

A FAIRER SHARE

Explanatory Notes on how to fill in the Survey Form

The following notes are provided to help parishes with their membership count and category choice.

To share out the costs of ministry we need an accurate count of members across all the churches in the diocese.

We have to trust one another to declare the correct membership figure and choose the correct category as every under-declared member and category causes all other churches to pay more Parish Share.

PART 1 – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Fairer Share requires each parish to compile a list of members. This is not the same as the Electoral Roll or the Gift Aid Register (though many of the former and probably all of the latter will appear on the list). The Fairer Share list will need to be available if there is a dispute over Fairer Share allocation. A good start point might well be last year's list. Parishes should list:

- 1.1 Anyone aged 18 or over who has your church as their main place of worship and who has attended at least once during the time of the count. This figure goes into Box A. Note - anyone who attends more than once during the count will only count as 1 member. You will need to decide who are members and who are visitors. Members of other churches in your benefice are visitors for this purpose. If you are uncertain ask him or her. Tourists also count as visitors – although their generosity may well be a factor in deciding your category.
- 1.2 Add anyone who regularly supports your church but rarely attends through infirmity, travel, illness etc. and also add anyone who actively supports your church through financial means. Also add anyone who might normally have been there but was absent during the 5 week period. (Box B)
- 1.3 Less anyone who is NEW TO CHURCH (not moved from other churches) in the last year. (Box C)

This step by step process should produce a Fairer Share church membership which includes only those who think your church is their main place of worship and those who actively support your church through financial means.

How to do the count

Producing an accurate count of members of our larger churches is a difficult and time consuming exercise. Many churches have devised their own method of counting which for those larger parishes and those with many visitors will involve a weekly count over the 5 Sunday period. In many smaller parishes the formal counting over the five Sundays may be unnecessary. **If the PCC can provide an accurate list of members (as defined above) then that figure can be put straight into the final box.**

In larger parishes or those with many visitors then a weekly count over the five week period may be necessary. Parishes may find that giving out a weekly attendance slip to people as they arrive is the simplest method. An example of such a voucher, which can be freely adapted, is shown over. It may be helpful to use a different colour for each Sunday.

St. Polycarp's Church Attendance Survey May/June 2011	Circle the date 8 15 22 29 5
Name:	
Brief Address:.....	
Postcode:.....	
Please tick the following statements as they apply to you:	
<input type="checkbox"/> St. Emilion's is my usual place of worship	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am a member of another church in the benefice	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am a visitor from	
Data Protection notice: we will not pass on your name and address to any other organization.	

Another way is to use the Electoral Roll and Gift Aid registers. Each week tick the names as people arrive and add new names as necessary. Simply asking people to raise their hands to indicate membership is not recommended as, except in very small parishes, it would not enable a list of names to be compiled and thus eliminate duplication or recognise absentees.

PART 2 – DETERMINING YOUR CATEGORY

We know it is not always easy to comment on the ability to pay of the people who make up your church membership but we ask you to make as honest an assessment as you can.

Remember that the average category across the Diocese falls between a B and C. Only if you consider the ability to pay of your members to be below the average should you choose C. There are likely to be only 4 or 5 category E parishes across the whole diocese.

Please read the category statements in Part Two of the survey form. You may find the following suggestions helpful when considering the category of your membership.

- Number of taxpayers compared to non-taxpayers
- Does the church have a regular income of planned giving
- Types of employment
- Earning capacity (percentage of employed [single and two income families]),unwaged, students and pensioners

The membership of every church will include a mix of people, some of whom are always more able to contribute than others and some much less so.

Avoid assumptions; a large percentage of pensioners does not necessarily signify a lower category.

Finally consider if there is any other factor which might affect the ability of your parish to pay its share e.g. reserve or legacy income. This may result in a choice of a higher category than the membership alone may indicate.

If you find it difficult to decide your category, seek the advice of those who have a wider knowledge of the churches in your deanery and the diocese e.g. the Rural Dean, Lay Chairman or Archdeacon.

Do you need further help?

If you want to talk through any Fairer Share matters unique to your church or would like some help, please contact:

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