

# Parish Share:

what it does and  
how it works

**“I have come that they may have life,  
and have it to the full”**

(WORDS OF JESUS FROM JOHN 10:10)

*Life*

# 'Life in all its fullness'

When Jesus talks about 'Life in all its fullness' he is teaching about the life of God, which overflows with generosity, exceeds expectations, is more than imagined, abundant. It is the abundance of God's life within us as a Church and as individuals that flows out, giving life to those around us.

When it comes to thinking about stewardship, giving and finance, we do so as Christians from this place of generosity, recognising that the heart of the gospel is God's gift to us in Jesus Christ and that all we have is God's:

**'All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.'**

(1 Chr 29:14)

## What is the Parish Share?

As Christians we belong to something much greater than ourselves, we are part of the Church, which is the body of Christ. We are joined together in Christ. The Bible tells us: **'You are the body of Christ and individually members of it.'** (1 Cor 12:27). The concept of Parish Share is based on this understanding of the Church.

In the Church of England we live together as a broad Church with many different views and traditions, and we do so because of our common faith in God, and the belief that through Christ we belong to one another.

The New Testament describes a Church which is inter-dependent, mutually supportive and generous. Christians are called to give 'first to the Lord' of all that they have and to give of their best to the common good.

We pool the resources God gives us for the sake of the Kingdom.

Generosity is the hallmark of our faith, a desire to help others, to see that none go without, to share what we have. **Parish Share is giving.**

When a church contributes an amount of money to Parish Share it is giving into a common purse, which is then shared out so that all parishes/benefices may have a priest whether they are rich or poor. This is fundamental to Church of England theology, and it is a fundamental biblical principle – to resource the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere, and not just where it can be afforded. Everything that is given in Parish Share is hugely appreciated, and is being put to good use in providing ministry across our Diocese and resourcing the mission of the Church.

The cost of a priest includes their stipend and pension contributions (if stipendiary), housing costs and initial training, plus ongoing training and support. Parishes/benefices also receive a wide range of support services (such as safeguarding expertise, legal advice, buildings advice, assistance with problems, disputes and concerns) and ongoing training (such as bereavement teams, worship leaders course, development for lay and ordained ministers, children and youth work) thanks to the common purse.



# How is Parish Share calculated?

Each deanery is given an allocation for Parish Share for the year ahead. It is for the Deanery Standing Committee in consultation to decide how the allocation is met, and most deaneries use the calculations for benefices provided by the Finance Team. It should be noted that no diocese has yet found the perfect formula for calculating the allocation for each parish and benefice. In the Diocese of Gloucester our formula is based on two things: the parish's potential to give and the ministry received. Across the whole Diocese a base allocation is calculated to meet the annual budget for expenditure. The base allocation has two elements, with half being based on the Usual Sunday Attendance and half on clergy costs.

The detailed calculations are worked out as follows:

- 1 In terms of potential to give, the Finance Team in College Green look at the Usual Sunday Attendance (USA) for each parish (as recorded by the PCC in their annual mission statistics). Across the benfice a three year average USA is then calculated so that there won't be a sudden jump if your congregation has grown.
- 2 The Finance Team looks at the clergy provision, ie the ministry received. For example, your benefice may have one full time vicar with no supporting clergy. The cost of a full time stipendiary vicar for 2018 is approximately £67k. This cost includes housing, pension and training; the actual stipend for 2018 is £26,136. Also included in this cost are the shared diocesan and national costs and these are calculated and weighted by reference to the number of stipendiary, house for duty and self-supporting posts within the benefice. *The table opposite shows some examples of this calculation.*



	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
	1 x full time stipendiary post	1 x full time stipendiary post and 1 x self-supporting minister	1 x full time stipendiary post, 1 x self-supporting minister, 1 x house-for duty post
Stipend, national insurance, pension, housing & training	£61k	£65k	£83k
Diocesan cost	£1k	£1k	£1.5k
National cost	£5k	£5.3k	£7k
Total Clergy costs	£67k	£71.3k	£91.2k
½ of this used in the Parish Share calculation	£33.5k	£35.6k	£45.6k

**Note – Curates are counted across the Diocese and are included in the total clergy costs. House for Duty posts are weighted as 0.33 of a full time stipendiary post & Self Supporting Ministers are weighted as 0.05.**

"In recent years our team have made a commitment to increasing our Parish Share each year above what is asked of us. We strongly feel others should be able to enjoy the same ministry that we receive here. It is a priority for us to ensure that the Church of England can continue to support a Christian presence in every community.

"And at the end of the day all of this is God's..."

*South Cheltenham Team Ministry*

## The Diocesan Stipends Fund

This fund (the DSF) is a completely separate pot of money. It can only be used for stipends and comes from the historic income of our Diocese. Half of the income from this fund is distributed to deaneries in order to give 'a bias to the poor', using Experian data. The other half is distributed following a meeting of Area Deans, Lay Chairs and the Bishop to decide, by mutual discussion, where it is most needed. The amount distributed to the deaneries is then available for them to use (as decided locally) to support particular parishes or benefices as part of their Parish Share contribution.

