

Fairer Share
Exploring Options
Survey Digest

Contents

Exploring Options Survey Results and Summary Findings.....	3
Affordability and Membership.....	4
Next steps and timeline	4
More detail on responses to questions	5
Q2-3: Essential principles	5
Q4-5: Willingness and ability to give.....	6
Q6-9: Scheme options for ‘ability to give’ and ‘membership’	6
Q12-13: What (minimum) level of contribution should all PCCs aim to give towards the cost of their ministry received.....	6
Q14-15: Should PCC finances be considered as part of a share scheme?	7
Comments on other questions	7
Appendix: Parish responses and rural/urban split.....	8

Parishes are invited to:

Disseminate and discuss the survey results at PCC meetings and Deanery Synods

Contact Nigel Jenner or Elizabeth Harvey for further comments or questions

Issued: October 2022

Comments and questions to:

Nigel Jenner

(Nigel.Jenner@salisbury.anglican.org)

Elizabeth Harvey

(Elizabeth.Harvey@salisbury.anglican.org)

Exploring Options Survey Results and Summary Findings

Thank you

**217 PCCs
(51%)
participated**

The purpose of the survey was to seek PCCs view as we explore options for a future share scheme that will be widely owned and accepted by parishes.

Within this digest we have included PCC comments and suggestions that reflect majority views.

The next phase of the share review process is financial modeling and impact analysis based on potential scheme options.

Parish feedback suggests a share system that...

funds mission & ministry across the diocese, is simple to understand and administer, transparent, affordable and fair, inspiring generosity and mutual support.



“Hybrid” model

The majority view is a share scheme based on:

**Direct cost of ministry provision
+
element of mutual support**

It is imperative that the future scheme provides transparency to parishes about:

- What and how ‘cost of ministry provision’ is calculated?
- What is the cost of ministry provision for each parish?
- What is each parish being asked to give as part of the share request?



We asked what contribution all parishes should aim to give towards the cost of their ministry provision, and there is **overall agreement that in principle parishes should aspire to pay as much as possible for the ministry provision**, recognising there are wide ranging factors that might impact what is realistically achievable, such as in areas of deprivation, the increasing burden of maintaining church buildings and unexpected repair bills. A new scheme to include an element of ‘mutual support’ to help each other in need.

We will consider a variety of options to allocate the ‘mutual support’ element in a fair and transparent way across parishes.

We will consider the impact of offering a **vacancy alleviation** (following analysis of average length of clergy vacancies) for those parishes that have been without a vicar for an extended period of time.

Allocation will remain at PCC level, however, consider share communication for multi-parish benefice, so that there is transparency of the cost of ministry across the benefice and how this has been allocated at parish level. Provide the option for benefices to (reallocate share) across the parishes locally, if appropriate. This is already happening in some of our benefices.

Affordability and Membership

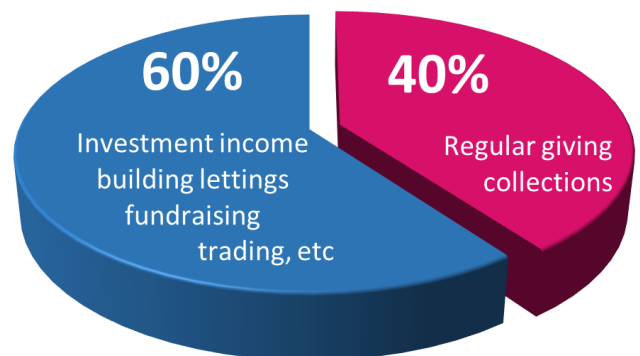
Responses to the questions about ‘willingness and ability to give’ and ‘membership’ really demonstrated the wide-ranging contexts and challenges parishes face across the diocese.

The responses indicate:

Church attendance does not necessarily relate to those that support the church financially

The affluence of the church members or the wider parish community does not necessarily reflect the ability or willingness to support the church financially

Regular giving or collections from those that participate in church life are only part of how parishes generate income.

