
 — Diocese of —
Hereford
 Proclaiming Christ + Growing Disciples



Impact Report





—Diocese of— Hereford

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What does Hereford Diocese do?

Our vision is for everyone to Proclaim Christ and Grow Disciples. We know that inspiring each generation is the key to how we will help our families, friends, neighbours, colleagues and the people we meet to follow Jesus Christ. Our focus is on intergenerational mission through the work that is carried out each and every day in the churches and communities of our diocese.

We support and encourage our parishes, clergy and lay leaders across the Diocese of Hereford to share the Good News of Jesus and our Generous God, instilling a prayerful approach to supporting life in our parishes so that lives and communities are changed and God's kingdom grows.

2020 saw many parts of Hereford Diocese experience severe flooding, with many businesses, homes and several of our churches affected. This all preceded the months which followed when all parts of the UK entered lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the foundation of our diocese in 676AD, through the Reformation and devastation of world wars, the Church of England remains at the frontline of local communities, supporting people where they live and work. When everything closed in March 2020, including our church doors, we responded to the needs of people living across our diocese in new ways online and in person where need was greatest.

To read more about our work, please visit www.hereford.anglican.org and follow us on social media.

Inspiring *each* Generation



Welcome from our Bishop, The Rt Revd. Richard Jackson, 106th Bishop of Hereford

Welcome to our first diocesan Impact Report, which provides some of the highlights of the past year. What a year it's been – It started before my move to Herefordshire, with severe flooding across our diocese that affected the lives of 1000's of people, businesses and several of our churches which border the rivers Wye and Severn. The cost of a changing environment cannot be forgotten. When I reflect on 2020, I note that I spent precisely 10 days without restrictions since I began my ministry at the end of March 2020. The opportunity to get out and about has been far less than I would have wished, and I have ministered deeply to my computer.



Despite the restrictions on gathering together, there is much to celebrate. Parishes have been hugely resourceful. Online worship has enabled us to reach new people. The Church has got out of the building, often acting as a catalyst and convener for community action in the many villages across our diocese. Churches have provided Food Banks, we visited the lonely, took people to hospital visits and so much more.

We have engaged with national issues in many ways, not least through Revd. Kina Robertshaw's media work in the wake of the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement.



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Our projects are starting to show fruit despite the lockdown restrictions. We are seeing new Christians through our Intergenerational Team. The church plant at St. Peter's, Hereford, is getting underway and we have continued to attract external funding for some of our historic church buildings. Some of this has been from the Culture Recovery Fund, others from private sources supported by our Community Partnership Team.

Further funding has come from the central Church, which will see us welcome 15 new curates for ordination in July 2021. It has also funded Parish Giving Advisers who have made a real difference to our financial position, even allowing for Covid-19. People have responded through Gift Days in parishes and at the Cathedral with great generosity. Alongside this, deanery plans are taking shape in Abbeydore and Pontesbury that are reimagining rural ministry in an exciting and collaborative way.

There have been times of sadness, too, as we have lost loved ones. Tragically, we lost Stephen Borthwick suddenly just before Christmas. His passion for education and chairmanship of the Diocesan Board of Education made a huge difference to the lives of children in our schools. We also said goodbye to Bishop Alistair who retired in April after a fruitful ministry, always calling us to the priority of evangelism and the transforming power of the scriptures, and to Michael Tavinor who announced his retirement at the end of 2020 after a distinguished 19 years as Dean of Hereford. He leaves the Cathedral in good heart.

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One of my hopes for our diocese is that we increasingly use the word ‘diocese’ to describe ‘us’, not as a disembodied other, because we see ourselves as parts that are one body in Christ.

One of my hopes for our diocese is that we increasingly use the word ‘diocese’ to describe ‘us’, not as a disembodied other, because we see ourselves as parts that are one body in Christ. We are all the diocese: the parishes, benefices and deaneries; our schools, chaplaincies, and intergenerational workers; those who work at the diocesan office resourcing and supporting frontline ministry and ensuring our affairs are administered responsibly and wisely. Each of us has a part to play as part of the body. I am hugely grateful to my colleagues in the senior staff team for their wisdom and prayerfulness. Leadership in the New Testament is always collaborative and I couldn’t ask for a better group of colleagues and support staff.

