

**STEWARDSHIP INTERVIEW : Stephen Purbrick & Tim Stead: 28<sup>th</sup> OCT. 07**  
**SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CHURCH FINANCE.**

Q1. Firstly a question about costs. Apparently the cost of running this church in 2008 will be about £89,000. Can you tell me where all this money goes?

- A1. a. Running of the church itself: £31,000  
(includes: heating, lighting, insurance, salaries, administration, expenses, Sunday school etc.)  
b. Payment to diocese for cost of ministry: £ 52,000  
c. We give 10% of our income to charities outside the church, estimated to be about £7,000 in 2008.

Q2. So what is this “payment to the diocese for cost of ministry?”

A2. It includes housing and training costs, pension costs and contribution to the running of the diocese and to the central church of England. We also make a small contribution towards the running of other churches that are less well off than us. But mainly we are only paying for what we get in terms of ministry support from the diocese – we pay pretty much what it costs to have a vicar. (Of course we get Linda, Hugh and David almost free!)

Q3. And I gather that all these cost have gone up a lot in the last few years. Why is this?

A3. Most costs have simply risen in line with inflation, but a number costs have increased more sharply. In particular, the cost of running the church building in terms of insurance, heating and lighting have gone up by around £5,000 over six years, simply due to higher charges of the sort that many organisations are having to face. And the payment to the diocese that we were discussing just now has gone up by over £20,000 over the same period, as the subsidy from the central Church of England that the diocese used to receive has been required to support the growth in pension costs.

Q4. So that’s the costs dealt with – where does the Church get its income from?

A4. Well it mostly comes from the people you see sitting here before you today. The church does receive some money from fees that it charges for weddings and such like, and the summer fete and Christmas event raise around £4,000 each year, but the vast majority comes from the money that people give. So one of the messages of Stewardship Sunday is to thank those people who have given so much over the years to keep the Church going.

Q5. But you said a moment ago that costs had gone up very steeply in recent years – I think you said by about £25,000 since the year 2000. Is the Church still receiving enough income to meet its costs?

A5. The short answer to this is no, it isn’t. And that’s one of the reasons why we’re having a Stewardship Sunday. Whilst the amount of money that people give has increased since the year 2000, it’s only been by around half the amount that the costs have increased by, and the Church is now losing money. It’s currently thought that we will make a loss of about £12,000 in 2007. The Church has savings that can meet this – money that it saved when it was in a better financial position, but a loss of that size will only leave it with a small amount of savings left. The Church simply can’t afford to go on making that sort of loss.

Q6. So what is the stewardship committee asking people to do?

A6. I think all we can do is to make people aware of the facts and ask them to reflect on how much they give to the Church. It's not about making people feel guilty – very many people in the Church give very generously, not only to support Holy Trinity but also in aid of other important charities and organisations. But at the same time, the Church is not receiving enough money to cover its costs and that is a serious problem.

Q7. Couldn't we just cut our costs then?

A7. We clearly need to be careful and responsible with how we spend our money and this is something that the PCC will be looking into, but many of the larger items are beyond our control. If we turn off the heating to save money, people won't come to the Church in winter, if we don't buy teaching books for the Sunday School the children will probably stop coming. So it's hard to see that we could save anything like we need to. And if we want to take the work of the Church into new areas, that may well cost more money.

Q8. You've talked about some quite large numbers. Can you break it down a bit and give people some idea of how much they need to give on average?

A8. I can, but that's not necessarily all that helpful, as people aren't average. We know that in the country there is a large difference between how much people earn, and that's equally true in the church. But if we were to be able to meet all our costs in 2008, and everyone did give the same amount, then each of the 160 people on the electoral roll would have to give £8 per week, or about £420 per year. And just to be clear, that's per person, not per family.

Q9. That sounds like a lot!

A9. And for some people it will be unaffordable and they should not be made to feel at all bad about that – it should not be seen as an individual target. But equally there are some people who can afford to give more than this and the Church is relying on them to give more than £8 per week.

Q10. OK, so how can people give to the church?

A10. Well, it's all explained in the Stewardship Sunday leaflet, which will be given out to people at the end of the service. But just to make two final points. The Church needs people to give regularly and this can be done in two ways. The easiest is via a standing order with your bank – that way people don't need to remember to bring their money each week and there's no need for someone to go to the bank and pay it in. More details are in the leaflet. Alternatively there is the planned giving envelope scheme and details of that can be found at the back of the Church. And finally, if people are UK tax payers then can gift aid any payments that they make to the Church, which enables us to claim back the tax. That way we can get an extra 25% free, which is well worth having.