



# Parish Share Explained

"We value generosity and give and receive sincerely."  
**Your Parish Share in 2026**



**DIOCESE OF BRISTOL**

TRANSFORMING CHURCH. TOGETHER.

## A LETTER FROM YOUR ARCHDEACONS

**To all God's people serving in the Diocese of Bristol,**

We are continually inspired by the incredible acts of generosity that take place across our Diocese. Our Churches maintain a vital role in guiding those who are developing their relationship with Christ and helping them grow deeper in faith. Your efforts in organising drop-in cafes, supporting children's ministries, and welcoming visitors into our churches make a significant impact. Many of you support with financial donations, which account for most of our churches' income, and it is this combined effort that sustains our ministries.

God's economy is based on grace and generosity, and this shines through in our Parish Share. Parish Share reflects our shared belief that God's blessings allow us to give generously to further Christ's mission. It's through the support of those with more that we can uplift those with less, ensuring that essential ministry reaches every part of our Diocese. Your work in managing and supporting these contributions is what ties us together as a community, united in our gratitude for God's goodness. As you reflect on your church's gift this year, we pray that you feel blessed by your role in this ongoing movement of generosity.

Thank you for all that you do, both individually and as congregations, to support and resource God's work across the Diocese of Bristol.

**Archdeacon Christopher, Archdeacon Becky and Associate Archdeacon Adam**



# Openness



## THE STORY SO FAR

### **You asked for a clearer and more transparent methodology for Parish Share.**

In 2022, focus groups and a survey sent to every parish provided us with excellent feedback on what your parishes need in this area.

### **You asked for more information on on:**

- ♦ how the costs are worked out
- ♦ how they compare nationally and
- ♦ the costs and benefits of shared support from Hillside House

### **We delivered a new calculation, which was fairer, more transparent and simple.**

The calculation considers the cost of local stipendiary ministry, as well as asking every parish to contribute a fixed percentage of their average unrestricted income towards shared costs.

### **It reflects the local situation.**

The cost of stipendiary ministry is adjusted, depending on the average household income of the area. Larger income churches are asked to make an additional contribution to make ministry happen everywhere. The national church also provides a Low Income Community (LInC) grant providing essential support.

Some parishes may find their request lower – although we are asking them to maintain their generosity to enable vital ministry.

Reserves are not part of the calculation, but attention will be drawn to them where appropriate.

# Generosity



# PROVIDING, SUPPORTING AND ENABLING

As the Diocese of Bristol, we work together creatively and cost-effectively...



### Mission and Ministry Support team

Provide ongoing training and support to clergy and LLMs and SSMs. We also run the process for discernment, and support ordinands and curates.



### Property, Sustainability and Church Buildings teams

The Property team provide and maintain all the housing provided to clergy and curates and manage vacant properties, rentals, and a small amount of glebe land. The Sustainability team help parishes work towards net zero carbon through conducting energy audits and other carbon reduction schemes and resources. The Church Buildings team support churches with maintenance repairs and re-ordering and support the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC).



### Governance Support, Finance and Information Service teams

The Governance Support team support PCCs during pastoral reorganisations or vacancies and service Diocesan Synod meetings and elections. The Finance and Information Services team manage payroll (for clergy as well as diocesan staff), invoices and accounts and provide treasurer support and training. They are also responsible for technology used by the Diocesan Support Services.



### People & Safeguarding team

We look after the wellbeing of paid employees, and offer training and support to parishes, including advice on matters of mental health\*,



### Transformation team\*

Builds the foundations on which the diocese invests in working collaboratively. Reimagines the way we form relationships, which bring more people to Christ and implement transformational and cultural change.



### External Relations team

Provide diocesan-wide fundraising, communications and partnership engagement strategies and advice. Provide support for churches around Parish Share. Produce content and run the outward-facing online channels, liaise with the media and answer media enquiries.



### Education team

Support for church schools and governors, including appointments, resources, training and advice.