I hope you enjoy this impact report. As we begin to look forward to a post-Covid world, I hope you will find evidence of God at work here. I hope that it will encourage us to continue to pray for the future God has planned for our diocese.

With best wishes,



Successes and achievements in 2020/21

When we set our strategy in 2015, we laid out our framework with the strapline: 'Proclaiming Christ, Growing Disciples'.

The plan identified three priority areas:

Spiritual and numerical growth – growing Christians of all ages and backgrounds

Contributing to the common good

Reimagining ministry

We want to be judged by the difference we make to people's lives, helping them to come to know Christ and building communities that transform people.



Any targets must be backed by performance measures and reflect our bold and ambitious agenda.

By setting clear priorities, we have been able to step out boldly in faith, and focus and target our work to deliver our vision for our diocese. Our targets for each priority need further revision if we are to see continued success to the end of our present strategic plan. Any targets must be backed by performance measures and reflect our bold and ambitious agenda. We recognise there is no guarantee of achievement, but we continue to pray for God's will in this plan, asking that His kingdom grows here, across our diocese, on earth, as in heaven.



2020 has seen the most significant and unexpected external factors play a part in preventing progress towards this goal. Despite this, we have seen a strong performance and our achievements can be listed as:

- growth of Intergenerational Mission Project
- a prayer pilgrimage
- parish Gift Day and Parish Giving Scheme targets achieved
- launch of Mission and Mortar toolkit to parishes across the diocese
- rapid growth of church online
- pastoral care and support in parishes
- Home Safe from Hospital project
- continued support of food banks across the diocese
- approval of funding, recruitment and successful appointment for the St. Peter's Project
- continued development of Eco Church – seeing more parishes sign up to the scheme following our successful online conference in November
- growth of diocesan Pioneer Learning Community including lay leadership training and evangelism through Alpha online.

On its own, this list of achievements cannot tell the whole story of our performance, but it does highlight some of our successes and the possible issues that we are likely to face in 2021 and beyond. The rest of this impact report provides case studies which highlight our achievements more fully.

We hope this will prompt reflection and focus our attention where it may be needed most, as we plan for the next cycle of our strategy from 2022 and how we emerge from the global pandemic.



Case study 1: Responding to a global pandemic in our Church Schools

This has been the most challenging time for the education sector since the Second World War, and our education professionals have risen to this challenge. It has been a year of uncertainty, of rising and falling infection rates of a virus which has taken the lives of over 127,000 people.

On 18 March 2020, Her Majesty's Government announced that schools across England would close to all pupils except children of key workers. Overnight, schools were required to reinvent the operating model with little to no guidance. On-site attendance was initially low but slowly grew, and we encouraged those identified as vulnerable and children of key worker families to attend.

The initial, most significant barrier was the available access to technology, which was very patchy across our 78 church schools. With government support, innovative local schemes and creative approaches from all schools, we significantly improved access to online learning opportunities for pupils, although considerable technological barriers remained.

September 2020 saw all children return to school despite rising infection rates. As 2020 drew to a close, infections were rising sharply and there was an increasing expectation of a third lockdown. It was not until the evening of the first day of the spring term, 4 January 2021, the Prime Minister announced the start of the third national lockdown, the following day, this time including all schools. With no time to prepare, schools nationwide had to revert to remote learning for all but vulnerable groups and children of key workers.



Inspections

Since March 2020, most Ofsted and all SIAMS activity has been suspended; however, Ofsted mini-inspections began to check how schools were responding to lockdown limitations and what provision was available for pupils. Initially, these involved a limited visit to the school but they later became a remote process.

The diocesan education team quickly adapted its approach to support schools during the first lockdown, offering support and meetings online. The training programme for the summer term was suspended and rewritten over the summer.

