

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

MANAGING EMPLOYER: THE CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Pastoral and Closed Churches Division

JOB PROFILE

JOB TITLE: Case Officer.
GRADE: Band 4 Market Rate Salary (MRS)
LOCATION: Diocesan office Birmingham
ACCOUNTABLE TO: Closed Churches Team Manager (Based in London)

KEY RELATIONSHIPS:

Church Commissioners and NCI staff including: Team Manager (Closed Churches); Pastoral and Closed Churches Secretary; Case Officers and Casework Support; Church Building Council and Statutory Advisory Committee; Legal Department.

Diocese staff including: Archdeacons; Diocesan Secretaries; Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee Secretaries.

Statutory Bodies including: Local Planning Authorities; Historic England.

Heritage Trusts including: The Churches Conservation Trust.

Legal / Marketing including: Diocesan Registrars; external Solicitors; Agents.

Prospective Purchasers: Community; Private and Commercial.

BACKGROUND:

The Church Commissioners has a role in the reorganisation of parishes, which was given to it by Parliament. The closure of church buildings, the process for finding and considering suitable uses for the buildings thereafter and their subsequent disposal are governed by legislation, the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

This post is in the Commissioners' Closed Churches Team, which is regionally based. It involves working with dioceses to drive forward the casework and settle the future of closed church buildings.

JOB SUMMARY:

Use professional skill and experience to actively progress casework, working flexibly with dioceses to resolve the future of closed church buildings.

To enable the Commissioners to provide specialist skills and add value in dealing with closed church buildings as a national agency but operating at the local level.

To provide a specialist advice to dioceses on property and planning issues, the operation of the Mission and Pastoral Measure and ecclesiastical law in general.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Closed Churches Casework

Building beneficial working relationships between dioceses and the Commissioners and proactively drive forward closed churches casework, working in partnership with dioceses and, where agreed, on behalf of dioceses in the 'use seeking' process.

Work with and/or oversee Diocesan/Commissioners marketing agents, seeking marketing appraisals and valuations, providing guidance and authorising sales/marketing documentation.

Where appropriate seek planning permissions prior to marketing or prepare planning briefs and seek local authority agreement to those briefs.

Negotiating with local authorities and other relevant bodies.

Use judgement and skills to organise meetings with appropriate bodies to progress cases. This may include local council leaders, ward councillors, planning officers, English Heritage and other interested parties.

Attending and reporting to Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committees and/or Use Seeking Sub-Committees to keep them updated on progress of casework and the Commissioners updated on Diocesan proposals for reorganization that may lead to new closures.

Preparing reports for the Commissioners' Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee and attending where required.

Advising diocese, interested bodies including English Heritage, Local Planning Authorities and Amenity Societies, solicitors and prospective purchasers on the statutory provisions set out in the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 and the latest version of the Code of Recommended Practice in respect of consecrated closed Churches.

Meeting prospective purchasers and understanding their proposals.

Drafting Schemes under the Mission and Pastoral Measure and administering the publication process.

Consulting in the locality on draft Scheme proposals and where appropriate engaging with local residents through meetings and drop-in sessions to ensure an understanding of the proposals and processes.

Legal instructions on sales/disposals, covenants and variations to covenants.

Negotiations with prospective purchasers, their legal representatives and agreement of heads of terms.

Ensure proposed uses are in accord with the Commissioners' policy on suitable uses for closed church buildings.

To seek the best use for buildings and, within the constraints of 'appropriate use' the best price.

To maintain accurate and up to date casework records in both electronic and hard copy formats.

Organise and attend meetings and site visits to progress casework.

Provide clear and accurate briefings to the Casework Support Officer to assist in the preparation of documentation.

Undertake work in accordance with the Mission and Pastoral Measure Code of Recommended Practice.

Other Duties.

Assist with reports, arrangements and where appropriate attend the annual Mission, Pastoral and Church Property Committee Visit.

Monitoring the emerging Local Plans within a geographic area of the country to try and ensure that they make facilitative provision for the future of closed church buildings.

To provide a specialist advice to dioceses on planning issues, the operation of the Pastoral Measure and ecclesiastical law in general.