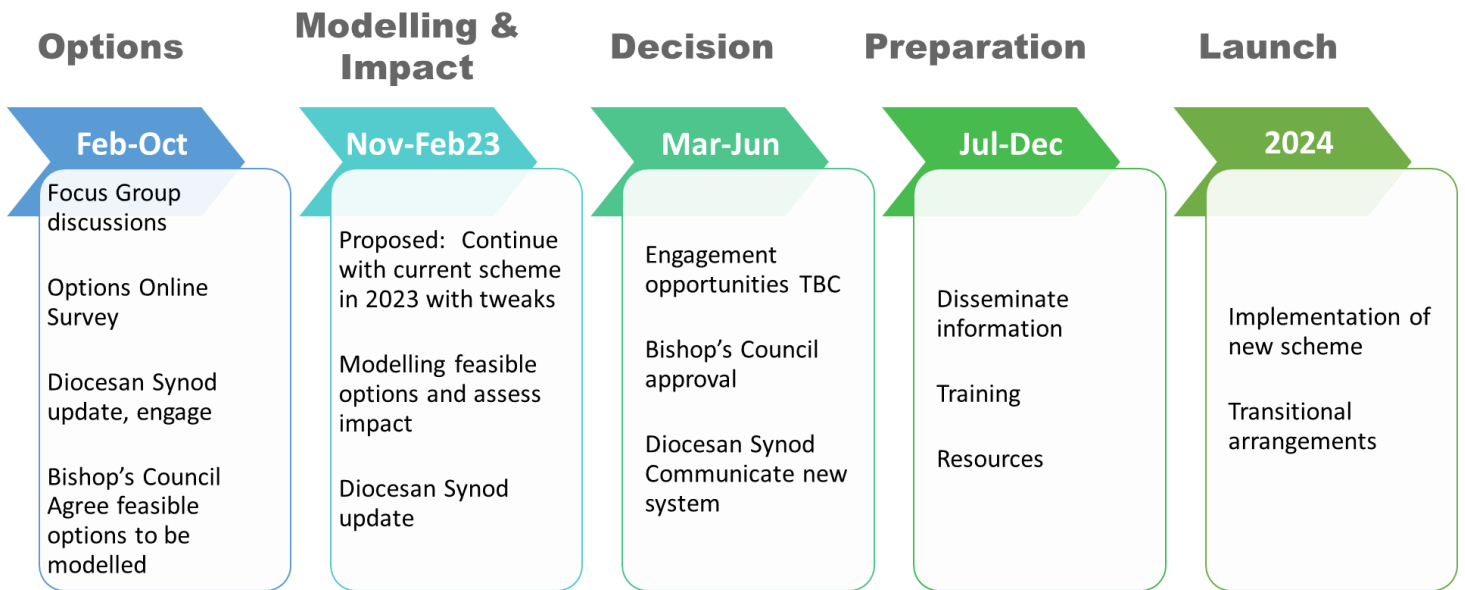


Based on 2019 and 2020 parish finance returns as part of CoFE statistics of the Diocese of Salisbury

Next steps and timeline

The next phase (Modelling & Impact) will include in person and virtual opportunities to ensure we continue with the good level of engagement in the process and (re)establish trust. It will need to align with the strategy and vision process since these are inseparable.

Whatever changes we make or new scheme we introduce, it will only be successful if parishes believe that the diocese is more transparent and there is greater general awareness and understanding.



More detail on responses to questions

Q2-3: Essential principles
 Support for the essential principles (Generosity, Mutual Support, Transparency, Simplicity, and Objectivity) with many suggesting 'fairness' and 'affordability'.

"Unless 'value for money' and 'affordability' are addressed any diocesan share system will not be owned or accepted by parishes. There is ... a whiff of entitlement which is wrong."



1 - Word cloud based on parish comments

“How can willingness be judged with any objectivity? We need to encourage generosity from the assessment of the potential ability to pay.”

Q4-5: Willingness and ability to give

Consensus that ‘ability’ and ‘willingness’ are two separate matters and that ‘willingness to give’ is too subjective and emotive to include in a scheme.

