

## Business Case for a new Share System

Approved by Bishop's Council January 2024.

### Introduction

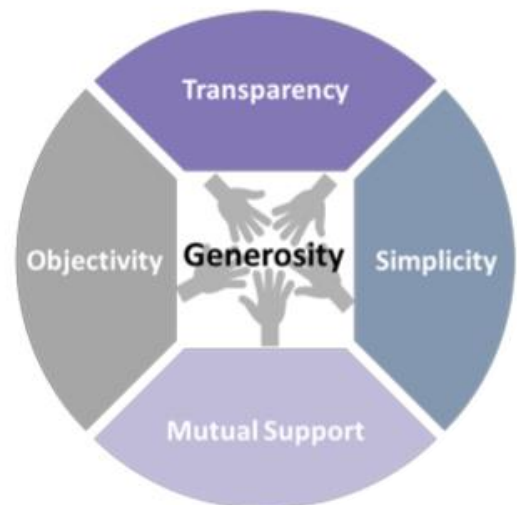
Towards the end of the last decade there was increasing dissatisfaction with Fairer Share. Research showed the following factors were at play:

- When Fairer Share was first introduced in 2005, 50% of parishes were net contributors and 50% received support, now the ratio is 30/70 and the 30% of contributors are feeling the strain.
- The modification factor for ministry was not widely understood.
- The subjectivity of 'the count' and 'affluence' enabled some parishes to game the system....
- There was a perception that the scheme penalised growth as it was heavily weighted by the number of members (despite the use of a 3-year rolling average).
- The Diocesan Worshipping Community was much larger (approx. 28,000 in 2005), as numbers declined the moderating criteria no longer reflected reality (20 years ago the avg. FS members per priest was 150, now it is nearer 130).
- The inevitable emphasis on the declining number was infecting the narrative and culture.
- We had ceased to communicate and educate about Fairer Share and as Church Officers changed knowledge and understanding of the scheme deteriorated leading parishes to lose confidence in it.
- Latterly....Covid put a coach and horses through the system as we could not carry out accurate counts.

### The Journey towards a new Share System

The pre-pandemic working party produced a report in 2019 which was discussed at the Bishop's Council Residential in January 2020. In February 2020 Diocesan Synod, agreed principles, consultation & engagement process with a timeline for implementation but Covid caused the whole process to stall until an online survey in November 2021 kick started a new initiative.

The results of the survey led to some modelling of scenarios leading to a second online survey in July 2022. There was a high-level of engagement in the two surveys, 72% participation from parishes in the first then 51% in the second. A preference was expressed for a hybrid system - part cost of ministry provision, part mutual support, which evidence from the wider church showed performed better during the pandemic. Also expressed was a desire for clear principles supporting an objective and simple to understand system, coupled with transparency over the costs of ministry.



It was less clear whether affluence should be a factor in assessing people's willingness and ability to give, but affordability was deemed important. Research also indicated that direct giving formed a lesser element of most parish's income than might be expected.

The responses indicate:

Church attendance does not necessarily relate to those that support the church financially

The affluence of the church members or the wider parish community does not necessarily reflect the ability or willingness to support the church financially

Regular giving or collections from those that participate in church life are only part of how parishes generate income.



Based on 2019 and 2020 parish finance returns as part of CofE statistics of the Diocese of Salisbury

In 2022, it was hoped a new system would be ready for January 2024 but changes in the Finance department delayed progress in the design of a new system until the Spring of 2023.

### Key considerations and interim decisions in 2023

- Hybrid systems modelled with different percentages of cost/mutual support and discussed with Deanery Treasurers in May 2023.
- Affluence was discounted when national research reinforced that it bore no relation to people's actual giving.
- There was a recognition of the importance of balancing the needs of rural and urban parishes (a pure cost system favours the single church urban context but disadvantages the multi church rural benefice).
- 60% cost/40% mutual support coupled with rebating a proportion of fee income helps to strike this balance (but no system will be perfect).
- Mutual support relies on having some measure of the size of the church community. In July 2023 parishes were asked to check their most recent Worshipping Community figure (produced for the national church's mission statistics in January each year). This honoured the fact that parishes didn't like the old Fairer Share count by using a figure they were already producing for other purposes.
- It has the advantage of being defined by the national church in a definition readily available on the Church of England website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/WorshippingCommunity.pdf>

### **Worshipping Community**

The 'worshipping community' of a church is defined as anyone who attends that church (including fresh expressions of Church) regularly, for example at least once a month, or would do so if not prevented by illness, infirmity or temporary absence. It includes activities such as fellowship groups and other activities that have a distinct act of worship or prayer. It also includes acts of worship not on church premises (e.g. at a school or community centre).

