

11<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Dear Incumbents, Treasurers, Churchwardens, PCC secretaries**

I am delighted to have the opportunity of communicating directly with you at the start of 2020.

Bishop Nicholas reminded us at the November 2019 Diocesan Synod that “We need to ensure that ambition, expenditure and income are matched. It can be done in a number of ways: a strengthening of vision and purpose through our diocesan priorities, reducing expenditure, increasing income - and in all likelihood a mix of all three.”

**Strengthening of Vision and Purpose**

We share a common purpose in response to the invitation of Jesus Christ, seeking to be a flourishing Christian presence in every community across the Diocese of Salisbury. We are called to love and serve God and our neighbours. Last year Bishop John Gladwin was invited by Bishop Nicholas to conduct an independent review of our vision of ‘Renewing Hope: Pray Serve Grow’. His report made a series of recommendations on how to take the next steps in faith. A refreshed vision will work in two ways: as an invitation to all parishes to make local decisions in response to the ‘Pray, Serve, Grow’ vision, as well as the basis for greater focus by the teams working together in the Boards of Finance and Education. More news on this after the forthcoming Diocesan Synod.

**Reducing Expenditure and Increasing Income**

Thank you for all that you do to inspire generous giving, through your leadership we achieved a remarkable 97.1% Share contribution for 2019. As you are aware the Diocese of Salisbury, like many parishes, faces significant financial challenges and a five-year framework has been drawn up to help us identify potential changes in areas of income and expenditure. We are committed to finding a sustainable approach and eliminating the current operating deficit by 2025. This plan will be discussed in the next two Diocesan Synods and communicated more widely with engagement across the Diocese of Salisbury as part of a financial awareness campaign. The framework needs to be capable of remaining fluid as our financial situation continues to change.

**New Ways of Working**

As we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in a fast-changing world, we need to work well together across the diocese to support each other in change. Your diocesan team is here to serve you in this. The team in Church House is seeking to become more outward facing and efficient, seeking to provide an excellent service to you in your local context. In March the diocesan teams are changing to a new structure under new leadership; each of the four new teams will be working to improve the service they provide to the parishes. After significant challenges in 2019, the DAC team is now fully resourced, and we look forward to providing better service this year.

## **Review of the Fairer Share System**

The Fairer Share system is currently under review – thank you to those who have contacted me about this during my first year. Common sense and learning from other dioceses have recommended wide-spread consultation and engagement before any changes are made. This is proposed to take place in two phases after the February and June Diocesan Synods with the intention of delivering a plan for final discussion at the November Diocesan Synod. There would then be a transitional year in 2021 to address any issues with a new system going live in 2022.

## **Training**

I commend to you the financial training for PCC Treasurers and Secretaries offered in the accompanying leaflet. Additionally, there are 2 courses being run by our finance department as part of the CMD programme. Booking is via the website.

- Financial Best Practices for Parishes 30 April 2020 11am - 1pm at Church House
- Understanding Fairer Share 30 April 2020 2pm - 4pm at Church House.

## **Thank you**

I would like to thank you for all your work and enthusiasm in being and growing a flourishing Christian presence in every community. Thank you especially for all that you do to ensure time, talents and money are deployed in the service of Christ in your locality as part of the Diocese of Salisbury.

Thank you for the many messages of support and encouragement you have sent to me. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your ideas and suggestions as we move forward together.

In view of all that is going on I will write again in July to inform you of progress.



Yours sincerely

David Pain  
**Diocesan Secretary**