

First pilot begins as Church of England aims to enable contactless giving in half of all parishes over the next two years.

More than 100 churches across the Diocese of Carlisle will be the first to take part in a national pilot scheme to help encourage contactless giving, making giving easier for congregations. The pilot will help pave the way for a £1.25m investment from the Church of England which will see thousands more churches accept contactless and digital payments over the next two years.

The funding will be used to provide contactless devices for churches. Consideration for connectivity in rural settings has been taken into account, with churches being offered one of two types of device depending on each parish's context.

Two further pilots will take place in other dioceses later this year before the nation-wide roll out begins.

All those churches taking part will be offered training and one-to-one support. Grace Emmett, National Digital Giving Manager for the Church of England, and David Stout, Regional Giving Advisor for the North, are currently touring churches in the county, offering drop-in advice sessions for Cumbrian churches.

Grace explained: "As the trend continues for card payments to outperform payments made using cash, contactless giving will enable visitors and regular churchgoers the ability to quickly and easily support the life and ministry of churches across the Diocese of Carlisle. Experience so far is that contactless donations are, on average, three times the value of cash donations.

"Working with churches in Cumbria allows us to see how contactless giving functions in a range of contexts, from the city of Carlisle to towns and villages. Enabling contactless payments will be ideal for helping tourists and ramblers share generously within the local economy as they visit churches while out and about exploring the Lakes. We're also excited to see how these units support churches in the urban centres of Carlisle, Workington, and Barrow where churches are delivering front line support to their local communities."

The Rev Beverley Lock, Team Rector of St Mary's, Ambleside, said: "We really welcome the opportunity to help lead this pilot and give thanks that Cumbria has been chosen as a pilot area.

"More and more we are seeing people who worship in and visit our churches turning to contactless forms of payment in their day-to-day lives so it's really important that the church is able to offer them the same opportunity to give financially.

"We are so grateful for all the ways in which people give to our mission, both through action and in monetary ways. During the Covid pandemic, we've really missed our regular visitors for their fellowship and encouragement. We hope this will make their generous giving easier."

The Church of England has adopted a National Giving Strategy for 2020-2025 that will invest in different ways to encourage giving to its churches.

This includes expanding advice and guidance for parishes, encouraging digital giving and providing training for clergy and laity.

For further information on the guidance and resources available please visit the [Building a Generous Church](#) section on the Church of England website.

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