

THE PARISH AND WARD CHURCH OF ST BOTOLPH-WITHOUT-BISHOPSGATE
Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31 December 2017

Under the Church Representation Rules, the Parochial Church Council ('the PCC' or 'the Council') is required to prepare an Annual Report on its proceedings and on the activities of the parish generally. It is also required to prepare a financial statement for the financial year that gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the parish as at the end of the financial year and of its income and expenditure for that period.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Parish and Ward Church of St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate is situated in Bishopsgate, in the City of London. It is part of the City of London Deanery, the Two Cities Area and the Diocese of London within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3TL. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Incumbent (and in the current period of vacancy, the Sequestrators).

The Verger, Hall and Court Manager is Mr Paul Gibson.

The Church Administrator and Parish Clerk is Miss Mhairi Ellis.

Bankers:

Allied Irish Bank, City Business Centre, 26 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1DS

Independent Examiner:

Mrs Julie Griggs, BSc Hons FCA, Levicks, West Hill, 61 London Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8TX

Inspecting Surveyor:

Mr Kevin Stephenson, BSc FRICS, Kevin Stephenson Associates, Grovewood House, 155 Abbs Cross Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 4FS

AIMS AND PURPOSES

The Parochial Church Council of St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector (and in the absence of an Incumbent, with the Sequestrators) in promoting the whole mission of the church, liturgical, pastoral, educational, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, in the ecclesiastical parish in its care in the City of London. It is also responsible for maintaining a fine (Grade II* Listed) Georgian church building—restored after bomb damage, and refurbished during 2015—and an adjacent Church Hall, Churchyard, and Netball/Tennis Court.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many people and groups within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer, scripture, music and sacrament.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of the church building, and to this end we undertook major refurbishment works during 2015, with snagging ongoing into 2017.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through worship and prayer, and teaching about the Gospel; provision of pastoral care for people living and working in the parish; and missionary and outreach work.

We also bear in mind the Diocese of London's collective vision 'Capital Vision 2020' and strive to follow its mission statement: 'We share a vision of a Church for London that is Christ-centred and outward looking: we seek to be more confident in speaking and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ, more compassionate in serving communities with the love of God the Father, and more creative in reaching new people and places in the power of the Spirit'.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

2017 was a year of 'business as usual' as we continued to await positive developments in the appointment of a new priest. Our 'open door' policy was maintained throughout the year to ensure a ready welcome to all visitors. We maintained a full programme of regular and special services, and the staff continued to work hard to ensure that income streams from the use of the church, Hall, and Court were kept up, and developed where possible.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

St Botolph's Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England, and operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 (as amended). The Council is a charity, previously exempted from registration with the Charity Commission but registered in May 2010 (Charity Number 1135985).

All those who regularly attend our services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules: members of the PCC are either *ex-officio* or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Rules.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

REPORT ON THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Ex-officio members

The Ven Luke Miller, Archdeacon of London (Priest-in-Charge)

The Revd Dr John Turner MA Cantab (Honorary Assistant Priest, to 21 September 2017)

Mr John Parker (Churchwarden, to 23 October 2017)

Ms Chris Watkins (Churchwarden)

Mr Christopher Butten and Mrs Christine Ferris (Deanery Synod representatives)

Elected members

Mr Ian Adams MBE (to 5 August 2017), Mr Nick Creswick Gough, Mr Frank Curtiss,

Mr Alastair Harris, Mr David Lee, Mr John Marshall, Miss Mary Moore,

Mr Andrew Newman (from 27 April 2017), Mr Michael Scargill

Notes

We are allowed to elect nine members to the Council, in addition to those elected to the Deanery Synod.

The Churchwardens are Joint Treasurers.

The Church Administrator, Mhairi Ellis, also acts as PCC Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer.

The Council has a Standing Committee involving the Incumbent and Wardens. The Standing Committee meets, when necessary, between Council meetings, and has power to transact the business of the Council between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council.

The full Council met in person six times in 2017 (brief meetings before and after APCM on the same day are counted for these purposes as one meeting), and was consulted electronically at other times as necessary. The Standing Committee and Finance Committee met, when necessary, between Council meetings. In addition to the elected members, Mhairi Ellis (Administrator, and Secretary to the PCC) and Paul Gibson (Verger, Hall and Court Manager) attended meetings as appropriate.

