



Annual Report for 2019

Vision Statement

*In response to God's generosity and immense love for us,
we seek to be God's people in sharing the good news of Jesus,
growing in faith, being with people in need,
challenging injustice and respecting God's creation.*

Prepared by the PCC and Coordinators

Fabian Wuyts

Vicar

9 March 2020

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 2019 and has been written to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practices (SORP FRS102).

Foreword by the Vicar

Looking back, looking forward

In the midst of life in St. James and all its activities, we have, in the last twelve months, made a concentrated effort to discern God's vision for the church. Since it has to do with what we can see, our vision states:

"We can see a growing community based on love where a diverse range of people from all walks of life find a place to belong and participate, share life's journey in its deepest sense and encounter the transforming love of God displayed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus."

The vision speaks of a place where the hurting, the depressed, the confused can find love, hope, help, forgiveness, guidance, acceptance and encouragement. A place where lives are transformed through the hearing and receiving of the Good News of Jesus Christ. A place of fellowship where we grow as followers of Jesus, laugh and learn to live together. A place where we participate in God's purposes, equipping every Christian for a significant ministry by helping them discover the gifts and talents God gave them. A place that has a godly impact in its community, town, country and further, empowering and sending out members to serve God in his mission. It also unashamedly speaks of growth in number and in depth. William Temple who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1942 until his death in 1944 famously said "The Church is the only organisation that does not exist for itself, but for those who live outside of it."

So how do we go about it? Well that is the current journey we are now taking. We have already discerned the need to employ a children and family worker to support those with a ministry among families. We will be welcoming our Curate, David Wilkie, and his family ... at the end of June. These are great developments, but more importantly we need to get a clear understanding of what we are here for (purpose), what is God calling us to do (priorities) and how should we do them (strategy).

Since God is the one who can do immeasurably more than we can think or imagine, we need to be bold and trusting. While Christ doesn't expect us to produce more than we can, he does expect us to produce all that we can by his power within us. There is a lot more than most of us think is possible. I therefore invite you all to continue to pray for God's Spirit to guide, reveal, confirm, unite and to make yourselves available to respond to God's promptings as we seek to be faithful to his Kingdom's priorities.

Rev Fabian Wuyts

Prayer for Growth

Heavenly Father, increase in number your Church at St James as you deepen us as followers and learners of Christ.

Help us to show uninhibited reliance on your grace and power as we seek renewal of our lives, our church, our community and our world.

Give us courage, imagination and generosity in order that your kingdom may come and your abundant life be known by all.

We make this prayer in the name and to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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, surveyed during October, was 202 (compared to 207 in 2018, 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 46 people under 18 attending at least once.

At the 2019 Annual Meeting, there were 177 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 runs a parent and toddler group, an after-school club, a school mentoring scheme (Transforming Lives for Good) and a parenting support group (Family Links Nurturing Programme). It also 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.

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.

The worship in the Church that takes place within the services is coordinated by the worship coordinator alongside the Vicar and the Musical Director. There are a range of people within the Church who contribute to, lead and preach within the services. A greater range of members have been encouraged to take part and use their gifts and this had a positive effect with their ministries being used and this has contributed to a wide range of people being available and confident in their ministry in particular with AAW and evening services where those available from the Ministry team is more limited.

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 worship coordinator plans the singing and rotas. The worship Coordinator has an overview of the evening services and how these relate to the 10.30 services. There is a different team which has been grown within evening services. It has been a joy to see people flourish and have their gifts used and expanded.

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 crèche for younger children every week, in the church alongside the service.

A large team of volunteers is involved in each morning service, 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. There are gaps that need to be filled within this ministry to enable the smooth set up and organising of services with the wide range of activities and equipment needed.

