



Annual Report for 2018

Vision Statement

- *As part of the church in Taunton, we seek to know Christ better and to make him better known.*
- *We do this through varied and lively worship, learning to apply God's word in the Bible, and being filled with his Holy Spirit.*

Prepared by the PCC and Coordinators

Fabian Wuyts

Vicar

11 March 2019

Registered Charity No: 1130757.

Full name of the charity: The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. James, Taunton.

Short names: St James Church PCC; St James Church Taunton.

Address: St James Church Office, St James Street, Taunton, TA1 1JS.

This report covers calendar year 2018 and has been written to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practices (SORP FRS102).

Foreword by the Vicar

Is it safe?

By the time you read this article, over eight months will have passed since we were welcomed as a family during that lovely service back in August, 2018. God has been very good to us, providing good schools for the children, blessing us with a spacious house, opening our eyes to all the beauty that Somerset has to offer ... and our taste buds to cider.

I spent those past months immersing myself in the life of the church, getting to know the people, the life and rhythm of the church and rejoicing in what God is doing here at St James. During the recent bring and share lunch there was a kind of “prophetic moment.” I was looking for my sticky name label, which I had lost, when someone pointed out to me that it had been stuck on top of the food table. As I was about to get the label, someone then said, “we now have a table called Fabian;” to which I replied, “well it looks like I am already part of the furniture.”

It certainly feels like the time is right to slowly move from observing the life of the church to start exploring God’s future purposes at St James. In early March, the PCC and other members of the leadership team spent a day praying and sharing what that future might look like. To discern a future, it is always good to tell the stories of the past. There are good reasons for doing this. First, God is a God of history and the Bible often tells us to remind ourselves of all that God has done in the past. Second, what he will do with us in the future is likely to be a development of what he has been doing in us so far. Finally, we need to learn from past mistakes or we will be in danger of repeating them again. We therefore spent our first session answering the question “what is our story so far?”

During our second session we looked at the future and explored the difference between a purpose statement and a vision. A “purpose” explains why we are here and so what we should be doing. A “vision” is what we have faith to believe that God will bring about if we fulfil our purpose faithfully. The current St James purpose statement is “to know Christ better and make him better known,” the vision will seek to describe what happens when Christ becomes more real to individuals and to the community. So the vision pictures a scenery that is different from what we experience today. It is also about faith in what God will achieve, rather than what we will manage. We are still at an early stage, but the conversations and pictures shared during the day were truly inspiring.

Finally, we spent some time thinking about the “now” and the small incremental changes we can bring about to positively improve our welcome, our worship and our work among families and children. Despite having now lived in three different countries, moved four times in just the last 10 years and experiencing my family grow from just the two of us to four kids, a cat, a dog, three guinea pigs and recently a cockatiel; I know that any changes, even small ones, bring a level of discomfort at first. However, I have also learned to embrace the power of changes and let those changes transform and challenge my faith. One of my favourite passages in C.S. Lewis’ book [*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*](#) is the following conversation between Susan and Mr Beaver. It goes like this: “Aslan is a lion - the Lion, the great Lion.” “Ooh” said Susan. “I’d thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion”...“Safe?” said Mr Beaver ...“Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

Following Jesus is not safe, but it is the best thing we can do for he is good, he is the King we are called to follow. May I therefore invite you all to pray as we seek together to discern and form a clear vision and set of values that will excite our imagination and affirm our faith in the God of Mission. While prayer is foundational, personal response is its natural outcome. May I also encourage you to make yourselves available to respond to God’s promptings as we seek to be faithful to his Kingdom’s priorities. Finally, we are journeying together in an open future that welcomes learning, change and risks. As we lift our eyes to the one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, let us walk with confidence into God’s good future.

With Christian love and affection,

Fabian

Introduction

St James Church, Taunton, is a parish church within the Diocese of Bath and Wells in the Church of England. Its parish includes the Roughmoor, North Town, Priory and Firepool areas of Taunton. The church's membership is drawn partly from within the parish, partly from across the rest of the town, and from nearby villages. Its services and activities are open to all, and the church works with other churches and local inter-church organisations in proclaiming and applying the good news of Jesus Christ.

Attendance at services, counted during October, was 207 (compared to 197 in 2017, 202 in 2016, 194 in 2015, 187 in 2014 and 171 in 2013), this being the "number attending at least once during the period", excluding visitors. There were also 37 people under 18 attending at least once.