Q6-9: Scheme options for ‘ability to give’ and ‘membership’

Preference is to consider PCC accounts and Parish Giving Bands as potential ways to measure ‘ability to give’. Marginal preference to use attendance as a measure of membership and size of a parish.

General dissatisfaction with these questions due to lack of information and many felt they did not have the knowledge or understood the impact of the choices to answer these questions.

“Using nationally derived data on a Parish does not reflect the church-going community and we consider this would be an unfair approach for a rural church.”

“Attendance needs to be carefully balanced alongside those who donate”

“In most cases, parish boundaries are no longer relevant to attendees...”

“This should be scrapped! As it does not promote generous giving. It increases the feeling that Parish Share works like a tax, while some of the assessment methods would be pastorally insensitive to administer.”

Q12-13: What (minimum) level of contribution should all PCCs aim to give towards the cost of their ministry received

There is **overall consensus that in principle parishes should aspire to fully pay for the cost of ministry received**, however, there are wide ranging factors that might impact what is realistically achievable. Feedback from parishes include:

- **need** for mission & ministry **not necessarily related to ‘ability to pay’**, e.g. areas of deprivation
- **lack of transparency** of both the cost of ministry and how this is calculated for each parish/benefice; this is eroding trust in the share scheme
- **mutual support remains an important principle; greater transparency of the cost of ministry at a benefice level** and how best to attribute this (fairly) across the churches and PCCs
- **central (administrative) cost** from the diocese and Church of England is **seen as excessive and bureaucratic**, stifling local mission and ministry outreach
- a view that the **Church of England should contribute** towards the cost of ministry, the training of ordinands and or church buildings
- a view that ‘the diocese’ need to generate **other forms of income** to cover central costs
- a request for **share alleviation when a parish is in vacancy**
- transparency of **share contributions across the diocese, holding each other to account**

- many parishes only **think of share contribution in relation to the number of services received, not considering wider ministry provision**, such as baptisms, weddings, funerals, bible studies or worship groups, youth clubs, visits to schools, retirement homes, home communion, etc.
- The **increasing burden** (particularly with increasing energy prices and inflation) **of maintaining church buildings** and the reality that, many (particularly rural) parishes are no longer able to financially sustain both building and ministry costs

Q14-15: Should PCC finances be considered as part of a share scheme?

Majority agree that considering PCC finances as part of a scheme would be more transparent, realistic and objective, however, there are a range of views how this could be done fairly.

“The answer to this question depends entirely on how the financial information is to be used. Any analysis should not be over-simplistic. For example, low levels of financial resource may result from poor stewardship, inability to give, or unwillingness to give. Each of these possibilities would require a different interpretation of the financial data.”

“open to misuse”.
“There should be clear and transparent principles by which income and expenditure are reviewed”

“This is more distraction and “wishy-washiness”. The PCC should be responsible for paying for the actual cost of Ministry they receive. If they are struggling to pay then this should be addressed and help given on a case-by-case basis - at that point then certainly their finances can be taken into consideration.”

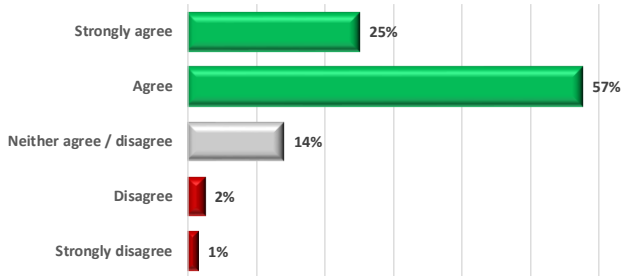
Comments on other questions

- Q10-11: **Support for some form of smoothing effect of membership** (e.g. rolling average over 2 or more years) if this continues to be part of the scheme; several highlighted that it adversely affects smaller and or shrinking parishes
- Q16-17: **Strong preference for share to be allocated at a parish (PCC) level**; general concern that apportionment at benefice or deanery level would be challenging, divisive and potentially erode relationships. Others point out that any apportionment to be done locally (and not centrally by the diocese) will add administrative burden
- Q18: **Preference for a share scheme that is based on direct cost of ministry and an element of mutual support, i.e. the ‘hybrid’ model**
- Q19: There is **some support to retain the existing fairer share scheme, but to make some tweaks** that addresses the areas of concern identified through the review process
- Q20: **Support to introduce vacancy alleviation beyond an agreed period**
- Q21: Names suggested for the new share scheme include: Parish share, (retain) Fairer share, Cost of Ministry, Parish Contributions, Diocesan levy, Share of Ministry, Ministry contributions

