

TIMETABLE FOR THE COMMON FUND APPORTIONMENT PROCESS 2010/2011	
Old Deanery sends out letters to Churchwardens and Incumbent / Priest-in-Charge	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
Parishes receive a 'steer' as to the likely Parish Share for 2011	September
Synod approves budget	October 16

How do we



decide?

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”.**

A ‘toolkit’ is available from the Stewardship Office, 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 which is both properly Christian and effective.

Please contact us if you want to order the ‘toolkit’ on giving, or if you need more detailed advice on financing the on-going needs of your parish, or if you have a major capital project which requires outside funding.

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

When completed one copy of the form should be returned to your Rural Dean by 20 April 2010

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 2011

How can we increase our PCC's income to enable us to pay our Parish Share?

The average parish in this diocese receives 70% of its income from planned giving and money on the offertory plate. If you think 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.

Many parishes find they still have a high proportion of regular givers whose gift is under £3.00 per week, which covers less than half of the average Parish Share and allows nothing for the direct ministry costs of the parish. Some can encourage more regular giving through Standing Orders. Some can make still better use of Gift Aid.



What is the Parish Share?

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



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, mainly in the form of their priest's monthly stipend, but also in the form of 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. Without regular instalments of Parish Share from parishes, there would be no Common Fund to pay our clergy, and no support for the work that goes on in our parishes and the wider church.

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.

How does the Common Fund enable us to help each other?

We ask each parish to assess their membership and choose their category. The membership is assessed in accordance with the guidance starting on page 6, and the category is a reasonable and honest judgment of your own particular congregation's relative capacity to give, in relation to the likely ability of members of other congregations around the diocese. We are looking for a simple comparative assessment based on common sense and experience, not an intrusive or complex calculation.

*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.*

Your parish's Share is based on the number of members you have and the category into which you have placed yourselves.

This method was agreed by Diocesan Synod in 1995 as the fairest way of asking parishes to raise the money needed to pay their share of the cost of ministry across the diocese. It has been amended in minor ways and is kept under review.

down a category, and must recognise that they are increasing any subsidy they receive from other churches.

What else can affect the amount we pay?

Apart from changes in your category and membership number, each year the total amount which the whole diocese needs to raise to cover the costs of ministry changes - it usually goes up! 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 every Parish Share. But 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 locally afforded.*

What happens if we decide to change up?



If your parish decides to go up a category, say, from B to A, the increase is phased in over two years, rather than being an immediate rise. You will thus not pay the full up-rated Parish Share straightaway, and will be listed as an Ab parish for 2011 and an A parish in 2012. In this way you can play your part in supporting weaker parishes without having to find a big increase in your Parish Share.

If you choose to move from C to Mid, you will contribute your Mid share from 2011, but remain at Mid rather than going up to B in 2012. Of course, you can still choose to go from Mid to B at any time.

What difference will it make?

Based on 2010 figures, a move from D to C or from B to A is **equal to an increase of just 41p per member per week** for each of the two years of the phased increase. A move from C to Mid, or from Mid to B, being a 'half move', likewise means an increase of 41p per member per week. So you can easily calculate the impact it will have on your finances.

What happens if we decide to go down?

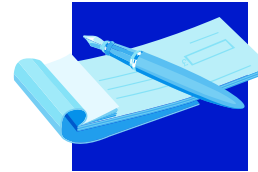
If you decide to go down a category the effect will be to decrease your Parish Share in 2011. You will need to demonstrate what has changed in the parish to prompt this move.



Please remember that you are, in effect, asking other churches to bear that part of the load that you are shedding. The PCC needs to be clear that they are genuinely 'less favourably placed' than others across the diocese to justify going

In this way each parish decides its own contribution to the mission and ministry of the whole diocese.

What is our obligation to pay the Parish Share?



We are an inter-dependent network of churches, and we all rely on parishes making an honest assessment of their own worshippers' ability to pay into the Common Fund. Every parish has difficult choices to make about finance, and there is no legal obligation for any parish to pay its Parish Share!

However, as well as paying for the cost of stipendiary ordained ministry across the diocese, the Common Fund also contributes to the cost of the whole ministry, including for the wider church, ie the training of Ordinands, and support for our fellow Christians at home and abroad.

So there is a huge moral obligation, because the contributions towards the Common Fund are literally the parishes' share in the cost of providing ministry right across the 496 parishes of our diocese.

