

THE WORD WHO IS LIFE

Financing the Mission

The Vision and Context

In his Pastoral Plan '[The Word Who is Life: The Call to Mission](#)' Bishop Richard issues an invitation to all the faithful:

I invite everyone in the Diocese – lay faithful and religious, deacons and priests – to join with me in forging our parishes into communities of saints, into strong, lively and welcoming schools of discipleship. May they be communities where the Lord is known and loved; where the liturgy is experienced as an encounter with the wonder of heaven; where daily prayer is a natural part of life; communities of healing, where all are welcomed, their dignity as children of God always recognised; where young people grow in deep love for the Gospel, for the sacramental life of the Church and for prayer; where all know the riches of the Faith and seek to share it with others.

This bold and compelling vision is being shared in a challenging context where engagement with the faith has been impacted by secular culture, and we anticipate that our parish communities will be served by fewer priests. The purpose of changing canonical and administrative arrangements is to mobilise all our diocesan resources in the best possible way to deliver the Bishop's vision in this context. It is anticipated that the eleven new parishes will come into being through fusion of the existing parishes in each deanery. This will mean that our canonical structures are future proofed.

The creation of new larger parishes served by a Moderator and the priests *in solidum* will support greater collaboration between communities, so that responsibilities are shared in new ways, in a spirit of subsidiarity, freeing up the clergy and enabling greater engagement of the lay faithful in parish life and leadership.

Priests are encouraged to embrace opportunities for delegation, including developing the skills and gifts of lay staff and volunteers to enable the clergy to focus on their primary mission and achieve balance in their life and ministry. Some recommended staff roles are discussed in the Appendix.

The Community of Communities

The priests appointed in each new parish are together responsible for its care. Priests will also continue to be charged with the care of a particular community (maybe more than one), including oversight of day-to-day finance and administration for that community. Each community, or group of communities will continue to need the leadership and contribution of volunteers supporting their priest(s) in an advisory role. It is recommended that we refer to these groups as **Stewardship Teams**. See Terms of Reference in the Appendix. Most communities also have a Pastoral Team supporting the Parish Priest.

Decision Making as a Parish

The new parish will make all major decisions collectively. It is recommended that each parish will have a **Leadership Team** reporting to the Moderator and priests *in solidum*. The Leadership team will be appointed by the Moderator and priests *in solidum* and will include the Moderator, some members of clergy and lay parishioners. Its function is to ensure the development and delivery of a pastoral vision for the parish.

Each parish will have a **Parish Finance Committee** to secure resources for delivering the vision and advise the priests on matters affecting the parish as a whole (see terms of reference in the Appendix). The Moderator and priests *in solidum* will ensure that the lay people serving on these teams are well chosen and have relevant insight and formation. Deacons may also frequently be members of Leadership Teams, Finance Committees, Pastoral Teams and Stewardship Teams.

A **Parish Council (Representative Group)** will meet to bring together members of each of the church communities that form the new parish. This group will work closely with the Leadership Team to develop and implement the pastoral vision for the parish. Members of Pastoral Teams from all the communities of the parish will be encouraged to attend.

Collaboration between Communities

Each team of priests will be responsible for deciding how the new parish is organised, and where activities take place, including how communities can best to collaborate to deliver sacramental programmes and other activities.

The priests who will form the *in solidum* team have been meeting to discuss new ways of working in preparation for the canonical change.

Appendix

- Parish Finance and Administration: Frequently Asked Questions
- Stewardship Team – Terms of Reference
- Parish Finance Committee – Terms of Reference
- Recommended Staff Roles
- Summary: The Roles of Priests and Advisory Teams in the New Parishes

Parish Finance and Administration – FAQs

Will parish bank accounts merge into a single bank account?

Consolidation of banking into fewer accounts is recommended as this will reflect the new canonical reality of a single parish. This change will happen gradually over time. The Moderator and priests *in solidum* with him will decide which accounts to merge, having sought the advice of the Parish Finance Committee. This will reduce administration and costs for the parish but must be managed carefully when the account is receiving Standing Orders. The Diocesan bank, HSBC, can arrange for Standing Orders to be forwarded to another account for 12 months after closure.

Will accounting be centralised in the parish?

Initially, the finance system, made up of many individual accounting databases maintained by local treasurers, will continue unchanged. Each new parish has several accounting databases, and the financial information required to give an overview of parish finance will be produced by consolidated reporting, which combines the output from individual accounting databases. This consolidation can be run by the central Finance team at intervals required by the parish.

