

CHAPTER 20

Payment of ministers

The terms and amount of payment to ministers in the early history of the church are not known in any detail, but throughout its history, Great Chishill church expected the services of paid ministry, first in tandem with Melbourn and later with Barley.

Many early ministers elsewhere combined their ministry with other paid employment such as teaching, but this does not appear so here. Some of the Great Chishill ministers (for example Rev. John Watson) had private resources, making any stipend less important.

An important feature available from quite early days was the provision of a manse alongside the church building for the minister and his family.

In addition, members of the congregation would offer gifts of vegetables and other produce, and probably farmers would offer poultry and other meat at Christmas time. It was the practice until the advent of Rev. George Hobson to donate the Harvest Festival gifts to the minister.

The amount of stipend was undoubtedly frugal, for the church lacked resources to offer more. To establish a fair level, the County Union offered guidelines, but although Great Chishill members sometimes paid a bonus to their minister at the end of the financial year (£10 in 1919), the minister was obliged to take a cut in stipend in other years because the church finances were in deficit.

An embarrassing situation arose in 1928, when Rev. George Hobson explained in a graceful speech to the Church Meeting that in every year since his arrival in 1917, he had received less than the minimum stipend

recommended by the County Union. The members in response raised his stipend to £180, which was £5 above the minimum, and agreed to pay half the cost of his superannuation. This would enable him to receive a pension of £50 per year at age 65 years.

The stipend level was raised steadily in later years, and in the 1950's the payment of ministers was transferred to central funds, into which all churches contributed according to their means. Certain local costs of office (e.g. postage and telephone) were still to be paid by local churches.

The arrangement agreed for the ministry of Rev. David Buckle was somewhat unusual. Mr. Buckle, described as a 'student pastor', was paid a stipend of £430 per annum (in addition to payment of National Insurance stamps and telephone calls) as from 1st August 1963. This proposal was accepted by all members in April 1964 and was later reflected in an increased stipend of £670 with expenses of £75 and car allowance of £100.