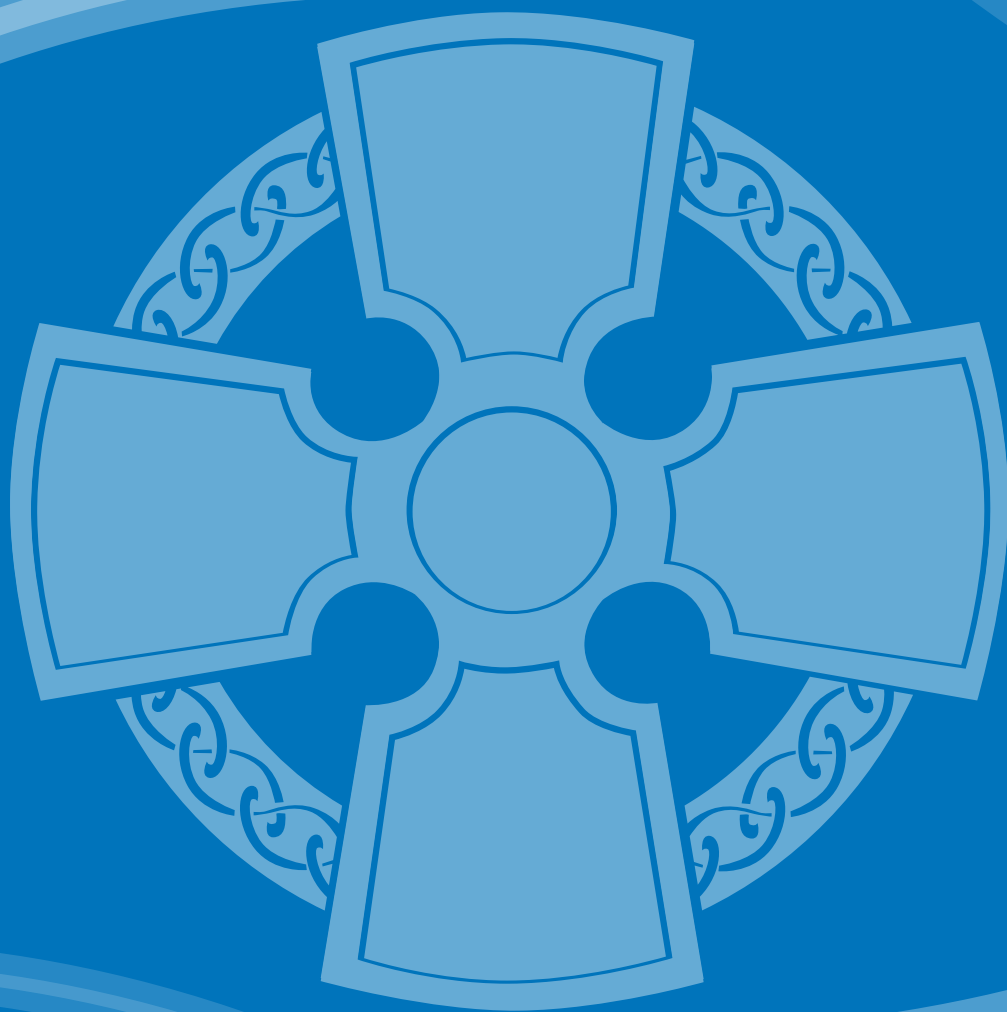


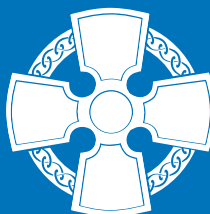
# The Church in Wales

## Membership and Finances

### **2015**

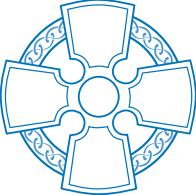


YR EGLWYS  
YNG NGHYMRU



THE CHURCH  
IN WALES

Y R EGLWYS  
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THE CHURCH  
IN WALES

Welcome to the Church in Wales Membership and Finances report for 2015.

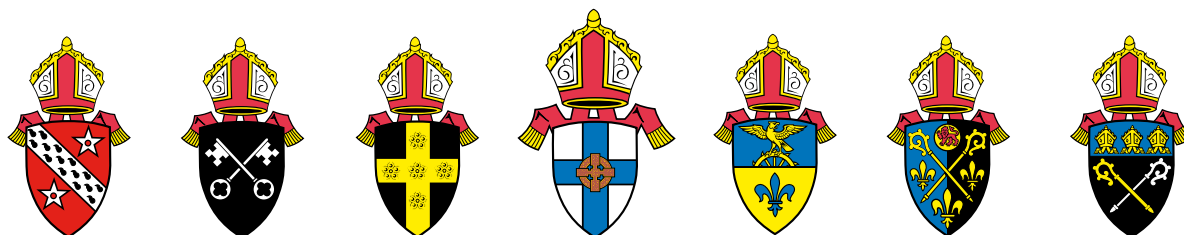
This year's report is based upon a 94% return from Church in Wales parishes. We are grateful to clergy and parish officers – and staff from diocesan offices – for ensuring that questionnaires were completed and returned in time for this report to be prepared for the Governing Body. This is also the first year in which it has been possible to complete questionnaires online and 170 (out of a total of 813) parishes chose to do so. We hope to continue to improve this new facility, and that as we do so, that the number of parishes using it will increase.

