



# Giving to Grow

from where we are to where  
God is calling us



## *An Introduction from Felicity*

I feel blessed to be a part of this amazing parish with a huge community reach and very varied ministries – in our three churches, with young people and schools, with community organisations, pastorally in grief and joy, with fun and socialising, in a range of worship styles, with creativity, humanity, inclusivity, and prayer.

All ministry costs money, and sometimes we have to talk about it: Jesus talked about money all the time. Our last concerted Stewardship Campaign was in 2018. But Covid has reduced our numbers and the cost of living crisis has increased our bills, so we need to do this again. This Lent we are asking for your help to keep our parish running.

We need everyone in our church community to take to heart our ‘Giving to Grow’ campaign and, with prayer, take time to discern what is possible in terms of increasing our financial giving. On the following pages, you will find some facts on our situation – they make for difficult reading, and we all have a responsibility to change our position.

I believe it really is possible to turn this around. Please take the time to

1. reflect, pray, and re-evaluate your giving.
2. complete and return the form on the back page of this booklet – whether you are changing your giving or not. (It shows us you have thought about it.)
3. Join one of our planned giving schemes if you are not already doing this

Please take time to get involved with our campaign.

Our future as a parish depends on it.

Yours in Christ, Felicity

## *Who are We and What do We Do?*

Money is tight nowadays and we want our money to go to things that are worth funding. **Are we worth funding? I think so.**

Our Mission Statement sets out our values:

*Sharing the Love of God Joyfully:  
Loving, Welcoming,  
Exploring, Growing.*

In their different ways all our congregations show out these values.

We are a healthy community where diverse people of all ages can grow in faith and confidence, find their place to belong, and experience God's love and healing. In an increasingly divided and anxious world this is more precious than ever, and a real benefit to our local community.

Many people connect with us in one or two ways and quite naturally, have no idea of the sheer range of our ministry. We offer something for so many different people in so many different ways.

You might meet us in a toddler group or breast feeding support session at *Kidlinks*, or enjoy singing popular songs in the bustling and inclusive *Big Sing*. You could meet us for the monthly social *Parish Lunch* or come confidentially to a weekly *Parent Support Group*. You might find holiness in the beauty of *Choral Evensong* with choir and choristers or the creativity and shared lay leadership of *Open Space* and *All Together*. You may deepen your faith through a *Study Group* or the silent *Meditation Group*, or the practical *Making Group*. You may be fed by the big *Civic and Seasonal Services at St Mary's* or the *intimate ones at Hampton Poyle*. You may remember Camels at the *Live Nativity*, or *Concerts, Talks, Festivals*, or more *personal encounters with the clergy*. This, and much more, is what we do day in and day out.

## Our Challenge

We stand alone; contrary to popular belief we receive no income from the Diocese, or any national Church of England body, or the government. We have to maintain our three buildings ourselves, and after April we will no longer be able to claim VAT back on church repairs so maintenance will cost us 20% more than before. It is a myth that 'the church' is rich.

