

FAQs for parishes

Why are we moving to a three-year share request? We have had requests from some churches for this, as it will help both parishes and Diocese to better plan and budget, enabling us to continue our missional aims.

Will the three-year share request be updated year on year? A small percentage increase will be inbuilt for inflation, but if inflation continues to rise above this, we may need to update and reissue these figures. These requests will continue to be sent out each year to help keep you up to date with your budgeting.

How will I know when my turn in the three-year cycle is coming up? The timetable will be uploaded to the website so that you can always access an up-to-date version.

Will there be any new support offered, or will we just be sign posting to existing support? Both. We are planning to provide some budget training for parishes in Autumn 2025 to help you plan and manage your church budgets. We will also be signposting to existing support that the Diocese provide and including some new resources.

How has the order of parishes/deaneries been decided? Primarily in consultation with your archdeacons. We have also had to try and ensure that we are seeing approximately a third of parishes each year (about 150), which means that some deaneries may have been moved slightly in the order due to the practicalities of visiting you all.

Why aren't we visiting those parishes who don't currently pay 100% of parish share first? We discussed various approaches to visiting parishes, but after speaking to the Manchester diocese who have already run a similar scheme, their recommendation was not to take this approach. This is because we also want to offer help and support to the parishes who have been paying 100% of their share request but who may be struggling to do this.

The PSA meetings

My church is already paying 100%, do we have to have a meeting? These meetings are not mandatory, but they are your opportunity to talk to us about your church and how things are going. It gives us a chance to offer you support where needed and encourage you in areas that are going well.

Who needs to attend the PSA meetings? It will be up to each PCC to select the individuals to attend these meetings. As a minimum, we would expect the incumbent

and the treasurer. Churchwardens or key people from your PCC might also be appropriate. We would suggest a maximum of four attendees, but if more are required, please get in touch with us ahead of your meeting.

How will these meetings work with a multi-parish benefice? Ideally, we would see each individual parish, which works for those with individual share requests. Where there is a multi-parish benefice which receives a joint share request, we will need to discuss this with those involved as to who should be in those meetings.

Will these meetings still happen during a vacancy? We may still be able to proceed without an incumbent if the PCC feel able to take this forward. If this applies to you when you are due to be visited, we can have a discussion about who would be appropriate to be involved, as your area dean or archdeacon may be able to support you in these meetings. In other situations where the incumbent is in post but unavailable due to maternity leave, sick leave etc, we have built in some flexibility if the incumbent would still like to be involved in this process.

What happens if we have a meeting and don't come to an agreement? If no agreement can be reached, the default position will be to go back to the figures set out in the three-year parish share request.

Are these agreements agreeing to the share request, or will they have legal liability? The agreements we make at the meetings will be the first step in your parish agreeing to the share request, the second step being a PCC resolution agreeing to it. They will not create a legal liability.

Will the parish share formula be changed at all? We're not looking to change the formula at the current time, however there may be instances where the formula doesn't work for your parish. One instance that we know of is the church attendance factor not taking into account a church service that only happens once a month across several different churches. This means that the usual Sunday attendance doesn't show the correct figure. If this applies to you and it hasn't been adjusted, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can recalculate your parish share request if necessary.

How much do we expect parishes to be able to increase parish share contributions by when their current level may fall far short of 100%? The current parish share system is not working, so we're trying something new. We hope that by investing time into having these conversations and looking at your church finances with you, we may be able to identify areas in which we can help to support your parish. We may also be able to agree reduced requests with a view to increasing them over the coming years. There are some financial risks to this, especially if we were to agree to large reductions across the Diocese, so this will need to be done carefully and consistently.

Why do we need a PCC resolution following the meeting? We want the parish share request to be discussed by the whole PCC so that they take an active part of the agreement process. The agreements that we make in our meetings together will represent a commitment and intent from your parish to contribute an amount that is both reasonable and attainable and so the PCC need to understand and support this.

My parish won't be seen until year 2/3:

- **Which years will my meeting be relevant to?** Broadly speaking, the current and following two years. If your meeting is later in the year, we will be speaking about the following three years. We will confirm the exact years with each parish prior to their individual meeting.
- **I want to be seen earlier** –We're delighted that you're as excited about this as we are! We have 450 parishes to meet with, so we've got a big job ahead. All the help that we can currently provide you with is linked to on the Diocesan website, so have a look there in the first instance. It might also be worth speaking to a member of the Stewardship and Income Team. If this doesn't resolve your issue, speak to your area dean in the first instance who may refer you to your archdeacon.
- **I need help with a specific issue now** – All of the normal routes such as the website and chatting to a member of the Stewardship and Income team are open to you.
- **What do we pay for parish share in the meantime?** – Three-year parish share requests will be going out to all parishes in October 2025 for the years 2026-2028. Until you have your Parish Share Agreement (PSA) meeting, please continue to pay your parish share contributions according to the request.

After the meeting

What happens if/when things change after the agreement has been made? Once we have agreed on a contribution to parish share, that's not the end of the story. We're going to be diarising reviews and following up with you if there any difficulties. You can help us in this by keeping us up to date with any unexpected/major changes to your financial situation.

What happens if we don't pay our parish share in full/don't increase our parish share payments? If you're trying your best to meet your parish share contributions and are in communication with us, we should be able to come to some agreement. We understand that for some parishes, parish share requests can appear to be unrealistic, and it can be extremely disheartening if it can't be met in full. Our goal will be to agree a contribution that does feel realistic and to put in place support to help you to increase contributions over the next few years.

