

2021 Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Paul's, Rusthall



Aim and Purposes

St Paul's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Ronnie Williams, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Parish Church, the Church Centre, the two Church Cottages, the Lodge and the Nellington Road New Churchyard.

Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community at St Paul. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on 'charities for the advancement of religion'. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer:
 - the provision of public worship which is open to all and seeks to provide a variety of styles enabling different groups within the parish
 - the teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups
 - the provision of child and youth activities with a Christian ethos
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish including:
 - visiting the sick and bereaved
 - taking communion to nursing homes and parishioners' houses.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of all our buildings.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, fully recognising its duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Achievements and Performance

The Choir

Despite the restrictions brought about by the pandemic, the church choir has continued to provide music for services throughout the year. The thriving junior section was able to enjoy a reduced choir camp in August.

Family Service Children's Group

We restarted the children's group in September, welcoming back large numbers. We currently have some 30 children on our register with group sizes varying from 12 – 20. The children worked really hard to put on, and participate in, the Family Service on 17th November using the theme of Daniel. They made it a most enjoyable and interesting service, despite the challenges of also presenting to the small

Zoom audience. It was lovely to get back to further normality and join the Parish Church Parade for Remembrance Sunday and resurrect and organise the crib service in December, despite the Omicron variant being determined to scupper many of our cast! A big thank you to the continued amazing support from Julia, Sally, Jo, Ed, Tracey, Charlotte, Laura & Fin without whom we wouldn't be able to run the group. We would also like to add that in these tough financial times, all our leaders/helpers have made the very generous gesture to subsidise all the group's activities and crafts out of their own pockets.

Further activities

Rusthall Lunch Club for older parishioners is an ecumenical activity run by volunteers and uses the large Parish Hall and lower kitchen as its venue. The Lunch Club resumed in September and was very well received although some people are still nervous and prefer not to mix. The rising cost of food, particularly meat, is a concern and the Club committee is monitoring the finances carefully.

Fund raising events (a) Ride and Stride went ahead and thanks go to Jane Goldsworthy for organising this annual event at which £930.00 (2020 £965.00) was raised to be shared between St Paul's and Kent churches. Jane raised a further £100 for St Paul's through a work scheme. (b) The Choir raised £189.50 (2020 £365.50) from the sale of jams and preserves which was also organised by Jane. (c) At Christmas time Gill McAllister sold candles produced from unusable candle ends and raised £249.00.

The Rusthall Community Larder: A new ecumenical venture, started at the beginning of the year, run by a steering group from both Rusthall churches, the parish council and manned by volunteers. No remuneration is received and the main expense is FareShare's costs. The Larder uses FareShare to receive, weekly, surplus fit-for-purpose products from the food and drink industry and promotes 'no good food should go to waste'. Products are also collected by arrangement from local supermarkets by volunteers. The Larder is open to anyone with a donation of £2 (requested but not obligatory) for one full bag of goods. St Paul's allows free use of the Parish Hall and storage and has financial administrative responsibility. The village as a whole has been very supportive with monetary donations from individuals and groups so the Larder can be supplemented when there is a shortage of particular products. At Christmas time users were given a Christmas bag, the contents of which were, donated by a number of businesses. It has been very successful and very much appreciated and will continue while financially viable.

Worship and Prayer

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the week, and over the course of the year, that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. For example, **Evensong** provides a quiet, intimate and reflective environment for worship whilst opportunities are provided for people to engage in more outgoing worship such as that provided by the Family Service within our parish.

Unfortunately the St Paul's churches were shut again in January 2021 due to the prevailing high levels of Covid-19 locally and the situation was monitored on a monthly basis with permission sought from Bishop James to remain closed for the first three months. The **Family Service** at the Church Centre therefore decided to explore the delivery of services via Zoom from people's homes. This proved to be quite successful and generated an average attendance of 24 people. When it was possible to return to face-to-face services, we did so but with the addition of delivery via Zoom for those who still felt unable to attend church. This has proved to be a useful service but necessitated some expenditure to improve the delivery externally. There remains some difficulty with the delivery of the service during Communion to be resolved in 2022. After returning to face-to-face services at the Church Centre the numbers there have been encouraging with an average of 30 adults, up to 20 children and up to 8 continuing to attend via Zoom.

