

## Notes from the Stroud Deanery

### Open Parish Share Meeting

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July, 7.30pm at St Laurence Church, Stroud

Led by Archdeacon Jackie and Julie Ridgway, Diocesan Head of Finance

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Archdeacon Jackie opened the meeting with prayer and thanked everyone for taking the trouble to come along and join in the discussions. The aim is for everyone to go home with a greater understanding of the whole system of Parish Share, what it does and how it works. The presentation is being trailed this evening, along with the power point slides, and is aimed primarily at PCCs. Your feedback would be very welcome at the end of the evening.

What is Parish Share - As Christians we belong to something much greater than ourselves, we are part of the Church, which is the body of Christ. We are joined together in Christ. The bible tells us: 'You are the body of Christ and individually members of it' (1 Cor 12:27). The concept of Parish Share is based on this understanding of the Church, 'inter-dependent, mutually supportive and generous' – a hallmark of our faith is to help others, to see that none go without and to share what we have – **Parish Share is giving**. When a church contributes to an amount of money to Parish Share it is giving into a common purse, which is then shared out so that all parishes/benefices may have a priest whether they are rich or poor. The Archdeacon outlined the cost of a priest, which includes their stipend and pension contributions, housing costs and initial training, plus ongoing training and support. Parishes/Benefices also receive a wide range of support services (such as safeguarding expertise, legal advice, buildings advice, assistance with problems, disputes and concerns) and ongoing training (such as bereavement teams, worship leaders course, development for lay and ordained ministers, children and youth work) thanks to the 'common purse'.

Julie Ridgway then gave a 'summary of generosity' of the giving from 2014 to 2016, bearing in mind that there was a move to the new calculation method in 2016 – Stroud Deanery Parish Share allocation for 2017 is £734k, to be offset by the Diocesan Stipends Fund allocation of £21k, leaving a final balance of £713k for 2017. Comparing giving to other Dioceses – Giving to parishes -17<sup>th</sup> (just above Bath & Wells) and Giving to our Diocese 36<sup>th</sup> (just behind Leicester and ahead of Ely). There followed an in-depth look at the 2017 budget for our Diocese (*please see the attached copy of the Powerpoint presentation slides for the full details*) giving a final Base Allocation of £7.4m split ½ by clergy headcount and ½ by Usual Sunday Attendance (USA). How the Base Allocation becomes Parish Share: Moderation within the model, with a cap so that no benefice sees increases of more than 4% + inflation rate used in DBF budget (1.5% for 2017) – Deanery Moderation is then applied, before the Stipends Fund support. (*DSF prior to the new model was shared equally, regardless of need. It is now targeted - half to give a 'bias to the poor' and half allocated from an inter-Deanery meeting chaired by +R and Chair of the DBF*). Methods of Parish Share Calculations vary, but the main priority is for it to be fair and equitable.

A time for questions followed:

- Why calculations by Benefice, not Parishes? *We are not in a position to drill down to that level of detail. Do liaise with your Deanery to ensure a sense of fairness and equity. Usual Sunday Attendance (USA) are taken from a 3 year average, so 2017 would have been based on 2013, 2014 & 2015.*
- Do we still have to pay Parish Share during a Vacancy? *Yes, as total calculation of PS needed in the Diocese as a whole takes vacancies into account and is based on an average of eight vacancies per year. It was noted that Stroud Deanery have sustained at least 4 of these for a considerable length of time).*
- What if a parish does not pay? *The Finance team are always willing to listen and help out with any problems if they can, but PS must be a priority and come first before other things (buildings, youth work etc), as it funds the mission and ministry of the church. If you are not able to pay your PS it still has to come from somewhere, and others have often risen up and paid more to help those with a shortfall. Ultimate consequence will be someone without clergy altogether. If you feel that you are not going to be able to meet your commitments please talk to the Finance Department for help so that if necessary deferment can be arranged.*

- We have little reserve and it is our 'rainy day' money. *Parishes are urged to look seriously at other fundraising opportunities, rather than not pay PS. (Diocesan Development Fund/grant making bodies)*
- We feel our allocation is incorrect – *Please raise it in your Deanery, talk to the Area Dean or Lay Chair – the DBF will do their best to resolve any concerns. Returns are very important, particularly mission statistics and Usual Sunday Attendance figures, as some of the calculations are based on the figures submitted.*
- What help is available? *Stewardship resources - Parish Giving Scheme, set up by the Diocese of Gloucester to help parishes managed their regular donations, linked to inflation so you know exactly where you are. Giving for Life - The Church of England website has a huge amount of information and resources available, including ideas on how you can make the most of the resources that you have and giving ideas that you could adapt for your parish. There are also preaching aids to help you broaden the subject of giving, bible study and gift days. Visit the Mission and Ministry page on the Diocesan website for other smaller grant making bodies.*

The Archdeacon circulated a printed leaflet 'Parish Share: what it does and how it works' – a new draft publication that will eventually be widely available, laying everything out in a straightforward, clear format, including the most commonly asked questions and answers.

- Peter Davis, Sheepscombe – There has been a huge increase in PS from 2016 to 2017, up by 10%. *The Diocesan Stipends Fund will be used to ease situations like this.*
- David Groom Selsley – With the Diocese calculating that there are 8 clergy vacancies at any one time across the whole of the Gloucester Diocese, Stroud Deanery has had 4 of these for a considerable amount of time. If our full stipendiary contingent for Stroud Deanery is 12, why do we not have any training curates? *Placing curates with training Incumbents is matched closely. There are some self-supporting Curates in post but the Archdeacon acknowledged the long wait in some cases for posts to be filled. The remaining vacancies will be filled as quickly as feasibly possible.*
- Brian Stanley – Felt the booklet and the discussions this evening had been hugely helpful in fully understanding the whole process of PS and how it works.
- Helen Daltry, Cranham – Very grateful for the explanations – concerns on how best and fairly to allocate the PS figures for next year.

*Once the 2018 figures are out, Archdeacon Jackie and Julie Ridgeway would be happy to come out and have discussions with individual Benefices if it would help.*

- Sue Green, St Laurence – We still need to insure and heat our buildings and these are as pressing as giving to PS. *Being a follower of Jesus Christ is not easy, but there are other avenues of help and support out there for buildings.*
- Minchinhampton – Concerns over the large increase in PS over the last 4 year by as much as 20% (Probably in part due to historically paying extra in 'mutual support'). *Julie Ridgeway would be happy to look into this particular situation outside of this evening's meeting.*
- Simon Barker, Amberley – Stressed the importance of maintaining assets – concerns over parishes eroding their reserves. Suggested the Deanery should conduct a review of parish reserves across the whole Deanery going into the autumn to have a clear understanding of the position.

The Area Dean confirmed that at 4<sup>th</sup> October Deanery Synod meeting the PS allocations will be discussed. We will know the results of our funding 'bid' shortly and how much of the £160k pot we have been successful in securing, which will be used to relieve the pressure of PS in the neediest areas.

Mike would be happy to come out to Benefices to talk about Stewardship if you think it would help.

The Diocese would welcome any feedback on the PS Leaflet by Deanery please.

The PS booklet will eventually be circulated widely across the Diocese.

The meeting closed with thanks to Archdeacon Jackie and Julie for their clear and concise presentation.

If you have any further queries Julie can be contacted through the Finance Office:

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