



Annual Report for 2021

Encountering God

Growing as Followers of Jesus

Participating in the Life of His Spirit

Prepared by the PCC and the Coordinators

Fabian Wuyts

Vicar

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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 2021 and has been written to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practices (SORP FRS102).

Foreword by the Vicar

Does your pair of shoes fit?

I recently read that when we try to force our own agenda or strive to do what we want to do, there is a sense of spiritual discomfort. Joyce Meyer uses the analogy of the discomfort that comes from wearing a pair of shoes that don't fit. Throughout Scriptures we see how God promises to guide those willing to listen and obey. In other words, He will make sure you end up with shoes (a purposeful life) that fit.

Jesus said: "my sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me." (John 10.27)

The series "Fit for purpose" aimed at providing us with the tools to know how our life can bring about the purposes of God. God has and will continue to shape us in a unique way with skills, experiences, spiritual gifts, personalities and dreams. He will continue to instruct, guide, teach and confide to those willing to listen and yield to his guidance and teaching. It is a great encouragement to know that we do not need to be perfect in order to hear God's guidance, but we do need an attitude of humility. Another great assurance is that God can do immeasurably more than we can think or imagine with our small and simple obedience. This is what I was reminded of with the story of Hattie May Wiatt, a six-year-old girl who lived near Grace Baptist Church in Philadelphia, USA. She told her minister that the Sunday school was so crowded that she was afraid to go there alone. The minister then replied that when they would get the money they would construct a church building large enough to get all the children in. Two years later, in 1886, Hattie May died. After the funeral Hattie's mother gave the minister a little bag they had found under their daughter's pillow containing 57 cent in change that she had saved up. Alongside it was a note in her handwriting: "to help build bigger so that more children can go to Sunday school." The minister changed all the money into pennies and offered each one for sale. He received \$250 and 54 of the cents were given back. The \$250 was itself changed into pennies and sold by the newly formed "Wiatt Mite Society." In this way, her 57 cents kept on multiplying. Twenty-six years later, the minister explained the results of her 57-cent donation: a church with a membership of over 5,600 people, a hospital where tens of thousands of people had been treated, 80,000 young people going through university, 2,000 people going out to preach the gospel – all this happened because Hattie May Wiatt invested her 57 cents (story used in Bible in One Year, HTB).

Eugene Peterson once said "God cannot fit into our plans, we must fit into his. Holy is the word that sets God apart and above . . . Holy means that God is alive on God's terms, alive in a way that exceeds our experience and imagination. Holy refers to life burning with an intense purity that transforms everything it touches into itself." God does not require our business, but our faithfulness. We all have something to contribute to God's kingdom and when we walk with "shoes fit for us," we will experience God's fruitfulness and life.

Lord open my eyes to the danger of business in my life and teach me the blessings that comes with simple obedience and faithfulness to your guidance. I want to be found with shoes that fit me.

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.

Rev Fabian Wuyts

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 2019, was 202, this being the "number attending at least once during the period", excluding visitors. There were also 46 people under 18 attending at least once. Equivalent figures are not available for 2020 due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The count for October 2021 registered 111 adults and 15 children, in a period where many were still isolating due to the continuing pandemic.

At the 2021 Annual Meeting, there were 180 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*.

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 Donor 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 (both of these currently still in abeyance), a school mentoring scheme and Make Lunch scheme 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.

From March 2020, the in-person activities had to be suspended, but support of individuals continued through a network of telephone and social media conversations, and worship services

continued online. This situation continued through to the end of 2021, with some activities resuming over the summer until having to be closed again.

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, assisted by the Planned Giving and Payroll Officer.

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. At the end of the year, the Outreach Coordinator post was vacant.

The PCC meets monthly, except in May (Annual Church Meeting) and August (summer holidays). It approves all major non-recurring financial expenditure and decides proposals to undertake any major new activity. The agenda includes a strategic overview of the church's activities. In 2021, the meetings from January to July were held on Zoom videoconferencing, with in-person meetings resuming in September.