By the start of the autumn term, all our Education Partnership and training was relaunched online at a reduced cost. The new approach reduced the carbon footprint of the team while conversely improving engagement and attendance at courses and meetings. By adapting to circumstances, the team has identified a more efficient and effective way to deliver and engage with schools, which will continue as the new operating model.

Governance audit data

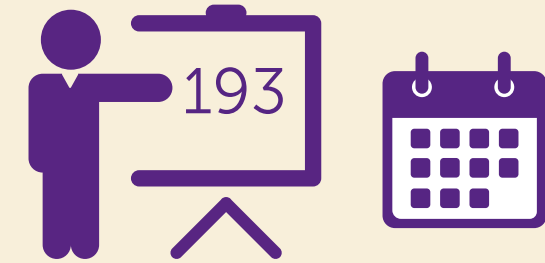
During the first lockdown, we experienced some blockages with governance which led to a complete review and audit early in the autumn term. Improvements were made in the areas of compliance of governing boards.

Estate management and capital

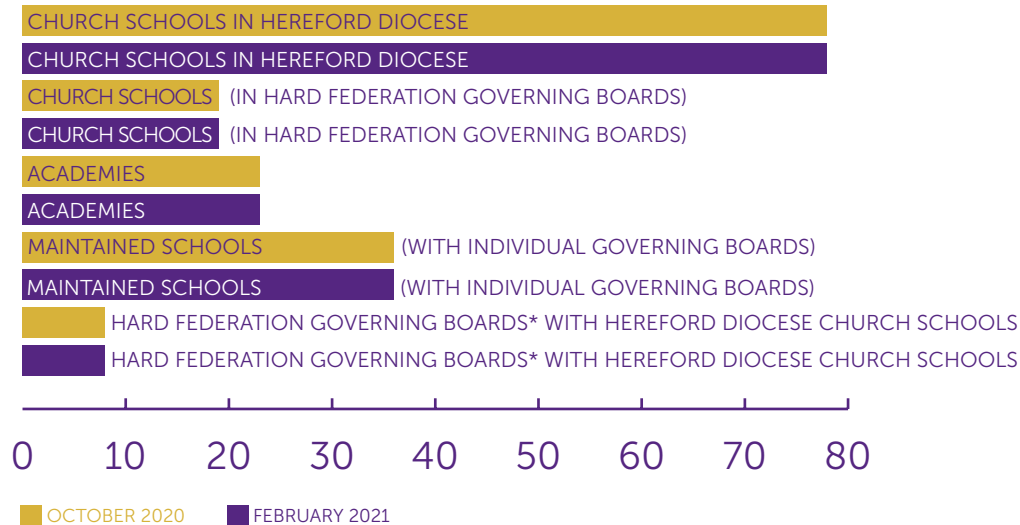
Despite the lockdown, the education team continued the capital programme for Voluntary-Aided schools during the summer of 2020. With the introduction of the new school condition allocations (SCA) and the additional requirements, we delivered the highest-priority schemes. We successfully applied and were awarded the SALIX de-carbonisation Grant and the Low-Carbon Skills Grant to assist schools to meet the net-zero carbon targets of the Church of England by 2030.

Admissions Response/Outcome Table update

When churches closed during the first lockdown in March 2020, those with a faith criterion as part of their admissions policies needed a variation. Working as part of a national scheme introduced by the Department for Education (DfE), the Church of England (CofE) and the Office of Schools Adjudicator (OSA), 20 diocesan schools were identified for support with admissions policies. Two schools did not apply for this change, and one withdrew from the process...



**193 DELEGATES ATTENDED TRAINING
SEPTEMBER 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021**



*A 'hard federation' is a formal arrangement where 2 or more maintained schools share a single governing board.