The music team comprises a range of instrumentalists and singers with the Music Director providing settings to match the available skills. New music is introduced on a regular basis in collaboration by the Musical Director, Worship Coordinator and the Vicar. The style is based around the leading of corporate worship with a contemporary feel and with a range of songs and instrumentation that complement this. Singers lead worship in each service with one person designated to lead praise times. Practices are led by the Music Director and these take place before all services. There is also a Worship meeting and practice on the first Monday each month with a time of prayer and reflection alongside the learning of songs and practicing for the services. Regular prayer meetings are held each Friday morning and before each morning service.

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. Currently this is a guitar led service with a band who are growing and learning as they worship and lead. The coordinator would particularly wish to thank Steve Gill for his ministry and commitment in playing and leading the music alongside Patrick Platt, Jamie Fox, Nigel Bright and our new keyboard player Rev Fabian Wuyts. 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 teaching and praise and runs to a similar format to the second Sunday. 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 desire a different style and approach within a smaller setting. The first Sunday of the Month is Soul Space, a meeting for young people led by church members; this involves a range of worship and activities 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 the Good Friday service. We also support and attend the B1 joint services at Wellsprings which are an opportunity to meet fellow Christians from a range of other Churches and share in worship for all the ages. Both of these events remain positive examples of Christian unity within the town and across a range of denominations and traditions. As in previous years we will continue to consider how we reach out to those outside the church and those who come without a church background and endeavour to make worship accessible and relevant within a changing landscape. New singers, musicians and technical team members are always welcomed especially as some move

to new ministries within the church. There is a commitment required in leading, singing playing and ensuring that the technical side functions and my thanks go to all those who give their time to this ministry.

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

Pastoral visiting: thanks are due to Sue Morrell and Eileen Fowler who keep in regular touch with specific needy or vulnerable church members. Members of the congregation who are in hospital continue to receive visitors; the names of those involved are also given to Fabian. Members of the pastoral visiting team are shortly going to attend a safeguarding training session.

Email prayer chain: this is now run by Jill Winstanley and messages can be passed on by Annie, Alex or Fabian. These messages are confidential and members of the team are asked not to discuss requests or to approach those who are being prayed for.

Flower Rota: this is running successfully --- and we also have some new volunteers. Warm thanks are due to Pam Marks who has managed this team so well over the past few years. Marilyn Gibson has kindly agreed to be our "treasurer".

Newcomers lunch: an occasional event managed by members of the catering team. 18 newcomers signed up for the most recent lunch.

Labels: we hold three "name amnesty" Sundays each year.

Thursday Fellowship is run by Vicky Dykes and Pam Anderson. This regular meeting continues to be popular and the membership is increasing.

Welcome Team: there are plans to bring this team, wardens and sides persons together in a new protocol.

Suggestions for the future: new photos of members of the congregation to be shown on the big screen before and after main services to help people recognise and get to know others in the congregation.

Discipleship *Contributed by Roger Fenton, Discipleship Coordinator.*

It has been a pleasure to work with home group leaders and their group members these past twelve months. The number of home groups has reduced by one during 2019; there are now 11 home groups. I wish to sincerely thank Kay Seed for faithfully leading her group for many years. Those attending a home group now number 114, a reduction of 9 from last year. Home group leaders continue to 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 2020 the intention is to invest further in this valuable resource to fully support the leaders as they develop their ministry to the group and enjoy growth in discipleship and commitment.

Study notes for home groups (and all church members) will continue mainly to be produced 'in house' each week and will continue to build on and compliment the subject of the Sunday readings and talk. The writing of the notes is now shared between three authors - Fabian, Richard Carpenter and myself, and this brings a variety of style and content that has been well received. Study notes from outside sources will continue to be considered if they positively supplement the Sunday theme.

There was insufficient appropriate demand to run an Alpha course this year. We keep under constant review the demand and opportunity to offer Alpha or other discipleship courses.

Every Christian's discipleship needs are individual, as we are all at different stages along our faith journey. Help and encouragements to grow closer to our Lord Jesus for church members who are unable or choose not to join a home group remains a challenge. I have been rewarded by seeing faith growth in a

Children's & Youth Work

number of individuals but remain aware that there are many church members with whom I have spent little time, something which I continue to work towards correcting.

