

**To: All Incumbents
cc. PCC Secretaries/Administrators and Treasurers**

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Pastoral Aid Support Grants 2021

Firstly, may I thank you for all that you have been doing in your parishes in the very challenging circumstances of recent months. The Board of Finance is enormously grateful to all those who have continued to pay their parish share, and whilst, no doubt, pressures on parish and diocesan finances will continue for some while yet, the response to date will greatly assist us in sustaining the ongoing mission and ministry in the diocese.

At this time of year, I write with details of the process for considering applications for Pastoral Aid Support grants for next year, and we have considered whether this should change as a result of the impact of Covid-19.

As you will understand, the grant scheme was not designed to deal with the consequences of an event such as a pandemic, and the funding available, which is provided by parishes themselves, has been budgeted on the same basis as in previous years. Given the uncertainty which exists over the resumption of many activities and the effects on individuals and business, it is difficult to assess the impact for 2021 with any accuracy. Moreover, any additional funding would either have to come from parishes themselves, or the Diocese's reserves which would impact future income.

It is therefore proposed that applications submitted now should be made as in previous years, and **exclude** any requests to deal with the specific effects of the pandemic.

Nevertheless, we hope that the dialogue that has taken place in deanery finance forums will continue into 2021 so that we can continue to work together to address the ongoing financial implications of Covid-19.

Applications on the usual basis will therefore be on the agenda of the Board's Parish Shares and Grants Committee in late November 2020 when it will consider recommendations from deaneries for Pastoral Aid Support grants for 2021.

As in previous years, two categories of grants will be available:

- (i) grants to parishes which need additional support to maintain an appropriate level of ministry, which the Board describes as 'mission aided parishes'. A limited number of grants are awarded in this category where longer term support is needed, and these are the subject of discussions between the Archdeacon, Rural Dean and Lay Chair. **The Parish Shares and Grants Committee would not expect to receive applications directly from parishes for this category.**

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- (ii) grants to parishes facing exceptional and unforeseen difficulties, apart from Covid-19 related issues. The Board wishes to emphasise that grants in this category should be regarded as temporary and will not usually be given for more than two years in succession. The Parish Shares and Grants Committee will wish to know that the parish has submitted a Mission Action Plan in response to Living God's Love and that the parish has actively addressed stewardship and the scope for increasing giving in order to remove the need for additional support from other parishes by way of a grant. The Rev'd Kate Peacock, Church Growth Officer, is very willing to offer assistance to parishes in this situation. The Committee will also expect that the annual Accounts, Mission Statistics and Finance Returns have been submitted to the diocesan office.

Applications for the second category of grants should be submitted to the Rural Dean on the form provided. Pastoral Aid Grants awarded by the Parish Shares and Grants Committee will be subject to the parties concerned undertaking to pay the (net) parish share on a regular basis by either Standing Order or Direct Debit.

All applications for Pastoral Aid Support Grants **must be supported by, and should be submitted through**, the deanery. Parishes who wish to apply for a grant are therefore encouraged to contact their deanery **at the earliest opportunity** in order to meet any deadlines they may set. Deaneries have been asked to submit their recommendations for grants by no later than **Friday 23 October 2020**. The application form and guidelines can be downloaded from the Diocesan website: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/finance/finance-forms/> .

Parishes should also consider whether it would be more appropriate to apply for a church repair grant, details of which, together with an application form, are available on the website at: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/diocesan-funding> . These should be returned direct to me by 23 October.

Details of the provisional Parish Share figures for 2021 are now available from the diocesan website at: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/finance/parish-share-deanery/> .

Yours sincerely



Susan Pope
Diocesan Secretary

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