Cost of Ministry Narrative

How much does it cost to provide mission and ministry in your worshipping community?

All our parishes and new Christian communities will be grouped together in Mission and Ministry Units. We believe this will provide a sustainable ministry in every place and enable us to develop new communities as well. We hope that each Mission and Ministry Unit will have at least one full-time stipendiary priest and other ordained and lay ministers. But how much does this cost?

Then stipend for a full-time priest is £27,290 per annum.

The clergy also need provision for their retirement. The annual contribution to their pension costs us £9,840. Other mandatory costs, such as National Insurance and DBS safeguarding checks, cost a further £2,720 p.a.

However, your priest will need a house to live in. The average cost of this for each post is £10,750 per year.

In order to properly support the clergy there are also in-service training costs of £500 p.a. (running total = £51,100).

Needless to say, the direct cost of a house for duty priest is a lot less. There is no stipend but the cost for the housing is still £10,750. The DBS checks and in-service training costs are the same as for stipendiary priests.

Thanks to the generous gift of time from self-supporting ministers the only cost requiring funding for an SSM priest is for DBS checks and in-service training.

However, all these clergy needed training in the first place, and we also need to be training the next generation of parish priests - our ordinands and curates (and housing them too). Increasing the number of vocations has been a strategic aim of the diocese for the past seven years and has been one of our success stories. This is the equivalent of £14,220 per stipendiary post.

Moreover, clergy do not minister in isolation. Ministry belongs to the whole people of God and we are enormously grateful for the ministry offered by churchwardens, PCC members, treasurers and, in particular, taking an important leadership role in our churches, licensed lay ministers, readers and other authorised lay ministers.

We only spend £50,000 a year on this. This is the equivalent of £270 per stipendiary priest (running total = £65,590). It is an area of the budget we would love to increase if we were able to.

Our hope is that no clergy will ever work alone, therefore within a Mission and Ministry Unit we are aiming to develop patterns of collaborative ministry. All these clergy and lay ministers need further support in a number of different areas.

- Essential advisory services, such as the Diocesan Advisory Committee which helps you with your church building and other related matters; safeguarding; children and
young people. This costs £4,500 per stipendiary post (assuming a congregation of 120 members).

- The leadership, oversight and support of the Diocese through its Bishops, Archdeacons and Area Teams. Bishops are paid for by the National church, though we are responsible for their housing. The total cost of all this is £3,750 per stipendiary post (assuming a congregation of 120 members).

- A large and diverse diocese like ours also requires other essential management services such as finance, governance and human resources. No large organisation could survive without the services. We also make a contribution towards the National church. This costs per stipendiary post £5,800 (assuming a congregation of 120 members).

We are blessed by having 139 schools. The vast majority of our ministry in schools is funded from other ring-fenced income, reducing the net cost per each stipendiary post to only £500.

How much does all this all add up to?

A helpful way of looking at our costs is that for every stipendiary post in the diocese we need to find £80,180.

Not so long ago we received a subsidy from the National church of £3.1 million. We were able to pass this money onto parishes - a subsidy per stipendiary post of £11,200 per annum. This meant that even though many parishes faithfully paid 100% of the parish share we asked from them, this was still less than the actual costs of providing a priest. All this has changed. We now need to find the full £80,180 per stipendiary post ourselves. We can only do this by the generosity of people’s giving.

We do receive £750,000 per year (rising to £1m in 2025) through what is called a Low Income Communities Grant. All this money goes to support parishes in more deprived communities. We also receive £1.4 million from our investments. At the moment, this is roughly equivalent to the cost of those mandatory and essential central services which we all need. However, wouldn’t it be good if we could use this money to support training more lay ministers, to develop new Christian communities across the Diocese and to serve and most deprived communities? This can only happen if every individual Christian and every worshipping community takes responsibility for the cost Mission and ministry in our worshipping communities.