A view of our diocese from Diocesan Secretary, Sam Pratley

2020 was set to be a year in which our vision would be clearly put into action. However, it proved to be a far more challenging year for the Hereford Diocesan Board of Finance than any of us could have imagined. The global Covid-19 pandemic resulted in significant falls in our overall income, with a general fund deficit of nearly £500k. Although disappointing, we have been able to offset our running costs with some asset sales, which is unsustainable if it happens too often.



As in previous years, parish contributions of £3.5m (2019-£3.8m) provided the primary source of income for the diocese to pay for local stipendiary ministry and related costs. Since introducing the Parish Offer system in 2017, the Hereford Diocesan Board of Finance had seen PCCs contributing at least 99% on average of their commitment for the year. The global pandemic and resultant closure of places of worship resulted in dwindling and, in some cases, nil cash collections and fundraising, leaving many PCCs struggling to honour their Parish Offer commitments.

In light of this unexpected situation, it is encouraging to note that the Hereford Diocesan Board of Finance received 90.8% of the commitments made for the

year, testimony to the generosity of PCCs and their willingness to reach into their reserves. However, this has left many PCCs with weakened finances. The picture for those who have signed up for the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) has been more positive. Through the first nine months of the pandemic parishes enrolled in the scheme saw a 17.7% increase in the number of regular donors and a 22.5% increase in the funding raised, demonstrating the importance of regular giving especially at a time when other forms of giving were not easy.

As Diocesan Secretary, it has been a privilege to witness the tremendous effort of our churches in service across the many towns and villages of our diocese. I would like to pay particular tribute to the dedication of our small diocesan staff team who have gone above and beyond to support parishes and clergy. It was also incredible to see how quickly our diocesan network mobilised to support our local councils and hospitals to provide food parcels, medication and a safe welcome home (from hospital) at the height of the pandemic. I also want to thank the staff in all of our schools who have coped with so much uncertainty to enable the children of our diocese to receive an outstanding level of education.

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Much of 2021 will be about finding a new rhythm of church life, seeking to grow disciples and increase generosity.

Looking ahead to 2021 and beyond, we need to take the best of what we've learnt in 2020 (online meetings, caring for one another, streaming services) as we reconnect with one another in person. Much of 2021 will be about finding a new rhythm of church life, seeking to grow disciples and increase generosity. We will also respond to the national ambitions for us to be carbon neutral, to address racial injustice, to play our part in helping to increase the availability of affordable housing across the civic boundaries which fall within our diocese, where we have land available, to engage with Living in Love and Faith, and to care for our people, our communities and our places.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Pratley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Sam Pratley



Case study 2: Intergenerational mission

The intergenerational team has supported a wide network of people across our diocese who are working with families and young people in local communities.

The year has offered opportunities for creative mission, prayerful steps of faith and increasing pastoral community care, where youth groups have met online, Food Share initiatives have been launched and Messy Church bags were given to families to facilitate worship at home. Intergenerational Missioners, clergy and lay leaders formed local teams to serve their local communities.

- Leaders in Bridgnorth worked together to create a programme of support and collective worship opportunities for schools, despite the restrictions.
- Open the Book teams worked together across the whole deanery in Pontesbury, creating Bible stories to share with their local schools.

Our Learning Community group expanded to 50 members. It provides a space to share experiences, pray together, build relationships, learn together and support one another. In learning how to respond to the needs of those they ministered to and supporting one another through fortnightly Zoom meetings, WhatsApp and message groups, and through working together on shared projects, the group has flourished.

Many members of the Learning Community worked together to create all-age services online and a Taizé pilgrimage week on Facebook, and YouTube was used as part of a partnership approach with two other dioceses.

Children and Young People

Many churches and Messy Church groups offered online holiday clubs for young people throughout the summer holidays. Deeper relationships and friendships were built through online messaging, email and groups, prayer requests were shared and many opportunities were created to deepen our connections with one another and reach out in mission.

