

Parochial Church Council

This was Derek's second full year as vicar and it remained a busy one, with ongoing discussions about church growth, building development and paying our way top of the agenda.

The PCC had 20 members, including the curate and one churchwarden, and three Deanery Synod representatives, who sat as ex-officio members. It met eight times and attendance averaged 13 people or 65%. PCC members are trustees of St James's, which is a registered charity, and can serve a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms of office without a break, either starting or standing down after the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in April. Only churchwardens have to stand for re-election every year and can serve a maximum of six consecutive years without a break.

The year began with a meeting that focussed on the budget, which had originally projected a loss of £18,000, but had been reduced to £9000 as a result of an increase in donations, mainly through the Planned Giving scheme, and budget cuts. Worked continued on bringing the building up to standard, and in January the electrical wiring was upgraded to meet statutory requirements. Following an incident during the Ark Playgroup the radiators and pipes were being covered with low surface temperature guards.

In February, the PCC held an Away Day at St John's, Hampton Wick, to discuss uses for the legacy from Betty Stewart. It had already been agreed that the money should be used for church growth, and the first major commitment to this had been the appointment of a children and families' worker, who had started at Christmas. Members highlighted other areas that fitted the remit of growth, including making better use of the space in church, making it more accessible to wheelchair users, installing a kitchenette to serve as a café for the Ark Playgroup, Connections, and post services and concerts, and floodlighting the building. Other ideas included establishing a Youth Club, creating groups for Mums and Dads, repositioning the St James's Day weekend as a community event, and making better

use of the churchyard. It was agreed to set up a Building Development Team to shortlist ideas.

The March meeting agreed to refurbish the hall, replacing old radiators, cleaning and resealing the main floor, new vinyl on the stairs and in the Upper Room, and renovating the toilets. The Charities and Links Committee was reborn as the Charities Support Team under a new chair, and a stewardship campaign was backed up with talks by members of the Finance Team. The Eco-church Team was working towards an award as part of plans to become a Local Wildlife Conservation Area. The newly-established Gardening Club would be creating new wildlife areas as well as maintaining existing areas, in conjunction with the local council, who remained responsible for the general upkeep. The Children and Families' Worker had begun an after school club at Hampton Hill Junior School as well as working with other churches locally to offer events to youth members. The upcoming General Data Protection Regulations had generated work and Derek, Nick and Gwynneth had been on training to ensure the church was compliant. The ongoing organ restoration reached another hurdle.

In April the PCC's minds turned to the annual accounts that were being prepared for the Annual Meeting. After the spending from the legacy was taken out, the church had recorded a loss of £9000. The hall refurbishment came a step closer, and the church bought a card reader to take payments and donations using credit and debit cards.

At the Annual Meeting all five PCC vacancies were filled, but Gwynneth remained the only churchwarden, the second post went unfilled. Derek reported that attendance had increased from 65 to 105, helped by the *Together at Eleven* service, the Pop-up Cinema was growing in popularity, and several one-off social events had helped get the church used outside of services. There would be more prayer through meetings, plans to bolster pastoral care, extra fundraising events to replace money from the PCC, developing *Life Groups*, splitting St James's Day into two days, with a focus on the community on the Saturday, and plans for a youth club for our teenagers.

May's focus was safeguarding. As the new PCC met for the first time, Jane Newman, our Safeguarding Officer, reported on her review of our procedures, including risk assessments, training and centralisation of records. The meeting also adopted the diocesan safeguarding statement for another year. This year's St James's Day would be split into two days, with the Open Church element (bell ringing, climbing the tower) moved to Saturday. An organ recital was planned, as well as guided tours, a tombola, refreshments, and a film would be shown to close the day.

In July the PCC our search for a new organist began in earnest. With a deficit forecast, members decided to make a smaller than requested rise in our Common Fund payment for 2019. It did, however, agree to make a £10,000 payment from the legacy to St Richard's, Hanworth, towards a new roof. Lou Coaker was appointed Children's Champion in place of Linda Webb whose term had come to an end. The hall refurbishment work was approved.

By September, the Finance Team had managed to reduce the forecast deficit. Income, particularly from Planned Giving, was higher than budgeted for, as was that from hall hire. The organ renovation was on budget. The Children & Families' Worker had decided to leave, and a decision would be made about a replacement. The Children's Ministry Team were preparing a Vision Strategy about how the needs of children and families could be met. Nick had been appointed Lead Recruiter under a diocesan reorganisation of how Disclosure and Barring Service applications were carried out. The hall refurbishment was completed on time and on budget. A strategy for future development of the churchyard was drawn up, and Derek clarified when he or the archdeacon was required to consent to work. Elsewhere, new notice boards were being installed outside the church and changes were planned to Sunday morning refreshments, with new teams created and trained, and new coffee makers in the hall and vestry. The Parish Visitors Team had grown, as had its work. There was increased demand for copies of the Spire magazine in High Street shops, particularly the Post Office in WH Smith (up 50%).

As the year neared a close the 2018 budget was the focus. Relative to the budget our income continued to remain strong, mainly due to the success of the Planned Giving campaign. And although spending was higher too, the gap had narrowed and the deficit was now £7000, well down on the previous year's loss of £18,000. Work on completing the north-west corner of the church garden was imminent. A new Children and Families Worker had been appointed part-time and the young people were promised a trip to Hampton Court Palace for ice skating. Members also heard about Capital Growth, the diocese's plan to double the number of young people aged 12-18 in churches on Sundays. Currently 70% of churches had fewer than 10 young people worshipping.

*Nick Bagge
PCC Secretary*