



Save the Parish in Parliament

Laity Event

Transcript

Tuesday 15th November 2022



Event Description

Of all the institutions discussed when talking about the Church of England and its present issues, parliament is not one that usually comes up.

Many believe that, whilst the King is the Supreme Governor, the CofE is otherwise independent. This is not so.

Parliament has a role to play.

Therefore, we are delighted to be putting on an event in the Houses of Parliament in November, kindly sponsored and co-run with Chris Loder MP.

The purpose of this event is to invite you, a supporter of Save the Parish, to hear about the issues currently facing Parishes on several fronts, how Parliament can do something about it (and why), and give you the tools you need to help galvanise support.

This event is one of a series of Parliamentary events we are planning for 2022/2023, tailored to a specific part of the Anglican Church:

Laity (this event)
Churchwardens
Clergy

We look forward to seeing you there.

Save the Parish

Save the Parish in Parliament



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Chris Loder MP

First of all, a very good evening to you all. It's great to welcome you all here to the House of Commons. I'm Chris Loder, I'm the Member of Parliament for West Dorset. In my spare time I'm a Churchwarden as well. And I'm truly delighted to welcome you here to have this very, very important discussion. See, the purpose of me inviting Save the Parish is so my colleagues and I can hear from you.

The members of the Church of England, and the Save the Parish Campaign. So, we can hear directly from you about some of the concerns you have. I'm not going to say much more because it's for me an honour to be here, to listen to hear what you have to say because we have an important role to play here in terms of legislation in this country.

So, it is my great pleasure to hand over to Marcus Walker.



The Rev'd Marcus Walker

Thank you very much indeed, Chris, and a huge thanks on our behalf to Chris Loder for arranging this meeting and the series of meetings that this is really the first of- building up to a meeting on the 25th of April where we're hoping to invite as many Members as possible of both Houses to a meeting for a full-scale briefing.

And if you can go forth at the end of the day and let them know, that will do much good. It's been just over a year ago day since, I suppose you could say, my blood pressure was raised by reading the report of the denouncement of parishes, of being places that are too costly: that the Church was being held back by old buildings, stipends, and long

costly theological education.

That triggered me, to try to see if there are other people who are just outraged by this and who realize that so many of the parishes which have built up the Church of England, and their communities, are now at risk.

So many have been merged. So many have been closed.

So many have been put under the custody of a priest who can't with the best will in the world can't get around [all their churches] in the time that they have- so few hours, so few days. That has risen up a movement, that really is bottom up, that really is a grassroots movement. So many people got in touch with me that my inbox was really overloaded. So many others who are much cleverer than I have done some seriously hard work. Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, who will be speaking to us in a bit, has put together a community of people who can count, and can count well. Proper accountants, proper bankers, proper auditors, who've gone through every single account of every single diocese, and of the National Church, and of the Church Commissioners to see where the money comes from and where the money is going.

And where the money is going wrong. And he's going to be speaking in a bit about the fact that the money that is so often used as the excuse for closing and merging churches is there, if the National Church wants it.

The Rev'd Canon Angela Tilby, who many of you will have heard on Radio 4 or read in the Church Times and other publications is going to talk about this treasure that we have. The parish that's been gifted to us over many, many, many centuries. And why it's such a crucial part of our national life.

These are the people who are talking to us today. I'm delighted that they're here and I'm going to invite Angela to take over from me and to give us a moment to reflect on how these parishes that we all love so much are under threat. Angela.



The Rev'd Canon Angela Tilby

We're here tonight to sound an alarm about the mounting crisis of power and polity in our national Church. *Ecclesia Anglicana*, the English Church, has served the English people since before the Reformation. The whole notion of 'Englishness' is connected to the Church, as the historian Bede insisted as far back as the 8th century.

The laws of the Church are part of the laws of the land, which is why Parliament has an interest in the life of the Church and why the Church has an interest in Parliament – an interest which goes beyond the fact that senior bishops sit in the House of Lords. The role of the Church of England today, as spelt out in 2012 by the Queen, 'Is not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of other religions. Instead...it is to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country.' And it can do that because it is 'woven into the fabric of this country...' and, because

of that 'has helped to produce a better society.'

To be 'woven in' surely means to be visible, to be a familiar part of the physical and social landscape of the country. It means a church building, a clergy residence, perhaps a churchyard, a school, visible signs of the communion of the living and the dead.

Last Sunday I took a Remembrance Sunday service in a Hampshire village in the Meon Valley with many connections to the Armed Services. Drive through the village and you can have no doubt that the church building is the heart of it. In the Church on Sunday and at the War Memorial there were many middle-aged and elderly, but also school children, young people, service personnel, police, local councillors, perhaps almost two hundred people. The last post and reveille were played brilliantly by a saxophonist who lived in the village.

The churchwardens and parochial church council have been told they will never again have a vicar. They are about to be amalgamated with three neighbouring parishes. The savings have been passed on to the diocese. They are now reliant on visitors like me to do the major services in the absence of any local oversight or pastoral care. The people feel abandoned. They have been abandoned.

