

O Lord, help us to go out of ourselves, so that we may give ourselves over to you, with all our powers, with all that we are and all that we have. Amen.

Joseph Boehme

Parish Share



Questions and Answers

**Notes to help Church Councils calculate
the right category and membership figure
for their Parish Share**

“What! Giving again?”
 I ask in dismay.
 “And must I keep giving
 and giving away?”

“Oh, no”, said the angel,
 Looking me through.
 “Just keep giving ‘til the Master
 stops giving to you”.

TIMETABLE FOR THE COMMON FUND APPORTIONMENT PROCESS 2011/2012	
Old Deanery sends out letter and survey form to Churchwardens, copy Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge (PIC)	Late January
PCC/Standing Committee assess the membership and agree a Category	February/March/ April
1 copy returned to Rural Dean for Deanery scrutiny; 1 copy retained in parish	April 20
Rural Dean and Lay Chair convene a group for the scrutiny. Forms are either passed to Old Deanery duly signed off, or there may be a need for a discussion between the Deanery and the parish. Rural Dean then ‘signs off’, or informs parish that s/he is not prepared to do so. Forms then sent to Old Deanery.	May 31
Old Deanery Accounts team process the information on the forms	June to August
Diocesan Synod approves budget	October 29
Old Deanery sends out letter to Treasurers, copy Incumbents/PIC informing the parish of its 2012 parish share.	Early November



What happens next?

You need to complete one copy of the Survey Form and return it to your Rural Dean by 20 April 2011. It will, alongside all the others in your Deanery, be scrutinised by the monitoring group appointed by your Deanery Standing Committee.

- ⇒ Forms are either passed to the Old Deanery duly signed off, or in a small number of parishes there may be a need for a discussion between the Deanery monitoring group and the parish
- ⇒ The Rural Dean will then 'sign off' the form or inform the parish that s/he is not prepared to do so
- ⇒ Forms are then sent to the Old Deanery at Wells to be used by the Accounts team to calculate your Parish Share apportionment for 2012.

Please contact us if you need more advice on financing the on-going needs of your parish. We are here to help!

Stewardship Office:

E-mail: sue.whitehead@bathwells.anglican.org
 Telephone: 01749 670777
 Address: Diocesan Office, The Old Deanery
 WELLS, BA5 2UG

There are plenty of helpful resources at:

www.bathandwells.org.uk/go/stewardship

or at www.parishresources.org.uk

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What is the Common Fund?

The Common Fund is the total of all 496 Parish Shares in our diocese.

Every parish contributes to the Common Fund each year by their Parish Share, and every parish receives *from* the Common Fund in the form of their priest's monthly stipend, clergy pension contributions, housing costs, clergy training and in the wide range of diocesan support services for parishes.

The diocese shares out these contributions fairly, **so that whether a parish is rich or poor**, its ministry is assured and the priest is paid the same as any other priest fulfilling the same calling.

The Common Fund is based upon Biblical teaching:

The New Testament describes a church which is inter-dependent, mutually supportive and generous. Christians are called to give "first to the Lord" of all that they have and to give of their best to the common good.



What is the Parish Share?

The Parish Share is the sum of money paid by your parish each year into the diocesan Common Fund.

Remember, holding back of part of your Parish Share has many consequences both for the other parishes and the Diocese:

- ⇒ It is much harder to attract a priest to a vacancy if the benefice is known not to pay its way.
- ⇒ it is a source of considerable embarrassment to clergy in post if their benefice does not pay its Share, knowing that they are being paid when their benefice is not contributing fully to the Common Fund.
- ⇒ The other parishes of the Diocese have to pay more in order to cover for you.
- ⇒ You may be thought to be misleading your church members, who believe that a good proportion of their giving is going into the Common Fund.

From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:16 (NIV)



What if we are having difficulty paying our Parish Share?

Please do not consider changing the way in which you properly calculate your Church Membership or Category (as outlined in this leaflet) because of difficulties in paying your Parish Share.

You may need to look at reviewing your parish's regular income. The average parish in this diocese receives 70% of its income from planned giving and money on the offertory plate. If you need to increase your income, you should first be sure that your church members have looked seriously at their own levels of giving recently. Some parishes can encourage more regular giving through Standing Orders. Some can make still better use of Gift Aid.

A 'toolkit' is available from the Stewardship Office at the Diocese, which is full of ways of presenting people with the need to review their giving. You can ask the Stewardship Office for help with preparing a programme to encourage increased giving, which is both properly Christian and effective.

If your parish is without a priest due to a vacancy, or has a House-for-Duty priest remember the ministry which the common fund pays for continues non-stop throughout the whole diocese.

If you are facing expensive building repairs, there are many grant funding bodies available to provide financial assistance. The Stewardship Office can provide advice and guidance. More information is available on the Diocesan website.



How is our Parish Share Calculated?

Your parish's Share is based on the Church Membership of your parish and the socio-economic Category into which you have placed yourselves.

*We ask you to aim for the highest Church Membership figure and Category Rating that you believe accurately describe your church.
In this way you will be doing your best to support others within the Body of Christ, and playing your full part in resourcing ministry and mission across the 496 parishes of the diocese of Bath and Wells.*



What is meant by 'Church Membership'?

A member of your church is any person, aged 18 or over, who attends your church at least once a month, or would do so if not prevented by illness, infirmity or temporary absence.