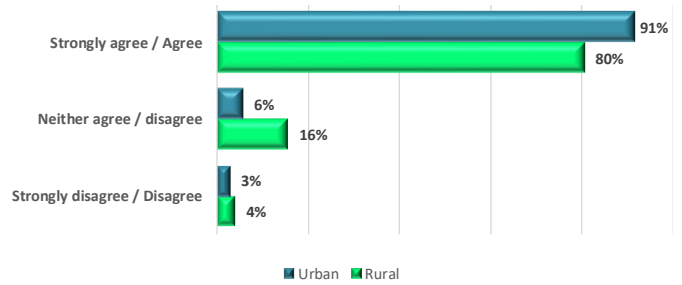
Appendix: Parish responses and rural/urban split

2. Does the PCC agree with the essential principles to guide options generation, evaluation and decision-making?

Q2: Parish responses

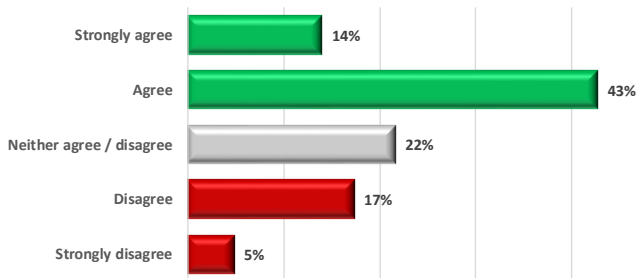


Q2: Parish responses split by Urban / Rural

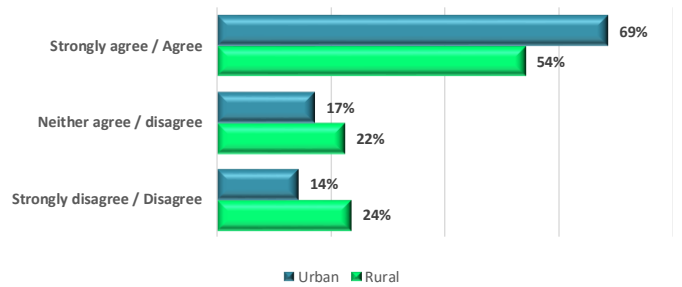


4. Does the PCC agree that we should consider 'willingness to give' as part of a share scheme?

Q4: Parish responses

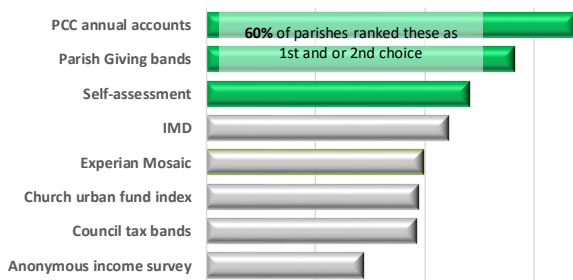


Q4: Parish responses split by Urban / Rural

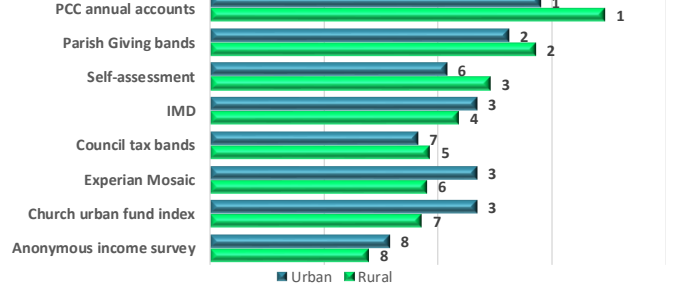


6. Rank 'Ability to Give' (ways of quantifying) in order of preference

