

IN SERVICE OF THE FAITHFUL

A guide to those who work in our
Diocesan Services and how they
serve our parishes and people

*For we are God's co-workers; you are
God's field, God's building*

– 1 Corinthians 3:9

DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

FOREWORD



Our diocese relies on a great number of people to ensure everything runs smoothly.

They include our clergy, of course, as well as countless lay men and women throughout the diocese who volunteer for the many vital ministries which are essential in our parishes.

Others serve on committees or are engaged in social action through the organisations that make up Caritas Middlesbrough.

Without all of these people, we wouldn't be able to carry out all the important work we currently do, and I thank all of them for their contribution, however big or small.

We also depend very much on the staff who work in our Diocesan Services, most of whom are based in the Curial Offices on The Avenue, Middlesbrough. This review introduces some of these people and explains their roles to give you a better understanding of how the diocese operates behind the scenes and, most importantly, how these functions support the various ministries and works of evangelisation undertaken in your parish.

Towards the back of this document you will find a financial breakdown of how our



Bishop Terry meeting Pope Francis

Diocesan Services are funded and how our money is spent. You will also find further information on how we can all play our part in making our parishes financially sustainable for the future.

I would also ask you all to pray for me and for all those who work in our diocese, as we also continue to remember you in all our prayers.

Yours in blessed hope,

Rt Rev Terence Patrick Drainey
Bishop of Middlesbrough

INTRODUCTION

FROM MONSIGNOR GERARD
ROBINSON, VICAR GENERAL



For most of us, our main focus will always be the life of our parish, our worship, our community outreach and our care for our sick and elderly. And quite rightly so – we devote our energy to building vibrant parishes in which we can play an active part. We may pay little attention (if any) to “the diocese” and even less to the Diocesan Services functions based in the Curial Offices.



However, in a world where parish priests and their parishes must deal with ever-increasing regulations imposed by civil law (Health and Safety, Data Protection, Finance and Safeguarding, to name just a few), strong and effective central support offered across all parishes is essential to ensure that we meet our legal and charitable obligations.

This is where the wider work of the diocese and our Diocesan Services comes in. Our role is to help the parishes in every way we can. We provide administrative support to enable them to meet the challenges of the future and to grow as truly evangelising parishes. This is our Mission Statement...

We aim to serve the Bishop, the clergy, the parishes and the schools of the diocese with care and commitment and to provide appropriate resources to enable the diocese to function efficiently and so grow and flourish as a Christ-centred community.

I hope this document gives you an understanding of how we strive to fulfil our Mission Statement and provide parishes with “value for money”. After all, it is the parishes that help to fund the provision of Diocesan Services.

I thank you for reading this document. I hope you will find it interesting and that it gives you a greater appreciation of some of the wider work carried out on behalf of the parishes in the Diocese of Middlesbrough.



DIOCESAN SERVICES

The following Diocesan Services are offered to our parishes:

Finance

Financial Secretary: John Walton

Fundraising

Fundraising Officer: Dan Woodgate

Property

Property Manager: Sharon Westcough

Environment

Environmental Surveyor: Glenn Melvin

Health and Safety

Health and Safety Advisors:
Kevin Archer and Debra Butler

Schools' Service

Director of Schools: Kate Bailey

Youth and Chaplaincy

Youth and Chaplain Coordinator:
Father Philip Cunnah

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Coordinator: Jacqui Drysdale

Adult Formation

Adult Formation Coordinator: Vacant

Clergy Care and Welfare

Care and Welfare Consultant: Audrey Kirby

Music

Director of Music: Steven Maxson

Communications

Communications and Data Protection Officer:
Michael McGeary

Legal Services

Diocesan Solicitor: Reverend Peter Warren

Human Resources

HR Manager: Barbara Yellow

Administration

Bishop's Secretary: Dawn Cummings

Over the following pages you will find a summary of the work of each of these departments and the services they provide to our parishes.

DIOCESAN SCHOOLS' SERVICE

The Bishop's vision for Catholic education in the Diocese of Middlesbrough is to make Christ known and loved through the provision of outstanding Catholic education and schools.



KATE BAILEY



MARTIN MACAULAY



It is the responsibility of the Diocesan Schools' Service to ensure that the Bishop's vision is being implemented and lived out through strategic oversight. All the schools in our diocese are now academies and form two multi-academy trusts, St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust (SCRCAT) and Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust (NPCAT).

