TOGETHER WE ARE

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

SUFFOLK

Growing stronger

A GUIDE TO PARISH SHARE

cofesuffolk.org

Growing in God

Lord Jesus,

You have shown us how to live and love generously, giving up everything – even your life – for us.

It is your loving generosity that has given us life.

We pray that you may continue to give us this gift of generosity and grow it within us.

So that your church may radiate your generous love and care for all.

Please help us to inspire and encourage each other to live the generous life you have called us to.

Amen

TOGETHER WE ARE
THE DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH

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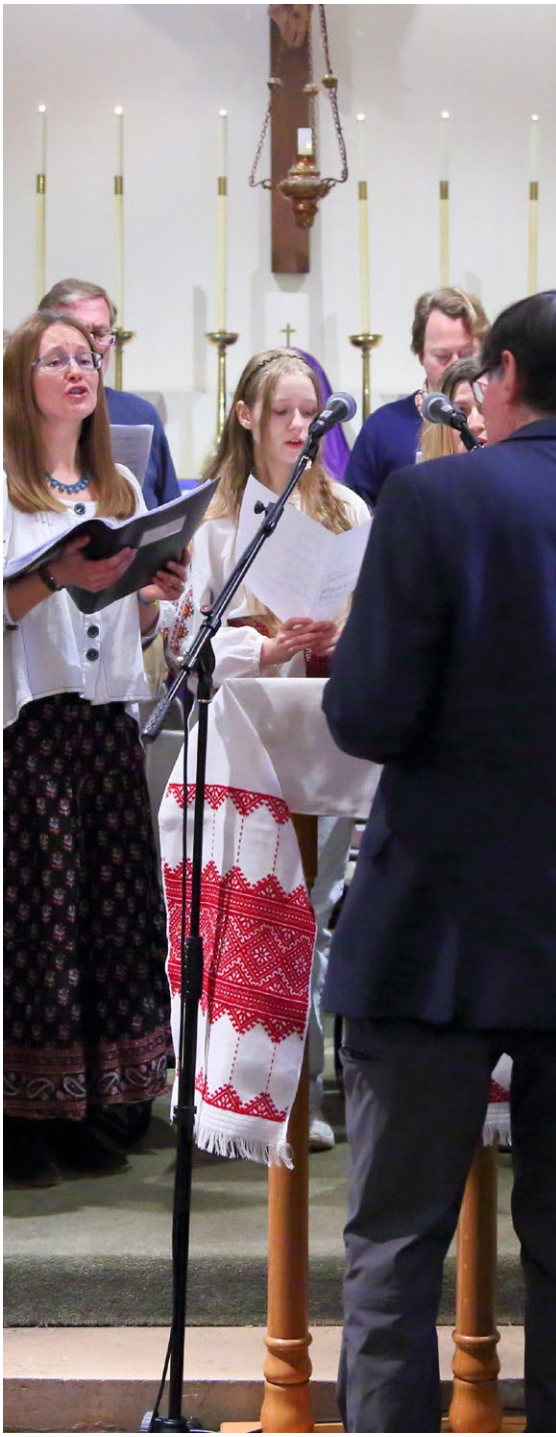


OUR THANK YOU

Over the past years, I have been truly inspired by the incredible generosity of our church communities.

I would like to thank you all for the love, kindness and generosity you have so readily given to the ministry and mission of the church during my time as your Bishop.

When I retire in February it will be almost 10 years since I came to the Diocese and the faithful financial support you have shown has ensured we are now moving towards a much healthier position as benefices and as a Diocese. Crucially, we have committed to maintaining the numbers of stipendiary clergy posts, and to increasing the number of self-supporting ordained ministers and lay ministers. Our clergy and lay ministers are essential for our churches' worship and fellowship, and for pastoral care and outreach in our communities. Our focus on this is clearly demonstrated through the 80% of Parish Share that directly supports mission and ministry.

