

PARISH SHARE

Commonly Asked Questions

1. In a nutshell

A. *What is Parish Share?*

- Parish Share is the primary way that parishes fund ministry, training and support for parishes and schools across the Diocese. It enables ministry to be provided to each community regardless of wealth and gives each parish the opportunity to model the generous discipleship that we commend to each Christian.
- Every year parishes are asked to prayerfully consider what they will commit to give in Parish Share that year, informed by their situation and the principles of taking responsibility, being generous and having faith.

B. *What is the challenge we face?*

- The cost of clergy and their training alone exceeds what is given in Parish Share. Compared nationally, parishes in the Diocese of Bristol give one of the lowest proportions of their unrestricted income in Parish Share. We have the potential to give more and invest in the growth of the Church now and for the future.
- In the last three years, clergy costs have increased and diocesan support costs have reduced. To meet future needs, the number of new clergy we train each year will need to increase by 50%.
- If parishes reduce the amount they give, it puts an additional burden on other parishes to cover the shortfall and/or reduces the Diocese's ability to support ministry. If Parish Share overall does not rise, the number of current and future clergy we can support will need to be reviewed, and essential parish and schools support reduced.

2. Our approach to Parish Share

A. *Why do we give in this way?*

The principles of Parish Share are based on St Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. St Paul teaches how resources should be shared between churches. He urges the Corinthian church to follow the example of the poorer Macedonian churches who gave beyond their ability to support other churches. The goal is both to "excel in the grace of giving" and to achieve equality in resources across the Church so that the Gospel message can be spread across the world.

There are a number of calls on each parish's income: outreach, administration, youth work, mission giving and, of course, buildings. But the largest cost in the Church of England relates to ordained ministry and this is met by dioceses.

As a Church we are committed to mutual support. This means:

- supporting parishes in our diocese that are less well off,
- enabling the provision of ministry on the basis of need and opportunity, not wealth, and
- recognising that we are connected to each other and not simply focusing on our own needs.

The Parish Share system invites each of us to take responsibility for meeting the cost of ministry in parishes, to be generous in supporting those we are connected with across the Diocese, and to have faith that God will provide all we need for His mission.

B. How do parishes decide how much to give in Parish Share?

In 2016 a new approach was developed to bring together the principles of Parish Share to meet the ministry and support needs we have.

In June, each parish is given a range of indicators about their parish's size, context, income and share of ministry and support costs to help them make a Parish Share commitment. These indicators help to put the parish's current Parish Share giving into context – both in relation to other parishes in the Diocese and the principles of responsibility, generosity and faith. The request letter suggests a minimum amount that a parish might choose to commit, based on clear and consistent measures and principles.

3. What Parish Share covers

A. What does Parish Share pay for?

Parish Share pays for parish ministry and its support. Clergy costs – their training, support, stipends, pensions and housing – are met by the Diocese rather than by each parish individually, in order that appropriate ministry is provided for every community. The highest costs are for stipendiary ministers, but there are support costs for self-supporting ordained and lay ministers as well.

This is not restricted to current ministers but those who will lead the Church of the future. It pays for those who will be the future ministers of our parishes – through their selection, training and curacy.

Finally, it contributes towards essential services that support parish ministry – for example, supporting safeguarding, mission, parish management and volunteers – and church schools, as well as providing professional staff to wisely manage the finances and governance of the Diocese.

B. What is the actual cost of ministry to the Diocese per parish or grouping?

When the total diocesan budget is apportioned to each parish or grouping of parishes with a share of a full-time clergy post, the total cost is £89,600 per year. This breaks down as follows:

Clergy costs

Stipend and National Insurance: £28,000; Pension: £9,500; Housing: £10,500
£48,000

Training and support for ministers; chaplaincies
£7,000

Ordinand and curate training

Training future clergy to minister in our parishes.
£15,000

Training and advice for parishes and schools, and professional management of the Diocese
in the areas of: Safeguarding, Youth and Children's Ministry, Church Buildings, Mission, HR, Governance, Finance, Property. This includes contributions to National Church.
£19,600

Total costs: share of ministry and support costs per benefice or grouping
£89,600

C. Training new ministers seems to cost a lot. Can we afford to sustain this level of investment?

The real question is, "Can we afford not to?". The Church faces a real shortage of available ministers and has set a goal of a 50% increase in the number of new ministers being trained and ordained. Even achieving this goal will not maintain current levels.

