

CHAPTER 12

MINISTERS' RESIDENCES

Manse Provision, Maintenance and Finance

12.01 The Circuit Executive shall ensure that

- (a) suitable comfortable and properly furnished residences with adequate sanitary facilities are provided for the ministers appointed to that Circuit.
- (b) residences and furniture therein are kept in proper repair.
- (c) All rates and taxes relating to ministers' residences are paid.

It shall be the duty of the Superintendent of the Circuit to make an annual report to the District Synod in relation to their condition and repair.

12.02 The General Committee shall have powers and responsibilities of a Circuit Executive in regard to the residences of the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department, and any other ministers working under the direction of the Home Mission Department. The General Purposes Fund shall hold similar powers with regard to the residence of the Secretary of the Conference. Committees of Departments, Institutions and Missions shall likewise be responsible for the provision and upkeep of residences of ministers connected with the Departments, Institutions and Missions.

12.03 In December the Circuit Executive shall appoint a manse inspection committee to assist the Manse Steward, which shall consist of a representative group drawn from the Circuit membership. The Circuit shall provide a Furniture Book for each manse on the Circuit in which shall be entered a full and proper inventory and description of the furniture and effects in the house, with the signature of the Circuit Steward or Manse Steward to the inventory.

12.04 The Circuit Executive shall allocate a reasonable sum of money each year for the purpose of maintaining the fabric and quality of decor of the manse. This amount shall be identified in a separate manse account and shall be included in the Circuit accounts. Expenditure on property or furniture during the year shall be recorded in the Circuit Schedule Book, Manse Furniture Book and Home Mission Department schedule. No application for Home Mission Department grants will be considered without a current schedule.

12.05 When leaving a Circuit a minister shall obtain the signature of the Circuit Steward or Manse Steward to the inventory and shall be held accountable for any want of good order and condition in which the furniture may be found prior to the minister's departure from the Circuit.

12.06 The Minister shall be responsible for:

- (a) the care of all items provided by the Circuit as listed in the Furniture Book.



- (b) the provision of general furnishings not provided by the Circuit (as required in the document “Manses — Basic Accommodation required” issued by the Home Mission Department and approved by Conference.)
- (c) damage to furniture, and all breakage or loss, arising from neglect or fault by the resident minister. Such damage, breakage or loss shall be repaired and made good by him/her at the time of the occurrence.

12.07 The Conference annually, on the recommendation of the Home Mission Department, shall approve an amount for the provision of furnishing grants which shall be paid through the Comprehensive Assessment by the Circuits and disbursed by the General Purposes Fund.

12.08 All Circuit accounts, which shall include a statement of the total assets of the Circuit, shall be audited and a statement to this effect submitted to Spring Synod.

Standardisation of Manses

12.09 In situations where manse accommodation is not of the required standard for the appointment of a minister, the Stationing Committee may leave the station vacant.

Vacant Manses

12.10 A vacant manse is defined as one where no minister appointed by the Conference is resident.

12.11 Where a vacant manse meets the required standards, no letting shall be considered until a decision is made by the District Home Mission Committee and District Synod that it is not likely to be required for ministerial accommodation in the foreseeable future. Where a manse has been vacant for 5 years, and where legally permissible, the Home Mission Department shall have vacant possession in order to use the property in the best interests of the Connexion.

12.12 Most manses are the property of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland. Local Circuits are the stewards of the properties and are charged with providing and maintaining them for the use of the ministers appointed to the Circuit. The proceeds of the sale of manses shall normally be allocated to the Home Mission Fund on the understanding that, should a manse be required at a future date on a Circuit where a manse has been sold, it will be provided with the assistance of the Home Mission Department.

12.13 The letting of a manse requires the permission of the Property Board. The letting agreement must be drawn up by a solicitor acting on behalf of the Circuit, and must be approved by the Property Board. The rental proceeds shall be lodged in the Circuit manse account, and used only for maintenance of the manse or, where agreed with the Home Mission Department, other manses on the circuit. Any surplus remaining at the end of the year shall be paid to the Home Mission Department. Manses shall be rented at a rate based on the valuation given by a local estate agent, and letting arrangements must take account of the exigencies of Stationing.