In August 2020, we launched Alpha online. The programme attracted 22 attendees, mostly from within our diocese. Some attendees had no current contact with their local church and may never have joined an Alpha course if we hadn't gone online. The group included many young people. We facilitated a special breakout room for young people to discuss the videos and explore the topics. Participants went on to join online Bible groups that were being set up and four further local Alpha courses were launched by the Alpha leaders following their experiences of this diocesan course. The young people carried on meeting, forming a Thursday night online youth group where we ran a young people's wellbeing course (from Hope Together) with 19 participants.



Many churches and Messy Church groups offered online Holiday Clubs for young people throughout the summer months.



Case Study 3: Leadership and Ministry

One impact of the pandemic meant the usual programme of events and activities that young people on our Discover programme stopped. The three interns who joined our diocese in September 2019 on this programme, part of the national ministry experience scheme, were heavily involved in supporting parishes creatively to deliver church and community life online. One of our interns loved the experience so much she has settled in the diocese and is now training as a Reader.

All discernment and recruitment processes have also gone online during the last 12 months. The usual process of meeting young people who are considering Discover generally involved an interview and a driving tour around Hereford and the possible parishes. Adapting to Zoom video conferencing has also meant learning new technology and seeking new ways to engage people, which included a virtual visit to the intern house.

The national discernment processes went online, with all those in the first year of training recommended by that means, and more going forward in 2021.

The most encouraging fruits of the past year are the curacies starting in 2021, some of which were arranged wholly online. Thanks to our securing additional resources from the new national Strategic Ministry Fund, we have eight stipendiaries (the most since 1989) and three SSMS (Self Supporting Ministers) to be ordained. This will be an event of great joy and hope, despite a delay in the easing of restrictions.



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Case study 4: Generosity in our parishes

The suspension of public worship in March 2020 made traditional giving more difficult but also enabled our parishes to fundraise in more creative ways and to reach a wider audience through online services and events. The pandemic also brought to the fore the generosity of our churches as congregations were deployed as volunteers in support of the most vulnerable and isolated in our communities.



Many parishes rose to the challenge of digital giving, of demonstrating the Church's need and impact, and of intentionally thanking people for their generosity. Thanks to support from the national Church, we employed two new part-time Giving Advisers, one focused on developing our giving and embracing technological innovation, and the other on training clergy and lay leaders to articulate the spirituality of fundraising and the theology of generosity; both posts are part of making giving easy, meaningful and missional.

Online training for clergy and lay leaders attracted a wider audience and enabled us to partner more easily with other dioceses and with HeartEdge, an ecumenical network bringing together people to share ideas and experience, do theology and develop their church and community. The arrival of Bishop Richard in 2020 provided a wonderful opportunity for a 'prayer pilgrimage' as part of embedding generosity within our culture of mission and ministry.



