



## Welcome

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in the key role of Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) within the Diocese of Blackburn. You would be joining us at an exciting moment as we move into our refreshed diocesan vision: “Joyful Followers of Jesus – seeing lives changed and communities filled with hope through Knowing Jesus, Sharing our Faith, Loving our Neighbour, Inspiring Young People, and Forming Christ-like Leaders.”

This pack contains the role description, person specification, information about the Diocese, and how the Chair of the DBF will help enable the delivery of the refreshed vision through wise stewardship, robust governance, and transparent reporting.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, please contact Stephen Whittaker (Diocesan Secretary) at [stephen.whittaker@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:stephen.whittaker@blackburn.anglican.org). A separate conversation with the outgoing Chair can also be arranged.

Applications should include:

- A CV or completed application form
- A covering statement (no more than two sides of A4) setting out why you are applying and what you will bring to the role
- Details of two referees (one being your current/most recent employer and one a representative from a parish/church)

**Please send applications to Jenny Simpkin, PA to the Diocesan Secretary & Head of Finance, at [jenny.simpkin@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:jenny.simpkin@blackburn.anglican.org).**

Further information and the application form are available at [www.blackburn.anglican.org/general-vacancies](http://www.blackburn.anglican.org/general-vacancies).

**Closing date: Noon on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2026 12 noon**  
**Selection/Interview date: 24<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

Yours faithfully

Stephen Whittaker  
**Diocesan Secretary**

# Contents

|     |   |    |
|-----|---|----|
| 1.  | Role Description .....                        | 3  |
| 1.1 | Title.....                                    | 3  |
| 1.2 | Context.....                                  | 3  |
| 1.3 | Diocesan Finances .....                       | 4  |
| 1.4 | Key elements of the role .....                | 4  |
| 1.5 | Specific Responsibilities .....               | 4  |
| 1.6 | Key Working Relationships .....               | 5  |
| 1.7 | Support.....                                  | 5  |
| 1.8 | Time Commitment .....                         | 6  |
| 1.9 | Appointment process.....                      | 6  |
| 2   | Person Specification.....                     | 7  |
| 3   | The Diocese of Blackburn and its Setting..... | 8  |
| 3.1 | Location.....                                 | 8  |
| 3.2 | Structure .....                               | 8  |
| 3.3 | The Cathedral .....                           | 9  |
| 3.4 | Whalley Abbey .....                           | 10 |

# 1. Role Description

## 1.1 Title

Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance

## 1.2 Context

Our refreshed vision calls us to be “Joyful Followers of Jesus”, seeing lives changed and communities filled with hope through five core strands: Knowing Jesus; Sharing our Faith; Loving our Neighbour; Inspiring Young People and Forming Christ-like Leaders.

As Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) you will help translate vision into delivery by ensuring governance, financial planning, budgeting and investment decisions enable each strand to flourish:

- Knowing Jesus – enabling discipleship resources, worship and prayer initiatives, and access to training (including theological and biblical engagement).
- Sharing our Faith – resourcing evangelism, new congregations and church planting, communications and training for confident witness.
- Loving our Neighbour – supporting action and advocacy for the marginalised, racial justice and accessibility, care for creation, and partnership with civic leaders.
- Inspiring Young People – prioritising ministry with children and young people, and strengthening partnerships with our Church of England schools.
- Forming Christ-like Leaders – investing in vocations pathways, lay ministry development, wellbeing, and the formation of wardens, treasurers and other key roles.

Implementation planning is underway with a draft Vision Implementation Plan scheduled for discussion at the Diocesan Synod in July 2026. The Chair will provide independent oversight, strategic guidance and challenge throughout the planning cycle including aligning budgets and resources to the agreed priorities.

The role of DBF Chair is a voluntary one, being an opportunity for a person to offer a significant Christian service to the life of the Diocese of Blackburn.

The role of the DBF Chair operates slightly differently in each diocese. The following description is how the role currently operates in this Diocese. However, any person in such a role will bring different skills and will wish to develop the role in their own way.

The Chair is assisted by a Vice Chair and the Chair of the Finance Committee. It is important to develop a close working relationship between these roles so that some of the following responsibilities can be shared between the three people.