Your collective generosity also plays a vital role in supporting every church in Suffolk, often in communities where there is great need and financial challenge.

My appeal to you now is to strive to keep all our benefices and the Diocese flourishing, to make them sustainable for many years to come. The last few years, with the pandemic and then the cost of living crisis, have shown that we never know what is round the corner. Yet through these challenges we have continued to worship, witness and serve.

We have supported one another, and seen over and again, how working together enables the whole Diocese to show and share the love of God across our county.

Generosity manifests in all sorts of ways, and I am so grateful that we have some churches paying above their allocation for the Parish Share to offset those who are unable to meet theirs.

Many of you are generous with your time, giving up countless hours to support the worship and mission of your local church, and to serve your wider community.

I will treasure countless memories of selflessness and generosity from individuals and congregations who have gone above and beyond. However small or large your contributions in years past and in the years ahead, thank you.

Bishop Martin

The Lord is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.

The Lord is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made.

All your works praise you, Lord;
your faithful people extol you.

They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,
so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does.

The Lord upholds all who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.

Psalm 145: 8 - 14

TOGETHER WE ARE

THANKING OUR 6,500 PARISHIONERS WHO GIVE A WEEKLY GIFT TO THEIR PARISH

Church tackling food poverty attracts huge support

Pop-Up events were started by St Mary's Church, Hadleigh, to promote a community spirit for those struggling. The events offer a warm space for residents and villagers finding it difficult to pay for soaring energy costs or have a hot meal. The majority of attendees come from Hadleigh, however some people travel to the town and events are also supported by Ukrainians and military families.

In the previous 12 months, 32 Pop-Ups have been held with attendances ranging from 55 to 148, averaging 96 a session.

" In 2023, due to the positive response to the Pop-Ups and because of our ongoing concern as a church about food poverty, economic challenges, soaring energy costs, and social isolation, we expanded the Pop-Ups to make this event more accessible to the wider community."

MARYLOU DELFGOU,
Volunteer and a Lay Elder

Safe Harbour supports people with complex needs

Lightwave group Safe Harbour, held in St Helen's Church, Ipswich, is a refuge for those facing life's complex challenges. It was opened in 2021 with the aim of helping people to turn their lives around and was seen as a community for 'people who have been battered and bruised by the storms of life.'

Safe Harbour offers food, warmth and hospitality to those who need it – not least those who are isolated or alone, those struggling with addictions, those navigating physical or mental health challenges, those in economic straits or facing other difficulties.

It provides a safe, loving, Christian community accessible to all, and is flourishing, making a real difference to those who are involved.

" Safe Harbour is for those who are travelling through the storms of life. We are like a lifeboat station that aims to help those in need by welcoming them into a safe community through sharing meals and sharing the good news, that Jesus loves us and wants to journey with us."

BOB HAMILTON
Leader of Safe Harbour Church

TOGETHER WE ARE

THANKING THE 1,906 PARISHIONERS WHO GIVE THROUGH THE PARISH GIVING SCHEME

Celebrating Messy Church's tenth anniversary

The Messy Church hosted by the Hoxne Benefice and held in the Village Hall at Syleham and Wingford, was launched in 2014 and celebrated its anniversary this September.

Every month, children and their parents gather to take part in a range of fun craft activities, from finger painting to decorating greetings cards.

The Revd Canon Eleanor Goodison, Priest-in-Charge of the Hoxne Benefice, said: "One of the great things about Messy Church is that it's a wonderful way for all the families and parents to socialise and get to know each other and to welcome new families to the church and wider community."

19 children and their families who regularly attend messy church as well as one new family with their daughter attended the celebration.

Messy Church groups are offered in many of our churches throughout Suffolk, often reaching out to families with young children in rural and isolated areas, offering welcome and support with opportunities to grow together as God's people. It is just one example of Growing Younger with all age worship in a multi-parish rural benefice.

