

To: PCC Secretaries, PCC Treasurers, Deanery Treasurers.

Cc: Licensed ministers, Lay Chairs.

Dear all

I am writing to share a brief update from the Diocesan office as we seek to work together to respond to COVID 19.

Clear communications:

There are three routes for communication within the Diocese during this COVID19 crisis:

1. The Bishops will maintain an 'ad clerum' type communication to all clergy and licenced ministers **regarding ministry and pastoral matters**. For clergy, churchwardens and LLMs with questions about church, worship, occasional offices and pastoral care we are asking you to talk first with your Archdeacon.
2. The Parish Support office at Church House, working with the Area office and Archdeacons will seek to provide support on **all other administration and financial matters**.
3. **We have established a weekly version of 'Working Together'**; this is produced by Carole Peters King and Michael Ford. This will give a weekly overview of changes and advice.

We are making sure that you will be able to find information signposted on the diocesan website.

The national church website also has clear advice [here](#).

Supporting the local church

The goal for the diocesan team is to ensure that churches can focus on prayer and practical support within our communities. We are very aware that for all communities this means helping vulnerable people to stay safe and that this is a substantial logistical challenge where many of our church members are themselves being advised to self-isolate at home. It's good that the church can and will play an important part, alongside other partners. In coming days and weeks, we want to work with you to address the many practical issues in church life and finances so that you can focus on the needs of your community and church members.

As far as possible we are going to do this in a co-ordinated way between national, diocesan and local responses, keeping you up to date and informed and not burdening unnecessarily.

Contact point: Church House staff are now working from home. We have established a single point of communication to ensure we can work with you while we do not have an office building, and in a context in which some colleagues may not be able to work due to illness or care of dependents. Please use this email address parishsupport@salisbury.anglican.org if you need support at this time. Messages on the diocesan office phone 01722 411922 are being picked up and responded to as swiftly as possible.

Financial support: As you will no doubt be doing at parish level, we are taking stock of the financial impact of this situation in the short, medium and long term. The Diocesan Board of Finance are here for you, whether you are a small parish or a larger community. We are responding locally and nationally to the changing realities: the diocesan Finance committee met last week, the Bishops Council this Thursday, there is a national conference call of diocesan secretaries on Tuesday this week to discuss how support can be provided. We will communicate more on this through 'Working Together' later this week. Please be assured that we have already put in place measures to ensure we can sustain ministry across the diocese.

Parish Share. Whilst you are focussed on the practicalities of dealing with this crisis, the payment of share is probably the last thing in your mind right now. However, we are starting to get enquiries about this. Those churches who can continue to pay share will enable the church to keep functioning – paying our clergy and ensuring essential services are in place. If your church is facing immediate financial difficulties, please contact your Archdeacon in the first instance. The share count is clearly now irrelevant so please do not worry submitting any figures to your Rural Dean. We have decided to use last year's figures for the 2021 budget which will be set as late as possible this year in these changed circumstances. Parishes that have experienced significant movement in numbers will be invited to contact their archdeacon.

We continue to pray for one another as we respond together in seeking to love our neighbours in this time of international crisis and upheaval.

David

David Pain
Diocesan Secretary