Parochial Fees from the 1st January 2021 Guidance Notes for Funeral Directors



This note outlines the relevant legislation surrounding the statutory fees due in relation to Church of England funeral services. However, you may also wish to refer to the fee procedure issued by Norwich Diocese which can be found at: www.dioceseofnorwich.org/fp

Statutory Fees

Depending on the type of service, statutory fees legally belong to the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd (NDBF Ltd) and the PCC. Where an incumbent has previously notified the Diocesan Bishop of their wish to do so, they may still be entitled to retain the fee, but this is exceptional.

Extras in addition to the prescribed statutory fee

Under the legal provisions which came into effect from January 2013, 'extras' can only be charged for items over which those receiving the ministry have a genuine choice. 'Extras' should never be imposed by the incumbent or PCC where those paying the fees have not agreed in advance that they wish to be provided with the 'extras' in question.

The fees order specifies that parochial fees include any costs and expenses incurred in relation to a service for routine administration (including arranging dates and times and the making of entries in registers), making the church available and lighting it. Therefore, it is unlawful to make any additional charge for these items.

Payment to retired clergy

Fees for all funerals will include elements for supporting the local church and the Diocese generally. This means that when retired clergy take a funeral, they will no longer be entitled to keep any part of the fee that is chargeable to the family.

All payments for funerals taken by retired clergy must therefore be made either to the relevant parish (PCC) or NDBF Ltd. The member of retired clergy will then be responsible for claiming their occasional duty rates directly from the Diocese. An occasional duty rate is the set amount paid by the Diocese to a retired minister with permission to officiate for conducting a service. Please bear in mind that the rate claimed from the Diocese does not include any provision for travel expenses.

Recommended approach to paying the fees

The Diocese of Norwich recommends not making any payments in cash and to ensure that all cheques are made payable to a PCC or to NDBF Ltd.

As the handling processes are agreed at a local and not Diocesan level they can vary. Therefore, it is worth bearing in mind that a small number of incumbent clergy may maintain bank accounts specifically for the administration of parochial fees, so you may receive a request for cheques to be made payable to them. If you are unsure whether a cheque should be made payable to an incumbent's fee account (rather than to a PCC or the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance), you may wish to call the Diocesan office who will be happy to confirm the arrangements which are in place (see contact details overleaf).

Funeral including a service in church

From the 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021, the Diocesan and PCC fees combined are as follows:

Church funeral followed or preceded by cremation, or burial in council cemetery £228

Church funeral followed or preceded by burial in churchyard £519

Individual churches' extra charges for heating, music, clergy travel etc. will be additional to these amounts and each church will tell you what those figures are.

Funeral at crematorium only - The Diocesan fee will be £199.

If the minister taking the funeral is on the staff of a local church (vicar, curate, Reader, etc.) or the arrangements for the funeral have been coordinated through a local church, please make out a single cheque for £199 plus clergy out-of-pocket expenses to the PCC of that church. The local church will administer the fee and ensure that the relevant parties are remunerated.

If the minister is not on the staff of a local church (e.g. a retired priest) *and it is not clear which PCC should be paid*, you should give a cheque made payable to **NDBF Ltd** to the minister together with a completed payment form which can be downloaded from <u>www.dioceseofnorwich.org/fp</u>

It may be preferable that you provide any out-of-pocket expenses (mileage etc.) directly to the minister.

The minister will then be responsible for passing the cheque on to NDBF Ltd who will ensure that the fees are distributed to the appropriate parties. Please do not make out any cheques payable to a retired minister personally.

Burial of cremated remains in a churchyard - The combined Diocesan and parish fees will be £166.

If you are involved in collecting the fees, please process them in the same way as for funeral fees.

Are there any circumstances in which fees are not charged?

Fees must normally be charged for all Church of England funerals, even if the priest or lay minister taking the service is a volunteer. In some instances Incumbents and Priests-in-Charge have the authority to waive fees if there are special individual circumstances, which they will discuss with you (Please note that retired clergy, Readers, assistant clergy etc. do not have the authority to waive fees, and if you have any queries on this point you should contact the area Archdeacon). Please note that **no fee** is charged for the burial of a stillborn infant or for the funeral or burial of a person who dies under the age of 18.

Service of thanksgiving

Where a service of thanksgiving is held, it is at the discretion of the incumbent/PCC as to the charge made as this is not covered by the table of parochial fees. However, the fees stated on the table of parochial fees may be a useful guide and consideration should also be taken in relation to any reasonable additional costs incurred (such as heating).

It is important to exercise discretion when differentiating between a funeral service and a thanksgiving service as it is likely that any service that is held in church either on the day of or the day preceding/following a funeral (such as at a crematorium) would be classed as a funeral service and not a remembrance service and therefore a statutory fee would be due.

What should we do if we are aware of a person claiming to carry out Church of England services who is not complying with these procedures?

Everyone involved in organising and conducting a Church of England funeral must comply with the legal requirements. A CofE funeral is a funeral taken by an authorised CofE minister (lay or ordained) who will have a licence or permission to officiate from the Bishop of Norwich. A service conducted by any other person cannot be described as a CofE funeral, even if the words from a CofE form of service are used. In addition, legislation makes it clear that the statutory fee no longer belongs to the minister but jointly to the NDBF Ltd and a PCC.

It is therefore unlawful for anyone to act in such a way that the NDBF/PCC's do not receive the part of the fee to which they are entitled. That is one reason why we recommend cheques are made payable to a PCC or to NDBF Ltd. If you have any concerns or queries, please contact the relevant Archdeacon.

In addition, the Archdeacon should be informed of any person claiming to take services in the name of the Church of England whom you have any reason to believe does not have the appropriate licence or authorisation to do so.

Archdeacon of Norwich	archdeacon.norwich@dioceseofnorwich.org	Tel: 01603 620007
Archdeacon of Norfolk	archdeacon.norfolk@dioceseofnorwich.org	Tel: 01603 559199
Archdeacon of Lynn	archdeacon.lynn@dioceseofnorwich.org	Tel: 01362 688032

Contact details

Whilst the above notes are to assist with the implementation of changes which came into effect from the 1st January 2013 the Diocese also wish to engage with Funeral Directors regarding suggestions which may help reduce the administrative burden. If you wish to clarify these notes or make suggestions as to how the Diocese can help, please contact James South using the following details:

Diocese of Norwich 109 Dereham Road Easton NR9 5ES Tel: 01603 882347 Email: james.south@dioceseofnorwich.org