

Many diocese use economic data from governmental and non-church sources to calculate what it is felt appropriate to request from each church. The difficulty is, this may or may not be a fair reflection of the income of those who attend that church and so can easily lead to very unjust outcomes.

Fairer Share takes a more direct approach to assessing economic means whilst providing a very clear indication of what it is appropriate for each church to contribute. It's not perfect but it is founded on the very good biblical principle that our giving should be proportional to our means. Without generosity in more affluent parishes we would be unable to uphold the commitment of the Church of England to offer 'A Christian Presence in Every Community'



For more information on how parish share is allocated, please visit:

[www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/a-fairer-share](http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/a-fairer-share)



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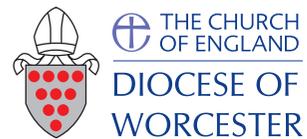
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
DIOCESE OF WORCESTER



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The Board is a Registered Charity No. 247778

April 2018



Kingdom People  
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# Fairer Share



## Understanding Fairer Share

## What is Fairer Share?

This is the name given to the way we calculate the amount of Parish Share that is requested from each church in the Diocese of Worcester. It is based on the teaching of the Church of England that, when considering financial giving to the church, we should be basing our giving on a figure of 5% of net income to the church and 5% to other good causes. Whilst the ability and commitment of individuals to do this will vary, it is assumed that this will be the intention across each of our churches. Some individuals may be called to give more, some less.

The amount each church in the diocese is asked to pay towards the shared costs of the diocese is therefore based on the actual income of the actual people in the church as declared in a completely confidential survey conducted once every three years. This income information is used to work out the potential for giving in the parish and a set percentage of this is then requested in Parish Share. This ensures that each parish is asked to give the same proportion of their potential income. It does mean that where giving is lower than the level recommended by the Church of England the local church may struggle to raise enough income to cover both the Parish Share and the local church expenses. The percentage requested varies each year depending on the total income required to balance the overall diocesan budget.

## Why was Fairer Share introduced

Prior to the introduction of 'Fairer Share' Parish Share requests were based on estimation of parishes' ability to pay made by looking at the local economy and adjusted by deanery synods on the basis of local knowledge. The introduction of Fairer Share has demonstrated that in some cases this was putting a disproportionately heavy burden on some churches where the income of the church members was actually lower than estimated by those around them. Fairer Share was introduced with the aim of anonymously gathering real income data from all the members of all our churches so that the Parish Share request can be based on this.



## Introducing Fairer Share seems to have caused much bigger increases in Parish Share – why is this?

Some churches have experienced very significant increases in Parish Share requests since the introduction of Fairer Share. This is a reflection of the relatively low level of Parish Share previously requested compared to the income of church members that they were experiencing prior to Fairer Share. The experience of Parish Share request continuing to rise very significantly in the early years of Fairer Share is caused by the increase having been phased in over two years to try and make it more manageable. This has been funded from diocesan reserves. Also, some parishes chose not to, or were unable to participate in Fairer Share in the first year or two and the Parish Share requested from them defaulted to a higher figure. As they have joined in the scheme and had their Parish Share request reduced the shortfall has been shared out causing an increase beyond the normal inflation based increase in the budget. It is hoped and expected this will settle down as the scheme matures.



## Is Fairer Share really fair?

No system is perfect! Different dioceses of the Church of England use different schemes to calculate Parish Share requests. Some do leave it up to parishes to decide what they feel able to contribute. Whilst this sounds attractive, it puts the whole diocese at a very high level of financial risk and assumes the mature generosity of all the churches of the diocese. There is a very real risk that some will carry a disproportionate burden that they really don't have the means to sustain, whilst others may fail their neighbours, prioritising their own sometimes self-centred needs over the poverty of their unseen brothers and sisters whose story is unknown to them. It is very hard for any parish to assess how great a financial sacrifice they should be making without any guidance.