Keep up to date with the development of heritage legislation and its impact on new uses for closed churches.

The main duties and responsibilities of the post are outlined in your job description. This list is not exhaustive and is intended to reflect the main tasks and areas of work. Changes may occur over time and you will be expected to agree any reasonable changes to the job description that are commensurate with the banding and in line with the general nature of the post. You will be consulted about any changes to the job description before these are implemented.

PERSON SPECIFICATION:

Essential

Education:

- Educated to degree level or equivalent with planning or related qualifications (MRTPI, RIBA, RICS or IHBC).

Skills/Aptitudes:

- Ability to be flexible and use own initiative to pro-actively drive forward casework.
- Manage own time and caseload (approx. 50 cases) with minimum supervision.
- Strong organisational skills with ability to apply discretion and judgement.
- Ability to negotiate and influence a wide range of stakeholders.
- Ability to understand and explain legal documentation and to grasp ecclesiastical law and procedures.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Good team member and team worker.

Knowledge/Experience:

- Writing reports, preparing briefs and developing client proposals, including through the planning process.
- Making presentations.

Personal Attributes:

- Good IT skills.
- Able to travel extensively to various geographical locations to fulfil the duties of the post.

Circumstances:

- Extensive travel within England with occasional overnight stays.
- Operate from a regional base.

Desirable

Skills/Aptitudes:

- Awareness of pastoral issues in closed church casework, especially where churchyards are involved.
- Driving licence.

Knowledge/Experience:

- An understanding of the workings of the Mission and Pastoral Measure and related ecclesiastical legislation.
- An understanding and empathy with the structure and culture of the Church of England.

GENERAL CONDITIONS:

Diversity

We understand the benefits of employing individuals from a range of backgrounds, with diverse cultures and talents. We aim to create a workforce that:

- values difference in others and respects the dignity and worth of each individual
- reflects the diversity of the nation that the Church of England exists to serve

- fosters a climate of creativity, tolerance and diversity that will help all staff to develop to their full potential.

We are committed to be an equal opportunities employer and ensuring that all employees, job applicants, customers and other persons with whom we deal are treated fairly and are not subjected to discrimination. We want to ensure that we not only observe the relevant legislation but also do whatever is necessary to provide genuine equality of opportunity. We expect all our employees to be treated and to treat others with respect. Our aim is to provide a working environment free from harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form which may affect the dignity of the individual.

Standards of Behaviour and Conduct

Staff are expected to act at all times with due consideration for others and in a manner befitting their position as employees of the Church and as professionals, whatever their job.

Health and Safety Responsibilities

The NCIs take Health and Safety at work very seriously and require their staff to familiarise themselves with, and follow, their policy.

Confidentiality

Staff must not pass on to unauthorised persons, any information obtained in the course of their duties without the permission of their Head of Department.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:

Starting Salary: The current MRS is £47,261.00

Pension Contributions: Non-clergy staff will be admitted to the Church Administrators Pension Fund (CAPF, DC Section) unless they choose to opt out. Clergy already in the Church of England Funded Pensions Scheme (CEFPS) will have the option of either remaining in this scheme or joining the CAPF scheme.

There is no contracting – out certificate under the Pension Schemes Act 1993 in force for this employment in relation to the CAPF and CEFPS. Both CAPF and CEFPS members are contracted-in to the State Second Pension.

The NCIs have an income protection insurance arrangement. To be eligible for cover under this policy an employee must be a member of the CAPF DC section. Please note that insurance cover is not necessarily automatic, and that underwriting may be required by the schemes in some instances. Cover will be subject to any terms and conditions laid down by the insurance company.

Hours of Duty: Normal hours of work are 35 per week, Monday to Friday with an hour's unpaid break for lunch.

Annual Leave: 25 days paid leave per leave year. This is exclusive of public holidays and additional holidays approved by your employer. The leave year runs from 1st January to 31st December.

Season Ticket Loan: Staff are eligible to apply for an interest-free travel season ticket loan for their journey to and from work.

Contract: The post is offered on an open-ended contract, subject to 6 months probationary period.

Closing date for receipt of applications:

Interviews: We anticipate interviews taking place during w/c