

June 2018

A Message from Bishop Rachel and Colin Rank (Chair of the Board of Finance)

Parish Share

The detail about Parish Share is available elsewhere, but the point to emphasise here is that clergy who are leaders in mission are provided for out of the Parish Share that we all contribute towards. It is not about 'paying just for what we get'; it is about being the unified body of Christ giving into a 'common purse' each one in the generous support of all.

Bishop's Council approves the budget for 2019 at the meeting on 25 July 2018 following which the Parish Share figures for the next year will be circulated to deaneries and incumbents by the end of August.

The budget process might seem protracted, but it needs to follow an orderly path to be ready in time for Diocesan Synod to approve it at their November meeting.

Part of that path involves the allocation of the Diocesan Stipends Fund (DSF) at a time when the Parish Share figures are as yet unknown.

All of this serves to emphasise the true nature of Deanery Parish Share calculations which are ultimately all about the generosity of 'giving'

Diocesan Stipends Fund (DSF)

In June 2015 a revised calculation for the allocation of Parish Share was approved by Diocesan Synod. This calculation excludes income from the Diocesan Stipends Fund (DSF). The figure available from the DSF varies from year to year.

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. For 2019 this figure £218k
- 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 2019 this figure is £218k

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Inter-deanery meeting 20 June 2018 to discuss the allocation of the £218K:

The Area Deans and Lay Chairs (or a representative) gathered together for our second annual inter-deanery meeting. In addition to ourselves and the deanery representatives, the meeting was attended by Ben Preece Smith (Diocesan Secretary), Julie Ridgway (Head of Finance) and Archdeacon Phil. The aim of the meeting was to have a collegial conversation to strengthen our sense of 'diocese' and mutual support within the Body of Christ.

The Experian contextual data for each deanery had been circulated prior to the meeting and each deanery had submitted a short paper outlining where the additional funds might be applied within their deanery and an initial suggestion of a sum they would like to receive from the funds available. Each deanery pairing also shared how the funds allocated at the 2017 meeting had been distributed within the deanery.

Colin Rank began the meeting with a short meditation and prayer from Psalm 133. He highlighted the theme of the Psalm extolling the virtues of God's people living together in unity. It is like a fresh anointing on the priesthood cascading down, bringing a fresh blessing of Life from God which touches all the people like a covering of heavenly dew.

Each deanery spoke to the points made in their paper and 'request' figures were entered on a spread sheet. The total figures submitted came to approximately £268k

The aim was not to try and share out the 'financial pot' in a formulaic way or even necessarily give bias to the poor (as that is the basis on which the other 50% of DSF is allocated). Rather it was to listen to particular needs and situations and discern where encouragement and mutual support might best be focused in the coming year regarding Parish Share allocation. It was recognised that agreed figures would be arbitrary sums and not specific percentages etc. It was agreed that both of us would further reflect on all that we had heard before producing final figures. These figures have now been circulated to Area deans and Lay chairs.

Encouragement and Inspiration:

Once again it was very encouraging to be part of a conversation in which people not only spoke of their own contexts, but also spoke out in support of other deaneries as they listened to their contexts. It was inspiring to hear people offering to reduce their proposed sums in order for another deanery to receive more support with Parish Share giving.

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Deanery allocation:

Whilst most people spoke of challenges in their deaneries relating to specific benefices, the allocated figures are for each *deanery*, in the same way that Parish Share allocations are for each deanery. This year, the timetable for confirming Parish Share figures and setting the budget includes a request for PCCs and benefices to hold meetings in September to discuss their figures ahead of a deanery meeting which we hope might reflect the same spirit as was evident at the inter-deanery meeting regarding benefice/parish allocations (Please see attached sheet). Depending on the dates and times of those deanery meetings, Archdeacons and/or Julie would be happy to be present and offer support.

Stewardship:

It was good in our conversation together to hear of places where there is a commitment to focus on stewardship, and indeed work is being undertaken at College Green to pilot some work in specific deaneries. If we are to receive and share the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ so that people may know life in all its fullness, then we need to enable people to better understand financial giving as a response to God's generosity to us, and be both challenged and excited. The Diocese of Gloucester is the place where the Parish Giving Scheme originated. It is now established in a number of dioceses and there are lots of good materials and resources to assist and excite people about financial giving. Appropriate support can be provided by PGS, staff at College Green and the Board of Finance.

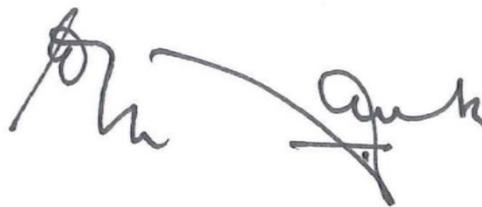
This comes with our thanks to all who participated in an uplifting and heartening meeting

*Yours Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty;
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.*

All things come from you and of your own do we give you (based on 1 Chronicles 29:14)



Bishop Rachel



Colin Rank