**It includes:**

- Those who come to midweek services;
- are ill and unable to come to church;
- are away on holiday or business;
- have home communions;
- are part of a regular 'fresh expression' of church;
- live in care or residential homes and would consider themselves to be full members of their church;
- give regularly to their church;
- lead worship.

**It does not include:**

Visitors – e.g. holidaymakers, baptism parties or those who consider their 'home' church to be another church.

The inclusion of Fresh Expression members is the main departure from the old Fairer Share membership definition, but it is time to include these people. Also, they are recorded in the January of the year before they will form part of the Share calculation so there is time to absorb and disciple new people.

In multi-parish benefices where people travel to different churches, people should be counted only once and allocated to their 'home' church (more details in the Share Guide).

### **The Proposed New System**

This will be a hybrid system, part cost/part membership, with 60% of the total Share request allocated to benefices according to the ministry deployed there (the cost element), and 40% of the Share request allocated according to their Worshipping Community (the membership element). As currently structured ministry deployment remains the easiest unit to attach 'overhead' to, and recognises that the provision of ministry to parishes remains the core purpose of the DBF finance and assets. As more hybrid patterns of ministry evolve this may need to be reviewed.

When determining ministry deployed, we will continue with the factors used in the Fairer Share System, 0.33 for a House for Duty priest with no stipend, 0.66 for a House for Duty priest with half a stipend and 1 for a fulltime stipendiary priest. Given that an average Rectory can be rented out for £2000 a month or £24,000 p.a. and the cost of a full stipend plus pension contributions and NI will soon be £42,000 p.a. these factors remain realistic.

No account will be taken of relative affluence because research shows the level of giving bears little relationship to affluence, however the income on the Stipends Capital Account will be used to help subsidise some parishes as indicated by national deprivation statistics (the original purpose of the Stipends Capital Account) and assist parishes in temporary difficulty. Parishes would be able to bid for assistance from the fund. There will be rebate of part of the prior year's fees for weddings and funerals – this will

assist rural parishes which tend to do more occasional offices and recognises the time and effort some priests expend on these services.

Whether Share requests should be made at Benefice or Parish level has been the subject of some debate. Many would like to see it made at Benefice level to encourage more collaborative working within multi-parish benefices, but others suggest it could cause huge difficulties in benefices where parishes remain fiercely independent and protective of their funds. The proposal is that the default option will be to parishes - apportioned according to the size of their Worshipping Communities, but the incumbent will receive a 'benefice letter' summarising the Share request by parish and inviting the benefice to consider a different method of allocation between themselves if appropriate (for instance one parish in temporary difficulty being helped by the others). The request will go out in early September with a deadline of the end of October to notify the Finance Department if a different method of apportionment has been adopted.

Other proposed elements are:

- The Deanery Standing Committees will be required to sense check the Worshipping Communities figure by the end of March each year, with issues being referred to Archdeacons.
- Leave the discount scheme as it is – 1% discount (increase from the 0.5% for 2024) for paying in full by end of January or in 12 instalments by DD or Standing Order (discount deducted from the final installment).
- Changes in Deployment or Pastoral Re-organisation affecting benefices to be notified to the Finance Department by Archdeacons by the end of June of the previous year.
- Share requests to be rounded to nearest pound.
- There will be no relief for vacancies but if they last longer than a year, 75% of letting income from the parsonage to be credited against the share request in the second year.
- A 4-year transition period to smooth out the changes, increases to be phased in over 4 years, decreases phased in only in years 3 & 4 of the transition period.
- A manual/guidebook to be written like the old Fairer Share Guide.

