

Mixed manse provision: hows and whys!

1. Provision of manses and allowing ministers to live in their own homes delivers flexibility.
2. A mixed economy on manse provision signals the adaption of ministry to the 21st century. Tied housing is a thing of the past.
3. Removes the possibility of losing potential ministers because they do not wish to live in a tied house.
4. If you own a house, you need a “buy to let” mortgage to rent it out, which is normally at a higher interest rate and requires a larger deposit to buy, making it difficult or impossible for some who wish to do so to get on the property ladder.
5. Living in your own home releases you from the hassle of renting arrangements which can result in tenants not caring for your property.
6. With your own home you don't have to put up with manse inspections of your home, then debates about what should or should not be done to the house, what should or should not be provided, etc. Embarrassing!
7. At the end of your ministry you do not need to rely on certain stock houses being offered to you through Housing and Loan, not enter into a loan agreement with them that can be restrictive, nor potentially lose out on money invested in the property.
8. You don't have to put up with a house that is sub-standard because a Church is unwilling or unable to make improvements.
9. If you own your own home but live in a manse then you have two gardens to tend, two houses to heat, etc. Live in your own home and you cut half the work, cut half the cost, and help combat climate change!
10. If you want to live in the manse provided, go ahead and enjoy!
11. Congregations can rent the manse, which includes tenants paying the Council Tax, and make a yearly profit, even after paying additional housing allowance to the minister for using his/her own home for work.
12. If areas are such that make owning a house prohibitive for whatever reason, then the minister simply continues to use the manse provided.

13. If a Kirk Session insists the minister lives in the manse provided, then the minister accepts the call on that basis.
14. If you can't afford your own home, then live in the manse provided.
15. Ministers may not move as readily if in their own home – but conversely may be encouraged to stay longer and have a fruitful ministry.
16. It is a hassle moving home whether you are in your own home or in a manse, so flexibility to move charge is not really an issue.
17. Maintaining and paying for your own home can be expensive – but it's still your choice – most other people are in the same position.
18. Would you choose to live in a home you don't like? For nearly every Church, it's either the manse provided or don't come!
19. Why should the minister's spouse and family be forced into a situation that applies because of the minister's job? They were not called to be minister.
20. If a minister dies in service, there is no need to add to the stress of the family by asking them in a matter of months to move house, and what if they have nowhere to go?
21. If you have special needs for family members then your own house can be adapted better than a manse.
22. Leaving an inheritance for children/family is a matter of personal choice, but ministers should still be allowed this option.
23. Ministers knew the position when they entered ministry but that doesn't make it right and should not restrict improvements and reform.
24. A calling can be restricted by a manse – if it is not maintained properly or in good condition, a minister may quite rightly refuse to accept a call to that charge.
25. A rented manse could be put into the hands of a letting agency, thus saving hassle for fabric conveners except for agreeing maintenance; with rent received most Churches would still make an annual profit after costs.
26. A charge could decide to sell the manse and use the funds for mission and declare itself a non-manse providing charge and take its chances as it moves into the future. Wouldn't you love to minister alongside a congregation willing to take risks like that?
27. In a declining Church which will no longer maintain its present form

- into the next decade, why are we so concerned about moving from manse provision? What have we got to lose?
28. Charges could still sell their manse and if a minister wishes accommodation provided then the charge could rent a suitable house, the upkeep of which would be the responsibility of the owner.
 29. Tenants of a manse can be given notice if a new minister is being called – it may just take a few months longer.
 30. Consult congregations by all means, but how many church members are told where to live? Most live in homes of their own choosing, so to state a minister must live in a tied house would be hypocritical.
 31. For all the uses a manse can have, are we really saying that they are absolutely necessary for everyone? No. Circumstances of charges vary as do circumstances of ministers and flexibility would be fitting to adapt.
 32. Is living in a large luxury house a good example for a minister to set? We say we have a Gospel bias to the poor yet live in such places?
 33. You can still meet people in a variety of places for discussion, meetings, prayer, etc. without it having to be in your manse.
 34. Stipends don't need to vary because of a flexible system, you still choose (or are called) to serve in an area where you think God wants you to be. Fixed allowance sum for all ministers in their own homes, paid through payroll, with tax and NI.
 35. When Jesus told his disciples to accept hospitality as they went, I'm pretty sure he did not envisage 7 apartment luxury homes! Is a large manse compatible with Kingdom values?
 36. Those who choose to stay in manses can still state that for them the manse is a necessary part of their job and therefore avoid tax implications.
 37. If the next minister wishes to live in a manse then the congregation will lose income from rent – just the way it is folks!
 38. In a declining Church that will struggle to meet its territorial claims, ministers and manses will no longer necessarily be in the community served because several communities may be served in one parish.
 39. In your home, when you retire you can stay there or sell and move to a place of your choosing, perhaps near to family/friends.
 40. Does the law state that we all have to live in manses? I think not.
Reference Section 290 ITEPA 2003.

41.Red herring: we lose some manses, we lose all tax benefits. Let's talk to HMRC and follow a system along the lines operated quite satisfactorily by the United Reformed Church.