That cost (£9.0 million for 2010) does not alter because of any one parish's circumstances. So if your parish is facing expensive building repairs, or is without a priest due to a vacancy, or has a House-for-Duty priest, remember the ministry continues non-stop throughout the whole diocese, and any reduction in Parish Share for your 'special circumstances' would simply mean all the other parishes paying more in order to cover for you. In addition, any holding back of Share would mislead church members who believe that a good proportion of their giving is going into the Common Fund.

Consider the position of the clergy. It is much harder to attract a priest to a post if the benefice is known not to pay its way. And 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.

What is meant by 'Church Membership'?

What is needed is an accurate church membership figure, using this statement as a good guide:

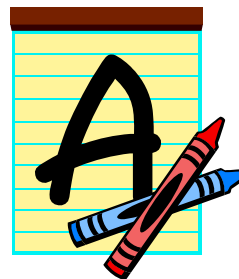
Please note that this is not the same as weekly attendance!

We include as members those who:

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.

- ⇒ 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

All these are living members of the Body of Christ. We must not



So how do we know which category is right for us?

Having a look at the proportions of car ownership, house ownership and salaries/ occupational pensions among your members 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.

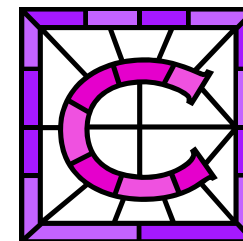
You may also wish to look at how many of your members are taxpayers, and so eligible to sign up for Gift Aid. Many part-time workers and many pensioners have enough income to pay tax.



Mid was introduced two years ago to help those parishes who genuinely feel that they are somewhere between B, 'better placed than most'

and C, 'less favourably placed than most'.

A very few parishes, often only 3 or 4 at any one time, are in S category. They are in areas of great deprivation and are given an additional discount suitable to their circumstances. A parish does not choose to be S; it can only become S on deanery recommendation.



You are assessing the relative ability to pay of the people who make up your Church Membership, when compared with other churches in the Diocese. We know this is not easy, but we ask you to make as honest an assessment as you can so that those churches that are less well off do not end up with a bigger burden than they can manage.

By its very nature, this system means that there should be the same number of members in category A and B parishes as there are in C and D parishes.

The parish share system is about us helping one another and not about avoiding our responsibilities.

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.

You might also want 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.

It is important that the whole PCC takes responsibility for your willingness and ability to contribute to the Common Fund. Your decision should therefore be made by the whole PCC (or, exceptionally, when meeting dates do not allow this, by the Standing Committee).

If we are to be fair and honest with each other, then it's important that PCCs reflect carefully and pray about their own position and in which Category they really belong.

deny any Christian the opportunity to play their full part in the resourcing of God's work.

As your 'church membership' includes only those who think of your church as their principal place of worship, we do not include as members those who:

- ⇒ have joined in the last year (to avoid a 'tax' on growth)
- ⇒ 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

The Survey Form enables you to record these numbers accurately and it is sent to your Rural Dean when completed. It is then passed to the Diocesan Office where the Accounts staff use it to apportion your Parish Share for next year.

How to work out your membership

There is no one way to determine your membership. The aim is to make sure you do not miss anyone out, nor include anyone twice.



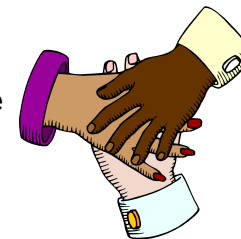
- ⇒ Most churches have a master list of names of those who come regularly
- ⇒ In addition to the October national count some churches continue to give out weekly attendance slips during a five-week assessment period early in the year
- ⇒ Others use their Electoral Roll and the list from the October Statistics 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

As an aid to checking your number, the Survey Form gives:

- ⇒ 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 greater than the attendance on any particular Sunday.
- ⇒ Your Electoral Roll membership. You would normally expect your church membership to be smaller than your Electoral Roll.
- ⇒ Your Church membership reported by you last year. If your figure in box 4 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.



But please make sure all of the churches agree to this and then fill in the special box at the bottom of the back page of the form.

The Categories

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.

Each parish is asked to assess itself each year on a socio-economic scale from A to D. Your PCC is asked to agree the category (A, B, Mid, C or D) which it believes most accurately reflects the parish's circumstances.