We **include** as members 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 'fresh expression' of church
- ⇒ live in care or residential homes and would consider themselves to be full members of your church

We **do not include** as members those who:

- ⇒ have joined in the last year
- ⇒ are visitors - holidaymakers, baptism parties etc
- ⇒ consider their 'home' church to be another part of your benefice (please pass their names to the relevant churchwardens so they are included in the 'right' church's membership)
- ⇒ receive ministry but have no other connection with your church such as residents of care or residential homes who receive Holy Communion because the home is in the parish

Remember: *If you are uncertain which is the individual's principal place of worship, ask him or her.*



How do I accurately calculate my Church Membership?

Most churches have a master list of names of those who come regularly. In addition to the October national count some churches continue to give out weekly attendance slips during a five-week assessment period early in the year.



What else can affect the amount we pay?

The total amount which the whole diocese needs to raise to cover the costs of ministry changes, but the percentage amount of the general increase may not be the same as your increase, even if your category and membership stay the same. That is because there will be other changes across the diocese;

- ⇒ If membership as a whole **decreases**, the amount to be raised will be shared among fewer people, so increasing the amount to be paid per member.
- ⇒ If membership across the diocese **increases**, there will be more people to share the load and the amount per member will decrease.

It is a fundamental biblical principle reflected in the parochial system of the Church of England that we want to offer resources for the work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in worship, ministry and mission in every part of England, and not just where it can be afforded locally .



What happens if we decide to change up?

If you are moving from D to C, or from B to A, the increase is phased in over two years rather than being an immediate rise. Therefore you will be listed as a Cd or Ab parish for 2012 and a C or A parish in 2013. In this way you can play your part in supporting weaker parishes without having to find a big increase in your Parish Share.

A change from C to Mid, or from Mid to B will take effect the following year. This is because Mid was introduced a few years ago as a “half move” to help parishes who genuinely feel they are somewhere between B and C.

Based on 2011 figures, a move up a Category would be **equal to an increase of just 42p per member per week** for each of the two years of the phased increase.



What happens if we decide to go down?

The PCC needs to be clear that they believe the parish to be genuinely ‘less favourably placed’ than others across the diocese to justify going down a category. They must recognise that they are increasing any subsidy they receive from other churches and be able to demonstrate what has changed in the parish to prompt this move. The effect of going down a Category could be to decrease your Parish Share in 2012.

Please remember that you would be, in effect, asking other churches to bear the part of the load that you are shedding.

Others use their Electoral Roll and the list from the October Statistics for Mission Count as a base. The Roll is a reminder of those unable to attend because of sickness or infirmity. Add other people to the membership if they attend regularly but are not on the Roll.

Your **Church Membership** should be recorded on the Survey Form and sent to your Rural Dean.

Consider the following points on the Survey Form as an aid to checking your Church Membership number:

- The Sunday Attendance you recorded in October’s Statistics for Mission form (where this is available).

*You would normally expect your Church Membership to be at least 20% **higher** than the average weekly adult attendance.*

- Your Electoral Roll membership.

*You would normally expect your Church Membership to be **lower** than your Electoral Roll.*

- Your Church Membership number from last year.

If your Church Membership differs significantly from last year’s, then you ought to be able to identify the reason why things have changed; perhaps a growing congregation, or a number of deaths.

Churches that work together

Some benefices with several churches like to be assessed together. The form allows for this possibility, so if you prefer, you can send us numbers for the whole of your group or team. Please ensure all of the churches agree to this and then fill in the special box at the bottom of the back page of the form.



What is meant by Category?

Your PCC is asked to agree the Category on a scale from A to D which it believes most accurately reflects the parish's relative ability to pay its Parish Share. This is based on the circumstances of the people who make up your Church Membership when compared with other churches in the Diocese.

CATEGORY A Our Church Membership is amongst those most favourably placed.

CATEGORY B Whilst not amongst those most favourably placed, our Church Membership is likely to be better placed than most.

MID: We do not feel our Church Membership is better placed than most, but equally, we recognise that we are not amongst the less favourably placed.

CATEGORY C Whilst not amongst the least favourably placed, our Church Membership is likely to be less favourably placed than most.

CATEGORY D Our Church Membership is amongst the least favourably placed.

Those parishes in A and B pay relatively more into the Common Fund, so that their contributions can be used to help sustain the ministry in C and D parishes.

A parish in an area of great deprivation may be classified as an "S" category parish. This can only happen on deanery recommendation and Archdeacon support. Around 1% of parishes are classified as such across the Diocese.



How do I accurately assess our Category?

It is important that the whole PCC takes responsibility for willingness and ability to contribute to the Common Fund. If we are to be fair, honest and help one another, it is important that PCCs reflect carefully and pray about their position and in which Category they feel they genuinely belong.

- ⇒ Have a look at the proportions of car ownership, house ownership and salaries/occupational pensions among your Members. This can give a pointer towards the right category for your parish.
- ⇒ Compare your situation not just with neighbouring parishes, but also with parishes in other socio-economic areas right across the diocese.
- ⇒ Look at how many of your members are taxpayers, and so eligible to sign up for Gift Aid. Many part-time workers and many pensioners have enough income to pay tax.
- ⇒ It may also be helpful to seek the advice of those who have a wider knowledge of the churches in our diocese such as your Rural Dean, Lay Chairman or Archdeacon.