



PARISH SHARE: EXPLAINED

"We value GENEROSITY and give and receive sincerely"

Autumn 2022



Diocese of Bristol

LETTER FROM YOUR ARCHDEACONS

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion... this service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

2 Cor 9:11-12

To all God's people faithfully serving in the Diocese of Bristol.

It's wonderful to see and experience what God is doing through our people and our parishes in every part of the Diocese. Volunteers run youth groups, lonely people are visited, food banks are provided, God is worshipped, the faithful are taught, Eucharist is celebrated week by week...

This is what your faithful giving makes possible.

Local churches are supported almost entirely by the generous donations of parishioners, and we give thanks to God for this generosity. One of things that we celebrate as Anglicans is the way that through Parish Share, **we are all able to support each other.** Parishes that currently have more than they need give to support the parishes that need it, in order to provide vital ministry in every part of our diocese.

Generosity is one of our diocese's core values. We hope that the new Parish Share approach will affirm and celebrate this generosity – both cheerfully given and joyfully received!

Archdeacon Neil and Archdeacon Christopher



THE STORY SO FAR

For some time, you have been asking for a clearer more transparent methodology for Parish Share. Our last review was in 2016. The amount each parish was asked to give was based on a range of factors, including their income and attendance levels. These measures began to vary wildly due to the pandemic, with some churches weathering the storm better than others. So since 2020 we've been in a holding pattern with Parish Share requests staying broadly static. Therefore in consultation with you, we are introducing a new methodology for Parish Share.

How your views have made a difference

This new calculation is fair, transparent and simple. It considers the cost of local stipendiary ministry, as well as asking every parish to contribute a fixed percentage of their 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 grant" providing essential support.

Some parishes will be asked for significantly more as they move towards a fairer and proportionate contribution. Transitional arrangements to help them do this will be agreed with phased increases over a number of years. Some parishes will find their request less – so we are asking them to maintain their generosity which enables vital ministry.

Focus groups and a survey sent to every parish provided excellent feedback. In response to these suggestions:

- More information will be provided on how the costs are worked out, how they compare nationally, and the costs and benefits of shared support from Hillside House.
- Parish Share requests will now be made at a Benefice level, where appropriate, to enable parishes to work out allocations within the Benefice.
- Reserves are not part of the calculation, but attention will be drawn to them where appropriate.



HOW COSTS ARE WORKED OUT

$$\text{PARISH SHARE} = \text{INCOME ADJUSTED STIPENDIARY COSTS} + \text{INCOME ADJUSTED SHARED COSTS}$$

Stipendiary Costs

In Bristol Diocese stipends are set at £27,079, just over the national benchmark. Pension payments are around £10,000, and housing costs around £11,000. Adding National Insurance brings cost per full-time stipendiary post to £50,080.

Shared Costs

The diocese spends around £4.3m on shared costs:

- £1.85m a year on training future ordinands, and providing curates training and housing.
- £2.47m on the people and teams that help transformational ministry happen across the diocese - see pages 6 and 7.

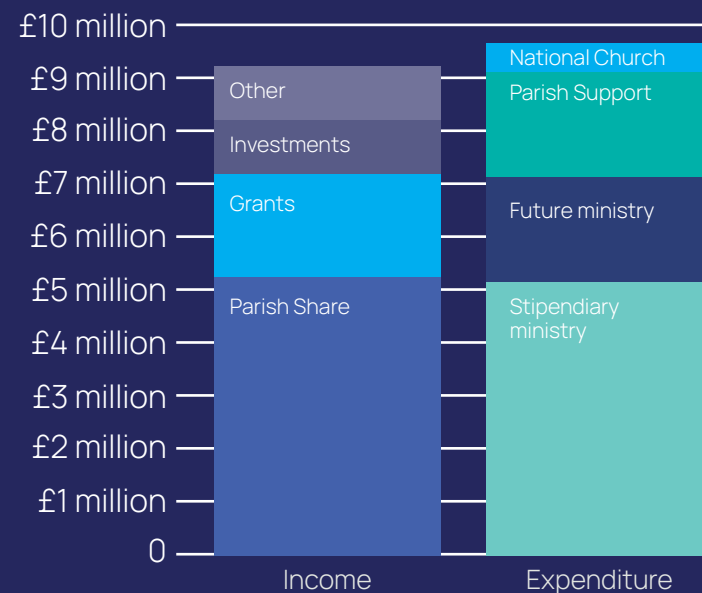
Where parishes are asked for considerably more than their previous pledge in order to reach a fair and proportionate contribution, a transitional arrangement will be made, giving agreed and staged increases over forthcoming years. Naturally, whilst parishes recover their own parish share it is diocesan funds and other parishes that cover the gap – that's why it's critical that over the next five years all parishes are able to meet the new calculations.

