

## Parish Share Consultation | Core Principles

*'My father is glorified by this: that you bear much fruit and become my disciples'*

### Funding mission, ministry & pastoral care in the Diocese of Salisbury

Every year, the Diocese prepares an annual budget for approval by Diocesan Synod – the 2022 budget has been approved by Synod at its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. The annual budget, which is designed to provide the funding for the mission, ministry and pastoral care programme endorsed by diocesan synod in the Mission & Pastoral Plan, forms part of the Diocese's 5-year framework.

The overwhelmingly largest source of funding for the Diocese, is the 74% of Share contribution by the parishes. The categories of costs the Diocese needs to meet each year are summarised within the budget guide and show that the overwhelming largest cost met by the Diocese is the direct and indirect costs of parish ministry and support (85%). See the [2022 Budget guide](#).

### Parish Share

Many of you will know that, in response to concerns raised by some parishes and deaneries, we began a review of the current system (Fairer Share) to "sense check" whether it is indeed still "fair" and whether there are any changes that might improve it or, indeed, whether to replace it with a different system. This work had got to the stage where we had conducted a limited consultation exercise and were about to launch a wider scale consultation with parishes and deaneries but was paused as a result of the Covid pandemic, the view being that parishes had quite enough to deal with without being asked to give thought to changes to the system for Share assessment.

Now that most Covid restrictions are lifted and the Generous Giving campaign has concluded, it feels like the right time to revisit this subject.

We want to proceed at a pace which allows a good amount of time for parishes and deaneries to discuss this very complex topic with their own members and to feed into the planned discussions at Diocesan Synod, so you will see from the '[Response and timeline](#)' section further below that we are expecting that no final decisions will be reached until later in 2022. This means that the current Share process will be used 2022.

## PCC Consultation – Online ‘SurveyMonkey’ Fairer Share Survey

In this phase of the consultation, we are asking PCCs to think about the core principles behind the 3 limbs of our current Fairer Share system and to let us know whether or not your PCC still supports them. To facilitate feedback, we are asking PCCs to complete an online ‘SurveyMonkey’ Fairer Share Survey. Information to assist you in considering the issues and completing the survey is set out below in this paper.

**Please only submit 1 survey on behalf of the PCC by Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2022.**

Depending on the outcome of this phase of the consultation, there may be a next phase of consultation asking for your views on some more detailed matters, which may or may not include proposals for changes to the current system.

### The "membership-based" assessment system

A membership-based system uses some form of count of people who are (broadly) supporters of the C of E church within the Diocese (for convenience, called here **Supporters**) with the total sum the Diocese needs to raise from its parishes then being divided between those Supporters. This is the system we use. However, in our case – as with many of the other Dioceses we surveyed who use this system – additional layers of complexity are then added.

The key components for our current system are shown in the next section. Complexities include the vexed question of who to include as a ‘Supporter’ for the purposes of the count (see below) and how to "smooth" changes in the count so parishes (especially very small ones) are not caught up in an annual rollercoaster if they have experienced a change in numbers during the year (this aspect may be included in a next phase of consultation).

- **Does the PCC agree that the Diocese should continue some form of membership-based system as a method to divide the total sum the Diocese needs to raise between its parishes?**

### The core principles behind our current Share system

Our current system has 3 (main) components to it:

- a) Size of the parish – determined by reference to the count of Supporters
- b) Relative affluence of a parish (ability to pay) compared with the other parishes in the Diocese
- c) "Modification": an adjustment – up or down – by reference to a pre-set ratio of Supporters to (broadly) clergy who receive a salary and/or house paid for by the Diocese. (This component borrows from one of the other systems used by some Dioceses, which is based on the cost of the ministry received by a parish).

Each one of the elements has significant complexities within it.

## Core Principle 1: Determining the relative size of a parish - The count

As those of you who prepare Share returns each year will know, difficult questions arise as to who counts as a Supporter (or "member" in the terminology of the old guide) for Share purposes and who doesn't. Very detailed guidance has been provided over the years and yet still there appear to be wide divergences in practice across the Diocese. The purpose of the count is to provide a diocesan-wide number by which to divide the total Share request each year. The current system attempts to count Supporters who can reasonably be expected to make a financial contribution to the parish which is more than trivial. The Share review working group has spent some time looking into the consequences (intended and unintended) associated with this approach. One obvious one is that it can seem that there are 2 classes of members, those that give quite a bit financially and are "counted" and those who don't and aren't. For brevity, we aren't including more of the working group's research here but may provide this in the next phase of consultation if it seems helpful to do so. The working group also looked at different options (particularly purely objective ones), such as the civil electoral roll or (less objectively) the parish electoral roll, for establishing the relative size of each parish: all also have difficulties associated with them.

- **Does the PCC agree that some form of supporter count is an acceptable way to determine the relative size of the parish?**
- **Does the PCC agree with the current way supporters (membership) is counted for the Fairer Share assessment?**

## Core Principle 2: Relative affluence

It is a principle of our Fairer Share system that we recognise that the Supporters of some parishes will be much better placed than that of other parishes to contribute financially to the costs of ministry and of maintenance of their own parish church. Given this, it is considered to be fair that they are asked to pay a little more than the less wealthy parishes. To enable this, the current system asks parishes to assess the affluence of their own Supporters relative to those of all other parishes in the Diocese. The accuracy of this is quite evidently challengeable, as there can be very few (if any) parishes with a good enough appreciation of the Supporters of all other parishes in the Diocese to be able to correctly position themselves relative to the others. The Share review group has been looking at objective measures which can be substituted for the current approach.