Church building to become a community hub

All Saints' Church, Stanton, near Bury St Edmunds, is throwing open its doors to the community by taking out some of its traditional pews to create a flexible space for other activities.

With a £200,000 redevelopment project, the church is disposing of 21 old Markham pews and replacing them with wooden chairs to create a welcoming, warm and wonderful space at the heart of their community, one that is open and accessible to everyone. The aim is to make the building as hospitable and as friendly as possible with local people taking ownership of their church.

The church hosts a Men's Breakfast once a month and teenagers already use the building as a warm space after school and at weekends. The church hopes to provide an after-school 'drop in' for them, offering toast and tea/hot chocolate etc so they can start their homework, play board games and socialise in a safe space before going home.

TOGETHER WE ARE

RUNNING 58 FOOD BANKS ACROSS SUFFOLK

Church plant reaches out to people in the community

How do you build a church without a church building? Pop a gazebo up in your front garden of course! Lindbergh Road Community Church (LRCC) was formed in the Priory Heath Estate in Ipswich and currently the church, a gazebo in the Revd Ian Daniels' front garden, has a regular congregation of 20 – 30 people every Sunday with many others involved in related activities. The church vision is a thriving church for the estate - offering an open door to those in the community who want to journey with them in faith.

The Priory Heath estate is in the bottom 10% of deprivation in Suffolk and there have been recent stabbings in the area relating to drug-related crimes.

The gazebo is a visible presence in the estate and people happen to come across it and stop to chat. Some people donated funds and they bought heaters, urns and a few more mugs and the church has grown from there.

The church offers discipleship as a journey. People can share thoughts, have discussions, talk about a Bible passage and essentially enjoy being together and learning together.

Those who come age from a five year old to an 85+ year old. The congregation is totally intergenerational, and diverse in many ways including neurodiversity.

Weekly Food Bank, Youth Activities and Well-Being Café

St Thomas The Apostle church in Ipswich has a food bank every week, helping up to 50 people with 12 volunteers. They also hold youth activities weekly for up to 30 young people aged 11 to 19 years old, and have a weekly Well-Being café where people can drop in for support every Thursday.

" After spending only a short time with the team, I could so clearly see how passionate they are about caring for people of all ages and backgrounds in and around their church community and, in particular, how much their group of young people value being a part of church activities. The team are really listening to try to understand the challenges and provide a stimulating and safe space for young people to be. It's precious work and brings stability and much needed hope to often fragile lives that are really only just beginning."

TIM HOLDER
Diocesan Director of Engagement

OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER

I joined the Diocese in 2017 as Director of Finance and was appointed Diocesan Secretary in 2023. During this experience of working with you all every day, I have had the privilege of gaining a unique perspective on both the financial and operational aspects of our work together.

In 2025 and beyond we will face a unique set of challenges and opportunities as we remain committed to growing the presence of God's love in Suffolk.

To read a detailed account of our *challenges and opportunities* please **click here**

I am confident that we are in an increasingly stronger position to make the most of the many inspiring opportunities facing us and we must continue to work hard to ensure that all voices are heard and that communities in Suffolk are well served with a strong spiritual, practical and impactful demonstration of faith.

In achieving this, I am hugely thankful to everyone for their continued commitment and generosity. For your prayers, for the time you give so generously and for the financial gifts you continue to offer in support of our work here in Suffolk.

We are a strong team and together we will continue to grow in our Christian faith.

In our ongoing commitment to looking outwards, understanding the challenges and opportunities facing local people in the community we seek to serve is important as it will enable us to shape our resources accordingly.

As scripture so clearly teaches us, sharing what we have been blessed to receive is a key part of showing our gratitude to God and demonstrating our faith.

Getting the balance right between giving of our time, our love and resources is key to our spiritual growth. Giving in all its forms is fundamental to strengthening the quality of our mission, worship and the practical support that will make a difference to those most in need around us.

