

29th August 2018

Dear Colleagues

Diocesan Stipends Fund Allocation 2019

We're writing to invite you to express an interest in getting involved in a project we hope to develop, enabled by the allocation of funds from the Diocesan Stipends Fund to support our Parish Share contribution.

You may recall that at the last Deanery Synod meeting reference was made to the opportunity to bid for additional support in 2019 from the Diocesan Stipends Fund (DSF). The Deanery Chapter's initial thinking about directing this to a mission project was mentioned.

Background

In 2016 Diocesan Synod agreed that deanery Parish Share support from the available DSF would be shared in two ways:

- One half of the available funds would be allocated to deaneries based on population, adjusted for Experian income indexing to provide a clear bias for the poor.
- The other half of the available funds would be allocated at an inter-deanery meeting to be held each summer as the final part of preparing the DBF budget for Synod.

For 2018, our Deanery received £17k parish share support from the DSF following last year's Inter-Deanery meeting. Our submission to that meeting had asked for this amount for the Deanery which would be allocated to support the payment of Parish Share in the newly created Stroudwater Team. This would ease the process for the parishes there of contributing to the cost of the administrative hub that was envisaged as a key element of the team's functioning.

A key point about the use of the DSF is that it has to be related to stipends so proposals from deaneries have to demonstrate how any additional support to Parish Share from the fund supports ministry, and enables the full Parish Share contribution to be made. Any amount allocated simply reduces the overall expected Parish Share to be found by the Deanery, we don't get a cheque from the Finance Office!

Proposal for DSF for 2019

For 2019 the figure available for each element of the DSF outlined above is £218K and the Inter-Deanery meeting to discuss the use of the second element took place on 19th June 2018.

In considering options for the bid for 2019, the Deanery Chapter focussed on one of the key proposed actions in our Deanery response to the *Life* vision “Being creative in our contact with our schools”. The Deanery bid argued that the high turnover of incumbents in the deanery in recent years has made it difficult to develop plans to pursue this. It therefore proposed (in addition to a further small sum for Stroudwater) a Deanery-wide initiative in partnership with a local organisation to work creatively with schools and local churches: the *Illuminate* project. The Deanery has been allocated £25K from the DSF for 2019 and it is proposed to use the majority of this in the work with Illuminate.

You may already be familiar with the Door Youth Project (www.thedoor.org.uk), a Christian charity serving the Stroud district, which has an established reputation of community youth work and family support. It has recently developed the “Illuminate” youth work project which, as it develops, will be working across multiple secondary schools to grow Christian youth as whole life disciples, impacting the “frontline” of their school, growing them as leaders, reaching out to make disciples. It also seeks to equip local churches to support and grow their young people. It is gathering funding from a range of sources, so our commitment would just be a part of its costs.

Unlike the standard youth work model of church-based workers, the Illuminate project is centred around secondary schools, thus potentially having an impact on a significant number of parishes for every school-based group. This approach has the potential to be a highly efficient means of investing in the future of the church through its young people and one that could well be replicated elsewhere, once proven in the Stroud Deanery area. Bishop Rachel is very supportive of the work of the project.

Are you interested in this for your benefice?

At this stage we would like to know whether you would be interested in finding out more about this project with a view to your benefice potentially taking part. We’ll then arrange a briefing/discussion meeting with all those who express an interest to explore the approach further. The way the financing works is that each benefice that takes part will contribute an amount to the payment we make to Illuminate, and will get an equivalent reduction in their Parish Share allocation for 2019. The idea is that you can still meet your full Share while also being able to invest a modest amount in this new ministry.

We hope that you’ll be interested in exploring this opportunity further. If you are then please let Sally Withers at the Deanery Office know by 19th September so that we can arrange the further briefing and discussion.



Revd Pat Freeth
Interim Area Dean



Margaret Sheather
Deanery Lay Chair