

The report was presented to the Bishop's Council on 26th March and was unanimously commended to the Diocesan Synod. The following points were raised at the meeting and are clarified below. The report remains unchanged.

REDUCTION IN CENTENARY SHARE THROUGH DIOCESAN CONTRIBUTION

There are two elements of relief which reduce the amount of Centenary Share that parishes will be invited to contribute.

A fixed rate based on the number of churches which is deducted from the initial calculation (page 14 and page 17 item 8).

A second adjustment is made based on the Index of Income Deprivation and is applied to all parishes. Using the Index of Income Deprivation, each parish is placed on a scale from the least deprived to the most deprived. Those parishes that have been contributing more than they are assessed under the new system are asked to continue to contribute at a higher level for three years. This forms the fund for a rebate. The fund is then allocated to all parishes with the least deprived receiving the least amount of money and the most deprived receiving the greatest sum. Parishes that are in areas of income deprivation or who are assessed at significantly more than they are currently contributing will have a reduction in order that they can work towards full payment.

This is a permanent feature of the proposed system and takes account of relative affluence and deprivation. However, for the first three years it will also be used as a basis for some additional transitional relief based on historic contributions towards parish share. (page 15 and page 17 item 10). This will be reviewed by the Finance Committee after three years and other elements may be taken into consideration.

EXPLANATION OF ASSESSMENT

The cost of ministry. The cost of supporting all ministers is made up of the costs of training and support provided from diocesan officers. The total budgeted cost of ministry across the whole diocese is allocated out on the basis of the establishment figure for each benefice. This is based on the number of stipendiary clergy posts (including those which are vacant) and also all other ministers in post on 1st September each year.

SAMPLE ASSESSMENTS

The sample statements have been reworked in the light of the comments of members of the Bishop's Council. They now show the cost of each minister and a fuller explanation of how the historical payment of the parish share is calculated.

In assessing the amount of Centenary Share that a benefice is invited to contribute the level of payment over the past four years is taken into account. This is reflected in the revised statement which shows the maximum, minimum and average actual payment along with the success rate of achieving the total asked for in previous years.

USE OF ELECTORAL ROLL NUMBERS

It is always difficult to find an accurate way to define membership and potential within the Church of England. Population figures do not equate to potential and it is difficult to find a suitable measure

for Sunday attendance as seasonal fluctuations can easily distort 'usual Sunday attendance'. The electoral roll establishes some form of commitment to the church and is a basis for determining representation on synods. The roll is renewed every six years and has to be revised and reported to the Diocesan Secretary every year after the annual parochial church meeting. The figure reported in 2013 will be fixed for three years for the purposes of calculating the Centenary Share and then the figure for 2016 will be used for the subsequent three years. There is provision for someone to be on more than one electoral roll but for the purposes of all elections they have to nominate which is their principal church and this is the one that is reported to the diocese.

OFFER SYSTEM

It has been widely reported in the national church press that some dioceses have adopted the offer system. The Group investigated the possibility of introducing the system in the diocese and rejected it, (see page 10).