

Parochial Church Council Meeting
Monday 25 November 2024 18:30-21.00 Q4
Church Hall and by Zoom

CONGREGATION REPORT

We had a good turnout of members of our PCC for the latest meeting on 25 November. It was also attended by Charley Matthews (our Parish Safeguarding Officer) who presented a paper and discussion for an hour on this important issue. He raised a number of scenarios which might arise which were considered in groups in the PCC before a full discussion. While focussing on St James's, for which the PCC is responsible, the discussion acknowledged the national context with the publication of the Makin Report and the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Safeguarding team meets quarterly addressing the specific SJP context, in terms of training, reporting, risk assessments. The environment at St James's encompasses activities and ministry not so much with children, but certainly with vulnerable adults. DBS administration has now been strengthened by the addition of volunteers to the team.

Matters on our partnership with St Pancras Church (where our Rector Lucy Winkett is Priest in Charge) are progressing. St James's has supported with a 3 year strategy and an implementation plan for 2025, which the St Pancras PCC considering this very soon.

In response to PCC queries regarding the adopted Modern Slavery Policy, our Chief Operating Officer (Nick Thasarathar) reported on the checks we do with our suppliers to ensure that they are not engaging in modern slavery (which would include not paying the Minimum Wage). No issues have arisen.

As at every PCC quarterly business meeting our finances were scrutinised by the PCC through the Management Accounts. It was noted that while SJP is in a healthier position this year than last there is still a shortfall on congregational giving. Energy prices and other operational costs have risen for SJP and we know that this is true also for members of our congregation too. The costs of keeping St James's open, safe, staffed and active each day is £5,000 per day. As ever, Christmas activities and gatherings are a key moment for income generation as well as the core purpose of gathering people together.

Another responsibility of the PCC at its meetings is to monitor our Risk Register and the monthly dashboards. These are scrutinised at every meeting to make sure that we have identified all the risks we face as well as taking remedial action to combat them.

On the fundraising efforts for our Wren Project proposed building works and refurbishment of the church and its surroundings we are making good progress towards the target. The next review and decision point is January 2025. The good news is that we have now raised sufficient to proceed early next year with the reinstatement of the South Door (part of Wren's original church but subsequently blocked up). Work is due to begin in early January. Sunday services are planned to go ahead as normal.

Finally, we reported on the recent Archdeacon's Visitation. This is a regular inspection undertaken every three years by the Diocese to ensure that all our practices, records and procedures are in compliance with our obligations. The Archdeacon not only inspected all our service registers, checked on the existence and safe storage of our valuables (such as the communion plates and vessels), our insurance policies etc. There is an enormous amount of work that goes into preparing for such an inspection but at least now there is a Digital Platform on which all this information can be stored. The PCC extended its thanks especially to our wardens Claire and Dee, to the PCC secretary Keith and to the Verger Team, Head of Estates and clergy for preparing all the paperwork for the Archdeacon to inspect. We should receive the Archdeacon's report on his visit shortly and we are hoping for a clean bill of health!

Keith Best
PCC Secretary
27/11/24