

**Fairer Share Review**

**Exploring  
Options**

## Contents

Who is God calling us to be as the Church?.....	3
Scheme Principles .....	4
Scheme options – what are our choices? .....	5
Ministry Provision .....	7
Ability to give .....	8
Church buildings - Share in the context of a different economy.....	9
Support for giving and fundraising .....	9
Summary of cost and membership-based models .....	10
Allocation alternatives – examples from other dioceses & suggestions from parishes (January survey response) .....	11
APPENDIX: Research of 10 southern dioceses parish share schemes .....	12

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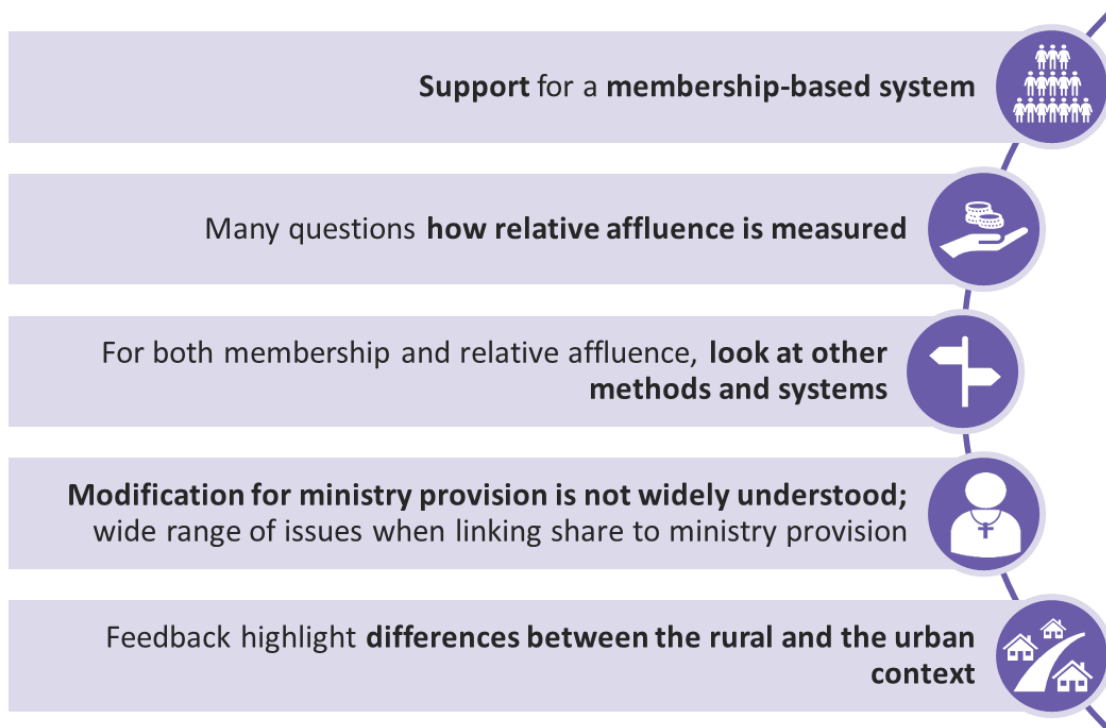
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## Who is God calling us to be as the Church?

...and how do we create a healthy and sustainable approach to mission & ministry and finances?

*We restarted the share review process towards the end of 2021*, seeking views about the current system in a survey format. Findings from the survey completed by 313 PCCs (72%) include:



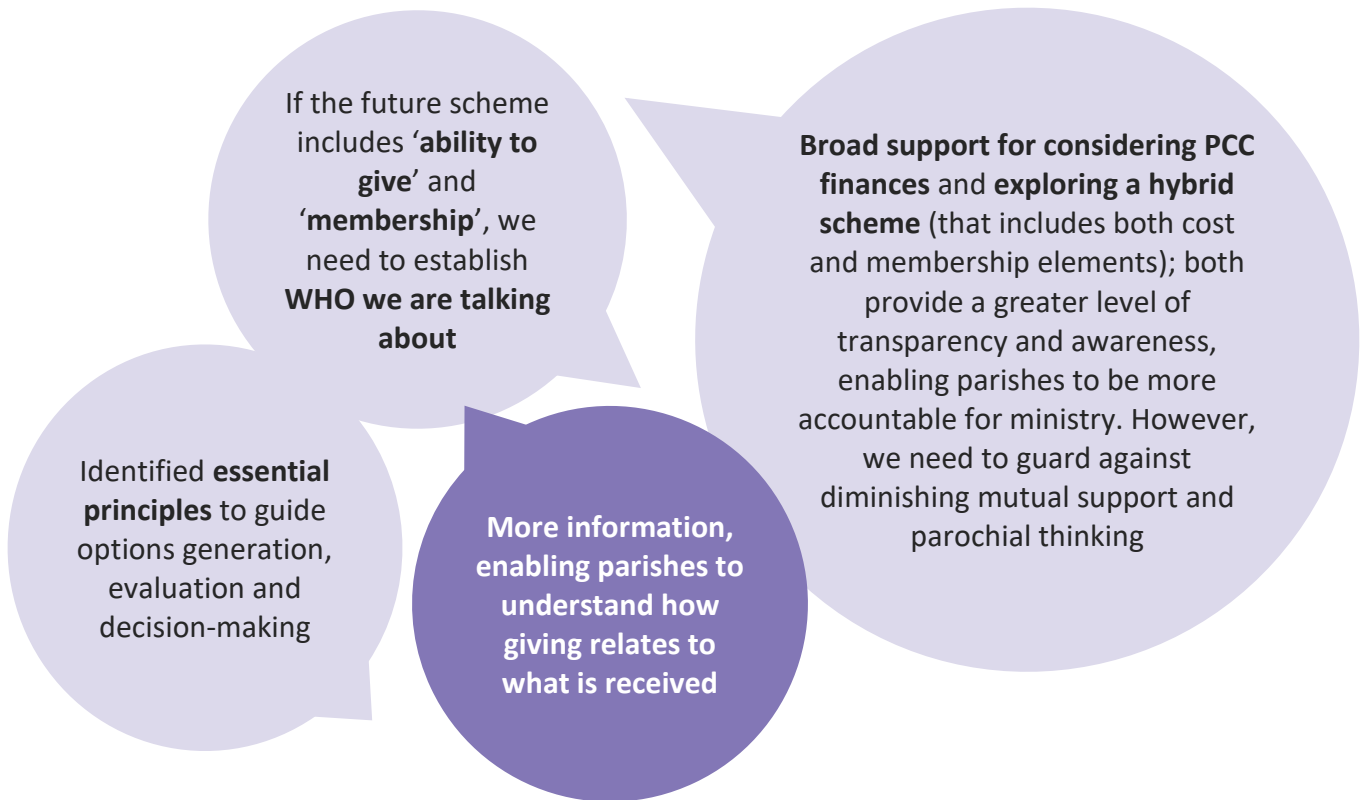
Helpfully, several PCCs sharing ideas and options for the future; while not sought in the survey questions, this has very usefully launched the important **next step of our Review**:

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### ***Generating and exploring options for the future***

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*In May*, 25 people from across the diocese – representing all contexts, lay & ordained – participated in archdeaconry focus group discussions, to gain an understanding of parishes' views on share scheme options and explore ways we can encourage good levels of engagement and support for any changes we make. The discussions provided helpful feedback to shape our thinking around scheme options and next steps:



*We are now launching the next survey, seeking PCCs views as we explore options for a future share scheme*, that will be widely owned and accepted by parishes.