### **The Letting of Parsonages during Vacancies**

Some parishes have argued for a reduction in Share during a Vacancy, especially where the parsonage is let out. Our letting agents require the houses to be brought up to a very high standard, decorated and carpeted throughout. This leads to good quality tenants who leave the houses in very good order and ready for immediate occupation by a new priest. This saves money on in-going works but also houses that are decorated and carpeted throughout beyond the specification normally provided in other houses. The letting income effectively pays for the improvement of our housing stock and is a 'win win' scenario for parishes and Diocese at a time when parish volunteers able to help an in-going priest with decoration, are increasingly scarce. The rebate of 75% of letting income if a vacancy goes into a second year recognises both that it is becoming increasingly difficult to fill some posts so vacancies can be longer, and also that the first year's rental income has largely covered the costs of refurbishment (but not the running costs of the building).

### The Impact of Modelling

- 92 and of 126 Benefices (73%) will see their share request go up or down by 20% or less over the 4-year transition period.
- 17 Benefices (13%) will experience an increase of more than 30% but many of these will be able to apply to the relief fund or are likely to be the subject of discussions about the affordability of the ministry currently deployed there.
- 39 Benefices (31%) will see their share request fall, only 6 of these by more than 20%

### A Simple Hypothetical Example

- The total Share request is £10m, so £6m allocated by cost, £4m allocated by membership
- If there were 120 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) priests deployed across the Diocese
- If the total Worshipping Community (WCom) across the Diocese was 20,000
- Cost element:  $\text{£}6\text{m}/120 = \text{£}50,000$  per priest
- Membership element:  $\text{£}4\text{m}/20,000 = \text{£}200$  per member
- If a parish has one priest and a WCom of 100, their share request will be  $\text{£}50,000 + (\text{£}200 \times 100 \text{ people}) = \text{£}70,000$

### A more Complex real-world Example

- The total Share request is £12.2m, so £7.32m allocated by cost, £4.88m allocated by membership
- There are 159.3 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) priests deployed across the Diocese
- The total Worshipping Community (WCom) across the Diocese is 19,416
- Cost element:  $\text{£}7.32\text{m}/159.3 = \text{£}45,951$  per priest
- Membership element:  $\text{£}4.88\text{m}/19,416 = \text{£}251$  per member
- If a parish has one stipendiary priest, a 0.33 House for Duty priest and a WCom of 125, their share request will be  $(\text{£}45,951 \times 1.33) + (\text{£}251 \times 125 \text{ people}) = \text{£}92,490$

Then this more Complex Example is now a multi-parish benefice of 6 churches with the following Worshipping Communities figures:

- Parish A = 12
- Parish B = 35
- Parish C = 15
- Parish D = 45
- Parish E = 8
- Parish F = 10

The Share request would be advised as follows:

- Parish A =  $92,490 \times 12/125 = \text{£}8,879$
- Parish B =  $92,490 \times 35/125 = \text{£}25,897$
- Parish C =  $92,490 \times 15/125 = \text{£}11,099$
- Parish D =  $92,490 \times 45/125 = \text{£}33,297$

- Parish E =  $92,490 * 8 / 125 = £5,919$
- Parish F =  $94,490 * 10 / 125 = £7,399$

Total = £92,490

### **The Cost of being Church in Salisbury Diocese versus 'Cost of a Priest'**

In designing this new Share System, we are applying the principle agreed by Synod in October that future budgets will total the expenditure, deduct other sources of income and the remainder will form the Share request as the 'cost of being church in Salisbury Diocese'. This way we are not setting a deficit budget but also being realistic with parishes about what our current level of activity costs. It is also deliberately moving away from 'the cost of a priest' narrative in order to encourage a less transactional response from parishes.

### **The Consultation Process**

This was headed up initially by the Fairer Share Review Group and latterly by the Finance and Resources Committee. There were two online surveys participated in by more than half the parishes in 2021 and 2022, the results of which were discussed by Bishop's Council and reported to Diocesan Synod. These provided support for a hybrid system.

Deanery Treasurers, meeting in May 2023, were consulted over various versions of a hybrid system.

In October 2023 a number of focus groups of parish treasurers attending workshops on DataDevelopment accounts package were consulted as were Rural Deans at a meeting with the bishops.