The encouragingly high level of response to the Membership and Finances survey means that these statistics can be used with confidence to plan for the Church's future at provincial, diocesan and parish or ministry area levels. It also means that we must take these figures seriously, and be open and honest in interpreting what they are telling us as a church.

The figures this year confirm a long-term trend: membership is down, particularly amongst young people; financial figures remain sound. But people are the lifeblood of the church, not money: without people there is no church. Since 1990 our average adult Sunday attendance has fallen by nearly 54%.

Church members are continuing to give sacrificially. However, there are clear signs that even though fewer people are giving more, this is not providing the funds needed for parishes to be adventurous in mission, or to take on exciting new projects. Total parish expenditure has now fallen for five years in a row, and there can be little doubt that over time this lack of expenditure will affect parishes' ability to be effective in mission.

This is the context in which we are currently working, and in which we must take decisions about the future mission, ministry and resourcing of the Church in Wales. Dioceses are already taking bold steps with their respective mission and ministry strategies, and there are signs that some may be starting to bear fruit. We should also recognise and celebrate that we have many growing parishes and that this provides a good basis for more widespread growth.



## Membership

**Table I: Participation in Parish Life in 2015 and 2014.**

		2015	2014	2015 - 2014	%
Communicants	Easter	<b>51,435</b>	52,021	-586	-1
	Pentecost	<b>28,721</b>	30,282	-1,561	-5
	Christmas	<b>49,972</b>	51,284	-1,312	-3
	Trinity III	<b>27,821</b>	28,921	-1,100	-4
Average Attendance - over 18	Sundays	<b>29,019</b>	30,424	-1,405	-5
	Weekdays only	<b>3,896</b>	3,997	-101	-3
Average Attendance - under 18		<b>5,827</b>	6,158	-331	-5
Electoral Roll		<b>46,604</b>	47,086	-482	-1
Baptisms		<b>6,727</b>	6,782	-55	-1
Confirmations		<b>1,105</b>	1,036	69	7
Weddings		<b>2,848</b>	3,015	-167	-6
Funerals		<b>6,446</b>	6,396	50	1

The concept of “membership” in the Church in Wales has always proved difficult to define, with the claim to the Cure of Souls within each parish sitting more easily with the Anglican tradition in Wales than membership lists. The number of Easter communicants has traditionally been the high point of attendance figures, with average Sunday attendance providing a more reliable guide to regular levels of participation. In addition, Electoral Roll figures have been used to record the number in each community with a demonstrable connection to the work of the parish.

### The Picture for 2015 compared with 2014

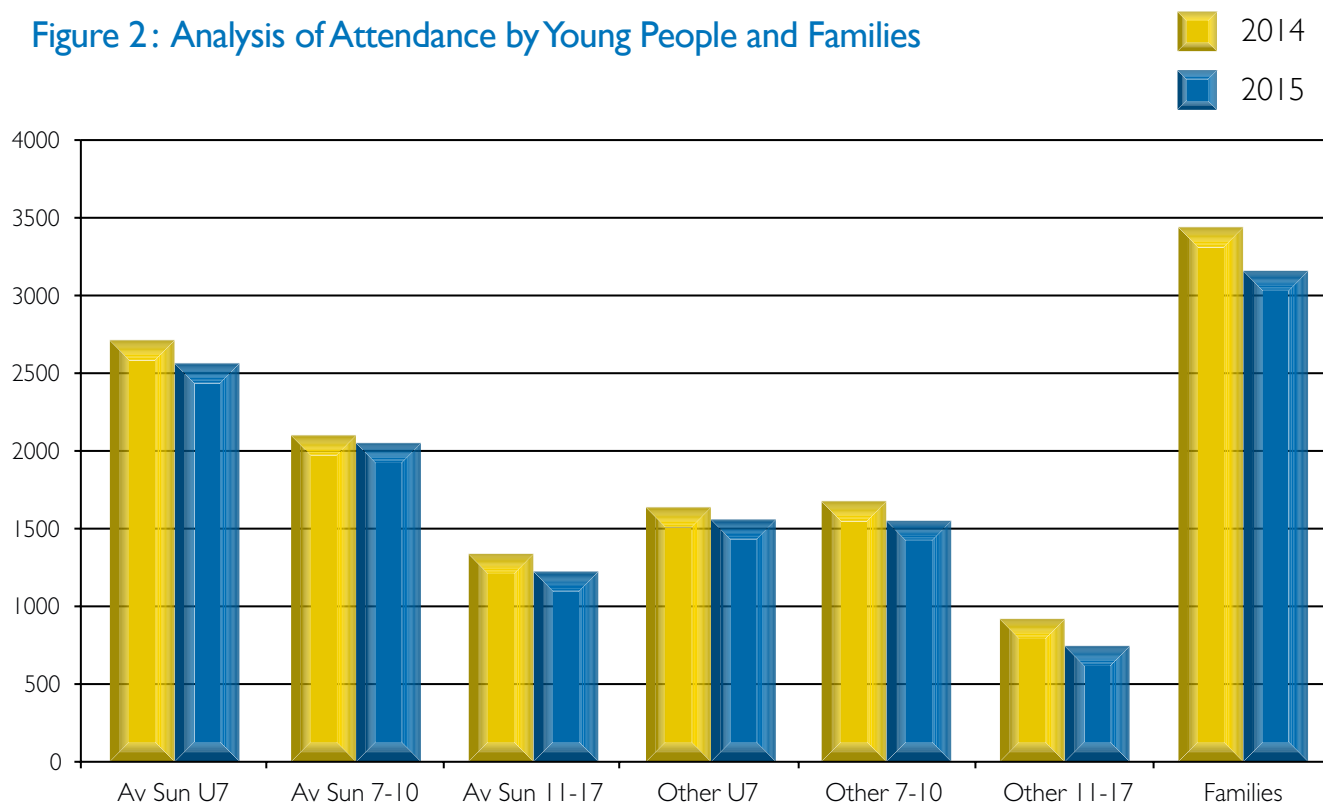
Table I sets out a comparison of key attendance figures for 2015 and 2014.