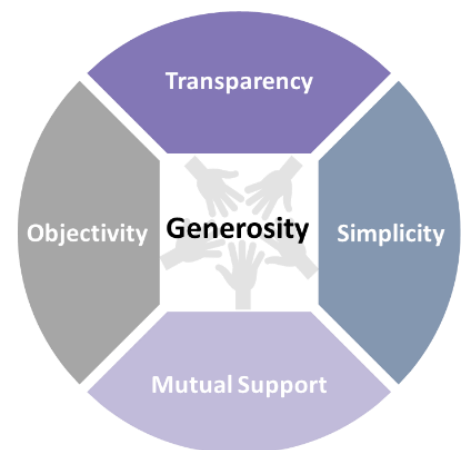
As well as being open to genuinely new ideas, we have the benefit of the experience of [other dioceses](#), and this is also captured in this document.

Once we have a range of feasible options, we will seek Bishop's Council support in October 2022, to evaluate and model these to understand their financial implications.

## Scheme Principles

Participants from the Archdeaconry Focus Groups identified these essential principles to guide option generation, evaluation and decision-making.

The principle of **Generosity is seen as the heart of our faith as we believe in a generous God**, whilst scheme transparency "what money is for, where it is going to" is seen as essential to (re)establish trust in 'the system' and enable parishes to understand how giving relates to what is being received.



## Scheme options – what are our choices?

Parishes giving through the share system enables God’s ministry and mission in our diocese. How much a parish contribute and the way this amount is derived at, is referred to as the scheme models and apportionment.

Changing the share scheme and apportionment, will not address the fundamental issue that the cost of ministry provision and support (£12.5m) is currently 22% / £2.8m greater than the contributions we receive from parishes through share (£9.7m)<sup>1</sup>.




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***Share scheme apportionment enables parishes to prayerfully consider a realistic contribution, rooted in Christian generosity and mutual support***

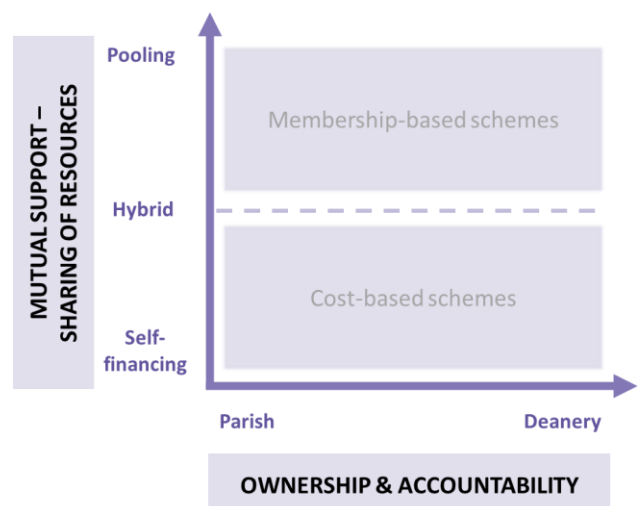
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Our share scheme needs to be relevant and related to the provision of current and future models of ministry. At a time of change in the church we anticipate a renewed vision and strategy for the diocese which Bishop Stephen has signalled his intention to prioritise.

The scheme options available to us are based on the relationship between two principles:

### Mutual Support – sharing of resources

- **Self-financing:** to what extent is the parish, benefice or deanery being asked to self-finance the ministry provision they receive? Referred to as **cost-based models**
- **Mutual support:** to what extent do we choose to pool the resources God gives us and then share it out so that all can enjoy ministry provision. These are the **membership-based models**
- **Hybrid:** an approach that blends both mutual support and self-financing, i.e. membership and cost-based models (see [Gloucester](#) and [Guildford](#)). This generates a degree of realism about cost but equally maintains mutual support.



<sup>1</sup> 2021 Audited Accounts

## Ownership & Accountability – Deanery, Benefice or Parish?

We are connected to each other, living together as a broad Church in our common faith in God. We want to share the resources God gives us for the sake of the Kingdom and enable decisions to be made and owned at a local level, in the light of knowledge of local circumstances.

How do we enable communities to own and be accountable for ministry? Should share be attributed at a deanery, benefice or parish level to support local ownership and accountability? It may increase visibility and allow communities to prayerfully consider mutual support and generosity across boundaries. However, it may have significant and unhelpful resource and relational implications at a deanery, benefice or parish level.

