THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BIRMINGHAM

Common Fund Guide 2027

Growing churches at the heart of each community

A prayer for open hearts

Generous God,

We thank you for all the good things that you lovingly pour out on the churches and communities across Church of England Birmingham.

Remind us of all that you have given to us and give us the help of your Holy Spirit to generously share your gifts.

With open hearts and hands, we offer to you ourselves, our time, our talents and our treasures.

As we follow your Son, Jesus,
we pray that you would use all we have and all we are to grow your church and build your kingdom in our lives, our parishes, our region and your world.

Through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Revd Richard Westwood, St Michael's Church, Boldmere



Why the Common Fund?

The Church of England Birmingham is one body, made up of churches and communities with different gifts, needs and resources.

We cannot fulfil God's mission alone. The Common Fund is one of the ways we live out our shared life in Christ, pooling our resources to provide and sustain the clergy, housing, training and support services needed for ministry across the Diocese.

Every gift enables clergy to lead worship, proclaim the gospel, provide pastoral care, nurture children and young people in faith, and equip churches to serve their local communities. It also enables the training of future ministers, strengthens safeguarding, cares for clergy housing and church buildings, and provides the advice, resources and practical services that help parishes thrive.

The Common Fund is how we share responsibility for the ministry and mission we undertake together. Every church is invited to contribute according to its circumstances, and every church receives support.

Together, we make it possible for ministry to flourish across every neighbourhood, ensuring that the Church's presence is not determined by local wealth but by our shared commitment to one another.

Every gift enables clergy to...

- Lead worship
- Proclaim the gospel
- Provide pastoral care
- Nurture faith in children and young people
- Equip churches to serve their local communities

It also enables us to...

- Train future ministers
- Strengthen safeguarding
- Care for clergy housing and church buildings
- Provide advice, resources and practical services

... helping parishes thrive.

Every gift makes ministry possible.

For 2027, the Birmingham Diocesan Board of Finance is anticipating to spend £97,362 on the average parish with one stipendiary priest and one house. This includes...

£65,805 on a minister's stipend and housing

This covers a full-time minister's stipend, National Insurance and pension (£47,218), the cost of providing and maintaining a vicarage including repairs, maintenance and council tax (£17,563), and grants to support clergy moving to a new parish (£1,024). Together, these costs enable a minister to be present in their parish, leading worship, proclaiming the gospel, offering pastoral care and serving their local community.



£22,338 on equipping current and future ministers for ministry & mission

Training curates and ordinands, developing clergy and readers for ministry, and providing support from archdeacons, area deans and chaplains.



£9,219 on supporting the parish

Diocesan support with safeguarding, church buildings, finance, HR, governance, communications and the practical services that help churches flourish.



The Common Fund and stipend make me proud to be Anglican.

The stipend does not only make priests feel equal as colleagues, though I treasure that. It is more importantly a clear demonstration of our belief that God is equally loving, equally attentive and equally present to every kind of neighbourhood.

Through the Common Fund – into which we put gifts of grace in proportion to our congregation's means – we all express that commitment and desire to make tangible God's constant, loving attention in our communities.

Our diverse churches put into the Common Fund without requiring that everyone agree with us. There is much grace in that.

Revd Canon David Warbrick, All Saints Kings Heath



The Common Fund in action

Every day, Common Fund is making a difference in churches and communities.

These stories offer a glimpse of how Common Fund helps sustain ministry, grow disciples and serve communities across Birmingham and the wider region.



Outreach among refugees and asylum seekers in the Jewellery Quarter

"I was a stranger and you invited me in." Matthew 25:35 (NIV)

If you come to St Paul's Church in the Jewellery Quarter on a Sunday morning, you will hear the Bible reading, sermon and intercessions twice: in Farsi as well as English.

Our dual-language services reflect the integration of Iranians into our life together. Their presence has led to a fundamental shift in what we do and who we are. From this ministry of hospitality and welcome, we have been enriched. The faith of many asylum seekers and refugees has flourished, leading to baptism and confirmation.