In November Bishop's Council was consulted and on the 1<sup>st</sup> December the Deanery Treasurers were once again consulted over the final iteration of the scheme. The proposals received a high degree of support at all the Autumn meetings.

### **Transitional Arrangements**

It is envisaged that we will need to phase in the system over 4 years in order to keep the increases for those whose Share will rise to reasonable amounts. Only 8 benefices will experience a rise in excess of 40% (excluding inflationary rises) and this means 4 years of rises of just over 10%. Those whose Share will decrease will be pegged at the 2024 share ask for a further 2 years and this will fund the phasing in of the increases. Decreases will be applied in a phased manner in years 3 and 4 of the transition period.

### **The Risks of introducing a new Share System**

The biggest risk is probably doing nothing, given that we have had 4 years of inflation increases based on membership last counted in March 2019. We know some benefices have experienced significant loss of members, and the 2024 transitional arrangements, although welcome, hardly begin to address some of these situations.

The principal risks of introducing a new system are:

- A botched introduction and communications exercise leading to a loss of confidence in the system and consequent reduction in contributions.
- After a number of years of underpayment, difficulty in re-establishing the expectation that in a normal year a benefice should expect to pay 100% of the share request.
- Donor fatigue amongst those who face 4 years of above inflation rises to reach their new level of request.



- The inability to effect pastoral re-organisation where the ministry deployed is beyond what a benefice can afford by way of share request under the new system.
- Fears that the use of the Worshipping Communities figure might inhibit growth.

#### Mitigations:

- A good communications programme (see appendix 1).
- The experience of other Dioceses that have changed share system will be researched and best practice adopted.
- The Director of Finance and Asset Management will be available to hold Deanery meetings with PCCs throughout 2024.
- Share requests will be available earlier (September 2024) so benefices have more time to plan and prepare.
- The Bishop's Senior Staff will be pro-active where conversations about pastoral re-organisation need to happen.
- The Giving Team will be pro-active in helping struggling benefices to increase their income.
- The Area Stewardship Groups will work to re-establish the expectation of 100% payment of the request.
- The income on the Stipends Capital Account will be available to help in cases of short-term hardship.
- Communicating that a much smaller proportion of the share request will be based on 'membership' so a growing church should find it manageable. Also, that there is fairness in expecting churches with larger numbers to pay more, as long as it is not disproportionate.

#### Summary

The new scheme is designed to ensure that every benefice contributes a realistic amount of the costs involved in being part of the church in this Diocese and since deploying clergy in parishes is our major purpose and cost, it is appropriate to link this to the clergy deployed in a particular benefice. Equally a larger Worshipping Community will have more contributors, so it is also appropriate they pay more than a smaller congregation.

The scheme endeavours to strike a balance between the needs and ability to pay of urban and rural benefices – a purely cost system favours the urban church, a hybrid system with partial rebate of fees re-balances that.

Communicating and engaging audiences will be as important as the system adopted, but it will not result in a reduction of share for the majority of benefices. The 4-year transition period will be crucial to embedding the scheme for the future.

#### Appendices

Appendix 1 – Comms Plan as at December 2023

Appendix 2 – draft annual form to be sent to parishes/benefices to collect data.

Appendix 3 – draft letter showing share calculation and request letter to be sent to a parish.

Appendix 4 – draft benefice share letter for the incumbent.

Appendix 5 - FAQs



## Appendix 1

### Communications and engagement plan for proposed new Share scheme

Draft to December 2023

*Every time we approach people for money, we must be sure that we are inviting them into this vision of fruitfulness and into a vision that is fruitful. We want them to join us so that together we begin to see what God means when God says, “Be fruitful” (Gen. 1:28). [Nouwen]*

#### Objectives:

- To engage all those who contribute to the Diocese of Salisbury through Share to understand and support the new Share system
- To move away from an understanding of Share as transactional (pays for the cost of ministry) to transformational (contributing to fulfilment of collective vision as part of Team Salisbury)
- To engage and deepen the understanding of all who contribute or may contribute that Share funding is essential to realising our vision to Make Jesus Known in every place so that all might flourish and grow, seeking his Kingdom here and now.