A small group of worshipers attended the thought provoking **Lent Course** entitled Living in Love and Faith which resulted in an article for the magazine in June/July.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. This year we have celebrated 10 baptisms and 7 weddings and held 9 funerals in the Parish Church together with 9 committals/burials of ashes at the new churchyard with no service. Additionally 5 full funeral services were also conducted by a member of the ministry team at a crematorium.

The Parish Church and the Church Centre

Parish Church Roof

Following the Quinquennial Inspection various repairs have been put into motion including the Vicar's vestry roof. The major repairs will proceed during 2022 so little expense has been incurred during 2021.

The Lodge

One side of the Lodge has been replaced due to old age. This work has been carried out including a protective liquid coating. The remaining three sides of the Lodge will also need to be painted over with a protective coating. This work may be undertaken by our Tuesday volunteers, or a summer working party by our parishioners. In either case the costs should only involve the materials used.

Tuesday Voluntary Group

The Tuesday Group of young people, guided by Patricia, has now effectively taken over the work of our paid gardener and volunteers Tony Maylam and David Vernon. Tony and David have for many years worked on maintaining the churchyard round the Parish Church and without their freely given time our maintenance costs would have been significantly greater. Thank you both Tony and David. The Tuesday group is also painting various metal structures and fittings with the cost of materials only covered by St Paul's.

Trees

Various trees have been reduced in size at the east end of the Parish Church churchyard. This has been put into action to allow more natural light to enter the church through the east windows. This work was overseen by Graeme Anderson on our behalf. Our thanks go to Graeme.

The Parish Church Boiler

Thankfully our expenses regarding the boiler during 2021 have been relatively light considering the advanced age of the boiler. At some stage it will need a major overhaul or be replaced completely at which point either option will cost St Paul's a considerable sum.

Lighting and Electrical Circuits

We now have an electrical supply and repair company who regularly updates our electrical systems, where necessary, and repairs or replaces lights within the Parish Church, the Lodge and the Church Centre. Our usual liaison volunteer with this company is May, who, many times this year, has opened the Parish Church early morning; an exemplary example, along with many, of her commitment to St Paul's. Thank you May.

Nellington Road New Churchyard

The heavy duty wire fence was maintained, the grounds were kept clear by a contractor and the bins emptied regularly by volunteers.

1 and 2 Church Cottages

Ongoing maintenance work was carried out on No 1 Church Cottages following advice from Bracketts Surveyors and new tenants at No 2 Church Cottages took up residence in May after redecoration of the property.

The Church Centre

There remain some issues with hot water provision in the top kitchen and the front toilets as the water heater is now obsolete and not functioning. This will need to be resolved in early 2022. Also, there is a problem with hot water provision in the lower Gents toilet. This, again, remains to be resolved in 2022.

Pastoral Care

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. The vicar has visited all church members who have requested it, to celebrate communion with them either at their homes or in hospital.

Mission and outreach

St Paul's, Rusthall website www.stpaulsrusthall.org.uk provides a go to place for up to date information on church activities with amongst other things a weekly "pew leaflet" and a monthly magazine. There is also a Facebook page: St Paul's Church, Rusthall. The PCC warmly thank Deborah Bruce and Sue Hare for all their hard work in producing the magazine.

Ecumenical Relationships

St Pauls works closely with St Mark's Tunbridge Wells, King Charles the Martyr Tunbridge Wells, All Saints Langton Green and St Luke's Tunbridge Wells sharing the responsibility of the provision of confirmation and this year it was the turn of St Paul's Church to host the confirmation service at the end of June. 5 candidates from St Paul's received preparation and 1 from King Charles the Martyr but due to a Covid-19 infection only 5 were confirmed on the day.