Bishop Terry holds canonical responsibility for the oversight of all Catholic education within the diocese, ensuring that:

- There are sufficient places in Catholic schools to meet the needs of Catholic children resident in their areas
- The formation and education provided by the schools is authentically Catholic and
- Educational standards are outstanding. The Bishop relies on the Diocesan Schools' Service, led by the Director of Schools, to assist him in carrying out these responsibilities.

Kate Bailey, Director of Schools, speaks with the voice of the Bishop and represents him in all matters related to Catholic education in schools. Kate is assisted in this work by Martin Macaulay (Deputy Director of Schools) and Katherine McKeown (Schools Service Administrator).

The Schools' Service is responsible for supporting schools in a number of ways, including support with the RE curriculum, the inspection of schools, providing leadership pathways, appointments to senior posts, governance and providing professional development opportunities for those working in our schools.

Other key priorities of its work include the promotion of effective chaplaincy in schools, finding appropriately skilled practising Catholics to join local governing bodies and, where needed, to serve on trust boards.

These roles often help to build links between the parish community and local schools to ensure our young people receive the very best spiritual formation, whether in the church, at home or in the classroom.

YOUTH AND CHAPLAINCY

Father Philip Cunnah acts as the Diocesan Coordinator of School Chaplaincy, in addition to his work leading the youth mission in the diocese.



Father Phil



Pupils in the chapel at St Augustine's Catholic Secondary School in Scarborough

As Diocesan Coordinator of School Chaplaincy, he works on behalf of the Bishop to monitor and develop chaplaincy in schools, particularly at secondary level. Working alongside the Diocesan Schools' Service, the coordinator meets regularly with school chaplaincy coordinators to support and encourage their work.

The Catholic Education Service, working with the Bishops' Conference Liturgy Commission, has recently published a new Directory for Prayer and Liturgy in schools. This will be a main focus for chaplaincy development in the coming months and years.

In the past year, the Diocesan Youth Service has coordinated the participation of students from our parishes in wider Church events such as Flame and World Youth Day. Flame is a national event at Wembley Arena, organised by the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation (CYMFED). More than 100 students of secondary school age from our diocese attended alongside thousands of others from throughout England and Wales.

The youth service works in conjunction with CYMFED and helps distribute their resources, such as those for World Youth Sunday.

In addition, the organisation of our young peoples' involvement in the diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage is undertaken by the youth service. For many of our students, the Lourdes Pilgrimage is a highlight of their year as they accompany our elderly and sick pilgrims on the way of St Bernadette.

Looking ahead, the Holy Father has announced a youth festival in Rome for the jubilee year in 2025. The next Flame event will take place in the same year.

ADULT FORMATION

The Adult Formation role is an important part of our work in Diocesan Services. This includes encouraging lifelong growth in faith and collaboration between clergy and lay faithful and offering formation in lay pastoral ministry and parish administration. At the time of publication, this position was vacant.

SAFEGUARDING

The Safeguarding Department plays an important part in the life of the diocese and is led by Safeguarding Coordinator Jacqui Drysdale, assisted by Support Manager Mo Hunter.



Jacqui Drysdale



Mo Hunter



Lisa Whelan



Patti Wieczorek



Patti Wieczorek and Lisa Whelan complete the department as our two part-time Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) team members.

The department's key focus is to make our churches a safe place for everyone by ensuring that we adopt rigorous recruitment policies when employing workers and volunteers. They also provide support services for victims and survivors who have suffered abuse in our Church and support those who have been accused of abuse.

Part of their role is ensuring that, where appropriate, all workers and volunteers hold a current DBS certificate. They process more than 500 DBS checks every year on behalf of the parishes and the Lourdes Pilgrimage.

They assist all parish priests to identify and train a Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR) who is the face of safeguarding within the parish and a direct link with the Safeguarding Coordinator.

They also have the important job of verifying and checking each volunteer's identity as part of the application process. The department provides training events to support PSRs in their work and also holds an annual conference to update them and thank them for volunteering in this important role.

The Safeguarding Coordinator and the Support Manager are always on hand to provide advice to parishes on all safeguarding matters, whether these relate to the appointment of volunteers, creating a safer environment or listening to concerns and taking action when necessary.