Q6: Parish ranking responses

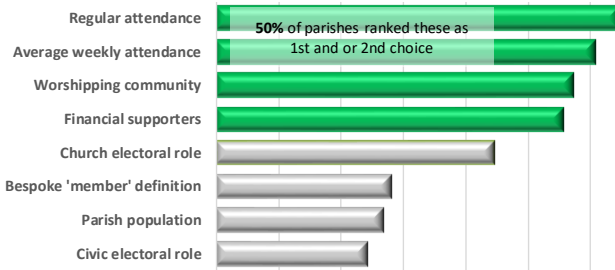


Q6: Ranking responses split by Urban / Rural

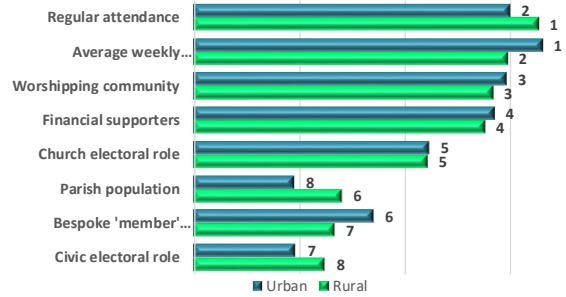


8. Rank 'membership' (ways of quantifying) in order of preference

Q8: Parish ranking responses

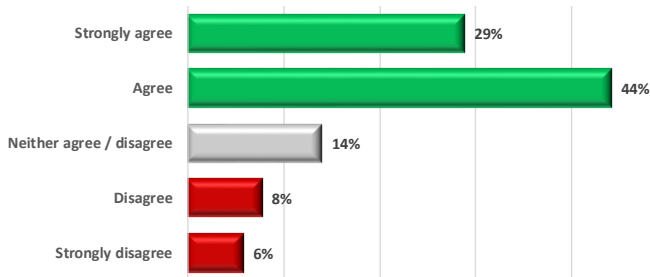


Q8: Ranking responses split by Urban / Rural

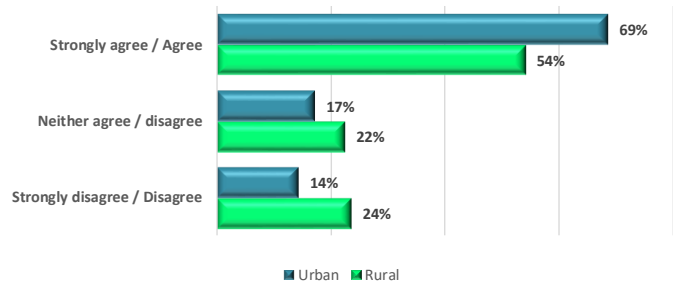


10. Does the PCC agree that a smoothing effect of membership numbers should be considered as part of a share scheme?

Q10: Parish responses

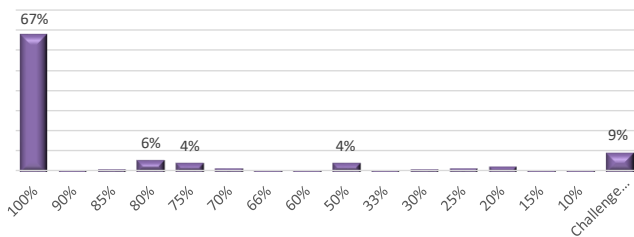


Q10: Parish responses split by Urban / Rural

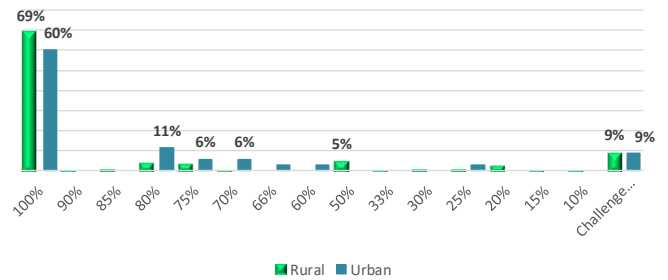


