

ON THE MONEY

How the Diocese of Oxford is funded and how that money helps its churches and the communities they serve to thrive



Introduction

The Diocese of Oxford is the Church of England in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. We are a living, growing network of more than 1,000 congregations, chaplaincies and schools, working with God and with others for the common good in every place in one of the great crossroads of the world.

You probably know that we're one of the largest dioceses in the Church of England. But did you know that three of our four episcopal areas are larger than entire dioceses elsewhere in the Church?

Over 2.5 million people live in a parish that's served by one or more of our 808 churches and 284 church schools.

With size comes responsibility. We now spend more than £30 million each year directly or indirectly supporting the mission and ministry of the Church of England, our schools and partner agencies.

That's a huge amount of money for us all to raise each year, so we have a duty to spend it well. This document sets out to explain how we do just that.

But before we begin, what, or who, is the diocese?

The answer is that every congregation, church, church school, parish and benefice makes up the Diocese of Oxford, and that's how we most often refer to ourselves: the diocese is all



Reading Minster. Cover: Interior of Christ Church in Oxford and St Mary the Virgin, Ivinghoe

of us working together for the sake of God's world.

Of course, there must be a legal entity to manage all the money that flows in and out to support the mission we've been given.

The Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance (ODBF) is that legal entity - an incorporated, charitable body.

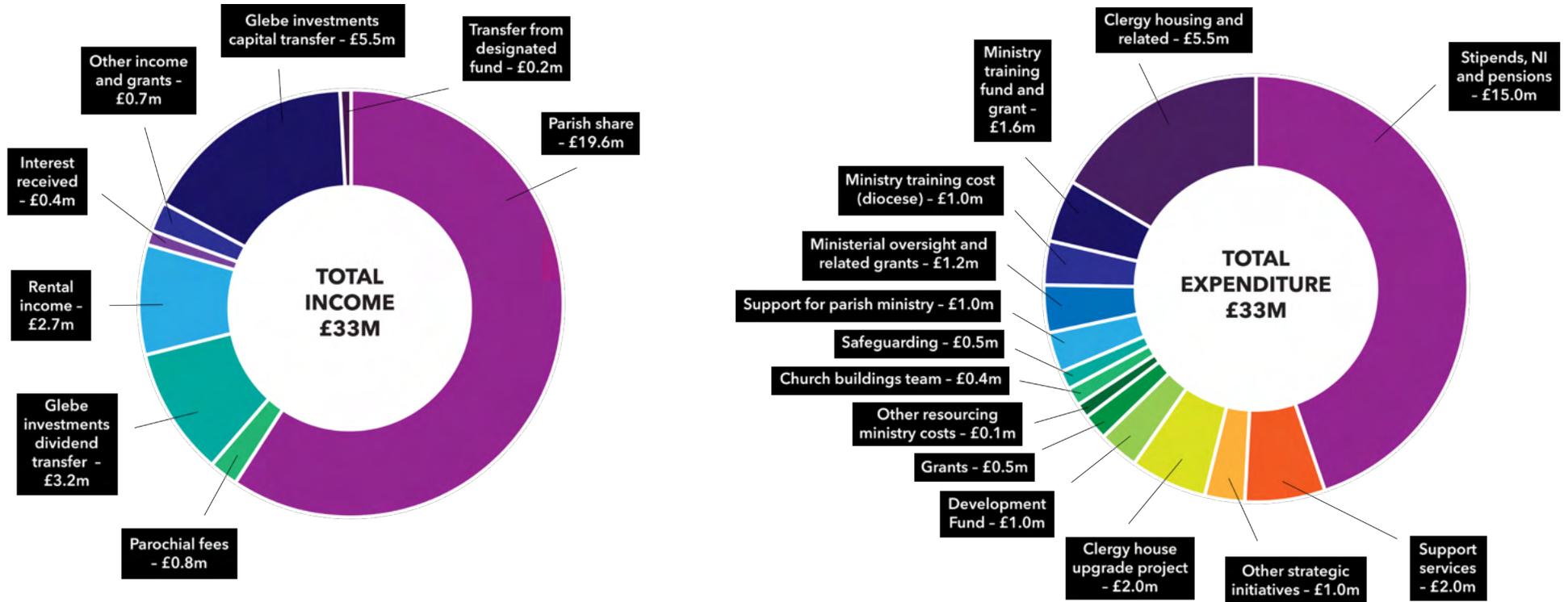
A separate legal entity, the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE), serves and advises our church schools. ODBE receives an annual grant of over £300,000 from the board of finance but is otherwise funded from education income streams.

