

Effectively Resourcing Ministry

Working Together towards a Kingdom Vision

As Kingdom People we seek to serve our God, who is the source, sustainer and goal of all that we do. We are all called to participate in his work in the world through a variety of different ministries.

This booklet is produced for a series of open conversations across the Diocese. It has been put together by two groups appointed by Synod and Bishop's Council. We hope it provides some background to our thinking, some key questions and the chance for you to give us feedback. All different viewpoints received will be carefully considered before any recommendations are developed.

The context



25% decline in church attendance since 2006



46% of church members over 70



£1 million deficit in 2018



60% of church buildings judged difficult to sustain



But the utter goodness of God is just as strong as ever, and the good news of Jesus Christ just as relevant.

The Big Question

“How do we best shape and resource ministry in and through as many healthy and sustainable churches as possible?”

“Thank you for engaging with these Open Conversations. This is a challenging time in the life of our diocese. It is essential that we work together to discover a way forward and answer the question of how we can best shape and pay for ministry across the Diocese for the growth of God’s kingdom.” Bishop John



As background...

The underlying cause of the £1 million loss made by the DBF in 2018 is that our income (as well as parishes income) hasn't kept pace with inflation. Individuals have given more, but fewer people in our pews means that overall our income hasn't changed much at all.

Looking forward to 2025 and 2030, we believe this trend is likely to continue. With neither parish nor DBF incomes keeping pace with inflation, in real terms we expect to have between 3% less money in 2025 (optimistic) and 23% (pessimistic).

Bishop's Council has concluded that we need to save £1.67 million from the DBF budget by 2024 (in comparison with 2018). Around £0.55 million of this will come from diocesan office staff and budgets, with £1.12 million from wider diocesan restructuring. If our income turns out to be worse than we hope, both areas will have plans to achieve greater savings at the end of this period.

Our central costs are already being reduced. Sadly a number of roles have been made redundant, some budgets have decreased and Synod has agreed that we should look at our office accommodation, which may involve leaving the Old Palace.

Feedback from these open conversations will enable plans to be developed for the wider restructuring. Although we will make some budget reductions (mainly in parsonages), most of the savings will need to come from spending less on stipendiary ministry – cutting between 15 (optimistic) and 30 (pessimistic) stipendiary clergy roles. This will mean a significant change in what ministry looks like in many of our parishes.

Medium term projections





Kingdom People

love • compassion • justice • freedom



We start from these underpinning principles

1. Ministry is shared and diverse, and is better because of this: lay and ordained, part-time and full-time; stipendiary and self-supporting; locally or regionally deployed. It also has many roles: church leader, priest, active retired; Incumbent, Reader, Authorised Lay Minister, Christians going about their daily lives etc.
2. The Diocese of Worcester is diverse, with significant urban towns and deeply rural villages, with large and small congregations, pockets of deprivation and also wealth, and a significant range of community needs and priorities. The Church of England is here to serve every community. Appropriate approaches to ministry will look and feel different in various parts of the Diocese – and we want to celebrate that.
3. The church is called to share in God's work in the world; developing worshipping, witnessing and serving congregations which reach outwards towards the communities they serve.
4. We seek to support and develop those who engage in ministry. We want to encourage them in their current ministries, and offer training to develop new forms of ministry and mission. We also seek the well-being and flourishing of all who minister, ordained and lay – encouraging personal spiritual development, rest and renewal.
5. Ministry and money are inter-related. It is right that some should receive their living from the church (1 Cor 9:14). It is primarily the responsibility of the church across the Diocese to meet the costs of ministry within it (a limited amount of external funding is available to support our lowest income communities).

Our current thinking on: **Church Growth**

- We want to see the church grow – numerically and spiritually.
- We seek to welcome more families, children and young adults within our churches. This will need us to change and we want to continue to invest in our Calling Young Disciples project to help parishes with this.
- While continuing to value those things we do best, we encourage parishes to consider offering new worship services and fresh expressions of church. This will expand the choice available.
- Our two Resourcing Churches should result in church planting and developing of existing churches as ways of reaching new communities (demographic as well as geographic).



this might look like:

- More people in church, sensing a deepening commitment to following Jesus.
- Increased numbers of families and young people, more volunteers and activities targeted at these groups.
- Personalised guidance to help parishes move ahead – with the Ministry and Discipleship team providing a new service to help with this.
- Two new church plants by 2025, targeted at different demographic groups or new housing areas.
- Our Resourcing Churches supporting / working with four existing churches to help them develop and grow and increase their sustainability.

