



Parish Share Explained

"We value generosity and give and receive sincerely."

Your Parish Share in 2025



Diocese of Bristol
† TRANSFORMING CHURCH.
TOGETHER.

A LETTER FROM YOUR ARCHDEACONS

To all God's people serving in the Diocese of Bristol,

We are continually inspired by the incredible acts of generosity that take place across our Diocese. Our Churches maintain a vital role in guiding those who are developing their relationship with Christ and helping them grow deeper in faith. Your efforts in organising drop-in cafes, supporting children's ministries, and welcoming visitors into our churches make a significant impact. Many of you support with financial donations, which account for most of our churches' income, and it is this combined effort that sustains our ministries.

God's economy is based on grace and generosity, and this shines through in our Parish Share. Parish Share reflects our shared belief that God's blessings allow us to give generously to further Christ's mission. It's through the support of those with more that we can uplift those with less, ensuring that essential ministry reaches every part of our Diocese. Your work in managing and supporting these contributions is what ties us together as a community, united in our gratitude for God's goodness. As you reflect on your church's gift this year, we pray that you feel blessed by your role in this ongoing movement of generosity.

Thank you for all that you do, both individually and as congregations, to support and resource God's work across the Diocese of Bristol.

Archdeacon Christopher and Archdeacon Becky



‘God who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.’

2 Corinthians 9:10-12

Openness

THE STORY SO FAR

You asked for a clearer and more transparent methodology for Parish Share.

In 2022, focus groups and a survey sent to every parish provided us with excellent feedback on what your parishes need in this area.

You asked for more information on on:

- how the costs are worked out
- how they compare nationally and
- the costs and benefits of shared support from Hillside House

We delivered a new calculation, which was fairer, more transparent and simple.

The calculation considers the cost of local stipendiary ministry, as well as asking every parish to contribute a fixed percentage of their average unrestricted income towards shared costs.

It reflects the local situation.

The cost of stipendiary ministry is adjusted, depending on the average household income of the area. Larger income churches are asked to make an additional contribution to make ministry happen everywhere. The national church also provides a Low Income Community (LInC) grant providing essential support.

Some parishes will be asked for significantly more as they move towards a fairer and proportionate contribution. Transitional arrangements are staying in place this year, to help them do this, with phased increases over a number of years.

Some parishes may find their request lower – although we are asking them to maintain their generosity to enable vital ministry.

Reserves are not part of the calculation, but attention will be drawn to them where appropriate.

Generosity



WORKING FOR YOU

As the Diocese of Bristol, we work together creatively and cost-effectively...



Mission and Ministry Support team

Provide ongoing training and support to clergy and LLMs and SSMs. We also run the process for discernment, and support ordinands and curates.



Property team

Provide and maintain all the housing provided to clergy and curates. Also manage vacant properties, rentals, and a small amount of glebe land.



Governance, Finance, Administration teams

Governance (which includes the DAC) includes managing applications for faculty and providing advice as needed, and the legal process for reorganisations etc. The finance team manage payroll (for clergy as well as diocesan staff), invoices and accounts and provide treasurer support and training. Hillside House is used for diocesan training events - the admin team will probably welcome you on the door! The DAC secretary is ably supported by the volunteers on the DAC.



People & Safeguarding team

We look after the wellbeing of paid employees, and offer training and support to parishes, including advice on matters of mental health*, disability* and racial justice*. The safeguarding team administer the checking procedures and are first point of contact for escalation.



Environment & Sustainability team*

The Environment & Sustainability team is in place to help parishes work towards



Transformation team*

Builds the foundations on which the diocese invests in working collaboratively. Reimagines the way we form relationships, which bring more people to Christ and implement transformational and cultural change.



External Relations team

Provide diocesan-wide fundraising, comms, partnership engagement strategies and advice. Produce content and run the outward-facing online channels, liaise with the media and answer media enquiries.



Education team

Support for church schools and governors, including appointments, resources, training and advice. Provide resources and advice for church schools.



