

The Open Synod Forum was asked to identify key issues for discussion about the budget. These were the comments captured. People were asked to think about what had brought them to the meeting, what are the questions they would like answered and what had struck them as most significant.

1. 'We are steadily growing, fragile, but most new people don't give...'
2. Remain ambitions but be realistic!!
3. To hear the drift of the conversation at Diocesan Synod.
4. 'We are up & down very fragile'.
5. New to diocese – want to get a snapshot of what's going on re-money!
6. I am a treasurer and I feel that I need to know what is new in the report, so that this can be discussed in our parish (Heddon). To let people know what is being discussed.
7. It's not 'attractive' to ask for money – 'perception of being generous'.
8. More attention to generosity as a theological principle. If not generous with £££ how likely to be generous in other areas such as new forms of ministry etc.
9. Importance of Parish Giving Scheme – understanding the overall Diocesan perspective – rather than just an individual parish.
10. 'They are there & we have to reach out to them'.
11. How can we cope with less income (from less people)
12. 'Times are tough' (a DFO) most parishes in deficit.
13. How quickly can we change? How might SGP Free help?
14. This cannot continue! We do pay but...
15. Reserves going down! What help is available to parishes?
16. Here to learn more about how we can make work when there is always a short fall. Why does it appear that the richer parishes are the ones who fail to pay their share in full?
17. Can we overlap options?
18. Can we merge options in order to agree a final option?
19. Clarification – ideal & realistic.
20. Time & effort spent raising money!
21. Is 3 years the right timescale?
22. BMO good means of support. (MINE context).
23. What is the wider business plan this budget supports?
24. Education, social justice & other 'outward looking' needs only make up 2%!
25. Duty – Bringing Hope 2%!! Education: Social Responsibility: Interfaith: Ecumenism.
26. What's the balance between realism & aspiration?
27. Share life – churches – clergy.
28. Note massive differences represented on our table
 - a. Geography
 - b. Age
 - c. Site
 - d. Style
 - e. Population etc
29. Starter for 10 – important to have a representative from our church in addition to Robin Brims. Take information back to others at church.
30. If you are on committee, you should turn up!
31. I have finance! But I need to be involved.
32. Reflect the issues facing a less deprived parish.

33. New church warden & my wife!
34. How successful was last year?
35. New to role.
36. Help to communicate the message.
37. In order to be sufficiently briefed for a deanery treasurer's meeting tomorrow!
38. To have a say!
39. To be able to report back to my parish so that they can understand more about how the share is allocated.
40. Review Diocesan paid posts. Could some be taken by lay volunteers? e.g. PICA
41. Enabling ways to listen to each other.
42. How can we be more inventive & creative (to support each other)?
43. Is the 20% less clergy likely to happen through natural wastage (retirees).
44. Balance between resources/people/income/ 'delivering', the good news & vision for God & Kingdom' now & into the future.
45. Sensible discussions about best options. Best value rather than cheapest.
46. Lots of printer ink needed to print out paper.
47. Diocese vs deanery vs parish – which hat to wear? Different perspectives – what's good for the parish? What's good for the diocese?
48. Concern for a loss of direction – are we trying to do too much?
49. Is the diocesan plan the same as the 'word on the street'?
50. People don't want the Church to be like BIG BUSINESS! (although understand things need to be 'viable')
51. Role of Deanery Finance Officer/Treasurer for a parish.
52. How good is Church House at controlling costs?
53. Clarification.
54. To get to know the diocese better and be part of conversations.
55. Forward planning & hope.
56. What questions raised?
57. We should be responding to God's generosity.
58. Is our vision long or short-term?
59. If every parish felt their obligation to pay their share, we could raise the extra needed!
60. Keep the figures simple.
61. Communication as to rationale behind any increase.
62. Lead option is 1 → how do we achieve?
63. How will we manage multi parish benefices over large distances?
64. What is Strategic Capacity Funding?
65. What has happened with the Parish Share Review Group?
66. Concern for money
67. The most realistic option no 3.
68. How do we get this important issue to the parishes?
69. Why do we put money first when we should put people first? More people = more money!
70. Have the Church Commissioners got the right strategy for distributing funds? Can it still be challenged?
71. How many vacancies have we got at present?
72. Needing a broader understanding.
73. P8 - What is transfer in (green) £122k?
74. P8 - What is our income from Diocese of Durham £24k for?
75. Do we have a deanery plan on how to reduce stipends? (for all deaneries).

76. What base do we apply increased % to (full payment or actual payment)?
77. What will we do in 2020? (no restructure funding). How can we fill the gap?
78. How do we combat the perception that the church is wealthy?
79. What is the strategy process for reduction of clergy?
80. This is not a budget proposal, it is an income proposal. What are the real implications on different spending?
81. LICF really helpful.
82. Voice for deprived parish.
83. Uncertainty over CofE Central Funding.
84. Navigating the complexity e.g. understanding LICF.
85. I can see why people are anxious but whether we like it or not this is where we are. So let's look at what we can do, what we have got & perhaps not realised & be brave enough to do something different.
86. Share first projects next or last.
87. Is time scale realistic?
88. Any evidence of relation between appointments & parish share collection.
89. What will the 3 options look like in 3 years time? Taking into account the further reductions from central Church.
90. 'We feel well supported by the Diocese'.
91. How do we help one another understand Parish Share as a duty, a bill, like a mortgage on the house?
92. What about parishes that default on parish share regularly – what to do?
93. Lead option is 1 → how do we achieve?
94. Do we understand what the reality of the request for parish share means at the 'coal face'?
95. Here to represent 3 parishes who expend an enormous amount of time, effort and energy in paying parish share. I'm proud to say all 3 parishes paid last year – but it's like trying to win a gold medal every year!
96. Clarity about the message of parish share allocation.
97. I am committed to paying our share and paying our way. But concerned that I am going to manage decline because not able to disciple.
98. As older members of the churches (who are used to generous giving) de – it becomes more and more difficult to raise enough money for the parish share.
99. P6 - parishes have told us that they cannot afford more to parish share.....How do we know? Evidence? For the 'truth of this...'. Stewardship as a focus, generosity as a theological principle.