

## **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**

The choir, under the leadership of Fiona Johnson is a very active and important part of church life. In February the choir sang Evensong at Peterborough Cathedral. Once lockdown started towards the end of March it was not possible to have choir practice or sing live for services. Instead, thanks to the technical expertise of members of the Johnson family, the choir went online. Each member of the choir who felt able to, recorded their part of a hymn and an anthem every week and these were then mixed together to create music that could be played during the Sunday morning service. Additionally the choir recorded an online concert for St Paul's Dedication Festival on 27<sup>th</sup> June which featured lockdown experiences of members of our parish as well as solo and ensemble performances from members of the choir. At the beginning of August the choir had a socially distanced choir camp without the usual

activities or the sleepover in church. Instead they created an online choral evensong service which was uploaded to the St Paul's Rusthall YouTube channel (Junior Choir Choral Evensong) to show the music they had sung during the week. 19 children and 14 adults were involved in the week which was a great success. As the restrictions on choral singing were relaxed at the end of the summer the choir started to look for ways in which it could resume singing. They managed to restart singing for the morning service at the Parish Church from the beginning of October following the strict Covid-19 guidelines. A limit was placed on the number of singers who could sing and each singer was spaced 2 metres from the next singer. The choir took over the North Aisle wearing face shields when singing. The second lockdown meant no live singing in November but the choir was back in Church in December. During this time they also recorded a Service of Readings and Music for Advent at the end of November and Nine Lessons and Carols at Christmas both of which are on the YouTube channel. The PCC thanks everyone in the choir and the wonderful organists: Alex Robson, Alistair Curtis and Daniel Toombs for another excellent year albeit in trying circumstances.

### **Family Service Children's Group**

The first lockdown put paid to any in church activities. However following strict Covid-19 guidelines the children's group was able to restart on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September and the numbers were promising. Each child had their own named pack with pens and paper and they were seated socially distanced at tables in a large horseshoe format. The tables were wiped down before and after and plenty of hand gel was on offer. Sadly two regular leaders were unable to continue however Julia Maguire continued to be a fantastic leader and support along with a great band of helpers.

### **Further activities**

Rusthall Lunch Club for older parishioners is ecumenical and is run by volunteers and uses the large Parish hall and lower kitchen as its venue. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 restrictions operations ceased in March.

Ride and Stride went ahead between lockdowns and thanks go to Jane Goldsworthy for organising this annual event at which £482.50 (2019 £305.50) was raised to be shared between St Paul's and Kent Churches.

Although no Autumn Fair was held this year the Choir went on line and raised £365.50 (2019 £2,427.42) from the sale of jams and preserves which was organised by Jane. This money goes direct to USPG. The Vicar's charity appeal at Christmas was also organised in a slightly different way this year with a notice in the pew leaflet and the website together with a Just Giving page. £3,036.22 (2019 £5,496, down because of Covid-19) was donated for the benefit of two local charities.

### **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. However due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions this year, our activities have been severely curtailed due to the closure of both churches from mid March until July. A short Service of the Word was streamed on our YouTube channel each week until the end of the first lockdown. Input for these services was provided by the Vicar, Readers, members of the congregation and the Choir (recorded remotely) and special thanks go to Nic and Jennifer Farman without whom the recordings would not have been possible.

From 5<sup>th</sup> July shortened services recommenced at 10am at both the Parish Church and the Church Centre following Government and Church of England guidelines. Although congregation singing was not permitted, the Choir was welcomed back to the Parish Church (subject to Government, Church of England and RSCM guidelines) for the Harvest Festival service. The Church Centre held a separate Harvest service.

Services continued to be available on the St Paul's Rusthall YouTube channel for those people unable to attend in person. Additionally the Readings and Music for Advent service and the Nine Lessons and

Carols service were recorded. 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 is being monitored on a monthly basis with permission sought from Bishop James to remain closed. Since the beginning of 2021 the Church Centre has been providing services on Zoom.

All are welcome to attend our regular services. At present there are 178 parishioners on the Church Roll, 76 of whom are not resident within the parish. 11 names were added during the year and 1 was removed through death. The Electoral Roll was last reviewed in March 2021. The average weekly attendance, counted during October, was 61 at the Parish Church and 43 at the Church Centre, but this number increased at Harvest and Christmas.