Dates of meetings and attendance

The number of members of the Council at the start of the year was 14. It rose to 15 following the elections at the APCM when Andy Newman joined the Council; fell to 14 following the death of Ian Adams in service in August; and fell again to 13 following the resignation of Dr Turner as Honorary Assistant Priest in September. Following the resignation for personal reasons of Churchwarden John Parker in October, the number at the end of the year was 12.

Prior to his resignation, Dr Turner had been unwell and unable to come up to town; Ian Adams had also been unwell for some months before his death, but still faithfully read and commented on PCC papers. The business meeting in July was unusually low in attendance - several members, including Warden John Parker who would normally have chaired the meeting, had been obliged to send apologies at the last minute due to work or family emergencies; it was decided to hold the meeting in any case, as it was the first normal business meeting for six months, and it was quorate for decisions on regular business items.

Full business meeting of the PCC, Thursday 26 January in the Hall	<i>Present 9, apologies 5</i>
Meeting before the APCM, Thursday 27 April in church	<i>Present 9, apologies 6</i>
Meeting after the APCM, Thursday 27 April in church	<i>Present 9, apologies 6</i>
Extra meeting with the Archdeacon, Wednesday 12 July in the Rector's Office	<i>Present 7, apologies 8</i>
Full business meeting of the PCC, Thursday 27 July in the Rector's Office	<i>Present 5, apologies 10</i>
Extra business meeting, Wednesday 20 September in the Rector's Office <i>Jacquie Driver, Financial Consultant, in attendance for part of the meeting</i>	<i>Present 6, apologies 8</i>
Full business meeting of the PCC, Wednesday 18 October in the Hall <i>Julie Griggs, Independent Examiner, in attendance for part of the meeting</i>	<i>Present 8, apologies 5</i>
Electronic consultation of the PCC (<i>re replacement Parish Representative</i>), Wednesday 15 November	<i>Affirmative replies from all members</i>

The main matters discussed were:

- Interregnum planning and appointment process
- Fabric, including snagging on Quinquennial works, boiler replacement
- Faculties—Alderman's Walk paving, new sculpture in Churchyard
- 'to-do list' following Archidiaconal Visitation (all items completed by year end)
- Financial matters, including funding of Quinquennial works, budget, Reserves policy, rebuilding the Fabric Fund, overall review of finances
- Common Fund, including decisions on top-ups in support of other churches for 2017
- Charitable giving
- Future maintenance of the netball/tennis court
- Liturgy and music, including clergy cover, Director of Music's report
- Services and events
- Outreach, and ongoing relationships with neighbouring organisations
- Staffing and security
- Appointment of Frank Curtiss as Parish Representative to replace John Parker
- Appointment of Parish Clerk to fill vacancy
- Timing and frequency of meetings

Appointment process

The year began on an optimistic note. The PCC had accepted one of the ministry options offered by the diocese in 2016, namely that that a priest be appointed on a part-time basis but who would over the course of a couple of years become a full-time parish priest. The Churchwardens had held informal discussions in December 2016 with the suggested candidate, but he, after consideration, declined to take the proposal forward and notified us of the decision in March 2017.

As a result the protracted interregnum stretched into 2017. While supportive of a full-time priest to develop St Botolph's ministry as a flagship church in the locality, the Diocese had no suitable accommodation available, nor had it the funds to purchase a house, and challenged the PCC to provide one. The PCC wanted independent evidence that St Botolph's had sufficient funds, both to purchase a house and to continue to function viably. A meeting was held in July at which the need for a financial review was agreed, the Parish Profile was updated, the Statement of Needs reviewed and revised, and a draft advertisement compiled ready for approval by the Diocese. An independent adviser was appointed in July to conduct a financial review, and the report was received in September. At the October meeting the report was accepted, and correspondence with the Diocesan Property Department begun to confirm the legal position of the PCC as beneficial trustee of any house bought for the priest. At end of year, ready with up to date Statement of Needs, Parish Profile, draft advertisement, we awaited confirmation of the legal position of owning property. The PCC remained firm in its resolve for a full-time priest to be appointed to support and develop St Botolph's ministry across the parish and beyond, and discussions were set to continue into 2018.

