

ST ALBANS DIOCESAN SYNOD

13 MARCH 2021

QUESTIONS – FIRST NOTICE PAPER

- 1) Mr Anthony Archer (General Synod) to ask the Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance:

“In respect of the year ended 31 December 2019, what percentage of parishes submitted to the diocesan office for DBF and other use, their (i) accounts; (ii) returns of parish finance; and (iii) mission statistics?”

The Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance will respond:

I thank Anthony Archer for his question.

In respect of the year ended 31 December 2019, the percentage of parishes who submitted to the Diocesan Office for Diocesan Board of Finance and other use, for each of the below, is:

- (i) Accounts – 81%; 19% not uploaded;
- (ii) Returns of Parish Finance – 77%; 2% started; 21% not started;
- (iii) Statistics for Mission – 98% submitted; 2% not started.

- 2) Mr Anthony Archer (General Synod) to ask the Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance:

“What stewardship and mission giving resources are currently made available to parishes, how are these delivered, and what generally is the take-up?”

The Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Finance will respond:

Again, Anthony raises an important question.

The last year has seen a variety of approaches to encouraging stewardship in parishes, and in particular addressing the challenges of doing so during lockdowns.

The Archdeacons hosted Treasurer Forum Meetings with representatives from the Finance Team and/or the Diocesan Secretary in attendance, along with a member of the Flourishing Churches Team. This has been about sharing ideas, concerns, receiving the budget (in October/November) and the imparting of information on stewardship and giving. The following were highlighted:

- online giving methods (especially on A Church Near You webpages);
- text giving;
- card readers;
- the work of Parish Buying;
- the Parish Giving Scheme.

The importance of messaging ‘from the front’ e.g. the message of how to give and why we give, and to express grateful thanks to donors was also emphasized.

42 meetings were held across the diocese (17 in Hertford, 16 in St Albans and 9 in Bedford Archdeaconries). Approximately 25 treasurers attended each meeting, although some attended multiple meetings across the year.

The Flourishing Churches Team have also worked with about 25-30 individuals to provide support with digital giving in a 1:1 context. They also hosted a Zoom Café on online giving – approximately 24 people attended. The Flourishing Churches team have also provided some 'how to guides' for online/digital giving available on the Diocesan Website.

The broader Resourcing your Mission booklet is also still online <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2-Resourcing-for-Mission-2019.pdf> (and in hard copies in various homes/vicarages around the diocese) and provides a picture of stewardship, giving and further resources for parishes to access.

The Parish Giving Scheme responded to the pandemic by providing a telephone service for new donors to sign up, and they continued to take new parishes signing up. 95 parishes in total are now using the scheme, with several more in the pipeline. Amounts given in recent years through the PGS are as follows:

2018	£1,623,280
2019	£1,896,176
2020	£2,100,060

It is worth noting that due to the numbers of providers, and their policy of not sharing information, we do not have access to the number of parishes that have taken up card readers and online giving.