

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Manchester

CHURCH
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WORLD

Parish Share

**A guide to the diocesan scheme
2024**

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1 Introduction

Diocesan Synod approved an updated system for collecting Parish Share in October 2022. This followed extensive research by the Parish Share Review Group and also included an online survey and consultation exercise with parishes.

A key objective of the current system is to foster a sense of common ownership for Parish Share as well as how it contributes towards resourcing ministry and mission in our diocese.

The updated system will continue to provide flexibility and responsiveness to individual parish circumstances and lead to greater understanding of diocesan finances between our parishes and the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF).

Feedback has indicated that a parish's giving potential is still the fairest way to apportion Parish Share¹ so the current system continues to be fit for purpose. However, the updated system builds in certain safeguards to ensure fairness at the extremes of the Parish Share calculation. It continues to provide the opportunity for parishes to have a discussion with representatives of the Diocesan Board of Finance about their Share, but at Mission Community level (see Section 6). It also gives parishes an assessment for a three-year period to help them with long-term financial planning.

¹ Parish Share survey September 2021 – 63.1% of respondents agreed that using giving potential to apportion Parish Share was fair.

A summary of how the scheme works can be found in Section 3.4.

What is Parish Share used for?

Parish Share is used mainly to meet the costs of stipendiary clergy. Over 75% of the diocesan budget goes on 'people costs' to support ministry and mission across the Diocese. However, the total amount of Parish Share requested is less than the costs of having our full allocation of stipendiary clergy. The 2022 cost of a parish priest is about £48,260 per year (stipend, national insurance, pension contribution and housing).

Parish Share helps fund a variety of ministry across the whole Diocese.

Principles of the Parish Share scheme

The Parish Share Scheme is based on two main principles:

Who pays?

The people who attend church regularly and form the heart of the church are responsible for resourcing the ministry and local mission of the church. This is an expression of care between individuals and between congregations.

How much do they pay?

Those who are wealthier should pay more towards these costs than those who are poorer, in accordance with the Biblical principal of proportional giving.

Inevitably, as with any Parish Share scheme which is recalculated on an annual basis, some parishes are likely to be asked to pay less each year – and some parishes more.

The Parish Share Review Group and Diocesan Synod trust that the scheme embodies sound theological principles that will encourage clergy and lay people to play their part in responding joyfully to all God's gifts and resourcing the Church's mission across the diocese.

2 Theological background

Theology – ‘each according to their means’

The theological underpinnings of our approach to Parish Share are based on teaching from both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament the Law enshrines giving as part of our religious duty and it is proportional, or akin to tithing. “Give to God as he has given to you.” The main use of tithes was to resource the ministry of the priests and Levites. Within the understanding of the tithe, a real generosity towards God, neighbour, stranger and the poor is encouraged, and celebrated.

In the New Testament we hear of God’s wonderful gift to us in Jesus who gives all he has for us and our redemption. Jesus teaches us the generosity of God, who knows our needs and provides for us. In Acts we hear of the practical sharing of resources between individuals and congregations to support those in need and the Church leaders in their mission.

We are called to give in proportion to what has been given to us, and to do that on a weekly basis. We are encouraged to recognise that “God loves a cheerful giver”. Paul’s teaching about the body of Christ tells us of the need to share resources between people and congregations so that all God’s gifts can be used in worship, teaching and mission. As a diocese, we are called to work together as “One Body” in sharing ministry, and local mission, with all our resources.

3 A summary of the rules of the scheme

There are three factors that are used to calculate the Parish Share:

- A count of the members of each congregation that attend church at least 12 times per year, averaged over three years;
- The number of Parish Income Points which is related to the annual incomes of regular members of each congregation; and
- The total amount of money to be raised by the Diocese via Parish Share.

Also the number of children and young people that attend church on a Sunday at least 12 times per year is used in the calculation – see section 3.4.

3.1 Attendance census

The census is carried out over the first four Sundays in October and the weekdays following them and includes all services and acts of worship (including weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.) in a church or parish centre of worship.

Individual attendees should only be counted once each week.

Those to be included in the census are all people aged 16 and over who have attended a church or centre of worship as their primary place of worship 12 times or more in the preceding year.

Each church or centre of worship is counted separately.

The Average Weekly Attendance is the total count for the four-week census period divided by four.

3.2 Three year rolling average

A rolling average of three attendance censuses and three income surveys are used.²

3.3 Income Survey

Income data is collected using an anonymous survey of individual income which is defined as “an individual’s salary or wages, interest from bank, building society or National Savings accounts, dividends from shares and investments, pension benefits and personal allowances or pocket-money, but not student loans.”