- **Does the PCC agree that parishes whose supporters (members) are better placed to provide financial support should be asked to pay a little more than parishes whose supporters (members) are more financially constrained?**
- **Does the PCC agree with the current way relative affluence is assessed for Fairer Share?**

### Core Principle 3: Modification

There are two principles behind this element. Firstly, a view that it would not be right to seem to 'tax church growth' and secondly that benefices which use more paid clergy resource per Supporter than what is considered (at that time) to be a fair entitlement should pay more. (NB Modification applies at a benefice/team ministry, rather than parish, level). So, in the [Treasurer's guide to Fairer Share](#) you may have seen that the formulation being used was 131-170 members per paid clergy post/house for duty post. In simplified terms, if the benefice has fewer Supporters per post than the set range, all parishes in the benefice will be "surcharged" and if it has more Supporters, the parishes will benefit from a discount. The rationale is again twofold. Bigger churches tend to engage additional postholders (such as operations managers, administrators, pastoral workers, youth and children's workers) to help resource their larger congregations and outreach work, at their own cost, and so should not have to pay as much for the "diluted" ministry of the diocesan paid clergy stretched over a larger number of Supporters. Secondly where the number of supporters within a benefice was markedly below average, modification ensured that such benefices contributed a more realistic amount towards the actual costs of the ministry they received.

The application of "modification" can have a significant impact on the amount of Share a parish is asked to pay. (For the purposes of this consideration of the principles, please ignore the mechanics of how modification is currently dealt with – ie as an adjustment to self-assessed category – as there is recognition within Church House that this needs to change so that the modification element stands separately from category considerations).

- **Does the PCC agree that Share contribution from a parish should be adjusted in light of the number of stipendiary clergy and House for Duty clergy there are in the benefice to which it belongs?**

## Response and timeline



## Additional information

- [Guide to Fairer Share](#)
- [Treasurer's Guide to Fairer Share](#)
- [Budget Guide 2022](#)

## Fairer Share (Online) Survey – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Below for reference are the questions included in the SurveyMonkey survey:

### YOUR DETAILS AND DECLARATION

In this section we ask for the details of the person completing the survey on behalf of the PCC and to complete the declaration. **Please only submit 1 survey response per PCC.**

#### \* 1. Your contact details

Name and Surname	<input type="text"/>
PCC Post / Position	<input type="text"/>
Legal name of PCC	<input type="text"/>
Deanery	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

#### \* 2. Declaration:

I declare that I have been nominated by the PCC to completing this survey on behalf of the PCC.

I confirm that the answers and comments I have included in this survey:

- a) Have been discussed by the PCC at a meeting and or by email
- b) Is a fair representation of the majority views of the PCC.

- I agree  
 I disagree

If you have selected 'I disagree', please provide further information

### ABOUT THE CHURCH(ES) OF THE PCC

Please select the statements that best describe the demographics of the church(es) of the PCC.

\* 3. Which statement best describes the population demographic of the church(es) in the PCC?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Mixed

\* 4. Please indicate the number of churches within the PCC.

(When answering this question, please do not include 'Chapels of Ease')

### THE MEMBERSHIP-BASED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

A membership-based system uses some form of count of people who are (broadly) supporters of the C of E church within the Diocese.

\* 5. Does the PCC agree that the Diocese should continue some form of membership-based system as a method to divide the total sum the Diocese needs to raise between its parishes?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree / disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### CORE PRINCIPLE 1 – SIZE OF THE PARISH / MEMBERSHIP

\* 6. Does the PCC agree that some form of supporter (membership) count is an acceptable way to determine the relative size of the parish?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree / disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

\* 7. Does the PCC agree with the current way supporters (membership) is counted for the Fairer Share assessment?

(i.e. annually parishes are asked to conduct a 'count' of membership based on a predefined definition. This is used to calculate a rolling 3-year average membership count)

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree / disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

## CORE PRINCIPLE 2 – RELATIVE AFFLUENCE

\* 8. Does the PCC agree that parishes whose supporters (members) are better placed to provide financial support should be asked to pay a little more than parishes whose supporters (members) are more financially constrained?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree / disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

\* 9. Does the PCC agree with the current way relative affluence is assessed for Fairer Share?

(i.e. annually self-assessing relative affluence under one of five categories A-E)

Strongly agree

Agree



- Neither agree / disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### CORE PRINCIPLE 3 – MODIFICATION

***Please consider the principle of modification, rather than the way you might currently be impacted by the existing modification rules.***

\* 10. Does the PCC agree that Share contribution from a parish should be adjusted in light of the number of stipendiary clergy and House for Duty clergy there are in the benefice to which it belongs?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree / disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### ANY OTHER FEEDBACK

11. Please include any other comments from the PCC, not captured elsewhere in the survey.

12. The PCC may choose to upload further relevant information or comments here.

Please upload file here

Choose File

Choose File