Is there any appetite to move to a benefice and or deanery scheme and if so, what are the considerations for and against?

## More about cost-based models

A self-financing or cost-based model is based on the principle that the **actual cost of ministry provision is attributed** at either a deanery, benefice and or parish level.

- **Calculating the actual cost of ministry provision**  
Dioceses like [Chichester](#), [Oxford](#), [St Albans](#) and [Southwark](#) calculate and attribute the actual number and type of clergy and associated cost at (mainly) deanery level. Oxford also attribute income such as parochial fees and significant investment and rental income to each deanery.
- **Voluntary contributions by parishes – a commitment to be self-sustaining**  
Each parish or benefice, in discussion with the deanery, are invited to make a voluntary contribution which is realistic, challenging, and generous. The diocesan office provides parishes, benefices and deaneries with the actual cost of ministry provision received to inform conversations and ensure voluntary contributions are realistic, challenging, and generous.
- **Local ownership and accountability**  
The two-step allocation from Diocese to deaneries, then from deaneries to benefices/parishes allows for decisions to be made and owned at a local level, in the light of knowledge of local circumstances.
- **Mutual Support**  
Parishes and benefices are asked to prayerfully consider generosity 'locally' (within the deanery, benefice or parish) and give in proportion to what God has given them.

## More about membership-based models

A mutual support or membership-based model is based on the principle of **pooling the resources** God gives us and then **sharing ministry provision based on need and opportunity**. The contribution request to each parishes/benefice/deanery is based on an agreed methodology which recognises that some are able to give more, thereby supporting those in the diocese that are less well off.

Our existing Fairer Share scheme as well as the dioceses of [Bath & Wells](#) and [Winchester](#) have similar schemes. See [Allocations Alternatives](#) for more options and examples.

Strong support remains for some form of membership-based scheme, however many parishes expressed that the way we currently define and count members it is not fit for purpose – it is considered open to interpretation, a cumbersome process and clearer guidance needed.

Below are some of the issues that we will need to address or accept if we do continue with a membership-based scheme:

- A system that is **heavily weighted towards membership numbers can be seen as a tax on growth**, unless there is some form of alleviation, i.e., 3-year rolling average (smoothing effect), a cap or some form of ‘taper relief’
- As the Church of England has responsibility for ‘**the cure of souls**’, should membership be (partially) based on the **potential worshipping community or actual churchgoers**?
- Many **households and couples** make a financial contribution as a collective, rather than as individual members
- Parishes may benefit from **financial contributions that come from ‘non-members’** and equally, some members might contribute to the church in non-financial ways
- It is often easier to ask for and attract financial **contributions from the wider community and ‘non-members’** (e.g. Friends of...) **towards the fabric, emergencies and project of church buildings**, such as roof repairs, installing kitchen/toilets, etc. rather than contributions towards the cost of mission and ministry
- With changing worshiping patterns, **church tradition is less influenced by location**. This is even more pertinent following the pandemic, with wild church, gin church and online worship to name but a few. Using data like the Electoral Roll, population and worshipping community to define a ‘member’ is more about people living in a particular area and the potential opportunity, than the people attending and or give financially to their church.

## Ministry Provision

The share survey results in January 2022 indicated broad support from parishes to include an adjustment in light of ministry provision within the share scheme, however, many parishes felt that they did not understand the current way by which modification is made. Transparency about

cost is essential, enabling parishes to understand how their giving relates to what is being received.

Parishes highlighted wide-ranging factors that influence ministry provision:

- The Church of England has responsibility for care and service to the whole population and therefore **all communities should have access to ministry**
- The **need for ministry** at a locality, regardless of ability to pay, underpinned by the Christian principle of generosity
- The **size of a congregation and opportunities for growth**
- The number and **geographical spread** of churches – making the job of ministers physically doable
- As well as stipendiary clergy, **other mission and ministry resources available** locally include self-supporting and retired clergy as well as lay leaders

As the diocese looks to grow new models of ministry consideration needs to be given to how we will financially support and resource those ministries that compliment but sit outside of the traditional model of parochial ministry (mixed ecology). Opportunities currently exist to further develop chaplaincy, pioneering ministry, lay ministry, increasing our investment in serving children and young people through youth work and expanding the Community Hub network. Therefore, what would it look like to create a share scheme that supports both traditional forms of parochial ministry as well as enabling the resourcing of emerging ministries both lay and ordained in the service of God across the whole diocese.

