

LIVERPOOL DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Parish Share – How to apply for Transitional Relief

The Parish Share system in the Diocese of Liverpool is based on the Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) in a church and the socio-economic make-up of its parish. The ASA figure can vary year on year as congregations grow and decline. Sometimes levels of growth within individual congregation mean that their Parish Share increases are significantly higher than the diocesan average.

A key principle of the Parish Share system is that there is no cap on annual increases for each parish; rather, each parish is asked to pay its full share. However, the DBF recognises that some parishes face major increases, and once again a sum of money has been allocated to help those facing the greatest financial challenge. This paper sets out the mechanism for bidding in for this support.

Before looking for transitional relief from the DBF, the DBF asks all parishes to go through the following steps:

Stage One - Assessing current levels of giving within the congregation

The first stage is to answer the following questions:

- ◆ What are the current levels of giving within the congregation?
- ◆ How do these levels of giving compare with diocesan average and deanery average (outline figures are available from the Resources Department at St James' House)?
- ◆ What would giving levels need to be to meet the Parish Share increase in full?
- ◆ How best could you achieve this?
- ◆ Have you done a Giving in Grace programme?

Help and advice is available from the Resources Department of St James' House. This can include calculating the giving levels required to meet Parish Share as well as details of Giving in Grace.

Stage Two - Assessing levels of parish reserves

Parishes should also look at whether they have reserves which could be used either to invest in asset development or to cushion the parish from the full increase in 2008 while the church members respond to the giving challenge.

If the parish believes that if having gone through Stages 1 and 2 they cannot meet the increased share in full in 2008, the DBF asks that they look next for support from within their deanery.

Stage Three - Exploring Mutual Support within the Deanery

One of the key themes within the Diocesan Review, and the subsequent document "Responding to the Call", is a desire to see a heightened role for the deanery. Deaneries are already moving ahead on mission plans. In 2005, 2006 and 2007 some deaneries also provided mutual financial support.

Inevitably, in a Parish Share system dependant on church attendance there are 'winners' and 'losers', often within the same Deanery. Also, for historic reasons, different parishes in the same deanery can have vastly different levels of reserves and low assets. We ask parishes to explore the possibility of support within their deanery. This has proved very successful in some deaneries in recent years.

The DBF believes the most effective way for parishes to explore mutual support is through their Area Dean. We, therefore, suggest that parishes who feel unable to meet their Parish Share increase in full write to their Area Dean explaining their financial situation and why they feel unable to pay their full Parish Share. The Area Dean can then raise the issue with Chapter meetings (or privately with one or more of the better resourced parishes in the Deanery) to see if there is a possibility of providing support.

Applying for Transitional Relief

If, having gone through all the above stages, the parish feels that it is unable to meet its full Parish Share, the parish can apply for transitional relief. To do this, the parish needs to write a letter of not more than two sides of A4 outlining how they went through Stages one to three of the above process, why they feel they do not have the resources to meet the Parish Share increase in 2008, and the level of transitional relief they would hope for in 2008.

The closing date for applications is 16 November 2007. Decisions will be made on 22 November 2007.

PLEASE NOTE: There is only a limited amount of money available from the DBF (£15,000 for 2008). We ask all parishes to be rigorous as possible in going through the stages one to three outlined above.

Further information is available from:

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Thank you.

Mike Eastwood