



February 2020

To: All PCC Secretaries & Treasurers
Cc: All stipendiary clergy

Dear PCC Secretary & Treasurer,

PARISH OFFER 2021 – Commitment Form due by 30 June 2020

Thank you

Thank you so much for your continued support of local ministry and mission through your Parish Offer, which is enabling all of us, whether lay or ordained, to witness to God's love and work for the coming of His Kingdom. I hope you received safely and displayed in your church the Parish Offer certificate I sent last month; I'm aware that these have already led to some fruitful conversations!

Our vision and priorities

We long to see God's Kingdom growing in lives and communities right across our Diocese. We seek to achieve this vision through enabling spiritual and numerical growth, contributing to the common good, reimagining ministry, and by focusing our resources where there is greatest mission need and opportunity.

Our response to our generous God

Sometimes PCC conversations about money can too readily become defensive and sterile, and financial anxieties overwhelm our instinct to be generous in response to the grace of God in Christ Jesus – the one who sustains and guides us day by day. As a result, we risk missing the full spiritual dimension of our giving: the invitation to give freely, wholeheartedly and joyfully to the Lord as we pray and work for God's Kingdom to come among us.

As in previous years, please set aside sufficient time in a PCC meeting over the next few months to review your PCC's Mission Action Plan objectives, and the resources you will need to deliver these. Please consider carefully and prayerfully how much the PCC can commit to set aside for Parish Offer in 2021. I know you will want to be as generous as possible, trusting in the gracious provision of our generous God, and remembering that we invest Parish Offer directly in parish ministry and mission.

I would also ask you to be realistic about your Parish Offer, being honest about what level will be sustainable for you, but also clear-sighted about the effect of inflation, which pushes up costs every year¹. The average cost of a stipendiary clergy post in our Diocese (including stipend, national insurance, pension, housing, Council Tax, training, future ministry costs, safeguarding etc.) is around £60,000, giving rise to total parish ministry costs of over £4.3m.

With the slight rise in average costs of parish ministry, only a few deaneries are expected to cover all these costs and most will continue to rely on diocesan support to maintain deployment levels.

... continued overleaf ...

¹ Inflation (as measured by Retail Prices Index) is forecast to be 2.7% in 2021: www.gov.uk/government/collections/data-forecasts

The chart below illustrates the current split of Parish Offer contributions across the deanery:

[Deanery chart inserted here]

So we need to grow Parish Offer to cover the majority of these ministry costs. To achieve this, I strongly encourage you to liaise with colleagues in neighbouring PCCs to see how collectively you can meet the costs of ministry in your own area, as well as contribute to the Church's mission in more deprived parishes. Consider whether your PCC could release some reserves to support next year's Parish Offer.

Guidance for the 2021 Parish Offer exercise

If we work together to boost Parish Offer in 2021, we can start to close the parish ministry funding gap in the deanery and across our Diocese, as well as to contribute to new initiatives that will help grow the church. That's why I encourage you to commit to a 4.5% increase. I illustrate the effect of this for each benefice below:

[Table of 2021 Parish Offers by benefice or group of parishes inserted here]

What to do next?

Once you have concluded your discussions as a PCC and with colleagues in your benefice, please complete a **2021 Parish Offer commitment form** and email it to finance@hereford.anglican.org or post it to the Diocesan Office in Hereford. Please make sure this reaches me **no later than 30 June**. This will enable me to prepare the 2021 diocesan budget during June and July.

Thank you in advance for your generous Parish Offer for 2021. Together, we are investing in the future of the church locally and across our Diocese.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Herbert

Finance Director