12. What (minimum) level of contribution should all PCCs aim to give towards the cost of their ministry received

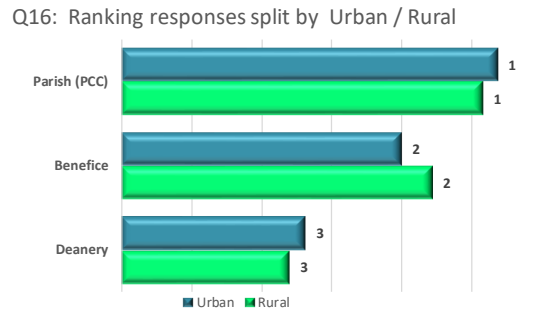
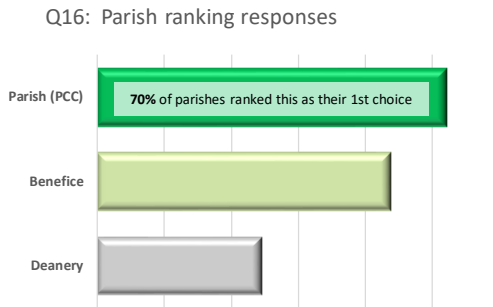
Q12: Parish responses



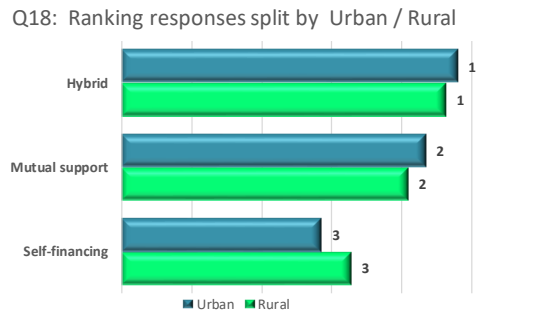
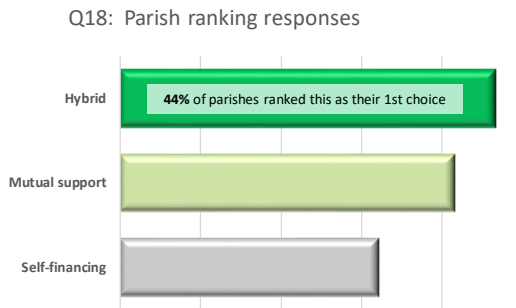
Q12: Parish responses split by Urban / Rural



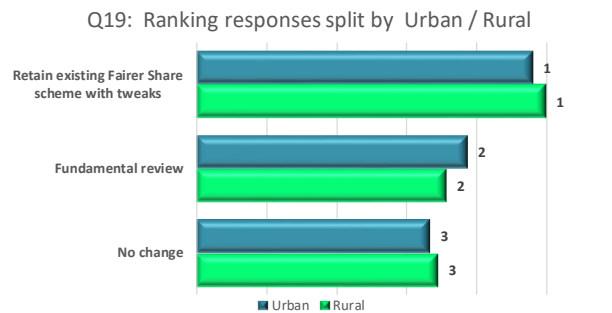
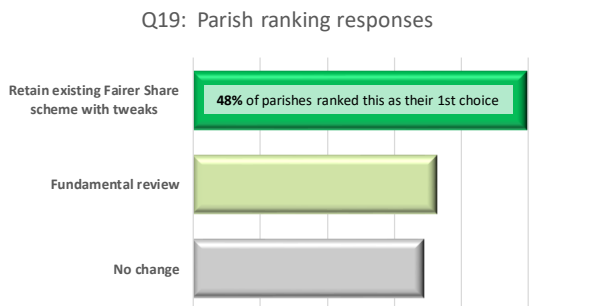
16. Rank share apportionment in order of preference



18. Rank the following overarching scheme options in order of preference



19. Rank options if we retain our existing share scheme in order of preference



20. Rank options to provide clergy vacancy alleviation as part of a share scheme