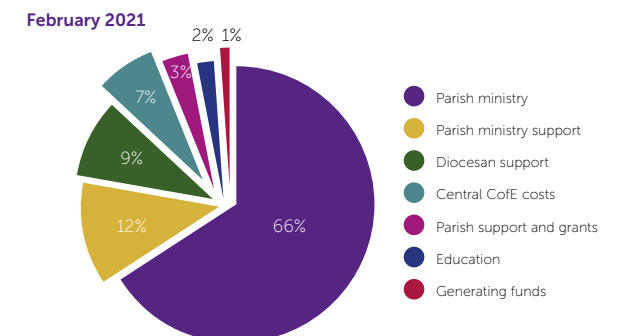
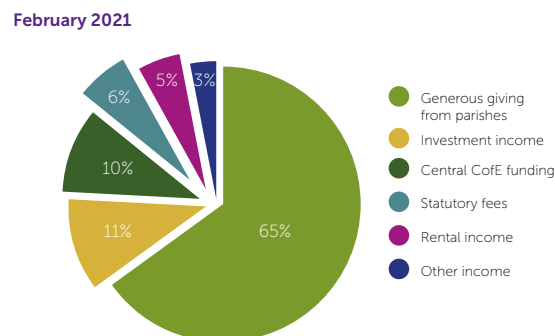
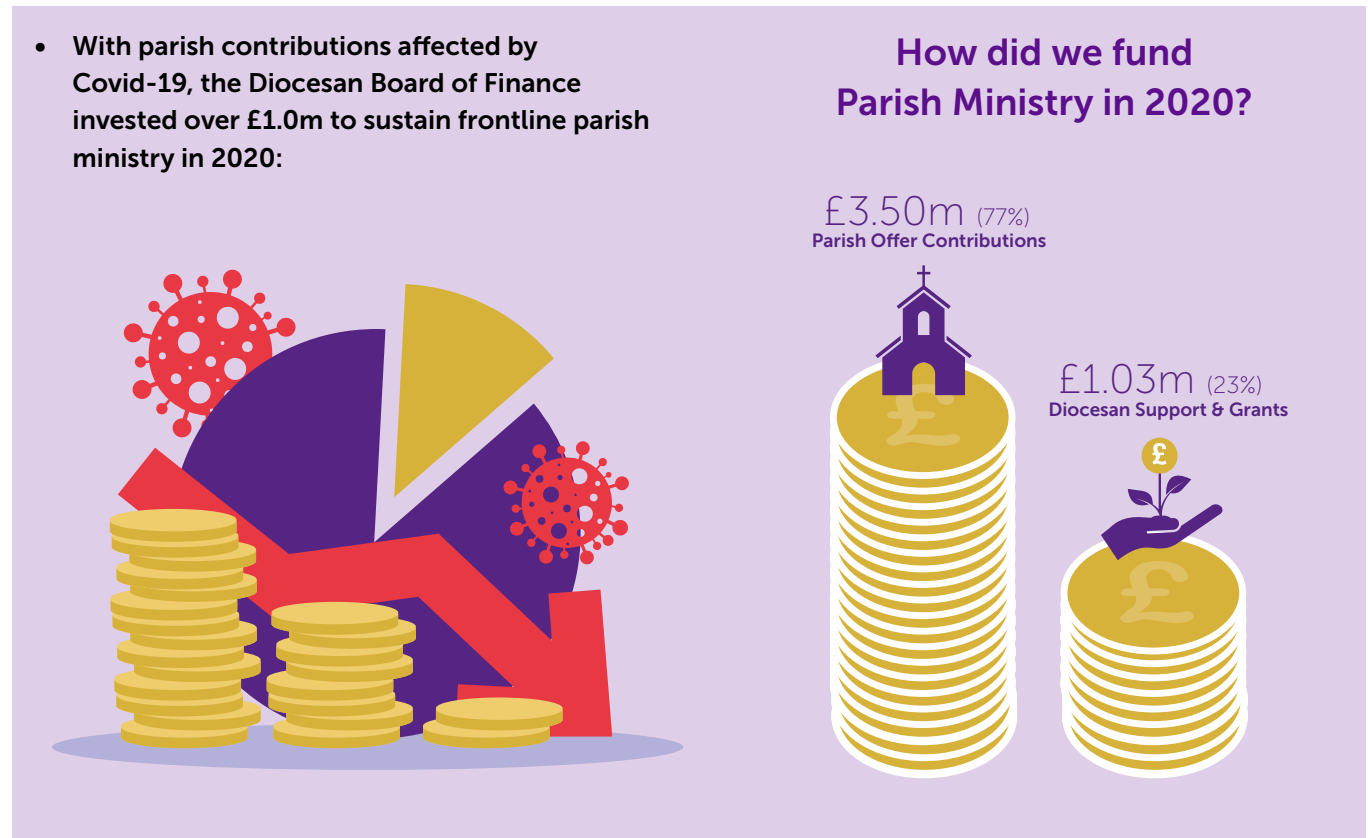
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How we spend our money

- Generous giving by parishes in 2020 totalled £3.50m, £0.33m below budget due partly to Covid-19 restrictions. We spent £4.53m on frontline parish ministry and support, which includes clergy development and training, conferences, mission projects, and support ministers' salaries.
- Other income of £1.89m was £0.18m below budget, resulting in an overall operating loss of £0.41m before investment gains and losses (per year-end management accounts).