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. The Worship leader and the Musical Director select the worship songs and the Vicar plans the themes and organises rotas for leading and officiating. The worship coordinator plans the singing and rotas for singing in church. There are meetings when required with the Vicar and Curate to look at the praise and worship within the morning service.

Over the past year the pattern of worship moved from an online recorded service at 10.30, with a pre-recorded evening service, to socially distanced covid-secure in-person and streamed version to the current model - a service at 10.30 which is streamed. The church is set out to creatively allow for a covid regulations with chairs set apart and separate areas for families and those who wish or need to be masked.

There is currently no evening service. Over lockdown, a team grew within evening services. It had been a joy to see people flourish and have their gifts used and expanded despite the difficult and different circumstances. Evening Connect services ended last August when as a church we moved back to all

services being in church and with one 10.30 service. The evening service which ran till August was given the title Connect@7 after discussion and prayer with the Vicar, curate and team, with a link to what we are as church and what our vision is saying to us. The aim was to be different, though not for its own sake and to reach out to those who are not (maybe yet) within the church or in possession of a faith but are connected to us.

With the church delivering services in lockdown we had to look at different formats and styles. As a church we had to get used to worshiping from home and without personal interaction and face to face greeting. The lesson we took from this was that we will not be returning to the church as it was but to a church as it will be. Some will have seen the content and look to attend others will find the return difficult and the fear of Covid will linger in the way that we interact. This has resulted in fewer musicians and singers which has increased the commitment of those who are prepared to take part.

Alongside Morning Worship there is young people and children's worship in the hall led by David and Vashti with a team and this is exceedingly well planned with a team to support and it has received excellent feedback and is engaging with the children and families. They start in the church building then move to the hall, returning at the end of the service. There is a crèche area for younger children every week, which continues to be well used.

There is a team of volunteers involved in each morning service and a wide range of people contribute to a service with a welcome team, refreshments, technical set up and flowers. A great deal of preparation goes into the planning and the setting up for each week, with a small and hardworking team on the sound and technical side who now have the added task of ensuring that the live stream is set up and operated with the added pressures that that brings. However thanks to these efforts the service leaves the building and goes to those who are unable to attend. A small number of DVDs are produced for those at home without internet. The past years have also shown that through an online presence the church can reach well beyond the walls of the building and engage with a wide It is appreciated there may be gaps that need to be filled as we return to enable the smooth set up and organising of services with the wide range of activities and equipment needed whatever church will look like on a Sunday as we move into a new and exciting pattern of worship and being church.

The music team comprises instrumentalists and singers with the Music Director providing settings to match the available skills. New music is introduced on a regular basis in collaboration with 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. This has taken on a new form in the world of the pandemic. The Musical Director works with a team of singers, instrumentalists, and technicians with practice sessions each month across the whole team. Worship is corporate, it is not just the people who are seen at the front each week.

Lockdown prompted Morning Prayer to be taken online on Monday to Thursday using a combination of Zoom and Facebook; it now continues on Mondays and Wednesdays. The monthly Church Prayer meeting had also moved online, but is now held in-person each Friday at 5pm in Church. Other services, such as the monthly communion service for the Alzheimer's group, will also move from online back to in-person.

As in previous years we will continue to consider how we reach out to those outside the church and those without a church background and endeavour to make worship accessible and relevant within a changing landscape.

Finally, I would like it noted that there is a great commitment required both online and face to face and in ensuring that the technical side functions and

my thanks go to all those who give their time to this ministry in particular during the past two years.

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

Pastoral care

Whilst it is encouraging to see so many members of the congregation able and willing to come to church, there are still others who are nervous about attending live services; it seems likely that telephone support will remain a permanent feature of the pastoral care role for some time yet.

Over the past year, we have lost a couple of members of the pastoral care team so there are opportunities for new people to come forward to help.

Email

The email prayer chain continues to operate and is still supported by our good friend Jill Winstanley - albeit remotely from Nottingham!

The flower Rota

The flower group are back in action providing lovely floral decorations in church on a weekly basis - thanks to all the members of this group for their contributions.