Comparing costs nationally

Costs are fairly typical nationally, but diocesan income varies greatly. Dioceses with historic assets can subsidise parishes significantly, so Parish Share varies across dioceses. Bristol Diocese is not historically wealthy, but has enough diocesan income and grants to cover most shared costs, so parishes are only asked to contribute a small proportion of these.

The diocese is currently operating with a significant annual cash deficit even though we run cost-effective small teams. Through the generosity of parishes and by exploring new funding sources, it's very much hoped that this deficit can be brought into balance by 2028.

DIOCESAN BUDGET 2022



WORKING FOR YOU

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



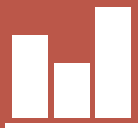
Ministerial Development

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



Property

Provide and maintain all the housing provided to clergy and curates. Also manage vacant properties, rentals, and a small amount of glebe land.



Governance, Finance, Administration

Governance (which includes the DAC) includes managing applications for faculty and providing advice as needed, and the legal process for reorganisations etc. The finance team manage payroll (for clergy as well as diocesan staff), invoices and accounts and provide treasurer support and training. Hillside House is used for diocesan training events - the admin team will probably welcome you on the door!



People & Safeguarding

We look after the wellbeing of paid employees, and offer training and support to parishes, including advice on matters of mental health*, disability* and racial justice*. The safeguarding team administer the checking procedures and are first point of contact for escalation.

*starred items are funded by external sources



Environment & Stewardship

Your Stewardship Advisers * provide advice on topics such as giving campaigns, grants, gift aid, Parish Giving Scheme etc, to enable parishes to resource their ministries. The Environmental Adviser helps parishes work towards net zero carbon.



Communications

Provide diocesan-wide communications, including e-news and strategy documents. Produce videos and run the social media accounts, liaise with the media and answer media enquiries.



Education

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



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.

The DAC secretary is ably supported by the volunteers on the DAC



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if we can't afford it?

The calculation is designed to be fair and affordable. The parish share amount is adjusted according to average local household income, any low income community funding, and - where appropriate - transitional funding (see pp.5-6 for more detail). If the Parish Share amount is unaffordable, even after the parish has done all it can to raise funds and sensibly use reserves, then planning is needed to find a way to sustain ministry. Where building costs are an issue, then the stewardship advisers can provide help on applying for grants. If the costs of maintaining a church building are unsustainable, then this is a matter for discussion with the archdeacons.

What about small churches?

Small churches are usually part of a multi-parish benefice, which will receive a whole benefice request. The parishes in the benefice are in the best position to work out what they can all contribute. One or two multi-parish benefices are currently in vacancy, and so will receive a whole benefice request once an incumbent is in post.

How will this affect large income churches?

The largest churches (with income at 1.5x average or above) are given information that enables them to see their calculated costs, plus an extra 10% suggested contribution, but many give far more than that. The new transparent calculation allows them to be much clearer with their congregation about the level of support that they are providing. In one or two cases, there are larger churches who are not giving at the same level. The new calculation gives them a figure that is commensurate with what other large churches are giving, so that the request is fair and transparent.

CELEBRATING GENEROSITY

Pattern Church hosted a weekly dinner for Ukrainian families, with English lessons and practical support. Curate Tom Morgan said "It often feels like the building is bursting at the seams, but it is a wonderful joy and privilege."



Average unrestricted church income is about £65,000. A few churches have an income larger than this but less than 1.5x the average. They get a tapered request for an extra suggested contribution, so that they don't suddenly receive a larger request when they hit 1.5 x average income.