The membership figures in last year’s report had suggested that the trend of decline had slowed or been reversed in a number of key areas. However, all measures of attendance demonstrate substantial decline between 2014 and 2015, with average adult Sunday attendance and average attendance of under 18s falling at a rate above the longer-term trend. The average Sunday attendance is now less than 1% of the population of Wales.

The number of occasional offices carried out tends to fluctuate from one year to the next: the number of confirmations fell by 15% 2013/14, but increased by 7% 2014/15. Similarly, over the same two periods the number of weddings stayed the same (2013/14) and fell by 6% (2014/15).

Average attendance and communicant figures do not provide a full picture of participation in church life in Wales. In recent years we have collected figures for attendances at other major acts of worship not covered by the traditional categories above. Such additional services, which include civic services, family services, Remembrance, Carol and Christingle services, registered a total attendance of some 206,000 in 2015, compared with 152,000 in 2014.

Figure 2: Analysis of Attendance by Young People and Families

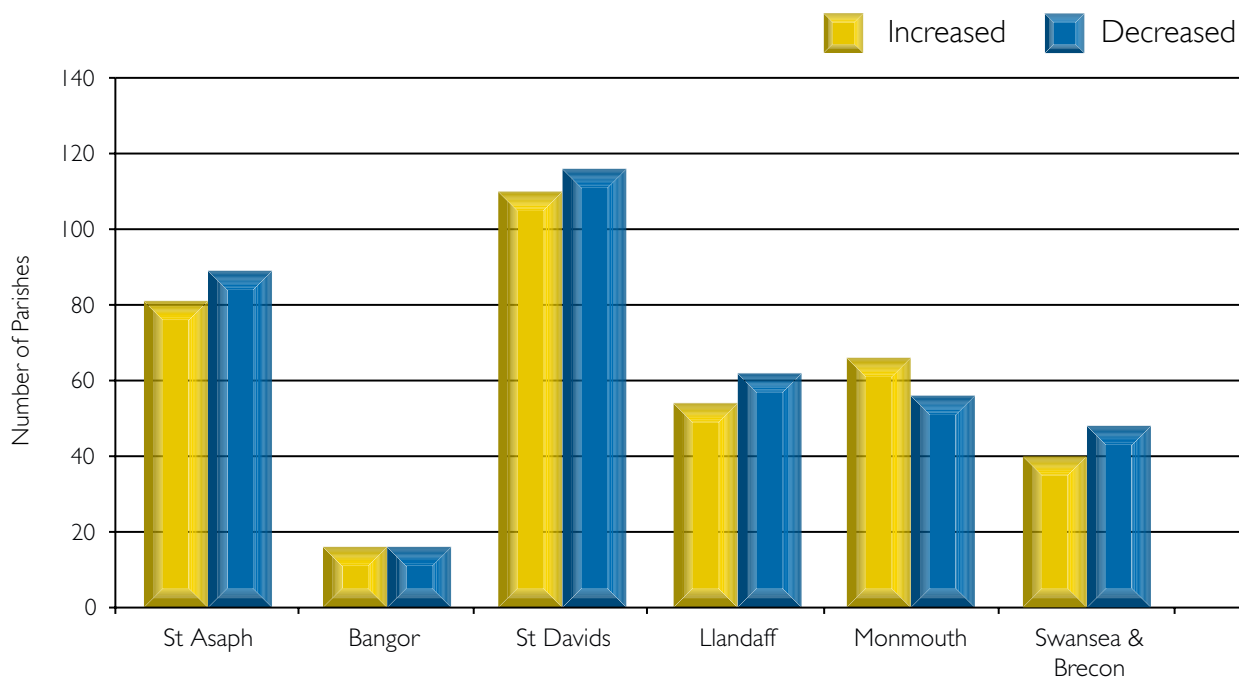


### Working with Children, Young People and Families

Since we started collecting information about children, young people and families through the Membership return in 2011, the figures have tended to fluctuate among the younger age groups but largely remained at a similar level. For example, the figure for average Sunday attendance among under 7s for 2015 was only 0.1% lower than in 2011; for other church activity the under 7s figure shows an increase over the same period of 3%. However, there has been a significant fall in the number in the 11-17 age group. For example, the numbers involved in other church activities fell by 25% between 2011 and 2015. The number of families (3,166) is also the lowest it has been since 2011.

Our work with children, young people and families is currently an area of significant investment by the church, with most dioceses appointing new officer support. The returns on this investment may not be fully evident for some time, but there are already encouraging signs. The diocese of Bangor has had a network of Children, Young people, Family Mission Enablers (CYFMEs) in place for a number of years now, and there are indications that this work is bearing fruit in some areas. For example, since 2011 the number of under 7s involved in other church activity has risen by 61%; in the 7-10 age group over the same period numbers increased by 89%. This change has not been replicated in all areas, but does provide hope for the future.

**Figure 3: Average Sunday Attendance Parish Growth/Decline 2014 - 2015**



This new table is intended to enhance the provincial picture on attendance. It compares the number of parishes in each diocese where the average adult Sunday attendance has increased between 2014 and 2015 with the number of parishes where such attendance fell over the same period.