Safeguarding

The Council takes seriously its role in the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults: it annually reviews its subscription to the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, and is thus compliant with its duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 in relation to having due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding. The Safeguarding Officer is Churchwarden Chris Watkins, who regularly reviews the parish safeguarding audit.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR—OUR MISSION AND ITS PUBLIC BENEFIT

A church open to all

The church continues to be open every weekday (7.00am to 5.30pm) and is much used by people from the surrounding businesses and by commuters from Liverpool Street Station.

Additionally, the Church Hall, Netball/Tennis Court and Churchyard occupy a central place in the life of many who work around Bishopsgate. The Churchyard is a busy thoroughfare as well as a place of rest, reflection and recreation. We see this as the provision of a most useful service to the public—all are welcome on our premises regardless of belief or opinion, and we strive to make everything we do in and around the church and Churchyard open and accessible to all in the area.

An active church

At the end of 2017 there were 130 members on the Electoral Roll. All members of the Roll live outside the parish.

The Wednesday and Thursday lunchtime liturgies (average attendance 25 and 8 respectively) continued to attract both parishioners and tourists. The overall standard of worship offered is high, drawing in visitors and pilgrims as well as regular worshippers.

At the start of the year the arrangement ended whereby Fr Hugh Thomas was 'lent' to us to conduct the majority of the services, as he had been asked to move on to help out at a church in Tottenham. He was formally thanked at the Patronal Festival for all his help at St Botolph's from October 2015 to January 2017. Dr John Turner was also thanked (*in absentia*) and his thirty years of service here noted; he resigned his Licence formally in September.

Following Fr Hugh's departure, Fr Peter McGeary agreed to cover as many Wednesdays as he could, to give the congregation as much continuity as possible, and we are most grateful to him, and to our Priest Missioner Fr Andrew Williams, for their regular attendance, as well as to all the other visiting clergy who continue to say 'yes' when the Administrator contacts them.

We are also grateful to all those who give so generously of their time to play particular roles in regular worship, and would like to record our gratitude to these in particular:-

- our altar servers: David Lee and Ian Shadforth;
- our additional assistants at Holy Communion: Chris Butten, Chris Watkins, Alastair Harris, and Michael Scargill
- our teams of readers and sidesmen, especially John Marshall
- our team of lay intercessors: Chris Butten, Christine Ferris, and Ian Piper (who sadly moved away from his work in the parish in July and was no longer able to attend)
- our Tower Captain, John Adams, and his team of bellringers who ring for every Wednesday service

Prominent among the names on the above list in previous Reports was the name of Ian Adams MBE, the senior member of our congregation; he had been ill for some time and we were saddened to hear of his death at 94 in August. St Botolph's was well represented at his funeral service at West Norwood Crematorium; we were honoured that Ian's family asked for a memorial to take place here, and delighted that our former Rector, Dr Alan McCormack, was free to take the service on Wednesday 27 September, which took the form of a BCP Communion with choral music. During the service, members of Ian's family came forward with newly-completed damask linings in liturgical colours to be received and blessed for use in St Botolph's in Ian's memory. These had been made by the couturier Sue Young to fit the new collection baskets donated to the church by our former Alderman, and Past Prime Warden Basketmaker, Sheriff Neil Redcliffe, and his wife Emma, and had been funded by a donation made by Ian for this specific purpose.

The large congregation of Ian's family (including some who had come especially from Australia) and friends then moved to the Hall to hear some of Ian's favourite music (which had all been learned for the occasion by Iestyn and members of the Choir) and tributes covering various aspects of his life; refreshments at the Travellers' Club followed. From feedback received it seems all thought the afternoon was a most fitting tribute to a wise and much-loved friend and colleague.

At the very end of the year we also heard of the sad death of another stalwart of the regular congregation, Celia Marshall, who had seemed to be making a miraculous recovery following a stroke in the summer. Her husband, PCC member John, had been caring for her at their home in the Barbican, but she did not recover following a second stroke in December.