In the face of social change and challenging economic times, the continued generosity and commitment of our congregations is essential.

We're committed to making sure those resources are used efficiently, effectively and responsibly. Read on to find out more, and please do write in with any suggestions for how we can improve the information presented here.

Financial summary

We plan to spend around £33m in 2026. This is funded by donations from the church community and income from other sources. This page illustrates where funds will come from to finance the planned level of expenditure during the year.



Our income

Overview

We do not receive significant ongoing financial support from either the Church of England or the Government. Instead, almost all of the money we receive comes from our church congregations, in the form of parish share and parochial fees, and from our assets and investments.

The parish share we expect to be raised by our church congregations (£19.6m) will account for 59% of the diocese's budgeted income for 2026 (£33m).

It is thanks to the generosity of our predecessors (realised today as the income we generate from our assets and investments) that parish share allocations are a lot lower than they would otherwise have to be.

Taken together, the parish share, parish fees and investment income mean that we can train, pay, house and support our clergy.

Relative to some other dioceses, we are well placed financially. Even so, the reality is that our income is only just sufficient to fund our current level of activities.

We recognise that maintaining the current level of parish giving in real terms will be a significant challenge and that this will depend on continuing growth in our congregations.

Parish share - £19.6m

The parish share is the amount of money that each parish is asked to contribute to support the provision of mission and ministry of the Church in the Diocese of Oxford and beyond.

It's the responsibility of us all and an essential part of our discipleship and how our clergy are funded.

Without the parish share, we simply would not be able to support and pay for our clergy.

With it, we're able to ensure appropriate levels of ministry provision across each of our 283 benefices.

You'll find a detailed explanation of the principles behind the parish share, along with the formula for deanery allocations, on page 10.

Parochial fees - £0.8m

Under ecclesiastical law, it is a requirement for parochial church councils to pay a portion of the parochial fees (the money charged for events such as baptisms, weddings and funerals) to the diocese each year.

But did you know that our diocese is one of the few that routes these fees back to deaneries through the parish share scheme?

Glebe/property income - £11.5m

Glebe is the Diocese of Oxford's land, property or investments.

Historically, Glebe was the land given to individual priests to provide them with a source of income.

The amount of such land varied from one parish to another, meaning that the income clergy received could vary considerably.

In 1976, the General Synod of the Church of England passed the Endowments & Glebe Measure, legislation that paved the way for all Glebe land to be transferred to individual dioceses and held as an endowment fund to pay parish priests centrally and equitably.

As a result, the Oxford Diocesan Board



Christ Church Cathedral is the setting for the annual service for licensed lay ministers

of Finance (ODBF) has land, buildings and investments that have been built up over many years.

Outstanding management of our assets and investments (over the last decade, our portfolio has outperformed its benchmark) has allowed Glebe income to make a very significant contribution to the life of our churches right across the diocese.

Our Glebe and property income for 2026 is budgeted to be £11.5m, which amounts to just under 35% of our expected income of £33.0m.

The income is split into the following categories:

Rental income - £2.7m

The rental from commercial properties and from renting out empty vicarages.

Glebe investment dividend transfer - £3.2m

The diocese currently has more than £130m that is ethically invested in the stock market, some of which generates dividend income.

The dividend is the share of profits paid out annually by organisations in which the diocese invests.