At the 2018 Annual Meeting, there were 200 people on the Church Electoral Roll.

Objectives

The governing document is The Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. In common with other Anglican (Church of England) churches, this gives the objects of the church as to:

Promote in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The PCC's registration with the Charity Commission (using headings provided by Church of England Guidance at the time of initial registration) expands the statement of objects as covering:

- *Regular public worship open to all.*
- *The provision of sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation.*
- *Pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved.*
- *Teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups*
- *Taking of religious assemblies in schools.*
- *The provision of a youth club with a Christian ethos.*
- *Promotion of Christianity through the staging of events and meetings, and the distribution of literature.*
- *Promoting the whole mission of the Church through provision of activities for senior citizens, parents and toddlers and other special need groups.*
- *Supporting other charities in the UK and overseas.*

Public Benefit

The PCC has noted the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, including publication PB4 *The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit*.

The way that St James Church provides public benefit is summarised in its Vision Statement:

- *As part of the church in Taunton, we seek to know Christ better and to make him better known.*
- *We do this through varied and lively worship, learning to apply God's word in the Bible, and being filled with his Holy Spirit.*

Worship services are all open to the public. The church building is open as many days as possible for private prayer, and is available for weddings and funerals of parishioners as required. Baptisms of parishioners are normally conducted during Sunday morning services. The church building is also used for concerts and by some other groups, such as the NHS Blood Doning service.

Pastoral support is available to anyone who requests it. Church members also receive support through home groups.

The church supports local Christian organisations including Street Pastors, Taunton Team Chaplaincy, Besom, Open Door and Taunton Area Debt Advice.

A church does not exist in isolation, but is part of one world-wide church of all denominations. St James supports the work of WEC (church planting), TEAR Fund and Samaritans Purse (emergency and relief work), and Barnabas Fund (support for the persecuted church worldwide).

The PCC also has maintenance responsibilities for St James' Church building (Grade 2* listed) and the church halls. The halls are available for hire by community groups.

Operating

The vicar and the churchwardens manage the day-to-day business of the church, assisted by a Church Administrator. In particular, the church administrator handles bookings for the church halls and supervises the work of the caretaker. All financial matters are handled by the Treasurer.

In August 2018, we were joined by our new vicar, Fabian Wuyts, following a vacancy of ten months. (This length of vacancy is normal for a change of incumbent in a Church of England parish.) The parish continued to function normally during the vacancy, with the load being shared among other church leaders.

Various church members manage other church activities on a day-to-day basis, and there are rotas and teams in place to manage all activities which occur on a regular weekly or monthly basis.

The vicar and PCC have appointed coordinators to whom authority has been delegated to manage certain aspects of church life: Worship, Pastoral Care, Discipleship, Children & Young People's work, Outreach, Administration, and Facilities (premises and technical). The aim is to avoid overloading the vicar with too many decisions in a church which is steadily growing, and also to free his time so he can focus on where he can be most effective. This delegated leadership arrangement has continued with our new vicar.

The PCC meets monthly, except in April (Annual Church Meeting) and August (summer holidays). It approves all major non-recurring financial expenditure and decides proposals to undertake any major new activity. Space is made in the agenda to maintain a strategic overview of the church's activities.

The Standing Committee is empowered by law to conduct PCC business in between meetings of the council. Its members are the church officers plus one ordinary member of the PCC. In practice, the Standing Committee operates primarily through email discussions.

Various provisions decided by legislation (enacted by General Synod) or decisions made by Diocesan Synod govern, for example, the type of formal public worship services that can be provided but allow a church to develop its own style. The appointment of clergy and readers is managed by the diocese, in consultation with the parish. Payment of clergy is carried out via the diocesan Common Fund, which scheme decouples clergy pay from a parish's financial circumstances. Maintenance work and alteration of the church building is overseen by a Diocesan Advisory Committee, through faculties granted by the diocesan chancellor; this process is in lieu of civil planning procedures. The parish is required to appoint an architect approved by the diocese to advise on and specify all works required.

Activities

Worship

Contributed by Richard Lucas, Worship Coordinator.