Contributed by Hilary Hayes and Vashti Smit, joint Children and Young People's Coordinators.

Sunday Groups (Hilary Hayes)

When Vashti and I took over from Kate Taylor, my remit was the Sunday activities. This includes crèche, Sunday Club, Boulders, Soul Space, Messy Church and provision for special needs children.

Crèche – a rota of helpers set up and clears away each week. Most weeks there are 3 or 4 little ones. Gordon and Barbara Stones kindly look after the children's books.

Sunday Club – the former Gems and Pebbles groups were joined because of shortage of helpers. It was re named Sunday Club. Children are aged 3 – Year 5 and we average 10 to 16 children. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, meeting in church before going to the hall. We now have more helpers so we have opening worship and activity before splitting into two age groups for about 20 minutes before coming back for summing up and prayer.

Boulders – those aged Year 6+ meet separately and number 2 – 6.

Soul Space for those aged 10 – 16 meets once a month on a Sunday evening. Rachel and James Haddell lead in conjunction with leaders from other churches. They average 16 – 20 young people but it remains a concern that few St James' children attend.

Messy Church has continued on the first Sundays of the month and is led alternate months by teams led by Jenny Wakefield and myself. 20+ children and 15+ adults attend.

One of my main concerns has been that we should be helping our families in their Christian journey together so boundaries between groups have become fluid hoping to help with the varying needs families have. The table in church is primarily for our special needs children and families, for children who may stay in church and for children during coffee time. Many thanks to all who help putting up the table and chairs and with clearing up afterwards.

It has been a real joy and privilege to do this work but it was always a temporary post so I will finish in mid-May. We pray for God's continuing provision. Thank you to all who give their time and energies to encourage and support our babies, children, young people and families as we together have amazing adventures with Jesus.

Weekday Groups (Vashti Smit)

Toddler Group: around 20 – 25 families on average come to the weekly Toddler Group, and new families keep coming! A good number of mums from this group have also started going to Praise and Play. Kitchen staff is still a good number, though I feel a real need for more 'able' help on the floor so we can have a stronger presence on the floor and be more able to help the parents/carers. The introduction of a monthly craft session for the parents/carers (meeting in the church) is very popular, and these sessions fill up quickly; there have been several requests to make it weekly!

Praise and Play: the weekly Wednesday service for parents and toddlers is going strong. Rachel and her team have got it well under hand. The serving helpers also have a good rota going now with two people serving each week.

Other events: A Light Party (alternative to Halloween) was very successful with over 100 children and their families showing up. Messy Christmas was great with a lot of positive feedback. A Family Links parenting course was

facilitated by church members and members of another church in parallel with the Toddler Group for ten weeks in the Autumn term.

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

Links with St James Church School

- **TLG (Transforming Lives for Good) Mentoring Project** began in the Autumn term with four volunteers working with individual children in partnership with the school. Early results are encouraging.
- **TLG Make Lunch:** planning commenced for another TLG initiative to provide a weekly lunch in school holidays for a number of families. This is moving forward with enthusiasm and excitement.
- **Xplore:** the weekly after school club run by church members continues to be popular and has children waiting to attend.
- **School Ethos Committee** meets termly with representation from the church.
- **Experience Events:** this was the fallow year in a four-year cycle, which will continue with Easter Experience in 2020.
- **School / Church prayer meeting** meets twice a term.
- **Collective worship:** the vicar is involved with this.
- **School services:** Easter, Leavers, Harvest and Christmas school services are held in the church with many parents attending.

North Town School holds Christmas and Leavers services in the church.

Outreach

Contributed by Jenny Wakefield, Outreach Coordinator.

Over the past four years we, as a church, have been continuing to identify with 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”, and by the Worship Coordinator in the evening services. 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. 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, and several members are involved on the frontline of local voluntary projects. This is also underpinned by the discipleship and worship coordinators in their roles.