Thursday Fellowship

This gathering restarted in February 2022 with an enthusiastic audience of about 30 individuals who were privileged to hear an excellent talk by Andy Rowden. Meetings will now resume monthly as before.

Welcoming

A new team has been formed to welcome newcomers to church services and will be starting work in early March.

Discipleship *Contributed by Roger Fenton, Discipleship Coordinator.*

I finished my report last year with a comment that it was expected that Government Covid restrictions would be lifted in the summer (of 2021). Well lifted they were, but in part only, although they did not permit churches to gather properly, so most of the difficulties of offering or assessing discipleship ministry remained. And today as I write, some church members remain sensibly cautious about returning to open gatherings and so, as per last year's report, the information contains an element of 'circumstantial evidence'.

As 2021 ended some home groups were beginning to physically meet together but keeping within regulations, but for most groups their meetings continued via Zoom, and some groups remained unable to meet at all. Home Group Leaders maintained contact and support of their members by phone calls and an occasional meeting with individuals 'in the open air'. Such contact proved invaluable to many. Study notes continued to be available every week, be that for group sharing or individual reflection. Until groups are physically meeting together again it is difficult to assess what impact Covid has had upon membership numbers. I believe we should expect an overall reduction.

One Alpha course was delivered in the Spring of 2021 'on-line', which I am confident achieved the prime objective of growing the faith of all participants and therefore the Kingdom, but other churches have received the membership benefit. I wish to thank the church members who helped and supported the running of Alpha. Alpha will continue to be offered in 2022.

I look forward to 2022 when I expect to be in a position to write a more detailed report.

Children's church

We were able to restart the children's church on the 26th of September 2021 and I am really proud of what we have achieved! There has been consistent leadership with a pair of volunteers taking it in turns every other week and each individual taking it in turns to lead the week. The creative collaborative working through Dropbox has produced so many amazing sessions that the children really love. Attendance has varied, hitting the highs of 16 to the lows of three but there are on average a higher number around 12-14. Children want to keep coming back and we have formed a lovely atmosphere that includes healthy snacks, a story, a time of worship/prayer and some wonderful crafts and games. The numbers have dipped in the past month and this is a concern. We are considering how to advertise the children's church to St James School either through assemblies or using their website. There has been some interest throughout the year to restart a toddlers group, but due to the lack of someone to take the lead on this, we have not been able to do so.

Youth

It is with sadness that the weekly youth group stopped their weekly meeting after September 2021. There was a consistent group of around 6-8 young people who attended every Sunday evening at Fabian's house and we worked through Urban Saints sessions and had some fun socials. It came to an end due to a lack of volunteers and time as it was led by David and Fabian every week. With the effort shifting to other challenges, such as children's church, something had to give and sadly it was this group. The hope was that the young people might be disciplined through the running of the children's church and there is a consistent pool of 3-4 young people who do help but the others have not wanted to attend. There is no Sunday youth provision for them but they are a very welcome and helpful part of the children's church. It would be wonderful to be able to give them a space on a Sunday for discussion and input, especially those who have now been put off from attending church as there is nothing targeted for their age group. Again this requires volunteers to lead this.

School Assemblies

Every Wednesday afternoon Fabian and David have run a virtual assembly for the whole of St James School. We really enjoy leading the children in songs using our guitar, telling stories and interacting with around 100 children at once through a screen. This is both a challenge and a delight! North Town School invited David to give the harvest assembly in 2021 and it was well-received with another few being booked in November. Unfortunately, covid put a stop to this as the school had to reintroduce year group bubbles. Now that it has opened up again it is hoped that another invitation might come our way.

Other events

Despite restrictions, we were able to host many school events such as North Town's leavers' service and St James Nativity and Christingle. The reception class at St James School had a fun morning being introduced to the church and North Town's reception class are also visiting in March. There were a number of family events held, such as a church picnic at French Weir Park and the churchyard. The Easter trail seemed to be well attended by the community over the fortnight it was open with many names being written on stones. All-age services such as the Christingle and the crib service were especially well attended by pupils from St James School.