PROPERTY

The diocese has an extensive portfolio of properties ranging from churches, presbyteries, church halls, retired clergy housing and some investment properties, which provide rental income to support the work of the parishes and Diocesan Services. Sharon Westcough heads the Property Department with the administrative support of Jenny Dowson.



Jenny, Glenn, Sharon, Kevin and Debra

One of the principal objectives of the department is the maintenance of all our properties to ensure good stewardship of our churches, presbyteries and halls for future generations. They advise our parishes on all building issues and assist with the appointment of skilled contractors where necessary.

The department also provides advice to parish priests and their finance committees on the best use of their parish property portfolio, whether this relates to the development of their buildings, the letting of properties to raise rental income, purchasing new properties or selling redundant property.

The department also supports the work of the diocese's Historic Churches and Art and Architecture committees. It is mindful of the rich history of our sacred places, including our 29 Grade II and Grade II* listed churches and our Grade I listed church, St Charles Borromeo in Hull.

Among the department's biggest challenges is meeting the housing needs of an increasing number of retired clergy, and they work closely with our Care and Welfare Officer and priests coming up to retirement to ensure they have a safe and comfortable house to live in.



Sharon Westcough



Jenny Dowson



St Charles Borromeo Church in Hull is the diocese's only Grade I listed building

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Keeping our priests and parishioners safe is the most important thing we do. In 2019, we appointed two part-time Health and Safety Advisors, Debra Butler broadly serving the parishes in the north of the diocese and Kevin Archer covering the southern parishes.



Debra Butler



Kevin Archer



St Mary's Cathedral, Middlesbrough

Kevin and Debra advise parish priests on all H&S matters, conduct safety audits and support priests with their legal obligations. Both have a background in safety management and their role is to promote a culture of health and safety in the diocese in a way that our clergy, employees and volunteers can easily understand and implement.

They conduct regular parish visits to assess potential dangers and to report and advise on safety equipment and systems in parish properties. They also play a crucial role in helping ensure that our places of worship, presbyteries and church halls are safe and that everyone is aware of the risks associated with those places.

When necessary, they investigate any accidents or injuries that occur. This is to determine any risks that need addressing and to identify good practice across the diocese. If necessary, they will recommend changes to structures, equipment, operations or procedures that are designed to eliminate hazards.

They also provide training to priests and volunteers, covering subjects such as working at height (use of steps and ladders), safe lifting and handling techniques and fire safety. Training events can be tailored to the parish's requirements.

DECARBONISATION AND ENVIRONMENT

As a direct response to the Holy Father's encyclical *Laudato Si'*, concerning the stewardship of the environment and the natural resources of the world for future generations, Glenn Melvin was appointed to the Property team as Environmental Surveyor.



Glenn Melvin

Glenn's key role is to work with parishes to find ways of reducing our carbon footprint, whether this be by introducing energy efficiency measures or engaging in projects to support the environment.

He has advised parishes on a range of energy efficiency projects ranging from better insulation, the installation of more energy-efficient heating systems and simple actions such as the replacement of older lighting with energy-efficient bulbs.

Glenn works with a national Catholic organisation, the Guardians of Creation, to represent the diocese in all environmental matters, learn from best practice and develop a consistent approach.

He is also responsible for conducting energy audits in all parish properties. This will help us all save energy and reduce emissions and continue progress towards our goal of being an environmentally responsible diocese.

Solar panels installed last year at St Clare's Presbytery in Acklam, Middlesbrough



MUSIC

The Music Department's purpose is to support parishes, priests, congregations, schools and musicians across the diocese in all aspects of liturgical music, ensuring that the musical ministry enhances worship, responds to the liturgy and enables active participation. Steven Maxson leads the department as Diocesan Director of Music.



Steven Maxson



Andrea Maxson



The department offers training, support and practical help to parishes, priests, congregations and musicians according to their needs. This can be in person, by telephone, online, via the diocesan website or on our YouTube channel. They are also responsible for the musical direction of choirs and cantors at St Mary's Cathedral and for the diocesan choir, which sings at the cathedral and elsewhere within the diocese.

In addition, the department leads on the National Schools Singing Programme (NSSP), which involves whole-class music teaching, with approximately 1,300 pupils every week, currently in schools across parts of three of our four deaneries.

