

I want to know...

why do we pay Parish Share?

For most parishes Parish Share, also known as 'Quota' or 'Common Fund', makes up the biggest single cost in their budget. Many people however are unclear about what it pays for with ideas ranging from a Church tax to the vicar's salary.

The underlying reason for Parish Share is to spread the cost of ministry across all parishes in the diocese, so that ability to pay does not affect whether or not an area is properly served by the Church.

The greatest shared cost (around 75 per cent) is the cost of training, housing and paying the clergy. Other shared costs include the cost of supporting Church schools, running the Church's independent planning system and support officers in key areas such as children and youth work. There is also a contribution to the national Church and some administration.

In every diocese Parish Share is collected and the shared costs are paid by the Diocesan Board of Finance or the 'DBF'. The reasons the DBF does this are:

- To ensure uniformity of stipends
- So the Bishop may deploy a fair spread of clergy across the diocese
- To ensure clergy have the security of being paid on time and housed appropriately
- It is accountable both democratically (to Diocesan Synod) and legally as a registered charity

Over recent years as the cost of ministry has increased sharply and the Church Commissioners have withdrawn funding (see companion leaflet *Why is the Church no longer free?*) the cost of Parish Share has increased greatly from a relatively small contribution to shared services to one which now pays for around 75% of all shared costs of ministry.