Latest News

Covid means Share will stay the same

Our parishes have been told their Share request will remain the same for 2021.

With a few exceptional cases, our parishes will be asked to raise no more in Share than they were asked to pay in 2020.

Writing to the Parish Treasurers, the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, Nigel Salisbury recognised we are living in exceptional times, saying that his letter “comes at a time of continuing difficulty and renewed uncertainty for all our parishes and communities.”

With the possibility that restrictions may still be in place well into next year, Nigel also asked our parishes:

“Whatever your particular circumstances as a parish, please pay us what you can, when you can both for the remaining weeks of 2020 and in the year ahead.”

In the letter Nigel said he was “incredibly grateful for the continued payment of Share to the high level we have seen across the Diocese,”

And said that this, along with an injection of funds from Diocesan reserves, “has enabled us to continue to meet our obligations to date.”

He also stressed that the Diocesan Board of Finance was simply “the vehicle through which all the parishes in the Diocese together hold resources in common to fulfil our mutual responsibilities.”

The Board of Finance is responsible for the payment of stipends, pensions, housing and support costs of up to 200 clergy, as well as a support team, payments to National Church and our annual grant to the Board of Education in support of our mission and ministry to children and young people.

Nigel said that “whilst we are extremely fortunate to have reserves, and it is right and proper that we should make use of them in the unprecedented circumstances we are living through, these reserves are not without limit and will not allow us to continue on our current financial trajectory for long.”

He added:

"To curb expenditure and protect our cash flow” the DBF had furloughed some staff, frozen stipend and salary increases, was restructuring and reducing costs in respect of Diocesan support staff, cutting non urgent expenditure on houses, and securing a government-backed Covid-19 loan.

He said:

“You may also be aware of some of the longer term strategic review work we have in hand – developing a pastoral plan in relation to the deployment of clergy and the further development of lay ministry, releasing houses for sale that are no longer needed, and proactive management of our Glebe and other property assets to derive development potential where it might exist.”

And added:

“After a long and constructive debate at Diocesan Synod we have, for the time being at least, steered away from either a radical and potentially harmful cut in stipendiary clergy numbers, but also from the unwelcome and potentially unrealistic step of increasing the Share call upon parishes.

“Instead we will continue to consult on longer term deployment plans, whilst making some modest cuts to clergy numbers now and continuing to take out support costs where we can. We will also be planning for a Stewardship Renewal across the Diocese at an appropriate time in 2021.

“Our plans for 2021 are to cut 4 stipendiary posts (around 2% of the total), whilst aiming for a reduction of just short of 10% in support staff costs, with a goal to achieve further central support cost savings of 1% per annum over the next 5 years.

“Through these measures, together with further use of reserves in 2021 (made possible through the sale of houses we no longer need), and in recognition of the huge financial pressures on parishes and individuals at this time, we will be able to avoid asking parishes to pay more.”

This means parishes would be asked to contribute again for 2021 the amount they were asked for in respect of 2020.

Read the letter here.

You can see the 2021 budget at a glance here.