

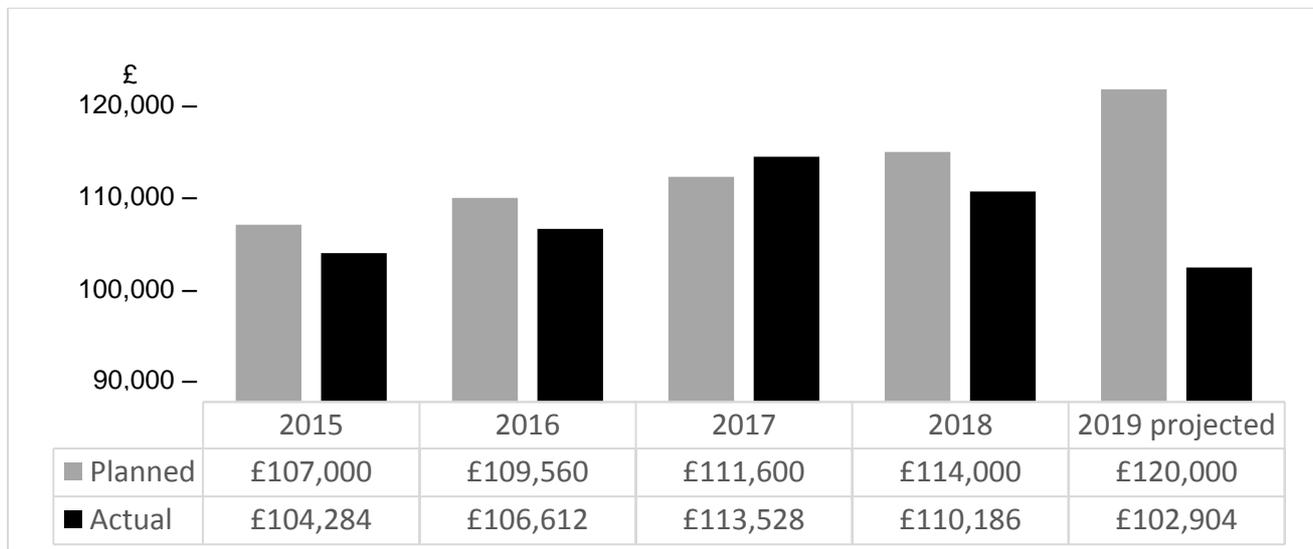
Parish Appeal for St Richard of Chichester and Our Lady of the Assumption Bosham

It is several years since our parish last held an appeal to encourage us to increase our contribution to the offertory collection. Father Tom and the Finance Committee have very carefully reviewed what is required for the essential needs of our parish and diocese, and this document provides some background on the issues to be addressed.

In carrying out this review, and setting the budget for 2019, the Finance Committee was mindful of the Bishop's Pastoral Plan for the parishes and the Diocese, to meet our evangelisation and mission commitments, now and in the coming years.

As a parish we are already very generous in how we contribute, not only financially, but in time, skills and commitment to our mission.

The chart below gives an overview of contributions to the offertory for the last four years, together with the projected total for this year, given where we are so far this year.



You will see that, although the offertory collection has generally kept pace with our plan in recent years, the overall level has not changed very much. Last year there was a decrease and this year, given the outlook, we could be significantly under plan - by about £20,000.

The offertory collection does not usually fund one-off projects: these are often the subject of separate appeals and the response of parishioners to these has always been very generous. However the cumulative shortfall in the offertory over the last four years, although not large, has eaten into our reserve funds, making it more difficult to ensure that we can carry out essential repairs and maintenance.

Other pressures on our finances include levies that all parishes pay to the Diocese to support the mission of our Church, including, for example, funds for the care of retired priests who have given a lifetime of service to our parishes.

What can we all do to help?

To address the shortfall this year, it is estimated that offertory donations, whether in the collection plate, Gift Aid envelopes or bank standing orders, will need to increase by about 20% overall. For example, every £5 today would need to increase to £6 and every £10 to £12 and so on.

That may sound a lot, and it is understood that for some this may not be affordable, but it is hoped that all of us will be able to contribute according to our means.

Please make a positive commitment to increase the amount you give, whether it be weekly or monthly using whatever method you choose.

You could consider setting up a standing order through your bank for a regular amount that you can adjust as your circumstances change. A bank standing order form is included with the information package referred to below.

If you are a UK taxpayer, please consider signing up to the Gift Aid Scheme. Gift Aiding your donation enables the parish to claim an extra 25% on top of your donation, at absolutely no cost to yourself, meaning that every £10 you give is worth £12.50 to the parish. All that is required is that you already pay enough tax to cover the additional 25%.

Many parishioners are already signed up for Gift Aid using weekly envelopes or a regular standing order or both. Currently about 60% of all offertory donations are Gift Aided and that is of enormous benefit to our parish. It would be great if we could get that up to 70% or even 80%.

If you use the envelope scheme, there is no requirement to give a fixed or regular amount. You can give as much as you want, when you want, and the envelopes' contents are confidential until opened in the Parish Office.

You will receive information on Standing Orders and Gift Aid on your way out today. This information, and the forms to use, is also available on the Parish website at: www.strichardschichester.co.uk/giving.

You can contact the Gift Aid Coordinator through the Parish Office or by email to: maurice@pollock.demon.co.uk

From Fr Tom:

I am most grateful to our Finance Committee for their hard work in bringing these new challenges to our attention. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continuing and generous support for our Parish to date. Considering the position we are now facing, we all need to consider prayerfully how we can most effectively contribute to our parish mission.

With my prayers for us all and the success of our appeal.

May God bless you.