Public Disclosure of Parish Finances

2025

and maintenance update

How things work

The parish priest is the legal representative of the corporation of the parish and the "administrator" of its temporal goods (property and money). **N.b.** Arrangements are made in civil law to try and allow the church's own law and system to function according to how it is supposed to. In England & Wales, this is done by making **each diocese** is a single civil **charity**, and the trustees of that charity "delegate" authority to parish priests to ensure that each parish functions separately. In the church's own law, each parish is totally separate from other parishes *and* from the diocese regarding temporal goods (property and money).

To fulfil his responsibilities, the parish priest usually has executive leads. In this parish, we have the following arrangement:

- **Treasurer**: Caroline O'Grady – *manages all payments/reimbursements, manages accounting and the bank account, keeps all records/spreadsheets, prepares the financial returns to the diocese*
- **Gift-aid officer**: Darryl Smith – *manages all gift-aid operations*
- **Maintenance lead**: Mary Mustoe-Arthur – *co-ordinates all maintenance projects for the estate, especially by communicating with contractors, keeping quotations, etc., and helping the parish priest to establish a framework*

To help as a first level of audit, and also as a source of technical expertise in planning a budget, the parish priest is also required to have a **parish finance council** to advise him. The current parish finance council has the following membership:

- Michael Trott (chairperson), Annette Shaw (secretary), Chris Emery, Peter Godfrey, Tony Grossfield, Veronica Marett

The parish has **2 bank accounts** and **1 investment portfolio**

- A **current account** from which we draw actual payments, and into which our income is deposited
    - **This currently stands at approximately £34,000**
    - A bank requires that named persons have the ability to use the bank account ('mandate). 2 mandate-holders together are able to make payments. For the current accounts in this diocese, these mandate holders are meant to be:
        - **The parish priest**: still awaiting Barclays Bank to put Fr Simon on the mandate
        - **The rural dean**: the parish priest needs to ensure that the dean is on the mandate
        - **At least one other person**: in this parish, the current bank-mandate holders are Caroline O'Grady, Michael Trott and Peter Godfrey.
- A **higher-interest current account** which is an account kept with the diocese:
    - We pay into that account any excess from the current account
    - We can move money from that account to the current account at any time for expenses
    - The diocese also automatically takes money from that account (referred to as movements) for certain mandatory expenditures (e.g. insurance policy participation)
    - **This currently stands at approximately £31,000**
- Our **investment portfolio**, which is managed by the diocesan investment company
    - **This is currently valued at approximately £133,000**

The diocesan bishop is able to **tax** parishes in his diocese. In this diocese, this tax is taken from the 'offertory' collection (regular free-will giving) at a total rate of 38%. In addition, with the sale of any property, profits are taxed at a rate of 40%.

Twice a year, **the parish priest is required to render account** to the diocese: (1) for the first six-months of a given year, and (2) for the total year just completed. In addition, the parish priest also informs the diocese of the budget he has set for the upcoming year.

How much money did the parish get in and spend in 2024

Most income is from regular free-will giving (Sunday offertory, standing orders, etc).

In 2024, our regular free-will giving was **£61,885.48**

- Standing orders: £26,316.37
- Plate: £19.395.31
- *Plus* gift aid collection: £5,925
- Gift-aid tax refund: £10,248.80

Remember, regular free-will giving (offertory collections) are **taxed at a rate of 38% by the diocese**, so we don't keep all of this income.

Data from standing order donors reveals that, on average:

- 4 households give 37.3% of the parish's standing order income with an average gift of c.£200 per week
- 11 households give 23.% of the parish's standing order income with an average gift of c.£10 per week

In 2024, the parish received in addition:

- in **legacies** (a gift in a will after death) and **donations**: £2,047.75
- a total of £9,055 in **hall rental**
- a total of £6,600 in other property **rental**
- raised by **fundraising** £8,894
- and added up with other items there was a **total income** of **£101,768.98**

In 2024, the parish spent:

- **£15,851** to have a priest (including income, expenses [including food and car milage])
- **£32,419.63** on property maintenance and expenses
- **£11,609.18** on administration expenses and non-priest staff expenses
- **£3,201** on fundraising costs
- **£4547.10** on liturgical expenses
- And added up with other items there was a total expenditure of **£79,657.26**

So in 2024, the parish 'earned' **£20,762.73**

How much does it cost to have a priest, and why?

In the law of the church, the diocese is responsible for priests: their care and welfare, their remuneration (what they get paid if they are able to work in public ministry) and sustenance (what they get as a basic minimum), and their cost in retirement and sickness.

In most countries, the responsibilities of the diocese are met by a parish to which a priest is appointed. In our diocese, the following burdens are placed on a parish in order to have a priest

- The priest gets 'paid' a **wage** of about **£125 per week** (£6,000 per year):
    - In England & Wales, priests are considered in a civil sense to be 'self-employed' and submits a tax-return along with other self-employed persons;
    - East Anglia has one of the lowest priest remuneration rates in the country.
- The priest can charge milage to a parish for **parish driving expenses at 45p per mile;**
- The priest's **food bills (housekeeping) are paid by the parish;**
- The parish also contributes to the priest's private pension:
    - In East Anglia, every diocesan priest who was ordained under the age of 50 is required to participate in the diocese's pension scheme with Aviva.
- From 2024, parishes are also required to pay for the **priest's national insurance contributions**, which we previously paid by himself privately from his own income;
- In this diocese, the priest also gets to keep the regular free-will offering made at **Christmas and Easter** (the plate offering, and one quarter of that month's standing order offering);
- All offerings made at the moment of a sacramental celebration ('**stole fees'** for baptisms, marriages and funerals) are kept by the parish if the offering is made to the parish priest (another priest can keep the stole fee);
- All **Mass stipends** (Mass intentions offerings made to the priest for him to keep a Mass intention when he celebrates Mass) are kept by the parish in an arrangement whereby the priest 'voluntarily surrenders' the offering;
- The parish is also required to pay for the maintenance of a presbytery for the priest to live; this can realistically end up to be more of an expense than the actual priest himself, since many of the diocese's presbyteries are in a poor state of repair.