The primary role of the DBF Chair is to Chair the Board of Finance Ltd (a charitable company limited by guarantee). The DBF Directors and Trustees delegate most of the financial detail to a Finance Committee, Investment Committee, Bishop's budget team and the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee.

There can also be several working groups which the Chair may be invited to attend or Chair.

The Chair is an ex-officio member of the Bishop's Council, ex-officio member of the Bishop's Budget team and the Finance Committee and attends the Governance, Risk and Audit Committee to support the independent chair of the committee. The DBF Chair is also a Bishop's Nominee to the Diocesan Synod.

The Chair supports the parish share process; meeting with parishes and attending a monthly meeting to review the support needs of parishes. Individual meetings with parishes are also held occasionally.

There is a strong representational element to this role in communicating with the wider diocesan family on the finances of the Diocese, explaining financial policy, including the budget and parish share and responding to questions.

### **1.3 Diocesan Finances**

The DBF's main expenditure relates to clergy costs (stipends, pensions, training, housing). The primary source of income is the Parish Share. Given the collaborative nature of diocesan life, positive relationships with parishes and deaneries are essential for sustainable finances.

The diocese has an annual expenditure of approx. £14 million and aims to achieve a breakeven position or strategic use of reserves each year.

The DBF has also received substantial funding from the Church Commissioners to help catalyse our vision and enable long lasting transformation change in the diocese. The Chair has a key role in oversight and understanding of this funding and its significance to the Diocesan Vision.

### **1.4 Key elements of the role**

To lead the DBF to:

- support, develop and agree priorities of the Diocese, relating to financial matters, ensuring through a budget that they can be funded (and alerting the other directors when the funding requirement is too great to ensure that the Diocese is not over-committed).
- ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities as per its Memorandum and Articles of Association.
- inspire confidence in sound financial management and governance of the Diocese, through financial planning, monitoring key performance indicators, control processes, governance and transparent open reporting and to encourage finance as an instrument for mission.

### **1.5 Specific Responsibilities**

- to chair meetings of the Board of Directors.

- in conjunction with the Diocesan Secretary, the Chair of the Finance committee, the Vice Chair of the Board and the Head of Finance, to support, encourage and oversee the financial control of the Company; to ensure appropriate reporting including accounting, financial and asset management, budgeting and forward planning, legal matters; to ensure that the organisation complies with both company and charity law and other relevant legislation and regulations.
- to engage with the Diocesan Synod, parishes and deaneries and communicate with the wider diocesan family on matters of finance.
- to be one of the representatives of the Diocese at the Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum which meets twice per year either in London or via TEAMS/Zoom.
- to support the Diocesan Secretary, through regular meetings, in their role of oversight for all those employed by the DBF.

## **1.6 Key Working Relationships**

- the Bishop of Blackburn and his Vision and Strategy Team.

The Chair needs a positive relationship with The Bishop and senior staff, in which issues of concern (whether financial, local, national or otherwise) may be raised with confidence that they will be acknowledged and accorded due prioritisation.

the relationship with the two Archdeacons is particularly important as they work closely with parishes.

- the Vice Chair
- The Chair of the Finance Committee and the Investment Committee.

Sharing responsibilities and ensuring a common approach and common key messages on Finance are given.

- the Diocesan Secretary.
- the Head of Finance (Deputy Diocesan Secretary) and Director of Vision Delivery (Deputy Diocesan Secretary).
- members of the Bishop's Council, the Finance Committee, chair of the Property Committee, the Dean of the Cathedral and other committees/working groups.

## **1.7 Support**

The office of Chair is not remunerated, but the Chair is encouraged to reclaim all necessary expenses of office.

The Diocesan Secretary and the Finance Team will provide administrative support for this role. There can be some communication - e-mails, phone calls, letters - and the diocesan office is

willing to support the Chair in handling these. The Finance Team and Property Team will also provide support on financial and property information.

The Chair will, if they wish, have access to all relevant data on the diocesan systems and will have a diocesan email address.

### **1.8 Time Commitment**

- the Bishop's Council currently meets twice a year on Saturday mornings
- The DBF Directors meet six times per year with a mixture of weekday evenings, Saturday mornings and online meetings.
- Diocesan Synod currently meets three times a year, usually on two Saturdays and one midweek evening.
- Finance Committee meets six times a year, currently midweek from 3.30pm until 6.00pm.
- regular contact with the Diocesan Secretary and the Head of Finance, to be mutually agreed.
- occasional meetings with the Bishop and others.
- parish share support meetings currently monthly, although individual meetings are possible.
- attend if possible the Inter-Diocesan Finance Forum held twice a year, currently one in person in London and one on Zoom.