This is the rural church, but the pattern of church visibility has also been the pattern in urban and suburban areas. Thanks to our church-building-forebears clergy residence, school and church building are still visibly woven into many of our urban neighbourhoods. The church is still visible on high streets and housing estates, near tower blocks and sprawl. And all this is the parish system, offering a continuity of presence, prayer, and pastoral care.

Yet over the last twenty years the Church of England has turned in on itself. No longer does it see its role as serving the nation through its parishes but more as ensuring its own survival through centralisation.

This began in 1999 with the creation of the Archbishops' Council, intended to simplify the church's decision-making processes. Sounds like a good idea. But simplification of a complex institution can lead, as you know all too well, to whole constituencies being silenced. Today there are multiple examples of the systematic undermining of the parish system by the forty-two dioceses of the Church.

Our parishes are very ancient. Many go back to pre-Reformation times. After the Reformation, the Puritans insisted that the practice of

holding benefices in plurality was stopped. It took a long time, but it happened. The principle of particular people ministering in particular places became the norm. A priest who lives in a community, who is known, and who knows his or her flock whether saints or sinners. A church building where worship is offered, daily and weekly and the bell is rung, so everyone knows they are remembered. Where the newly born, those getting married, and the deceased are connected through time and memory.

Our church leaders believe that their best efforts should be in trying to reverse decline. This must be right, but the way they are going about it is failing badly although an estimated £176,000,000 has gone into the attempt, to plant new churches, to prioritise the young and to look to fewer, big, well-staffed churches often planted across parish boundaries as the source of renewal. It was hoped that these attempts would produce 90,000 new churchgoers, but so far, the result has been a modest 13,000. But the cost of those 13,000 souls, welcome as they are, has been high for parish churches.

This is because the dioceses levy a tax on parishes – called parish share – a proportion of which is meant to fund parish ministry.

But the dioceses have not played fair. They've hoarded the money, deliberately starving even successful parishes of resources, grouping them arbitrarily into mega parishes, and mission areas, depriving them of priests, selling off their parsonages. All this sets the clergy and other ministers at one remove from their communities.

So how does this reorganisation work? Well first you join your neighbouring parish and share a priest. Then three more parishes are added. The spare vicarages are sold. Then the priest moves on and is replaced by a half-timer. Then two more parishes are added. Then you lose your half-time priest, and you are told you are not producing enough money and you can't even advertise for a house-for-duty, voluntary priest because the diocese is reorganising yet again. Who can minister in five, twelve and even up to twenty-seven places? Current diocesan strategies demoralise the lay people who care for their church, who run the Sunday schools, polish the brass, and wash the linen, greet visitors, serve on parochial church councils, manage the money.

The dioceses judge parishes by their zeal, their numbers, their finances. Their attitude was encapsulated by John Spence, Chair of

the Archbishops' Council Finance Committee who stated: 'We will no longer fund failure.' Failure here means small, means struggling, means poor. And his words have sunk into the diocesan culture of the Church.

Here's a confession. For five years I was the Ministerial Development Advisor in the Diocese of Oxford – a diocesan bureaucrat. We worked from offices on an industrial estate in Kidlington. We thought from there that we had an overview, that we could launch in and tell the clergy how to do their job, wag our fingers at them for not raising enough money, insist they develop plans for mission which it was for us to approve or disapprove and threaten them with merger and closure if they failed. I saw all this at first hand. I was part of it.

But then I came to see the cost in the deteriorating mental health of the clergy, the mutinous despair of lay people and relentless growth of diocesan bureaucracy, the energy released when a daring parish simply refused to pay its share. When I was in Oxford the Bishop had a press officer. Now there is a whole Department of Communications. There were Archdeacons. Now there are Assistant Archdeacons making petty rulings about decisions that parish priests used to make for themselves. Look in the Church Times and you'll see jobs advertised for all kinds of glamorous-sounding and well-paid posts, 'mission focused transition enabler' for example, while parish posts are being suspended and trained curates can't get jobs.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York claim to love the parish. They say there is no centralised plan to change the system, that each diocese is free to create its own plan for ministry and resources. But the actions of the dioceses belie their words of reassurance. The diocese has come to think that it is the Church, and that the parish is merely the local outlet for a vision which the diocese itself has generated. It is a business model, not a pastoral one. Hence the spate of pious little straplines which dioceses produce to try to ensure all everyone is on message. Pray, love serve, changing lives, changed lives, God's church for God's world, creative kingdom engagement. Loving, living, learning. Faithful, confident, joyful.

But you can't sustain a national church on adjectives. And you can't inspire a parish church on centrally generated ideology.

Anyone who knows the C of E and loves it, for all its faults, knows that the C of E is in its very essence a political and theological compromise.

Parishes hold different values and priorities. That's part of the point. If your vicar is barking mad, or preaches heresy, there is an alternative just across the parish boundary. And you can come back when he or she moves on.