Giving more is a natural expression of thankfulness for God's blessing. We follow Paul's instructions in 2 Cor 8:13,14: **"Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality."** We are thankful that our parishes who give out of their abundance do so joyfully, and we hope that making the calculations clearer will enable them to see clearly the difference they are making.

CELEBRATING GENEROSITY

Parish Share means that local lad Revd Sam Sheppard has been able to complete his training and curacy, and is now a minister to two parishes in South Bristol, with great potential to grow as they serve their local communities.



CELEBRATING GENEROSITY

St Mary's Marshfield were already doing what it could to support the local community, but they wanted to do more. When parishes were asked to consider an additional gift in the pandemic, they were one of the first to respond. They were so glad to be able to share in this way.



How is 'church income' calculated?

Church income is based on unrestricted income averaged over the previous four years, as reported in Parish Returns. It does NOT include grants or legacies, and also takes off the cost of trading. Therefore, it is important that the costs of running a pre-school, for example, are included in costs of trading when completing your Parish Returns. Where there is a very significant LEP cost, we also take this into account.

We do realise that all parishes are different, and that using church income as the basis for calculating shared costs isn't perfect. However, it is the fairest and simplest method. Most of a Parish Share request is a contribution to stipendiary ministry, so variations in income will make relatively little difference to most calculations anyway.

How are lower income communities helped?

Our lowest income communities are supported in three ways:

1. The stipendiary cost is adjusted according to local household income, so those in more affluent areas contribute more.
2. Low Income Community Funds are allocated according to need to the lowest income communities.
3. Many parishes are giving over and above their calculated amount, and this goes into ministry support for less affluent areas.

What about self-supporting ministers and licensed lay ministers?

To keep the calculation simple and transparent, we do not take SSMs and LLMs into account in the costs of stipendiary ministry but acknowledge that some parishes are very blessed by having an SSM or LLM. In some parishes this may mean that their costs for stipendiary ministry are lower than they might otherwise be. In this case, the parish may be able to contribute more than they are asked for – for which we are incredibly grateful.

Why are curates a shared cost when we don't benefit from one?

Curates are still in training and so are not expected to fulfil the whole role of a minister. Once they are trained, they are available to any parish in need of a vicar, and so the whole church does benefit. Saying that, several of our curates are in larger churches and make a significant contribution to ministry there, and so we encourage our larger churches to make an extra contribution where they are able.

Are reserves considered in the calculation?

There was broad support from parishes and clergy for taking reserves into account, but this is a complex area and so it does not currently affect the calculation. However, if a parish not meeting Parish Share (so is subsidised by others), also has large reserves, we will now draw attention to this.

What about diocesan reserves?

You can read the reserves policy in the Diocesan annual accounts. Some reserves are held in trust on behalf of others and cannot be spent. The main bulk of diocesan reserves are invested to produce income that significantly reduces the amount that parishes are required to give in Parish Share. So all parishes benefit directly from diocesan reserves.

Why does our Parish Share go towards parishes that seem small and can't pay share?

We are in this together, a church for all and in every community across our Diocese. This commitment means some parishes may struggle to pay their parish share, whilst others have surplus income. There is a common fund from parish share to support ministry, so that we can be present in all communities. The new approach helps all places know what a realistic and fair Parish Share should be for them. These figures help the parish, deaneries and the archdeacons manage and appraise the sustainability of parishes, and what adjustments may need to be made.

All parishes are expected to move towards their new amount with support and interventions to help them do so.

What about vacancies?

The calculation is based on the costs when a post is filled, so we don't reduce Parish Share during a vacancy. All parishes go through a vacancy at some point, so any savings will even out over time. If a parish has difficulty paying Parish Share during a vacancy, then please speak to the archdeacons, who are there to help and provide support.



CELEBRATING GENEROSITY

Parish Share makes ministry possible everywhere. In Lockleaze, lives are being changed. Youth clubs, kids work, sports events, mentoring programmes, breakfast church... all these show the church's vision of 'Loving Jesus, loving people and loving Lockleaze'.

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

Thank you.



Diocese of Bristol

Contact us: parishshare@bristoldiocese.org

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