Glebe investments capital transfer - £5.5m

In recent years, charities with permanent endowments (a gift of money, land or property that must be held forever) have experienced relatively low income from dividends and interest payments,



although the capital gain on their endowments has been high.

In recognition of this, charities are able to use increases in the value of a permanent endowment as income as long as the value of that endowment increases in line with inflation.

We take full advantage of this by withdrawing what we consider to be the maximum amount that can appropriately be withdrawn within the rules monitored by the Charity Commission.

Bishop's Council members, our trustees, are bound by law to preserve the capital value of the original endowment.

Other sources of income

Our other sources of income are anticipated to be:

- Interest received - £0.4m
- Other income and grants - £0.7m
- Transfer from Designated Fund (National Church tapered relief) - £0.2m



Above: Clergy gather for Bishop Mary's welcome. Top left: St Peter & St Paul in Buckingham

Our expenditure

We're committed to making sure our income is used efficiently, effectively and responsibly so that we make every pound count. The next few pages explain annual expenditure in some detail, based on the 2026 budget and on forecast 2026 staffing levels (referred to as the full-time equivalent, or FTE). You'll find this at oxford.anglican.org/finance

Stipends, National Insurance and pensions - £15m

Parochial clergy, including all our curates, are paid a stipend for their ministry. It's by far the biggest area of our expenditure and is predicted to account for approximately 45% of budgeted expenditure - £15m.

Full stipend costs include the actual stipend and related tax and pension payments.

A breakdown of the full costs of providing an incumbent minister (full stipend or house for duty) can be seen in the table to the bottom right of this page.

Buildings and related - £5.5m, 8.3 FTE staff

Our Property team oversees the repair and maintenance of more than 450 vicarages and other properties. Costs also include rental costs, housing allowances, council tax, buildings insurance and other bills.

Expenditure in this area is set to be just under 17% of overall diocesan spending in 2026.

Clergy house upgrade - £2.0m, 2.0 FTE staff

The Diocese of Oxford has committed to spending a total of £10m between 2023 and 2028 to improve the carbon footprint of vicarages.

It is part of the diocese's ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2035, but is also reducing energy costs for clergy and their families and facilitating us being able to let out all our properties (through moving all to at least EPC C) when not required for clergy.

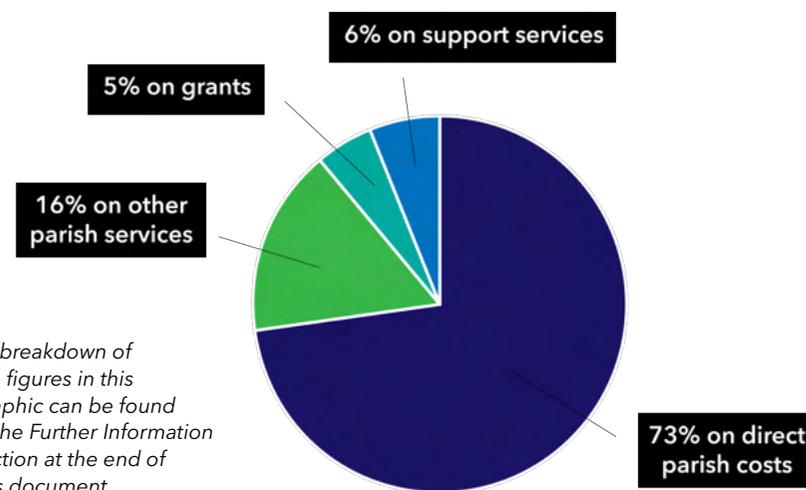
Ministerial oversight and related grants - £1.2m, 2.9 FTE staff

Half of area team costs £0.3m, 2.9 FTE

While the Church Commissioners pay for our diocesan and area bishops directly, the cost of the four archdeaconries and area office teams that support our 808 churches is met by the diocese.

These teams provide spiritual leadership, pastoral care and practical advice for our parishes and for our clergy.