The picture here is considerably more varied than the provincial figures in Table 1 would suggest. Rather than a scenario of general decline, it shows that by this measure many parishes across Wales (367 in total) are growing (compared to 387 parishes which have lower attendance figures). It is important to remember

that, whilst our general context is worrying, we should take time to celebrate this growth, and look to identify what might be shared with others.

Of course, it should be recognised that this chart is rather a blunt instrument. It gives no indication of the number of people involved in any growth or decline. It has also been necessary to make certain assumptions: in this model parishes which have maintained the same attendance are included in the “increase” column. Parishes that were created between 2014 and 2015 by reorganising a larger parish have not been included.

### Non-traditional Acts of Worship

In recent years, we have also asked parishes to record attendance at non-traditional acts of worship. This is an intentionally broad category, and has elicited an interesting range of responses. Examples of such activities include:

- Iona/Agape services;
- Arts festival services;
- Services held on beaches and in parks;
- Dramatic reconstructions of the Christmas and Easter stories;

- Animal blessings;
- Café churches;
- Teenscreen clubs;
- Interfaith engagement.

Overall, it would seem that just over 30,000 people in total participate in some form of non-traditional worship, compared with 36,000 in 2014.

# Finances

**Table 4: Provincial Summary of Parish Finances for 2015 and 2014**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2015 £k</b>	<b>2014 £k</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2015 £k</b>	<b>2014 £k</b>
Planned Giving	<b>11,436</b>	11,688	Parish Share	<b>16,707</b>	17,488
Loose Collections	<b>2,897</b>	2,816	Clerics' Expenses	<b>1,150</b>	1,209
Donations	<b>2,855</b>	2,910	Other Ministry Support	<b>267</b>	368
For Mission	<b>526</b>	509	Maintenance of Services	<b>1,484</b>	1,354
Tax Refunds	<b>2,802</b>	2,931	General Parish Expenses	<b>1,838</b>	1,878
Legacy Gifts Received	<b>3,243</b>	2,259	Maintenance of Churches	<b>5,974</b>	5,827
Grants	<b>2,725</b>	3,379	Maintenance of Property	<b>2,108</b>	2,492
Money Raising	<b>5,109</b>	4,789	Exceptional Property Expenditure	<b>3,425</b>	4,237
Fees	<b>2,489</b>	1,853	Parish Grants	<b>591</b>	517
Investments	<b>1,707</b>	1,779	Home/World Grants	<b>1,053</b>	1,025
Other Incoming Resources	<b>3,685</b>	6,049	Capital Payments	<b>1,385</b>	2,097
			Cost of Money Raising	<b>605</b>	538
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>39,474</b>	40,962	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>36,587</b>	39,030

