

**THE PARISH AND WARD CHURCH OF ST BOTOLPH-WITHOUT-BISHOPSGATE**  
**Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31 December 2019**

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 Parish Priest, with the support of the Churchwardens. The Verger, Hall and Court Manager is Mr Paul Gibson.

The Church Administrator, PCC Secretary 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 Parish Priest 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 most recently refurbished in 2015-17—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 2015-17; further works including repairs to the stonework of the Tower and an overhaul of the electrics were identified as a result of the Quinquennial Inspection which took place during 2018, and these were undertaken during 2019.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and 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**

At its first meeting of 2019 the Council expressed thanks to the Wardens and staff for keeping St Botolph's flourishing during the lengthy interregnum which had come to an end with the Licensing of Fr David Armstrong as Priest-in-Charge in November 2018. Chris Watkins, retiring as Churchwarden in April after 10 years' service, was especially warmly applauded for her time and attention to detail in steering the church through this often challenging period.

At the start of the year, although Fr David had been in post as Priest-in-Charge for just under two months, the parish was already starting to feel the benefit of having a full-time priest on site daily.

As he had promised in his summary in the 2018 Annual Report, he spent the first few months of the year getting to know the Wardens, Trustees and staff, and with their assistance 'reviewing the spiritual, liturgical and outreach nature of what St Botolph's offers to its congregations, communities and the general public, and also the logistical and business aspects of the church'. Having done so, and having forged bonds with all our linked organisations, he was in a position towards the end of the year to present the Council with a draft five-year plan for discussion, including proposals for a rebuild of the pipe organ, a coffee kiosk in the church building in conjunction with the youth charity XLP, and work with homeless people and those suffering from mental health problems, in the hope of providing for all 'a place of calm, sanctuary and God's love in the City' at St Botolph's.

In line with the requirements of the 2018 Quinquennial Inspection, essential work was undertaken on the stonework of the Tower, and to upgrade the electrics.

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, including some innovations. 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 Revd David Armstrong (Priest-in-Charge)

Ms Chris Watkins (Churchwarden, to 11 April)

Ms Wendy Hyde (Churchwarden)

Mr Frank Curtiss (Churchwarden, from 11 April)

Mrs Christine Ferris (Deanery Synod representative)

Mr John Marshall (Deanery Synod representative from 29 May, ratified 26 September)

### Elected members

Mr Christopher Butten, Mr Nick Creswick Gough, Mr Frank Curtiss (to 11 April), Mr Alastair Harris, Mr Peter Kibble (from 13 November), Mr David Lee, Mr John Marshall (to 29 May), Miss Mary Moore, Mr Michael Scargill (to 7 March), Mr Ian Shadforth, Ms Chris Watkins (from 11 April), Mr David Westover (from 11 April)

### Notes

We are currently permitted to elect nine members to the Council.

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 and a Finance Committee including the Priest-in-Charge and Wardens. The Standing Committee meets, if 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 Finance Committee meets to discuss the Accounts, budget, investments and other financial matters as necessary.

The full Council met in person for business five times in 2019, and also had an informal gathering over lunch in October to hear and discuss Fr David's draft five-year plan. It was consulted electronically at other times as necessary (and the results of such consultations were ratified at the succeeding meeting in person). 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, and presented Finance, Fabric, and Services and Activities background papers in advance of meetings.

## Dates of meetings and attendance

The number of members of the Council at the start of the year was 12. It decreased to 11 when Michael Scargill resigned in March; rose to 13 following the elections at the APCM, when John Marshall and David Westover joined the Council; and rose once again to 14 following the appointment of Peter Kibble in November. The number at the end of the year was 14.

Full business meeting of the PCC, Friday 25 January in the Hall	<i>Present 8, apologies 4</i>
Full business meeting of the PCC, Tuesday 19 March in the Hall	<i>Present 8, apologies 3</i>
Meeting after the APCM, Thursday 11 April in the church	<i>Present 11, apologies 2</i>
Full business meeting of the PCC, Thursday 26 September in the Hall	<i>Present 9, apologies 4</i>
Full business meeting of the PCC, Wednesday 13 November in the Hall	<i>Present 9, apologies 4</i>

(Note: Fr David had a period of illness in June and July, which meant that the full business meeting which would normally have taken place in July was postponed until September.)

The Council was consulted electronically on 7 March, 16 April, 4 June and 22 July, and gathered over lunch on 11 October to discuss, informally and candidly, Fr David's draft five-year plan.

The main matters discussed in the course of the year were:

- Clergy accommodation, Rectory rental, housing allowance
- Fabric, including tower stonework repairs and church electrical upgrade resulting from 2018 Quinquennial Inspection, HAC memorials, organ rebuild, updating of church noticeboards
- Proposals for drinking fountains in the Churchyard, and a coffee kiosk in the Bishopsgate porch of the church
- Homelessness, rough sleeping and mental health issues in the City – liaison with Corporation, Police and charities
- Faculties, including Quinquennial works, new sculpture in Churchyard
- PCC policies – all updated and reviewed during the year
- Financial matters, including budget, accounts, Voluntary Church Rate, banking arrangements, contactless and other methods of donation, hire charges, review of accounting arrangements
- Common Fund, including decisions on top-ups in support of other churches for 2019
- Charitable giving, including Lent and Advent charities, support for linked organisations including St Francis at the Engine Room, XLP, Christian Aid, ALMA, St Mungo's
- Church, Hall and Court running, including the implementation of a new cleaning contract
- Liturgy and music, including organ rebuild project, Director of Music's annual report, service innovations, renewal of chalice-bearers' licences
- Services and activities
- IT and communications, including upgraded computers, telecommunications and website
- Outreach, and reinforcing existing relationships with neighbouring organisations, including St Botolph's representation on the boards of the Bishopsgate Institute, Central Foundation Schools and the Samuel Butler Foundation
- Staffing and security

## Safeguarding

The Council takes seriously its role in the safeguarding of children, young people 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. During the year the safeguarding information on the church website and noticeboards was brought up to date in line with the most recent guidance from the Area Office, and continues to be monitored. The Safeguarding Officer is Chris Watkins, and the parish safeguarding audit is regularly reviewed.

