

## Five Year Plans and One Year Thoughts – A Reflection on the Exciting Plans for the Diocese and the Experiences of a “Recent” Joiner

Dear PCC Treasurers,

I am delighted to be writing my third Finance Newsletter to you at a pivotal time for the Diocese.

We have recently secured major funding from the Strategic Investment Board of the national church, to drive forward our investment in 20s-40s ministry and to strengthen our support functions for parishes. A key element of this is our new Generous Giving and Stewardship Team who began work in September and will be visiting deaneries soon to begin to explore how they can best support our parishes.

We are also bolstering our investment in Children & Youth, Safeguarding and Pastoral Support. These teams and projects are absolutely focused on growth at a parish level, on supporting you in dynamic ministry and in laying solid foundations for sustainable finance at a parish level.

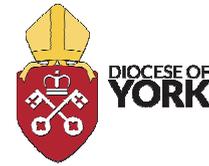
We have also, this week, seen the Archbishop give early notice of his intention to retire in 2020. He has brought huge energy and powerful prayer to our Diocese and has reinforced his focus on Diocesan evangelism and discipleship for the remainder of his tenure. His facilitation of conversations for the “One Yorkshire” deal and his passionate engagement in youth and schools are exciting areas for the church in the years ahead.

All of this provides context to the 2019 budget and 5 year plan which we have recently completed. Having had robust conversations to shape these financial plans and to ensure wise use of valuable resources, the draft budget will be tabled to Synod in November.

This has obviously been a key phase of the year for the Diocesan Finance Team and, as we have gone through our process, we recognise and appreciate the rigour with which you will all have gone through your own local budget processes and your prayerful planning of 2019 Freewill Offering.

On a personal note, 26 September marked the end of my first year as Interim Finance Manager for the Diocese. I feel privileged to have worked with so many professional colleagues in parishes and in the central functions over that year. In some ways it has been a wonderful year of learning for me, and in others I hope it has proven a positive experience to bring some ideas from other industries to bear in the way in which we deliver and assure our finance processes. In particular, I have been excited to read so many ambitious grant applications from parishes – plans which set out bold plans for growing our worshipping communities and for caring for our wonderful places of prayer. As a church bellringer, as well as a PCC trustee, I've also been delighted to see and hear our bells ringing for local and national occasions and to see church towers with colourful artwork capturing the attention of global TV crews during the Tour de Yorkshire.

# FINANCE UPDATE



[www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/finance](http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/finance)

October 2018

## STATISTICS FOR MISSION AND FINANCE RETURNS

Every year, parishes and benefices are asked to complete two returns covering our membership, attendance and church finances.

**Statistics for Mission** are all about membership and attendance at church. The information collected provides the latest information on attendance at Church of England services and the numbers of baptisms, marriages and funerals that have taken place over the last year.

The statistics help paint a picture of participation across the country and help identify mission opportunities and to plan clergy deployment.

**Parish Finance Returns** are about your church finances. The financial figures help paint a picture of the church's finances at the grassroots. They help the church nationally to argue our case for government support, for example in the matter of VAT relief on repairs and they bolster our diocesan case for support from national and local bodies.

### Why Bother?

The returns from parishes are vital for planning our shared mission and ministry. Robust data is essential to making good decisions about our resources and to targeting help and support where it is needed.

As each local church discerns its own plans for mission and growth; understanding the local context enables support teams such as the new Generous Giving and Stewardship team to provide accessible information which the local church can use to understand vital mission and outreach opportunities.

## Annual Accounts 2017. Have we got yours?

PCC annual accounts are central to good governance in a parish and are an important source of information both to the public who support us as charities and to the Diocese in offering guidance and support to parishes and in ensuring that we comply with our status as charities.

There are presently 134 sets of accounts which have not been sent in for December 2017 year ends (27% of the Diocese). Your support in sending these accounts in will be much appreciated. I will also send an email reminder direct to relevant parish treasurers.

## PARISH RETURNS - LOOKING BACK

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

#### Parish Finance Returns – 2017

Sadly, only 64% of parishes in York Diocese have completed their returns for the December 2017 year end.

The problem is, that where information is missing, the national church has to use 'guesstimates' to fill in the gaps. This means that in many places our data is inaccurate and presents a picture that does not reflect reality. This can have far reaching consequences and make it harder for the Diocese to access support and to target help where it is needed.

The parish returns website closed for online submissions for 2017 in May, to enable national reports to be run.

The 2017 return form is no longer available on the national returns website. It has been replaced by the 2018 form. However, we have temporarily placed copies of the 2017 form on the Diocese of York website as Excel or PDF documents.