Occasional liturgies—baptisms, weddings and marriage blessings, funerals, memorial and carol services—bring very large numbers of people into our beautiful buildings, again providing a high level of public benefit. The Administrator regularly reported to the PCC on her work arranging special services for individuals and corporate bodies, of which there were many more in 2017 than in the first part of the interregnum. It has sometimes proved more difficult to secure clerical cover for some of these, as they require a great time commitment on the part of the priest, and we would like to put on record our gratitude to the priests who have taken these on and generously given of their time.

It was not possible in 2017 to offer courses in Christian Education on site, but we joined once again with the Bank Churches Network to provide an innovative Lent course. In addition, members of the congregation were invited to join members of the community at our partner church in Tottenham Hale during Holy Week for a session of study and prayer, followed by refreshments and fellowship – Fr Andrew, the Priest Missioner, described the gathering as 'a significant element' of their preparations for Easter.

On Sundays, St Botolph's has continued to offer the hospitality of its fabric and space to the worshipping community of the Antiochian Orthodox Church of Great Britain. We also continued to welcome the Ethiopian Lutheran community of Mekane Yesus into our Church Hall on Sunday evenings.

A musical church, supporting the young

St Botolph's has an enviable reputation for the high standard of musical liturgy which it consistently delivers. 2017 was the third year of the new pattern of choral music at every Wednesday service, apart from during the weeks of 'high summer', when the services with solo singers, established when worship had to take place in the Hall in 2015, and repeated in the church in 2016, were renewed with great success. The Director of Music, Iestyn Evans, noted in his report to the PCC in October that he had managed this once again in 2017 slightly under budget, without any sacrifice of quality. The Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Iestyn, who together with his team of singers and deputy organists has provided such a high standard of music. Among musical highlights was the Choir's tribute in October to the 100th birthday of the distinguished composer Dr Francis Jackson, a long-term friend of St Botolph's who has composed music for us and for our former Director of Music, Tim Storey.

In our beautiful Hall, we continued to enjoy our ongoing partnership with 'Song in the City' which deploys young singers and accompanists from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Sadly, this arrangement has now had to come to an end, as the owners of the grand piano which had been lent to the group requested its return, and they were unable to find a replacement. In addition we have also been delighted to be able to make both church and Hall available to many visiting musical groups for concerts and rehearsals. We were pleased to host concerts by several emerging young choirs; young singers and instrumentalists gave recitals in aid of charity; and Streetwise Opera worked with the homeless in the Hall.

A new experiment took place in the summer when the new company Lunchbreak Opera chose to use St Botolph's for its inaugural production of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* – a most appropriate setting for a piece where the cast are with one exception members of a convent. Nine one-hour performances with young singers from the Guildhall School and other conservatoires took place in the space of a week, and seemed to be well attended and received.

St Botolph's continues to facilitate music-makers within local companies (including UBS, AON, Reed Smith and Stephenson Harwood) by providing a venue for the rehearsal and performance of their 'in-house' choirs and orchestras, and occasionally staff members wishing to practise the organ in the church, or solo singing in the Hall. During 2017 we hosted three concerts for Music in Offices, which organises choirs and instrumental tuition for office workers in the City and beyond.

A church working in partnership with others

Close and fruitful liaison has been continued with our Livery Companies (The Worshipful Companies of Leathersellers, Coopers, Bowyers, and Fan Makers), with The Bishopsgate Ward Club, and with The Honourable Artillery Company (the HAC) and The Rifles. We are grateful for our links with, and the moral, financial and corporate support of, all these organisations, as well as that of many local businesses.

The Leathersellers came to church both for their Election Day Service and their second carol service. The Bowyers attended for their own annual carol service. As well as attending the Parish Carol Service, the Coopers came for the Henry Cloker Service in October.

A neighbourly tradition continued in October when St Botolph's Choir provided the music for the patronal festival celebration at St Ethelburga's Bishopsgate. The Choir had also been invited to participate in a special service at there in March when the Saddlers' Company gave thanks for the life and charitable work of Robert Kitchin, a Tudor benefactor to the Company and St Ethelburga's.

We continued to work in collaboration with the City of London and the Ward of Bishopsgate, with regular liaison with various departments of the City Corporation, and our local Common Councillors. We were pleased to hear that our former Alderman, Neil Redcliffe, had been elected non-Aldermanic Sheriff for 2017-18, and the PCC made a donation to his Shrieval Chain Fund, Mhairi Ellis representing St Botolph's at the ceremony of presentation.