How much will the parish get in and spend in 2025?

Setting a budget is based, essentially, on the previous year's cashflow, amended according to the anticipated or planned expenditure needs for the upcoming year (either regular needs or 'one-off' needs).

Excluding income from second collections, and income from a car loan which Fr Trindade is still paying back, we anticipate an income of **£125,324, which includes a legacy (gift in a will after death)** of £10,100 which we received in January 2025.

However, we anticipate an **expenditure of £137,620 in 2025.**

This is largely because of large maintenance projects, and this will be the major expense of the parish going forward, excluding regular large expenses. It will be necessary to lay out what these maintenance requirements are, and why we have them.

Maintenance requirements

Every 5 years, each property owned by the parish is subject to a survey. This helps inform the parish priest what he may need to do to keep the properties in good shape.

Buildings of any sort (not only old buildings) require a lot of work and money to keep in a fit state.

In January 2024, a maintenance committee was set up in the parish to look at what needed to be done, and to set in motion a plan. Because of the changes in priests, these works have largely not progressed until now. Only a parish priest or parish administrator (a priest appointed to a parish who has the same financial powers of a parish priest, often called 'priest-in-charge' in this country) can actually spend parish money (or authorise its spending).

In East Anglia, a parish priest or parish administrator is also required to get authorisation from the diocesan bishop for any individual item of spending exceeding £5,000, or if he seeks to enter a contract (e.g. a contract of employment) which will cost money.

The following maintenance issues were identified as immediate priorities:

- **Roof repairs at St Joseph Church** (including the replacement of badly-designed gutters), which, including scaffolding, would cost about £20,000
- **Radiator repairs at Our Lady of Refuge Church and St Joseph Hall** for £4,400
- **Heating replacement at Our Lady of Refuge Hall** for £10,000
- A **tree survey** for £420
    - This will lead to further work in the gardens at much greater expense, as yet uncosted in total
    - The gardens (shrubs, etc) at St Joseph have been subjected to significant damage
- **Car park gravel repair** at St Joseph at £200
- Replacement and improvement of **roadside signs at both churches** at about £1,000
- … all of which exceeds **£39,000** as an immediate expense

The following immediate maintenance issues were identified in the presbytery, which, along with St Joseph Church, is the only listed building in Sheringham, and so additional layers of spending are required when undertaking structural work:

- Bathroom replacement at £12,000 – ***Fr Simon is going halves from his personal funds to help the parish***
- Boiler replacement at £5,000 (unanticipated, as it broke down upon Fr Simon's arrival)
- Carpets for bedrooms at £1,400 – there had been no proper carpets (just glued-down office carpet) in bedrooms for many years
- The following work still needs to be undertaken in the presbytery to bring it up to a basic standard – ***uncosted yet***
    - Carpet refitting in other rooms/halls – all carpets are old and worn out
    - Kitchen replacement – a previous kitchen replacement was poorly undertaken
    - Utility replacement
    - Removal of old systems (e.g. bell systems, phone systems, poorly positioned sockets, etc)
    - General refurbishment, including old wallpaper removal and potential plastering
    - ***[exterior]*** Repointing of the presbytery (repairing degrading mortar and bricks)
    - ***[exterior]*** Most significantly, the replacement of all the windows of the presbytery according to their original design, as required by listed building status – ***uncosted yet, but this will be a major expense***

There are also some other major issues that need addressing, ***currently uncosted***

- Window repair at St Joseph Church – a number of windows in the clerestory are smashed, and there are microfractures throughout; the west window (large stained glass window) is likewise very damaged (due to the 1938 refurbishment, issues that have not been addressed since)
- Repairs of the residential property at Our Lady of Refuge

After the parish's previous surveys, it was estimated that the parish should expect a maintenance cost – just bringing everything up to a basic standard of repair – of about **£700,000**.

All of these things exclude regular maintenance and refurbishment of property (interior and exterior) as a result of ordinary wear and tear. Naturally, it also excludes emergency works as yet unanticipated.

We obviously cannot afford this simply from regular free-will offerings.

Our ability to access formal grant money is limited because of the civil charity arrangements of dioceses, which are realistically limiting. A charity can apply for grant money from organisations, but the charity which is the diocese of East Anglia (as a civil corporation) has many other responsibilities to other properties that are in a worse state of repair, namely, the Cathedral Church, and All Souls' Church in Peterborough, as well as many others. Other properties in sea-side parishes (e.g. Southwold) have similar problems to our own parish in respect of sea-air damage (which accounts for the need to replace windows, etc).

We will realistically have to rely on internal (parish fundraising) and external fundraising (targeting donors with an interest in churches or Edwardian buildings), raising the civil profile of our parish and buildings (partly) to increase donation revenue, or targeted individual fundraising (e.g. the parish priest requesting large donations from individual wealthy people by proactive engagement over a period of time), and increasing a potential income from raising the profile and importance of legacies (gifts in a will after death), and also increasing our income by the expansion of our cemetery provision.