## Ability to give

‘Ability to give’ is the way we express the principle of mutual support, recognising that some are able to give more (giving parishes), thereby supporting those in the diocese that are less well off (receiving parishes).

We know from the fairer share survey in January 2022 that the current way relative affluence is assessed (self-declared categories) generated the most comments and the predominant view is that “**social wealth demographics do not necessarily reflect individual church members’ wealth or their willingness to give**”.

This challenges us to consider if it remains relevant and meaningful to include ‘ability to give’ as part of a share scheme; is the more pertinent consideration ‘willingness to give’?





**Who are we talking about?** Are we seeking to understand and quantify the ‘ability to give’ of the wider community (Church of England care and service to the whole population), the PCC, the members or combination of?

Objective measures are available once we decide WHO we are talking about, for example:

- Wider community – Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD)
- PCC – annual published PCC accounts
- Members – Experian data (which can provide data at a postcode level)

## Church buildings - Share in the context of a different economy

Our church buildings can be a valuable asset at the heart of the mission and ministry of the local church. They are a focal point for our communities, a place for people to gather and a reminder that God is present in every community. Our buildings impact worship, mission, and ministry. Yet it is evident that for many local churches it is the maintenance of their buildings that dominates the PCC agenda, drains energy and dominates their finances, with many reserves being held for ongoing building maintenance.

The Church Buildings Working Group is preparing recommendations to unlock new approaches to our relationship with our church buildings, to release the missional energy and take the pressure off the local worshipping communities:

- Exploring the value of Festival Churches
- Develop a Buildings Support Team to offer advice and support on using church buildings to serve and resource the wider community
- Offer advice and support for identifying and growing local funding for e.g., Friends of...
- Collaborate with other diocese to secure government funding to assist with repairs, and maintenance and to broker the best deals on insurance, oil, contractors etc

## Support for giving and fundraising

Local church carries significant responsibilities financially for the building, for ministry through share, for local mission and ministry provision. As a collective resource we could respond to the current challenge by significantly investing in fundraising support. At present we support the management of Trusts and Giving but this could be expanded to support for wider philanthropic giving, individual giving and community fundraising. Is there a need for this, or do local church communities have the capacity they already need in this area?

Experience shows that when impact of giving is clearly experienced people are more likely to respond as part of their discipleship journey. We can invest in creating opportunities to share best practice in the communication of the impact of the work of the local church. Telling our story will inspire people across the community to give, even if they are not regular church goers.

## Summary of cost and membership-based models

Models	Direct cost of ministry provision	Cost of common life of the diocese	Other considerations
	(e.g., stipends, pensions, housing and ministry support)	(e.g., National church and diocesan administration)	
<b>Self-financing (cost-based model)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actual allocation by deanery or benefice</li> <li>Could attribute income such as parochial fees and significant investment and rental income to each deanery or benefice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Partially) covered by income from historic DBF assets</li> <li>Balance is allocated based on an agreed methodology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mutual support: owned at a more local (deanery or benefice) level based on local knowledge</li> <li>Affordability: separate hardship or growth funds application</li> <li>If required, allocation method to parish level can be agreed by deanery or the benefice</li> </ul>
<b>Hybrid model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An element (say ½) is based on actual allocation of cost at deanery or benefice level</li> <li>Remaining element (say ½) is based on allocated based on agreed methodology</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diocese of Gloucester and Guildford are examples of such schemes and use separate designated hardship or growth funds</li> </ul>
<b>Mutual Support (membership-based model)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All resources pooled and allocated based on an agreed methodology</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choosing objective rather than subjective methods are key to ensure consistency, transparency, and trust in the system</li> <li>Changes to worshipping patterns are becoming less influenced by location and requires consideration when deciding on the definition of a 'member'</li> <li>A scheme heavily weighted towards membership numbers can be seen as a tax on growth, unless there is some form of alleviation</li> </ul>