During the year we continued to explore ways in which Section 106 monies from the Heron Tower project earmarked for youth work might be applied to a new social enterprise project in the Parish, and a decision was made to continue our support of the work of the youth charity XLP (based in the Guild Church in our parish, All Hallows on the Wall) and specifically their 'Ready to Work' programme. Funding was agreed with the Corporation in the Summer, and at the end of the year we were awaiting the release of £75,000 as a grant towards the project.

St Botolph's Churchyard continued to host the Gavin Turk sculpture 'Ajar' as part of the City of London's 'Sculpture in the City' initiative; this artwork has in many ways been the most successful of the series so far in terms of the level of public interest and interaction—and it reflects nicely the church's own 'open door' policy.

We were delighted to learn that St Botolph's had been selected as one of the City Churchyards to benefit from the City Churchyards Enhancement Programme, a joint initiative of the Corporation and the Diocese of London: Paul Gibson represented the church as part of the consultation process, and we look forward to hearing more about the plans in due course.

Fr Luke Miller, our interim Priest-in-Charge, continued to occupy a governance role in the Bishopsgate Institute and the Samuel Butler Foundation. Mary Moore, a PCC member and a former pupil of the Girls' School, continues to represent St Botolph's on the Board of The Central Foundation Schools in London. The Church's presence in these governance *fora* is an important part of our contribution to our area, and a further example of St Botolph's acting to enable public benefit.

A church engaging with its community

Our website and social media pages are regularly updated with the latest news and have continued to attract new people to church, as have our regular advertisements in *City Events*. We publish full lists of services and events, currently monthly, online and in paper form.

St Botolph's has not previously been known as a venue for art exhibitions, but following the interest taken in the exhibition of WWI memorials in London which we showed in conjunction with the centenary of our WWI Cross in Autumn 2016, we experimented in January 2017 with a selling exhibition of beautiful icons and mosaic pieces by the Bulgarian artist Ivan Djidjev.

The Patronal Festival was celebrated in style on Wednesday 14 June, with the Archdeacon of London, our interim Priest-in-Charge, celebrating at the lunchtime Choral Eucharist, and The Revd Laura Jørgensen, Rector of our near neighbour St Botolph-without-Aldgate, as the select preacher. As well as thanks for the ministry of Dr Turner, and Fr Hugh Thomas's service to the parish in the interregnum, special mention was made of John Adams, our Tower Captain, and his team of bellringers for their faithful weekly attendance, as well as congratulations on the quarter peal they had rung that morning to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the re-hanging of the bells. The service was followed by sparkling refreshments, and another wonderful fruit cake made by PCC member John Marshall and decorated with an image of the icon of St Botolph.

In late October we welcomed back the Haemophilia Society for their Annual Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for those who have died as a result of treatment with contaminated blood products. Iestyn and the Choir gave a second performance of a new piece written and composed by members of the haemophiliac community.

We welcomed the HAC and their Padre, Fr Mark Speeks, for their Remembrance service on Friday 10 November, with Fr Andrew Williams representing the parish in welcoming the congregation and giving the blessing. There was a full turnout, and a substantial collection for ABF The Soldiers' Charity. The following day, Fr Kevin Scully represented St Botolph's for the Armistice Day service on Liverpool Street Station, joining the Railway Chaplain, Michele Ashton; and we also provided a musician to support the singing of the hymns.

The Administrator was invited to represent St Botolph's at the Christmas lunch of the Rifles Veterans, and began exploring with the officers of the Association suitable ways to mark the end of the centenary of WWI with a service and social event using the church and Hall.

St Botolph's is now very near capacity for December services—in 2017 more new organisations were hosted for carol services, in addition to many returning firms and charities, and we are most grateful to all the clergy who kindly gave up their time to lead all the extra services. The Parish Carol Service on 14 December was well-attended and the congregation enjoyed favourite Christmas carols supported by the Choir and Band of Coopers' Company and Coborn School. Fr Andrew Williams led the service, and was joined in the chancel by the Chaplain to the Coopers' Company, which was also represented by the Master and Clerk and other members. Readers included representatives of XLP, the Coopers, and the City of London Police.

