



Glebe wardens are appointed to assist the officiating member of the clergy and the diocesan glebes committee in the care and management of the glebe house (or rectory) and lands. Every parish, union or group of parishes for which there is a select vestry and a glebe generally has two glebe wardens. Chapter III of the *Church of Ireland Constitution* deals with the appointment of glebe wardens. Chapter XIII cover the duties expected of the role.

Where the glebe is vested in the Representative Church Body (RCB), glebe wardens are *ex officio* members of the select vestry, that is, members by virtue of holding the office of glebe wardens. However, if the glebe is not vested in the RCB, but in other trustees, then glebe wardens are not *ex officio* select vestry members.

GLEBEWARDENS' APPOINTMENT

Glebe wardens must be registered members of the general vestry. One glebe warden is appointed by the officiating member of the clergy in the parish (often known as the rector's or incumbent's glebe warden) and the other by the registered members of the general vestry at its Easter vestry meeting (known as the people's glebe warden). Recommended good practice is that the glebe wardens are independent from and unrelated to the officiating member of the clergy who resides in the parish glebe.

If the office of incumbent's glebe warden becomes vacant the vacancy is filled by the incumbent appointing a new incumbent's glebe warden. If the incumbent fails to appoint someone within one month, then the select vestry may make the appointment. Vacancies in the office of people's glebe wardens are filled by the select vestry.

WHAT IS THE 'GLEBE'?

In State legislation and in church regulations, the term *glebe* means a residence, and/or lands, usually vested in the RCB and occupied by a member of the clergy serving in a parish. The residence is also often known as a rectory. Glebes (or rectories) are subject to the control of the RCB where vested in that body. The oversight of care and management falls to the glebes committee of the diocesan council. The local care and management is the responsibility of the officiating member of the clergy and glebe wardens. The costs are the responsibility of the select vestry (and proportionately to select vestries in a group of parishes).

GLEBEWARDENS' DUTIES

- To assist the officiating member of the clergy and the diocesan glebes committee in the care and management of the glebe house (rectory) and lands
- With the rural dean and officiating member of the clergy, to carry out an annual inspection of the rectory, reporting findings to the select vestry and rectifying any matter requiring attention
- To be present at both repair and vacancy commissions, annual inspections, and at such other inspections of the glebe house and lands as may from time to time be authorised
- To ensure the rectory and outbuildings are insured for their full replacement value at all times
- During a vacancy, to see that the rectory is properly maintained and supervised

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Good practice indicates that continued routine maintenance of a glebe house or rectory will save a parish a great deal of money in the longer term. It is recommended that each select vestry should draw up a plan of annual routine maintenance to be undertaken and that each year select vestries save a certain sum of money (such as a sinking fund) against future work which may be required for the upkeep of the glebe.

ANNUAL INSPECTION

Glebe wardens are required to be present at annual inspections of the interior and exterior of the glebe house. Together with the rural dean and a nominee of the diocesan glebes committee, the glebe wardens are

to report to the diocesan glebes committee on the glebe house, including on its furnishings and fittings, the garden, land, fences and trees, as well as on any sub-letting or tree felling.

COMMISSIONS OF REPAIR

Commissions of repair for each glebe are held every five years, on the occurrence of a vacancy in the position of clergy, and at other times by order of the diocesan glebes committee, or on the application of the officiating member of the clergy or a glebewardens to the diocesan glebes committee.

These commissions consist of a member of the diocesan glebes committee, the rural dean (who may not be a member of the commission on their own glebe house) and the two glebewardens. The quorum for such a commission is three people, of whom one must be the member of the diocesan glebes committee, who shall take the chair and have a casting vote. If a glebewardens cannot attend a commission, that glebewardens is to nominate a deputy from among the members of the select vestry.

The commission, advised by the diocesan architect, delivers a report to the diocesan glebes committee, together with recommendations on what work is required. The rural dean, the officiating member of the clergy and the select vestry are each to receive a copy of this report. The select vestry returns the report to the diocesan glebes committee, together with any views it wishes to express. The diocesan glebes committee then decides what repairs and improvements are to be carried out and instructs the select vestry accordingly. A glebewardens or the member of the clergy may request to appear before the diocesan glebes committee in support or opposition to the proposed work.

In all cases where the diocesan glebes committee approves expenditure on the glebe, the select vestry may appeal to the diocesan council, and notice of the appeal must be given to the diocesan council within fourteen days from the date of such approval. If the select vestry fails to carry out the work then the diocesan council may order the execution of the work. Urgent repairs and fixing sudden damage to a glebe house may be ordered by the rural dean and by the glebewardens.

COST OF REPAIRS

The select vestry is responsible for the cost of all repairs. If the select vestry fails to meet the cost it may be charged against any fund belonging to the parish over which the diocesan council or the RCB has control.

LETTING OF RECTORIES AND GLEBE LANDS

The vast majority of rectories are vested in the RCB. Prior to letting of any such rectories, approval is needed from the RCB. Parishes are advised to contact the RCB Property Department regarding any intention to let as early as possible.

Glebe lands are dealt with via the diocesan office. Prior to the letting of glebe land, glebewardens are to report to the diocesan glebes committee whether the proposed letting is consistent with the principles of good management of the land, and such report is to be considered by the glebes committee before any permission for letting the lands is given. In any letting of rectories or glebe lands, where the rental income goes to the parish, both the select vestry and diocesan glebes committee must approve the letting. The diocesan council and the RCB may require a letting valuation and should be contacted prior to any letting arrangement being made. The income is received by the select vestry and it is understood such income shall be used for the repair, maintenance and upkeep of the glebe house and lands.

FELLING TREES

Before any tree growing on a glebe or other property vested in the RCB can be felled, the permission of the RCB must be sought through the diocesan council. Please contact the RCB Property Department regarding any plans to fell trees. When permission to fell is given, that permission lasts for twelve months. Once permission has been granted it is up to the diocesan council to comply with any civil requirements, and to take steps to fell the trees, sell or otherwise dispose of them. The income from any sale of trees felled in glebe lands is received by the select vestry and is to be used for the cost of replanting (if appropriate), repairs to the glebe house, or the reduction of outstanding purchase money or loans for repairs. In the case of trees felled in churchyards or graveyards the money received is to be used for the cost of replanting, the maintenance of the fabric of the church, or the upkeep of the churchyard or graveyard.