Common Fund helps make this ministry possible by sustaining parish ministry, enabling people to be welcomed, discipled and supported as they grow in faith.

Alongside this, St Paul's continues to care for its historic church building so that it can remain a place of worship, welcome and community for generations to come. Specialist advice and support from the diocesan Property Team has been invaluable in helping us plan for the future. That support, made possible through Common Fund, helps ensure that we can focus on our mission while caring for the place from which it happens.

Revd David Tomlinson, Vicar, St Paul's in the Jewellery Quarter

Breakfast church at St Paul's, Bordesley Green



"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied." Luke 6:20 (NIV)

At St Paul's Bordesley Green the Common Fund contributes to a committed and vibrant church community serving a group of believers in the parish, including some who have recently come to faith in Christ.

Although the church is currently in vacancy, I serve as curate supporting a faithful congregation that gathers each Sunday around hospitality, prayer and friendship.

We begin by sharing breakfast before moving into a time of worship. Around the table, we share Bible discussion, sung worship, personal stories and prayer, with Communion celebrated once a month.

Some of those who come are vulnerable adults, including people living in care homes and supported accommodation. Though not financially wealthy they give what they have: their time, their ideas, their prayers. We are all richer in our faith as we encourage and learn from each other.

Alongside the income we derive from creative use of the church building, this ministry is also supported by the Common Fund, enabling St Paul's to continue being a place of dignity, welcome and spiritual care for people who are often overlooked elsewhere.

Revd Alison Hill, Curate, St Paul's Bordesley Green

Enabled by Common Fund in 2025

Serving the diocese

1.6m	17,000	146
population	worshippers	parishes

Enabling clergy ministry

126	including 23 curates	234
stipendiary clergy		volunteer ministers

Celebrating and supporting

1,047	214	243	1,835
baptisms	confirmations	marriages	funerals

Showing the love of Jesus Christ

102 parishes involved in lunch clubs	88 parishes involved in children's clubs	66 parishes involved in play groups
58 parishes involved in warm spaces	47 parishes involved in community cafés	37 parishes involved in youth groups
26 parishes involved in food banks	17 parishes involved in money advice services	8 parishes involved in homelessness provision

Source: *Statistics for Mission 2025*

Meeting today's challenges together

Like businesses, charities, churches and households across the country, the Diocese faces rising costs.

The Birmingham Diocesan Board of Finance budgeted to spend £10.5 million in 2026 on the core costs of supporting ministry in parishes – those shown in the graphic below. Against this, the Diocese expects around £9.7 million of income from Common Fund, stipend trusts, and Lowest Income Communities Funding, which supports ministry in parishes with high levels of deprivation, meaning a funding gap of around £800,000. The budget for 2027 is expected to be similar.