Where parish share and investment income goes



Full costs of providing a minister

	Stipendiary	House for duty
Stipend, pension and NI	£46,654	N/A
Housing	£11,619	£11,619
Curate stipend, pension and NI	£7,004	£7,004
Pre-ordination costs	£6,171	£6,171
Clergy grants	£1,345	£1,345
Total	£71,793	£26,139

Half of the overall cost of the archdeaconries and area office teams is allocated to this part of the budget.

The other half is allocated to support for parish ministry.

Payments for services in vacancy and sickness, area dean costs and other parochial costs £0.3m

Directly helping our parishes is a network of area deans and other clergy who cover for events when the incumbent is unavailable.

Grants to Clergy £0.6m

We directly support clergy with a number of support payments relating to retirement, removals and other needs they may have.

Ministry training fund and grants - £1.6m

This is money that covers the cost of clergy training.

It currently goes to the National Church's ministry training fund (around £1.3m in 2026), as well as directly to ordinands in grants (around £300,000 in 2026).

From 2027, grants will no longer be paid directly to ordinands and the amount paid to the National Church's ministry training fund will increase.

We are obliged to make one of the largest diocesan contributions given the size of the diocese and an assessment of the relative levels of both our investments and of population income.

Ministry training cost (diocese) - £1.1m, 11.6 FTE staff

It's vital to the future of the Church that the people called to ordained or lay ministry are equipped to respond well to the constantly evolving challenges of ministry.

Our Formation in Ministry team trains and supports licensed lay ministers, clergy and interested learners.

Alongside its work to support curates for at least three years following ordination, the team provides specialised support for clergy who are new to incumbency, experiencing challenges or a change in context, and offers courses and training resources for a wide range of people in lay and ordained roles.

Of the £1.1m that is due to be spent in this area in 2026, £0.4m will cover pre-ordination selection and training (4.0 FTE staff) and £0.6m (5.6 FTE staff) will cover post-ordination and lay ministry training. We also have 2.0 FTE dedicated to discipleship and the development of Learning Hub.

Our goal is that every minister can flourish in their calling.

Parish support services - £1.0m, 11.3 FTE staff

We have funded several roles to support the growth and development of local churches. After having a funding application to the National Church



St Peter & St Paul in Church Hanborough, near Witney, Oxfordshire

declined, we have slightly enhanced the resource devoted to children and young people's (CYP) work, with 5.5 FTE staff allocated to support parishes in this area.

We also have 1.3 FTE staff dedicated to growing new congregations (linked to substantial external funding).

Also included in this area of the budget are our leads on generous giving (1.2 FTE), as well as specialists in the environment (1.7 FTE), tackling poverty (1.1 FTE) and data analysis (0.5 FTE).

Development Fund - £1m, 0.8FTE staff

In 2026, it is anticipated that the Development Fund will provide £1m in grants to parishes across the diocese for a range of initiatives.

The fund is open to any parish, benefice, deanery or chaplaincy but is particularly helpful to those parishes and benefices that, after paying parish share and other essential costs, have limited financial resources to invest in missionally creative projects.

Stories of projects benefitting from the Development Fund and details of how to apply can be found at oxford.anglican.org/development-fund

Other resourcing ministry costs - £0.1m

The most significant individual costs in this area are associated with expenses related to General Synod and the



St Mary & St Nicholas in Compton, near Newbury, Berkshire

Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Ltd (DTOL), the custodian trustee for parish property.

Grants - £0.5m

In addition to grants made under resourcing ministry and mission, around £500,000 each year goes to supporting our schools, poorer dioceses, vulnerable families and our link dioceses.

Among the key beneficiaries in this area are:

- Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE): Diocesan responsibilities for education are carried out by ODBE, which has responsibility for 284 church schools across the diocese and provides advice and support to more than 300 schools and academies overall.

- Parents and Children Together (PACT): Supporting vulnerable families has been at the core of PACT services since it was set up by the Diocese of Oxford in 1911, and remains the focus today through adoption services, therapeutic support and community projects.
- Partnership in World Mission: In the Diocese of Oxford, we share in God's mission with partners from a range of countries. We have link dioceses in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, South Africa, South India and Sweden.