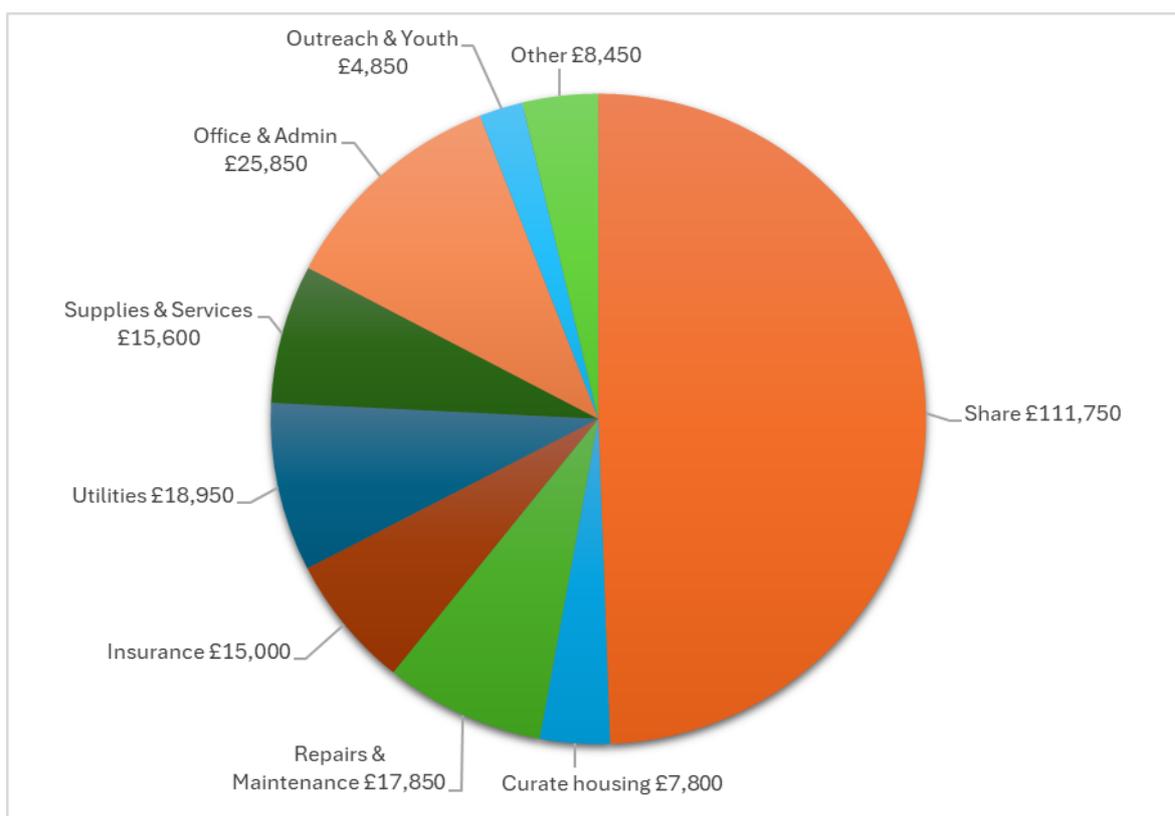
This year our budget is in deficit by £20,000 so we need to raise this amount extra *just in order to stay still*. If we do not raise more money we will use up our reserves in a very few years and effectively be bankrupt. But note that this does not allow us to make proper repairs or improvements to our buildings. We patched one leak in St Mary's roof but it's only a patch and like the potholes in the road other problems will arise. Nor does it account for the rising costs of all things and the addition of VAT. If we could raise £40,000 extra this would put us in a better position.

**In 2025 we received £112,129** from regular giving and claimed back £25,674 in gift aid. **Our aim this year is to raise £144,000** and claim back £33,000 in gift aid.

The "Parish Share" is the money we are asked to provide to the Diocese – we are obliged to pay this and we do so willingly. It is used to train, pay and house clergy, provide support for parishes (safeguarding, youth advisers etc) and pay Diocesan costs. Our parish share this year is £111,750 and now rises by 4% each year. The pie chart opposite shows clearly how this represents half of our expenditure.

We raise money separately for our three community projects from sponsorship and grants : *Kidlinks, Parentlinks, and Martin's Garden (Community Garden)*. So these costs are not shown in the pie chart.

Our expenditure in 2026 looks like this:



Other sources of income:

- We get some income from the hire of St John's hall and the refectory.
- Some income comes from funerals and weddings, but there are fewer of these nowadays as the public moves away from church occasions.
- We also get donations from the public and from church services.
- We do as many fund raising events as we are able subject to volunteer time and resources (Summer Fair, Tea Talks, Friends of St Mary's, concerts...).
- Legacies can make an enormous difference, but we have not had a large legacy for some years now.

***We give in gratitude because God first gave to us.***

***Moses instructed the people:***

***"Each of you must give a gift. It should show how much the Lord your God has blessed you" Deut 16.17***

## But what makes the real difference is a lot of people doing planned regular giving.

We currently have 149 regular givers (counting couple giving together as 2), but we have many more people who count this as 'our church' and are not yet in a Planned Giving Scheme.