The NSSP, now funded in every Catholic diocese in England, delivers musical education through singing, teaching basic notation, covering the bulk of the Music National Curriculum and National Plan for Music, while reinforcing Catholic ethos and providing signposting opportunities for children to progress further in liturgical music-making. Andrea Maxson is our NSSP Choral Director.

The key priorities for the Music Department over the next few years include sustainably growing the NSSP so it is available to any school in the diocese and providing bespoke and group training and formation to musicians, parishes, schools and clergy.

FINANCE

The diocesan Financial Secretary, John Walton, assisted by Lisa Campbell, Dan Woodgate and Francesca Stewart, is ultimately responsible for handling all financial and property matters in the diocese.



John Walton



Lisa Campbell



Francesca Stewart

The work of the department includes ensuring that all diocesan payments and receipts are processed in line with legal requirements and ensuring that all income and expenditure is recorded in the correct manner in line with our obligations as a registered charity. It also provides financial information, advice and support to parishes to assist with financial decision making.

The work of the department is wide ranging and they are in constant contact with parish priests and administrators to assist them in all financial matters, including the preparation of their annual accounts, where necessary paying bills on behalf of a parish and ensuring that parish banking facilities are fit for purpose and that the correct authorisations are in place.

The department also administers payroll, ensuring that staff in the Diocesan Services and in the parishes are paid correctly, and all deductions are forwarded to the relevant external agencies in a correct and timely manner.

FUNDRAISING

Dan Woodgate was appointed as Fundraising Officer for the diocese in 2023. This is a new role, created to meet the needs of the parishes in generating parish income in increasingly difficult times.



Dan Woodgate

DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH
RETIRED PRIESTS' WELFARE FUND

THEY'VE GIVEN THEIR LIVES TO SERVE YOU

CAN YOU HELP TO SERVE THEM IN RETIREMENT?

The Retired Priests' Welfare Fund provides care and support to priests during their retirement and elderly years, especially in times of ill health, acknowledging their lifetime of dedication and devotion to Christ, His church and His people.

In the year 2023, the RPWF provided care to 23 retired priests, incurring a total cost of £152,191. This included provisions such as accommodation, care expenses, pension top-ups, and additional support for spiritual, pastoral and emotional well-being.

As the number of clergy reaching retirement age steadily increases, so too will the cost of providing the support they deserve.

Your kindness and generosity helps to ensure a dignified retirement for each of our priests.

Dan has served the diocese since 2000. He oversees the administration of Gift Aid, which remains a vital additional income stream for the parishes. This includes providing guidance and maintaining the central database of donor records.

Dan spearheads our digital giving strategy as these forms of donating become ever more popular. Contactless payment machines have now been integrated into nearly half of our parishes, enabling offerings via debit or credit cards. Dan offers support in configuring and installing these devices within our churches.

Additionally, he can provide a dedicated online fundraising website for parishes, providing a global donation platform accessible anytime, anywhere. From this, a QR code can be generated for inclusion in any parish communications, directing parishioners to the donation website.

Dan advises on accessing funding for capital projects to improve churches or church halls and for outreach initiatives, identifying potential grant sources and helping prepare applications.

He is also able to assist in the development of parish appeals, explaining the parish's financial status to parishioners and offering avenues for increased giving. His role also includes promoting legacy donations.



Dan Woodgate with one of the contactless donation systems that have now been placed in many of our churches

CARE AND WELFARE

Our retired clergy have given a lifetime of active ministry to the Church, and as they approach retirement, they need specialist support and advice. Audrey Kirby is a retired senior nurse with more than 30 years' experience in the NHS. She has been employed on a consultancy basis as the diocesan Care and Welfare Consultant since 2017.



Audrey Kirby



Although Audrey's key role is to provide support for priests in their old age and retirement, she also provides invaluable support for all priests during periods of ill health.

For many of our priests, the idea of stepping away from parish life can be daunting and some continue to work well into their later years and only slow down once illness forces them to. Audrey aims to support priests during their transition from active ministry to retirement, helping with the practical aspects of moving into a retirement property and offering practical advice on wellbeing, physical and emotional health. If priests need support to access social care, she is experienced in navigating the care system to access practical and financial support.

The diocese ensures that all our retired priests have a safe, secure and comfortable place to live in their retirement. For most of our retired priests this will involve the purchase of a bungalow or flat to enable them to live independently if they can. For others, it may mean making arrangements for their care in residential homes.

The continued support of our retired priests is a key priority for the future and you will find an appeal for the Retired Priests' Welfare Fund at the end of this publication.