A church well-restored and well-staffed

Following the major refurbishment works undertaken during 2015, fabric matters continued to preoccupy the Council. Snagging on the Quinquennial works continued into 2017, and the final bills were paid during the year. Many visitors have commented on how splendid the Georgian interior of the church looks after its refurbishment. Both church boilers were replaced during the Summer, paid for by a substantial grant from the Bishopsgate Church Foundation.

During another year's interregnum, Paul Gibson and Mhairi Ellis, our staff, have excelled in maintaining their high standards of dedicated professional service. They have applied themselves with loyalty, energy and creativity to the addressing of their many and varied responsibilities, so enabling the church to continue to serve its community.

Throughout the year the staff deal with many genealogical and historical queries, both from visitors to the church and in enquiries by email and telephone, and are always learning something new about the fascinating buildings in which they have the privilege to work.

Our caretakers Tommy Lacken, Jeff Parkinson and Ade Salau have for their part continued to work happily and efficiently in welcoming our many church and Hall users.

A church working charitably at home and abroad

We are deeply grateful that charitable giving of £6,692 has been possible in 2017—the PCC is committed to its role in assisting in a small way other charities wherever possible, and in 2017 continued its deliberate policy of supporting charities already linked in some way with us. Homelessness and rough sleeping visibly increased in the City during the year, and was discussed by the Council; much of our charitable giving was channelled towards this complex issue, including donations to the Hackney Winter Night Shelter (through the Diocesan Homelessness Appeal), Providence Row, and St Mungo's. Grants were also made towards older people, including Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours, and young people, including the support of music in schools in the East End through the St Paul's Cathedral Music Outreach programme, and our support for the work of the youth charity XLP mentioned earlier.

Warden Chris Watkins represented St Botolph's at carol services for XLP and Providence Row, and was invited to read at the latter, held at our neighbouring church St Mary Moorfields.

In addition to the sum mentioned above, we were pleased to be able to send £1,500 raised from Lenten alms for the support of the Priest Missioner at our linked church in Tottenham Hale.

Our School in the parish of St Barnabas, Uige, Angola (built in conjunction with our US partner church St Barnabas, Greenwich, CT) was completed in 2012 and is now responsible for educating nearly 900 local pupils. During the year we received grateful confirmation from the parish that the final tranche of money collected for the school, sent via ALMA at the end of 2016, had been spent towards further essential works to the school classrooms.

We were pleased to be able to act as agents in the processing of further charitable donations, for example at services organised by external charitable groups, totalling a further £9,141, and also to be able to offer our premises at greatly discounted rates for the use of local, national and international charities. As in previous years we hosted a CardAid shop in the Bishopsgate entrance from October to December – now one of the only two CardAid shops in London.

A church playing its part in the Diocese, and beyond

St Botolph's has continued to pay its full share of Common Fund and so support the wider charitable work of the Diocese. As in previous years it was agreed to make top-up grants towards the Common Fund obligations of parishes less well off: £5,000 to St Francis at the Engine Room, £2,000 to St Botolph-without-Aldgate, and for the first time an additional grant of £3,000 to St Mary's Cable Street in recognition of the assistance given to us by Fr McGearry.

During the year we agreed to continue our partnership with St Francis at the Engine Room in Tottenham Hale for a second three-year period (to 2020), and while this partnership continues the support of the Priest Missioner will continue to be the object of our Lenten collections and almsgiving. St Francis, the first purpose-built church in the Diocese for 40 years, was finally opened on Sunday 8 October at a service at which Churchwarden Chris Watkins and PCC member Alastair Harris represented St Botolph's.

Representatives of the PCC and staff of St Botolph's joined a capacity congregation in St Paul's Cathedral at Candlemas for the farewell service for the retiring Bishop of London.

The network of City Church administrators and church workers—inaugurated in the early 2000s by Mhairi Ellis when she was Area Dean's Assistant, and now enhanced by the addition of the administrators from the Westminster Deaneries—continued, which allowed even greater liaison, help in need, and sharing of information across the Two Cities Area.

In 2017 we opened the church as usual for Christian Aid's 'Circle the City' and for Open House Weekend, and we have continued to welcome large numbers of visitors, school groups and educational tours into both church and Churchyard.