What is proposed in many dioceses is to cut the link between priests and communities, to operate a kind of carpool, Deliveroo ministry in which clergy are bussed in to take a service now and then if you're lucky. Don't ever expect to have a priest you know take a funeral for your loved one. As some of you may know (and I have experienced myself recently) many undertakers are doing all they can to prevent people opting for clergy led funerals and the oh-so-busy-racing-around-the-diocese clergy are helping them because they are never available. The clergy have less and less to do with death – which leaves us all bereaved.

The centralising agenda is already being worked out in detail. There are measures even now being prepared which will make it much easier to close churches, to disregard the views of local communities and cut clergy posts by diktat. This is the autocracy of Central Planning. And the tragedy is we know it doesn't work.

In the only systematic research done into church growth it has been shown that growth follows front line presence. Priest, building, people. This is what attracts people to feel that the church is for them, that someone, a real person, cares, prays, is visible. That the church building holds memories of the past and is open to the future. The fields are ripe unto harvest, as it says in the Gospels, but the workers are sitting behind their computers.

So here is the paradox. Current C of E policy is actually driving the decline it seeks to halt. It is contributing to the demolition of community, to the breakdown of that vocation to which the Queen's 2012 address calls us, and to the hollowing out of the C of E into a narrow little cult, run on business principles where decisions are made by well-paid employees in their remote offices and the people are abandoned by those who should be caring for them, praying with them, and giving hope.

We are going to need that care and that hope in the economic and social crises that lie ahead. Please ask questions. Please contact your MP. Please help us to explore alternatives. Please help save the parish and the Church of England. And England.

Chris Loder MP

Sir James Burnell-Nugent needs no real introduction from me, I'm sure he's going to share himself all of his considerable strengths and insights into the financial systems of The Church of England. James I'm delighted that you're here to speak, and I'd like to hand over to you.

Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent

Plasw see addendum for all diagrams used during this section

Angela thank you very much indeed. Absolutely excellent introduction. As Marcus said, at the beginning, I've been asked to talk about how does money flow around the Church of England: where does it come from, and where does it go to? And the description that Angela gives of a Deliveroo church, I think is so telling; it's not press one for a pizza and press two for a burger, it's- sadly- press one for funeral, press two for a wedding press three for pastoral care. That's the sort of Church where we're heading for.

And I hope I can explain that this is absolutely not necessary on financial grounds, which is one of the arguments used for doing this. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave a very useful quote- I know the clergy here like to start a sermon with a quote from the Bible. So I thought I'd like to start with a quote from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"We've got a lot of money," he said in an interview to the Church Times.

"It's not always in the right place. In fact, it's usually not in the right place, actually." Well, I'm about to support him by demonstrating that it's not in the right place. This is the diagram which you've got in front of you and on the screen. There's a lot of numbers in this. You don't need to remember them. I'm going to simplify them down into some very fundamental points.

This diagram shows what accountants call the Consolidated Accounts of the Church of England. It is as if the CofE was a single enterprise- which we know it's not- it's 42 dioceses, 7 National Church Institutions and so on. But if it was a single enterprise like a big corporate, at the end of the financial year, it would aggregate the accounts of all its offices and branches into a single set of accounts.



The other point I want to make is, this diagram and all the numbers in it have been shown to John Spence and the finance team in Church House across the road, so I think it's fair to say that he was in broad agreement with both the way the way money flows around and the numbers themselves.

But I said I'm going to break it down so it's not too difficult to follow and build it up. Where better to start but from the bottom- from parishes. There are about 12,000 parishes in the Church of England, and there are about 7,700 stipendiary clergy. The giving by parishioners across the whole country amounted in 2020 to £925 million, call it £1 billion.

There's £1 billion coming in from the bottom, coming in to the Church of England through parishes. About 2/3rds of that - £600 million - is actually spent within the parishes on maintenance, upkeep, utilities and so on. And £318 million in 2020 was passed up the dioceses in - I hardly dare mention the word - in the form of Parish Share, which

we all love to hate. The dioceses then pass most of that back (here's probably some inefficiency there) in the form of Parish Ministry. A health warning here: every diocese defines Parish Ministry differently, so it's extremely difficult to compare whether utilities are included or not or whatever it may be.

But these are aggregate figures from dioceses own accounts. Another £54 million- this is going out of the diocese, goes to pensions for currently serving clergy. And another £129 million comes in from Glebe Land and other investments, most of which of course, originated in the parishes. So this is the flow- on the bottom hand of the diagram- between parishes and dioceses.

Now let's go to the top. The Church Commissioners in 2020, had investments of £9.2 billion. Last year it was valued at £10.1 billion- that generated £320 million in 2020. Parliament has mandated for certain expenditures to come from this directly for cathedrals, bishops and pensions.

The more discretionary money comes to the Archbishops' Council, which Angela mentioned. The Archbishops' Council now describes itself in their annual report as the executive body of the Church of England - Parliamentarians need to be aware that it is no such thing. The Archbishops' Council then passes money down to the dioceses, down two streams which are formally divided into two, which one could call pro-parish funding and strategic funding for strategic programmes.