During the vacancy services were planned and arranged by a team of people from within the Ministry team and across the Church and was led and planned by the Worship Coordinator. Services from October to Easter were planned by Geoff Treasure. From Easter until the arrival of Fabian by Richard Lucas. There were a range of Ministers, Bishops and Archdeacons who officiated and preached. A greater range of members were encouraged to take part and use their gifts and this had a positive effect with their ministries being used and has contributed to a wide range of people being available and confident in their ministry at the end of the vacancy.

The worship coordinator meets regularly with the Vicar to look at the overview of services. There will be meetings to look at song choices and themes with the Vicar and the Musical Director. The Vicar plans the themes and organises rotas for leading and officiating.

The main worship service remains at 10.30am on a Sunday, alternating between Holy Communion and Morning Worship and an All-Age Service. Services run for around an hour and a quarter with the exception of the All Age Service, with a pre and after-service time of fellowship. During Morning Worship, an alternative Messy Church service, primarily for families, runs in the hall on one Sunday. On other Sundays, Sunday Club groups for 3-16 year-olds run in the halls. There is a creche for younger children every week, in the church alongside the service.

A large team of volunteers is involved in each morning service. This is required as this is an expanding work with a great deal of equipment to be set up each week. This includes preparing the building for service leaders and preachers, singers and musicians, readers, people leading prayers, sound and video technicians. Regular prayer meetings are held each Friday morning and before each morning service.

The music team comprises a range of instrumentalists and singers with the Music Director providing settings to match the available skills, and introducing new music on a regular basis in collaboration with the Worship Coordinator. The style is based around the leading of corporate worship with a contemporary feel and range of songs from different traditions where appropriate. There are singers who are leading worship each service with one person designated to lead praise times. Practices are led by the worship coordinator and Music Director these take place before all services and at other times when appropriate.

The pattern of evening services, adopting a common time of 7pm and an informal praise format has run for several years and has a consistent attendance of between 20 and 40. The monthly pattern includes emphases on praise, communion, and teaching. The second Sunday follows the well-established Praise service format with extended times of praise with a contemporary style. The third Sunday is Communion with the opportunity for different styles to be incorporated with the 4th Sunday including an extended time of in-depth teaching. The aim is to provide a substantive alternative to the morning service, for those who are either not able to attend in the morning or values a different style and approach within a smaller setting. The first Sunday of the Month is Soul Space, a service for young people led by church members; this involves a range of worship and activities. It has a growing attendance with considerable input from church members.

Services are also held during the week. The "Praise and Play" service for young families is held on Wednesday mornings. The Wednesday Holy Communion service moved to a weekly event during the year, having previously been held monthly. There is a monthly Holy Communion Service for the Alzheimer's group off-site, regular services are held at Calway House residential home. Communion services are held elsewhere such as Pegasus Court and home Communion is also provided for those unable to attend church. Readers, retired clergy and other church members also help to lead services at other churches in the area.

There are several town-wide services held in the church each year, for example in the week of Christian Unity and the Good Friday service. This remains a positive example of Christian unity within the town with a church packed with all denominations.

As in previous years, we will continue to consider the needs of those who currently attend services and look at how we reach out those outside the church and make worship accessible and relevant within a changing landscape.

Pastoral Care *Contributed by Annie Reid, Pastoral Coordinator.*

One of the interesting aspects of the pastoral care role is that, despite being a multi-faceted activity, it produces no easily measurable output with most of the activity taking place quietly and confidentially behind the scenes.

But the starting point is an awareness of various needs or concerns; among these being the needs of individuals and families within the congregation, the needs of those with specific roles to play within the church body and the differing needs of various groups – the young, the single, the elderly, etc.

In recent times, a number of initiatives have been introduced and developed to provide support to these various groups – for example, the email prayer chain, the Welcome team planned social events, home and hospital visiting and the coordination of church transport.

Some things to celebrate this year ... new lunches for ladies on a regular basis to help people get to know others better, the thriving Thursday Fellowship under the care of Vicky Dykes and her team, templates of name badges created by Alex and Beccy for the periodic "name amnesty" Sundays, Vicky Dykes keeping track of members in hospital and the hugely successful newcomers' lunch.

Finally and most important – my thanks to the pastoral care team for all they do and also to members of the congregation who keep us posted when help is needed.

Discipleship

Contributed by Roger Fenton, Discipleship Coordinator.

