

Glossary of terms

Benefice: The area that an incumbent (priest/vicar) is licenced to. It may consist of a single parish or a group of parishes.

Benefice Share: Refers to the contribution requested of a benefice and its parishes to help fund the ministry and mission of the church across the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Churchwarden: A lay person elected by the congregation to help look after the church building and support the vicar.

Clergy: The general term for people who are ordained in the Church of England (e.g., priests, bishops, and deacons).

Ordinands and curates: An ordinand is someone who is currently being trained at theological college to be a member of the clergy. A curate refers to an individual ordained as a member of clergy and in placed in a parish to train with an incumbent. In their first year of training they are ordained as a deacon, after which they are ordained as a priest.

Common Fund: is the fund from which the costs of the work of mission and ministry across a diocese is funded. In Bath and Wells income into the fund comes from Benefice Share contributions, investment income and an element of parochial fees.

Diocese: A large geographical area of the Church that's overseen by a bishop. Each diocese is made up of many benefices and parishes.

House for Duty: A House for Duty priest will generally live, rent-free, in a diocesan property while fulfilling their duties as a priest under a working agreement, usually part-time.

Incumbent: The vicar or priest in charge of church/es in their parish/es.

Ministry: The work done by clergy and lay people in serving God and the church. There are many types of ministry, from preaching to pastoral care.

Mission: The work the Church does to share the message of Jesus and help people in need. It could be local (in the parish) or global.

Offering: A collection of money given by the congregation during a service to support the church's work, often during Holy Communion. Many people also give to their churches using regular standing orders or through the Parish Giving Scheme.

PCC (Parochial Church Council): A group of lay people and clergy who help run the parish. They make decisions on everything from finances to the church's mission.

Parish: A specific geographical area that a church serves. Each parish has a vicar or priest who leads the congregation.

Parish Share: Prior to 2025, contributions into the Common Fund in Bath and Wells were requested on a parish basis. It is now calculated by benefice to reflect the way that ministers are allocated.

Parochial Fees: Fees paid to a church to undertake services such as weddings and funerals. The fees are set annually by the Church of England General Synod and Parliament. Parochial fees are legally payable and split between the Diocesan Board of Finance and the PCC.

Stats for Mission: The annual Statistics for Mission return collects attendance and participation information from churches across the Church of England. This information is generally collected via the Data Services Unit's [Online Parish Returns System](#).

Stipend/ stipendiary minister: Clergy who are paid receive a stipend, or salary, which enables the clergy person to exercise their ministry without the need to take another job in order to earn their living. Not all clergy receive a stipend but those who do can be referred to as stipendiary ministers.