Financial Review

The total income was £121,600 (2020 £125,604), a decrease compared to last year of about 3%. Planned giving through envelopes and standing orders continues to provide a steady source of income. The two cottages continue to be let and provided a net income of £17,963 (2020 £15,253).

The total expenditure of the PCC during 2021 was £156,177 (2020 £141,569).

Covid restrictions and reluctance to use cash resulted in no payments to charitable organisations and mission agencies (2020 £3,227). The Parish Offer was £57,588 (2019 £61,000). Ministry costs £61,028, (2020 £64,734), Support costs £3,115, (2020 £911), Services £13,071, (2020 £9,724), new churchyard upkeep £2,920, (2020 £3,512) and the cost of voluntary income and appeals £59, (2020 £192) amounting to £80,193 (2020 £79,076) provided Christian ministry from St Paul's.

The net result for the year was a deficit of income over expenditure of £34,577 (2020 £15,965).

No legacies were received in 2021 (2020 £6,500).

The PCC is grateful to the Treasurer Pat Cripps and members of the Treasury team for all their hard work.

Reserves policy

The free reserves amount to £37,281.32 (2020 £65,927). £60,000 is considered sufficient to meet 3 months operating expenditure. The PCC is aware that regular expenditure exceeds income and is taking action to rectify this situation; until they see the results of this work, they hold greater reserves than usually stated.

Although designated funds are held for maintenance of the buildings, the free reserves also relate to future capital projects which still have to be decided. The majority of the free reserves are invested with the Central Board of Finance. During the Covid-19 pandemic income has been reduced with the loss of collections, hall hire and wedding fees. Regardless of this the finances, and with special thanks to all members of the Planned Giving Scheme who have continued their support, have held up very well but our reserves are being steadily eroded on a yearly basis.

Going Concern

Despite Covid-19, with the levels of reserves the PCC expects the charity to continue operating as normal for the near future and be able to meet its obligations as they fall due.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our churches a lively and vibrant community. In particular we should mention our churchwardens Clive M^cAllister and May Graves who have worked so tirelessly on our behalf and Pat Cripps who has helped us all to understand the church's accounts and its finances.

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is registered with the Charity Commission as required by the Charities Act 2011. Its governing document is the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Paul's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), churchwardens, deputy churchwardens, deanery synod members and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

In normal times the full PCC meets six times during the year with an average level of attendance of 81%. Given its wide responsibilities the PCC has a number of committees which deal with a particular aspect of parish life. These committees, which include standing, worship, and family service, are all responsible to the PCC and report back to it regularly with minutes of their decisions being received by the full PCC and discussed as necessary. The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law and has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any direction given by the PCC.

Administrative information

The Parish Church of St Paul's, Rusthall is situated at Langton Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 8XD and the Church Centre address is Parish Office, Church Centre, Rusthall Road, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 8RE. St Paul's, Rusthall is part of the Diocese of Rochester within the Church of England.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2021 until the date of this report are:

Ex Officio members:

- Incumbent: The Reverend Ronnie Williams (Chairman)
- Warden: Mr Clive M^cAllister
- Warden: Miss May Graves
- Deputy Warden: Mr Graeme Anderson
- Deputy Warden: Mrs Susan Powley
- Deputy Warden: Mrs Margaret Brown
- Deanery Synod representative: Mr Tim Cripps – Reader
- Deanery Synod representative: Mr Tony Bourne
- Deanery Synod representative: Mrs Vreni Gould

Elected members:

- Miss Daphne Pilcher – Reader
- Miss Sue Hare
- Mrs Mary Holmes (until May 2021)
- Mr Paul (Bill) Barter
- Mr Nic Farman

In attendance:

- Treasurer: Mrs Pat Cripps
- Secretary: Mrs Mione Palmer

Approved by the PCC on 28th March 2022 and signed on their behalf by the Reverend Ronnie Williams (PCC Chairman)

Independent Examiner: Mr David R Ralph JP. FCIPD. FCIE
50 Southwood Road, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 8SP

Bankers: Lloyds Bank plc
82 Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1RP