

2027 Shared Ministry Fund Guide (previously Parish Share)

Together, making ministry and mission possible
across our diocese



October 2026



**“ And God is able to bless
you abundantly, so that in
all things at all times, having
all that you need, you will
abound in every good
work.”**

2 CORINTHIANS, CHAPTER 9, VERSE 8

Foreword

Every day from the North Wessex Downs to the Jurassic Coast, our churches celebrate life's significant moments, support people through difficulty, bring communities together and help people explore faith.

Through our shared commitment and giving, the Shared Ministry Fund (previously Parish Share) enables parishes to contribute to a common purpose: sustaining ministry and a Christian presence among the one million people who live and work across our diocese, now and for the future, and providing the practical support churches need to serve safely and confidently.

I hope this guide helps you understand the why, how and what of the Shared

Ministry Fund, providing clear information, answering your questions and offering reassurance about how the scheme works and the principles behind it.

Thank you for all that you give to the life of the Church – your time, talents and financial support. Your generosity makes a real difference to people's lives, helping sustain ministry, serve our communities and share God's love across the diocese.

[Elizabeth Harvey](#)
[Director of Finance and Operations](#)

[October 2026](#)

Introduction

The Shared Ministry Fund is the way parishes share the cost of ministry and practical support across the diocese. It helps sustain a Christian presence in our communities and enables churches to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the people who live and work here.

Three core principles underpin the Shared Ministry Fund methodology:

- **Simplicity, Transparency and Objectivity:** A clear, consistent calculation using information people can check and understand

- **Realistic contribution:** Each benefice request reflects the cost of locally provided ministry.

- **Mutuality:** Benefices contributing above their own ministry costs help sustain ministry where

This guide explains why the Shared Ministry Fund is needed, how suggested contributions are calculated, what information parishes are asked to provide, what the Fund pays for and the key stages in the annual process.

INTRODUCTION

The calculation is made first for the whole benefice because clergy and ministry are shared across it. In a multi-parish benefice, Worshipping Community numbers are used to suggest each parish's share of the total. The benefice may agree a different split to reflect local circumstances. As a result, a change in one parish may affect the amount requested from the others.

Why do we calculate contributions in this way?

Following wide consultation with parishes in 2022 and 2023, we adopted a method designed to share the cost of ministry and practical support across the diocese in a clear, consistent and equitable way.

The total amount needed through the Shared Ministry Fund is divided into two parts:

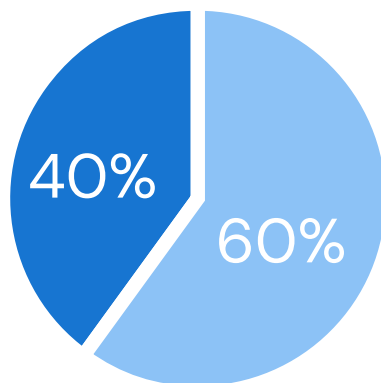
- 60% distributed based on ministry provision
- 40% based on Worshipping Community

Each part is then used to calculate a standard contribution rate across the diocese.

WHY DO WE CALCULATE CONTRIBUTIONS IN THIS WAY?

60%– Ministry provision

60% of the total amount needed is divided by the agreed clergy provision across the diocese to calculate a standard contribution for a clergy post. This is then applied to the number and type of clergy posts allocated to each benefice.



This is not a charge for the actual cost of a benefice's own clergy, but a way of sharing the wider cost of ministry and practical support across the diocese.

40% – Worshipping Community

40% of the total amount needed is divided by the total number of people aged over 25 in Worshipping Communities across the diocese to calculate a standard contribution per person.

This rate is then applied to the number of people in each benefice's Worshipping Community, using information already collated annually for the National Church.

This recognises that sustaining ministry is a shared responsibility, with larger worshipping communities generally asked to contribute more than smaller ones.

WHY DO WE CALCULATE CONTRIBUTIONS IN THIS WAY?

Why not base contributions on what a parish can afford?

The scheme uses information that can be checked and applied consistently across all benefices. It does not attempt to judge what individual parishes can afford, because financial circumstances vary and the ability to give is not necessarily the same as the willingness to give.

Instead, the calculation provides a common starting point, with adjustments to recognise particular local circumstances. These may include rebates for parochial fees, additional support for parishes serving low-income communities, or relief for benefices that have been without a clergy for more than a year. These adjustments are explained later in this guide.

A shared responsibility for ministry

At its heart, the Shared Ministry Fund is about mutual support. The calculation provides a consistent way of sharing the costs of ministry provision, while recognising that some benefices will contribute more than the cost of the ministry they receive, helping sustain ministry in communities where local contributions cannot meet the full cost.

In this way, we support one another to sustain ministry and maintain a Christian presence across the diocese.

How your Shared Ministry Fund request is calculated

This section and table explains how the Shared Ministry Fund is calculated and the information used at each stage. Parishes receive their requests in the Autumn, before the start of the new financial year.