Those to be included in the survey are the same as those who are counted within the attendance census.

Personal income only is to be taken into account, i.e. not income of other household members.

The income survey is carried out in October on an annual basis. The median average income resulting from the survey is converted to Parish Share Points for the purposes of the Share calculation.

² Due to poor data quality as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2024 Parish Share calculation is based on data from 2019, 2021 and 2022 for attendance and 2018,2019 and 2022 for income.

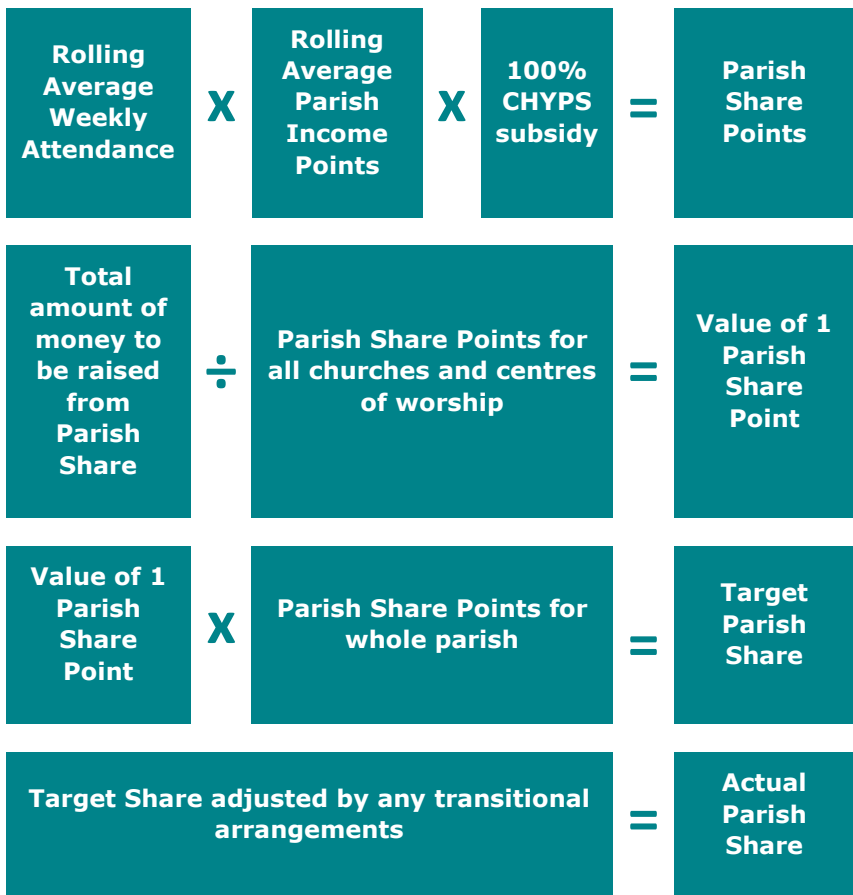
For each church or centre of worship, a response rate equivalent to 70% or more of the last available year's Average Weekly Attendance is viewed as representative. The results from the income survey forms are collected and scaled up or down to match 100% of the current year's Average Weekly Attendance.

For any church or centre of worship where a response of less than 70% of the last available year's Average Weekly Attendance is recorded, the Deanery Standing Committee should consult with the PCC and Archdeacon and set the Income Points for that congregation.

3.4 Calculating the Parish Share

The four elements of the Parish Share calculation are, for each church or centre of worship:

- Average Weekly Attendance (averaged over three years)
- Children and Young People Average Sunday Attendance
- Parish Income Points (averaged over three years)
- The total amount of money to be raised by the Diocese from Parish Share



3.5 Additional elements of the calculation

Three additional elements are included in the scheme as follows:

Parish Share Stabiliser:

Annual movement in the Parish Share request for individual parishes is limited to no more than +/- 10% plus the movement in the overall Parish Share request

from the diocese. For example, if the overall request increased by 2.5%, annual movement in the request for any one parish shall be limited to between – 7.5% and + 12.5%. Any share allocation outside of these limits shall be reallocated across all parishes in the diocese using the standard Parish Share calculation.

The Parish Share Stabiliser can be overridden if a greater percentage change has been agreed through the Discussion and Agreement process.