#### Finance communications to date :

The comms and finance team have (in Q4 2023) been engaging with different stakeholder groups and introducing resources ahead of the February Synod.

This has included:

- Video from diocesan secretary explaining phrase shared cost of being Church (Nov 23)
- Video shared on Slack channel and key members of staff to begin to engage with and monitor conversations on Slack channel (relaunched Feb 24)
- Leaflet explaining new Share system and cost of being Church (for wider church audience) in the framework of the new vision (available for Synod)
- Webinar for clergy on financing the future together which unpacks phrase and vision and asks for feedback/resources planned for Feb 24

#### Post Synod comms and engagement:

Following February Synod the data collection form (Appendix 2) will be sent out together with the Share Guide. Then there is a 7-month period until the Share request letters go out to engage people with the new Share model, in the context of how it seeks to fulfil the diocesan vision. Successful engagement with the new Share model is impossible to separate from successful engagement with overarching vision – all stories celebrating engagement with vision and its priorities will help to embed understanding and achieve ownership of why the new Share model is necessary.

Pre synod, leadership and voice on the new Share scheme has been offered by the Diocesan Secretary and Director of Finance. Following the anticipated endorsement by Synod, the voice of the Bishops will also link the new share to the Diocesan vision. The Bishops are widely seen as “owners” of the new vision and their voice will help to develop relationships of trust, essential to any successful fundraising/giving strategy.

Some specific resources to help explain the new model will be needed, but face to face encounters are likely to be the most important – embodying the principle of moving to relational and transformational giving/fundraising.

### Stakeholder groups:

- Deanery synods
- PCCS and parish treasurers
- All clergy and postholders
- Lay ministers
- Regular worshippers in congregations

### Tools and resources:

- Video using stories to explain how financial sustainability underpins our new vision and how a collaborative Share scheme is key to that sustainability. Shared on website and in Slack but also for use at ‘roadshow’ type events
- Leaflet explaining new Share model with QR link to video and other resources on website, for general church audience
- Resources for clergy on giving and discipleship including offering webinars, using induction and CMD training
- Focus in ebulletins (Grapevine, working Together) and in releases to external media of stories of transformational giving (personal/community). Video stories shared on social channels.

### Roadshows:

Plan for four archdeaconry roadshows led by Bishops for clergy on new vision, of which Share and moving from transactional to transformational are key elements. Dates being finalised for May 2024.

PCC and parish treasurer events – led by Director of Finance and Anna Hardy, with emphasis on what ‘going local’ support and resources are available to help with fundraising etc

*Please note : A detailed timeline for the Share comms plan is incorporated in the 2024 Comms and Engagement Plan for the diocese.*

### Risks and opportunities:

1. Legacy of difficult relationships with diocese can act as barrier to increasing giving in some places– how can we offer training and support to clergy to teach on giving in framework of new vision?
2. Share discussion overruns the vision and is all interpreted through lens of money – need for early progress in vision to ensure the narrative moves forward and finance is understood as supporting arm only.

**Appendix 2**

<b>DRAFT Parish/Benefice Share Data Collection Form 2024</b>			
<b>1. Worshipping Communities (WC) Figure: please fill in your 2024 WC count</b>			
<b>Parish</b>	<b>Parish Code</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Jan 2024</b>
A	340001		
B	340002		
C	340003		
D	340004		
E	340005		
Benefice Total			
Please give reasons if there is a difference of +/- 10% between 2023 and 2024 please specify the related parish if more than one reason:			
<b>2. Financial Support from the Stipends Capital Account.</b>			
If your parish/benefice falls within the most deprived 25% of parishes/benefices in the country, your Archdeacon will discuss with you whether support is needed. Other parishes with special circumstances are invited to apply, please mark the box to apply.			<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px; border: 1px solid black;" type="checkbox"/>
Please give reasons why you would like support (e.g. replacing stolen lead from church roof, or special social factors).			
<b>3. 50% of the DBF Parochial fess in the year to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 will be returned as relief on share requests. Fees for Q1 and Q2 of 2024 must be received by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 to qualify for this relief.</b>			
<b>4. Agreement</b>			Date
The Benefice Council/PCC have discussed the above and have agreed this:			01/06/2024
Signed:			