Our current thinking on: Supporting and Sustaining Ordained Ministry

- We celebrate the differences in individuals' gifts and help them all to flourish
- We help clergy to focus on work which best matches their gifts and calling.
- The well-being of all who minister is important, but we recognise a special duty of care towards those who are paid to do so.

this might look like:

- Reduced levels of clergy stress.
- Parish priest roles that are more focused on the individual gifts and calling of clergy, with more support around them.
- A clearer idea of what is expected of clergy in large benefices with a number of churches – ensuring roles are appropriate.
- Developing alternative roles that give greater flexibility.
- A continued focus on supporting people through discernment and training for ministry (both stipendiary and non-stipendiary).



Our current thinking on: Developing Discipleship and Lay Ministry

- Understanding that everyone is called differently and responding to it should be a priority. We will offer support for this. Lay ministry is not a replacement for priestly ministry but complements it and is just as important.
- Many Christians will see their primary ministry as being with those they meet outside of the church – whether in the workplace, the home or through social activities.
- Others will see their ministry being within the church, where there are many different opportunities for lay Christians to share in leadership, mission and pastoral care.



this might look like:

- "A Big Conversation about Discipleship" provides a process to enable church members to reflect on how their faith relates to their everyday life.
- A social media campaign to encourage #EverydayFaith to support this (whole of our lives, not just Sunday mornings).
- Continuing to promote and develop pathways & resources to support Christians grow in how we live out our faith.
- A greater number of people involved in ministry (eg as Authorised Lay Ministers).

to talk about...

“What excites you about this? What concerns you? What else? What would help ensure our children and grandchildren want to come into our churches and find out more about the Christian faith?”

Our current thinking on: Local Ministry

- In some communities, the traditional model of having a 'vicar' will need to change. However, all our churches will continue to fall under the oversight of a stipendiary priest.
- In some churches, the day to day leadership will be voluntary. Where possible it will be shared between two or more people who will be called 'focal ministers' – acting as a focus for ministry in that community.
- This can be a healthier solution than a priest dashing from one church to another. It can lead to strong pastoral networks within the church, and good support to those outside of it.



Our current thinking on: Evangelism and Service in our lowest income communities

- We receive £700,000 of Lowest Income Communities funding from the national church for our 37 most deprived parishes.
- This funds stipendiary ordained ministry, local lay ministry and some support roles e.g. administration. Some funding pays for ongoing roles, other elements fund projects. Can we use it more effectively?



this might look like:

- Around 40 of our smaller churches having voluntary leadership – either Self Supporting Ministers (clergy) or lay leaders. They will remain under the oversight of a stipendiary priest, and with clear role definitions.
- Supporting 'focal ministers' with training and through a diocesan network.
- Some churches choosing to stop having regular worship. Some may find an alternative which creates a welcoming, cared-for open presence, others might even close their building altogether.

this might look like:

- Churches that minister in our most deprived communities have more help and greater confidence.
- A set of projects that would not otherwise be possible have an impact on meeting social needs and/or the Church's outreach.
- Those ministering in these communities are able to reflect together, learn from one another and as a result have a more fruitful ministry.

Our current thinking on: Appropriate Structures and Governance

- Encouraging parishes to use new models e.g. benefice councils.
- Simplified deanery structure which brings together parishes in similar contexts. This gives greater flexibility for parishes to be reorganised as appropriate.
- Simplified diocesan governance structures: fewer committees with each clearly focused on particular areas of responsibility.
- Clear focus on serving parishes from central diocesan staff – identifying and meeting key needs.
- Revised Parish Share system that is stable and effective.

this might look like:

- Fewer deaneries, potentially 6 rather than the existing 13.
- Fewer diocesan committees, which take less time for staff and volunteers but which have better focus and clearer governance.
- Joined up support to parishes from central teams, focused on key needs.
- A stable Parish Share system that has the ability to fund stipendiary ministry across the Diocese for the future and can easily respond to changing circumstances.



to talk about...

“ What excites you about this?
What concerns you? Is there
something we haven't considered? ”

Please pray

For all who currently minister in our churches across the diocese, and especially for those who minister in your church.

That others might hear a fresh call to minister both in the Church and in living out their faith every day.

That more people and money would be found for us to grow as Kingdom people.

That this process might draw us together as a Church, supporting and encouraging one-another.