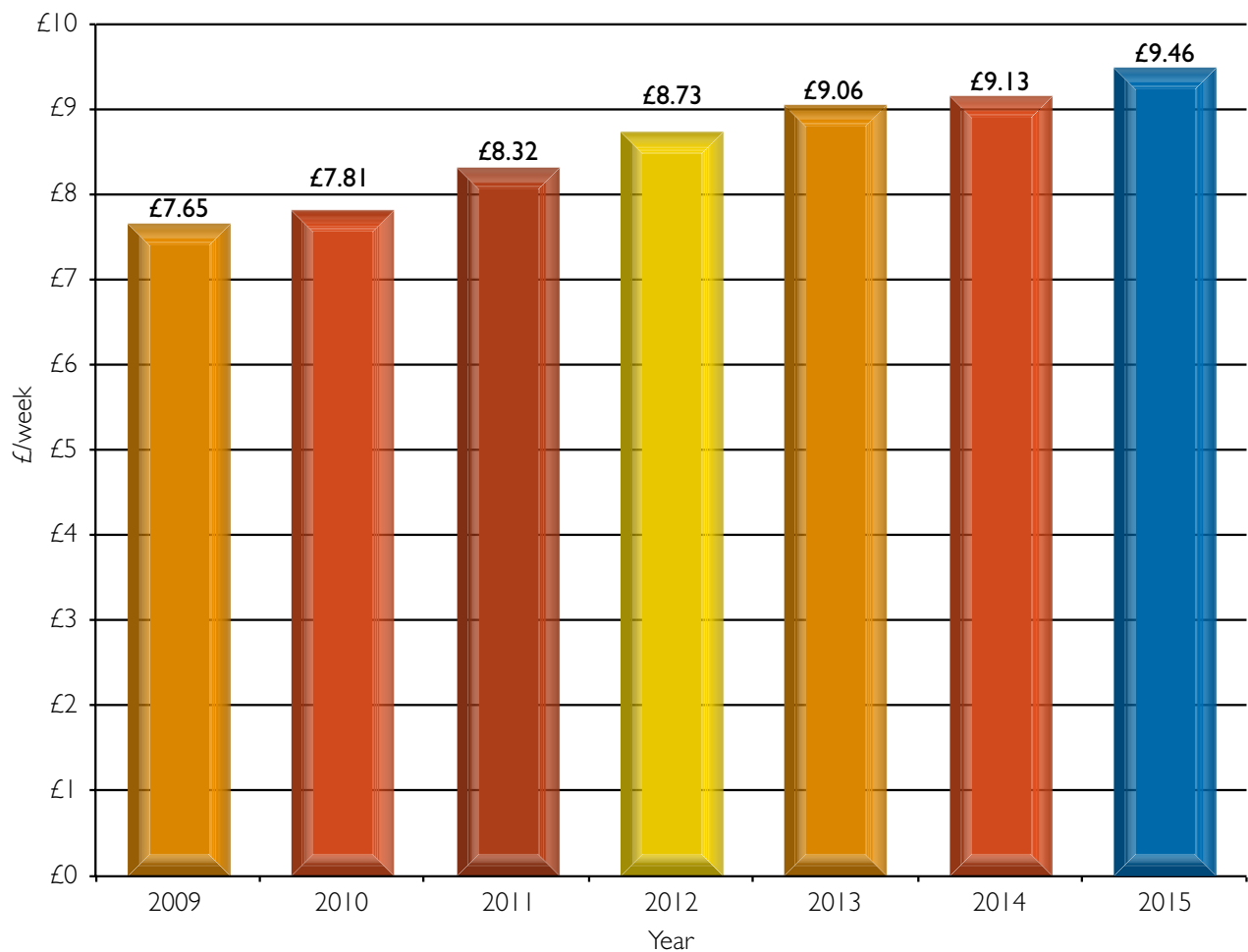
Table 4 provides a comparison of total parish income and expenditure for 2015 and 2014.

In 2015 total parish income exceeded total expenditure by a significant margin: some £2.9 million. On the face of it this is good news, and demonstrates that, overall, parishes are more than living within their means. However, there are warning signs in this year's figures.

First, total parish income fell by nearly £1.5 million between 2014 and 2015, with planned giving – the main source of parish income – having fallen for the fourth year in a row. Whilst other, less regular sources of income, such as legacy gifts and money raising income, showed a healthy increase in 2015, the longer-term economic health of parishes is questionable if planned giving continues to decline.

