The Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

for those involved with the
CRCW Church-in-Community project Application Process

1. HOUSING & HOUSING ALLOWANCES:

As for ministers of Word & sacraments, the fundamental expectation is that a CRCW minister will live in the same neighbourhood as to where the church / project is located. This is because of the need to fully engage with the worshipping life of the local church, including living and working in that community.

1.1 CRCW ministers are fully integrated under the terms of the Plan for Partnership. It is essential that full provision for **all the options** under the Plan for Partnership for the CRCW minsters coming into post are made (ie. both options of a manse and a housing allowance must be available to a CRCW minister).

The Church-in-Community Steering Group and the Synod finance person must be involved at the earliest stage of the CRCW Application process. She or he needs to be fully aware of these additional guidelines regarding housing and also ensure that both options of an appropriate manse or housing allowance will be underwritten by the Synod, if the local church is unable to provide this.

Early negotiation involving the local church and the appropriate Synod pastoral committee / person regarding particular housing need is also essential as soon as a call is being explored with a prospective CRCW minister.

1.2 Provision of housing is the responsibility of the local 'pastorate'. (Church-in-Community in CRCW terms) Where a house is provided, the pastorate is responsible for paying rates (where applicable) and Council tax, water rates, interior and exterior decoration, repairs and property insurance.

1.3 Where a person lives in their own house or rents a property, the pastorate will pay them a housing allowance which should be enough to cover the cost of the above items. (see 6.2.1.1 Plan for Partnership: 'Housing allowances paid to a minister/CRCW minister who does not occupy a church owned manse') The amount paid should be the estimated total cost of these items grossed up for tax (presently 20% but please check with URC Finance) and National Insurance (presently 11% but please check with URC Finance). The pastorate will also be charged employer's national insurance on this gross amount (presently, an additional 12.8% but please check with Finance).

Most people living in their own house will have to pay a mortgage. This is the responsibility of the person purchasing the house which may be an appreciating asset.

1.4 There may be other options that can be considered to meet the housing needs of the CRCW minister. These may include part rental, part buying, exploring local housing association property, or local authority housing stock. The accredited Church-in-Community project may have to rent a house or persuade someone else to rent or buy on its behalf. Sometimes partnership arrangements have been made between the individual and the pastorate to share the costs, whether of a rental property or of equity or of a mortgage. Another option may be to find a wealthy neighbouring church that might buy a house as an investment, or an ecumenical arrangement where the URC's contribution is the CRCW minster's stipend and the accommodation provided by another church or organisation.

There are no URC General Assembly resources available to help in these situations.

However, some Synods may have some special arrangements and grants available and each Synod should be able to offer advice.

1.5 There can be a problem of providing short term accommodation for someone who wants to buy a house but is currently unable to do so:

There is no obligation on the pastorate to provide 'bridging finance' prior to the current home being sold. Indeed, it might be more 'normal' to delay the start of the new post until this has happened. This does not prevent the pastorate coming to an arrangement with the individual if it wants to - e.g. over a short term rental - but this is, of course, rental money that will come out of the housing allowance in that particular year.

2. OTHER MATTERS

2.1 Fixed car allowances: As the rates of reimbursement of mileage do not adequately reimburse the costs incurred, the expectation is that a fixed car allowance should be paid (presently £1200 per annum) to a CRCW minister. This needs to be budgeted as a local church expense. (Presently as a cost of £1356 pa. including NI but please check with URC Finance). However, in exceptional circumstances, for CRCW ministers living in the neighbourhood, needing to meet local people and mainly working in the local area, car use may not be essential and therefore the fixed car allowance not mandatory. However, if the minister of Word & sacraments at the same church receives a fixed car allowance, then there must be good reason why the CRCW minister does not also receive this allowance.

2.2 Travel expenses: All CRCW ministers are also expected to attend regional and Synod events plus CRCW gatherings, but public transport can be used and full expenses claimed at the appropriate amounts. (Church-in-Community project annual budgets need to allow for this expenditure)

Details about the Fixed Car Allowance and travel expenses are in paragraphs 6.3.4. of the Plan for Partnership.

2.3 Sabbaticals: Every ten years, CRCW ministers are entitled to take up to three months sabbatical in order to engage in further study, reflection and

spiritual development. Permission must first, however, be sought from the appropriate Synod to ensure that sufficient cover is available and to discuss the sabbatical proposals. Grants to cover some of the costs of the sabbatical are available on application to the Synod EM / Training Officer, and she or he can also offer useful advice regarding the study itself. Stipends for the CRCW minster are continued over this period, and some costs for cover may be recoverable from the URC Finance Office (similar to pulpit supply costs being recoverable for ministers).

It is to be negotiated between the CRCW minister, local project and the Synod whether a CRCW minster remains at the Church-in-Community to have a sabbatical after 10 years service (with the resulting housing costs paid locally), after 9 years 9 months service (and thus with no additional local housing costs) or within the first 3 years of her or his following post. This will be a period of reflection & benefit for the new Church-in-Community as well as for the CRCW minister.

This normal expectation for a CRCW minister to take a sabbatical should be emphasised at the Church-in-Community Application stage. Additionally, a Church-in-Community project should be informed at the calling stage about the probability of a sabbatical if a prospective CRCW minister is nearing 10 years service.

Bob Day & Steve Summers
Agreed by the CRCW Programme Sub-committee (12th June 2007)
Terminology updated 5.9.14.