The Chair will need the time and capacity to fulfil the role, though to a large extent the role can be adapted to suit the individual and their circumstances.

### **1.9 Appointment process**

The Chair is recommended to the Diocesan Synod by the Bishop of Blackburn and, when ratified by the Synod, serves for a period of three years or up to the next triennium (the three-yearly election cycle) if appointed outside the election cycle.

There is no limit on the length of time for holding the role.

## 2 Person Specification

|                        | Essential   | Desirable               |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| <b>Christian Faith</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a committed and mature Christian faith</li> </ul>   | Active in a CofE church |
| <b>Experience</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a professional background in business or a charitable body</li> <li>• can demonstrate sound business, financial, operational problem solving skills and ideally have an understanding of charitable governance</li> </ul>   |                         |
| <b>Knowledge</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have knowledge, sympathy and understanding of the work of parishes</li> </ul>  |                         |
| <b>Skills</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an effective chair of meetings</li> <li>• good communication skills</li> <li>• ability to think strategically about both finance and mission</li> <li>• ability and willingness to appropriately challenge as well as support others</li> <li>• act fairly and impartially in the interests of the Diocese and the DBF, using independent judgement and confidentiality as appropriate</li> <li>• can lead, inspire and foster a collegiate manner of working with both staff clergy and volunteers</li> </ul> |                         |

# 3 The Diocese of Blackburn and its Setting

## 3.1 Location

The Diocese of Blackburn is in the north-west of England, bounded by Morecambe Bay to the west and surrounded by Carlisle, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds dioceses. There are coastal plains to the west and the foothills of the Pennines to the east. See the map overleaf.

There are several large centres of population, with attractive countryside between them, with many small towns and villages.

The boundary of the diocese is virtually coterminous with the geographic county of Lancashire; that is the administrative county plus the Unitary Districts of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.

There are some slight variations:

- To the south west a large part of West Lancashire District is excluded (Diocese of Liverpool)
- To the south and south east of the Diocese, an area of Greater Manchester – Borough of Wigan – is included in the Diocese and parts of the Borough of Rossendale are excluded (Diocese of Manchester)
- To the north east, small parts of both the Ribble Valley and Pendle Borough are excluded (although parishes have recently been welcomed into our Diocese as part of changes to the dioceses in Yorkshire)

## 3.2 Structure

The diocese is a geographical and administrative area, under the spiritual leadership of the Diocesan Bishop, that contains the parishes, schools and chaplaincies contained within its area. A diocese is episcopally lead and synodically governed through the diocesan synod. Each diocese has a structure of boards and councils responsible for different aspects of the Church's work including ministry, mission and education.

The Diocese of Blackburn has two archdeaconries, each under the responsibility of an archdeacon. The Lancaster Archdeaconry covers the area north of the River Ribble and the Blackburn Archdeaconry covers the area south of the Ribble.

Each archdeaconry has seven deaneries, which is a number of benefices/parishes grouped geographically with an area dean having oversight.

A benefice is a parish or group of parishes served by an incumbent who typically receives a stipend and the benefit of occupation and use of a parsonage house provided by the diocese for carrying out spiritual duties.

### 3.3 The Cathedral

Blackburn Cathedral is one of England's newest Cathedrals, yet it is one of the country's oldest places of Christian worship.



For many centuries, there has been a church on the site of the current cathedral. The Parish Church of Blackburn dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin became the Anglican Cathedral for the Diocese of Blackburn (The Church of England in Lancashire) in 1926.

The cathedral is a separate charity with its own governance and financial structures but the Dean is an ex-officio member of the Bishop's Vision and Strategy Team, Bishop's Council and Diocesan Board of Finance Directors.

### 3.4 Whalley Abbey

The Retreat and Conference House is set in the stunning grounds and ruins of a 14th Century Cistercian Abbey.



The Abbey has a programme of residential retreats, spirituality days and quiet days for clergy and laity. The DBF is responsible for the running of the Abbey and its financial performance .