So that's the flow from the top. So it's top-down and bottom-up. The funding of the Church of England that is essentially a dumbbell. It comes from the two ends- it come from the top from Church Commissioners and it comes from the bottom from parishes.

So the first thing would say to the Archbishop of Canterbury is: he's right. There's plenty of money. £1.4 billion is a lot of money, and it's plenty more money compared to the sort of sums that you, me and my wife will be raising on cake stands and coffee mornings - It's a lot of money. And a very important point is that it's all parish money.

The money that the Church Commissioners has, which is a whole separate historical topic, is money ceded by Parliament for parishes. The money that was held in Glebe land and so on is parish money, held by dioceses, but it's for stipends, so it's parish money. So from the top it's parish money and from the bottom it's parish money. So

there's a frightful black hole in the middle behind that red box, which are the dioceses. It's very confusing, I think when dioceses say they are handing out some new money. I'm sure we've all read in various newsletters from the diocese: It's just funded a new, generous giving programme of £X to Y number of parishes in the diocese. They're not paying for it, you're paying for it.

Dioceses are a consumer of money. They don't generate resources, they waste resources.

So that's where the money comes from. Money coming into dioceses from parish share and Glebe endowments was £447 million in the year 2020; dioceses are paying out, quite simply, for stipends and pensions, to parishes £383 million. So there's £84 million more going in than is coming out. Where's it going? Can you guess? Bureaucrats.

Let me give you a couple of examples: in the Diocese of Blackburn, 26 bureaucrats in the diocesan office and 176 stipendiary clergy – that's five clergy to every bureaucrat – in Exeter Diocese, where I come from, actually there's nine clergy for every bureaucrat. Both Exeter and Blackburn are in surplus. Let's turn to Leicester, where they have 74 bureaucrats 'supporting' 156 stipendiary clergy, which is a ratio of one to two, so there's one bureaucrat in the office to support every two stipendiary clergy. We see similar figures in the Oxford Diocese, and guess what? They're in deficit.

Truro has the same: one bureaucrat for every two clergy, and they're in deficit. The answer is blindingly obvious – halve the number of bureaucrats in every diocese in deficit, which will release £42 million across the Dioceses, which is more than enough to clear all the deficits of all the dioceses.

So when we hear, "there is no alternative", there is a very clear alternative, which is to reduce the number of bureaucrats in diocesan offices and increase the number of clergy on the frontlines. Leicester is about to lower the number of stipendiary clergy by 20 full-time clergy, and hire 20 full-time operations directors, who will probably be paid more.

So that's my first key point here, that there is an alternative.

The next point is if we turn to money coming out of the Church Commissioners' pot: I mentioned that money flows down, and some goes off to the side, out to pensions etc., but just over £100 million flows down from the Archbishop's Council to the Dioceses. This is in

two forms, it's camouflaged massively by the business language that is used at this level of the Church, but fundamentally the money on the left, is parish funding but doesn't get anywhere near the parishes, it's kept by the Dioceses. There's also a funding stream for curates, where dioceses say they can't afford curates. That's what I call "pro-parish money". Coming down on the right, is so-called "strategic funding". This is what I call "anti-parish money", this is money that is paying for resource churches, that pull people away from parishes, particularly in rural districts. It's the £177 million that Angela referred to, that has so far produced 12,000 new disciples, when probably the real number is half that because of people moving church.

The funding for dioceses to change the parish structure to the new, huge, mission areas of 20, 25, 30 parishes, that's being funded coming down on the right hand side of this diagram. Now, is this cast in stone? No, it's not. The funding cycle for the Archbishop's Council runs on three-year cycles. The current three-year period finishes this year and strategic funding averaged out at about £50 million per year. The next three-year period, 2023 to 2025, it's double that.

The amount of money in the next three years going on the right hand side, on "anti-parish money", will double; the amount of money, of "pro-parish money", will stay the same. This is a staggering apportioning of resources. This is what the Archbishop's Council is doing, it is doubling the money for anti-parish schemes, and it is flatlining the more traditional parish funding.

So, again, this can be changed. We don't have to accept this. There's all sorts of constitutional issues behind this; there are only eleven people on a committee deciding this, General Synod does not get a vote on it. These are all parts of the process that we can tackle. But the claim that there is no alternative - well there is an alternative, which is to change the balance between those two flows of money.

There are two clear, discretionary things that the Church of England can do: cut the bureaucrats and increase the number of clergy; and they could move money across from "strategic schemes" to parish funding.

Here are my points to sum up this: first of all, this pot of money from the Archbishop's Council of £1.4 billion, which all in one way or another is either for parishes or originates from parishes. Second, Dioceses have a surplus of money; we're paying into Diocese £84 million more

than they need, and it's being spent on bureaucracy. And, finally, the spending on "strategic funding" is going to double. This clearly demonstrates that parishes are not a priority in terms of the financial flows. So, all that needs to be done, to save the parish is a rebalancing. The Church of England needs to rebalance between bureaucracy and clergy, and needs to rebalance between anti-parish schemes and pro-parish schemes. And with the energy and effort of the Save the Parish Campaign, I think we can achieve that.