Transforming Lives for Good (TLG)

Contributed by the TLG teams.

TLG is an organisation that supports churches working with struggling children, through local schools. We participate in two programmes:

TLG Make Lunch enables and equips churches to bring hope to struggling children through holiday lunch clubs. This is normally done by making free hot meals, but this has not been practicable during the Covid pandemic. Instead, we have been delivering food boxes for families identified by several local schools, including our church school. The boxes themselves are provided by Taunton Food Bank, and we supplement them with “recipe bags” containing the ingredients and a recipe for making a family meal, and also activity bags for the children. We are planning to begin making hot meals using the facilities of our church kitchen, in the Easter holidays in 2022.

TLG Early Intervention provides one-to-one mentoring for children who are struggling in some way or other. A team from the church is working with four children identified by our church school, for one hour each week, with activities and chat tailored to the child’s needs. During the Covid pandemic, some sessions were held online.

Outreach

Contributed by Jenny Wakefield, Mission Review Group

Our core approach to outreach: **Scattered Lives.**

We have continued to encourage each church member to share the gospel in their everyday lives, using the “Life on the Frontline” and “Living the Story Telling the story” approach to share the life changing message of Jesus.

Activities happening and restarting

- Church members have continued to volunteer in a host of different community organisations activities including stacking shelves, delivering supplies and working at vaccination centres.
- The Eco group have continued to advocate for a positive response to our responsibilities in God’s Created world
- St. James Players were not able to produce any live entertainment or fund raising but produced the fourth online performance “Postcard from Bethlehem” in January, and for Easter prepared a radio version of their 2018 PassionEaster play, which was broadcast on Tone FM. Preparation began for a live “Murder Mystery” event in 2022.
- The Art Group recommenced on Zoom initially with about but have been meeting together weekly in the hall since mid 2021.

It has remained a largely “uneventful” year with regard to one-off events and celebrations as we seek God’s guidance as to how to connect with our community and demonstrate God’s purpose.

Communications

How we communicate is an essential part of our outreach. New ways of communicating are being experimented with as we get to grips with the medium of social media and its possibilities

Facebook and website are now increasingly becoming our front window and while many are still grappling with how to use it, it has been an important tool in helping us worship, communicate, encourage and keep in touch.

The Church Suite database has enabled us to send out the weekly bulletin, vicar’s letter, etc, by email.

The Parish Magazine continues to be produced quarterly thanks to Chris Doyle and is produced in an online format with printed copies available from the office.

Local and International Mission

It continued to be a great privilege during the early part of 2021 to interview representatives of the local and international organisations that we have a link with on zoom and to find out what they are doing despite the pandemic. These interviews continue to be on YouTube and the Church Mission pages. None of our mission partners were static and if anything their need for support is as great as it ever was.

As a church we have links with the following and in almost all we have church members volunteering:

- Street Pastors (ministry to young people visiting the town's night clubs and local community areas during the day time) and School Pastors.
- Taunton Team Chaplaincy: Chaplaincy team members and Rail Responders have gradually restarted their activities and the plans for a Court Chaplaincy in 2022 are well advanced.
- Besom: Also have restarted their activities over the year and were very busy with referrals from keyworkers for furniture and crisis food packs.
- Open Door have reopened during the year and recommenced their work with the homeless.
- Taunton Youth for Christ have continued to work with schools and detached youth where possible and their work with young people has developed a greater urgency.
- Taunton Area Debt Advice have been preparing to help people as the issues of debt emerge from the Covid period as protection is removed
- Home for Good is an agency that encourages churches to support the work of adoption and fostering.
- TLG – as mentioned above
- Watch – local mental health organisation for peer group support

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; they have made one visit to Africa in addition to supporting churches online
- TEAR Fund (emergency and relief work).
- Traidcraft, Freda continued to process orders for their products but this will now be in abeyance as she has moved away.
- Samaritans Purse (international relief organization); and
- Barnabas Fund (which supports the persecuted church worldwide).

All these organisations have been profoundly affected by the global nature of the crisis.