Just like last year, as I write my annual review, the first hurdle to jump is - how do you measure or assess in some meaningful way whether discipleship is growing within church members? Is what I'm doing a help? I've yet to find an answer! As growth in discipleship is unique to every individual, it's really for you, the church members, to decide. So, I start with an invitation - for you to let me know. What would help you along your faith journey?

Thank you to Sue Lucas and Mark Stevens who helped Fabian and me to run an Alpha course in the autumn. My thanks also to the home groups who provided and served the food. Twelve people started the course, a mix of some St James members, some from other churches in Taunton, and some unchurched folks. Three people dropped out after a couple of weeks but overall everyone else who completed the course indicated that, as a minimum it was very helpful, and for some significantly more. Praise God! I expect to again offer an Alpha course during 2019.

A new home group has begun, created to meet the increasing need for a group to meet during the day rather than in the evening. This brings our number of home groups to twelve, and the total number attending groups to 123 members, a small increase over 2017. I intend to continue promoting the benefits of joining a home group, and my hope is to see future growth in 2019. Home group leaders meet together four times a year, for fellowship, for prayer, the sharing of experience, and to learn from one another. Leading a group is not easy and we are blessed to have the current leaders and in 2019 the intention is to invest further in this valuable resource. Study notes for home groups (and all church members) will continue to be produced 'in house' each week and will continue to build on and compliment the subject of the Sunday readings and talk.

I am very aware that there are still some church members with whom I have not, so far, been able to have a chat about things. I ask for your patience as I try to find you on a Sunday morning. You could, of course, always come and find me.

Children's & Youth Work

Contributed by Kate Taylor, Children and Young People's Coordinator.

The number of families and children has increased during 2018. This was helped by the birth of four babies.

Sunday Club and Messy Church continued throughout the year. Sunday Club operates on alternate Sundays at the same time as the morning service, for children between the ages of 3 and 16, and runs as three groups. They are well resourced but staffing the groups has remained an issue. I would like to thank those who have faithfully served these groups.

Soul Space has continued to meet monthly on the 1st Sunday evening and again the numbers have increased. Our partnership with Wellsprings has been very beneficial to the group and a new partnership with Vineyard has led to joint working by staff and new friendships made within the group. We hosted young people from Zambia for an evening of worship and fellowship assisted by the diocesan youth team. Staff attended two diocesan resource evenings and were inspired to shop, prepare and cook a Christmas meal for fifty people. The group also attended a TYFC evening youth event in Taunton and an event in Wells.

Soul Space is open to all young people in Taunton who want to explore their faith and meet young people from other churches.

The Friday night Voice project run jointly with St Mary Magdalene continues to support our young people in their faith journey.

The Monday morning toddler group has remained popular, serving families across Taunton. Some members have also joined Praise'n'Play, these are members of our church, other churches and those with no church affiliation. The attendance at Praise'n'Play has increased, we seem to be one of the few providers of a midweek service for Mums and pre-school children.

Both groups raised over £300 for RAFT purchasing mother and baby toiletries. We introduced a monthly Table Talk enabling adults to explore matters of faith, this is followed by a bring and share lunch.

Our relationship with St James School continues to flourish. The after-school club, Xplore, is over-subscribed! The school attends church for services and each class came in turn to participate in the Christmas Experience. Volunteers attend regularly to hear children read. Weekly worship is led by members from church.

North Town School have continued to invite our church to take worship from time to time and attended church for their leavers service and at Christmas.

As I retire from my role as Children and Young People's Coordinator I would like to thank all those who continue to support the children's work in so many ways. A special thanks to those who plan and deliver the teaching that enables all young people and their families to explore and grow in faith.

I look forward with prayer to the continued development of this ministry.

Outreach

Contributed by Jenny Wakefield, Outreach Coordinator.

Over the past three years we, as a church, have been continued to be influenced by the Life on the Frontline approach to sharing the good news to those we come in contact with in our everyday out of church lives. This is also encouraged by our Diocese, through promoting the concept of our "Living the Story telling the Story". It is essential that we hold true to this if our friends, colleagues and indeed all those we meet, are to have any chance of hearing the Life changing message of Jesus. Our church-based focus in worship, teaching and discipleship involves an integrated approach to encouraging church members at every level to reach out to their everyday contacts and within our church activities and worship we seek to provide opportunities both social and worship orientated which enables members to adopt a "come with me approach" We also seek to encourage members to be outward looking and aware of opportunities for service and mission in the wider community and world. This is also underpinned by the discipleship and worship coordinators in their roles.