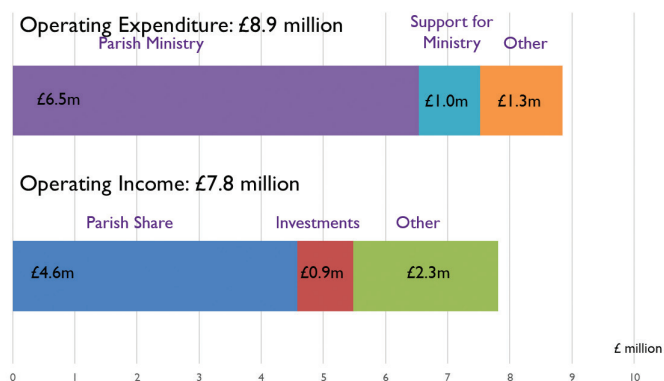
Parish Share: The Issues

In 2018, we only received 76% of the Parish Share we asked for, compared with a national average of 94%. This was the main reason behind a £1 million shortfall in diocesan finances. In 2019, following the 2018 survey of individual incomes, there were big changes (both up and down) in the amount of Share requested. As a result, Diocesan Synod has asked a group to look again at the system and how it should be developed in the future.

The chart below summarises the issue. In 2018 we spent over £1 million more than we received. This included spending £6.5 million on parish ministry (i.e. our clergy), but receiving just £4.6 million in Parish Share (£1.5 million lower than requested).

We have already started a programme of cutting the support and other costs by £0.5 million. The level of stipendiary parish ministry we can afford in the future will be primarily shaped by the amount of parish share we are willing to offer.

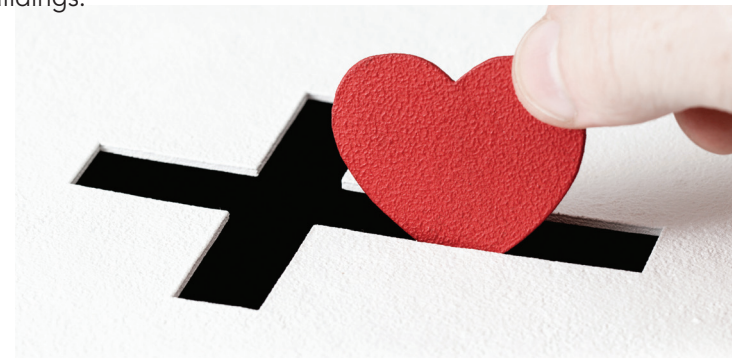
Diocesan Finances 2018:



Parish Share: The Principles

Diocesan Synod approved the following principles which will guide the thinking of the group reviewing the Parish Share:

1. God's generosity to us blesses us in many different ways. The Gospel teaches us to be generous and care for those less fortunate than ourselves. Giving money is part of our discipleship and should be reflected in our approach to Parish Share.
2. We are committed to being 'a Christian Presence in Every Community' funded through the 'common purse' and appropriately expressed through people and buildings.



3. Our approach to Parish Share must be:
 - a) **Sustainable** i.e. meet our current and future needs in a way which is both realistic and **Stable** in that it avoids big changes from year to year.
 - b) **Agile** i.e. flexible enough to cope with changing the needs across the Diocese without major changes in what a parish is asked to contribute.
 - c) **Clear** i.e. it should be easily understood by all those in our churches, whatever their role.
 - d) **Empowering** i.e. it encourages parishes to engage in the common life of the Diocese and to participate in local conversations around ministry and other costs.
 - e) **Sufficient** i.e. it brings in enough money across the Diocese to meet costs, taking into account other income sources e.g. Lowest Income Communities funding received from the national church.
4. We value the understanding of 'fairness' established through 'Fairer Share' i.e. that any measure of the wealth of a parish relates directly to the incomes of church 'members' rather than the overall parish population.



Different Parish Share Models

There are a range of approaches to Parish Share across the country:

- Our current system considers how many people go to a church and the level of their incomes. – it is “fair” because it asks for the same fraction of each person’s income.
- Some dioceses take the cost of clergy/ other ministry allocated to a church and adjust by the incomes of church members – this is “fair” as it links Share requested to ministry received, after adjusting for wealth.
- Some systems have a mixture of the two above. This blends the two measures of fairness, and can be more complex to explain.
- Some tell benefices the cost of their clergy and ask for offers above this cost (wealthy parishes) or below (poorer parishes). Experience suggests that most parishes make offers below cost and hope that another parish will make up the difference.
- Some systems aim to cover many aspects of fairness by having formulae which combine several elements. These could include parish incomes, attendance or membership levels, and the amount of ministry; and which may then be adjusted for wealth. This is often difficult to explain.

Notes

- No system is perfect!
- We realise there are other aspects of fairness, for example the cost of clergy / ministry, the number and nature of church buildings, capacity for additional parish income. We will also consider these.
- The introduction of any new share system would inevitably mean some changes to the amount requested from parishes. We would plan to minimise the impact of this.



to talk about...



Which of these principles are the most important to you?

What else is important?



For your notes



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