



February 2011

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Dear Treasurer,

### **Parish Shares Account and See Round**

I enclose an updated statement for your parish, showing the position as at **11<sup>th</sup> February 2011**. This includes all remittances received up to this date and also a debit in respect of the first quarter's parish share for 2011. I also enclose a copy of the See Round Statement account where applicable.

### **Diocesan Common Fund Outturn 2010**

The total requested from parishes last year was **£11,014,693** (2009 - £ 10,664,423) of which **£10,329,523** (93.8% of the amount requested) was received by the end of January (2009 - £ 9,921,218 – 93.0%) and therefore will be included in the annual accounts as received for 2010. In addition to this, a further £167,468 was received from parishes during 2010 in respect of 2009 and earlier years. On behalf of the Board of Finance I would like to thank parishes for their ongoing contributions to the Diocesan Common Fund which in turn supports the parish mission and ministry in this diocese.

Many of you now pay some or the entire parish share by regular monthly transfers from your PCC's bank account. If you do not already do this at present but would be in a position to do so in the future, then please contact a member of the Accounts Team, who would be pleased to help you set this up.

### **Inserts for ACAT Handbook**

Handbook supplements published in October 2010 and January 2011 are being sent to you through the incumbents' bundle for February. Please contact your incumbent.

I enclose a copy of the latest Newsletter from ACAT (January 2011) (<http://www.acat.uk.com/acat/page3.html>). In particular, I would draw your attention to the article on Cheque Clearing, and the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme. I have included further comments on the LPoW scheme under Stewardship Matters below.

### **Cheque Signatories on the PCC Bank Mandate**

I wanted to remind Treasurers that they should ensure that the list of authorised signatories is kept up to date and approved by the PCC. Normally the Parish Priest, Churchwardens and the Treasurer are signatories although additional PCC members could be signatories if necessary. The list should be reviewed at regular intervals and, particularly, whenever there is a change of incumbent or a change of other signatories, e.g. on the election of new Churchwardens. Ideally, the mandate should require that at least two signatories should sign all cheques and orders on the PCC's account.

### **Stipends Letter**

Please find enclosed a copy of the annual letter from the Diocesan Secretary that was sent in last month's "bundle" to Stipendiary and Clergy and Lay Ministers (<http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/Media/Files/2011-stipends-letter> )

## **Stewardship Matters**

### 1. Note from Geoff Fletcher, Diocesan Stewardship Adviser

In March, Geoff is holding five more Stewardship sessions aiming to support Parish Giving Representatives and Treasurers. Dates and venues are 8th (Knebworth), 10th (Stanstead Abbots), 15th (Colney Heath), 17th (Maulden), and 26th (Bedford). These sessions are in evenings, except for at Bedford which is on a Saturday morning, and will be similar to those held last autumn: we will view new stewardship material, Giving for Life, provide opportunity to see communications material used by local churches in their stewardship programmes, and comment together on specific current issues for our churches.

Please get in touch ([gletcher@stlbans.anglican.org](mailto:gletcher@stlbans.anglican.org) or on tel 01727 818141) with Geoff for further details and to book up for one of these sessions.

As you'll probably be aware transitional relief on Gift Aid will cease from 5 April - if you happen to be aware of donors who could bring forward the time of their donation to before that date, then the tax recoverable available will be at 28.2% of the value of their gift - after that date the rate will revert to 25%.

Please get in touch with Geoff both to arrange for further parish visits and to raise stewardship issues and opportunities.

Geoff is always pleased to be in touch with parishes enquiring about stewardship and other resourcing issues and initiatives. He can be contacted on [gletcher@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:gletcher@stalbans.anglican.org) or by telephone on 01727 818141.

### 2. Notes from John Preston, National Stewardship Advisor

#### (a) Gift Aid

In April 2011, the three-year Transitional Relief ends, and parishes must take action as a result.....

Parishes will need to claim separately for Gift Aided donations made up to 5th April, and those made on 6th April onwards and amend literature where appropriate to remove references to 28%, 22% etc.

We have taken the opportunity of revising the Parish Resources website, and there is a specific page of guidance on this: <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/giftaid/2011actions.htm> You may also like to know that there is a completely revised set of guides on Gift Aid at: <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/giftaid.htm> (for which I'm grateful to Rachel Lindley.)

#### (b) Listed Places of Worship Scheme

You may have seen a notice from the DCMS about the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. Their original announcement stated that "the last date for receipt of applications under the current arrangements will be 31 March 2011". Given they have announced that the scheme will continue for a further four years from April, this was confusing to put it mildly.

The clarification e-mail below from Helen Donoghue helps, but the picture is still not entirely clear.

My interpretation is that this tax year, they will honour all applications up to 31st March, irrespective of whether or not this will pass the budget cap of £12 million they have put in place; and that some modifications will be made in the future so that the scheme can operate within this fixed budget of £12m, but the proposals for how they will achieve this are not yet released. The key message is that if parishes are ready to claim reimbursement of VAT for works carried out to listed churches, they should do so without delay!

[From Helen Donoghue on behalf of the Churches' Legislation Advisory Service:]  
Subject: LPWGS - UPDATE AND CLARIFICATION

We got in touch with DCMS to clarify matters and the situation is as follows:

- Funding for listed places of worship will continue for a further 4 years from April 2011.
- To make the scheme "financially sustainable" the terms have already been tightened (with effect from 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011) by removing the eligibility of professional fees and repairs to clocks, pews, bells and organs.
- There will be an annual fixed maximum budget of £12 million, and DCMS intends to discuss with faith groups and denominations how the scheme can best operate within that budget. Further announcements will be made in due course.
- The latest announcement is to confirm that the way the scheme works will be reviewed so it can be managed in the most simple and un-bureaucratic way possible in order to stay within the budget cap that has already been announced. DCMS has promised to discuss any potential changes with faith groups before any alterations are made.
- The announcement is also a reminder that the last date for receipt of applications under the current arrangements (i.e. the tightened ones since 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011) will be the 31st March 2011.
- Following the increase of VAT to 20% from 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011, DCMS has confirmed that the current scheme will continue to refund up to the full VAT paid for works that remain eligible.

In practical terms this means that:

- From 4th January 2011, the additional items that were deemed eligible from 2006 (organs, bells, pews, clocks and professional fees) are not eligible under the scheme.
- Claims for the additional items (organs, bells, pews, clocks and professional fees) had to have been RECEIVED before 4 January 2011, as eligibility depends on the date the claim is received by the LPW grant scheme.
- Any claim received on or after 4th January that includes the above works or fees will be reduced by the amount of the ineligible items.
- For any 'rejected' claims that are subsequently resubmitted, the date of receipt will be the date on which the resubmitted claim is received and not the date the original claim was received.

We strongly suggest that members submit claims as soon as they are can. Meanwhile, we hope that this clarifies the position and should add that we checked this e-mail with DCMS.