LEGAL SERVICES

Deacon Peter Warren is our Chief Operating Officer and Diocesan Solicitor and also acts as the Company Secretary to the diocesan Board of Trustees, which he advises on civil law matters including meeting the requirements of charity law. He also advises the other Diocesan Services departments as well as our parishes on property law, employment law and a range of other legal issues.



Peter Warren



Deacon Peter Warren in his office

Peter offers general advice to the parishes on a range of legal issues but primarily deals with property law matters on their behalf. Whenever a parish wants to rent out its property (for example, a vacant presbytery or an unused church hall), he can advise on the best form of tenancy agreement and negotiate the best rental terms for the parish. It is essential that a legal agreement is in place for any letting of parish property to protect the interests of the parish, the diocese and the tenant.

Peter is able to provide parishes with advice and the drafting of church hall user agreements and a range of other short-term/occasional lettings.

He also responds to a wide range of other legal requests from parish priests, ranging from the negotiation of commercial contracts, data protection questions, issues arising from contracts entered into by the parish, disputes with neighbours and many other matters.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Barbara Yellow was appointed as part-time Human Resources Manager at the start of 2024 to offer support to the Diocesan Services and parishes in all employment law matters. This is a new role created to help the diocese negotiate the increasingly complex legislation regarding the employment of workers, employees and volunteers.



Barbara Yellow

The Human Resources (HR) department oversees our recruitment and selection processes, manages employee training and development and plays a vital role in maintaining employee engagement by handling grievances and conflicts and ensuring fair treatment.

The department is responsible for developing and implementing diocesan policies, ensuring legal compliance and minimising risks related to employment law, discrimination and workplace safety.

A key element of the role is in assisting parishes to navigate UK employment law with regard to the recruitment of parish workers and volunteers, which includes ensuring that appropriate contracts and payroll matters are in place and that all individuals are provided with ongoing support.

The HR department aims to help the diocese foster a healthy work environment, ensure legal compliance and ensure that all workers and volunteers, whether in parishes or in the Diocesan Services, are treated fairly.



Diocesan Services staff who attended a Dementia Friends Awareness session in 2024

ADMINISTRATION

In 2023 the diocese brought together all administrative support roles to create an Admin Hub. This is the first point of contact for parish priests and anyone who needs signposting to one of the Diocesan Services or who visits the Curial Offices for a meeting. We have three team members, Dawn Cummings (Bishop's Secretary), Heidi Cummins (Assistant Administrator) and Katherine McKeown (Schools' Service Administrator).



Katherine McKeown

The Admin Hub provides front-of-house services and administrative support to the Bishop, the Vicar General and the Chancellor, in addition to servicing all diocesan groups including Caritas, the Bishop's Council and associated groups, the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees. The Hub also assists in the management of the diocesan Archives, facilitating visits by members of the public for private research and providing copies of certificates.

They also help in the organisation of all diocesan events and ceremonies, including the production of service booklets, in addition to providing support to the Walsingham pilgrimage, the diocesan inspirational day for all Ministers of Holy Communion and the Word. They also support the Diocesan Schools' Service in matters, including school inspections, course bookings, meetings and foundation governors.

The Admin Hub is generally the first point of contact for priests, parishioners or other individuals seeking support from one of the Diocesan Services teams. The office is open from 9am to 5pm each weekday.

