

Macclesfield Team Ministry

1. What exactly is Parish Share?

It is a levy raised by the Chester diocese to cover the cost of providing clergy, and supporting Parish mission and ministry. It includes clergy stipends, pensions, housing, ordination and vocational training, curates in training, human resources and other direct support services.

2. How is Parish Share calculated?

The total cost is shared in proportion to the number of employed clergy we have in the Team Parish (ie two - Graham Turner and Dave Mock). A banding adjustment is applied to reflect the relative wealth of parishes across the diocese (and Macclesfield is regarded as comparatively wealthy).

3. Does all the money we pay to Team funds go to Parish Share? If not, what is the extra money used for?

No. Currently about 60% paid for Team Funds goes for Parish Share and 40% for Team Costs. Team costs include the clergy's working expenses, youth work costs, salaries for team employees, costs for producing the Link magazine and other office costs (photocopier, stationery, telephone etc).

4. Why is the separate Youth Worker fund being merged with the general Team funds?

When the position of Youth Worker was introduced, it made sense to allow people to pledge specifically to support this. However, the separate Youth Worker fund never covered the costs, and the shortfall was met from Team reserves. It would be more straightforward now to ask people for a single pledge to cover all types of expenditure.

5. I make a separate donation to the Youth Worker Fund. Now this is no longer a separate fund what should I do?

We would be grateful if you would combine your giving into a single donation to cover all expenditure. If there are sufficient funds, the Team intends to fill the current vacancy.

6. Why are the finances in such a bad way? Where has all the money gone?

Over recent years, there has been a significant continuing decline in giving, caused by retirement, redundancy, death, and re-location. This decline has partly been offset by one-off receipts such as legacies and gifts. But at the same time,

running costs have increased and continue to do so. The harsh reality is that we are no longer covering our running costs by our level of giving, and have consumed our reserves over recent years.

7. Does the diocese not make allowances for churches with deficits?

Deferred payments can be negotiated, but we have to pay at some point for the books to balance across the diocese. All churches have to cover their own costs, and we are not alone in struggling with this. More permanent solutions can involve the joining together of parishes or closure of churches. The question we need to ask ourselves is whether we want to maintain our level of clergy; to do so we need to pay our dues to Chester.

8. Now we have fewer clergy (having lost Andy Bull and Philip Robinson) how much lower is our expenditure on Parish Share for 2011?

Neither Andy Bull, who was a curate in training, nor Philip Robinson, a non-stipendiary minister, affected the Parish Share calculation. The basis for 2011 will therefore be the same as this year, although early forecast guidance from Chester, suggests that our Parish Share is likely to rise by 5% for 2011.

9. Is the figure for income from 'Open Door' not offset by additional Running Costs such as more heating, staffing and cleaning?

Certainly there are costs associated with "Open Door", though staffing is not one of them, thanks to our many volunteers. The "Open Door" management are aware of the costs and take them into account in the pricing structure. Costs specific to "Open Door" are met from their revenues and the amount transferred to St Michael's. This contributes £10,000 per year, which is more than sufficient to cover the marginal cost of extra light and heating.

10. The St Michael's Stewardship leaflet shows 'Team Costs, including Youth Worker' of £46,000. Does this mean that the St Michael's congregation is subsidising the other churches in the Parish by this amount?

Team Costs are shared between the four churches on a basis last agreed in 2008. There has been an element of support, particularly for St Barnabas. On their own, All Saints, St Peter's and St Barnabas would all struggle to meet their Parish Share (that is why we are a Team). The cost sharing reflects electoral roll numbers and ability to pay based on current giving, and a proposal is made to recommend the size of contribution from each church. This is felt to be the fairest way to allocate resources. The current review proposes to reduce the share paid by St Michael's.