



October 2009

**Martin Bishop**  
**Financial Secretary**

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Dear Treasurer,

### **Parish Share 2009**

I enclose the statement of account for Parish Share which includes cheques and BACS payments received from you up to **30<sup>th</sup> September 2009** and also an entry showing your PCC's contribution for the fourth quarter of the year.

I would like to thank those of you who pay a regular amount each month, either by Standing Order or Direct Debit. If you currently pay by cheque, may I ask you to consider making future payments by either of these two methods? I have enclosed forms for each method, (<http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/Resources/Finance/Finance-Forms>). In the case of a Standing Order you are not expected to pay exactly one twelfth of the annual amount, every month. Quite a number of parishes pay a lower monthly amount and then clear the difference at the end of each quarter.

As in previous years, there will be a period of time after the 31st December for parishes to make cheque payments in respect of 2009 Parish Share before any shortfall is determined. The cut-off date for this will be **29<sup>th</sup> January 2010**. However it would be greatly appreciated if you could do what you can to ensure that any outstanding payment for 2009 is sent to the Diocesan Office in time for the end of December.

### **Parish Share 2010 and Pastoral Aid Support**

At the end of July you will have received provisional figures for the 2010 Parish Share for your parish and deanery. The Diocesan Parish Shares Committee will be meeting on the 19th November to consider recommendations from the various Deanery Committees, on behalf of their parishes, for Pastoral Aid Support Grants for next year.

If your own PCC is considering a request for support, and has not yet indicated this to your Deanery, it is important that they now do so as a matter of urgency, as Deaneries have been asked to submit their recommendations by the end of October.

### **Stewardship**

Following the Vision for Giving presentations over the last year, autumn meetings in each archdeaconry will bring together Parish Giving Representatives and Treasurers to develop support for Parish Giving Reps. Please encourage all parishes to be represented at these events:

**Wednesday 21st October** at 7.45pm at Stanstead Abbots, St Andrews Church;

**Wednesday 28th October** at 7.45pm at Bedford St Andrews Church;

**Saturday 31st October** at 10.15am at Holywell Lodge.

Please contact Carol Chisnall or Geoff Fletcher, (01727 818141 or [cchisnall@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:cchisnall@stalbans.anglican.org) or [gletcher@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:gletcher@stalbans.anglican.org) ) for further details and booking in for these events.

## **Clergy pensions**

The latest information from the Clergy Pensions Task Force can be found on the diocesan website at: <http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/Resources/Finance/Clergy-Pensions>

### **Registration of PCCs whose annual income exceeds £100,000**

I have been made aware of incorrect advice recently given by the Charity Commission's help desk. In some cases parishes have enquired as to whether the Charity Commission would accept trustee registration by a subset (smaller group) of PCC members and have been told that this would be acceptable.

Whilst this advice may be appropriate in the circumstances of churches from other denominations, Anglican PCCs are constituted differently in that all members of the PCC are regarded as trustees and therefore have to sign the declaration form on registration.

If this is causing your PCC any difficulties then please contact me to discuss if there is anything which I can suggest to help you complete the registration process.

I have received a message from one Treasurer who recently received a charity registration number for his PCC. On checking the PCC's details online, he noticed a number of discrepancies between the information that he had just submitted and that which was being displayed on the Charity Commission's website. It is difficult to know whether this is an isolated case or not but, if you have recently registered, I would recommend that you check the PCC's details online, and make any corrections as appropriate. (If you are the "registered contact" for the charity then you should have been given an account login and password to enable you to make changes as and when necessary.)

A few people have asked me about what changes are required as and when their PCC is registered with the Charity Commission. The main thing will be that the PCC will have to make an Annual Return to the Charity Commission. This will involve sending them (as well as us) a copy of the PCC's accounts, filling out an "annual update form" (this lets the commissioners know if there have been any changes in particulars like changes in Trustees), and a short questionnaire relating to information in the annual accounts. Most of this can be done online.

Your accounts should conform to the layouts prescribed by the Charity SORP. For further specific advice on this please consult the "Green Book" also known as "The Charities Act and the PCC - third edition" - copies available at a modest price from the Diocesan Resources Centre. (Contact Ron Upton on 01727 818158).

