

Finance in Focus - 1

What a gift the world got at Christmas!

As the big day comes around again, we can't help but be amazed and thankful for God's gift of his Son over two thousand years ago. And we know that, through the Holy Spirit, it is a gift that keeps giving.

And I hope we all know the joy of giving gifts to friends and family at this and other special times. God's gift was more special than any other, of course, knowing that it would involve the death and resurrection of his Son.

Those of you who give to the Priory regularly by Standing Order or via the *Parish Giving Scheme should by now have received an individual thank you card from the PCC. It's important that we express our appreciation for your generosity and commitment.

But our thanks also go to everyone who gives to support the running costs of the Priory in other ways too, whether by donations via "the plate", the contactless giving facility, or by supporting the various fundraising events throughout the year.

We have been rather shy of late in raising the subject of church finance. However, several years have gone by where Priory income is many thousands of pounds less than expenditure, and we need to take action to address this.

Over the coming months we will be using this page, which we are calling **Finance in Focus**, to talk about the Priory finances. We will explain some of the detail behind the income and expenses, and discuss ways in which we can perhaps be a bigger part of the solution. Thank you. John Bland.

**To join the Parish Giving Scheme scan this QR code on your smartphone, contact the Forbury Office, or use this link <https://www.paritygiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/leominster-priory-church-hereford/> or visit or the Forbury Office or website leominsterpriory.org.uk*



Finance in Focus - 2

Back to basics – Expenditure

Deficit Watch:

2025 Total shortfall:

£20,163 (draft)

Of course, we all get bills (groan!). The cost of living affects us all – some more painfully than others. And the same is obviously true of the Priory. At home we probably have rent or mortgage, council tax, utilities, food, clothing... even the basic demands on our resources can seem endless, their cost increasing year by year.

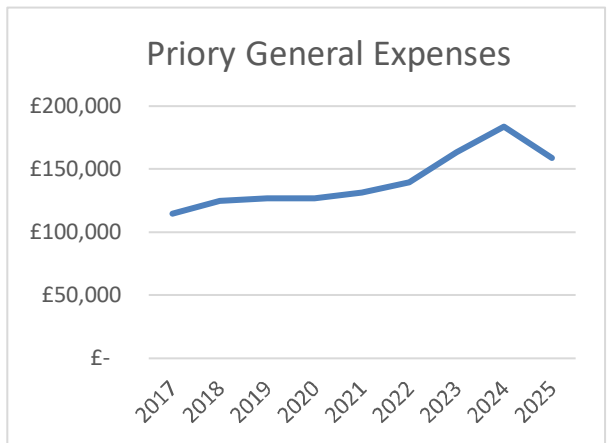
This graph shows how the Priory General expenses (excluding special projects) have changed over the years. That's a 38% increase in eight years whereas Priory income, excluding special projects, increased by just 10% over the same period. (2024 exp. were high

mainly due to rented property repairs, organ work, and high energy costs.)

Next time we will look the key income sources that support the Priory's general expenses. But of course, at any time you feel able to increase your financial support (note the Deficit Watch panel at the top of this page) please refer to the information below.

John Bland, January 2026. johnbland@leominsterpriory.org.uk

(Email me if you can't wait for more information, and I will try to help!)



There are several ways you can give to support the Priory. To join the Parish Giving Scheme (more about PGS later in the year) scan this QR code, or contact the Forbury Office or the PCC Treasurer for this and other ways to give.

Finance in Focus – 3a

Back to basics – Income

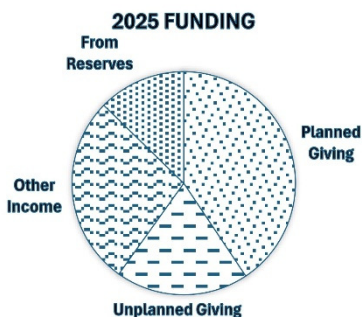
2026 Deficit Watch:

Current shortfall:

£2,543 at 28th February

At home, our income has a variety of sources – wages/salary or pension (state and/or private), interest from savings, perhaps an inheritance on occasion, and so on.

As for the Priory, last year an amazing £95,000 (almost 60% of the 2025 expenditure) was provided by giving, by people like you and me! Let that sink in for a moment. Not *paid* but given. Not used to buy new cars, or fancy holidays, but *given*. And that from a worshipping community of about 150.



That £95,000 was given in a variety of ways: about £64,500 by **Planned Giving** (Parish Giving Scheme, Standing Orders, and Gift Aid Tax Refund); and £30,500 by **Unplanned Giving** (Collections, Special Events, contactless giving etc). The remaining £64,000 (40%) of expenditure last year was paid for by **Other Income**

from things like fees, rental income, hire of the Priory, interest on reserves, and the shop, and about £20,000 taken **From Reserves**.

The 2026 budget estimate, approved by the PCC, anticipates expenditure of about £154,000, leading to an increased income shortfall, or deficit, of about £25,000 even after a hoped-for 5% increase in giving. Next time we shall start to look at how we can address this problem. But in the meantime...

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John Bland, March 2026.

johnbland@leominsterpriory.org.uk



Finance in Focus – 4a

Getting Serious about Giving

2026 Deficit Watch:

Current shortfall:

£7,069 at 31st March

I was struck by a wonderful mini-sermon by Dr Sam Wells, which was included in a Diocesan Stewardship presentation some of us attended last year. It is so worth sharing, and very much applies to The Priory Church. Apologies if you've seen it before.

"If you don't give because no one's ever asked you, I'm asking you now. If you don't give regularly because you've never got round to it, I'm saying today's the day. If you don't give much because you think St Martin's* doesn't need it, I'm telling you that it does. If you don't give a lot because you don't have a lot, I'm saying your giving something is an example to everyone else. If you don't give more because no one's ever said thank you, I'm thanking you right now. If you already give until the pips squeak, I'm saying that's wonderful, and nudge the person next to you to do the same."

Rev Dr Sam Wells, one time vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields

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John Bland, April 2026.

johnbland@leominsterpriory.org.uk



Finance in Focus - 5

An Easier Time to Give More?

2026 Deficit Watch:
Current shortfall:
£7,069 at 31st March

- Are you a State Pensioner, just receiving your annual increase?
- Do you have a Company Pension, that has an annual increase?
- Are you in employment, where a wage/salary increase comes along from time to time?

Each of these cases offers a good opportunity to consider whether we could review our giving to the to the Priory Church. As the growing Deficit Watch figure in the box above shows, the need is great. *And just a baker's dozen of us giving an extra £10 per week would almost wipe out the current deficit! (13x£10x52=£6,760, or £8,450 if Gift Aided.)*

If we pay tax, we can Gift Aid our giving as well. It's worth an extra 25%, and is easy to set up using the Parish Giving Scheme (which is such a good scheme, and reduces the Treasurer's and Gift Aid Officer's workload considerably).

If you are already signed up with the Scheme, it's easy to increase your giving just by giving them a call – even if you've already opted to have your giving automatically increased with inflation.

Here's their number: 0333 002 1260 or email: info@parishgiving.org.uk

(P.S. These articles are now on the Parish Website "Donate" page)

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John Bland, April 2026.

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