Lay workers living in vacant manses shall be required to pay a commercial rent, and there shall be a formal letting agreement.

12.14 If a manse does not meet the required specifications, it must either be:

- (a) brought up to the required standards within a time specified by the District Home Mission Committee, in consultation with the Home Mission Department and Property Board, or
- (b) replaced, for which the approval of the Home Mission Department and Property Board is required.

Non-Stipendiary Ministers

12.15 Non-Stipendiary Ministers normally reside in their own home. Office space should be provided for their use, if required, by the Circuit, ideally on church premises.

Ministers residing in their own property

12.16 The discipline and practice of Itinerant Ministers living in the manse provided by the Circuit, Department or Institution is re affirmed. However, ministers who are within two years of retirement from the active ministry may be permitted to live in their own residence, provided it is convenient and accessible to the members of the Circuit, Department or Institution to which the minister has been appointed. Permission must be obtained from the District Superintendent and the Home Mission Department. Any minister who chooses to exercise this option will receive no allowances towards manse expenses. No extra travel allowance shall be paid.

12.17 Ministers who are not within two years of retirement and choose not to live in the manse provided are in breach of the Discipline of the Church and the matter will be referred to the President and the President's Advisory Committee.

Manse handover

12.18 In the year that a minister is due to move, the Circuit Executive shall arrange for the inspection of the condition and structure of the manse by a competent group, not to exceed five people, appointed by the District Synod.

12.19 The inspection shall be carried out against a Surveyors' checklist which will be supplied by the Home Mission Department and all items considered to be unsatisfactory shall be made good before the new minister moves into the appointment. An independent report shall be sent to the District Property Committee, who will bring the report to the notice of the Spring Synod. It shall be the responsibility of the Circuit Executive to implement the recommendations of the report.

12.20 In the event that unsatisfactory items are not made good at the appropriate time, the newly appointed minister, the District Superintendent, the officers of the Home Mission Department and Circuit Officials will prepare a report for the Autumn Synod and shall address the implementation of the recommendations of the report. A report confirming that



unsatisfactory items have been made good, and confirming the satisfactory condition of the property on hand-over shall be presented to the following Spring Synod.

12.21 When the draft of Stations is circulated at the beginning of March, each minister expecting to move, and Superintendents and the Circuit Stewards expecting a change on their Circuit, will be given an outline of their obligations in relation to manse property by the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department.

12.22 Prior to the date when the new minister is due to take up residence in the manse, the manse property must be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines supplied by the Home Mission Department. If the condition of the manse is considered to be unsatisfactory, the Manse Steward, with the approval of the Circuit Superintendent, (or the District Superintendent, if the Circuit Superintendent is the person occupying the manse) shall make arrangements for the necessary work to be undertaken. If alternative accommodation is required during the period when the manse is being prepared for the new minister, it shall be provided at the expense of the Circuit. In the event that the resident minister is the District Superintendent, or a minister on a separated appointment, or the President, the matter shall be referred to the General Committee.

Funding/Grants

12.23 Where a manse is being let, the excess of income over expenditure necessary to maintain the premises shall be remitted to the Home Mission Department. Details of expenditure on such maintenance must be recorded in the Circuit accounts.

12.24 Furniture grants may be paid by the Home Mission Department to ministers who are unable, from their own resources, to provide personal furnishing for a manse. This is in addition to the grant paid to ministers who have moved to a new station.

12.25 Applications from Circuits for assistance with the funding of repairs and/or refurbishment shall be submitted on the appropriate application form, with current Circuit accounts and a copy of the previous year's audited accounts appended. Expenditure on repairs and /or re-decorating each year must be entered into the Circuit accounts, the Circuit Schedule book and the Furniture Book.

Storage of furniture

12.26 The storage of manse furniture must be undertaken at the expense of the minister, in consultation with the Circuit Superintendent or Manse Committee. Manse furniture stored must be returned to the manse in good condition.

Accommodation for Married Students in College

12.27 Furnished accommodation shall be provided for married students while at Edgehill College. In cases where it is deemed necessary, the Governors of Edgehill College may consult with the Officers of the Home Mission Department regarding the provision of such accommodation.