

19 May 2016

Dear Colleague

2017 Common Fund – Return of Participant Numbers

Please find enclosed a number of documents relating to 2017 Common Fund assessments, and particularly the Return of Participants for 2016. This letter and attachments have been passed to you by your PCC Secretary (or Churchwarden), as you are the nominated person within the parish for preparing the information for the declared participant numbers. If you are not the correct person for preparing this information, then please discuss the matter with your churchwarden or PCC Secretary as a matter of urgency.

Participant Forms 2016

Please note that this is the only package being sent out in respect of your parish so could you please ensure that the form is completed. The Return of Participants form is to be returned to your Rural Dean, completed and signed on behalf of your PCC. You are advised to make a photocopy for retention with your parish records and also to ensure a copy is available in the event of the original form going astray.

The average of the number of participants declared in box 4 of the enclosed form and the corresponding figures on the 2014 and 2015 forms will be used in the calculation of the Common Fund request for 2017 and therefore the form is a very important document which should be agreed by the PCC. Please carefully read the enclosed guidance note “Assessment of Common Fund for 2017” and copy this as required for your PCC members before compiling the figures. Enclosed with this letter is also a sheet showing the declared number of participants, for each parish in your deanery, for 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. You will therefore be able to see the figures previously declared by your parish, as well as the address for either your Rural Dean or Lay Chair, to whom your participant form should be returned.

The Return of Participants form should be completed and signed by **your priest, two churchwardens and the PCC treasurer on behalf of the PCC**. If there is a vacancy for any of these positions, please arrange for another PCC member/s to sign instead. Once the form has been completed and signed, please then send or hand a copy to your Rural Dean (or Deanery Lay Chair if you have no Rural Dean) by no later than **27th June 2016**. This deadline is really important as there is much work to do on the figures before the Common Fund request can be issued in November.

We are once again asking the Deanery to provide a monitoring role in the process by ensuring that all forms are received and reviewed before forwarding them to The Old Deanery. This is an important element in providing confidence in the system so that it can be seen as operating as fairly as possible. Could I please ask you to work with your Deanery officers, should they contact you asking for the Return of Participants form, or if they request more information on the figures you have provided?

Statistics for Mission – Worshipping Community Data

Back in September we sent out the annual Statistics for Mission forms for completion. It should be noted that the definition of a worshipping community within that form, and the level of detail requested, exactly matches the participation number data that we use in the Common Fund calculation. As in 2015, if the details given in that form were agreed by your PCC, we will be happy to use that number for your allocation and not ask you for a separate submission. Some parishes do appear to have completed their Statistics for Mission forms with this dual function in mind.

Therefore, if you would like us to use the Statistics for Mission data in this way please email Charlotte Vickers on charlotte.vickers@exeter.anglican.org and she will then email you, your priest and rural dean affirming the number previously submitted. You will then need to confirm that the number submitted has been agreed by the PCC. However, you are free to choose whether to use the figure previously provided for the worshipping community, or to submit a new (updated) number using the enclosed form.

Appeals

There is a deadline of 30th June for all appeals relating to the Common Fund calculation for 2017. The Assets Group will make the final decision in respect of those appeals.

We are particularly keen to ensure that the declared participant numbers are correct, so if any errors were made in your previous calculation of the 2014 and 2015 figures, then you should ask us to correct the number for those years. You will have to explain how the error occurred and your letter of appeal will require the signatures of all those who are required to sign the participant form. It should be noted that it is not possible to amend previous years or the current year assessment – any agreed

changes in the data used to calculate your Common Fund assessment will be applied to the 2017 calculation.

See the Assessment of Common Fund guidance (Section 1, paragraph 2) about appeals for relief from assessment of income restricted to specified capital projects.

Summary

The Common Fund forms an essential part in providing resources for clergy across the Diocese, and also for funding the common life and work of the Diocese at every level. It is essential, therefore, that all parishes engage in this process with an equally open and fair approach.

Timetable

May	Letters/forms sent out to PCC Secretaries for distribution
May/June	PCC assesses the Church Participation figure
27 June	Deadline for PCC to return participant form to the Rural Dean, for Deanery review
June/July	Rural Dean and Lay Chair convene a group to review the forms. Forms are then either passed to the Finance Team at the Old Deanery duly signed off, or in a small number of parishes there may be a need for further discussion with the parish.
22 July	Deadline for Deaneries to return forms to the Old Deanery
July/August	Diocesan Finance Team process the information on the forms
15 October	Diocesan Synod approves the budget
November	Common Fund requests sent to parishes

Yours sincerely



Neil Williams
Director of Finance