

*Those who attended the Open Synod Finance Forum (22 July 2019) were asked to consider the three options set out in the consultation paper. These are the comments offered from table discussions.*

1. Are we extending Authorised Lay Ministries?
2. Let's use Ministry teams instead.
3. Some parishes will struggle to pay 3.8% more.
4. There is a suspicion around that parishes are hiding money.
5. We need transparency with money.
6. Are we asking for more money for less? (option 1)
7. What is the new model of ministry & mission.
8. Deaneries are key to enabling – generous sharing – mutual understanding – is God worth it?!
9. Being more generous/open to other churches in the Deanery – working together.
10. What are the new models of mission & ministry & how are parishes going to make the most of them?
11. % increase is irrelevant down to church level.
12. Are percentage increases the right way of framing the question?
13. Whatever the increase if we don't have a treasurer then how do we raise the increase?
14. Need to see laity as 'prime movers'.
15. We need to talk to one another more to support, help & encourage.
16. Do 'we' understand what the money is for? Is there clear understanding of the funding challenge we face?
17. Option 2 makes sense in terms of inflation to stand still. Only give just as much as needed.
18. Assessing financial capacity of each parish requires detailed delicate research.
19. Is a percentage increase the best way to deliver the budget?
20. Allocation of Parish Share is problematic – to deaneries & parishes will still be unresolved in 2020.
21. How are the treasurers going to sell this increase to the wider parishioners?
22. 2019 saw a reduction in parish share of 1.9% so 2020 an increase to 3.8% is just taking us back to where we should be.
23. 80 parish priests → more pro-rata for them to do. But that's not the case as we're looking at new patterns of ministry.
24. How are some posts going to be sustained in the long term (beyond the initial agreement to fund i.e. chaplaincy & resource church funding)?
25. Hassle church consulted with other organisations with similar issues such as English Heritage and other churches.
26. Is 3.82% a percentage increase on each share amount, or 3.82% on whatever level of share a parish gets – 3.82% on all or 3.82% deaneries.
27. Is 3.8% a courageous & generous move when budgets are frozen & some see cuts?
28. Effect of fees on income – different in many parishes.
29. Option 1 may be the best to deliver the expressed new models of ministry & mission, but I have concerns about a reduction in actual numbers of priests.
30. Generosity is share but also all other giving that sustains mission in all its forms.
31. We are asking people for more money but if we grew the church we'd have more people to contribute.
32. Clergy deployment linked to lay empowerment.
33. Need to value whole diocese.
34. Need to escape 'we used to...' thinking.
35. Engage parishioners in this diocesan 'project'.
36. Can't be done without inspiration & culture change.
37. No parish should feel abandoned.

38. Query fixed target figure of 80.
39. Option 1 a good aim – orderly use of clergy.
40. Running costs less glamorous than projects.
41. £184k across 150 parishes is possible – ‘peanuts’.
42. Is 3.8% the minimum amount needed to achieve the plan? – if so then just say so.
43. What does the end game look like? How will the Diocese look?
44. If folk have to put their hands in their pockets for 2% → might as well try for 3.8% as 2% does not get us out of the financial hole.
45. It will be a problems for parishes who are just managing to pay their full share this year – but not as difficult as 3.8%.
46. There is a problem for those parishes who worked hard to pay in full, especially larger ones, who will not be able to achieve this again, even 2%.
47. If we’re in vacancy why are we paying anything? We haven’t got a vicar.
48. Some parishioners say ‘why should we pay as we have less of our vicar?’
49. Is there an option 3a i.e. not increasing but making up the shortfall of the 2019 ask.
50. Amidst this option we are not naming and owning the reality of decline.
51. The well-known givers (parish and people) are already struggling very much to pay what is already being asked.
52. Can we really cut £184,000 of expenditure?
53. What would the different savings mean? Could we not have been given options of saving an expenditure and what it would mean?
54. Tell us what ‘re-imagining ministry’ is really going to look like. What are our parishes going to be dealing with?
55. Wider use of church buildings.
56. Closing churches no longer viable or offer to Historic Churches Trust.
57. Sell redundant vicarages.
58. Intentional use of retired clergy & Readers.
59. Pastoral re-organisation with time to plan for it.
60. Real conversations with congregations about expectation.
61. Option 3 represents a failure & a backward step!
62. Dangerous when people put funds in secret jam jars ... (for diocese).
63. Openness matters – it is great – but it needs to be genuine openness.
64. Does the Diocese have lots of jam jars too?
65. Why no standard way of doing accounts?
66. Has anyone read Acts 2 recently?
67. What are the real sanctions of people don’t pay?
68. Can the diocese have real power to know what people can pay?
69. Is pressure put on parishes who don’t pay their way?
70. What cuts might exist? Is it only staff cuts?
71. Are there any other sources of income in reality?
72. What are consequences if we fall back to this position? What look like in practice?
73. Nobody ‘gets it wrong’ in what we do.
74. Got to separate church & buildings.