- With parish contributions affected by Covid-19, the Diocesan Board of Finance invested over £1.0m to sustain frontline parish ministry in 2020:



Nearly 15% growth in churches receiving donations from Parish Giving Schemes



- On average in 2020, PGS supporters gave **£10.80** per person per week before Gift Aid.



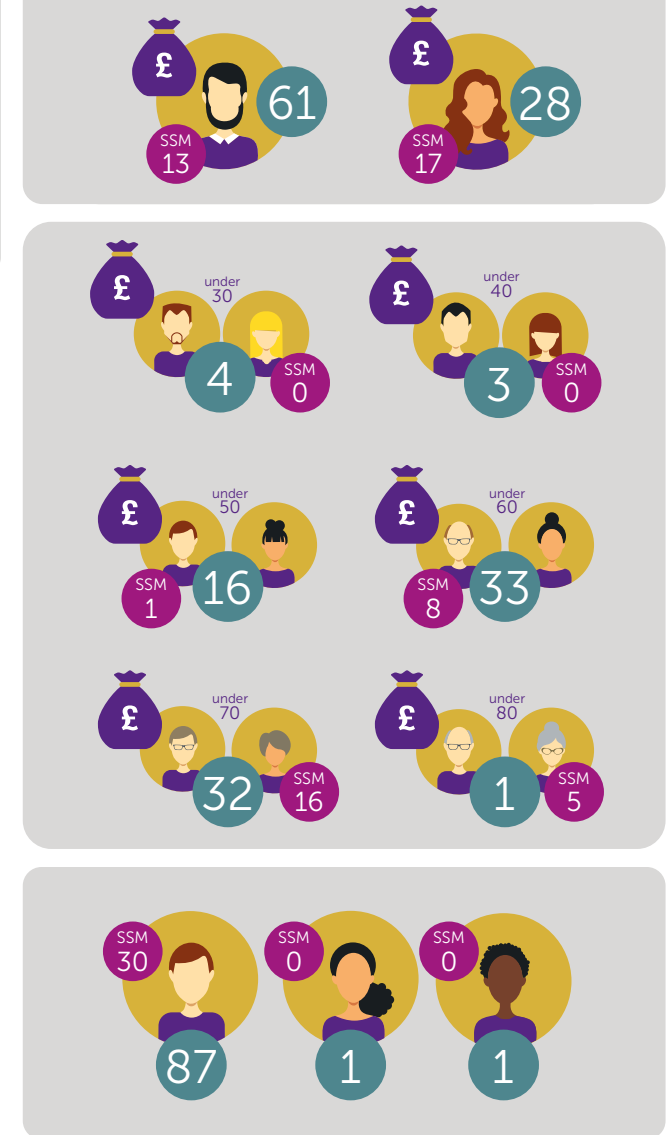
- In 2020, we maintained over 120 properties, mostly occupied by our stipendiary clergy and curates.



KEY

- £ Stipend
- 1 Number of Clergy (stipends, house for duty and curates)
- SSM Number of Self Supporting Ministers
- Characteristics: Male, female, age etc

Clergy (stipends, house for duty and curates)



Case Study 5: Caring for God's creation: Eco Church and the environment

In our stated ambition as a diocese to protect God's creation by becoming net-zero carbon by 2030, we have begun a journey to explore how we will achieve this goal. Many of the enforced changes to our lives this year have shown us how we can all reduce our energy consumption, and the learning is something we plan to explore in more detail during 2021.

