

## Parochial Church Council Meeting Monday 12 December 2022 Congregation Report

The PCC met again on 12 December for the important task of giving approval to the Business Plan and Budget for 2023. Revd Lucy Winkett prefaced the item by stating that the current times are very challenging for SJP and society as a whole as London emerges from the pandemic disruption. The pace of change has been rapid and this carefully crafted and costed Business Plan represents a big step taken together. It's important that we don't lose sight of our purpose and character as a church, wanting to make a difference in society, rooted in our faith in God. Obviously we cannot on our own reverse the decline in practising Christians in the UK as itemized in the latest survey statistics but we can make a difference by articulating our vision, rooted in our daily prayers, of a just society and a creative open-hearted church. We are searching for a language about life in all its abundance. This is a catalysing vision that has come from the congregation. All the strategies, figures, KPIs and objectives are in service to that vision. She thanked the PCC for all the hard work that had been done to get St James's to this point: it is inspiring and exciting.

Nick Thasarathar, St James's Operations Director, who has led the PCC and SMT through the putting together of the new strategy, thanked all those who had attended the Strategy Clinic a few days earlier which had enabled PCC members to raise individually any issues or points for clarification and he also thanked those who are PCC champions in the working groups considering the strategy in detail. He reminded the PCC that we are now in transition from developing the strategy to delivering it and he highlighted the updates. He outlined the delivery of the plan; this strategy is not risk free but the goals are worthwhile. The precautions on the journey are set out. Next year's budget predicts a surplus but increased risk, chiefly in embarking on more mission-aligned cultural programme and fundraising. Progress will be carefully monitored. If at points in 2023, if it looks as though the year may end with a substantial deficit this will trigger a reconsideration which may mean ceasing certain activities.

The proposed budget 2023 was introduced by the Treasurer Ben Mariam and this predicts a small surplus which includes a proposed salary increase for staff whereby the lowest paid receive 10%, the band in the middle receive 5%, but the highest (only the Senior Management Team) receive no increase. The Senior Management Team had agreed to this but members expressed concern about the effect of a real diminution in their salaries and staff retention. It was explained that such a scheme is widely practiced elsewhere and it was felt equitable to reward lower paid staff in this way. There is a strand in the Business Plan about staff welfare with a focus on how to embed and encourage high quality working practices on the basis of our stated value of kindness. It was acknowledged that everyone has been expected to work harder in the current circumstances and that staff have been under a lot of pressure, especially in the area of income generation.

Brian Willetts, St James's Development Director, gave an upbeat report on fundraising and the Wren Project. The overall campaign is known as the Heart of St James's: Christmas cards designed by Quentin Blake were on sale (SJP receives 100% of the proceeds) and the new gin is selling well – 69 bottles were bought online within 6 days of the launch. There will be a launch of the gin next Spring, supported by our neighbours Fortnum and Mason. A targeted approach to the American Friends has yielded more than £60k in the run up to Christmas. We received £20k income from the Christmas Gala. Corporate Friends has been launched and

we are asking them to encourage their staff to volunteer at Feast, Wardrobe and Breakfast too. £120k income has been generated from the Christmas appeal and the courtyard donations yielded between £3.50 and £50 from each person approached. BW commented that it is clear the amount St James's does is not communicated yet to our neighbours well enough: all who learned of the social justice/environmental projects were amazed at what we do when this is explained. For example, one young female lawyer working locally wants to volunteer as a result. It has been a successful year primarily building relationships and introducing the work and character of St James's to our neighbours and parish. Brian was commended on the film narrated by Adjoa Andoh from Bridgerton (who has a close link with St James's having volunteered in the Caravan counselling project). For the Friends of St James's, we are suggesting only £3.50 per month and are encouraging people to send out the film. The Spencer House Gala Dinner hosted by HRH Prince Edward will be on 18 April and the Christie's auction will be here rather than in New York (where there will be a different sort of event to engage the American Friends later in 2023). BW commented on the extremely positive reception St James's work has in the wider community of our historic parish.

Keith Best  
PCC Secretary  
12/13/2022