Thank you.

Chris Loder MP

The next section will be delivered by me before I briefly hand you over to Marcus to wrap up; but just very briefly from me to outline the Parliamentary process that we have here today, and just to very briefly highlight the sort of things that are available to us.

The things that I've heard from you this evening, there is so much, but there are a few things that I want to tell you that I've heard loud and clear. Clergy wellbeing; corporate takeover; "Deliveroo church;" social fabric; I could go on, but to reiterate what Angela had to say, we can't sustain a church run on adjectives, and that's an important point.

In terms of the machinery and relationship that Parliament has, we'll be speaking once a month in the House of Commons, one this Thursday coming and one every four to five weeks, at 10:10, we have 20 minutes when MPs can ask the Church commissioners' representative to the House of Commons questions about church matters. Andrew Selous is the current second-stage Church commissioner, so he's an MP and he answers on the Church's behalf the questions which he is asked and he tells me that, once upon a time, he struggled to fill his 20 minutes with questions, but now we're lucky if we get in because there are so many questions for him. I think if we need more time to debate these important matters for the Church.

So that's one of methods of holding to account the Church of England. Is it very thorough, and is it very productive? I'm not sure it is; if you watch on BBC Parliament at 10:10 on a Thursday, you'll be able to make your own mind up.

When General Synod finishes its work in the legislative process, it then puts forward its measures to the Ecclesiastical committee – you can

Google the details. It is made up of fifteen members of the House of Lords, and fifteen members of the House of Commons. It's currently chaired by Baroness Butler-Sloss, from the House of Lords. Its role is to consider the merits of proposed legislation from the General Synod. And it advises Parliament on whether it has merit or not.

It decides whether such a measure or proposal is expedient or not expedient. A bit where the process has fallen down is that, if the Ecclesiastical council sees it as expedient, or even if they see it as not expedient, that is the point where the process here falls down. Because if there are enough MPs who disagreed, we could actually, what's called, "pray against it." And that's basically where the measure will be brought to the House of Commons for debate, and there will be a vote on that measure in the House of Commons as there is for any legislative activities that the government would bring forward.

So, that is where the system has fallen down because, when the Ecclesiastical committee has finished its work, Parliament hasn't really had much of an interest. And of course, that ultimately is where your representation, looking at it from a constituency-MP relationship, falls down. The other reason is, you probably wouldn't have known that process either, I suspect, and therefore you wouldn't have been able to lobby your MP, if that was the case.

But we shouldn't ought to think that one MP to pray against something is going to work. It needs a considerable number of MPs in order to go to the Speaker of the House of Commons and say, "we wish to debate this."

There was a discussion on the appointment of Bishops earlier. Parliament does not have a role in the appointment of Bishops. The process is led by the Church of England, there was an advisor who has changed quite recently, an Archbishop's advisor who advises on Bishop appointments, and when the two candidates go down to the Lord Chancellor, and then they're taken to the Monarch. I may be incorrect on that.

(Marcus: In theory there are two names, one of them is stamped, and if for whatever reason that name is rejected, both names are then withdrawn.)

So even though Parliament does not have a role to play, as the process is, broadly speaking secret, you don't really have a chance to lobby the Lord Chancellor to say you don't like that person or that name. That's

partly because the process should take care of itself and discern the right person.

We've got some friends here from the palace – and the point I wanted to make is a very serious one because some of us have attempted to engage with the Archbishop of Canterbury on these matters, for quite some time. As of today, my letter to the Archbishop asking to meet with him along with a number of my colleagues has not been responded to, and therefore I can only really conclude that the Archbishop chooses not to have a dialogue.

The only reason I mention this is because some of you may read in the newspapers that the Bishops call on MPs to do things. Particularly about political matters of the day. Let me make perfectly clear to you, no Bishop or Archbishop has ever written to me about a political matter of the day. They write to the Guardian, or to other national newspapers, calling on me and expecting me to read that newspaper.

The reason I mention that, is because if we are to make real progress here, that relationship between Parliament and Lambeth Palace has got to get much better. And I hope that that letter I sent in June in which a number of my colleagues wanted to meet with the Archbishops, will be responded to positively, so we can have this conversation. Because we would like to have that conversation in relative privacy, rather than through emails.

That's the final point I'd like to make.

Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent

I'd just like to make a couple of points to wrap up the finance section. First of all, the statistics that I gave you, ratios and so on for some Dioceses, Truro and so on, they are now all available on the Save the Parish website, we've broken it down by every Diocese, and strongly suggest that you read that in preparation for any Diocesan Synod. Try and keep up the pressure, "why have you got 172 bureaucrats" and so on. It is worth being aware of these numbers, they are available in an easy format to comprehend.

The second point I'd like to make is that, going back to what the Archbishop said about there being plenty of money but it's very often in the wrong places, I described two places where the money could be moved. One is rebalancing between bureaucrats and clergy, and the other is between so-called "strategic programmes" and more direct

support for parishes.