Budget agreed	Two measurers applied	Benefice request calculated	Adjustments applied	Parish allocation agreed
Diocesan Synod approves the annual cost of ministry and parish support	60% ministry provision 40% worshipping community aged over 25	The two elements are brought together for each benefice	Eligible rebates, reliefs and transitional support are applied	A suggested split is provided; the benefice may agree a different local allocation

The process in detail

The numbered steps correspond to the calculation example on page 14.

1

What the Shared Ministry Fund pays for

Each October, Diocesan Synod approves the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) budget and this is used in the calculation.

Contributions to the Shared Ministry Fund pay for the people, services and practical support that make ministry possible in communities across the diocese.

THE PROCESS

Based on the 2027 budget, 89 pence in every pound of regular expenditure directly support local ministry and the services that make it possible. This comprises:

- **73 pence relates to direct ministry costs for stipends**, pensions, housing, water rates and council tax; the training of future clergy; clergy grants (first appointment, resettlement, removal fees), wellbeing support and continuing ministerial development; and the maintenance and improvement of clergy homes.
- **16 pence funds diocesan staff and services that support parishes**. This includes support for vocations and lay-ministry training; communications; parish governance, elections and pastoral reorganisation; legal and faculty advice; church quinquennial inspections; digital, giving, grants and parish trust advice; safeguarding and DBS checks; and a grant to the Diocesan Board of Education for its work with church schools, governors and clergy.

The remaining **11 pence cover the central costs of running the DBF as a charity**. These include technology, human resources, finance, audit, legal and governance costs, support for General Synod members, and the office and facilities at Emmaus House. The DBF also owns Milton Abbey in Dorset and is responsible for its insurance and upkeep.

THE PROCESS

2

Worshipping Community

The participation element makes up 40% of the Shared Ministry Fund calculation. It is based on the number of people in each benefice's Worshipping Community and reflects the benefice's relative size. Benefices with larger Worshipping Communities are asked to contribute a little more, helping to sustain ministry in communities where there are fewer members or local giving cannot cover the full cost.

Parishes submit their Worshipping Community (WC) numbers through the Church of England's annual online Mission Statistics return, which opens around October each year. The return also collects other information about parish life and mission.

From 2027, only people aged over 25 will be included in the Worshipping Community number used for the Shared Ministry Fund calculation. This recognises that younger adults may still be developing the habit and capacity to give. We can exclude people under 18 from your online submission, but we will ask you to tell us how many members are aged 18 to 25.

Worshipping Community Definition

The [national Church defines a church's Worshipping Community](#) as people who attend regularly, or who would attend if illness, infirmity or temporary absence did not

THE PROCESS

prevent them. It includes worship and prayer in church, in other locations and through regular church groups.

Included	Not included
People who attend regular services, including midweek services and those who lead worship. Acts of worship and prayer may be at church or in other locations. A couple who give jointly count as two people.	People who give financially but do not regularly take part in worship or prayer.
People who would normally attend but are temporarily absent because of illness, infirmity, holidays or business.	People who only occasionally watch online services and have little or no other connection with the church.
People who receive home communion or live in a care or residential home and consider themselves full members of the church.	Visitors, including holidaymakers, baptism parties and people whose home church is elsewhere.

In a multi-parish benefice, people may attend services at more than one church. Count each person only once. The benefice should agree which parish will include them, using one of the following: where they live, where they worship most often, or where their financial giving is received.

THE PROCESS

3

Clergy provision

The ministry element makes up 60% of the Shared Ministry Fund calculation. It reflects the ministry provided in each benefice and is based on the agreed number and type of clergy posts.

The Archdeacons agree the posts to include, covering both filled posts and agreed vacancies. Where pastoral reorganisation is under way, they consider the arrangements expected to be in place by the end of the year. Stipendiary and house-for-duty posts are included because both involve considerable costs, such as stipend and pension or the provision and maintenance of housing.

Each clergy post is given a deployment fraction so that different types of post can be compared fairly. The fraction reflects whether the post is full-time or part-time and whether it includes a stipend, housing or both. A full-time stipendiary post with a house counts as 1. Other posts count as a fraction of this, based on their average cost:

House for Duty post (no stipend but house): 0.33

Half-time stipend with a house: 0.66

Full-time stipend with a house: 1.00

If a post is shared between benefices, the deployment figure is divided between them in the agreed proportions, following discussion with the deanery.

THE PROCESS

Where a clergy post is funded wholly or partly by another source, such as an external grant or an institution such as a school, the externally funded element is excluded from the Shared Ministry Fund calculation and covered by a separate legal agreement.

4

How the benefice request is calculated and shared between parishes

The calculation brings together three main pieces of information: the amount needed to fund ministry and practical support, the number of clergy posts in each benefice, and each parish's Worshipping Community number.

The Diocesan Finance Team brings together the approved budget, the agreed clergy-post information and the reviewed Worshipping Community numbers. It then calculates each benefice's Shared Ministry Fund request and provides a suggested allocation between its parishes based on parish worshipping community numbers. The benefice may agree a different parish allocation to reflect local circumstances. Requests for the following year are sent to parishes in the autumn.