Regular and ongoing 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. An Eco group has been formed initiated by a group of people who have active concerns about our environmental impact and various steps have been taken to enable our church to be more eco-aware, this includes contacting and eco church survey, a churchyard survey, establishing a collection bins for Compass Disability and the children building a bug hotel in the churchyard. A Social Media group is under discussion with a view to exploring how we can use digital media more effectively. The Easter Monday

“parish ramble” is now in its 57th year, and in 2019 expanded to include a bluebell walk in May and a more adventurous walk on the late May holiday.

One-off events in 2019 included:

- The Biennial Pantomime, this year being Jack and the Beanstalk. This provided opportunity for friends, family and the general public to experience the inside of the church and feel welcomed. The pantomime ran for 3 nights and over 500 people attended. The money raised went to the Besom and the Conquest riding centre for the Disabled. Fabian bravely joined the Players for the performance and appeared as a French hen, which drew great acclaim.
- Plans were also in hand during the latter part of the year for a 2020 interim performance of a murder mystery play which again had the aim of encouraging friends to “come along with me” combined with fund raising for the Rail Responders.
- In June, the Cricket world cup came to Taunton and we opened our doors and our tower to visitors to the town. It was really good to enjoy the convivial atmosphere that this event brought to the town and to see many visitors coming through our doors. Our teams of refreshment providers and welcomers did a sterling job of talking to visitors and our tower achieved considerable prominence as TV reporters took the opportunity to film from it. We were even seen in Australia.
- A fourth celebration of St. James Day combining with the 50th Anniversary of the first landing on the moon happened in July, overseen by Norman Bambridge. It was busy and fun-filled day involving a large number of church members with tower trips, children’s activities, science workshop, lunar lander experience, carbon footprint measurement, displays of health and wellbeing, lunches and refreshments, which saw over a hundred people of different ages visiting the church.
- As part of the event we challenged the children at St. James School to enter a space and eco art competition and the results were displayed over the Summer holidays.
- 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 oversee and assist with arrangements for the regular events and provide some management for our catering facilities.

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 provide an essential, valued and supportive link with our hirers.

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.
- 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 mission review group met three times in 2019 to look at our mission giving and review the missions we support. There is no change in the above list of organisations. There is an opportunity to focus on one organisation a month to be featured in morning services, to keep church members aware of those we have connections with.

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, now under the editorship of Chris Doyle, keeps church members in touch with what is happening. The Church has its own Facebook page and Twitter link; a social media group is under discussion at the present time and this may assist with a wider review of our communication strategy.

Connecting with the Community

During 2019 we conducted 3 prayer walks in the parish. These proved to be informative for those who attended as to demographic of the parish and also what shops, businesses and charities situated in our neighbourhoods.

Our main opportunities for reaching the community is through our developing involvement in St. James Church School: connections have been developing over the years as the result of prayer and personal contact. Details of this are covered in the Children's & Youth Work section.

Facilities

Contributed by Martin Wakefield, Facilities Coordinator.

The main premises projects undertaken during the year were: removing a very large tree stump from the churchyard and making good; refurbishment of the inner (vicar's) office; refocussing the annual PAT testing schedule; replacing a cast-iron gutter on the vestry; priority remedial work on the electrical system following the 2018 inspection; the introduction of a range of recycling bins; the establishment of a conservation area in the churchyard (including a bug hotel built by our young people); replacing most of the old gutters on the halls and the office/toilet building; and undertaking a new Fire Risk Assessment using the latest form from Ecclesiastical Insurance.

In mid-December, two leaded windows were damaged in the North Aisle. A new A3-sized panel will need to be created for the stained-glass window which was affected; fortunately, there is a high-resolution photograph of the window from which to work.

Numerous minor repairs were also undertaken, some done by contractors and others by church members. The annual maintenance programme continues, including a visual inspection of the whole premises, and consideration of remaining items from the Quinquennial Inspection Report. Volunteers completed all they could do on the one remaining item from the 2015 quinquennial, the painting of gutters and downpipes on the church: a few high-level gutters will be done in due course by our regular contractor. Overall, the list of outstanding premises work has been reduced to one side of A4 for the first time, despite almost 40 new jobs being added during the year.

