

Benefice Share

- During the pandemic Parish Share receipts fell significantly, and have not recovered
- In 2023 Parish Share payments were roughly 87% of what was requested
- 80% of parishes are not covering the costs of the stipendiary ministry they receive, or the support they receive from the Diocese. 20% are paying significantly more than the costs of what they receive
- The Diocese has an operating deficit of £1.6 - £2m per annum.

So...

In January 2024 consultations started on a new Common Fund methodology, in which the share is paid by each Benefice as a whole. The first round of consultation received an 80% affirmation of the proposal.

On 10 July 2024 Diocesan Synod voted by a very large majority to ACCEPT the proposal.

Foundational principles of the proposal

- Mutual support and generosity
- Transparency
- Independent data
- Awareness of local issues

The three elements of the calculation

Part A: the annual cost of deploying ordained ministry to a benefice

- Full-time stipendiary priest £55,500
- Part-time (0.5) stipendiary priest £35,000
- House for duty priest £16,750

The three elements of the calculation

Part B: a proportion of the diocesan-wide costs based on number of worshippers

£140 per worshipper. Worshipper numbers will be calculated as the higher of the following two categories:

- Worshipping Community (Question 9 on the Statistics for Mission form) minus Fresh Expressions attendance identified in October (Question 6 on the Statistics for Mission form)
- Usual Sunday Attendance (USA) (Question 2 on the Statistics for Mission form)

The three elements of the calculation

Part C: a mutuality and generosity contribution of £15.25% of the combined total of parts A and B to create a £1.12 million support pot, in order to offer support

- To the 30% of benefices experiencing the greatest levels of multiple deprivation
- To benefices of 5 or more parishes who have a population density of fewer than 250 people per square mile.

Impact of the Benefice Share methodology

- 91 benefices increase in the share (average increase 25%)
- 60 benefices decrease in requested share (average decrease just over 20%)

Matthew Pinnock will provide indicative calculations for the relative contributions to the Benefice Share by each of its constituent parishes, but this can be adjusted locally.

Five-year transitional period

For all benefices, EXCEPT

- Where reductions in Benefice Share are due, these are offered, except where 2020-24 shortfalls exist that could be recouped by not applying the reduction.
- Where there has been an underpayment of share over the last four years the current ask will be locked in until either the shortfall is paid off or the ask under the new methodology exceeds the current ask because of the application of inflation.

What Next?

Do the maths:

- Element A: (£55.5k)
 - Element B: £140 x (Worshipping Community / Attendance)
 - Element C: $A + B \times 15.25\%$
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- Eligible for assistance from the Support Fund?
 - Transitional increases (20% per year for 5 years)

Think, discuss, pray:

- Any special factors affecting the calculation?
- Apportionment of Benefice Share between the parishes
 - What method to use
 - Special factors
 - Protecting relationships within the benefice
- Assessment of ability to pay
- Plans to improve ability to pay
- Consideration of impact on relationships between PCC and paid ministers

Think, discuss, pray some more:

- Consequences of underpayment
 - Help with giving
 - Help with mission (growth)
 - Discussions about deployment of paid ministry
- Impact on current Deanery plan (pastoral reorganisations)