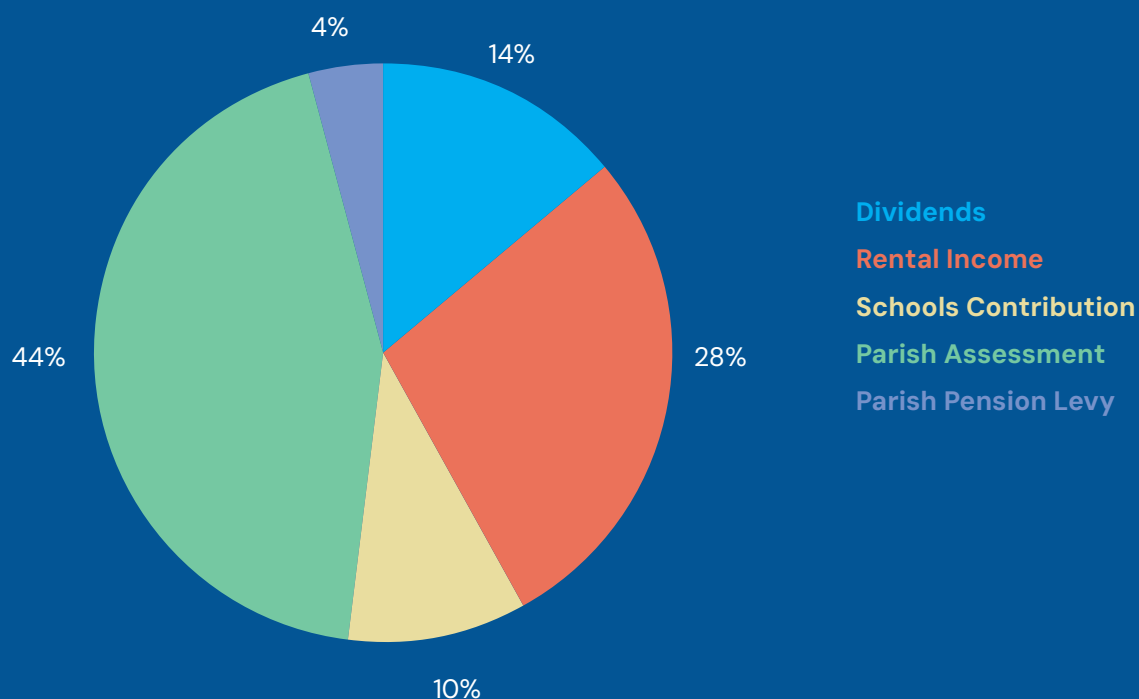


Dawn Cummings

HOW IS THE DIOCESE FUNDED?

Very broadly, the diocese needs to raise around £2m each year to carry out its functions. This includes enabling the Diocesan Services to be provided to ensure we meet our obligations under civil and canon law. Although simplified, the pie chart below provides an indication of where the money comes from each year to enable the diocese to function:

DIOCESAN INCOME



Dividends: Income we receive from our investments and bank interest.

Rental Income: Rental income received from our investment properties.

Schools Contribution: Money received from the two academy trusts to part-fund the Schools' Service.

Parish Assessment: Money paid by the parishes.

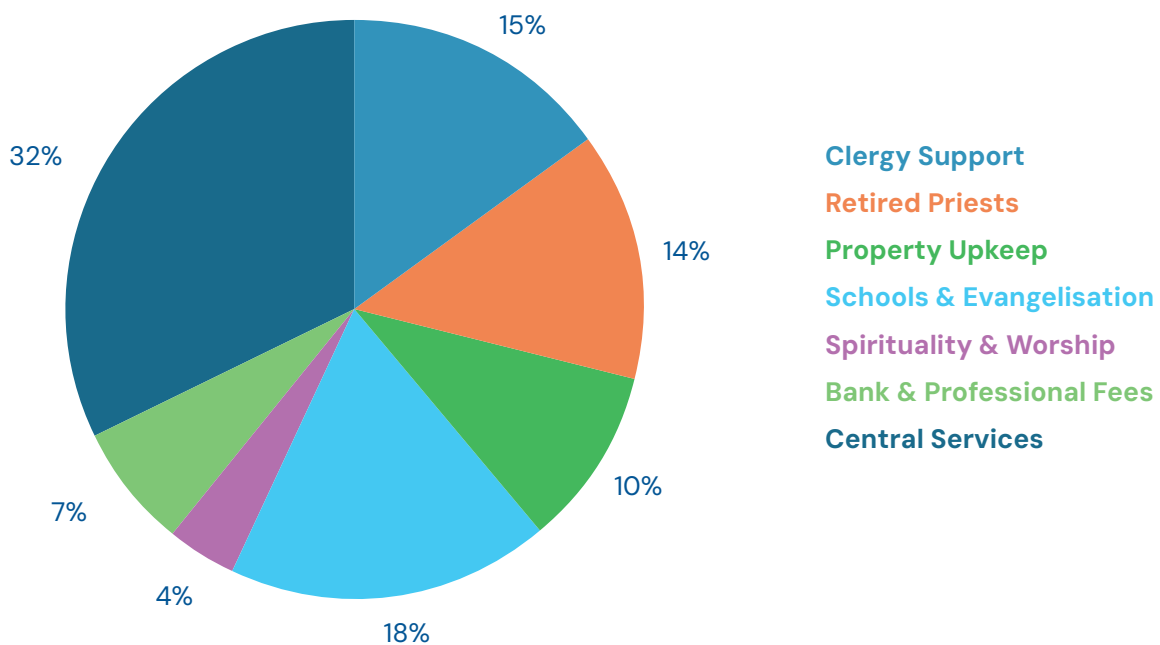
Parish Pension Levy: Money received from the parishes to part-fund priests' pensions.