On the technical front, the main task has been the replacement of the mixing desk in the church sound system with a new tablet-controlled device. This fundamentally different way of working has required careful planning, a considerable learning curve for the technical team leaders, and ongoing training of the operating team. Work on rewriting the church website had to be halted due to our IT Administrator leaving to fill a maternity vacancy in another local charity.

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 very slightly down in 2019 compared with 2018. Expenditure, other than expenditure on maintenance and repairs and extra activities, was up compared to that in 2018. This was mainly due to a sharp increase in the Parish Share.

The General Fund ended the year with a balance of £152,637. This was £4,454 less than at the end of 2018.

The major expenses of the year was for the new digital audio mixer to replace the old sound desk at a cost of £6246.

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 Reserves Policy is reviewed annually.

At the end of 2019, the designated reserve funds stood as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Projects Fund: | £57,381 |
| Fabric Fund: | £30,000 |
| Opportunity Fund: | £20,000 |
| Risks Fund: | £21,374 (10% of giving = £11,484, plus 30% of other income = £9,890) |
| Total: | £128,755 |

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

All of the £57,381 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 £23,882 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 two part time posts: the Church Administrator and the Caretaker. The IT support post became vacant at the start of the year, and will be filled again in early 2020.

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. In total, around 130 members carry out various roles within the church on a voluntary basis.

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, have these met. During the year the PCC developed a Supporting Volunteers Policy to codify this and is now engaged in its implementation.

Safeguarding

As a church we adhere to the Church of England Policy – *Promoting a Safer Church* – and have been working to the policy and practice guidance as set out on their website.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church/policy-practice-guidance>

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 regards 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 recommendation from the Church of England that anyone who acts as a volunteer should have Safeguarding Awareness Training, at least at basic awareness level (C0) and for many roles a higher level of training is required or recommended.

In a church as large as St. James maintaining this level of requirement is not easy and is a matter of ongoing chasing. During 2019 the Supporting Volunteers continued to meet, with its major priority being to establish the recruitment, support and training procedures for all volunteers. Recruitment packs have now been developed for all roles and notified to team leaders for their use in the recruitment of new volunteers. This process is in the process of implementation.

Safeguarding Training is obligatory for all clergy, PTO clergy and licensed readers, and this has been undertaken in the main. There has been a backlog in training for other volunteers, partly due to the lack of availability of courses for non-clergy volunteers. A new Diocesan trainer has been appointed and training in February has been arranged at Foundation and Leadership level.

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 2019 until the date this report was approved were:

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Vicar: | Rev Fabian Wuyts | Chairman | * |
| Churchwardens: | Mr Steve Bradford | Vice chairman | * |
| | Mrs Ruth Stevens | | * |
| | Mrs Joyce Kirk | Associate warden | * (co-opted) |
| Deanery Synod: | Mr Richard Carpenter | | |
| | Mr Nic Tall | | |
| | Mr Martin Wakefield | Secretary | * |
| Elected members: | Mrs Helen Dawe | | (until April 2019) |
| | Mrs Ruth Dunn | Minutes Secretary | * |
| | Mr Roger Fenton | | * |
| | Mr Jamie Fox | | * |
| | Mr James Haddell | | |
| | Miss Lizzie Haddell | | (from April 2019) |
| | Mrs Sue Lucas | | |
| | Mrs Sheila Marlow | | |
| | Mrs Ruth Preater-Gillard | | (from April 2019) |
| | Ms Chris Rickard | | (from April 2019) |
| | Mr Richard Sainsbury | Treasurer | * (co-opted) |
| Mrs Liz Sykes | | | |
| Mrs Jenny Wakefield | | | |
| Mr Stan Wojcik | | (until April 2019) | |

* 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.