At the financial heart of all our work together is the voluntary commitment each parish continues to make in gifting Parish Share.

It is a key element in ensuring that you and all parishes throughout Suffolk have access to the resources needed.

Together we are the Church of England in Suffolk and, as Christians, we join forces to improve the lives of everyone.

The sustainability and growth of our existing worshipping communities and starting vibrant new Fresh Expressions and church plants is at the heart of our vision of growth and we are making progress.

Underpinning everything, with the generous support of Parish Share, is our central commitment to maintaining our clergy numbers and continuing to develop their skills to fully provide them with support.

Our clergy, alongside lay ministers (see Our Diocese in numbers) and with the support of voluntary churchwardens, treasurers and other PCC members, are united in a common vision: Growing in God - with flourishing congregations who make a positive difference to local lives.

As we prepare for the transition of a new Bishop, we can continue to create even stronger foundations for growth and engagement. I look forward, to moving along with our team in full support and empowerment of our parishes.

I would like to **thank you** for your incredible and continued generosity, hard work and prayers as we continue to 'Grow in God.'

'All shall give as they are able, according to the blessings of the Lord your God that He has given you.'

Deut 16.17

– growing in depth, influence, younger and number, vitally ensuring the church continues to be present to share God's love with our children and future generations.

Gary Peverley
Diocesan Secretary

Our Diocese in numbers

481 Church Buildings
443 Parishes
111 Benefices
16 Deaneries

87 Church Schools and Academies (85 Primary schools and 2 High Schools)
21 Schools in our Diocesan Multi Academy Trust

2 Bishop's Mission Orders
119 Stipendiary Clergy

74 Self-Supporting Ministers
154 Licensed Lay Ministers
357 Lay Elders
189 Clergy with Permission to Officiate

757 Baptisms in 2023
401 Weddings in 2023
1,256 Funerals in 2023

684,000 Population in the Diocese
1,450 Diocese area (square miles)

OUR FINANCIAL CHALLENGE

Our vision is to be Growing in God with *Flourishing Congregations – Making a Difference.* To achieve this growth, of course we have to be financially sustainable.