Calculated example

The illustration on the overleaf shows how the Shared Ministry Fund request is calculated, using the 2027 Budget figures from steps 1–4 above. Please allow for rounding differences.

1

Annual ministry and support cost:
£12.5m

3

60% ministry deployed

$£7.5m \div 158.4 \text{ clergy} =$
£47,236 per clergy
post

2

40% participation

$£5m \div 18,141 =$
£275 per person

4

A benefice with
1 full-time
clergy and 95
people

$(£47,236 \times 1) = £47,236$
+
 $(£275 \times 95) = £26,125$
TOTAL = £73,361

4

Shared Ministry Fund request for the benefice: £73,361
before rebates and transition arrangements.
(Worshipping Community used as suggested allocation in
multi-parish benefice)

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. These are explained when the annual Shared Ministry Fund request letters are sent out.

Rebates, reliefs, discounts and adjustments

The following rebates, reliefs, discounts and adjustments may apply to a Shared Ministry Fund request.

Parochial fee rebate: Half of the parochial fee income for the four quarters ending in June is deducted from the following year's request, provided it is received by 31 July.

Growth recognition: From 2027, if the Worshipping Community of the parish grows from one year to the next, the participation element for each additional member is reduced by 33%.

Deprivation relief: Relief may be available to parishes serving low-income communities. Eligibility is based on the national Church's application of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and is agreed with the Archdeacons.

REBATES, RELIEFS, DISCOUNTS AND ADJUSTMENTS

Long-term vacancy relief: A benefice that has been without a clergy for more than 12 months and has contributed its full Shared Ministry Fund request may receive relief on the 60% ministry element for the vacant post. This adjustment is discussed and agreed separately from the annual Shared Ministry Fund request issued. The following relief is offered:

- Year 1 – 0%
- Year 2 – 33%
- Year 3 – 67%
- Year 4 – 100%

Relief is calculated by calendar quarter. It starts on the first day of the quarter after eligibility begins and ends on the last day of the quarter in which the new clergy member is licensed. A credit note is normally issued every six months in arrears, or as agreed with the Diocesan Finance Team. Short-term support may be available to a benefice or parish facing significant temporary financial difficulty. The incumbent or PCC Treasurer should apply to the Director of Finance and Archdeacon. The Finance and Resources Committee gives final approval.

REBATES, RELIEFS, DISCOUNTS AND ADJUSTMENTS

Contribution discounts: The DBF offers discounts for early or regular contribution because Shared Ministry Fund contributions help meet monthly costs, including around £900k for stipends and salaries. Parishes can receive a discount by meeting one of the following contribution conditions. The Diocesan Finance Team will apply the discount once the condition has been met:

1. 3.00% – full contribution received by the end of January
2. 2.25% – contributions by monthly direct debit
3. 1.5% – contribution in full (any method or frequency) by 20 December

Multi-church parishes that contribute at church level may agree a discount arrangement with the Diocesan Finance Team, although the Shared Ministry Fund remains a shared parish and benefice responsibility.

Transition arrangements: Changes from the old to this new Share Ministry Fund methodology, are being phased in over four years, with 2027 as the third year. A parish facing an increase will receive relief up to 25% of the difference between its 2026 and 2027 requests, after all rebates, reliefs and adjustments. A parish due a reduction will receive half of that reduction in 2027.

During the transition, a benefice or parish will receive either transitional relief or long-term vacancy relief, whichever is greater, but not both. Any exceptional relief will be considered separately.

Annual Timetable

The annual review starts when the Mission Statistics return opens in October of the previous year and ends when parishes receive their Shared Ministry Fund requests the following autumn.

October–February

The online Church of England Mission Statistics return opens in October. Each parish and incumbent reviews and approve its Worshipping Community numbers before submitting the return to the national Church by February.

In a multi-parish benefice, PCC treasurers and the incumbent should review all parish figures together, as a change in one parish may affect the requests for the others..

March–April

The Diocesan Finance Team collates the submitted

figures and sends them to incumbents and Deanery Standing Committees. The information includes the previous year's figures and space to explain significant changes.

April–June

Deanery Standing Committees review the figures for fairness and accuracy and discuss any queries with parishes. The Rural Dean submits the agreed figures on behalf of the deanery. If a parish has not submitted a figure, the previous year's figure is used.

TIMETABLE

July

The Archdeacons agree the number and type of clergy posts that will be relevant to the Shared Ministry Fund.

Parishes must submit parochial fees for the year to the end of June by 31 July for the rebate to be applied to the following year's request.

August–October

The Diocesan Finance Team calculates and reviews the Shared Ministry Fund requests and meets with Rural Deans, Lay Chairs and Deanery Treasurers in late September or early October.

The Finance and Resources Committee approves any changes to the scheme and exceptional adjustments.

The annual diocesan budget is developed and submitted to Diocesan Synod for approval in October.

October–End of the year

Parishes receive their Shared Ministry Fund requests.

Each incumbent receives a benefice summary and may agree a different allocation between the benefice's parishes. Any revised allocation must be sent to the Diocesan Finance Team by end of November.