St Botolph's once again supported 'Thy Kingdom Come', the annual Week of Prayer from Ascension to Pentecost, in conjunction with Capital Vision 2020.

We continued our membership of the Society of St Botolph, an informal linking of all the parishes in the UK and abroad dedicated to our patron saint.

Two members of the PCC sit on the City Deanery Synod—their report on its proceedings will be presented to the Annual Meeting at the same time as this Report. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the Church.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Income

In general, parish income remained at comparable levels in 2017 despite the ongoing interregnum and after allowing for certain one-off items.

General fund donations increased in 2017 as a result of a good number of special services and the successful reclaiming of historic CAF gifts. Service collections and alms box giving saw a moderate fall, as might be expected, but continued to form a small proportion of the overall income. Income tax recovery increased as the parish continues to catch up on Gift Aid claims from previous years. The grant from the Bishopsgate Church Foundation substantially increased during the year, and included funding to cover the cost of the new church boilers, which would have been a major expense for the PCC, and the transfer to the Council of historic balances. The Parish Voluntary Rate has continued at a comparable level as a result of the good work done towards this in communicating with our business community.

Hall lettings and income from the Court returned to more normal levels, after an exceptional year in 2016 due to one-off additions, but continued to provide substantial income for the parish. Finally the income from the sequestration account was lower as a result of Fr Hugh Thomas moving to another parish, as we had received income from the Diocese in recognition of his services.

Expenditure

The Parish managed to keep expenditure under control; however, with a wide range of activities, there have been exceptional items giving rise to a number of increases. There was an increase in staff payments to cover increased workload during the protracted interregnum.

The replacement of the church boilers (covered by the Foundation grant) added some £50,000 to the church maintenance category, and the investigation of damp ingress in the Hall added to the Hall maintenance total. Lastly, the PCC incurred final costs of £17,000 regarding Quinquennial works, whereas in 2016 the final receipt of grants relating to the Quinquennial works led to an overall credit of £7,000.

Overall, the Parish achieved a surplus of income over expenditure for the year of £27,600. This compares with an equivalent surplus in 2016 of £122,000 (largely due to the inclusion in that accounting year of the VAT reclaim and CCGC grant towards the Quinquennial works).

Gains on Investments

During the year the Finance Committee met our investment manager from CCLA to review our investments, the management of which it agreed was satisfactory. As a result of gradual improvements in the wider economic environment the Parish saw substantial gains on the value of its investments in both 2016 and 2017. These are unrealized as the investments concerned continue to be held and therefore the values may fluctuate over time beyond 2018. This is particularly relevant as the Parish considers its capital position in the light of its plans for a full-time incumbent and the investment decisions it will have to consider. Total funds in 2017 increased by over £175,000, or some 9%, to just over £2 million.

Reserves policy

During 2017 the Council approved the Finance Committee's proposal that £70,000, representing three months' salary and essential running costs, should be borne in mind as a basic reserve fund, although it was not necessary to set it aside separately as the General Fund already had substantial reserves in investments which could be readily called upon. The Council remained committed to re-building the Fabric Fund which had been depleted by the Quinquennial works.

Stewardship

St Botolph's operates a planned giving envelope scheme into which several congregation members have entered, and others give regularly by standing order. Gift Aid is reclaimed wherever applicable.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Council is responsible for keeping proper accounting records, for taking reasonable steps to safeguard the assets of the Parish and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities. The Council confirms that suitable accounting policies have been used and applied consistently, and reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates have been made in the preparation of the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2017. The Council also confirms that applicable accounting standards have been followed and that the financial statements which appear with this Annual Report have been prepared on a going concern basis.

OUR THANKS

St Botolph's continues to flourish due to the dedication and support of many people: those who have been named in this report and countless other parishioners, friends and organisations who support us with their resources and their prayers.

The Priest-in-Charge, Churchwardens and PCC continue to give thanks to Almighty God for his many mercies in the life of St Botolph's, and for the increase of God's Kingdom in this place.

On behalf of the PCC

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The Venerable Luke Miller, Archdeacon of London, Priest-in-Charge
Chairman
18 April 2018