

Parish Share Guide

Sharing the cost of being
the Church in the Diocese
of Salisbury

Endorsed by Diocesan Synod
September 2024





“I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need.”

2 CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER 8, VERSE 13 – 14

Foreword

As Christians we belong to God through Christ. It follows from this mutual inheritance that we belong also to one another. Sharing in the life of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit not only brings us into relationship with Him, but also enables us to be recipients of his generosity and life-giving love.

The Christian response to God's generosity involves giving to others. This simple yet vital principle of discipleship can be lived out in the way we meet the costs of our shared mission and ministry.

The Share apportionment scheme adopted in this Diocese seeks to build upon this principle in ways that we hope will be both understandable and fair to all.

In our church family we have many opportunities to express our thanksgiving to God, and principally through our generosity to one another. For many, the most natural place to express this sharing is in our local parishes.

However, we are also part of a wider church and Anglican Communion. Our Share System seeks to honour both the local and diocesan dimension of the church family life we share.

Elizabeth Harvey
Director of Finance and
Operations (from 1 April 2025)

April 2025

Introduction

The Share System, introduced on 1 January 2025, is based on the following principles:

- **Simplicity, Transparency and Objectivity**

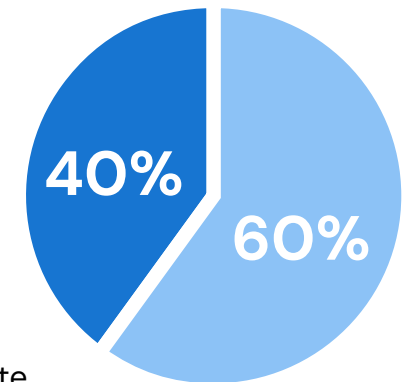
- **Every Benefice should pay a realistic contribution to the cost of being church in the Diocese of Salisbury**

- **Generosity coupled with Mutual Support**

The system defines both the formula for apportionment and the process by which it is applied.

INTRODUCTION

At its simplest, the system, takes 60% of the annual amount to be raised through Share and allocates that to benefices according to the ministry deployed there and takes the remaining 40% and divides that by the number of people who participate in the life of the churches in the Diocese, the 'Worshipping Community.'



As part of the Church of England, each parish completes a mission return to the national Church in January, which includes their 'Worshipping Community' figure. An amalgamation of these figures gives the 'Worshipping Community' total for the diocese.

These figures are assessed by the Deanery Standing Committee then forwarded to the Diocesan Office for calculation of the Parish Share request together with any requests from parishes for assistance from the income on the Stipends Capital Account.

INTRODUCTION

Half of the fee income for occasional offices received for the year up to June will be deducted from the following year's Share request.

The Share requests are notified directly to parishes and copied to Deanery Treasurers, Rural Deans and Lay Chairs. The Incumbent will also receive a letter detailing the Benefice Share request.

The Finance and Resources Committee, appointed by the DBF Trustees (Bishop's Council), ensures that the method of calculation continues to be equitable, and will make any necessary adjustments. They will determine any requests for assistance from the income on the Stipends Capital Account as advised by the archdeacons. Any changes are explained when the annual share request is sent out.

The Process

The process inevitably asks parishes and deaneries to be more aware of each other's needs, strengths and weaknesses. We hope it also fosters a greater sense of belonging to the wider community of the church.

Assessing the number of members for Share – The Worshipping Community

The 'worshipping community' of a church is defined by the National Church as anyone who attends that church (including Fresh Expressions of Church) regularly, for example at least once a month, or would do so if not prevented by illness, infirmity or temporary absence. It includes activities such as fellowship groups and other activities that have a distinct act of worship or prayer. It also includes acts of worship not on church premises (e.g. at a school or community centre).

It includes:

- Those who come to midweek services;
- are ill and unable to come to church;
- are away on holiday or business;
- have home communions;
- are part of a regular 'fresh expression' of church;
- live in care or residential homes and would consider themselves to be full members of their church; perhaps electoral roll members or those who receive the news sheet
- give regularly to their church;
- lead worship.