The money received from our parishes (around 44% of total diocesan income) is a critical element of the income the diocese needs to function effectively.

WHAT IS THE DIOCESAN INCOME SPENT ON?

The pie chart below shows the main heads of expenditure every year. Again, this chart has been simplified as there are, of course, a great number of other costs associated with the operation of the diocese. In very broad terms, the diocese spends the £2m income it receives each year in the following ways:

DIOCESAN EXPENDITURE



It should be noted that the expenditure on schools and evangelisation is offset to a large degree by the Schools Contribution shown on the income pie chart on the previous page.

The costs associated with our retired priests currently account for around 14% of diocesan expenditure, a number that will inevitably rise as the number of retired priests increases in the coming years.

Otherwise, the provision of the Diocesan Services outlined in this publication amounts to approximately one-third of the total costs of the diocese. Necessary but expensive regulations, including Safeguarding and Health and Safety, have added substantially to our overheads. On top of this there are the inevitable rises in the costs of both salaries and essential building maintenance.

THE DIOCESAN TRUSTEE BOARD

The Diocese of Middlesbrough is established as a charitable trust, Middlesbrough Diocesan Trust, which is a registered charity (Charity Registration Number 233748).

This trust is run by Diocese of Middlesbrough Trustee, which is a registered company (company number 03482285) and which acts as the corporate trustee of the diocese.

It is governed by a Finance Board, whose members are directors of the company and, collectively, act as the "trustees" of the charity.

The Finance Board plays a vital role, assisting Bishop Terry in the running of the diocese, especially with regard to its obligations as a charity. The Finance Board receives reports from the Diocesan Services at each of its meetings and provides oversight and strategic direction of the provision of the Diocesan Services to the priests and parishes.

The Finance Board is chaired by Bishop Terry, who appoints other members, both laypeople and clergy. Membership of the Finance Board is an important position in the diocese and the normal length of appointment is five years.



*Monsignor
Gerard Robinson*



Father William Massie



Philip Westmacott



Barbara Hungin



John Fleming



Chris Leather



Teresa Lyth



Nick Mack

The purpose of the Finance Board is:

1. To ensure the diocese operates within its obligations under charity law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
2. To ensure the diocese pursues its charitable objects, namely the advancement of the Roman Catholic religion in the diocese, and that it applies its resources exclusively in furtherance of its charitable objects.
3. To assist the Bishop in giving strategic direction to the diocese.
4. To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the diocese and its financial stability.
5. To protect and manage the property of the diocese and to ensure the proper investment of its funds.

The Finance Board's membership reflects the diversity of the diocese and the directors have experience in many secular roles and come from a wide range of backgrounds.

However, every member must have a commitment to the Roman Catholic faith, integrity and an understanding and acceptance of the duties and responsibilities of charity trusteeship.

In addition to Bishop Terry, the current directors of the Finance Board are:

- > Monsignor Gerard Robinson, Vicar General
- > Father William Massie
- > Andrew McMillan
- > Philip Westmacott
- > Barbara Hungin
- > John Fleming
- > Chris Leather
- > Teresa Lyth
- > Nick Mack

HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR PARISH



Dear parishioner,

Your parish has been a source of spiritual nourishment, guidance and fellowship for countless individuals and families since its inception. It is a haven where we unite to celebrate our faith, provide support for one another and actively embody the teachings of Christ. However, like any community, we face ongoing challenges that require the collective generosity of our parishioners to overcome.

Each parish is responsible for financing its own activities, without assistance from the government or the Vatican. It relies on the benevolence of parishioners such as yourself to contribute to the fulfilment of its mission.

I want to express my gratitude for the generosity demonstrated throughout the diocese in each of our parishes. To provide you with an insight into parish finances, in 2022, the average offertory donation per weekend Mass-goer amounted to £2.75, resulting in an average weekly collection of £596 per parish. This calculation encompasses cash donations, standing orders and digital contributions. To contextualise, during the same period, the average cost of running a parish was £1,298 per week.