Regular Events

In addition to informal and welcoming worship opportunities, the church supports a number of regular events which enable church members to invite friends and family to interface with the church and hopefully want to know more. Contacts are made through activities such as the weekly Toddler Group, Praise and Play, Bellringing and Art Group, and the monthly Thursday Fellowship.

One-off events in 2018 included:

- Passioneaster presented by the St. James Players at Easter, presenting the Easter Story through the eyes of lesser known figures involved. This was an opportunity to present the amazing story of Easter in a powerful and thought-provoking way. It involved a multi-aged cast and included some significant

input by two performers from other churches. The two evening performances enabled the Players to raise £900 for Open Door.

- On completion of this event, planning started for the biennial pantomime in January 2019, with its traditional intention of reaching out to a wider audience from the community.
- A third celebration of St. James Day, with Tower trips, children's activities, an art workshop, displays of our community and mission links, lunches and refreshments, which saw over a hundred people of different ages visiting the church. This year we linked with Taunton Live, an annual community event. A Taizé Service was organised for the Saturday evening and was attended by about 50 people.
- A Fish & Chip Quiz Night in November attended by about 70 people, church members and their guests for a fun and fishy evening testing knowledge they didn't know they had.
- Christmas Experience which involved re-telling the story to the children of St. James Church School, which now comprises 14 classes. The story telling team was augmented by some new people including Fabian in the role, very appropriately, as a Wise man from the East.
- St. James and North Town schools both held a wide range of Christmas services, involving six separate occasions, during which parents were welcomed as they came to see their children's contribution.

Food continues to be an important part of many of our events, and a small catering team continues to assist with arrangements for different events that occur, the most significant this year being the welcome celebration for the arrival of our new vicar.

With regard to our outreach to our local parish, a small group of people have been praying for the Priory area of the Parish, and what God would have us do there. This is a listening to God initiative, and one that could be commended for other parts of our parish area. The outcome of this group has been to concentrate on the school and there is a proposal supported by the PCC to start an initiative supported by TLG (Transforming Lives for Good) to provide mentoring for children at St James Church School.

ROC – Joint Church Community initiatives

In October 2017 there was a proposal within the local "B1" informal group of churches to set up a conference under the auspices of ROC (Redeeming Our Communities) aimed at engaging with other local organisations that are also seeking to support and benefit the vulnerable members of the community. Much of the Coordinator's time was engaged in this during 2017/18. The resulting Conversation in September 2018 was a dynamic occasion, supported by a range of local people and churches and attended by Bishop Ruth and various civic dignitaries. It has led to a number of initiatives being discussed and developing through action groups; this includes work on developing better Rough Sleeper provision: Fabian and other members of St. James have had some involvement in this.

Our premises

The church premises are popular as a venue for concerts and meetings, and a large number of people attend the regular blood-donating sessions, flu clinics, slimming club meetings, and other community meetings held in the church. These hirings help to make the church familiar to more people in the town and hirers appreciate the welcome given by our administrator and caretaker, Alex and Ian, who have continued the positive approach of their predecessors.

We seek where possible to keep the church open to the community, with a team of people locking and unlocking this church. Although we do not have a huge footfall, there are a significant number who call in, take away the mini guide,

gospels and literature and chat with Ian and church members who happen to be working in the church.

Local and International Mission

The church continues to support working with other local churches on town-wide 'social concern' evangelism, and several individual members are involved as volunteers. These include:

- Street Pastors (ministry to young people visiting the town's night clubs);
- Taunton Team Chaplaincy (providing chaplains to businesses and offices in the town);
- Rail Responders, has developed as a result of Chaplaincy and is now established
- Besom (carrying out decorating and gardening jobs for people referred to it who cannot do such things themselves, and crisis food parcels);
- Open Door (providing meals, clothes, showers, a laundry - and a listening ear - for homeless people).
- Taunton Youth for Christ (providing chaplaincy and youth work to mainly secondary schools in the town).
- Taunton Area Debt Advice, providing support to people struggling with financial difficulties.