In order to select the right kind of people, there is an intensive selection process at diocesan and national level which takes effort and resource.

Pre-ordination training costs (on courses and in colleges) then range from £9,000 to £24,000 each year per person over two to three years. Our 18 stipendiary curates have broadly the same costs as other stipendiary ministers.

We need to increase in each of these areas, which means that the current share per benefice of £15,000 *per annum* is likely to increase to £20,000 *per annum* by 2020. This is perhaps the most important investment we can be making.

Our Self-Supporting Ministers and Licenced Lay Ministers give their most valuable resource: their time. Without them we would struggle to maintain ministry in some of our churches. Although they generously give their time voluntarily, there are still costs attached to training, equipping and supporting them in their roles. Initial training for an SSM costs £8,000 *per annum*, and there is an ongoing cost to the support they are provided with by the Ministry Development team, the Archdeacon and others.

D. What about central costs?

Diocesan Support Services exist to support and serve the ministry of our parishes and schools. These services are centralised because it is the most appropriate and cost effective level at which to deliver them and, if they were not provided centrally, parishes would be required to procure them individually at a higher cost.

Staffing in Diocesan Support Services has significantly reduced in recent years and the number of volunteers has increased. Since 2013, the staffing levels and net costs of the Diocesan Support Services have reduced by 10%. At the same time, more training, consultancy and tailored support is being offered to parishes and schools.

E. Do we give more or get more from the national Church?

In total, we give £450,000 to the national Church as part of our Diocese's share – this is predominantly for ordination training costs and to help fund the National Church Institutions. There is a clear rationale. We should share the costs of ministry and the Diocese receives very good service from our colleagues in Westminster for responsibilities they need to hold.

The costs of ordination training alone for Diocese of Bristol candidates is currently £300,000. In 2017 the Diocese of Bristol receives £350,000 to subsidise lower income parishes. We have also successfully made our first strategic development funding for nearly £1m in support of robust diocesan strategic plans with further applications in the pipeline; this funding will be peer reviewed.

In addition, the national Church funds our Bishops' ministries and their offices, and clergy at Bristol Cathedral. They also meet the historic costs of clergy pensions up to 1997. Along with most dioceses, we are therefore net receivers as a diocese from the national Church.

4. How is the Diocese funded?

A. What proportion of diocesan expenditure is funded by Parish Share?

It is anticipated that Parish Share will account for £5.4m of a budget of £8.5m in 2017 – just under two thirds. Other diocesan income comes from grants, rents, investment income and fees. This income significantly subsidises the ministry of our parishes and diocese.

Whilst almost two thirds of diocesan income comes from Parish Share, the cost of clergy and training clergy makes up three quarters of Diocesan expenditure. Therefore, even if you do not take account of essential support and parish services, there is a significant gap between Parish Share income and ministry costs.

B. What other kinds of income does the Diocese get?

The Diocese is able to generate significant grant income that parishes do not have direct access to. These include the ongoing and strategic grants from the national Church but also grants from other charities committed to funding the Diocese of Bristol. In total, these amount to £1.4m in 2017.

The nature of the organisation means that the Diocese is an “asset rich” organisation. However, these assets either have a clear function or generate income to subsidise ministry. The vast majority of these assets are made up of houses that our clergy live in. Houses are sold when there is an operational justification and it makes financial sense. The proceeds are then invested to generate income. That income is normally restricted to fund parochial ministry. As a result, the investment assets of the Diocese will produce an income of £1m in 2017 to subsidise parish ministry, reducing the call on Parish Share.

The Diocese does have unrestricted investments that also generate income to subsidise the operating deficit and have been drawn upon in recent years. It is likely they will, however, be needed in the next few years to buy more housing for the increased number of new curates.

C. Can we be confident that the diocesan budget is properly managed and scrutinised?

As one would expect from a charitable organisation with a significant budget and a large number of stakeholders, finances are monitored frequently and closely.

Each year the budget is drawn up and scrutinised by the Diocese’s Finance Committee and then recommended by the Bishop’s Council to the Diocesan Synod for approval at the end of the year. Through the year, management accounts are closely monitored and reviewed by the Finance Committee. The annual report and accounts are also scrutinised by the Audit Committee and external auditors, must be approved by the Diocesan Synod and are published into the public domain.