Gradually, there will be a consolidation of parish accounting databases, which will reduce the administrative load. The pace of this change will be decided by the priests of the parish, in consultation with their advisory groups. The reduction in accounting databases naturally aligns with rationalising the number of bank accounts maintained by the new parish.

As the new parish gradually migrates to fewer, larger accounting databases, the diocesan Finance Team can work with parish treasurers to support with monthly accounting or to undertake some of the accounting on behalf of the parishes. This is being successfully piloted, and the Central Finance Team are able to take on more parish work as required.

How will communities be kept informed about decisions taken at parish level?

It is recommended that Parish Finance Committee (PFC) minutes are shared within the parish, and that the Parish Leadership Team maintains regular communications with all stakeholders.

Are parish staff affected?

Staffing needs may evolve over time. It is likely that the new parishes will have additional staffing needs, leading to new roles being developed. Parishes are recommended to ensure that there is a senior administrator supporting the Moderator and liaising with all the communities, and a property or estates manager who can oversee repairs and maintenance throughout the parish. See the Appendix for example role summaries. Existing parish staff can apply for any new roles that interest them. The COO's office can support with job descriptions and recruitment.

Will there be new costs for parishes?

Costs for parish level employees and projects will need to be shared across the communities. While finances and accounting are managed locally it will be necessary for communities to contribute to shared costs on an agreed method of apportionment. Percentage of total parish offertory is likely to be the best method of allocating shared costs.

Can I still leave a legacy to my own church?

Yes. Legacies can be left for a particular purpose or community - parish boundary changes do not affect the ways in which a legacy can be used.

Will our special funds be merged or repurposed?

No. Any money that has been raised or given for a specific purpose can only be used for that purpose. Both Canon Law (canon 1300) and charity law require us to be careful to identify and protect restricted funds.

Will offertory be pooled? People might want to give to their church not the wider parish...

All current parishes will be fused into the new parish, which will be the canonical owner of all the resources. Local church communities will not have an individual canonical status through which they can retain separate ownership of the general fund collections. However, the receipt and banking of these funds will continue to be under local management and stewardship following the creation of the new parish. Any changes to this will be made at an agreed pace, with advice of the Parish Finance Committee having been sought.

How will we build communications and a sense of belonging to the new parish?

Often as parishioners, we are familiar with our local church and can be less aware of other communities within the present deaneries. Improved communications will be key to building community across the new and larger parish. A new parish website project (using a product called *Sanctifyr*) is being launched across the Diocese to support parishes in creating effective communications on and offline. Each new parish will share one website which represents each of its communities and the parish as a whole.

The new website will require some sharing of parish data and it is recommended that ChurchSuite is used. This can be ringfenced at community level so that data is always used in an appropriate way. The Communications Team can support with implementing and merging ChurchSuite data.

What matters will be decided at “whole parish” level and discussed at the Parish Finance Committee? (cf. canons 537 and 1284)

This PFC will advise the Moderator and priests *in solidum* about strategic matters including:

- financial planning and fundraising
- expenditure to be referred to the Diocesan Finance Committee (above £20,000)
- staffing
- significant property projects
- consolidation of banking and accounting

Who makes the decisions about the appointment of new staff to serve the parish as a whole?

The appointment of any staff to a parish role is a decision for the Moderator and priests *in solidum*. The Parish Finance Committee should be consulted and there is an obligation to involve the COO's office prior to making any offer of employment. Contracts of employment are a significant financial liability for the parish and the Diocesan Finance Committee must be consulted where a significant change to parish staffing levels is proposed.

The diocesan COO's office supports parishes and individual colleagues with Human Resources (HR) including work to finalise job descriptions, advertise roles and interview candidates, utilising a robust process that includes interview tasks. The COO's team can help with planning interviews and the Communications team can help with advertising the vacancy via diocesan channels.

Stewardship Team – Terms of Reference

This is an advisory group formed by the priest with care of the community to support him with church oversight. At this local level decisions can be taken relating to **expenditure of up to £7,500**, subject to the decisions taken by the Moderator and priests *in solidum* to establish a scheme of delegation for the parish. Members should be appointed for a period of 3 to 5 years. Appointments can be renewed, and things should be arranged to facilitate, over time, a rolling programme of appointments. It is anticipated that the Stewardship Teams that will serve the communities of the new parishes will be formed from the current Parish Finance Committees and will continue much of the oversight these committees currently provide.