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 4 baptisms and one wedding and held 8 funerals in the Parish Church together with 5 committals/burials of ashes at the new churchyard with no service. Additionally 15 full funeral services were also conducted by a member of the ministry team at a crematorium/cemetery.

In March 2020 (held at the Church Centre) the World Day of Prayer was prepared by the people of Zimbabwe and the brothers and sisters of St Peter's, Mabelreign were remembered particularly. Throughout lockdown both church buildings have been open, for specific periods (because of the need to be manned) for private prayer. Additionally the Julian Group met once a month until lockdown. Since then, following a short break, weekly devotions have been sent out by email instead to approximately 64 people.

### **The Parish Church and the Church Centre**

At the Parish Church the PCC arranged for the pigeons to be removed permanently from the belfry whilst at the same time allowing the bats to come and go.

During the early part of the year pleated blinds were installed at the Church Centre to cover the windows above the sanctuary and the spot lights were repositioned so as to vastly improve the picture on the projection screen. These improvements were completed prior to lockdown in March. Towards the end of the first lockdown changes were carried out to the sound system enabling the proper connection of the laptop sound albeit at the expense of full microphone capacity. These changes have proved to be enormously beneficial to the new format for services when the Church Centre opened again in the summer.

Ongoing maintenance work was carried out on No 1 Church Cottages following advice from Bracketts Surveyors and the tenants at No 2 Church Cottages gave notice of their intention to vacate and indeed left at the beginning of 2021.

At the Nellington Road new churchyard the heavy duty wire fence was maintained.

### **Pastoral Care**

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. Reverend Ronnie Williams has visited all church members who have requested it, to celebrate communion with them either at their homes or in hospital. During lockdown the Electoral Roll was divided between a small number of people with responsibility to make contact, on a regular basis where possible, either by email or telephone.

### **Mission and outreach**

St Paul's, Rusthall website [www.stpaulsrusthall.org.uk](http://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", a monthly magazine and where

available weekly service sheet. 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 would have been the turn of St Mark's Church to host the confirmation service at the end of June. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 no service was able to go ahead and indeed no preparation for confirmation either.

## **Financial Review**

The total income was £125,604 (2019 £145,004), a decrease compared to last year of about 16%. 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 £15,253, (unchanged from 2019). The total expenditure of the PCC during 2020 was £141,569 (2019 £162,156). Total collections on behalf of other charitable organisations and mission agencies amounted to £3,227 (2019 £16,339.34); which was forwarded as received and therefore not included in these accounts. The Parish Offer was £61,000 (2019 £61,000). (The clergy stipend and parish share are no longer paid separately but given as a single offering.) Ministry costs £64,734, (2019 £65,614), Support costs £911, (2019 £1,420), Services £9,724, (2019 £16,415), new churchyard upkeep £3,512, (2019 £4,405) and the cost of voluntary income and appeals £192, (2019 £57) amounting to £79,076 (2019 £90,330) provided Christian ministry from St Paul's.

The net result for the year was a deficit of income over expenditure of £15,965 (2019 £17,152). Legacies received in 2020 amounted to £6,500. (No legacies were received in 2019.)

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 £65,927.58 (2019 91,212). £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 very much 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 to operating as normal for the foreseeable future and 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 McAllister 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, the readers, 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. However this year, due to Covid-19, there have only been 3 meetings with an average level of attendance of 85%. 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, family service and fund raising and saving opportunities, 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 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 until the date of this report are:

Ex Officio members:

- Incumbent: The Reverend Ronnie Williams (Chairman)
- Warden: Mr Clive McAllister
- Warden: Miss May Graves
- Deputy Warden: Mr Graeme Anderson
- Deputy Warden: Mrs Mione Palmer (until October 2020)
- 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 (from October 2020)

Elected members:

- Miss Daphne Pilcher – Reader
- Miss Sue Hare
- Mrs Mary Holmes
- Mr Paul (Bill) Barter
- Mr Nic Farman (from October 2020)
- Mr Chris Maguire (until October 2020)
- Mr Graham Robbins (until October 2020)

In attendance:

- Treasurer: Mrs Pat Cripps
- Secretary: Mrs Pat Churchill (until March 2020)
- Secretary: Mrs Mione Palmer (from March 2020)

Approved by the PCC on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021 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