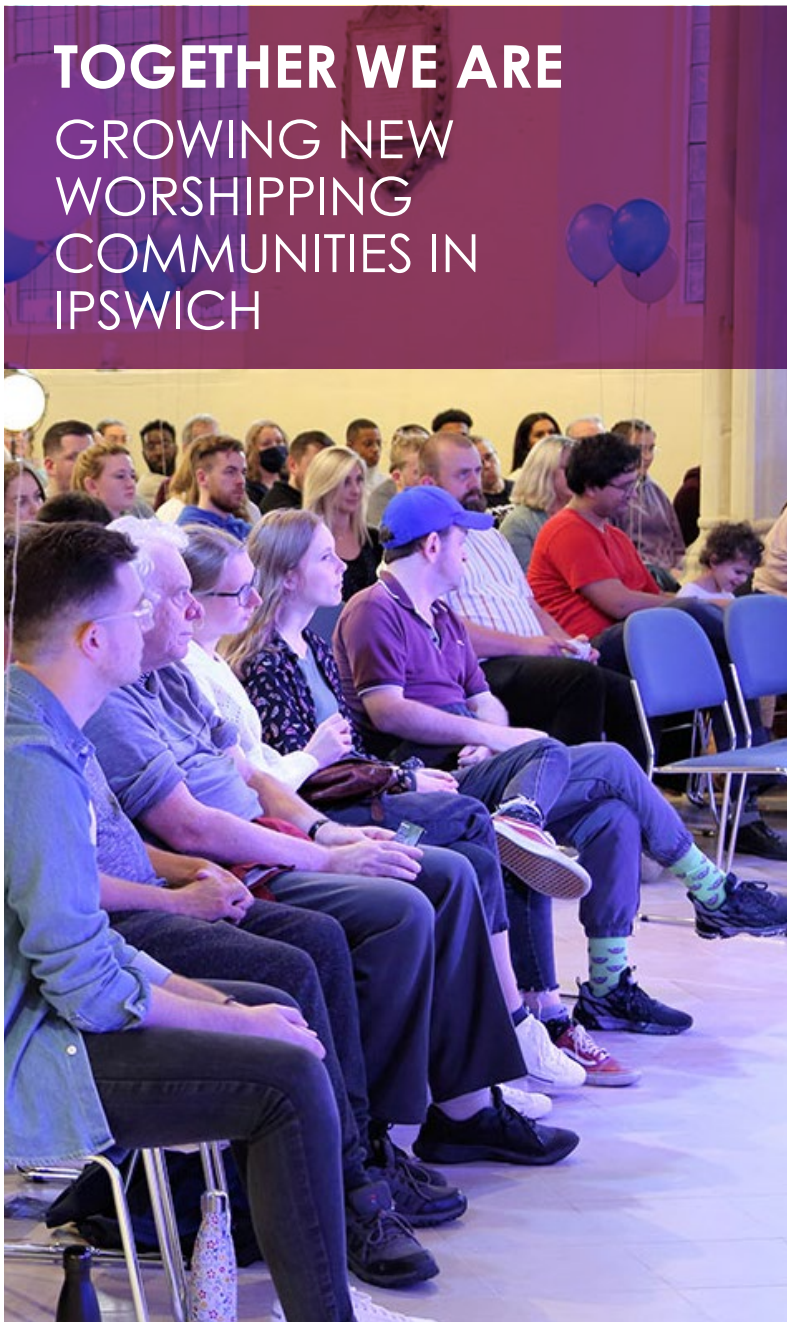
The Diocesan Board of Finance is the charity and administrative hub for the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, we work hard to be financially sustainable, and our expenditure is carefully monitored to ensure our income is used as effectively as possible.

The annual budget for the Diocese is around £10m and in general our finances are relatively stable while continuing to be a challenge.

In 2023 and once again in 2024, we asked people and parishes to give generously and sacrificially, making every effort to support us through Parish Share. It is the generous donations from parishes that enables us to collectively make a difference in our communities.

With rising costs and our commitment to retaining clergy and lay minister numbers, we continue to recognise that our financial conditions remain challenging.

If we are to continue to improve our overall financial position we need to increase the amount of Parish Share collected. In simple terms a 10% increase in Parish Share will ensure a sustainable continuation of the good works of churches in our communities.



"Our national vision is a Christian presence in every community, which we here express as "flourishing congregations making a difference." You can't do that and cut ministerial posts. My own sense indeed is that dioceses that have cut posts to save money are in much the same financial state now as they were before they cut".

Bishop Martin

DID YOU KNOW?

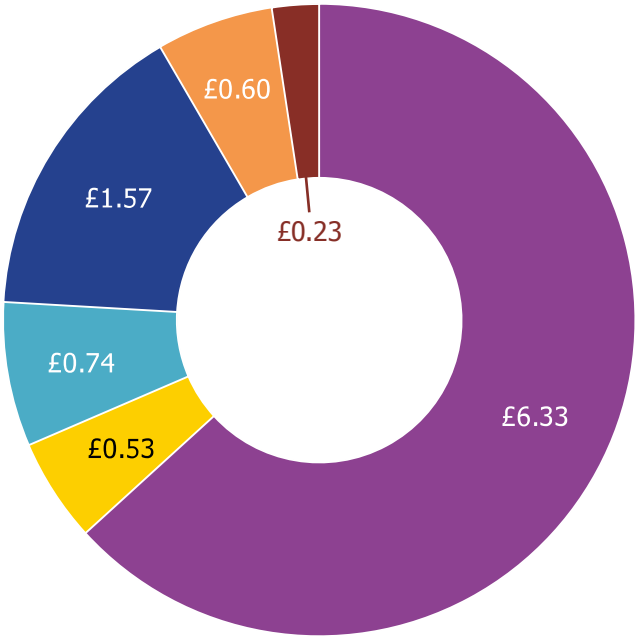
Contributions from Parish Share raises over 63% of our income.