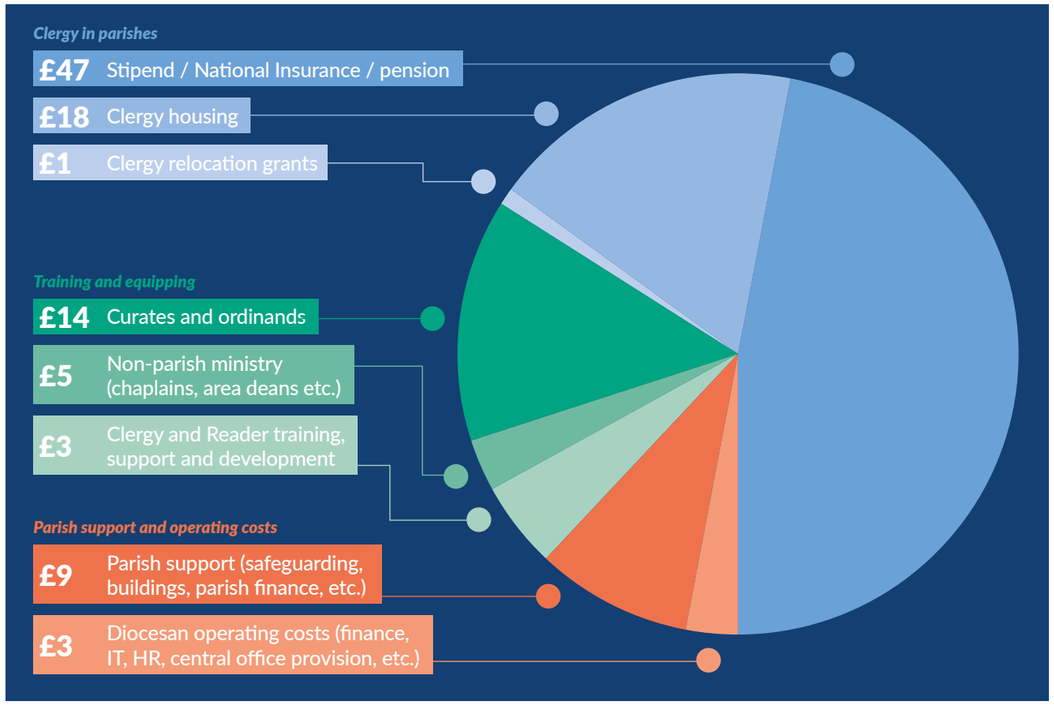
Alongside this core income and expenditure, the National Church has granted the Diocese £19.8 million over five years for projects and programmes designed to support parish growth, sustainability, leadership, church planting and revitalisation. This is restricted funding for specific initiatives rather than a source of ongoing income for the core costs of ministry. We anticipate that the investment will help to strengthen the long-term sustainability and growth of our churches. The grant also includes some limited deficit support.

This support is time-limited and cannot provide a permanent solution. In the longer term, we need to build a sustainable financial model in which the ministry and mission of the Diocese can be supported by sustainable income.

More information about income and expenditure across the Diocese is available in our latest **Annual Report and Financial Statements**.

How each £100 is spent

(of income from Common Fund, LInC, Stipend Trusts and National Church support)



What are we doing to address the deficit?

Together, we are working hard to address the deficit. This includes:

Common Fund process
Encouraging generosity by working more closely together

Strategic investment
Supporting churches to become more financially sustainable

Managing costs
To continue growing more cost-effective as a Diocese

National Church funding
Making best use of National Church strategic funding while it is available

Walking together

Our hope is that Common Fund is understood as a shared expression of generosity, partnership, and our commitment to God's mission across Birmingham and the region.

Over the next two years, our new **Generosity Team** – funded by a grant from the National Church – will be working alongside every parish to understand its context and discern together the next steps towards sustainable ministry and generous giving.

In these meetings, the Generosity Team will:

Listen to...	Support parishes to plan for...	Advise on...
• Parish context • Challenges • Opportunities	• Growing generosity • Growing financial sustainability • A five-year Common Fund Pledge that is proportional, informed and aspirational	• Generosity programmes • Legacy giving • Fundraising appeals • Card readers • Digital giving • Grant applications • Budgets

Many parishes have not yet begun this process or are not yet in a position to consider a longer-term pledge. For those parishes, the invitation is simply to make a pledge for 2027, providing a short-term commitment while allowing more time to explore a longer-term approach with support from the Generosity Team at a later date.

What happens next?

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We hope it has helped to explain how the Common Fund expresses our shared generosity, partnership and mission across the Church of England Birmingham.

Your next step is to read and discuss your *Information for Your Parish* document as a PCC. It provides information about the Birmingham Diocesan Board of Finance's planned investment in your parish, how this is funded, and suggestions to shape your discussion and discernment of your Common Fund pledge for 2027.

Further support available

Find more resources, a video message from Bishop Michael, and answers to Frequently Asked Questions on our website.

www.cofebirmingham.com/info-for-parishes/finance-governance/parish-finance/common-fund

If you have any questions or would like to talk through your parish's circumstances before or after making your pledge, the Generosity Team would be delighted to hear from you.

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND BIRMINGHAM

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