Children and Young People Subsidy (CHYPS):

Parishes receive a reduction in their total Parish Share Points dependent on the Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) of children and young people (measured during the attendance census). The level of subsidy is as determined by Bishop’s Council, but for 2024 is:

| Children ASA | Subsidy |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 0-9 | 0% |
| 10-19 | 1.5% |
| 20-39 | 3% |
| 40-59 | 6% |
| 60-79 | 9% |
| 80-99 | 12% |
| 100+ | 15% |

The CHYPS subsidy is determined on the Sunday attendance of children and young people attending 12 or more times in the last 12 months.

Minimum and maximum assessments:

The current system can result in very low assessments that bear no relation to diocesan costs.

A minimum Parish Share assessment of **£9,000** has therefore been introduced in the updated scheme which relates to non-stipendiary diocesan support services that are provided to all parishes, whatever the level of stipendiary costs.

This sets the expectation that all our parishes should be able to provide a basic level of financial support to the diocese, in line with the principle of mutual support.

Where parishes are not able to afford the minimum, this highlights the need for pastoral and missional support to help them achieve financial sustainability.

Similarly, a maximum Parish Share assessment of **£170,000** (approximate cost of 3 stipendiary clergy plus non-stipendiary diocesan support costs) recognises that our diocese relies heavily on the financial contributions of a few parishes with significantly larger congregations than most other parishes in the diocese.

Our larger parishes' commitment to the principle of mutuality could be undermined where their contributions are disproportionate.

3.6 Collecting Data

Attendance census

The DBF Finance and Corporate Services Department will collate the returns for each parish.

Income Survey

The Deanery Standing Committee or its nominated persons will collect and collate the income surveys for each parish in the deanery and submit them to the DBF Finance and Corporate Services Department.

The Deanery Standing Committee or its nominated persons will negotiate with the Archdeacon and PCC if any parish's income survey is not representative.

3.7 Encouragement Scheme

An Encouragement Scheme encourages parishes to make regular payments towards their Parish Share Assessment.

The Encouragement Scheme requires the following payments to have been made:

| | |
|------|--|
| 25% | To be paid by 31 st March |
| 50% | To be paid by 30 th June |
| 75% | To be paid by 30 th September |
| 100% | To be paid by 4 th January |

A credit equal to 2% of the qualifying year's Parish Share Assessment will be made to the parish's Parish Share account in the following January if the above targets are achieved.

For example, if a parish meets the payment schedule above in 2023, a credit of 2% of their 2023 Parish Share shall be posted to their Parish Share account in January 2024.

4 The parish role

4.1 Timing

Where possible, instructions and forms will be sent to the parish a month prior to the census and survey commencing.

4.2 Attendance Census

A summary of the rules is set out above in section 3.1.

Before looking at practicalities, it is worth thinking about the purpose of the count.

It is to get an estimate of a parish's relative numerical strength of regular attendees. Remember, the scheme is based on the principles that those who are committed members of the church should pay for its ministry and mission. It is believed that the more people who attend a church regularly, the more able it will be to contribute to the costs of ministry and mission met through the Parish Share.

Of course, it is not simple to decide who should be included in the average weekly attendance. While many church members attend every week, anyone can be ill or on holiday; some have family or work commitments which take them out of the parish every month, etc. On the other hand, some churches have many baptisms during a year, attended by people who will not visit the church again.

The whole Parish Share system relies on honesty and trust. In some congregations the Wardens will know

exactly who the regular attendees are. In others, size may make an accurate count difficult.

The rules of the scheme are explicit about who to count but not how to count. Parishes can, and must, be trusted to arrive at an honest figure in the way that is most appropriate to their circumstance.

If a parish underestimates the number of 'fringe' members, it will pay more in Parish Share than it should, but if it overestimates the number, then all other parishes will be asked to pay more than they should. However, deaneries have a responsibility to monitor and approve the figures before they are used and might ask for clarification if the figures seem unusual in some way.

Judgement is needed and must be exercised. When carrying out the count simply do the best you can, being fair to your own parish and to others.

To help with the task of estimating the 'fringe' attenders the following suggestions are offered:

In many parishes the clergy and/or parish officers (e.g. churchwardens) know all members of the church well. In these circumstances it should not be too difficult to identify the people who normally attend less than 12 times per year. It might be helpful to prepare a list of all church members before the count to use for reference and discussion.

In churches where this is not possible the members of the congregation could be directly involved in the process, e.g. some parishes have issued everyone who comes with a slip of paper to be handed in by regular

attenders. Others have used a slot during the notices for a hand-count of different groups (e.g. people who normally come weekly, those who come at least once a month or people who have already been to church at an earlier service in the week).

Parishes submit their completed census forms to the diocese according to the timetable set each year.