OUR FINANCES AND RESOURCES

In 2023, the total Diocesan income, excluding project income, was £9,824,000. Our total expenditure was £9,859,000.

Where does our money come from?

Every £10 we receive is made up as follows:



- Parish Share
- Fees from life events and income from schools
- Investment income
- National Church funding
- Rental income
- Other income

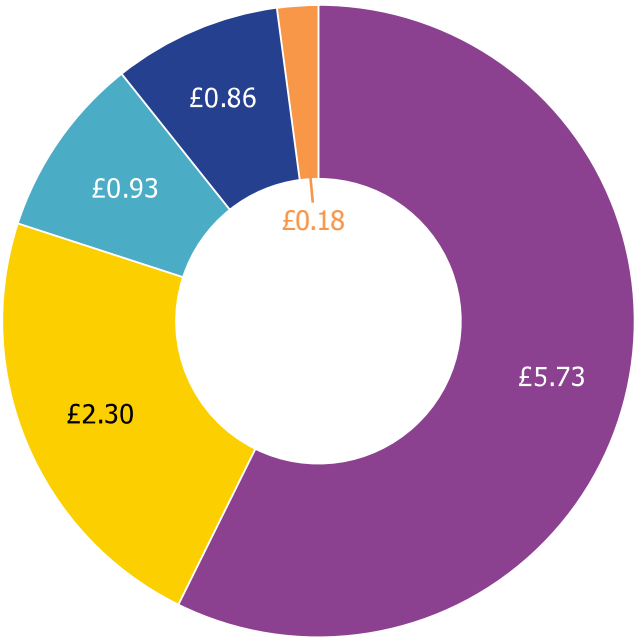
"The church's finances are part of her spiritual life, flowing from prayer. How we handle and engage with our material resources is shaped by our relationship with God. Our financial priorities embody our spiritual priorities. And that is true just as much for us as individuals, and our giving.

We need to be more comfortable talking about money. We are all pressed, but some of us who are less pressed than others can step up for the sake of everyone else and for the ministry of the church in this Diocese."

Bishop Martin

How do we spend the money we receive?

Every £10 we receive is spent as follows:



- Clergy costs and housing
- Support for parishes, churches, schools and current and future ministers
- Contribution to the National Church
- Governance, office and IT
- Raising funds

WHAT IS PARISH SHARE?

Parish Share is the model our Diocese uses to share the costs of clergy, housing, mission and ministry, governance between every parish in order to fulfil our calling to 'Grow in God'. Parish Share is based on the principle of Christian generosity and mutual support. Parish Share enables us all to contribute together so we can:

- Fund ministry in all our parishes developing enthusiastic ministry teams in every community.
- Join together to grow our mission to Growing in God as we aim to be flourishing congregations making a difference so that together we can have a greater impact.
- Unite in a partnership in proclaiming the Christian faith.

DID YOU KNOW?

80.3% of our expenditure goes directly back into supporting parishes.

Total costs to be covered by the Parish Share total of £7.57m:

This allocation to each area (benefice) is split into three areas, covering existing ministry, the minister for the next generation and shared costs of church leadership, known as wider church costs:

Total costs	2024 (£k)	2023 (£k)
Cost of ministry	6,451	6,233
Training for stipendiary ministers	310	297
Wider church costs	809	619
Total cost	**7,570**	**7,149**

Cost of Ministry covers 85% of the costs and is split into:

Ministry cost	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Ministry stipends & National Insurance	38,449	37,113
Ministry pensions	7,743	8,900
Property related costs (repairs & running costs)	10,137	9,668
Ministry training	3,872	4,129
Ministry team	3,849	3,937
Clergy HR fees	614	959
Contribution from other income	**-1,827**	**-2,375**
Total cost	62,837	62,331