The Stewardship Team should meet at least quarterly and should discuss issues of relevance to the communities they serve. The group is drawn from the lay faithful of these communities and has direct knowledge of local buildings and activities so can identify fabric and property issues and monitor health and safety. The group will review financial information and should include or engage with the Gift Aid organiser for the community. Planned giving campaigns should be initiated by Stewardship Teams for the communities they serve so that the lay faithful are encouraged to take financial responsibility for the mission in their place of worship.

Parish Finance Committee (PFC) – Terms of Reference

The PFC is an advisory group which will consider decisions pertaining to the parish as a whole, including those which require diocesan approval. The group will include lay faithful from different communities to ensure that there is a good collective understanding of issues throughout the parish. Members will serve for a term of from 3 to 5 years, with a rolling programme of appointment being in place over time. The team of priests serving *in solidum* will decide on the membership of the group, including whether all the priests of the parish choose to attend. Staff appointed at parish level will attend committee meetings to share updates. Decisions can be taken relating to **expenditure of up to £20,000**. The PFC will be responsible for:

- Obtaining an overview of the condition of parish properties as a whole; receiving summaries from quinquennial reports and establishing a maintenance plan
- Setting an annual budget and allocating financial resources to mission priorities
- Considering staffing requirements for the parish
- Monitoring progress versus the annual budget – reviewing financial information across the whole parish
- Considering fundraising matters including Gift Aid and planned giving
- Engaging with the Diocesan Finance Committee (DFC) regarding planned expenditure over £20,000 and ensuring that diocesan support is sought on **all** projects where HCC consent is required, or where there are issues with Planning or Building Control

- Considering the timing and planning towards merging bank accounts and consolidating financial accounting
- Optimising administrative operations and collaborating with the diocesan finance team to reduce duplication of administrative work (e.g. accounting)
- Working towards a property strategy for the parish – developing recommendations on the use of buildings including granting leases and engaging with the Bishop and Trustees regarding parish buildings

Minutes of the Parish Finance Committee meetings should be available within the parish.

Recommended Staff Role: Lead Administrative Officer

The Lead Administrative Officer will ensure that strong administrative support is provided to the Moderator and priests *in solidum*. They will be responsible for liaising with communities to ensure the smooth running of meetings and will plan and book these, collating and sharing papers, producing minutes and following up on actions where relevant. The Lead Administrative Officer can convene whole parish staff meetings, organise staff/volunteer training and liaise with the Diocese on behalf of the parish over administrative matters. This is a very important role, relieving the Moderator of significant workload, including all administration that is suitable for delegation.

Recommended Staff Role: Parish Estates Officer

The Parish Estates Officer will liaise with communities and report to the Moderator and priest team, and to the Parish Finance Committee about property issues at all sites. The role holder will support budgeting for property matters across the Parish. They will engage with each of the Stewardship Teams in the parish and oversee approved maintenance work, instructing contractors and ensuring value for money through rigorous procurement. The role holder will be responsible for ensuring a coordinated approach across the new parish from quinquennial surveys and health and safety management to commercial and residential lettings. The Parish Estates Officer will not replace Health & Safety volunteers or those who take hall bookings etc but will work to support them. They will lead on liaising with the Diocese to obtain permissions on major projects and will work with the Diocese to engage with the Historic Churches Committee when required. They will maintain close contact with the Diocesan Property Team, ensuring that advice is sought where required for any parish project, particularly where there are matters for Planning or Building Control.

The Roles of Priests and Advisory Teams in the New Parishes

Serving church communities as Parish Priests

Advisory in church communities:

- Pastoral Teams
- Stewardship Teams (max. £7,500)

Moderator & Priests *in solidum*

responsible for the care
of the Parish working
both locally and
collectively

Leading the Parish with the *in solidum* team

Advisory to the priests *in solidum*:

- Parish Leadership Team
- Parish Council (representing Pastoral Teams)
- Parish Finance Committee (max. £20,000)

The priests entrusted with the care of the parish are responsible for developing internal rules regarding parish governance and roles, and presenting these to the Bishop for *aprobatio*. The level of expenditure delegated to local decision making is set by the priests *in solidum* as part of the internal rules of the parish (maximum £7,500).