**In order to improve our 2017 data, it would be of great benefit to the national church and to the Finance Team, if any parishes who have not yet submitted their returns, could complete a paper form this month and send them to the Finance Team in the Diocesan Office in York.**

Please click the link below (or type this text into your internet browser) to access the Return form.

[www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/2017latereturns](http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/2017latereturns)

If you have forgotten your user name or your password please contact Sue Dale on 01904 699 535 or by email to [sue.dale@yorkdiocese.org](mailto:sue.dale@yorkdiocese.org)

#### Statistics for Mission – 2017

Similar to the above, we currently have a response rate of only 57%. Please visit the Diocese of York website link above, to access a temporary copy of the 2017 forms.

The coming weekend will be the first weekend of this year's 'October Count' so in readiness for this on Friday 5th October the 2018 Statistics for Mission online entry system will be live to allow parishes to enter their First Sunday October figures on the 7th.

**Thank you to those of you who faithfully provide this information year after year. We appreciate it can be fiddly but our hope is that, as the return rate improves, we will be able to provide you with better and more useful information to support your ministry.**

## PARISH RETURNS AND ACCOUNTS – LOOKING FORWARD

### Annual Accounts, Returns and Statistics for December 2018 Year End

As well as looking back to returns for previous years we want to encourage all parishes to submit this year's figures in good time. Please use the usual link for Parish Returns and Statistics – <https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org>

### Suggested timetable for 2018 submissions

In practice PCC's should have completed their accounts in time for Annual Parochial Meetings in March / April. When you are planning your APM reporting please can you include a formal step to submit all four of the following:

1. December 2018 annual accounts – signed copy to be sent to the Finance Team in Diocesan House
2. 2019 budget – copy of your PCC budget to be submitted with your accounts
3. 2018 Parish Finance Return – to be completed online as soon as your annual accounts have been signed **and no later than the national deadline of 31 May 2019**
4. 2018 Statistics for Mission – to be completed online as soon as you have the information (see above for opening date of the website) **no later than the national deadline of 31 January 2019**

## Diocesan Accounts, Budget and Parish Support

A breakdown of the 2018 budget was provided to each parish as part of the briefing pack for Free Will Offering 2019 and a few parishes have asked for more detail about the process for approving budgets and where our Diocesan accounts can be viewed.

### Budget Process

The Diocesan statutory accounts are shared in full with Synod each summer. The results for the year ended 31 December 2017 were presented on 9th June 2018 and the accounts are now available from Companies House: <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/00225234>

The Diocesan budget is shared with Synod each year in the Autumn, to allow Synod to have a full debate. The budget for 2018 was presented to Synod on 13 October 2017.

The 2019 draft budget will be presented to Synod on 10 November. The budget is put together in consultation between the Diocesan Board of Finance, the Finance Sub Committee and the Archbishop's Leadership Team. It involves representation from both the House of Clergy and the House of Laity.

If anyone has questions about specific elements of the accounts or budget, the best place to start would be to ask your local Synod representative or get in touch with the finance team at the Diocesan Office.

## FREEWILL OFFERING

### 2018 Payments

Like any family budget, we need to know what is coming in each month in order to ensure we can meet our needs.

Timely receipts of parish payments are crucial to Diocesan cashflow and thereby to the monthly payments of stipends, tax and pensions and to the ongoing resourcing of support services from clergy training to DAC and from housing to safeguarding.

As of 30 September, Freewill Offer receipts are almost 3% behind offer levels (a shortfall of more than £200,000). The shortfall has been exacerbated by receipts in September which were among the lowest in recent years.

We recognise that some parishes can experience local difficulties and we are acutely sensitive to that. There have, however, also been some administrative issues including standing orders not processed in January which have still not been caught up. These will be clear on the monthly statements that are sent to Treasurers.

If you have any particular issues which you know, or are worried might, affect your ability to give your offering each month; please contact your Deanery Financial Advisor so that we can see how best we can help.

### 2019 Offer – Deadline for responding

Further to the communications from the Archbishop in July, **please can you ensure your Offer forms are submitted by 12 October.**

- **The Archbishop and members of his Leadership Team will personally be reviewing all submissions shortly afterwards.**
- **The Archbishop's letter about 2019 Free Will Offer and all the information, forms etc can be found at**  
[www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/freewilloffer](http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/freewilloffer)

## Parish Buildings Grant Scheme

### Revised Application Form

As a result of recent applications and feedback from parishes, we have revised the application form and placed the new version on the Diocesan website here:

[www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/supporting-parishes/money-and-giving/grants](http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/supporting-parishes/money-and-giving/grants)

Please submit all future applications using this form.

## TO CONTACT THE FINANCE TEAM

Please visit the Diocesan website for team contact details:

[www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/people-and-places/whos-who/diocesan-house/finance-team](http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/people-and-places/whos-who/diocesan-house/finance-team)