THE PROCESS

It does not include:

Visitors – e.g. holidaymakers, baptism parties or those who consider their ‘home’ church to be another church. For share purposes, **it does not include those who are under 18 years old.**

The inclusion of Fresh Expression members is the main departure from the old Fairer Share membership definition, but it is time to include these people. Also, they are recorded in the January of the year before they will form part of the Share calculation so there is time to absorb and disciple new adults who come to a Fresh Expression.

In multi-parish benefices, members frequently travel to whichever church is hosting the service and this is something the Diocese wishes to encourage. In that situation you would be expected to count people only once and in the parish which was either/or;

- their place of residence
- their main place of worship
- the parish which received their financial giving

whichever is more appropriate whilst ensuring that the total Worshipping Community for the benefice is correct.

The review process

Each January PCCs are encouraged to approve their Worshipping Community figure and submit this to the National Church as part of their Mission Statistics. In March the Diocesan team will send out a Benefice Share Information Form to incumbents. The form will show the previous year's Worshipping Community number and a box to enter the new figure calculated in January. There will also be a narrative box to explain a significant change in the figure (up or down). This form also includes a section to request relief from central funds.

The Deanery Standing Committee reviews the Benefice Share Information Form for reasonableness (as regards numbers and requests for relief) and comments accordingly. If the Standing Committee cannot agree the Worshipping Communities figure with a parish the Standing Committee has the final say.

The Diocesan Office will make a final review consulting with Archdeacons where appropriate.

The Deployment figure for Benefices

Establishment posts for each benefice are agreed by the Archdeacons by the end of July in the year of the count. It includes those in post, and posts that have been agreed but are not yet advertised or filled.

Where pastoral re-organisation is in hand a view will be taken whether to request share as per any new arrangements likely to take effect by the year end.

Establishment posts are either stipendiary clergy, paid lay posts agreed to be paid through share or house for duty. Paid lay posts are treated in the same way as stipendiary ordained posts for Share purposes.

Part time posts or posts where housing (or housing allowance) is not provided are treated as a fraction of equivalent full time parochial posts.

The following fractions based on average cost differentials are used: -

- house for duty 0.33,
- ½ stipend with house 0.66
- Paid lay post 0.66
- Paid lay post with house 1
- Stipendiary with house 1

Where posts are split across benefices the proportion of the split is agreed with the Deanery.

The calculation of Parish Share apportionment

A parish's share apportionment will be its proportion of the total Diocesan Share request based upon its Worshipping Communities figure and its ministry deployment.

There may be three adjustments to this figure, firstly half the fee income on occasional offices received in the year to June of the preceding year will be deducted. Secondly any request for assistance from the income on the Stipends Capital Account that is agreed by FRC will be deducted.

The third adjustment will occur during the year if the benefice is in vacancy and that vacancy lasts for more than one year. In that circumstance where the vicarage is let out, 75% of the net rental income will be credited against the share request. This will start from January 2026. See appendix 1 for more information about these adjustments.

The Mechanism and Eligibility for assistance from the Income on the Stipends Capital Account

The amount available will be decided as part of setting the Diocesan budget for the year in question. Priority will be given to parishes in areas of social deprivation but any parishes in temporary difficulty (for instance lead stolen from a church roof) can also apply. Requests are to be sent in on the Benefice Share Information Form to the Deanery Standing Committees who will express a view to the archdeacon. The archdeacon will write a report with

recommendations to FRC for all requests from his or her archdeaconry/area. FRC will assess all the requests and decide the allocation.

Payment of Share & Discount Scheme

A discount of 1.5% will be deducted by the Accounts Dept (once the remaining Share has been received in full) where parishes agree to pay in full on a structured basis, either:

1. In full by the end of January
2. In quarterly or biannual payments with payments being made at the beginning of the quarter or half year
3. In 12 monthly installments either by direct debit or standing order

In order to facilitate the relief for parochial fees income, the share system uses the unique parish reference number provided by the National Church. This means that a parish with a number of churches will only receive discount if all churches pay in full using the means above. We encourage parishes and benefices to view share as a mutual responsibility.

