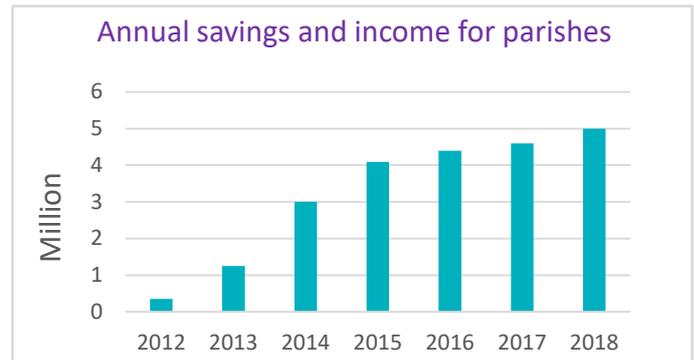


Overview

2018 was the seventh year of the Parish Buying service, www.parishbuying.org.uk. We seek to serve parishes by saving them time and money, to support increased income, to buy with greater confidence and to be better stewards in their spending.

How are we doing?

Savings made. In 2018, we estimate savings and extra income of just over £5 million. Just under £1.4m of this is from contracts through the Parish Buying service, with an unchanged £3.0 million through reduced insurance costs and a further £0.6 million from our building project workshops. Our focus in the next 12 months is on three areas: further growth of the energy basket, supporting digital giving and making connectivity more widely available and used.



Number of users of the service. 2018 saw a 20.8% increase in registrations, rising from 13,047 at the end of 2017 to 15,769 by the end of 2018. Concerted efforts continue to improve participation rates in dioceses, which range from 25% to 92%.

Benefit flowing through to parishes. Resourcing the parish buying service, in particular ensuring that contracts are competitive and well-presented online, as well as helping parishes with queries and providing training all have a cost, and that cost is met by taking a small commission from the national contract suppliers. This commission averages around 3.6% currently. In 2018 we passed over £71 of every £100 that is saved back to parishes. This does not take account of the savings made on insurance or building projects, nor of increased income, from which no commission is earned.

User satisfaction. In the September newsletter we included a survey asking members for feedback.

- The majority of members were very satisfied with the support received from the Parish Buying customer service team.
- Satisfaction ratings for our suppliers was more mixed, with several comments from members about the energy supplier's support service (poor response rates and problems with billing)
- The most 'useful' products from Parish Buying are the Energy Basket contract, office supplies, and the church supplies discount codes (Kevin Mayhew, Vanpoules and Grace Supplies).
- Suggestions for new products included audit services (which we are now trialling), more eco goods, coffee, disposable cups, and IT hardware.

New Products. The range of card-readers was expanded to support contactless giving. Members of Parish Buying were able to purchase great value online training for the first time, on GDPR.



Progress against 2018 Priorities

- ① *Use the platform afforded by the new website, broaden the range of products and services to encompass new ones useful to churches and cathedrals, with particular emphasis on sustainability through digital giving.* Contracts were signed with SumUp, iZettle and Acceptacard/Payacharity during 2018, with Memoranda of Understanding with GoodBox and GW Devices for trials with a view to later agreements.
- ② *Continue to help parishes purchase insurance more cost-effectively.* The insurance guide was regularly promoted in the newsletter, with a recommendation to obtain comparative quotations.
- ③ *Improve the product range offering to support more closely the Church's Shrinking the Footprint agenda.* Contract was signed with LED Hut Limited for the supply of LED Lighting
- ④ *Offer tools to support income generation at parish level e.g. Digital, Eventbrite etc..* Contracts were signed with a variety of telecommunications companies to support connectivity in churches
- ⑤ *Achieve comprehensive increases in take-up of the service by improved communication and a broadened set of products.* Increased engagement with the service at both diocesan level and from individual parishes, especially in relation to the contactless card readers now available (huge demand and interest).

Energy Basket

In the UK, wholesale prices for gas and electricity rose substantially (August 2018 prices were approximately 35% higher compared to August 2017) so energy is more expensive for everyone. We are pleased that on average our Energy Basket members are only seeing an increase of 11% for gas and 15% for electricity.

The electricity in the 2018/19 Energy Basket is 100% green, with all the electricity sourced from UK renewable sources as accredited by OFGEM.

2018/19 Energy Customers

There was a further 15.7% increase in the number of meters which now number 5,682.



Priorities for 2019

In 2019 we aim to:

- ① Continue to broaden the range of products and services to encompass new ones useful to churches and cathedrals, with particular emphasis on sustainability through digital giving, connectivity and its uses.
- ② Collaborate with Cathedrals and Church Buildings division on guidance on the uses of connectivity in parish churches
- ③ Continue to help parishes purchase insurance more cost-effectively.
- ④ Improve the product range offering to support more closely the Church's *Shrinking the Footprint* agenda, by introducing an Energy Audit service.
- ⑤ Offer tools to support income generation at parish level e.g. NFC, QR codes etc.
- ⑥ Achieve further increases in take-up of the service by improved communication and a broadened set of products, and better use of data.

To find out more, visit www.parishbuying.org.uk email info@parishbuying.org.uk or ring 0800 368 0887

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