The church continues to support the following overseas missions, financially and in prayer;

- David and Margie Whitehorn, the leaders for WEC's church planting work in Africa;
- TEAR Fund (emergency and relief work);
- Traidcraft, despite its recent difficulties. It is with sadness we note the loss of Lin Davies who worked with Freda to promote this Fair Trade initiative.
- Samaritans Purse (an international relief organization); and
- Barnabas Fund (which supports the persecuted church worldwide). Freda Davis continues to promote Publicity of events and services happens in a number of forms.

A review of our Mission support was postponed until the new year to given Fabian time to get an understanding of our current mission strategy.

Publicity

We have continued to use invitation cards for Christmas and Easter services, which are distributed to the primary schools in the parish and in the immediate area, through the efforts of congregation members. The church website is a valuable point of contact, being kept up to date weekly for forthcoming events, and carrying recordings of Sunday sermons. The quarterly church magazine keeps church members in touch with what is happening, and the church also has its own Facebook page. Andrew Slade has now stood down as magazine editor and a new editor is being sought. This may give opportunity for a review of our communications strategy.

Outreach work with our local schools is covered under Children's & Youth Work.

Alpha Courses are dealt with under the Discipleship Coordinator's section.

Facilities

Contributed by Martin Wakefield, Facilities Coordinator.

The main premises projects undertaken during the year were the refurbishment of the organ, completion of stonework repairs at the top of the tower, and the refurbishment of the church lounge. The work on the organ comprised the replacement of the electric blower, re-leathering one of the air reservoirs, replacing the pedal electric coupler and adding a coupler from the Great to the Swell; this was funded by members of the congregation through an appeal. The

tower stonework was carried out by conservators working from ropes. The lounge project was carried out by church members, with repair work to a wall done by our regular small works contractor. Numerous minor repairs were also undertaken, some done by contractors and others by church members; notable among the latter was the repointing of the churchyard wall facing St James Street, carried out by one determined volunteer. We also reviewed and reorganised the premises records, including plans of major projects going back many years.

The annual maintenance programme, started last year, was continued. This is an inspection of the whole premises combined with consideration of remaining items from the Quinquennial Inspection Report. There is now only one item remaining from the 2015 QI, that being to complete the painting of gutters and downpipes. The five-yearly electrical inspection was undertaken, resulting in not unexpected recommendations for replacement of major components of the now forty-year-old installation.

On the technical front, the rewriting of the office IT applications was completed, enabling the removal of old software. This was just in time for the PC itself to then fail, which made its replacement reasonably straightforward. The church sound system suffered a number of failures during the year, including the need to replace the mixer: this is now in hand. Good progress was made on rewriting the church website, and it is hoped this can be completed early in 2019.

Administration Administrative matters are covered in various places elsewhere in this report, so a separate report has not been prepared.

Our Administrator / Administration Coordinator is Alex Dickinson.

Financial Review

The majority of the PCC's income is from direct giving by church members (including tax reclaimed under Gift Aid), with a smaller proportion deriving from hire of premises. No funds are raised from the general public.

Income from stewardship and collections was slightly down in 2018 compared with 2017.

Expenditure, other than expenditure on maintenance and repairs and extra activities, was up compared to that in 2017. This was due in the main to increases in wages and administrative cost associated with filling the vacancy.

The General Fund ended the year with a balance of £157,091. This was £350.00 more than at the end of 2017.

Repairs to the Church organ were carried out, with the majority of the funding met from pledges reserved in 2017 and carried forward. Further pledges were received plus a grant from TDBC for £500. £1820 was also reclaimed under the Listed places of Worship Grants scheme. Once completed this cleared the restricted fund carried forward from 2017.

Investment Policy: it is our strategy to invest our funds balances in the Church of England's Central Board of Finance deposit funds.

No funds are held as custodian trustee on behalf of others.

Reserves policy: within the General Fund, the PCC has designated the following reserve funds:

Projects Fund – for capital projects being planned by the church and as a place to hold legacies when first received. There is no set level for this fund, monies being assigned to it as needs arise and funding allows.

Fabric Fund – for major fabric repairs that will occur from time to time but cannot be met out of annual income (for example, gas boiler replacement, re-roofing, repairs to stonework). The intention is to maintain this fund at £30,000, but that level will fluctuate according to demand.

Opportunity Fund – for short-notice opportunities that may arise from time to time, for example a piece of land adjoining the church being put on the market, leaving no time to raise the required funds for a deposit through an appeal. The intention is to maintain this fund at £20,000.

