

Auctioneers – a practical guide

Items that cannot be sold

Some items to be aware of

- Altars – an altar should never be sold. Where possible see if it can be donated to another chapel/oratory. If no alternative home can be found, the altar has to be destroyed.
- Altar stones – try and find an alternative home for them. If this is not practical, the altar stones can be buried.
- Sacred Vessels (chalice, ciborium, monstrance, pix) – your first option would be to be to return these items to a donor's family if there is an inscription and the family can be identified. If there is no inscription or the family cannot be located the items can be given to the local parish, a member of the clergy or they can be given to the Missions. You can contact Apostolic Works for further information.
- Vestments – these can be offered to the local parish, a member of the clergy or gifted to the Missions. If none of these are practical the vestments can be buried/burned.
- Relics

More information on all of the above will be provided in due course.

Items for sale

- There may come a time when you need to hire an auctioneer to dispose of books, artwork, rugs, furniture, lighting etc.
- Arrange to meet with the auctioneer before you engage their services.
- Decide who is to be the contact point for the duration.
- If the funds from the auction are going to a charity, advertise this at the outset and ensure this happens when the auction is finished.
- Once you decide to hire an individual/company, arrange to meet and show them what items you wish to dispose of.
- The auctioneer will arrange another visit to photograph the said items.
- Please ensure you are the owner of the items being sold.
- Ensure the auctioneer does not post photos of items on their website or on social media without first obtaining your permission.
- It may be an idea to allow staff/volunteers the option of buying pieces (at a reduced rate) before the auction date.
- Once all objects have been photographed, check to ensure that all items are up for sale.
- If there are items that are not for sale included at this stage, get them removed so that they do not appear in the final catalogue.
- The same applies if items were omitted. Ensure their inclusion in the final catalogue.
- Arrange dates for potential buyers to visit the site to see the items. The auctioneer will organise this.
- Ensure that the building is signposted effectively so potential bidders know where they are permitted to wander.
- Discuss with the auctioneer the need for extra staff on the viewing days.
- Most auctions now take place on-line.
- You may wish to set reserve prices for some items.
- Please note many items will be valued at a low price simply to get buyers interested in bidding. However, if there are items which you know have a high-value, discuss this in advance with the auctioneer as you may wish to dispose of them in a different way.

- Once the auction is finished, hopefully all items will have been sold.
- Buyers will have been allocated a restricted time period to arrange for the collections of the items they have purchased.
- Reminders can be sent by the auctioneer to the buyer if they fail to meet the collection deadline. Ultimately this is not your responsibility.
- Unsold items can be donated to a local charity shop of upcycled/recycled.
- Keep a record of all items auctioned and place this in your archives.
- You will also need to furnish this information to the Charity Regulator in your annual report.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact any member of the Shared Archives Working Group who will be more than happy to assist you.