Safeguarding - £0.5m, 6.4 FTE staff

Our staff support 432 parish safeguarding officers.

In a typical month we might provide guidance for 50 safeguarding enquiries and receive 20 safeguarding referrals, some requiring involvement of statutory authorities.

Every year we train thousands of participants to support children, young people and vulnerable adults to worship and grow in Christ safely.

Church Buildings - £0.4m, 7.8 FTE staff

We need to enable the mission and outreach of our churches while protecting the historic significance of these sacred places, many of which are Grade I heritage buildings.

Churches are exempt from some parts of planning law.

But, while listed building or conservation area consent might not be needed, any work on churches must be compliant with the Church of England's planning regulations – the faculty system.

Our Church Buildings team is there to advise and support parishes considering repairs, re-orderings and new works.

The diocese is now handling over 2,000 requests around work every year.

Support for parish ministry - £1.0m, 11.7 FTE

Support for parish ministry is broad and varied. It is the cost of supporting and maintaining current ministry provision and preparing for change when it happens.

Bishops' and archdeacons' offices - £0.3m, 2.9 FTE staff

As mentioned previously in this document, we apportion half of area team costs to ministerial oversight and half to support for parish ministry.

Mission & Ministry management and parish development advisor team - £0.4m, 5.0 FTE staff

Supporting our missional work are the area team of parish development advisors (3.0 FTE) and the management/continuing ministerial development team (2.0 FTE).

Communications - £0.3m, 3.8 FTE staff

Our communications team supports all that we say and do. Its work ranges from handling media enquiries to producing Pathways magazine, and developing and maintaining our website.

The team is on hand with help and advice every day of the week.

Note: the costs of communications support for the Bishop of Oxford are met by the Church Commissioners.

Support Services - £2.0m, 18.2 FTE staff

Our support services make up approximately 6% of our overall spend. A lot of the effort from each of these departments goes into directly working with and supporting parishes and PCCs.



St Oswald's in Widford, near Burford, Oxfordshire

Secretariat and Governance - £0.6m, 3.8 FTE staff

The diocese is episcopally led (by the Bishop of Oxford) and synodically governed (through Diocesan Synod). This department includes our Diocesan Secretary carrying out a CEO role.

The Secretariat handles pastoral reorganisation and the administrative work of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance, ensuring good governance across Diocesan Synod and committees.

The Secretariat also oversees data protection and is responsible for the church buildings team and Development Fund (shown separately), seeking and managing external grants and much else.

Finance - £0.4m, 5.9 FTE staff

Alongside support to our deaneries

and parishes, the finance department performs several essential statutory functions on behalf of ODBF and ensures that diocesan funds and investments are handled wisely.

Finance staff process around 9,000 receipts and 6,000 payments each year, oversee direct debits of more than £1m of parish share each month and manage more than 600 trusts on behalf of our parishes, worth around £80m.

Human resources - £0.5m, 6.3 FTE staff

HR enables our common vision through lean and effective structures and creative deployment of staff.

The department works to address issues of isolation and wellbeing among our clergy and staff, advises parishes on how to be and act as responsible employers, supports development fund bids, and handles all recruitment and employee relations relating to staff.

The team manages payroll for clergy and staff. The department includes specialist staff (1.3 FTE) who advise parishes on EDI issues.

Church House facilities - £0.3m, 2.0 FTE staff

Church House Oxford is where several senior clergy and almost all diocesan staff are based. It also provides spaces for meetings and training courses.

IT - £0.3m, 0.2 FTE staff

Our IT is outsourced. Cloud-based technology ensures that clergy and staff can work securely across the diocese.

Parish share explained

Parish share is a formula-based system built on generous, gracious giving and the principle of mutual support.