Risks Fund - for maintaining essential church activities for a period of up to around one year should there be a loss of income for any reason. This fund is set at 10% of Stewardship giving (and Gift-aid), which allows, for example, for members moving away; plus 30% of non-giving income (i.e. hall hire and car park charges, over which church members do not have control).

The Grants Fund was largely used up in 2018 and the PCC decided to wind it up and transfer the residue to the Projects Fund from the start of 2019. The fund was designated to hold part of the proceeds from the sale of a field and part of the churchyard, to be used for supporting other organisations whose aims complement the church's own mission. In practice, it was used mainly to support Taunton Area Debt Advice, a service set up by members of the church, whose funding will continue from the General Fund.

The Reserves Policy is reviewed annually.

At the end of 2018, the designated reserve funds stood as follows:

Grants Fund:	0 as merged
Projects Fund:	£55,894
Fabric Fund:	£30,000
Opportunity Fund:	£20,000
Risks Fund:	£20,918 (10% of giving = £11,538, plus 30% of other income = £9,380)
Total:	£126,812

The total exceeds the £75,000 needed to cover the recommended accounting practice of holding in reserve 6 months' budgeted expenditure.

Most of the £55,894 held at the end of the year in the designated Projects Fund was not assigned to specific projects. The church maintains a Capital Expenditure Plan detailing future projects which may in due course draw on this Fund. A further unassigned £30,279 is held as surplus on the General Fund. Each year, the PCC considers how to spend or designate any surplus assets.

Grant-making policy: the PCC has a policy of donating a minimum of 10% of stewardship giving (including cash collections and income tax recovered) to other Christian organisations. This is because an individual church such as St James is part of the one worldwide Christian church, with different parts of the church undertaking different responsibilities, and also being dependent on each other. Local organisations supported have aims which overlap with those of St James church. Organisations outside the local area are largely ones with which the church has had a relationship for some time. From time to time, the PCC also supports church members undergoing Christian training, and undertaking full-time work with Christian organisations.

Staff and Volunteer Support

Approximately two full-time equivalent posts are paid. One of these is the vicar, the other is made up of three part time posts: Church Administrator, Caretaker and IT support person (who also acts as deputy administrator).

In terms of the number of hours spent on preparing for and running church activities, the majority of effort comes from volunteers. It is difficult to gauge the total effort put in by voluntary workers, but a conservative estimate would be more than 12 full-time equivalent posts, probably more.

The contributions of all volunteers are much appreciated and are essential for the running of services, children's and other groups, maintenance, pastoral care and every other aspect of church life. In particular, the churchwardens, treasurer, and Music Director all carry heavy loads.

Appointment of volunteers: where a post involves working with children or vulnerable adults, appointments are made using the Safer Recruitment process set out in the Church of England's safeguarding guidance. This includes having a formal job description, being interviewed with references taken up, and the completion of DBS checks.

Other appointments do not usually warrant such a formal process. The length and format of any interview will be appropriate to the work being undertaken.

Supporting volunteers: everyone who volunteers has a right to be able to discuss their roles with the relevant coordinator in order to agree expectations, receive support, be reasonably resourced, discuss training needs and, as far as practicable, and have these met. For further pastoral support,

they may talk with the vicar, a member of the clergy/readers team, or a trusted church member of their choosing.

Safeguarding

As a church we adhere to the Church of England Policy – Promoting a Safer Church – and have been working to the 2013 Diocese of Bath and Wells Safeguarding Policy Guidelines.

The Role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Carry out safer recruitment procedures
- Respond to any disclosures or concerns
- Work with the DSA on any matters connected with parish Safeguarding
- Raise the profile of safeguarding in the parish and ensure PCC are kept up to date with development
- Advise regarding training.

Safer recruitment procedures are carried out with regard to all appointments involving working with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, which all require DBS clearance. For other voluntary posts there is also a recruitment procedure in place operated by those in charge of different volunteers. There is a requirement by the Church of England that anyone who acts as a volunteer should have Safeguarding Awareness Training, at least at basic level (C0) and for many roles a higher level of training is required.

In a Church as large as St. James maintaining this level of requirement is not easy and is a matter of ongoing chasing. During 2018 it has been of great assistance that Beccy Fox was appointed as Assistant Parish Safeguarding Officer, as she was able to assist in the developing of the safeguarding aspects of the data base. I would like to record a vote of thanks to Becki, who has had to step down now due to other work commitments.