	Position:	Incumbent/Church Warden if in vacancy		

## Appendix 3

Share request 2025			Share Code: Example 1	
<b>Total Diocese Share Scheme details:</b>			£	
60% of Share Request to be allocated by ministry deployment			£6,000,000	
40% based on Worshipping community (WC)			£4,000,000	
<b>Total Diocese 2025 Share Request</b>			<b>£10,000,000</b>	
<b>Benefice Clergy Deployment</b>		<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Full Time Equivalent (FTE)</b>	
Full Time Post		1.00	1.00	
Half Time Post		0.00	0.00	
House for Duty (HfD)		0.00	0.00	
<b>Total Deployment</b>		<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	
<b>Benefice Share Request:</b>				
	<b>Quantity/FTE</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>Deployment</b>	1.00	£50,000		<b>£50,000</b>
<b>WC</b>	100		£20,000	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>Total Benefice Request</b>		<b>£50,000</b>	<b>£20,000</b>	<b>£70,000</b>
<b>Parish Share Request:</b>				
	<b>Quantity/FTE</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Deployment</b>	1.00	£50,000		<b>£50,000</b>
<b>WC</b>	100		£20,000	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>Total Parish Request</b>		<b>£50,000</b>	<b>£20,000</b>	<b>£70,000</b>

The Parish request form 2025 is **£70,000** as calculated above, represents an increase on the Parish at **X%** on the 2024 request. The Occasional Office Fees of **X**, received for the year to June 2024 will be deducted from this.

### Discount:

There is a discount of 1% available if you sign up to pay by **Standing Order** or **Direct Debit (DD)** schemes by **January 2025** or **make a full contribution in January 2025**. The Discount will be deducted from the final payment.

### Questions:

If you have a query on your share request, please address your Archdeacon in the first instance. There will be quarterly meetings to discuss any adjustments to share, which will then go to the Finance Committee for approval.

Archdeacon of Sarum:	<a href="mailto:adsarum@salisbury.anglican.org">adsarum@salisbury.anglican.org</a>
Any other queries please contact:	<a href="mailto:accounts@salisbury.anglican.org">accounts@salisbury.anglican.org</a>

Thank you for all you are doing to contribute share.

Yours sincerely

## Appendix 4

Share request 2025			Share Code: Example 2	
<b>Total Diocese Share Scheme details:</b>			£	
60% of Share Request to be allocated by ministry deployment			<b>£7,320,000</b>	
40% based on Worshipping community (WC)			<b>£4,880,000</b>	
<b>Total Diocese 2025 Share Request</b>			<b>£12,200,000</b>	
<b>Benefice Clergy Deployment</b>			<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Full Time Equivalent (FTE)</b>
Full Time Post			1.00	1.00
Half Time Post			0.00	0.00
House for Duty (HfD)			1.00	0.33
<b>Total Deployment</b>			<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.33</b>
<b>Benefice Share Request:</b>				
	<b>Quantity/FTE</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>Deployment</b>	1.33	£61,115		<b>£61,115</b>
<b>WC</b>	125		£31,417	<b>£31,417</b>
<b>Total Benefice Request</b>		<b>£61,115</b>	<b>£31,417</b>	<b>£92,532</b>
<b>Parish Share Request:</b>				
	<b>WC</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Parish A</b>	12	£5,867	£3,016	<b>£8,883</b>
<b>Parish B</b>	35	£17,113	£8,797	<b>£25,910</b>
<b>Parish C</b>	15	£7,334	£3,770	<b>£11,104</b>
<b>Parish D</b>	45	£22,001	£11,310	<b>£33,311</b>
<b>Parish E</b>	8	£3,911	£2,011	<b>£5,922</b>
<b>Parish F</b>	10	£4,889	£2,513	<b>£7,402</b>
<b>Total Parish Request</b>	125	<b>£61,115</b>	<b>£31,417</b>	<b>£92,532</b>

The total Benefice request form 2025 is **£92,532** as calculated above, represents an increase of **X%** on the 2024 request. For local reasons you may wish to make a different allocation of the request between parishes than is shown above. If that is the case, please obtain the approval of all the PCCs and inform the Accounts Dept by the end of October. The Occasional Office Fees of **X**, received for the year to June 2024 will be deducted from the total and allocated against the parishes to which the fees relate.

