

Parish Share Review and Consultation



Background

Parish Share is fundamental to the delivery of the church's ministry and the ability of a diocese to deliver the support needed for parish ministry is hugely influenced by the amount of Parish Share received.

Since 2024, a key aim of the Finance and Assets Committee has been to consult widely with all interested parties across the Diocese with a view to building confidence and trust.

We have paid close attention to all views and concerns expressed; and wish to continue to encourage growth at parish, deanery, and diocesan level and foster a shared sense of 'ownership' over the Parish Share system.

Our work has been informed throughout by the findings of the National Giving Team's 2023-2024 research project into the effectiveness of diocesan Parish Share approaches and systems.

There have been three reviews of parish share since 2011. Each review has had to respond to distinct challenges such as the slow rebound from COVID, higher than inflation increases and the removal of the Parish Share "cap".

Participants

We have invited members of Synod, Clergy, PCC and Deanery Treasurers and PCC members to take part in two online meetings with overall objective of improving Parish Share allocation across our diocese. Below is the breakdown of participants' roles.

Church warden	4
Clergy	6
Deanery treasurer	3
Other PCC	1
PCC treasurer	13
Synod member	3

Preparation

Prior to the first meeting, the participants had been asked to familiarise themselves with the findings of the last Parish Share review.

Durning the 5 February session the following took place:

1. The budget numbers that drive Parish Share were explained together with explanation of Parish Share as a recovery model for diocese. Background information was given on why we have parish share and what was discovered at the last review in 2020.
2. To review our parish share system we discussed with participants the advantages and disadvantages of the way Parish Share is calculated currently and the issues we had run into over the last five years. We had captured feedback from individual groups which we will share with the Synod in July.

We had established at this session the following **requirements of the Parish Share:**

- **Must be equitable and fair**

- **Should reflect the ability to pay**
- **Should not be a tax on growth**
- **Should be easily communicated to the congregation**

At the next session on **16 April session** we will:

1. Present analysis provided by the national church institutions: “Parish Share – What makes a difference?”

We will discuss the key findings of this report which are:

- a) The *type* of system a diocese uses makes little difference to the success of Parish Share.
- b) Parishes often view parish share as a voluntary contribution to the diocese regardless of what system is used.
- c) How a diocese communicates and builds relationships with parishes has the greatest impact on returns.

We will focus on the following pages from the report:

Pages 13-17 – Parish share systems

Page 19 – Gift or Tax?

Page 21- 23 - Communications

2. We will consider a hybrid system – the percentage increase in costs is applied to deanery and within each deanery the costs are allocated based on changes in average weekly attendance allowing for swaps between parishes thus encouraging greater cooperation and generosity within deaneries. **There will be other ideas proposed by participants we will look at that are not mentioned in this document.**

Some known facts to consider are listed below but there will be more information once we hold a second meeting.

The current system is formula heavy relying on IMD and AWA numbers. Both are not without problems. IMD might not apply correctly to the whole parish area and AWA is not an indicator of giving and generosity within the parish.

The formula is run across the whole diocese resulting in individual parish increases that therefore exceed the % increase in overall diocesan budget. These increases are extremely difficult to explain to individual parishes who are then having to explain parish share increase to their congregation.

Whilst formula-based parish share system is very efficient in terms of splitting the overall diocesan cost, it does not allow for trade-offs between parishes or for negotiations. National Church Institution research suggests that parishes need consistency and multi-year planning.

Under the hybrid system, the diocese would allocate Parish Share to deaneries with suggested draft allocations to individual parishes encouraging parishes to work together. Final allocation of parish share within deanery could be the responsibility of the Deanery Synod.

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