- In September 2020, the Hereford Diocesan Synod passed a motion to become net-zero carbon by 2030.
- Hereford Cathedral and St. Laurence's Church, Stretton, achieved silver Eco Church awards in 2020. We now have a total of 39 churches registered on the Eco Church scheme, 12 with bronze awards and 4 with silver.
- There was an excellent Eco Church conference in November, hosted by Marches Christian Environmental Network, with Andy Atkins, the CEO of A Rocha UK as the main speaker. Andy highlighted a number of analogies with society's response to Covid-19 and our responses to environmental damage, and inspired us to take action as churches and individuals.
- A steering group has been set up comprising of multiple diocesan departments to deliver a partnership approach to becoming net-zero carbon, and an action plan has been agreed.
- Fownhope, Little Birch, Lugwardine and Orleton are piloting partnership approaches within their parishes to reduce their carbon footprints and develop community partnerships which improve environmental, social and financial sustainability.



ECO CHURCH
AN A ROCHA UK PROJECT



We now have a total of 39 churches registered on the Eco Church scheme.



Case Study 6: Our buildings and church communities

Against a backdrop of a tough funding climate due to the pressures of the global pandemic, there have been some positive outcomes for the work of our community partnership and property teams.

Many sources of funding were diverted to Covid-19 recovery, closing avenues normally available to churches for development or repair. Encouragingly, parishes have been determined to use the time creatively and usefully, with many engaging in training and learning – and with the advent of Zoom video conferencing we have been able to offer a wide range of training events, covering topics such as tourism, project development, how to engage with the wider community, the faculty process, paths to outreach and mission, and how to turn that into action as church buildings re-open.



Parishes have used the time productively to lay some foundations. In all, over 420 people have engaged in online training – far more than we could ever have reached in person.

February 2021



Some funding has been secured from emergency recovery grants for culture and heritage, although these awards have been small in number (also reflected across the country) as it was difficult for churches to meet the stringent criteria. Despite this, during the period covered by the report, we have had successful grant funding confirmed from a range of sources totalling over £1 million. This support helps parishes to have the confidence to be generous in funding local ministry through the Parish Offer.

Ways to give

Generous Parish Offer contributions from every PCC are key to our diocese's being able to resource our amazing clergy in their mission and ministry. Monthly, quarterly and annual payments can be set up online or by post or telephone through the Parish Giving Scheme, and one-off donations are also very welcome. These can be made online via Give a Little, SumUp or Give now with Stewardship.

Whichever way you choose to give, thank you for your incredible generous support.

Donate By Phone:

Call Parish Giving Scheme on

0333 002 1271

Online:

www.parishgiving.org.uk

Or through Internet Banking (UK)



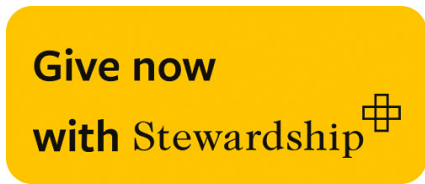
PARISHGIVINGSCHEME

By Post:

You can send cheques to your local PCC Treasurer. Please contact your Vicar or PCC Treasurer for more advice on who to make cheques payable to.

Transformation Gifts:

You can make one-off gifts on behalf of a loved one or in honour of a birthday, anniversary or other special day. We use a number of online tools to support this kind of giving including Stewardship.org



GiftAid:

If you pay tax we can claim 25% extra on your donation from HMRC at no cost to you. Please speak to your PCC Treasurer to complete a GiftAid Declaration form.

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Thank you

Without the generous giving of all our parishes, we would not be able to meet the practical needs of, and share a hope with, individuals and communities. Thank you for your continued support.



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HERE FOR CULTURE

The communities and churches of our diocese are full of people who give generously of their time, skills and money and we are hugely grateful for this support.

Generous Parish Offer contributions from every PCC are key to our diocese's being able to resource our amazing clergy in their mission and ministry.

Our preferred way to do this is to invite you to join the Parish Giving Scheme. You can choose to give online, by phone or via a paper gift form.

Monthly, quarterly and annual payments can be set up online or by post or telephone through the Parish Giving Scheme, and one-off donations are also very welcome.

Whichever way you choose to give, thank you for your incredible and generous support.

To read more about our work, please visit www.hereford.anglican.org and follow us on social media.



Diocese of Hereford

Proclaiming Christ + Growing Disciples



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