## Timeline for Parish Share

<b>31st January</b>	Deadline for submission of statistics for mission	<i>Need to be submitted onto the Church of England's online parish return system*</i>
<b>31st May</b>	Deadline for submission of return of parish finance	<i>Need to be submitted onto the Church of England's online parish return system*</i>
<b>June</b>	Inter deanery meeting for the use of next year's Diocesan Stipends Fund	<i>Each Deanery will send two representatives &amp; this meeting will be chaired by Bishop Rachel and the Chair of the DBF</i>
<b>No later than 30th June</b>	Usual Sunday Attendance figures (USA) circulated to each Deanery for review & comment	<i>USA is a key element of our Parish Share model</i>
<b>July</b>	Meeting of Bishop's Council to approve the GDBF budget for next year	<i>It is the GDBF budget which our Parish Share needs to cover</i>
<b>No later than 31st August</b>	Next year's Parish Share figures circulated to Deaneries	<i>Bringing the various elements of the model together, Finance Team at College Green send next year's Parish Share figures to Deaneries</i>
<b>Sept/Oct</b>	Parishes and benefices agree their Parish Share contributions	<i>They advise the Deanery accordingly</i>
<b>Early November</b>	Diocesan Synod meeting to approve the budget proposed by Bishop's Council	<i>Following Bishop's Council approval in July, the Budget is taken to Synod in the autumn</i>
<b>No later than 30th November</b>	Deaneries to confirm Parish Share allocations for next year with Finance Team at College Green	<i>Finance Team at College Green need these allocations to ensure the GDBF finances are up to date &amp; the individual parish direct debit instructions can be updated accordingly</i>
<b>Pre-Christmas</b>	Finance Team at College Green confirm direct debit collections with individual parishes	<i>Separate letters are sent to individual parishes confirming the Direct Debit for next year (if appropriate)</i>

\*[www.parityreturns.churchofengland.org](http://www.parityreturns.churchofengland.org)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## ? ***Our benefice is going into vacancy, will we still have the same allocation for Parish Share?***

Yes, because the total calculation of Parish Share needed in our Diocese as a whole takes vacancies into account and is based on an average eight vacancies per year.

## ? ***Some of us liked the previous system of Parish Share calculation, why did it have to change?***

In some places it was coming close to a model that said: 'we pay for the ministry we receive'. It is important that parishes understand the true cost of ministry, but this is not the sole basis of Parish Share. Parish Share is also about contributing to the needs of all, fairly and generously so that every parish has a priest (albeit shared with others) whether they can afford it or not.

## ? ***Why does Parish Share go up every year?***

Each year the annual costs increase due to inflation, with the most significant cost being the provision of clergy. For 2017 the total annual budget for our Diocese is £6.7m

## ? ***We have a listed building to care for and repair and we can't keep up our Parish Share as well as look after the building. Is there anything we can do?***

The Parish Share needs to be the first priority for the parish. If there are problems please talk to one of the Finance Team or the Archdeacon as soon as possible (*Contact details are on page 11*). There are a number of grants available for buildings and the team at College Green can advise on applications.

## ? ***We would like to employ a youth worker/administrator/pioneer minister... which we could do if we reduced our Parish Share. Would that be possible?***

As with the last answer, Parish Share is the priority because Parish Share contributes to the mission of the Church by providing clergy, who are leaders in mission. Having a youth worker or administrative support is also to be encouraged and churches often find that giving can increase for such a specific purpose. Advice is also available from the Mission and Ministry department in College Green about how such posts may find additional funding.

## ? ***I've heard it said that Parish Share is a spiritual issue – what does that mean?***

Jesus says, 'Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.' Luke 6:38. We don't give in order to get back, but it does seem that if we are generous ourselves, God provides for us in other ways. Giving is about having our hearts turned towards God, so that our material possessions and money, whilst important, are not the first things in our lives. Preaching about giving and discussing this, is a good place to start.

## ? ***We need some help in raising our giving, what help is there?***

The Church of England has a website called [www.parishresources.org.uk](http://www.parishresources.org.uk) This has advice and ideas including how to encourage giving, the giving for life programme, the parish buying initiative and resources for PCCs and Treasurers. The 'Giving' page of the website has great ideas to adapt that include 'Re-imagining the Offertory', 'A Simple Giving Programme' ideal for smaller or rural churches, and resources for preaching, Bible study and gift days. **The Parish Giving Scheme** has been set up to help parishes in the Diocese of Gloucester and nationally, manage their regular donations. The scheme enables churches to inflation-proof giving, maximise cash flow and minimise administration. Information can be found at [www.parishgivingscheme.org.uk](http://www.parishgivingscheme.org.uk)

**? We think our allocation may be wrong and has perhaps been miscalculated, what should we do?**

In the first instance please talk to your Area Dean, Lay Chair, or Deanery Parish Share Officer. It may be that the mission statistics and Usual Sunday Attendance have been over (or under!) estimated.

**? What are the practical arrangements for making our contribution?**

The PCC decide the best way to give the Parish Share. The Finance Team can assist with setting up direct debits either monthly or quarterly, or with changing your Direct Debit year on year.

## A thought:

Remember, holding back or not contributing Parish Share has a consequence on others. If a parish/benefice does not meet its Parish Share, then other parishes in the deanery have to give more to cover for them. Ultimately a parish/benefice may be without a priest because there is not enough in the common purse and a fundamental part of what it means to be Church, and what it means to be the Church of England, could be lost.

## Finally ...

A prayer that reflects why we give at all – because of God's generosity to us, and because of the love he pours into our hearts:

**'O gracious God, who loved the world so much that you gave your only Son; pour your love into our hearts we pray, that we, loving you above all things, may give of ourselves, our time, our money and our talents, to your service; for the sake of him who loved us and gave himself for us, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.'**



## Contact details

### **Archdeacons**

The Archdeacon of Gloucester, The Ven Jackie Searle  
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The Archdeacon of Cheltenham, The Ven Phil Andrew  
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### **Finance Team**

Head of Finance, Julie Ridgway  
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Diocesan Finance Officer, Jessica Ahern  
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### **Parish Giving Scheme**

Head of Operations, Helen Taylor  
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### **Department of Mission and Ministry**

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