The table shows how many people give per week in each band of giving.

<=£5	>£5 but <=£10	>£10 but <=£20	>£20 but <=30	>£30 but <=£50	>£50 but <=£100	>£100
36	34	50	16	7	5	1

Some thinking points:

The gas bill for December in all three churches was £2160. That represents £14.50 from every person in planned giving. But without this we could not have hosted every school in Kidlington, the Christmas Tree Festival, the KAOS concert, Advent and Christmas Carol Services, the Christmas Bereavement Service, Christingles, Study and Pastoral Groups, Children's Groups, and the very special range of Christmas Services we do in all three churches. The gas bill supports the more exciting aspects of ministry. So do our office, insurance, and maintenance costs!

- Do you think our parish is worth funding?
- Where do you sit on the 'Bands of Giving' table? Could you move up to the next band?
- If you don't already give regularly through a standing order or through the Parish Giving Scheme could you start doing so now?

***St Paul writes: "You are so rich in everything – in faith, speech, knowledge, zeal of every kind. Surely you should show yourselves equally lavish in this generous service." 2. Cor 8.7***

## Your Challenge

It is very important to stress that this campaign is not about shaming anyone or bullying anyone. What we all need to do is to be honest and prayerful about our situations, and honest with ourselves about our own ability to do more.

And in that spirit, here are some provocative challenges to consider.....

1. Currently the average giving is £17 per person per week - to get to where we need to be, **we need more people to join planned giving and we need all givers to consider if they can increase their giving.** On current figures, **an average of £19.50 per week** would help us do this. Of course some of us really can't do this for all sorts of good reasons, so others who can, need to give more.
2. If you are a taxpayer, we need you to **join our planned giving scheme** so that we can claim the Gift Aid - every £1 you give translates into £1.25 for the parish.
3. The Church of England guidelines for Christian giving are for **5% of your total income** to be given to the church and 5% to other charitable causes. This roughly translates as £10 a week for every £10,000 a year. If we all did this we would not have a problem.
4. Have you made a will? Would you consider **leaving us a gift** for after your death? These gifts make a huge difference to our ministry.
5. Put your church giving **into context with other things** you spend money on, and be honest with yourself about your priorities.

Thank you for engaging with this Giving to Grow Campaign.  
Our future as a parish depends on it.



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## Response Form

*This form tells us that you have considered our situation  
and decided what you can do.*

*When we receive this back we will know that you have responded  
and we will not 'chase' you further for a response!*

*If we don't hear from you we will try and contact you.*

Please fill in the questions overleaf.

To return the form, tear off this page and either place it in the boxes at the back of our churches, or by post: Parish Office, St John's Church, Broadway, Kidlington, OX5 1DD

Please note, returning this form does not make anything happen with your bank. To action your decisions you will need to set up or change your standing order yourself with your bank, or fill in the form for the Parish Giving Scheme (in the booklet or online). Further details for both of these are given on a separate sheet in this "pack".

### *A Prayer for Us All*

God help me to hear the Bible speak on Christian giving,  
To evaluate my giving motives and habits,  
To grow in my plans for giving,  
for Jesus' sake.  
Amen.

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I / we would like to support the parish by

- Joining the *Parish Giving Scheme* as a new member
- Setting up a new Standing Order
- Increasing my existing regular contribution (through either method)
- Another method (please say how).....

I / we will be contributing each month ..... (*please specify amount*)

I / we have thought carefully about the parish situation and my / our own situation and I / we cannot increase our offering at the moment.

## **My / Our Contact Details**

Full Name(s)

.....

Address

.....

..... Post Code .....

Email ..... Phone.....

I / we agree to these details being held on a database which is available to authorised church staff and volunteers so that you can keep me/us informed about news, events, activities and services in the parish. (You can find out more about how we use your data from our "Data Privacy Notice" which is available from our website or from the Parish Office.)

Signed ..... Date .....

**Thank you!**