Transition Arrangements

For a minority of parishes the new system will involve a substantial increase or decrease in their share request. These will be phased in over 4 years. See Appendix 2 for more details.

Timetable

TIMETABLE

The Diocesan Budget is circulated in draft in April/May for consultation and consideration at the June meeting of Diocesan Synod. This should give parishes not only more time to budget efficiently themselves, but also to have greater time for discussion of the issues raised.

March

The Diocesan Office sends out the Benefice Share Information Form to incumbents with the previous year's Worshipping Community figures pre-populated and a box to enter the current year's figure. The Form will have a section to request assistance from the income on the Stipends Capital Account. **The completed form is discussed and agreed by the PCC and sent by the Incumbent to the Rural Dean.** If no form is returned the previous year's figures will be used.

By the end of May

The Deanery Standing Committee (or other body appointed by the Deanery Synod) assesses both the fairness and the objectivity of the Benefice Share Information Form and, if necessary, discusses them with the parishes concerned. If the Standing Committee cannot agree the parish's 'Worshipping Communities' figure with a parish or is unhappy with its request for assistance the Committee has the final say. The Rural Dean signs the Benefice Share Information Form including any amendments and returns

the forms for all parishes in the Deanery to the Diocesan Office.

June

Diocesan Synod agrees the budget for the following year.

July

Archdeacons agree the deployment figures and review the returns from parishes for anomalies that might need further investigation. Parishes have until the end of July to submit any parochial fees for the year to the end of June. This figure will be deducted from the following year's share request.

August

When all the fees and forms are received and agreed the Diocese makes the diocesan-wide calculation of Share Requests allocating directly

to parishes. The Archdeacons and Deanery Treasurers are also consulted on the first draft of the request.

September

All parishes are notified of their request. A Benefice Summary will be sent to the incumbent with an option to apportion the total request differently across the parishes within the benefice. This may be appropriate for instance if one church hosts a fresh expression on behalf of the wider benefice. Any difference in apportionment to be agreed by all the parishes and notified to the Diocesan Team by the end of October.

November

Final Requests are sent out to those who have requested a different allocation within the Benefice. The Deanery Treasurer, Rural Dean and Lay Chairman each receive a summary of the requests given to its churches. Having gone through the above process, the Deanery retains a pivotal responsibility for seeking to ensure that all its parishes pay their Share to the diocese. It is hoped that both deaneries and parishes find this not only an efficient process, but also one that results in a greater mutual awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of parishes.

Appendix 1: More Information on the Adjustments

A. Rebate of Fees Income:

The fees money must be for the 4 quarters up to June and received by the end of July to qualify for the 50% rebate off the following year's share request. If a priest from a neighbouring parish takes a wedding or funeral during a vacancy or other absence, the minister's fee should be paid to their parish.

B. Assistance from the Income on the Stipends Capital Account:

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation as applied by the National Church to parishes will be used to determine which parishes receive relief on the grounds of social deprivation.

C. Rebate of Rental Income:

75% of the net rental income (after letting agents costs etc) will be rebated. In the event of a double vacancy and both houses are let out, the relief on the second house will start immediately the second the letting starts. After one year of vacancy, relief will be given on the first house as well.

Appendix 2: More Information on Transition Arrangements

As the last Fairer Share count was done in 2019 we recognise that the underlying conditions in some parishes have changed substantially which can give rise to a large increase or decrease under the new system. In order to cushion the effect of these changes, those receiving an increase will have it phased in over 4 years. Those receiving a decrease will be pegged at their 2024 share request for 2 years before receiving the reduction phased in during 2027 and 2028.

In order to calculate the amount of the phasing, it was necessary to calculate a notional 2028 share request and work back from there. The notional request was calculated by assuming no change to deployment and worshipping community figures but adding 2% pa for inflation to the total request for 2025. Clearly these assumptions are unrealistic and deployment and worshipping community figures will change but it has enabled us to give parishes a sense of the direction of travel so they can plan for the future. The 2028 notional figure will be recalculated each year and figures adjusted accordingly until the end of the transition period.

