

MEMORANDUM BY THE ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

1. Under the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986¹ ("the 1986 Measure"), most of the fees that the Church of England can charge in respect of marriages and funerals are set out annually in a draft Parochial Fees Order. In general, the fees charged in connection with burials in cemeteries and services in crematoria, monuments in churchyards and searches in church registers are also fixed by this Order. The draft Order is agreed by the Archbishops' Council and laid before the General Synod for its approval; the final Order is also subject to a right of veto by each House of Parliament.

2. In 2007, parochial fees produced around £45m, of which over £16m contributed towards the cost of paying stipends to the clergy - which represented 8.1% of the total stipends bill. The remainder was raised for PCCs and payments for extras, such as flowers and the services of third parties such as organists and bell ringers.

The Increase from 1 January 2009

3. Last year the Deployment, Remuneration, and Conditions of Service Committee (DRACSC) recommended an increase of 3% (in line with the increase in the National Stipends Benchmark) from 1 January 2009 for all fees. The Council agreed with DRACSC's recommendation.

4. Synod approved the draft Order as presented and the Archbishops' Council made the Order accordingly.

THE CURRENT DRAFT ORDER

The Increase from 1 January 2010

5. In April the usual consultation about the increase from 1 January 2010 took place. Those consulted included professional associations of funeral directors, burial and cremation authorities, the National Association of Memorial Masons, the Ecclesiastical Law Association, the Churches Main

¹ As amended by the National Institutions of The Church of England (Transfer of Functions) Order 1998.

Committee, the Council for the Care of Churches, the General Register Office, the Association of Family History Societies, as well as the Bishop of Hereford and the chairman of the Family Life And Marriage Education Network (FLAME).

6. At its May meeting DRACSC, after taking into account the results of the consultation, decided to recommend to the Council a 2% increase in the level of fees generally from January 2010, in recognition of the increase in pension contributions from January 2010, and the 1% increase in the National Minimum Stipend from April 2010. In view of the debate on the revision stage of the Measure at the July sessions, the Committee felt that there should not be any changes besides the usual annual increase.

7. The Archbishops' Council has accepted the recommendation made by DRACSC.

Conclusion

8. Under the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986, as amended by the National Institutions of the Church of England (Transfer of Functions) Order 1998, the draft Order has to be laid before General Synod. Where the Business Committee determines that a draft Parochial Fees Order does not need to be debated by the Synod, the draft Order shall be deemed to have been approved by the General Synod without amendment unless notice is given by a member of General Synod that he or she wishes the draft Order to be debated.

9. The General Synod is, therefore, invited to approve the draft Parochial Fees Order 2009 (GS 1743) which the Council has submitted.

10. If it is so approved, the Council will make the Order by sealing it. It will thereafter need to be laid before both Houses of Parliament in accordance with legal requirements. If Synod amends it, the Council has the option of *either* sealing the Order as amended by Synod *or* withdrawing the Order for further consideration. The effect of the latter would be that the 2008 Order would remain in force for the time being, as a new Order cannot become law until it has been sealed by the Council.