### Chief Executive Officer

The Diocesan Secretary provides leadership, management and accountability for Diocesan Support Services. When appropriate, the role also represents the diocese externally (nationally and locally), and supports Bishop's Council and Synod in their role of advising and supporting the Bishop.

# Creativity

**\*starred items/ teams are funded by external sources**





## HOW COSTS ARE WORKED OUT

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Parish} = \text{Income adjusted} \\ \text{Share} \quad + \text{Stipendary costs} \\ \quad \quad + \text{Shared costs} \end{array}$$

Through contributing to Parish Share, each church in the Diocese is taking shared responsibility for providing vital mission and ministry in every community, especially those that might not otherwise be able to afford it. The components we use in the calculation are designed to try and cover the cost of clergy for the whole diocese by asking those parishes most able to contribute to give the most.

### **Paid Clergy Costs**

For 2026 Bristol Diocese has set clergy stipends at £35,000, which, when combined with National Insurance (£4,500), pension contributions (£7,000) and housing costs (£14,300) (although the Diocese invests substantially more than this in its clergy housing), brings the total cost for a single, full-time member of stipendiary (paid) clergy to approximately £61,000 per annum.

These costs are then allocated to individual parishes based upon how clergy are allocated. For example, a parish with a half-time incumbent

would be asked for half of the stipendiary clergy and housing costs. This distributes paid clergy costs between different Parishes within a Benefice.

There has been a significant increase in clergy stipends for 2026 following several decisions made at General Synod. After several years of falling behind inflation, Synod resolved to increase clergy stipends which also impacts on pension contributions. The government increased National Insurance Contributions in 2025, which also accounts for a proportion of the increase.

### **Paid Clergy Cost Adjustment**

The National Church Data Services team map data from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government onto Church of England parish boundaries. This allows us to assess the average household income for a parish against an average for the diocese.

This comparison yields a percentage which is then applied to the total paid clergy cost as either an additional contribution (where household income is above average) or a discount.

# Bravery



# HOW COSTS ARE WORKED OUT

## Contribution to Shared Parish Support Costs

The diocese spends about £3.5 million a year on directly supporting the ministry of clergy, curates and parishes:

- ♦ £1.14 million on the training of future clergy and providing the training of current curates.
- ♦ £2.36 million on the people and teams that enable and support parish ministry across the diocese. This includes help with buildings, recruitment, safeguarding and other day-to-day support.

The amount requested of a parish towards these costs is calculated by asking for 12.5% of a parish's average unrestricted income (with Local Ecumenical Partnership costs subtracted where necessary).

Average unrestricted income is taken from the returns of parish finance completed each year. We take the total unrestricted income, and then exclude grants, trading income and legacies. We use an average of the past four calendar years to arrive at the figure used in the parish share calculations.

## Lowest Income Community Funding

When applied this acts as a discount on the parish share request and is targeted at those parishes who have the highest Index of Multiple Deprivation scores. The diocese has £564,000 to distribute in 2026.

## Parishes with Large Income

Using the average unrestricted parish income for the previous four calendar years (as described above), we calculate the diocesan average and compare each parish to it. Where a parish has an income of more than 150% of the diocesan average, they are asked for an additional contribution of 11% of their average unrestricted income. For the 2026 calculations the average parish income for the diocese is £56,769.

## Generous Giving Adjustment

Where the request sub-total of the above components comes out as less than the parish pledge in 2025 parish share, we request the difference as an additional generous contribution. The intention is to try and ensure that no parish is asked for less in 2026 than they pledged in 2025.

## Transitional Relief Allocation

Where a parish is asked for considerably more than their previous pledge, the archdeacons apply a discount.

# Bravery



**Parish Share makes ministry possible everywhere, through youth clubs, community gardens, kids work, sports events, mentoring programmes, breakfast church and more!**

Your openness, generosity, bravery and creativity bring our shared vision of 'humanity reconciled, creation restored' to life throughout the Diocese of Bristol.

Through Parish Share, you are playing your part in providing ministry in every community in the diocese.

Thank you.



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