Secondly, total parish expenditure fell by some £2.5 million over this period. Such a fall – substantially lower than the level of total income – may suggest a loss of confidence by parishes, particularly in investing in major new projects. A possible example of this shift may be seen both in the grants income section and in exceptional property expenditure. It would seem that parishes are not receiving (and perhaps not applying for) grants for property work to the same degree as in previous years. The grants income figure in 2015 was the lowest since 2007; there is a corresponding fall in exceptional property expenditure, where the figure for 2015 is some £2 million lower than in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Figure 5: Weekly Direct Giving per Sunday Attender



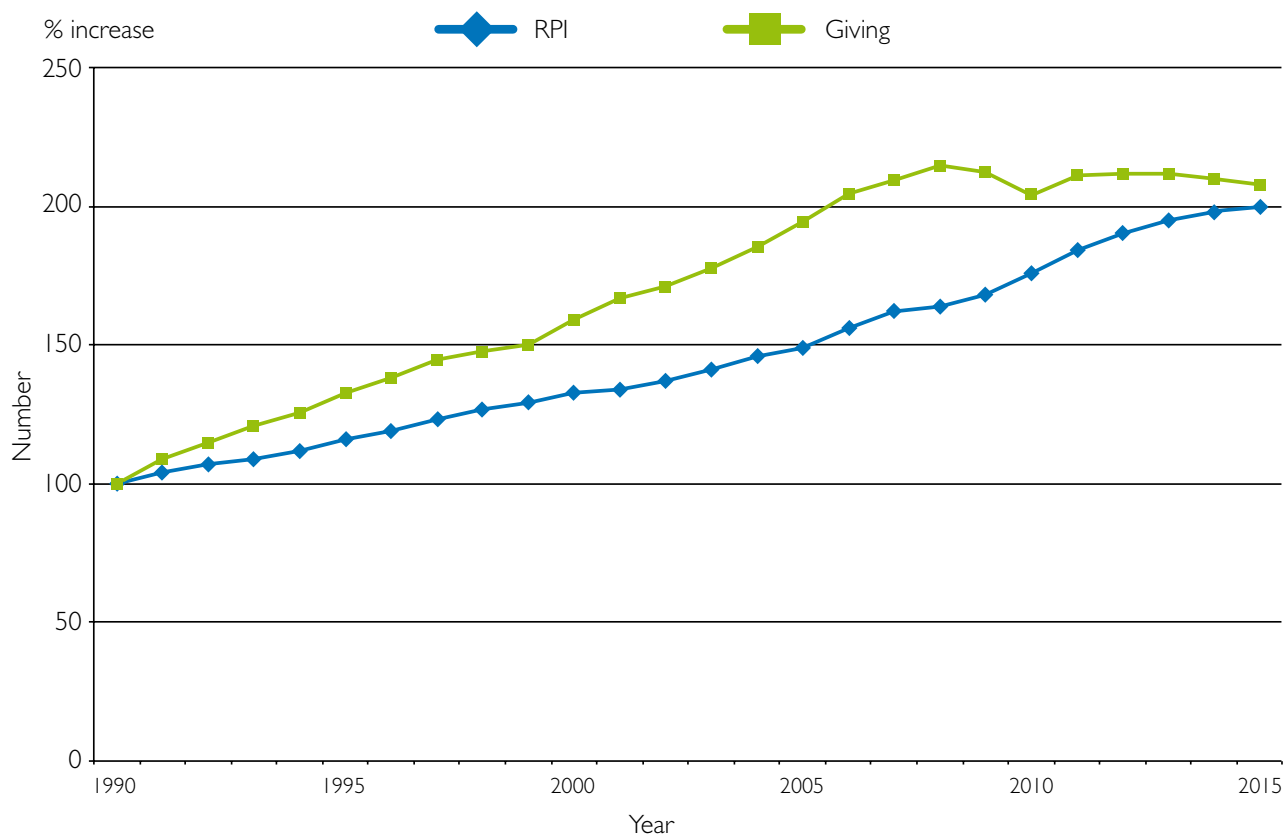
## Direct Giving

The 5% fall in average adult Sunday attendance means that, despite a fall in planned giving, weekly direct giving per Sunday attender increased by 3.6% to £9.46 in 2015. This represents 2.7% of Welsh gross weekly adult income (the same proportion as in 2014).

The narrative here is that a smaller number of committed members continue to meet a larger proportion of the church's expenditure, but that overall giving (and thus parishes' regular income) is falling. This is one of the key messages of

this year's report: that, despite the generosity of members, the Church in Wales's long-term financial security is being damaged by the fall in numbers. This is in addition to the very real damage being done to the church's capacity for and effectiveness in its mission and ministry by becoming numerically smaller year-on-year.