The mission review group has met once during the pandemic. There is no change in the above list of organisations supported.

Facilities

Contributed by Martin Wakefield, Facilities Coordinator.

The year for the premises team was dominated by a seemingly never-ending series of equipment breakdowns and other repairs, accounting for 26 of the 43 items on the completed jobs list. These included both main heating boilers, all four water heaters serving sinks, both drinks water boilers, the office security alarm controller, two light fittings, a fridge, the microwave, the Perspex in the outside noticeboard (twice), two leaks caused by cracks in roof leadwork, a video monitor, the lower section of one of the main church doors, the usual crop of broken slates and other minor repairs, and ending with the emergency replacement by Western Power of the main electrical fuse.

Some improvements were completed, including a new top for the servery counter in the church, additional storage units for the creche and the installation of two removable bollards in the pedestrian entrance to the car

park. Progress with the office refurbishment project was limited (due to the lack of available effort) to the gas fire being removed and reinstalled in the lounge.

The full report from the 2020 Quinquennial Inspection was received, this having been delayed by the furloughing of staff at the architect's practice during the pandemic. Two minor remedial items have been addressed, and another six are being fed into the works programme. The main item outstanding from the 2019 electrical EICR, the replacement of the 1975-vintage electrical distribution boards in the church, has not been progressed, again due to the lack of available effort. Improvements to signage have been made following the routine review of the Fire Risk Assessment, and attention is being given to extending the test schedule for emergency lights to include smoke and CO detectors.

Another productive 'drains and gutters working party' was held, proving the viability of dedicated sessions for this type of work. A 'painting and decorating working party' was established and a review of the premises conducted; the team will begin work in 2022. The gardening team continues to do sterling work, including the enhancement of the conservation area in the churchyard.

The technical team has had its work cut out over the year staffing the resumed Sunday morning services with a reduced number of team members. At the same time it has trialled methods of supporting the audio feed for the livestreaming of this service (which is different from the requirement for in-building sound reinforcement). The weekly production of DVDs for church members without internet has continued, covering both the livestreamed service and one of the midweek Zoom morning prayer sessions. Meanwhile, much thought has gone into the future reconfiguration of the video system to better support livestreaming, beginning with the imminent transfer of the camera operation from the ministry team.

Some background work has also continued on the church website, firstly to enable the old website to be taken out of use, and then in preparation for rationalising the church's two domain names.

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

Our Administrator is Rachel Knowlman, who took over mid-year.

Financial Review

Contributed by Richard Sainsbury, Treasurer

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.

2021 Significant events. The Covid-19 Pandemic continued to have an effect on 2021's finances, though Stewardship giving remained strong throughout the year. Over 90% of donors continued to support the ministry faithfully during 2021. Despite a gradual return of hirers in 2021, hall hirings were still less than 50% of the income from pre-pandemic times.

Income from stewardship and collections were down in 2021 compared with 2020. Expenditure, other than expenditure on maintenance and repairs and extra activities, was slightly down compared to 2020.

The General Fund ended the year with a balance of £203,078, of which £3,002 were restricted funds. This was £28,052 less than at the end of 2020, despite receiving a legacy of £12,000 during 2021. Of this amount £4,229 was from the restricted fund for TLG Make Lunch.

There were no major repair expenses during 2021.

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. Although designated for projects, this fund will need to be used for day to day running expenses should a further shortfall arise.

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, 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. However, the continuing deficit situation has rendered the fund unsustainable, so it has been reduced to zero to take up the bulk of the 2021 shortfall.

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 2021, the designated reserve funds stood as follows:

Projects Fund:	£157,782 (£166,399 at the end of 2020.)
Fabric Fund:	£30,000
Opportunity Fund:	£0 (£20,000 at the end of 2020)
Risks Fund:	£15,296 (10% of giving = £10,582, plus 30% of other income = £4,714)
Total:	£203,078

The total exceeds the £85,680 needed to cover the recommended accounting practice of holding in reserve 6 months' budgeted expenditure.

