

**GENERAL SYNOD**  
**DRAFT PAROCHIAL FEES (AMENDMENT) ORDER**

**Explanatory Notes**

The Draft Parochial Fees (Amendment) Order provides that, for the rest of 2023, the parochial fees set under article 6 of the Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2019 will increase by the lower of the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) and 5% from the 2022 level. As the CPI increase exceeded 5%, the fees will be 5% above the 2022 levels. The Draft Order also provides that, for the whole of 2024, these fees will increase by the lower of the CPI and 5% from the 2023 level.

**Background**

1. The Parochial Fees and Scheduled Matters Amending Order 2019 (“the 2019 Order”) set the framework for parochial fees until the end of 2024 and provides for fees to increase for each calendar year by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for the twelve months to the preceding August, rounded up to the nearest pound. On 1 January 2023, fees rose by at least 9.9%, in line with CPI. After the rounding up, individual fee increases range between 10.3% and 14.3%.
2. The Archbishops’ Council recognised that the base level of parochial fees was set in 2019 having regard to the time cost of stipendiary clergy and administrative staff, repair, maintenance and running costs (excluding heating which is chargeable separately by the PCC if relevant). However, the Council thought that the increases that have resulted from the 2019 Order were too high in the light of factors including the general cost of living pressures on fee payers and the likely increases in clergy stipends which will not be as high as inflation.
3. Therefore, whilst recognising the current rate of inflation, the Archbishops’ Council has decided that, for the rest of 2023, the fees should increase by no more than 5%, rounded up to the nearest pound. As the CPI increase exceeded 5%, the fees would be 5% above the 2022 levels, rounded up to the nearest pound. After the rounding up, individual fee increases would range between 5.2% and 7.1%. The Archbishops’ Council has also decided that, for the whole of 2024, parochial fees should increase by no more than 5% from the 2023 levels, rounded up to the nearest pound.

**Procedure**

4. This Draft Order, like the 2019 Order itself, is to be made under section 2(1) of the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986. Section 2 of that Measure provides that, if the General Synod approves the draft Order, it is then to be referred to the Archbishops’ Council. Once the Archbishops’ Council has made the Order, it is ready to be laid before Parliament. If General Synod does not approve the Order the parochial fees for 2023 will remain at the level as determined by the 2019 Order, i.e. between 10.3% and 14.3% above the 2022 levels.
5. Section 2 of that Measure also permits members of the General Synod to move amendments to a draft Order. The deadline for giving notice of amendments to this draft Order is specified in the Agenda for the February 2023 group of sessions. If the draft Order were to be amended, the Archbishops’ Council would have to decide whether to accept the amendment (and make the Order as amended) or to withdraw the draft for further consideration.

6. The One Motion procedure under Standing Order 72 applies to this draft Order, with the result that it will be considered on a single motion for approval with no further Synodical stages.

### Notes on the provisions of the draft Order

#### Article 1: Citation and commencement

7. This article provides for the draft Order to come into force on the day after it is laid before Parliament, which in practice is the earliest it could come into force.

#### Article 2: Prescribed fees and amendment

8. This article amends article 6(3) of the 2019 Order and provides that, once the Order comes into force, for the rest of this calendar year and until the end of the calendar year 2024, fees are to increase from the levels in the preceding year by the lower of the increase in CPI for the preceding August and 5%.
9. The practical result of that amendment is illustrated by the following examples (and, in each example, the figures are to be rounded up to the nearest pound)—
- (1) Until the amendment comes into force, the fee payable in 2023 for any particular matter is the fee payable for that matter in 2022 increased by 9.9%, the percentage by which CPI in August 2022 exceeded that for August 2021.
  - (2) Once the amendment has come into force, the fee payable for the rest of 2023 for any particular matter is the fee payable for that matter in 2022 increased by 5%, being the lower of (a) 9.9%, the percentage by which CPI in August 2022 exceeded that for August 2021, and (b) 5%.
  - (3) In 2024, the fee payable for the whole of that year for any particular matter is the fee payable for that matter in the part of 2023 that fell after the amendment came into force increased by the lower of (a) the percentage by which CPI in August 2023 exceeds that for August 2022 and (b) 5%.
10. By way of further explanation, the table below sets out the fees payable for some of the most frequently provided services for (i) 2022, (ii) 2023 under the current law, and (iii) 2023 under the law as it would be amended by this draft Order.

	Actual 2022	Current 2023	2023 under Draft Order
	£	£	£
Marriage service	480	528	505
Funeral service	206	228	217
Burial in churchyard, preceding or following on from service in church	331	365	348
Burial in churchyard, on separate occasion, or without service in church	360	397	379

11. The text of article 6 of the 2019 Order as amended would read as follows—

**Prescribed fees**

6.—(1) Parochial fees are payable to a diocesan board of finance and to a parochial church council in respect of each of the matters listed in the first column of the table in Schedule 1 as follows.

(2) The fee payable in the calendar year 1st January to 31st December 2020 is the base figure for that matter—

- (a) increased by the percentage by which the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for August 2019 is greater than that for August 2018, and
- (b) rounded up to the nearest £1.

(3) The fee payable in each subsequent calendar year is the fee payable for that matter in the preceding calendar year (“Year A”)—

~~(a) increased by the percentage by which the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for August in Year A is greater than that for August in the calendar year preceding Year A,~~

**(a) increased by the lower of—**

- (i) the percentage by which the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) for August in Year A is greater than that for August in the calendar year preceding Year A, and**
- (ii) 5%, and**

(b) rounded up to the nearest £1.

(4) But where there is no increase in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), the percentage for the purposes of paragraph (2) or (3) is to be treated as zero.

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January 2023