

Being a Rector

The title of **rector** was given to the priest responsible for a parish whose income included all the tithes. Tithes originally were a payment each year of one tenth of all the produce from all farms or businesses within the parish. Where it was not practical to have a tenth part then the equivalent value was paid in goods or even services.



The rector and parishioners agreed that some tithes might be paid in cash rather than in kind. By the 13th Century these cash payments had often become fixed by custom. During the 14th century, particularly after the Black Death, payments in kind also became fixed by custom from each farm or business. Tithes ceased to be a tenth of actual harvest yields or profits. In the long run farming improvements and skilled trading gave no benefits to the rector.

The rector had to meet two expenses. First he had to keep the chancel (the east part of the church where the principal altar was situated) in good repair. Secondly the rector had to provide basic necessities to the poor who had no income because of frailty, injury or economic distress.

The rector's personal needs, and those of his household, were met from his farm called the Glebe. His household might include an assistant clergy, man and a domestic servant.

Loughborough's rectors received a large income and, even after the Reformation of the 16th century, continued to meet obligations imposed by ancient church law.

Rectors and charitable people relieved poverty in the parish. After 1601 the Poor Law laid down how poor relief was to be administered and financed. This remained in place until the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 removed specific duties from the individual parishes.

Upkeep of church buildings remained as in ancient church law although charitable benefactors paid for improvements and repairs. At All Saints in the early 1860s William Perry Herrick and Henry Fearon organised the major refurbishment of the building.

The rector's house expanded at various times during the past. Today we see the medieval core. The last rector to live on this site left this house in 1958.

A priest was known as a **vicar** if he only received the small tithes – those dues on some livestock and dairy produce. Vicars did not have to maintain the chancel or relieve the poor.