4.3 Income Survey

A summary of the rules is set out above in section 3.3.

As with the Attendance Census it is worth considering the reason for carrying out an individual income survey. It is to get an estimate of the relative giving potential in parishes. Following on from the theology above there is an assumption that the greater an individual's income the more, potentially, they are able to give to the work of the church. Therefore, a measure of relative incomes is useful in calculating the proportion of Parish Share that should be asked of each parish. The Income Survey is not part of a tax regime - it is based on relative potential.

The survey is anonymous and no-one in the parish will see the completed forms. However, if a person chooses to ask for help in completing the form then assistance should always be given.

Each parish will need to provide for each church or centre of worship one or more sealed boxes in which completed forms can be placed. A suitable box from a supermarket or the box from a carton of A4 photocopier paper should do. At the end of the survey period, the sealed box should be delivered to the

nominated person within the deanery. Please don't forget to label the box with the name of the church or centre from which it comes.

It is recommended that at the main services during the period of the Income Survey, the reason and method for the Income Survey is shared with the congregation.

Examples of good practice

- Explain the reason for the forms at the beginning of the service.
- Give survey forms and pencils to all members of the congregation, as they arrive.
- Having explained the reason for the forms at the beginning of the service, ask those who attend 12 times a year or more to fill the form in there and then.
- In some churches, the forms are collected and put in the box during the service. In others, people are asked to post the forms at the end of the service. This ensures a very high response rate and positive comments.

Considerations for midweek 'school admissions' services

Many churches are now providing a shorter family-friendly midweek service so that children can attend and be considered for admission to Church of England schools.

In most cases the parents of these children also attend but do not become regular, contributing members of the church's congregation. Asking these parents to complete income survey forms could skew your parish's income survey result.

Therefore parishes may, if they wish, decide not to carry out the income survey at these particular midweek services.

5 The deanery role

5.1 Attendance Census

Parishes submit their completed census forms directly to the diocese.

The attendance figure for each parish or centre of worship in the deanery is recorded and a spreadsheet of all the results is sent to the Area Dean and Lay Chair for verification.

If there are concerns about a parish's return this should be discussed with the parish and a decision made about whether any adjustment is needed.

If a parish disagrees with an adjustment made by the deanery it has the right to appeal.

5.2 Income Survey

Parishes deliver their unopened boxes to the nominated person in the deanery.

The survey forms of each parish church or centre of worship is analysed separately.

The total for each income band is entered onto the summary spreadsheet provided.

Completed spreadsheets should be returned to the DBF Finance and Corporate Services Department.

For any church or centre of worship where a response of less than 70% of the previous year's Average

Weekly Attendance is recorded, the Deanery Standing Committee should consult with the PCC and Archdeacon and set the Parish Income Points for that parish.

6 Discussion and Agreement

This section is relevant to parishes that have been selected to have a meeting with the Discussion and Agreement team.

6.1 Process Steps

- a. Issue initial Share calculation figures to parishes and review teams
- b. Parish to liaise with Mission Community Leader to provide a submission/data before meeting on factors facing the parish and what support they need
- c. Meeting with all parishes in the Mission Community to discuss share issues and reach agreement on share figures
- d. Record outcome of negotiations and capture notes from meetings
- e. Agreed Share figures to be formally signed off by the PCCs and then confirmed to the Finance Team
- f. Confirmation by Finance Team of agreed Share for three years
- g. Moderation process (if no agreement can be reached)

6.2 Reaching Agreement

- a. There is an expectation that there will be one meeting that reaches agreement on a proposal for Share to be set, which must be approved by each PCC within 4 weeks. There is an option of one further meeting only, as soon as possible

after the 28 days, after which the decision of the team is final.

- b. If there is no agreement, the assessment will be referred to a Moderator Group for review
- c. If agreement is not possible, the Share figure will revert to the calculated share figure (as at present)

7 Timetable 2024

The Parish Share assessments for 2024 will be issued in September 2023. Parishes will be contacted in due course and offered the opportunity to enter into the Discussion and Agreement process regarding their Parish Share assessment for the period 2024 to 2026.

The outline process for 2024 Parish Share is as follows:

- Initial Share Calculation (September 2023)
- Discussion and Agreement Meetings with parishes (throughout 2024)
- PCCs agree Share figure
- Finance Team to confirm agreed Share

8 Further information

If you have any questions, please contact the Finance and Corporate Services Department:

Diocesan Office, 4th floor, Church House, 90
Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GH

Tel: 0161 828 1400

Email: finance@manchester.anglican.org

Website: www.manchester.anglican.org