Figure 6: Changes in Direct Giving

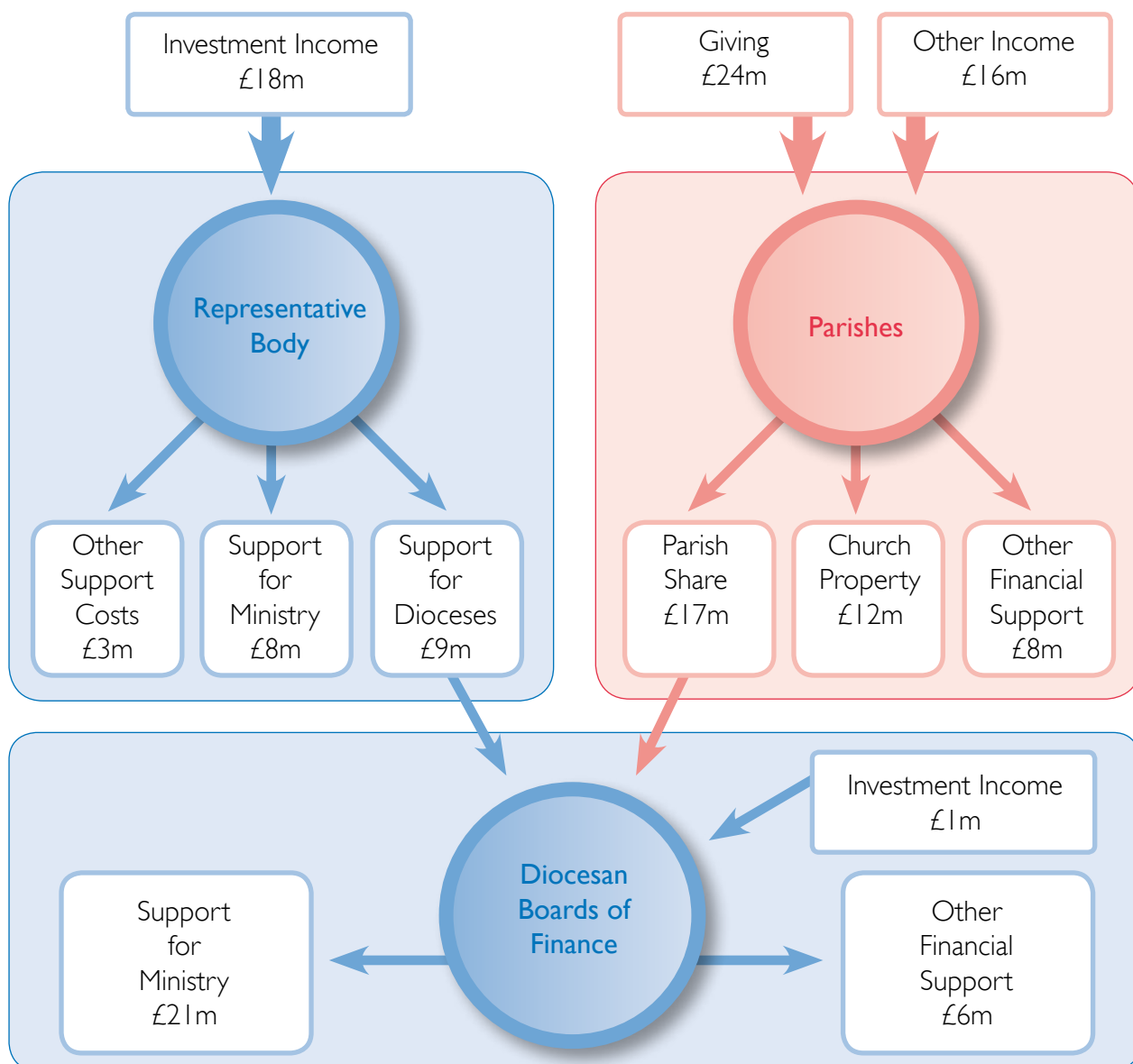


This message is demonstrated in a different way by Figure 6, which compares the rate of increase on a donation of £1 given in 1990 using the Retail Price Index (RPI) and the actual rate of increase in direct giving by Church in Wales members.

Despite members continuing to give sacrificially, the overall trend is that the “RPI increase line” will catch and overtake the “giving line” very shortly. In simple terms, when we reach the stage where giving does not keep track with inflation at the least, the ability of parishes to do anything more than simply “keep the show on the road” will be diminished.