Parish share is administered in partnership between the diocese and each of our 29 deaneries, using a transparent formula that's designed to be fair and reflect the ability of congregations to contribute financially.

As well as funding the ministry costs within each parish, the parish share is a commitment from every place to ensure that the work of the Church of which we are all a part reaches into every community. Every parish gives, and every parish receives.

We are committed to running a balanced budget.

Without the parish share we simply would not be able to support and pay for our clergy. But with the parish share we can all do more for God's mission than we could ever do alone.

It's an immense undertaking that now raises more than £19m each year and is a feat that's possible only because of the prayerful support, fundraising and long-term financial commitment of our congregations.

Core principles

- Must be fair and seen to be fair
- Should reflect the ability to pay

- Should not immediately penalise growth
- Should be administered as a partnership between diocese and deanery
- Should be based on generous and gracious giving plus mutual support
- Should be easily communicated
- Should be a formula-based system.

Mutual support

Mutual support means each parish does not simply pay the cost of the services it receives but those calculated according to the formula periodically reviewed by Diocesan Synod to need more help pay less and others pay more.

That's why it's so important to recognise that the work we do in our own parishes is only a part of the mission of God's church.



All Saints' Church in Soulbury, in the Cottesloe Benefice, north Buckinghamshire

By offering up our share, we're each ensuring that the work of the Church of which we are a part reaches into every community.

Together, we fund work and worship in every place.

How parish share is calculated and administered

The system for calculating what we ask of each deanery is driven by recovering the cost of providing services to that deanery's parishes. Some 86.5% per cent of the amount asked of a deanery relates to the number of clergy within it.

This element of the amount asked for allows the diocese to meet the cost of stipends, National Insurance, pensions and housing in that deanery.

A set of metrics that tries to capture a deanery's ability to pay is used to work out the remainder of what each deanery is asked for. This element of the amount asked for allows the diocese to meet other costs.

The diocese uses income generated from its assets and investments, both as a general offset to all parishes and to provide support.

The approach to calculating what is asked of the deaneries is set out in operating principles approved by Diocesan Synod.

It is important to note that deaneries principally decide the level of minister deployment in their area.

This means that, while the diocese might formally calculate parish share, decisions taken by individual deaneries effectively set a significant proportion of the parish share that those deaneries are asked for.

Having received their individual calculations from the diocese of what they should pay, deaneries then decide what each of their parishes or benefices should pay.

We expect individual deanery parish share methodologies to be fair and transparent, and approved in Deanery Synod.

The parish share scheme was updated for 2023 onwards following a diocesan-wide consultation led by members of Bishop's Council. The Diocesan Finance Committee will consider in 2027 when there should next be a review of the parish share scheme.

Where a deanery consistently does not contribute its full parish share but has an objective and intention to do so in the future, the diocese's finance team will work with it to develop a one- to five-year financial sustainability plan.

Parishes will also be encouraged to engage in discussion with the diocesan generous giving advisor.

Myth busting

The government funds the Church

We're the established Church, so many people think that the government funds us. But it does not.

We get no direct funding from the government.

The responsibility for funding parish ministry rests with us: we must support existing ministry and also invest for the future if the Church is to serve our children's children well and we are to be faithful to Christ.

The National Church funds the diocese

The Church Commissioners support the ministry of bishops - funding their stipends, office, housing and working costs.

Parishes benefit from grants made to the diocese, but the income of the Commissioners cannot cover parish costs, and the cost of the four archdeaconries and the area office teams must be met by the diocese.

Church Commissioners meet the cost of clergy pensions earned in service until the end of 1997, but clergy pensions since 1998 are funded by dioceses, and managed by the CofE Pensions Board.



Bishops Steven, Mary and Dave

Decision making is top heavy in the diocese

The majority of those taking decisions for the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance are elected by parishes. Deaneries decide the level of ministry deployment in their parishes, which dictates the level of parish share each deanery should pay.

The level of parish share for each parish

or benefice is then worked out by the deanery and the local deanery synod.

We discern together how we best serve Christ and maximise His impact in the world.

