



St James's
Church
Piccadilly

**Report to the Congregation on the
Parochial Church Council Meeting**

Monday 21 March 2022 18:30-21.00

INTRODUCTION

Note from new PCC secretary Keith Best: *I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you during the Sunday services that I attend and I hope that you will always use that opportunity to make any points to me that you wish about the life and work of the church and especially what you might wish me to pass on to the PCC members. Your elected representatives are all very anxious to engage with you as much as possible and recognize that this is a two-way street with mutual discussion and feedback.*

Some of you will recall that before my time and pre-pandemic there were summary reports of PCC meetings available for the congregation and part of the desire to ensure that you are part of the conversation about the church is that these will now resume. This is the first one.

Governance

We are undertaking an overhaul of the governance of SJP. Under Church Representation Rules which govern the way in which we take decisions affecting the church the PCC is the governing body (in company terms, the Board). This consists of members elected by the congregation who are on the electoral roll (you can apply to be on this) at the Annual Parochial Church Council (APCM) meeting which, this year, we have fixed for Sunday 8 May – so please put that date in your diary. The PCC is chaired by the Rector and also has a Lay Vice-Chair and for the meeting to be quorate requires always a majority of lay members over clergy. Under the Rules we are also required to have a Standing Committee (SC) which consists of the Rector, Associate Rector, Lay Vice-Chair of the PCC, church wardens (also elected at the APCM) and Honorary Treasurer (elected at the APCM).

The SC has no specific role in the Church Representation Rules but is tasked by the PCC to undertake what the PCC wishes. At SJP, however, the SC has met regularly prior to the PCC to help manage its agenda and, in effect, has acted as a Senior Management Team (which has put a considerable burden on its members as both the PCC and SC have been meeting each on eight occasions every year). This has been much more onerous during the pandemic. That is all about to change as we discussed at the PCC meeting on 21 March. The PCC has appointed a Senior Management Team of professionals consisting of the Operations Director Nick Thasarathar, Creative Director Richard Parry (both of whom have joined only recently) and Brian Willetts the Development Director whom some of you have met as he is responsible for raising the funds for

the Wren Project. As the Senior Management Team, they will report directly to the PCC as the supervising board. This means that the SC can revert to its traditional role of undertaking what tasks from time to time the PCC may ask of it and it will cease to meet regularly.

This will need a new structure of meetings so, rather than eight times a year, the PCC will meet every quarter of the year (four times) to deal with the business of the church but will also hold an extra two meetings a year to speak about the spiritual, pastoral and parochial life of the church and will want maximum input from you the congregation. There will also be a PCC Awayday (held in the church), this year, on Saturday 11 June in order to finalise the Strategic Plan for the coming year. This is all set out in the accompanying diagram. At the PCC meeting this was approved – so watch this space!

Giving Team

Those who attend the Sunday services either in person or via Zoom will know that every Sunday after the service there is a Being St James's Lenten discussion led by the Giving Team and the success of these so far was reported to the PCC meeting with some 40 people attending the last one. We recognize the sensitivity in asking for money for the church when so many of our congregation will be facing hardship through increased domestic bills this year and this is under discussion by the Giving Team and the PCC.

Finances and Policies

One of the main responsibilities of the PCC is the overall supervision of the finances (which are also subject to the scrutiny of the independently chaired Audit Committee). We ended last year with a surplus and so this year, for the first time in many years, we have decided to invest for the future of the church (such as in employing the SMT) by spending more (separately from the Wren Project which has to be accounted for independently) and, therefore, incurring a deficit for 2022. Over 2 years, however, SJP breaks even. But income generation is a very big challenge for 2023 and going forward. The PCC, with advice from the Audit Committee, will formulate a 'plan back to break even' in the course of 2022.

The church also has a large number of policies affecting the way in which we operate, subject to legislation, HR best practice etc. and these need to be updated so every PCC meeting a number of them are put forward for review and given a new lease of life – and this was done at the last PCC meeting. You are welcome to see these policies if you wish.

Upcoming events

We have during Refugee Week a lecture in support of the charity Redress on Sunday 26 June – another date for your diary.

Fundraising / 'Heart of St James's'

Our Development Director Brian Willetts has just returned from two weeks in New York where he has been fundraising through the American Friends for our Wren Project in order to help raise the £16m we need to bring this exciting development to fruition. The PCC was able to learn that he has established links with two leading churches there that want to support SJP and he has also made many other helpful contacts. There will be an auction in New York in the autumn, donated

for us by our neighbours the auction house Christies, with an ambitious fundraising target. If we have raised sufficient for the first phase we hope to submit a planning application in the summer.

Church life

Finally, there was a considerable discussion at the PCC meeting as to how to interact better with you, the congregation, and to get feedback on the way in which the church goes about matters. We have not yet been asked but, as with last year, we may be asked to give some practical assistance (last year it was providing a room for bags etc) to Extinction Rebellion which is planning a series of events during Holy Week. This is a topic on which opinions are strongly held in various ways, so your feedback on it would be most welcome. Expect to find PCC members asking you when you meet them. Also, a number of you have asked if we could have a discussion on Ukraine and a discussion is planned after the service on Palm Sunday.

Please feel free at any stage to talk things through with any member of the PCC, the wardens or clergy directly or do get in touch with me as PCC secretary. I hope to get to know many more of you in due course.

With kind regards

Keith Best | PCC Secretary | St James's Piccadilly [pcc@sjp.org.uk]