### Discount:

There is a discount of 1% available if you sign up to pay by **Standing Order** or **Direct Debit (DD) schemes by January 2025** or **make a full contribution in January 2025**. The Discount will be deducted from the final payment.

### Questions:

If you have a query on your share request, please address your Archdeacon in the first instance. There will be quarterly meetings to discuss any adjustments to share, which will then go to the Finance Committee for approval.

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Thank you for all you are doing to contribute share.

Yours sincerely,

## Appendix 5 - FAQs

### Why is the new share scheme part of the vision for Making Jesus Known?

The new vision for the Diocese commits us to being financially sustainable and it is only by doing so that can we plan for the Church of the future and ensure that it will be here to serve our children and grandchildren. From now on, the share ask will be realistic in asking for what is needed to fund the church today across the Diocese.

### When is the new share system coming in?

The true cost of being the Church has been set out in the budget for 2024. The new share system will be introduced in 2025. Over the last few years, we have been using reserves and selling assets to cover the growing deficit. It is clear we cannot do this for much longer without putting everything we do at risk. For one more year we will look to sell houses to fund the deficit while we ask everyone to prepare for the new Share model in 2025.

### What was wrong with the old system of parish share?

The old system is well and truly broken. People no longer understand how it was calculated and it was not felt to be fair. We haven't been able to do a proper count since 2019 due to Covid and knowledge of the system has declined – particularly an understanding of the category modification for numbers and affluence. The total Share ask has been set too low for many years and the Diocesan Board of Finance has been relying on reserves to meet ministry costs which it did not want to pass on to parishes. The DBF can simply no longer afford to do that. The DBF has cut costs and sold Church House in Salisbury (moving remaining staff into the DBE offices in Wilton) to reduce costs as much as possible. Continuing to set a deficit budget, as it has done for previous years, is not sustainable.

### Will the new Share model lead to even higher bills?

Showing the real figure of the cost of being Church today is about being transparent and honest with everyone. The parish share review process requested transparency and honesty in how share is calculated, and the new system will offer this.

For some parishes it will mean an increased ask in share contribution, in some cases this will be a large rise. A 4-year transition is planned to smooth the increases and decreases. Fundraising support and grants advice is available from Anna Hardy and her team to try and help parishes get as close as they can to the ask from 2025 onwards.

### Does this mean that Share contributions will go up for everyone?

Not for everyone, though many places will see an increased share ask. Our modelling suggests:

- 92 out of 126 Benefices (73%) will see their share request go up or down by 20% or less over the four-year transition period.



- 17 Benefices (13%) will experience an increase of more than 30% but many of these will be able to apply to the relief fund or are likely to be the subject of discussions about the affordability of the ministry currently deployed there.
- 39 Benefices (31%) will see their share request fall, only 6 of these by more than 20%

### **Why has the bill gone up when it is based on worshipping numbers and our number of worshippers has fallen since Covid?**

It is important to say that under the new system Share is only partly based on worshipping numbers. Also, the number of worshippers may have declined but there has not been a corresponding reduction in the number of clergy deployed, so Share is going up because we are having to be realistic about funding the costs of the Church today – we are running out of assets to subsidize today's costs.

The brutal fact is that we lost nearly 5,000 church members or 20% over last few years. This is shocking, but we are also hearing stories of new people coming to church for the first time. It's important we don't lose sight of this, and we keep reaching out and inviting people to know Jesus. Perhaps like the parable of the sower, we might feel like we are scattering seed on hard ground, but we do not know when the rain will come and that seed will grow, so we keep serving our communities, inviting people and see every conversation as an opportunity.

### **Why are numbers of DBF staff rising and clergy falling?**

The DBF operates on a small budget for a charity of its size – just seven percent of expenditure goes on administration costs, compared to 10 per cent for similar sized charities. DBF staff also offer the support services that are essential to enable parish ministry to happen at a local level – whether that's in finance, safeguarding or looking after our buildings.