Wider church costs are 11% of the total costs covering:

Wider church costs	2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Archdeacons & Rural Deans	210	225
Safeguarding	173	171
Communications	129	153
DAC	99	105
Parish resources	142	138
National synod & clergy retirement	261	281
Governance & administration	938	913
Subtotal cost	1,952	1,986
Other income	**-1,143**	**-1,367**
Total cost	**809**	**619**

Local support costs include the maintenance and upkeep of the clergy houses; the training and development of clergy and lay ministry already in post and the support of those training for ministry; and funding clergy relocations when clergy move into a new post in the Diocese.

Support also includes safeguarding, the Registrar, communications and financial governance.

National support costs include the cost of training new clergy; the cost of the General Synod and the work it carries out; the Church of England's contribution to the Anglican Communion; pension contributions for Mission Agencies; and contributions to provide housing for retired clergy.

Parish Share helps cover the costs of running and supporting church ministries in every parish. This includes expenses for local (diocesan) and national church support (wider church).

It funds the ministry we benefit from today and also supports those in training who will lead the church in the future.

Thank you to the **38 churches** who gifted over **100%** of their Parish Share contribution to support other churches in financial need.

In 2024 Parish Share is resourcing 101 FTE paid parish posts and 19 FTE paid curates in training.

HOW TO HELP

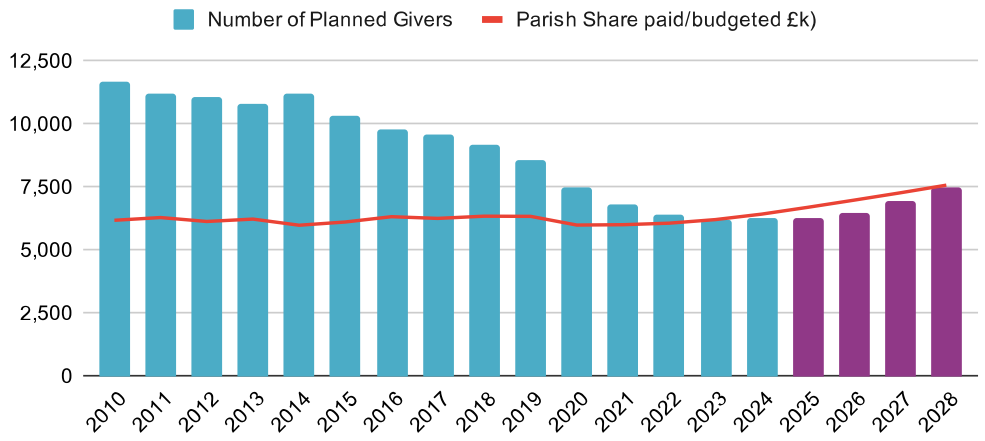
In 2023 we had just under 6,500 weekly givers with the average weekly gift being £13.51 per person per week. For the 1,906 givers from 239 parishes in the Parish Giving Scheme the average weekly gift was £15.56 excluding gift aid.

Whilst this is encouraging, the pace of engagement with Parish Giving Scheme has slowed in the last couple of years. We remain very grateful and thankful for the many examples of sacrificial generosity in giving finances, time and skills across Suffolk but there is still the potential and need to go further.

Our Growing in God strategy and ongoing ministry bid to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) directly address our financial and resourcing challenges with the aim to achieve financial balance and sustainability by 2028/29.

Additional income streams are a valuable support however we still need to increase the number of planned givers as highlighted in the graphs below.

Parish Share received and number of Planned Givers 2010-2028



PARISHGIVINGSCHEME

Parish Giving Scheme

Parishes are encouraged to register with the PGS to allow their givers to access regular and one-off giving. Parishes receive the whole donation and Gift Aid is paid monthly.

