

Up to £155 million of additional investment is proposed over the next three years by the Church of England to fund an increase in number of people coming forward to train for the priesthood and support cathedrals and disadvantaged areas, under plans announced today.

***Update on 26.06.19: The AGM of the Church Commissioners for England voted to adopt the recommendations of the Triennium Funding Working Group for 2020- 2022.***

Spending plans for 2020 to 2022 are outlined today by the Church of England to help build on significant progress already made through the programme of Renewal and Reform, aimed at ensuring the Church of England once again becomes a growing church for all people in all places.

Key areas of Renewal and Reform to be funded as part of the proposals include the Church of England's drive to recruit 50% more candidates for ordination, the programme of Strategic Development Funding for major growth programmes in the dioceses and the expansion of the Church's programme of digital outreach.

Over the past two years there has been a 23% increase in the number of people starting training for ordination to the priesthood and the Church of England has embarked on a major programme to spread the Christian message in the digital sphere.

The proposals include:

- Investment in recruiting and training new ministers – helping dioceses to meet the Church-wide goal of increasing the number of ordinands by 50%; and providing funds towards the costs of an increased number of curates;
- Supporting dioceses in making strategic investment in change programmes designed to grow worshipping communities.
- The continuation of specific funding to help dioceses to support mission in communities where income levels are low, places of greatest financial need.

The proposed plans include up to £155m to be made available for additional distributions in 2020-22 to support ministry growth including funds for:

- Up to £63m for Ministry growth to meet the full additional costs of training ordinands throughout the next triennium to help dioceses deliver the Church-wide goal of providing for future ordained ministry through increasing the number of ordinands by 50%. This figure also includes support for dioceses who can apply for funding as a result of an increased number of curates.
- Up to £45m of diocesan sustainability funding, mainly focused on providing funding for dioceses with financial difficulties, wishing to undertake a major programme to provide a platform for the Church's sustainable growth.
- Up to £20m for a social impact investment programme, which will allow the Church (through the Archbishops' Council) to invest directly in schemes, such as those that offer affordable housing and tackle poverty.
- Up to £10m to help develop cathedrals' financial sustainability. Cathedrals facing financial difficulty will also benefit from a commitment of

£10m in support. Cathedral attendance across the country continues to see an increase and this investment will help to protect these buildings of religious and civic importance for future generations.

Smaller sums will also be allocated to a variety of other projects over the triennium.

Today's announcement follows an announcement at the July Synod 2018 that the Church of England is making progress towards its target of a 50% increase in the number of ordinands from the 2016 level, with growing numbers of young people seeking ordination to the priesthood.

Welcoming the announcement, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby said: "Our ongoing and new investments underline our commitment to supporting the growth of God's Kingdom, so that more people can come to know the hope of Jesus Christ in their lives.

"The funding strengthens the ability for the whole of the Church to bear increased witness and extend Christian love and service in the many and varied communities it serves."

The First Church Estates Commissioner, responsible for the Church's investment portfolio, Loretta Minghella said: "Today's announcement takes the growth of the Church into its next phase.

"The Church Commissioners intend, subject to approval, to help meet the costs of delivering the Church-wide goal of increasing ordinands by 50% and to assist dioceses meet the costs of the consequent increase in curates.

"Today's news also includes a range of measures to enhance the financial sustainability of dioceses and cathedrals and provide seed capital for a social impact investment programme.

"Our intention is to continue playing our historic role in sustaining and growing the Church so that, in God's grace, the Good News of the Risen Christ will transform many more thousands of lives."

Canon John Spence, Finance Chair of the Archbishops' Council, said: "The Renewal and Reform agenda is all about the centre of the church supporting our parishes and dioceses in the critical work they are undertaking to bring the joy of Christ into the centre of their communities.

"Achievements in the last five years have been seen in many ways - numbers of ordinands, reach of our digital activity, and the many new strategic projects, to name just a few.

"These funds will enable that progress to be scaled up with sustained impact."

The funding proposals are subject to final approval at the Annual General Meeting of the Church Commissioners on 26 June.

For further information please click [here](#).

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