The shift that is required to make a dramatic difference is about 3% of the £1.4 billion total of the Church of England. It is a tiny amount, so really, it is a quite small adjustment, and it would make a fantastic difference.

Thank you.

The Rev'd Marcus Walker

Thank you, Chris, again, for hosting this evening. Thank you all very much for coming along tonight. We've heard a lot that, I hope, on the one hand, gives us a renewed sense that this fight is winnable, and on the other hand, is of great concern and anxiety and worry and personal pain.

And so, in order to avoid being accused of being “doomsters and gloomsters,” I'd like to end on some positive notes.

Firstly, the single most watched event in the entirety of human history was an Anglican liturgy in the traditional language! Is that nothing something we can all be proud of? When Her Majesty the Queen died, parishes around the country leapt into action. There were places where people could go and pray to share their respects. There were services, held at almost a moment's notice, where people were singing and crying at the same time.

It was amazing, and that was a parish at its best. It was a community, in a community building, at its most local.

The second thing to bear in mind is, when we are looking at James' figures, and see the £1 billion that parishes generate, to note that parish giving – that's *everyday people* in their parishes – has increased by 60% in real terms over the last thirty years. So often, in this debate, there has been an implication that you're not doing well enough, you hadn't been working hard enough, it's all your fault, but actually a decreasing number of people has produced a *vastly* increased amount of money.

That is something to be proud of, even as there are serious questions about how it is spent.

We are being listened to and there are a awful lot of people working in Church House in Lambeth Palace who do care about the parish and want to engage with us. And it's only by doing what we're doing that this can be changed. And the change, as James has said, is small, but it

makes all the difference in the world. And there is hope because there *is* an alternative.

Now, what is it you can do? The biggest thing is, to write to your MP, and to encourage them to come to the meeting that we're going to be holding *for* MPs on the 25th of April. There will be an email coming out that you can pass on, and perhaps there will be a parish that your MP knows about; but send them an email, and ask them to contact Chris to let him know that they're coming.

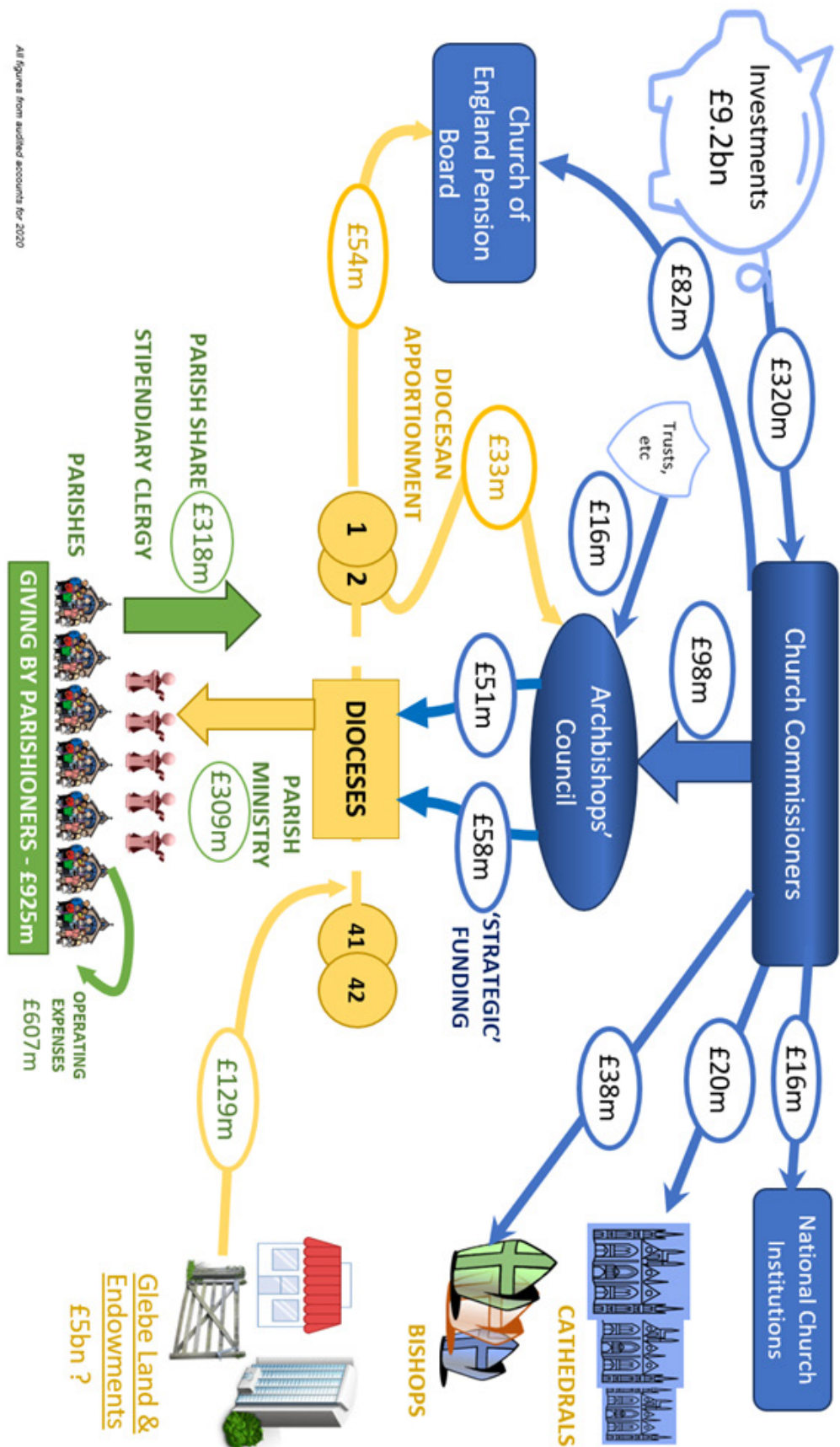
That's the big thing; if we can stir up noise here, we can stir up the conversation and the dialogue and we can stir up Parliament from its slumbers, to start taking a real interest in the Church of England, which it governs, once more. There is hope.