## Allocation alternatives – examples from other dioceses & suggestions from parishes (January survey response)

Membership	Ability to Give	Ministry Provision	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bespoke definition</b> (e.g. “a person committed to worship or other regular involvement with the church, and who may reasonably be expected to contribute towards the ministry of the church”)</li> <li>• <b>Regular attendance</b> using the church service register(s)</li> <li>• <b>Civic electoral role</b></li> <li>• <b>Church Electoral role</b></li> <li>• <b>Population</b></li> <li>• <b>Average Weekly Attendance</b> (mission statistics)</li> <li>• <b>Usual Sunday Attendance</b> (mission statistics)</li> <li>• <b>Worshipping Community</b> (mission statistics)</li> <li>• Membership defined as those <b>contributing over a sufficiently meaningful minimum threshold amount</b> (e.g., £5/week)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Indices of multiple deprivation</b> (IMD)</li> <li>• <b>Experian Mosaic</b> (taken from the census and HMRC data)</li> <li>• <b>Church urban fund index</b></li> <li>• <b>Council tax bands</b></li> <li>• Use <b>parish annual accounts</b> to assess ‘ability to give’, e.g. contribution as percentage of total parish income (Southwark)</li> <li>• <b>‘Giving bands’</b> –centered around the national average member’s giving per week compared to the parish’s average member’s giving per week. This will reflect the actual affluence of givers in a parish, include relativity to the wider CoFE community and be indisputably determinable by the PCC</li> <li>• <b>Anonymous income survey</b></li> <li>• <b>Self-assessment</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Actual (100%) cost of ministry</b> provision received attributed to each parish (Chichester)</li> <li>• <b>Same ministry cost allocation</b> for every parish (Winchester)</li> <li>• <b>½ cost of actual ministry provision</b> received (Gloucester)</li> <li>• <b>Modification</b> for ministry provision based on a ratio, e.g., clergy to number of members; clergy to worshipping community; clergy to number of churches in the benefice; clergy-led services as proportion of total services across the benefice</li> <li>• <b>No allocation or modification</b> for ministry provision as all resources are pooled within the scheme (Exeter, Portsmouth, St Albans)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocation at deanery or benefice level, rather than parish</li> <li>• Smoothing effect to manage change in membership (up or down)</li> <li>• Cap / taper relief / alleviation for growth or larger worshipping communities (Bath &amp; Wells and Winchester)</li> <li>• Allowance made in ‘membership definition’ for couples/households</li> <li>• Separate hardship and or growth fund (Guildford, Oxford, Gloucester)</li> <li>• Alleviation for benefices in vacancy (Guildford and St Albans)</li> <li>• Church buildings allowance (Exeter)</li> <li>• % of PCC investment income (Exeter)</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX: Research of 10 southern dioceses parish share schemes