Once the PCC is a registered charity, they must disclose that fact on any communications with "the general public". One of the statements below should be included on all notices, advertisements and other documents issued by or on behalf of the charity. This includes emails, websites, headed notepaper, annual accounts, cheques, orders for money, goods or services, endorsements, bills issued by the charity, its invoices, receipts and letters of credit.

You don't necessarily need to quote your registration number, any of the following terms would be acceptable:

"A Registered Charity";

"Registered Charity No." (followed by the charity's number);

"Registered as a Charity" or "Registered with the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales".

I think the Charity Commission would be pragmatic as to how soon this could be practically implemented, for example given existing stocks of printed letterhead, or customised cheque books, but steps should be taken to make the amendments as soon as is reasonably possible.

### **Trustee Training Workshop**

You may be interested to know that our Auditors will be holding a free training session for charity trustees on Wednesday 18th November. This will take place in their offices in London from 14:00 to 18:00.

The workshop will provide trustees with an overview of their responsibilities in key areas. The training includes elements of trustees' duties such as:

- Legal responsibilities including stewardship of investments
- The new requirements regarding public benefits
- Strategic aspects of charity management including risk management and reserves policies
- Trustees' liability

This is a regular event which Buzzacott put on, free, for their clients (and prospective clients). It is expected that a similar event will be held in May and November next year, although the exact dates have yet to be announced.

If you or your fellow PCC members would be interested in the workshop this November, then please register your interest using the **enclosed booking form** produced by Buzzacott **but send it to me at the Diocesan Office in the first instance.**

I appreciate that the venue and timing may not be convenient for many of you; however please let me know if you might be interested in a similar event if it could be held at a venue somewhere in the diocese. Please also state your preferred time of day/ day of the week that would be most convenient. If I receive a sufficient number of replies I might be able to approach Buzzacott to see if they could arrange a customised event for us, although there might be a nominal charge, made by Buzzacott, for this.

### **Church energy costs**

(<http://www.parishresources.org.uk/buying/Minimising%20Utility%20Costs.pdf> )

Please find enclosed a parish guideline on Minimising Utility Costs produced by the Archbishops' Council Procurement Group.

### **Investments**

I would like to remind PCC members that they, as charity trustees, have a duty to periodically review their investments and take proper advice as to whether the present portfolio meets the charity's present and future needs. This duty extends to any investments which the DBF may hold on your parish's behalf as Custodian Trustees.

CCLA are able to offer some advice about the various CBF pooled funds which they manage, in respect of what asset allocations could meet investment priorities specified by their clients. To that end you may contact **Richard Coulson at CCLA on 0844 561 5150**. However you may also wish to consult an independent financial advisor.

### **VAT: zero-rate on new buildings used for relevant charitable or residential use**

Under Extra-Statutory Concession 3.29, HMRC has permitted zero-rating on the new construction of a building where it is used 90 per cent or more for a relevant charitable use; and no change of use charge has arisen where a building has ceased to be eligible if it was zero-rated only as a result of the application of this concession.

HMRC has reviewed the Extra-Statutory Concession and now takes the view that the term 'solely', as used in the phrase 'solely for a relevant residential or relevant charitable purpose', can incorporate an appropriate de minimis margin. In order to avoid unnecessary disputes in marginal cases, HMRC will accept that this statutory condition is satisfied if the relevant use of the building by the charity is **95** per cent or more. The figure used to be 90 per cent.

### **Workplace pensions**

[Source: Charity Commission News – 16 June 2009]

The Charity Commission has pointed out that from *October 2012* all employers, including charities, will be legally obliged to offer a workplace pension to employees and suggests that many charity trustees remain unaware of what this will mean for them. The new duties mean that employers will be obliged automatically to enrol eligible workers into a qualifying workplace pension scheme and make a contribution. A minimum employer contribution of 3% on a band of earnings will be required, although employers can put in more. The total minimum contribution for eligible workers should equal 8%, made up of employer contributions, worker contributions and tax relief. To help employers, the minimum contribution will be phased in from 1% to 3%.

As part of these overarching reforms a new scheme, "personal accounts", is being created to provide a low-charge workplace pension scheme that any employer can use. It will be run by a not-for-profit Trustee Corporation and is aimed at low- to medium-earners, many of whom will not have had access to a workplace pension before. Employers can choose personal accounts or another qualifying scheme. The Personal Accounts Delivery Authority (PADA) is charged with delivering the scheme.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Bishop