Figure 7: How the Church in Wales is Funded 2015



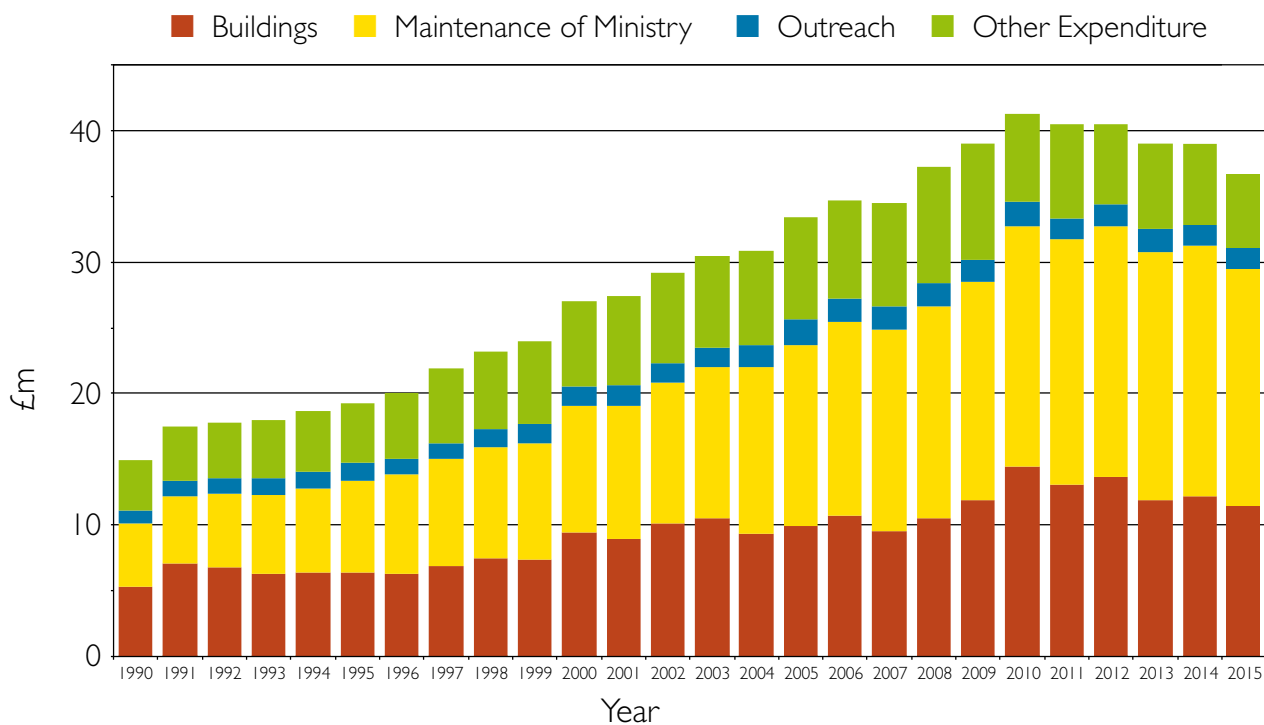
### How is the Church in Wales Funded?

Parishes play a major – and increasingly important – role in meeting the costs of running the Church in Wales. Figure 7 provides a diagrammatic explanation of the way in which the Church is funded.

Dioceses are responsible for meeting the cost of clergy stipends. To help them to do so dioceses receive funding from both the parishes (via parish share) and the Representative Body (via the block grant). Members will note that currently the Representative Body is distributing more annually than it receives.

The parishes, dioceses and the RB have other major areas of expenditure also. The main component in the Representative Body's "Other Support for Ministry" is the cost of the past-service element of the Clergy Pension Scheme, which in 2015 cost £4.9 million. "Other Financial Support" by parishes includes support for ministry (eg clergy expenses, the cost of services) not included in parish share.

**Figure 8: Parish Expenditure since 1990**



**How do Parishes Spend their Money?**

Total parish expenditure has now fallen for five successive years. In 2015 expenditure on both parish share and property fell, although the long-term trend is for an increasing proportion of expenditure to be on ministry rather than buildings. In this respect the general fall in the number of stipendiary clergy may be a factor in future (although some funding may well be diverted towards additional support for lay ministry too).

**Figure 9: Parish Expenditure 2015**

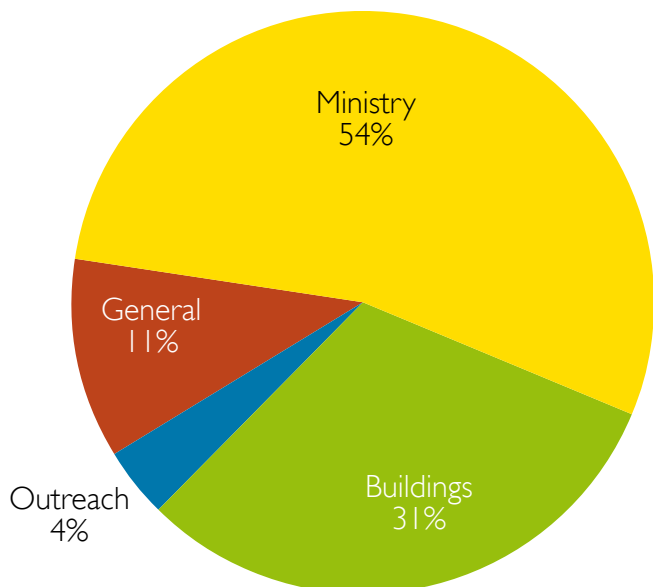


Figure 9 provides a breakdown of parish expenditure in 2015.

The proportion of expenditure on buildings fell from 32% in 2014 to 31% in 2015, with expenditure on ministry remaining on 54% for the same period.