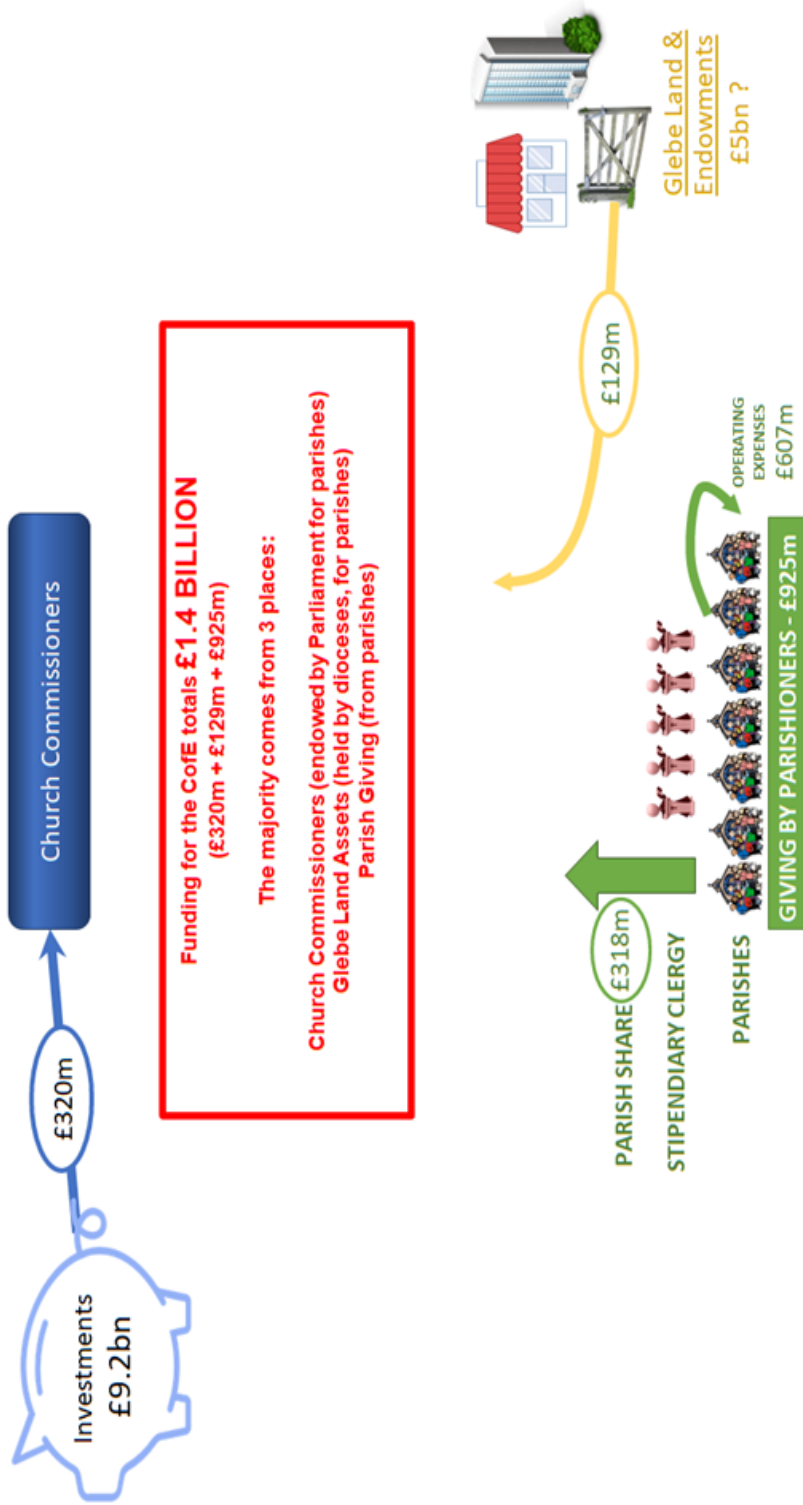
Thank you all very much indeed.