Email the team on:
pgs@cofesuffolk.org

and find your parish via:
parishgiving.org.uk/home/

Digital Giving

Online giving is essential for all parishes and enables people to give whether they are present in the church or not. Contactless devices are available through Parish Buying. Ask the Parish Resources Team to find out about the best options for your parish.

cofesuffolk.org/for-parishes/parish-stewardship-resources/

Gifts in Wills

Legacy giving is a statement of values and a celebration of life. Remembering your church in your will is a lasting gift. Let us help you run a legacy campaign ensuring that people know that your PCC is a charity, use the free wills offer. Resources and support available from the Parish Resources Team.

insight.cofesuffolk.org/?s=wills

OUR SUPPORT FOR YOU

Our Parish Resources team is here to help you grow giving to support a sustainable future for your local mission and ministry. The team can support you with resources, technology and training to help encourage generosity.

There is enormous gratitude for the generosity and faithfulness of so many of our churches and their congregations. We actively seek to support parishes who are having difficulties in contributing their Parish Share. Our Parish Resources team can help you plan a giving strategy, and offer advice on grants and fundraising, Parish Giving Scheme, digital giving including contactless donation devices, grants and fundraising, gifts in wills and provide resources to help. The team is also available for Benefice visits.

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Make your donation today

You can donate directly to support the work in Suffolk via this link:

givealittle.co/c/6M4hDIEJtrRO0zkaP2MOdH

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Why doesn't the Church Commissioners pay for everything?

The Church Commissioners for England have significant funds to support the mission and ministry of the Church of England. Income they receive supports our mission here in this diocese by:

- Paying the stipends for our two Bishops, and the Cathedral Dean
- Providing the house, office accommodation and staffing costs for the Bishop
- Providing an annual grant to help to support ministry in our low-income communities
- Meeting all clergy pension costs for those in ministry up to 1998 (meaning a good proportion of the pension received by our clergy who have already retired is funded by the Commissioners and part of the pension for those who began ministry before 1998, but are yet to retire, will be funded by the Commissioners).

How are ministry (Clergy) costs calculated?

Most clergy are paid a monthly stipend which enables them to exercise ministry without needing to take on another job. In 2023 the basic monthly cost of a full-time stipend, employer's national insurance and a pension contribution is £3,420 (or £41,000 per annum). In addition, rent-free housing is provided to ensure Clergy are able to live within the community they are Church House at called to serve.

Why do we fund the Diocesan Office?

The Diocesan office is here to serve Suffolk as a diocesan resource. It accommodates the operational side of the Diocesan Synod alongside other organisations helping our mission and ministry such as the Education Team serving Church Schools).

The office accommodates meeting and training space to facilitate learning as well as diocesan governance.

What happens if we can't afford to meet our full contribution to Parish Share?

If your parish is unable to meet its Parish Share then assistance is offered by the Parish Financial Support Process.

What if we don't make our full contribution?

If your PCC decides not to meet its full Parish Share the overall consequence is that someone else must pay or fewer paid ministers can be appointed.

Do we still have to pay Parish Share when we don't have a Priest?

A key principle of Parish Share is Christian generosity and mutual support. All parishes experience a vacancy at some point in time and your parish will have been supported by others in your deanery and the wider diocese when you have had a Vicar and they have not. Of course, Parish Share doesn't just fund the ministry you are receiving today but it also helps to fund the training of those who will be providing the ministry in the future.

Our 'Food for All Felixstowe' project fed **more than 50 people** every weekday of the summer holidays.

O gracious and holy Father.
Give us wisdom to perceive you.
Intelligence to understand you.
A heart to meditate upon you.
And a life to proclaim you.
Through the power of the Spirit.
Of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Attributed to St Benedict of Nursia

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THIS IS WHO WE ARE. TOGETHER.

We pray to be generous and visible people of Jesus Christ

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK