

Report on the state of parish finances

Presented at masses on the weekend of 24/25 Jan 2026 by Steve Jones – Chair of Finance Committee and Trustee of DAPT.

In recent years we have held an Annual Parish Meeting in the Pastoral Centre after the 10:30 mass, but that did not necessarily reach all of those who were interested in parish life, so we're trying something new this year.

I appreciate that some of you have homes to go to, so I'll keep this as brief as possible, but if you have to leave either now or before the end, I won't be offended.

Headline Figures

The parish's financial year runs from 1st Sept to 31st August so a lot of the figures I'll be referencing are from that 2024-25 financial year.

For the 2024-25 year –

The parish 'enjoyed' surplus £1818.

However, £36k was because we wrote off a 4-year debt to Archdiocese for the Archdiocesan Levy which we have been told will not be collected.

This wasn't real money, it was merely a provision we had made in the accounts in case the archdiocese called in the debt, so actually we had a deficit of £34k – about £3k per month

This year's performance (September 25 to January 26) is looking pretty much the same with a month-on-month deficit of about £3k

Roof Fund

In the 2024-25 year, roof fund income was £29k with thanks to those who organised and attended fund-raising events and those who continue to make regular donations.

Expenditure for the year was £199K. The cash-flow that enabled this was from parish reserves and is being 'repaid' by the roof fund donations. At the repayment current rate this will take about 8 years.

I'm sure you will all agree that having the tower safe and watertight is a vast improvement - we hadn't realised how rotten the supporting oak beams were until the work started - Unfortunately, funding the tower repairs left the parish with very little spare cash.

Staff Costs

Although the parish is run by a whole host of volunteers, there are a few who are employed by the parish to provide their expertise. As a parish we ensure that all staff are paid at the rate of at least the National Living Wage. The impact of recent increases to National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates have led to an increase in staff costs and, although we have reduced the number of hours worked by some staff, the wage bill is still £12k more than 5 years ago – at £47.5k

Collections & Legacies

We have had not been in receipt of any legacies since 2023 so the parish is reliant on offertory donations to remain afloat. Without wishing to be too miserable, maybe parishioners could give some consideration to leaving a legacy in their wills.

On a brighter note, Offertory Income has increased from £97k to £107k so thanks to all who donate and where possible Gift Aid.

£38.6k was donated last year in the form of cash. This was an increase from the previous year's £34k.

£2,900 has been generated from card donations on the machine at the back of church

£1,000 from the QR codes on the benches

£635 from the school uniform shop

So far this year (Sept 25 to Jan 26)

£1,800 card donations

£1,145 from the QR codes

£180 from the school uniform shop

Gift Aid (GA)

Special thanks to those who also Gift Aid their donations. Although this has brought its own challenges.

The archdiocese is very slow to process GA which has a negative impact on our cash flow.

To ease this delay, we plan to make some changes.

Fr. Hugh is Economist at Douai and has taken on the GA for all parishes except St. Annes. He is much more efficient.

For the next tax year (starting in April 2026) he will process GA for St. Anne's.

This will mean that we will need new GA declarations signing. If you currently or would like to start GA please make sure you leave your email address at back of church so that we can contact you about this nearer the time.

Running Costs

Over the past few years, we have tightened the parochial belts by installing LED lighting, more efficient boilers, Thermostatic radiator valves etc, But as we all know from our own homes, energy costs are still very high.

The long and the short of it is that we are running at £3k per month deficit so we need to find ways of generating more revenue.

Income Generation

We have had a couple of suggestions of how we might generate some revenue. One suggestion is to have an **Amazon pick up point** in the Pastoral Centre car park. I will be looking into this over the coming weeks.

Another suggestion is to operate a **200 Club**. I have investigated this already and can see how it might work. It just needs a volunteer to organise it. Please contact me through the parish office if you think this is something you could do.

Charge for car parking. We have been approached by a car park management company who would be interested in managing our car park and generating in income for the parish from this under used asset. In theory it sounds ideal, but we need to be sure we don't cause our parishioners any upset.

Their system is highly parametrised and can be adapted to suit parish needs. Their initial proposal is to provide a grace period (of say 30-60 minutes) where charges do not apply – this would be useful for the school drop off & collection times.

No charges would apply for a period around Saturday and Sunday mass times – maybe 30 minutes before mass starts until 2 hours after mass starts – 2 ½ hours should be enough for even the longest of sermons!

On days when there is a wedding or funeral service a similar no charge period could be applied

One of the other Douai parishes has a car park management system in place and they have managed to work out a routine that accommodates those going to mass but still generates a reasonable return from those parking up to go into town to do some shopping. I know this might take some adjustment, but it would certainly be a help to the parish finances.

I will be seeking input from our schools and from representatives of the uniform groups to hear what parameters they feel would work best for them.

The Pastoral Centre (PC)

For many years we have spoken about the costs associated with the PC. Last year we spent over £13k just keeping it heated and lit for the times it was being used.

It does not generate much income these days – only £2,700 last year – not a patch on what a catholic social centre used to generate in the 60's and 70's when the church club was the social hub of the community.

We are still exploring options for selling the PC to a housing developer and building a more appropriate and energy efficient PC at the back of church. The main focus is that such a development needs to be as near to cost neutral as possible.

There have been no major maintenance tasks undertaken for a few years as we simply do not have the cash available to spend £150k - £180k on a new roof for the PC, but if there is no appetite from developers to provide us with a new PC at little or no cost we may need to rethink the whole project.

Be assured that nothing will be agreed with any developers without a full consultation with the parishioners.

Finally

Thank you to all of those who contribute to parish life. This may be through your offertory donations, volunteering in some way or by supporting the various events that take place in the parish. It may be simply through your prayers. Whatever it is that you do for the parish is very much appreciated.