Addendum - Diagrams

To accompany section by Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent

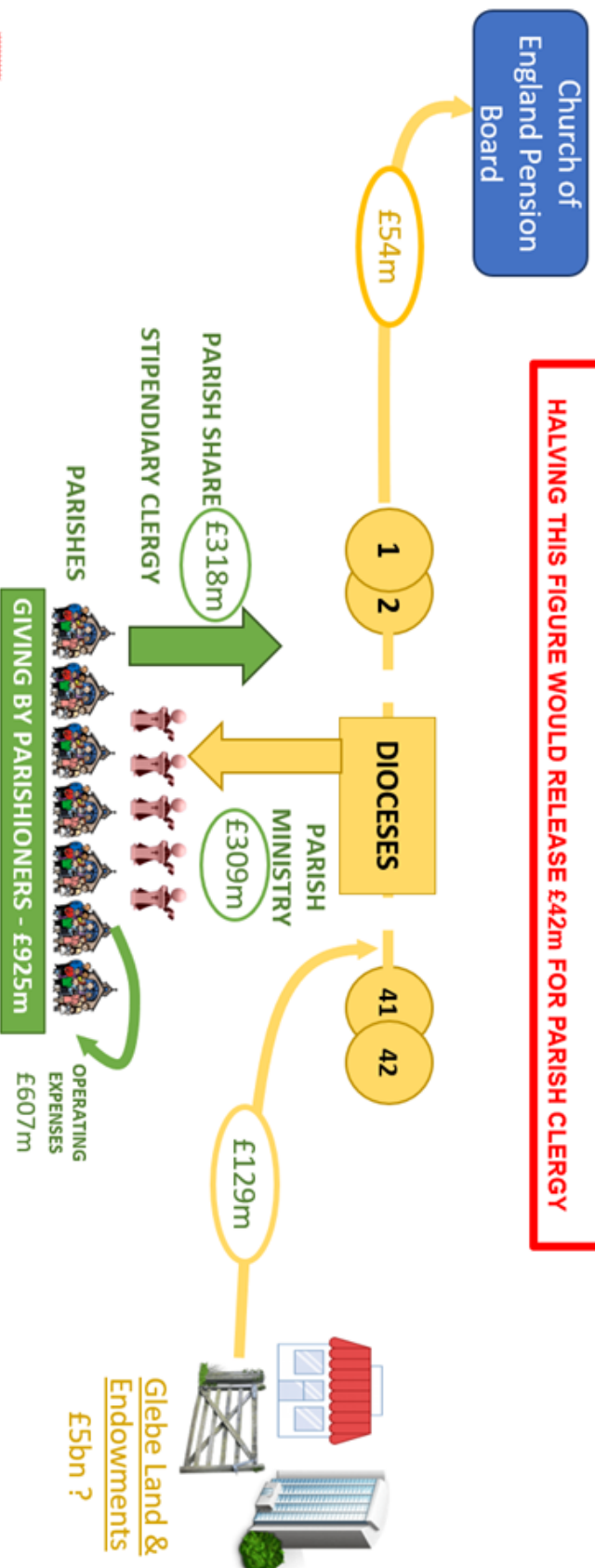




THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

Dioceses' income from parish share plus glebe endowments - £447 million
 Dioceses' paying out on parish ministry and pensions - £363 million
 So the difference - **£84 million (19%) OF PARISH MONEY** - is going into dioceses' bureaucracy and projects.

HALVING THIS FIGURE WOULD RELEASE £42m FOR PARISH CLERGY



2000-22

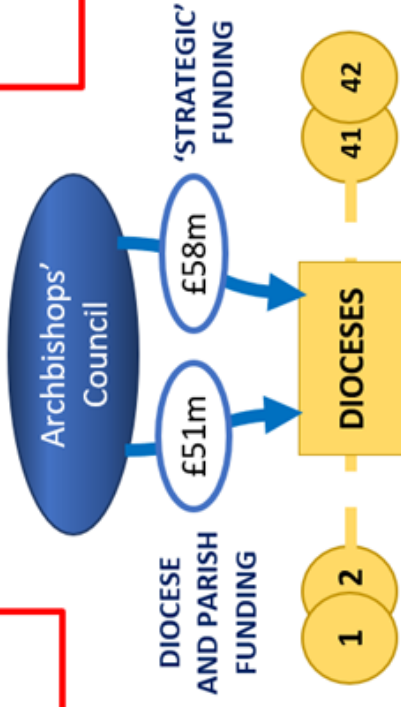
'STRATEGIC' FUNDING

£50 million per annum

2023-25

"STRATEGIC NATIONAL INVESTMENT to enable the bold outcomes and strategic priorities of the Vision & Strategy to be realised ..."

£97 million per annum



'STRATEGIC' FUNDING IS DOUBLING

PARISH FUNDING IS STATIC

ON THIS TRAJECTORY, IN 2023-25 THINGS WILL GET WORSE FOR PARISHES