There are no consequences if parish share is not paid

We each pool our resources so that all may thrive. If a parish cannot or will

not meet its share allocation then that means the balance will have to be met by other parishes in the diocese.

Failure to pay parish share leads to tough decisions in future about where to allocate limited resources to local ministry and mission.

The diocese is cutting clergy numbers

The number of stipendary clergy in the Diocese of Oxford is forecast to remain broadly stable for the next three to five years.

The diocese delays recruiting clergy to save money

While stipend savings and income from lettings is factored into parish share (parish share would increase by 5% to 10% if there were no vacancy periods), the primary consideration during a vacancy isn't financial savings.

Our Bishops, Archdeacons and Parish Development Advisors work with parishes during the vacancy to discern what's needed, draft the parish profile and recruit the next person. This is an important process, and the time and resources committed to it reflect that.

Further information

Resources that explain diocesan finances

On The Money is one of a number of resources that explains diocesan finances and the difference we make together.

You'll find links to the latest version of each of the publications listed on this page at [oxford.anglican.org/annual-review](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/annual-review)

Impact of Church House teams

The wide-reaching impact of our staff teams, along with forecast annual income and expenditure, is published each spring.

The document summarises key areas of work and the resources that support our common vision.

Annual Review

Published in June, the Annual Review provides an overview of the work of the diocese, including committees and stories of growth and change.

Statutory Accounts

Directors' reports and financial statements for the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance, the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education and Diocesan

Trustees (Oxford) Ltd are published and approved by Diocesan Synod in June each year.

Annual budget

The final budget for the next financial year is approved by Diocesan Synod in November (and on the web when papers are issued in October).

The draft budget is issued in May for agreement by Synod in June.

Share allocation reports

Parish share collection rates by deanery are published monthly on the diocesan website.

Encouraging generous giving in your church

At the heart of the Christian faith is the generosity of the self-giving God who entered the world to save humankind for a relationship with himself.

Our Generous Giving team is on hand to help parishes nurture and grow a culture of giving and generosity within the context of Christian discipleship.

The team can advise on the ways open to PCCs and church officers to increase local giving which the parish to flourish.

[oxford.anglican.org/giving-and-fundraising](https://www.oxford.anglican.org/giving-and-fundraising)



Above: St Peter & St Paul in Buckingham. Back page photos (clockwise from top): Christ Church, Oxford; St Mary's Shinfield; St Michael & All Angels, Leafield

Breakdown of expenditure

Area of expenditure	Direct parish costs	Other parish services	Grants	Support services	Total	% of direct parish costs	% of other parish services	% of grants	% of support services	% of total	*FTE staff
Stipends, NI and pension	£15.0m				£15.0m	45%				45%	-
Clergy housing and related	£5.0m	£0.5m			£5.5m	15%	2%			17%	8.3
Ministry training funds and grants	£1.6m				£1.6m	5%				5%	-
Ministry training cost (diocese)	£1.1m				£1.1m	4%				4%	11.6
Ministerial oversight and related grants	£1.2m				£1.2m	4%				4%	2.9
Support for parish ministry	£0.3m	£0.7m			£1.0m		2%			2%	11.7
Safeguarding		£0.5m			£0.5m		1%			1%	6.4
Church buildings team		£0.4m			£0.4m		1%			1%	7.8
Other resourcing ministry costs		£0.1m			£0.1m		0%			0%	-
Grants			£0.5m		£0.5m			2%		2%	1.5
Development Fund		£0.0m	£1.0m		£1.0m			3%		3%	0.8
Clergy house upgrade project		£2.0m			£2.0m		6%			6%	2.0
Other strategic initiatives		£1.0m			£1.0m		3%			3%	11.3
Support services				£2.0m	£2.0m				6%	6%	18.2
Total	£24.3m	£5.2m	£1.5m	£2.0m	£33.0m	73%	16%	5%	6%	100%	82.4

* All FTE stated net of funded posts

