

Parish Giving Scheme

Frequently asked questions



What is the point of PGS?

PGS helps churches in the Diocese of Oxford by enabling givers to donate via direct debit, rather than traditional ways of collecting money into the local church.

Who operates the Parish Giving Scheme?

The scheme was devised by the Diocese of Gloucester, and it is now an independent charity (Registered Charity 1156606), with trustees nominated from among the 29 dioceses that use the scheme.

How does it help local churches?

As more and more givers switch to the PGS, it will save many hours of administrative time at local church level. Donations are much easier for the Treasurer (or Giving Officer) to reconcile than standing orders or cash. It will improve cash flow, since Gift Aid is added each month, so there's no need to wait for the reclaim. Furthermore, with two thirds of givers opting to accept an inflationary uplift, the church receipts should increase year on year.

How does it help PCC treasurers?

PGS remits money directly to the local church's bank account on the 10th of each month. The amount remitted is the total for all the PGS givers in the congregation. The Treasurer receives a report showing names and amounts for each donation, except where the donor has chosen to remain anonymous. A payment with the gift aid from the donations is then given to the church a few days later.

How does it help givers?

PGS offers givers a convenient and secure method of making their regular donations to their local church by Direct Debit. Givers may choose to have their donation automatically uplifted by inflation each year. Givers can also choose to remain anonymous to their local churches, if they prefer.

Is a direct debit scheme secure?

Givers are protected by the Direct Debit Guarantee, which makes it a very safe system, safer than other forms of giving.

See www.directdebit.co.uk or www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk (search for 'direct debit') for more information.

Why is the option to increase with inflation important?

Because one of the biggest problems faced by churches is that of 'static giving' (i.e. costs rising, but donations staying the same). A donation of £20 given in 2005 is worth less than two-thirds of that value now (£12.93 in Dec 2019, per ONS figures for RPI www.ons.gov.uk)

Why is RPI used to calculate inflationary increases?

RPI was the most popular choice amongst givers when the scheme was originally piloted in 2008. The difference between RPI and CPI only makes a slight difference on the increase in gift level. For example, in October 2017, someone who had given £20 a week would see their donation increase by 18p a week more with RPI than CPI. The system applies the most recently published January RPI on the anniversary of the giver's gift through PGS. It only applies this increase to those givers who have 'opted in' – and the new amount is confirmed to the giver in writing.

How long does it take for the funds to come through?

Money is collected from givers on the 1st of each month and remitted to PCC bank accounts on the 10th of each month – or the subsequent working day. The gift aid is then given to the church a few days later.

What materials/publicity are available to promote the scheme in our church?

A full range of well-presented material is available to churches in our diocese. This includes a detailed handbook on the scheme (PDF format), leaflets for givers (A5) and gift forms (A5) for those who are ready to sign up.

What do PGS givers do when the offering plate is passed round during a service?

We can provide scheme participants with PGS tokens which can be placed on the plate or in the collection bag. This indicates that they participate in PGS and enables them to express an act of offering during the course of Sunday worship.

How much will it cost our church?

The Diocese of Oxford is paying the costs of participating in the scheme.

What happens to my donation in the event of PGS "going bust"?

If insolvency were looming, the trustees would be bound to manage affairs to avoid restricted donations being placed at risk. The chances of this are extremely small. PGS is a successful and well-resourced organisation with a proven track record in efficiently administering the scheme.

Where can I find out more?

For further information, please contact the diocesan PGS adviser by phone on 01865 208200 or by email on generosity@oxford.anglican.org