The national church has supported the Bishop's Council with the discernment and emergence of the new vision and plan. Part of its support is funding a new role in communications and a new role to support data and research, to ensure all decisions taken are grounded in real data. As plans are developed under the new vision, we will be applying for funding to help its implementation, and this will be for mission at the local level. Where new posts are judged to be needed to serve the vision and priorities, they will be rooted in the local church wherever practical.

### **If we can't afford this new bill, what will happen to us?**

Support is available to help churches with fundraising and increasing level of donations. You aren't on your own, there are many here to help, including your Archdeacon, Deanery Treasurer, and the Finance and Giving Team – so if you are struggling or worried let us know.

### **Can we overpay if we are blessed with abundance?**

The heart of our share system is mutual support. Where we see our fellow churches struggling, we might find ourselves able to give a little more to help out. If we can give more than requested, we may find it is our own church on the receiving end of help if circumstances change in the future.

### **Can you help in other ways?**

Many churches face the same challenges and lots of us have had to learn the hard way, whether it's writing a faculty, opening a café, restoring or repairing, working a contactless device or running a summer fete. We have so much expertise to draw on from across the Diocese, but so often we don't know where to turn. Would you be prepared to offer your knowledge to someone else in TeamSalisbury, so that we can stop re-inventing the wheel?

### **What do the new Missional Pathways mean for the local economy?**

Missional Pathways will trial different ways of working that will inform our thinking and generate learning with the purpose of developing good practice, enabling cultural change, and increasing the missional impact across a wider landscape. Missional Pathways will be encouraged to consider what resources already exist and can be deployed locally (the local economy), while identifying future resources for emerging work such as youth work, pioneering, chaplaincy, which will bring about the desired change at the local level. Additional resources will form part of our application for national funding to support mission and ministry at local level.

### **Why don't the Church Commissioners with their billions simply cover the deficit for a period?**

A large part of the Church Commissioner's funds is set aside to fund Bishops' Ministry and for pension liabilities relating to clergy service prior to 1998. The remainder would cover the costs of running the church for three years, then it would be gone. **The only sustainable way to fund today's church is for today's church to pay for today's ministry.**

That said, the Church Commissioners do give about £35m a year to support ministry in low-income communities. Salisbury Diocese only has 15 benefices in the upper quartile of deprivation (there are 12,443 benefice in total in the CoE) so we do not qualify for this support. Compared to other Dioceses we are wealthy although our giving per head is below average. The Commissioners also give nearly £5m a year to help with short-term sustainability issues. Additionally, they have earmarked several hundred million pounds to use over the next 9 years to invest in mission and strategic change, including supporting the mission and ministry of the rural church.

### **We are happy to pay mutual support but we don't want to support failing churches ...**

The Bible talks a lot about money and giving generously. If we truly see the money we have as a blessing from God, then we can be free from the hold it can have on our hearts and minds. As a blessing, it is to be shared with others freely and generously, as God's love has been with us. Mutual support is about those

who can give a little more, to support those who have a little less. By doing so, we can offer ministry and a Christian presence across the diocese.

In the Parable of the Sower Jesus shows God's extravagant generosity in scattering the seed indiscriminately and Saint Paul reminds us that one person may sow, another water and yet another may see the fruit because it is God that gives the growth. Ministry is an art not a science.

Having said that we are acutely aware that resources are scarce and must be used wisely and the Bishops and Archdeacons recognise it is in nobody's interests to perpetuate situations where change is desirable.

### **Does the Share pay for the Bishop's chauffeur?**

Your share contribution doesn't pay for our Bishops, and they don't have chauffeurs... so that one is easy to answer! Our Bishops are paid for by the Church Commissioners. It also doesn't pay for Bishop Stephen's house, which is also paid for by Church Commissioners.

### **Does Share pay for the Cathedral, staff and upkeep?**

Share also doesn't pay for the upkeep of Salisbury Cathedral which is financially separate from the Diocese. They have a dedicated and hardworking team raising funds for the upkeep of the building and a Friends of Salisbury Cathedral who run a number of wonderful fundraising events.

### **What does Share pay for then?**

See [2024 Budget Guide](#).

Essentially we are all one team -TeamSalisbury. Thank you for being part of it.

If you have any questions we haven't answered here, please send them to us and we will do our best to respond to everyone.