The £157,782 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. The PCC has decided that some of the funds can be used to pay for the proposed Children and Families Worker, but the exact amount has not been determined, pending a further appeal. Unlike previous years there is no surplus on the General Fund (after allowing for designated reserves and restricted funds) 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 three full-time equivalent posts are paid. One of these is the vicar, and another is made up of two part time posts: the Church Administrator and the Caretaker. A curate joined the church mid-year; this is a training post, funded by the diocese.

The majority of effort spent on preparing for and running church activities comes from volunteers. It is difficult to gauge the total effort put in by voluntary workers, but (in a normal year) 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.

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.

Safeguarding

Contributed by Jenny Wakefield, Parish Safeguarding Officer.

As a church we adhere to the Church of England Policy – *Promoting a Safer Church:*

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/cofe-policy-statement.pdf>

New guidance documents were produced in April 2021 and details of these can be found in the e-manual on the Church of England website:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/safer-recruitment-and-people-management-guidance>

The Church of England Safeguarding Handbook continues to provide practical information; a copy of this is kept in the office, on the safeguarding noticeboard or can be found on line at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

*The aim of the Church's safeguarding policy is to encourage a safer culture within the church. We are "called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of **welcome for all**, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has" From Promoting a safer Church 2016*

Parish Safeguarding Officer working with the Vicar, Wardens and PCC has a responsibility to:

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

Safer recruitment procedures are carried out for all appointments involving working with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, which all require DBS clearance.

For other voluntary posts there is 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 training, at least at basic awareness level (formerly C0) and for many roles working with children or vulnerable adults a higher level of training (Foundation or Leadership) is required.

Safeguarding Training is obligatory for all clergy, PTO clergy and licensed readers, and this has been undertaken for those in these roles. There has been a backlog in leadership training for other volunteers, partly due to the lack of availability of courses for non-clergy volunteers. However online training is now available for a number of courses, including Safeguarding Awareness, Foundation and Domestic Violence Awareness.

While many activities have been in abeyance during the pandemic period there has been a lessened number of people requiring safer recruitment procedures. With the commencement of new activities and projects this will change, and we need to ensure that we are maintaining the requirements laid down in the guidance and extending the understanding that Safeguarding is embedded in our church culture and we are aware of the universal responsibility.

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.

In 2020, one of these risks materialised, in that the majority of income from hall hire ceased.

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.

Health & Safety: physical risks are managed through the church's *Health and Safety Policy*, which is reviewed annually by the PCC. The policy 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 2021 until the date this report was approved were:

Vicar:	Rev Fabian Wuyts	Chairman	*
Curate:	Rev David Wilkie		*
Churchwardens:	Mr Steve Bradford		<i>(until April 2021)</i>
	Mr Nigel Bright		*
	Mrs Joyce Kirk		<i>(from April 2021)</i>
Deanery Synod:	Mr Richard Carpenter	Vice chairman	*
	Ms Chris Rickard		*
	Mr Martin Wakefield	Secretary	*
Elected members:			
	Mr Martin Bluemel		<i>(from April 2021)</i>
	Mrs Ruth Dunn		<i>(until April 2021)</i>
	Mr Roger Fenton		
	Mrs Marilyn Gibson		
	Miss Lizzie Haddell	Associate Warden	*
	Mrs Lyn Jones		<i>(from April 2021)</i>
	Mr David Jordan		
	Mrs Julie Kimber		<i>(from April 2021)</i>
	Mrs Sue Lucas		

	Mrs Sheila Marlow		
	Mrs Ruth Preater-Gillard		<i>(until April 2021)</i>
	Mr Richard Sainsbury	Treasurer	* <i>(co-opted)</i>
	Mrs Liz Sykes		<i>(until April 2021)</i>
	Miss Emily Tall		<i>(until April 2021)</i>
	Mrs Jenny Wakefield		
	Mrs Vashti Wuyts Smit		<i>(from April 2021)</i>
Ex-officio	Mr Nic Tall	Diocesan Synod	

* 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.
- Three representatives of the parish to Deanery Synod, elected every three years.
- 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.