5. Do parishes have to give?

A. What happens if parishes do not give at, or beyond, the level that is requested, or reduce their Parish Share giving?

Put simply, either (a) someone else has to pay or (b) ministry and support will need to be reduced.

If parishes do not give at the level that is requested, they are asking other parishes to contribute more. There needs to be a confidence that one parish’s need is greater than another’s need when it comes to deciding whether to give at a lower level. While there is gratitude to those parishes which give to support ministry in other parishes, this high level of subsidy is not a sustainable way of funding ministry across the Diocese.

If other parishes are unable to bridge the gap, in the short term, parishes giving below the level that is requested are asking that the funds of the Diocese are used to meet that reduction. That has happened: diocesan funds have met a cumulative deficit in excess of £1m over the last five years. This reduces the amount of investment income available to sponsor parish ministry and the Diocesan Synod does not consider that to be a sustainable position.

Ultimately, however, if total income reduces, so must expenditure. This means:

- further reducing the number of paid ministers across parishes.
- investing in fewer ministers in training thus reducing the number of ministers available in future.
- cutting diocesan support costs further and asking parishes to meet specific functions themselves, most of which are costly or require specific skills.

These are not steps we want to take as a diocese.

Parish Share works as an approach when we all give, in St Paul’s words, “as much as we are able and even beyond our ability” (2 Corinthians 8:3).

B. We are planning a large project in our parish. Can we reduce our parish share for a few years in order to meet this additional local need?

In this situation someone else will have to pay to fill the gap (see above). However, experience suggests that, with careful planning, it is possible for a parish’s income to increase during the life of a project as the amount of giving from congregation goes up to meet the additional costs, meaning

no burden is being placed on other parishes. Please seek advice from the Diocese's Giving and Resources Adviser (see below).

6. Encouraging generosity within parishes

A. What support is available to help us to encourage generous giving within our parish?

It is right for us to encourage generous giving as an expression of gratitude to God's generosity to us. Generous giving is an integral part of the discipleship of Christian believers. Giving within the Church and beyond it not only resources God's mission in the world but also has an impact on our lifestyle. All parishes are encouraged to speak and teach regularly about our responsibility towards generous giving and how we can all play our part in financially resourcing mission and ministry in the parish, Diocese and wider Church.

Firstly, if you would like support to discuss your parish's stewardship practices, please contact **Clare Fussell**, Giving and Resources Adviser, who would be very happy to meet with you.

Email: clare.fussell@bristoldiocese.org Tel: 0117 906 0100

Clare can talk through your situation, and introduce a range of materials and tools to support you in encouraging a culture of generosity. Some of these are listed on the Diocesan website – see www.bristol.anglican.org/stewardship

Secondly, attend one of the seminars designed to support parishes to understand more about Parish Share and encourage generosity. Register online at www.bristol.anglican.org/giving-events

Parish Share and Encouraging Generosity Seminars		
An introduction to our approach to Parish Share, plus support and advice to help your church to encourage generosity and resource its mission and ministry.		
Wednesday 7 th June	Toothill Church, Swindon, SN5 8SX	7pm-9pm
Thursday 8 th June	St Paul's Chippenham, SN15 1PS	7pm-9pm
Wednesday 14 th June	The Tithe Barn, Shirehampton, Bristol BS11 0DE	7pm-9pm
<i>For those unable to attend in June:</i>		
Thursday 7 th Sept	St Augustine's, Whitchurch, Bristol, BS14 0JL	7pm-9pm
Tuesday 12 th Sept	St John's Haydon Wick, Swindon, SN25 1QP	7pm-9pm

Parish Giving Scheme launch event		
Bristol Diocese is joining this nationwide scheme to support church giving from September. Come along and learn about how your church can access the scheme's benefits, overcome the problem of static giving and reduce your administrative burden		
Saturday 16th Sept	St. Paul's Church, Swindon, SN3 5BY	9.30pm–12am
Tuesday 19th Sept	St Edyths, Sea Mills, Bristol, BS9 2HU	2pm-4.30pm
Tuesday 19th Sept	St. Peter's, Chippenham, SN14 0LL	6.30pm-9pm

Connect Session: sharing our common experience of stewardship campaigns		
Learn from churches who are growing a spirit of generosity in their churches, and discuss ways to encourage generous giving in your context.		
Wednesday 4 th October	St. Paul's Church, Swindon, SN3 5BY	7pm-9pm