	Bath & Wells	Chichester	Exeter	Gloucester	Guildford	Oxford	Portsmouth	Salisbury	St Albans	Winchester
Population (1)	974,000	1,717,000	1,208,000	682,000	1,071,000	2,428,000	794,000	969,000	1,956,000	1,248,000
Parishes (1)	463	352	485	296	160	608	134	431	335	252
Worshipping community (1)	20,600 2.1%	42,400 2.5%	22,300 1.8%	19,900 2.9%	29,400 2.7%	59,900 2.5%	13,500 1.7%	27,300 2.8%	31,700 1.6%	25,400 2.0%
Share paid as % of total parish income	£9.3m 37%	£13.2m 36%	£8.4m 39%	£6.5m 40%	£11.4m 38%	£19.2m 33%	£4.7m 37%	£9.4m 39%	£12.6m 45%	£9.1m 34%
Share collection Ranking (2)	99.2% (2017) 98.3% (2020) (2)	97.8% (2018) 92.7% (2020) (4)	93.2% (2017) 90.5% (2020) (7)	97.4% (2017) 99.3% (2020) (1)	98.6% (2017) 91.8% (2020) (5)	97.0% (2017) 94.4% (2020) (3)	98.5% (2017) 89.9% (2020) (8)	95.9% (2018) 89.8% (2020) (9)	94.3% (2018) 91.0% (2020) (6)	95.8% (2017) 89.4% (2020) (10)
Avg Share/WC (3) Ranking (2)	£451 (1)	£311 (10)	£377 (4)	£327 (8)	£388 (3)	£321 (9)	£348 (6)	£344 (7)	£397 (2)	£358 (5)
Scheme name	Parish Share	Parish Share	Common Fund	Parish share	Parish Share	Parish Share	Parish Share	Fairer Share	Parish Share	Common Mission Fund
Share contribute towards?	All costs	All costs	All costs	All costs	All costs	All costs	All costs	<b>Not</b> all costs	All costs	All costs
Allocation level	Parish	Deanery	Parish	Deanery	Parish	Deanery	Parish	Parish/Church	Parish	Parish

<b>Elements of share calculation</b>	<b>Membership count</b> (3y avg)  <b>Affluence</b> (Self-assessed)  <b>Benefice Ministry Allowance</b> (alleviation for larger, growing churches)	Deanery expenditure = <b>number and type of clergy serving each parish</b>  PCC <b>pledge</b> according to its ability  Deaneries that cannot cover cost can apply for ' <b>Credit for Mission</b> '	<b>Membership count</b> (3y avg)  <b>Affluence</b> (IMD)  <b>10% of PCC Investment income</b>  <b>Church building allowance</b>	<b>Membership</b> (USA 3y avg) (4)  <b>Dio. Stipends fund subsidy</b> (separate fund using Experian data with 'a bias to the poor')  <b>½ cost of ministry received</b>	<b>Membership</b> (AWA average) (4)  <b>Affluence</b> (Experian)  <b>Ministry costs</b> (same for every parish)	<b>Membership</b> (Attendance and Electoral Roll)  <b>Affluence</b> (Experian)  <b>Actual ministry costs &amp; housing</b>  <b>Church of the future and M&amp;M</b>	<b>Membership</b>  <b>Affluence</b>	<b>Membership count</b> (3y avg)  <b>Affluence</b> (Self-assessed)  <b>Modification</b> (members per clergy)	<b>Membership</b> (3:2 weighted 3y avg of USA: Electoral roll)  <b>Affluence</b> (Diocese recommended; reviewed every 3 years)	<b>Membership count</b> (3y avg)  <b>Affluence</b> (Experian)  <b>Larger worshipping communities discount (&gt;200)</b>
<b>External info used in calculation</b>	No Self-assessed	No Self-assessed	Yes Indices of deprivation IMD	No Self-assessed	Yes Experian	No Self-assessed	Not published	No Self-assessed	Yes Electoral role	Yes Experian
<b>Interregnum adjustment?</b>	No	No	See below	No	> 12 months = 50% discount of ministry costs	No	No	No	20% reduction in stipend contribution	No
<b>Other scheme information</b>	Benefice Ministry Allowance: > 150 members/stipendiary minister > 100 members	PCCs provided with indicative cost of providing ministry.  Each parish, in discussion with Deanery Treasurer decides how much to pledge	When vacancy occurs, engage with parishes if share outstanding and/or arrears	-	Mission investment grant of £600k to help most deprived parishes, and parishes with higher-than-average population	Contribution towards Church of the future and M&M is based on ability to contribute	-	-	-	Members postcodes cross referenced v. Experian to calculate affluence  Online submission of membership count

- (1) Based on 2020 Parish Finance stats as published by CoE
- (2) Ranking is based on 2020 data of the 10 dioceses compared in this table only
- (3) Share paid / Worshipping community
- (4) Usual Sunday Attendance (USA) and or all-week attendance (AWA) as collated / submitted as part of the CoE annual Mission statistic