Risks

Finance: the main risk to the operation of the church is financial support. Most funding comes from church members, supplemented by income from hiring the church hall and car park. The church is not in receipt of any regular funding from other sources, either from within the Church of England, or the government. Grants may be obtainable to cover partial costs of some projects, and legacies may occasionally be received, but such sources do not impact on routine planning.

The church's finances are thus vulnerable to:

- Fluctuations in income from hall hire;
- Church members moving away;
- Gradual changes from one generation to another of members' understanding of their financial responsibility;
- Unexpected large costs for repairing the church building;
- Increases in the Parish Share contribution to the diocese which can be well above inflation.

The PCC keeps a proactive watch on these matters through reports from the Treasurer to alternate meetings of the council. An annual stewardship campaign, led by the Planned Giving Officer, aims to refresh church members' awareness of the principles of giving.

Communications: as the church grows in numbers, there is a risk of fragmentation due to the inability of all members to know every other member and what the various groups and teams are doing. Part of the PCC's strategy for growth is that the coordinators will facilitate communications within their respective functional areas.

Disaster Recovery Planning: The loss of the use of the church building is not considered to be a major risk. In 2001, the church moved its activities temporarily to the local church school, while the floor in the church building was replaced. It is considered that similar arrangements could be made again. The PCC does not consider that any disaster recovery plans need to be maintained for specific activities; the scale of operations is such that contingency plans are best drawn up in response to the nature of any issue that may occur. A project to secure the church computer system against loss of data and system failures is nearing completion.

Health & Safety: physical risks are managed through the church's *Health and Safety Policy*, which is reviewed annually by the PCC. The Policy document includes a schedule of risks using a checklist

provided by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Company. The Schedule sets out the procedures for mitigating and managing each risk. Equipment safety checks (gas appliances, security alarms, lightning conductor, fire extinguishers and electrical PAT testing) are undertaken annually.

Trustees

The members of the Parochial Church Council are the trustees of the charity. PCC members who have served from 1st January 2018 until the date this report was approved were:

Vicar:	Rev Fabian Wuyts	Chairman	*	(from August 2018)
Churchwardens:	Mrs Ruth Stevens		*	
	Mrs Joyce Kirk		*	
<i>Diocesan Synod:</i>	<i>Mrs Jacky Gillingham</i>			<i>(until, June 2018)</i>
Deanery Synod:	Mr Richard Carpenter			
	Mr Nic Tall			
	Mr Martin Wakefield	Joint Secretary	*	
Elected members:	Mr Steve Bradford	Vice chairman	*	
	Mrs Helen Dawe			
	Mrs Ruth Dunn	Joint Secretary	*	
	<i>Mr Jesse Eveleigh</i>			<i>(until April 2018)</i>
	Mr Roger Fenton			
	Mr Jamie Fox		*	
	Mr James Haddell			
	Mrs Sue Lucas			(from April 2018)_
	Mrs Sheila Marlow			
	Mr Richard Sainsbury	Treasurer	*	
	Mrs Liz Sykes			
	Mrs Jenny Wakefield			
	Mr Stan Wojcik			

* Asterisks indicate members of the Standing Committee: the Church Officers plus one ordinary member of the PCC.

Appointment of trustees: The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church of England's *Church Representation Rules*. The number of elected members is 12, with a minimum of four places to come up for election each year.

Ex-officio members of the PCC are:

- Clergy licensed to the parish.
- Two churchwardens, separately elected annually (on the same date as the main PCC election).
- Three representatives of the parish to Deanery Synod, elected every three years (on the same date as the main PCC election).
- Any members of Diocesan Synod and General Synod who are members of the church.

Recruitment of trustees: all Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and consider standing for election to the PCC. Active recruitment may occur when one sector of the church appears to be under-represented on the PCC.

Training of trustees: New members are provided with a copy of the *PCC Standing Orders*, which sets out how the PCC works, and a copy of the booklet *Trusteeship – an introduction for PCC members*. They are encouraged to obtain a copy of *A Handbook for Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councillors* and to attend any training events run by the diocese. PCC members also receive safeguarding awareness training.

Custodian Trustees: The Diocese of Bath and Wells is the custodian trustee for property owned by the church, i.e. the church hall and associated buildings and land.