

Where are we now?

Parish Ministry in the Diocese of York – ordained and lay ministers, self-supporting and stipendiary, housed or living in their own housing – is mostly funded by the Diocesan Common Fund, which is where the Free Will Offerings made by each parish are collected.

Ordained and lay ministers are selected, trained and supported in their work, backed up and sustained by safeguarding and other teams, and they minister in parishes across the Diocese where the need is greatest, or where they are able.

The amount currently collected in Free Will Offerings from parishes is less than the direct cost of providing ministry across the Diocese of York.

What next?

Our Diocesan Synod – the representative body of the Diocese – agreed in 2022 that:

- every Ministry Unit should at least meet the annual direct cost of the ministry it receives by 2026
- those able to contribute more should continue to do so, and those offerings should be increased annually with inflation
- that by 2031 each Ministry Unit should also bear a share of our pooled diocesan costs

The gap in funding parish ministry and the cost of pooled diocesan costs are being covered from reserves; Diocesan Synod’s decision should end this by 2031.

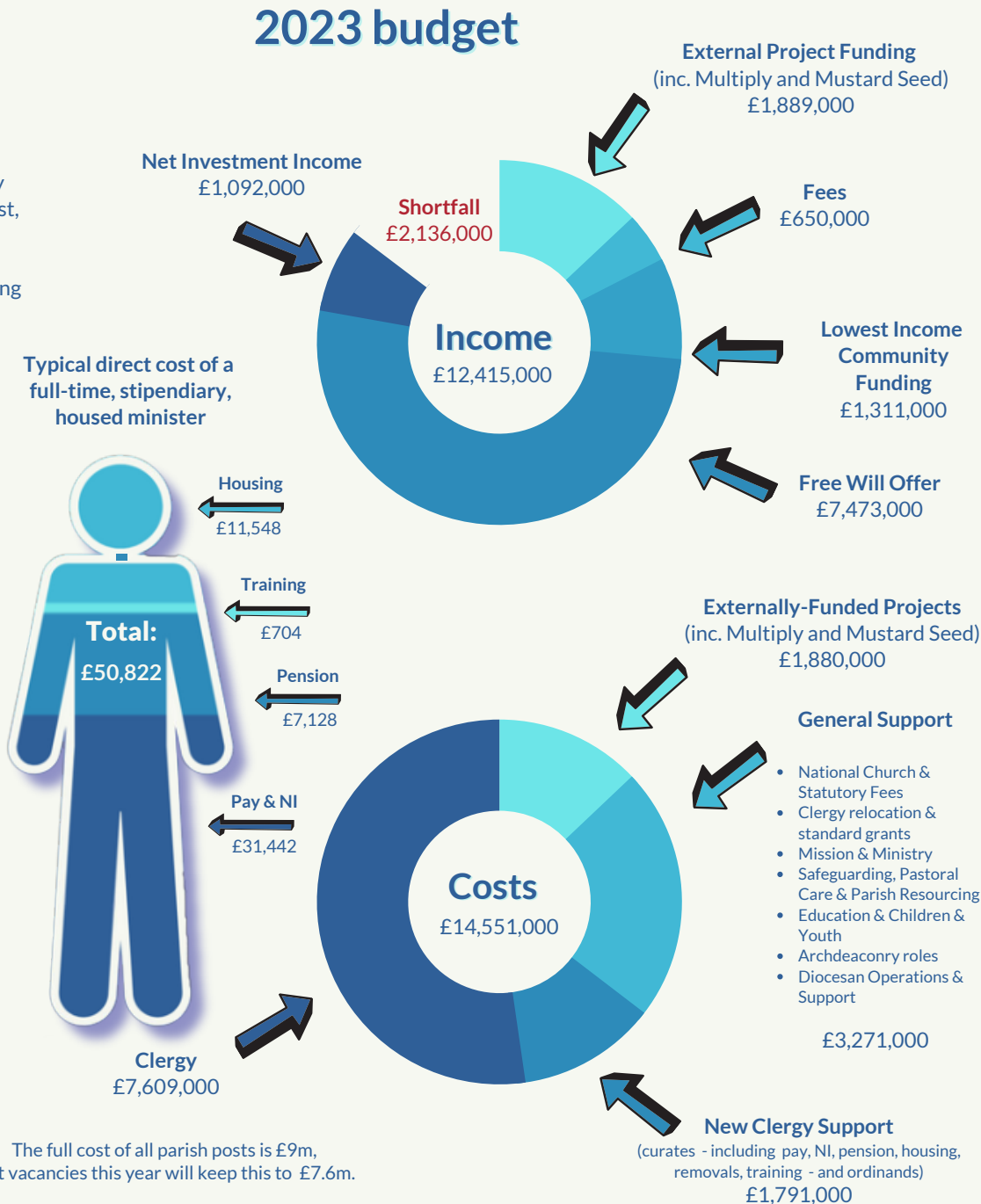
Led where possible by its incumbent, each PCC is asked to pray together and discuss what Free Will Offer you are called and able to make to the Common Fund in 2024, in order to help provide and support Ministry in parishes across the Diocese of York.

This will tell Diocesan Synod how much we can spend to provide and support Parish Ministry in 2024, when it considers the next budget this autumn.

You can talk with your Deanery Synod Reps about the process and the budget; every Deanery is represented on Diocesan Synod.

There are churches already seeing the benefits of support you can access, from:

- the Diocesan Generous Giving Team - generous.giving@yorkdiocese.org
- Growing Healthy Churches and Revitalise - john.day@yorkdiocese.org
- the Church Buildings team - dac@yorkdiocese.org
- your Archdeacon
 - Cleveland - adcl@yorkdiocese.org
 - East Riding - ader@yorkdiocese.org
 - York - adyk@yorkdiocese.org



Thank you for all your church's wonderful work in our continuing recovery from Covid and in responding to the ongoing cost of living challenges.

As the family of churches that make up the Diocese of York our financial situation remains a concern. Even before Covid, we were struggling to maintain paid ministry in every place because of the widening gap between costs rising with inflation and Free Will Offer which has been flat for nearly a decade. Before Covid that gap was around £1m per annum; today it is closer to £2m per annum.

Through the ongoing work to develop and implement the deanery plans we can see the seeds of change through Living Christ's Story; our Diocesan Synod has affirmed that we believe we can grow as a church, if we Become more like Christ, Reach those we currently don't, Grow churches of missionary disciples, and Transform our structures and finances.

This year's budget process is about to begin and your PCC's input is vital and valued. The PCC is asked to let the diocesan Finance Team know by the end of September what your parish will pledge in Free Will Offer for next year. This will help our Diocesan Synod to agree a budget which is realistic but also hopeful.

Can we be:

Faithful?

Belonging to the family of the Diocese of York matters – we are better together, when we love and support one another.

Informed?

We have a responsibility to understand the costs of ministry and mission in the diocese so we can make sensible decisions.

Generous?

God loves the church and wants us to flourish – we are called to reflect God's generosity and joy in giving, trusting that what we need will be provided.

These are difficult times but we are hopeful that by responding to our calling to live Christ's story in the places where we are, God will bless us richly and give us all we need for God's mission in the world.