Chief Executive Officer

The Diocesan Secretary provides leadership, management and accountability for Diocesan Support Services. When appropriate, the role also represents the diocese externally (nationally and locally), and supports Bishop's Council and Synod in their role of advising and supporting the Bishop.

Creativity

***starred items/
teams are funded
by external sources**



HOW COSTS ARE WORKED OUT

Parish Share = **Income adjusted Stipendiary costs** + **Income adjusted Shared costs**

Stipendiary Costs

In Bristol Diocese stipends for 2025 are set at £31,600, just over the national benchmark. Pension payments are around £7,000, and housing cost per incumbent are just under £16,600. Adding National Insurance brings cost per full-time stipendiary post to just over £60,000.

Shared Costs

The diocese spends around £3.22m on shared costs:

- £1.02 a year on training future ordinands and providing curates training.
- £2.2m on the people and teams that support you to deliver transformational ministry across the diocese. This includes help with buildings, recruitment, safeguarding, and other day-to-day support - see pages 6 and 7.

Where parishes are asked for considerably more than their previous pledge in order to reach a fair and proportionate contribution, a transitional arrangement will be made.

COMPARING COSTS NATIONALLY

Naturally, whilst parishes recover their own parish share it is diocesan funds and other parishes that cover the gap – that's why it's critical that over the next few years all parishes are able to meet the new calculations.

Costs are fairly typical nationally, but diocesan income varies greatly. Dioceses with historic assets can subsidise parishes significantly, so Parish Share varies across dioceses. Bristol Diocese is not historically wealthy, but has enough diocesan income and grants to cover most shared costs, so parishes are only asked to contribute a small proportion of these.

The diocese is currently operating with a significant annual cash deficit even though we run cost-effective small teams.

Through the generosity of parishes and by exploring new funding sources, it's very much hoped that this deficit can be brought into balance.

Bravery



CALCULATIONS EXPLAINED

Stipendiary Clergy Costs

The cost of the incumbent calculated by combining the stipend (and related) costs with the cost of housing. This figure is then allocated to a parish based upon clergy deployment. For example, a parish with a half-time incumbent would be asked for half of the stipendiary clergy and housing costs.

Stipendiary Clergy Cost Adjustment

Using data from the national church we calculate the average household net income (after housing costs) and compare the parish average against it. The difference is then applied to the stipendiary clergy costs as wither an additional contribution (where household income is above average) or a discount (where household income is below average).

Contribution to Shared Costs

This is based upon a percentage (16% in 2025) of a parish's average unrestricted income (taken from the Return of Parish Finance). Where relevant, any costs of a Local Ecumenical Partnership are deducted to be removed from consideration.

Lowest Income Community Funding Amount

The Diocese receives an amount from the National Church for allocation and we have applied this as a discount on parish share for those churches in the 25% most deprived areas of our diocese.

Parishes with Large Income

Using the average unrestricted parish income (adjusted to remove Local Ecumenical Partnership costs) used for Shared Costs, we calculate an average for the diocese and compare each parish to it. Where a parish has an income of more than 150% of the diocesan average, we ask for an additional contribution of 11% of the average unrestricted parish income.

Generous Giving Adjustment

There are a number of instances where the calculation yields an amount lower than a parish pledged in 2024. Where this is the case, we ask parishes to make an additional contribution so that they are not paying less in 2025 than they did in 2024.

Transitional Relief Allocation

Where the calculation yields a large increase on previous years then the archdeacons have applied a discount to give parishes time to meet the new request.

Bravery



Parish Share makes ministry possible everywhere, through youth clubs, community gardens, kids work, sports events, mentoring programmes, breakfast church and more!

Your openness, generosity, bravery and creativity bring our shared vision of 'humanity reconciled, creation restored' to life throughout the Diocese of Bristol.

Through Parish Share, you are playing your part in providing ministry in every community in the diocese.

Thank you.



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