I understand that given the current financial climate, you may not be able to increase your current contribution or provide any offering at all. If that is the situation, I kindly request that you continue to keep our parishes and the work conducted within them in your prayers. However, if you are able to help alleviate the growing financial challenges in our parishes, then I would suggest the following ways in which you could offer support.

> **Planned Giving** – The most effective method of supporting your parish is through a standing order, ensuring a secure and direct deposit into the parish account while minimising unnecessary administration. The amount can be periodically reviewed and adjusted accordingly. Alternatively, you may opt for a set of offertory envelopes and make cash donations each week.

- > **Gift Aid** – If you are a taxpayer, you have the opportunity to enhance the value of your donations to the parish by 25%. The sign-up process is straightforward and comes at no additional cost to you. In 2023, over £350,000 was directly deposited into parish accounts thanks to parishioners participating in the scheme. For more information, please reach out to your parish Gift Aid Organiser.
- > **Digital Giving** – As society adapts to changes in technology, so too must we. Presently, contactless terminals are available in nearly half of the diocese's churches, facilitating donations through debit and credit cards. Parishes also have access to an online fundraising page which allows donations to be received from anywhere in the world. By scanning the QR code you can see if your parish has this facility set up.
- > **Leaving a Legacy** – Including your parish in your will is a wonderful way to contribute to its long-term mission. The process is simple, and such gifts are exempt from inheritance tax.

Every contribution, regardless of size, significantly influences your parish's life. It aids in building maintenance, meaningful pastoral care, spiritual growth and outreach to those in need.

On behalf of all of our parishes, thank you for being an essential part of our diocesan family. May God abundantly bless you for your dedication and support.

+ *Levy*



APPEAL FOR THE RETIRED PRIESTS' WELFARE FUND

Our priests devote their lives to fostering the growth of our faith, nurturing our spirits, and guiding us through the various stages of life. The normal retirement age for our priests is 75 and many are therefore able to celebrate in excess of 50 years of ministry in our parishes.

As our priests reach retirement, or in some cases are forced to retire early due to ill health, they enter a new chapter in their lives and it is our duty as a faith community whom they have served so faithfully to ensure that they experience the peace and comfort in retirement they so richly deserve.

In this publication you have already read about the work of our Care and Welfare Officer and the work undertaken by the Property Department in sourcing comfortable housing for priests to live in in retirement. The Retired Priests Welfare Fund exists to provide



Retired priest Canon Michael Bayldon with Father Phil Cunnah, his successor at St Paulinus, Guisborough

financial support for our retired clergy, offering them the care and assistance they require during their retirement. Over many years your generous contributions have enabled the diocese to make financial provision for housing, pensions, essential services, medical care, and many other services to ensure that our priests are able to live with the dignity and respect they have earned through a lifetime of service.

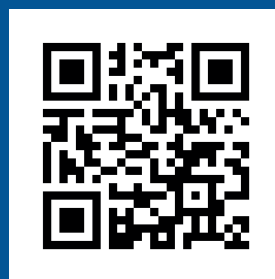
As an increasing number of priests enter retirement there is more pressure than ever on the Retired Priests Welfare Fund and your generous contributions alleviate the growing pressure on the fund and enable us to continue to provide crucial assistance to our retired clergy.

You can donate in the following ways:

1. By Bank Payment:

- Account Name: Diocese of Middlesbrough
- Sort Code: 20-56-90
- Account Number: 50421049

2. Via QR Code: Scan the QR code shown for a quick and secure donation.



3. By Cheque: Payable to the Retired Priests' Welfare Fund.

May your hearts be moved by the spirit of generosity as we come together to express our appreciation and care for those who have played an integral role in shaping our spiritual journey.

COMMUNICATIONS

Michael McGeary is our Diocesan Communications Officer. This part-time role involves editing the Catholic Voice newspaper, which is published monthly and given away free in all parishes, maintaining our website and social media channels and promoting the diocese through the local and national media.

He also helps to put together our annual year book and has taken on additional responsibility as our Data Protection Officer.







Michael McGeary



To keep up with the latest news, including the latest editions of the Catholic Voice newspaper, visit our website, middlesbrough-diocese.org.uk.

You can also follow us on our social media accounts...

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