## Data protection

The Priest-in-Charge and Council take seriously their roles as Data Controllers in complying with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR), and the parish is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. The parish's General Privacy Notice is clearly signposted from the website and from staff emails, and consent forms are collected as necessary. Trustees and members of staff undertook GDPR training during the course of the year.

## **REVIEW OF THE YEAR—OUR MISSION AND ITS PUBLIC BENEFIT**

### **A church open to all**

The church is 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 accessible to all in the area, including the local homeless community.

### **An active and inclusive church**

In 2019 the Electoral Roll was refreshed during one of its periodic complete renewals, and at the end of the year had 93 members, all of whom live outside the parish.

The lunchtime liturgies on Wednesday (1.10 pm Choral Eucharist; average attendance: 31 – 2018: 26) and Thursday (12.10 pm Said Eucharist; average attendance: 8 – 2018: 6) continued to attract both parishioners and visitors. From Advent 2019 Fr David introduced a third regular weekday service, a short Said Eucharist at 8.10 am on Tuesday (average attendance in December: 4) to attract local workers who would benefit from a said service before work.

Innovations during 2019 included the addition of a sung Alleluia to the Wednesday choral service, giving the reading of the Gospel greater solemnity. On Ash Wednesday Fr David offered early morning and early evening services with Imposition of Ashes as well as the lunchtime liturgy, and made himself available for private ashing throughout the day. The Lady Chapel was given new focus as a place for private prayer, the re-arrangement of its furnishings enhanced by the kind gift from the nearby church of St Margaret Pattens of an additional small pricket stand.

On St Francis of Assisi's feast day, 4 October, Fr David and Freddie the church dog welcomed animals and their owners for what may have been the first ever choral Animal Blessing Service in the City of London – this was organised at relatively short notice but was such a success that it was decided it should become an annual fixture. A service organised at even shorter notice came about when a local charity had to cancel its carol service owing to low ticket take-up; as the choir were already booked for it, the Director of Music suggested that disappointment could be turned into opportunity by putting on a short service of 'Rush-Hour Carols'. With colourful posters and internet marketing, this service drew a good congregation of people who had never been to St Botolph's before for a joyful pre-Christmas celebration.

Our Priest Missioner, Fr Andrew Williams, continued to assist with services monthly, and we are most grateful to him, and to other visiting clergy who were able to assist when Fr David became ill in the summer months.

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, Paul Gibson, Alastair Harris, Tommy Lacken and Chris Watkins (who together with David Lee were all licensed or re-licensed in public services during the year)
- our teams of readers and sidesmen
- our lay intercessors: Chris Butten and Christine Ferris
- our Tower Captain, John Adams, and his team of bellringers who ring for every Wednesday service

Occasional liturgies—baptisms, weddings and marriage blessings, funerals, memorials and the burial of ashes, and our many and varied carol services—bring very large numbers of people into our beautiful buildings, again providing a high level of public benefit.

It was not possible in 2019 to offer courses in Christian Education on site, but members of the congregation were once again invited to join the community at St Francis at the Engine Room, our partner church in Tottenham Hale, during Lent for a session of study and prayer on Justine Allain Chapman's book 'The Resilient Disciple', followed by refreshments and fellowship.

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. The pattern of a variety of choral music at every Wednesday service continued, 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, were continued with great acclaim. The Organist and Director of Music, Iestyn Evans, noted in his report to the PCC in October that he had managed this once again in 2019 on 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.

During the year Iestyn took on with enthusiasm the additional responsibility of starting to research possibilities for the rebuild of St Botolph's pipe organ, unplayable since the 1990s. The church engaged the services as consultant for this project the eminent performer and teacher Professor David Titterington, Head of Organ at the Royal Academy of Music, who has overseen the building of several significant organs in recent decades. The costs of the initial stages of this project up to tendering are to be covered by a grant from the Bishopsgate Church Foundation.

Additional music is brought to our Wednesday services, weddings and occasionally memorial services by our loyal team of bellringers, and we were sorry that the bells had to fall silent from St Botolph's Day until the Autumn during the period of work on the tower stonework.

We have been delighted as usual to be able to make church and Hall available to many visiting musical groups for concerts and rehearsals. Highlights included the return of Lunchbreak Opera for another production in the Hall, this time of Puccini's comic opera *Gianni Schicchi*. Seven one-hour performances with rising young singers and players from the London conservatoires took place in the space of a week, and were well attended and received.

St Botolph's continues to facilitate music-makers within local companies (including UBS, AON, Reed Smith, Stephenson Harwood, Travelers and UK Finance) 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.

### **A church working in partnership with others**

Close and fruitful liaison has continued with our Livery Companies (the Worshipful Companies of Leathersellers, Coopers, Bowyers, and Fan Makers), with the Bishopsgate Ward Club, the Bishopsgate Institute, and with our linked regiments the Honourable Artillery Company (the HAC) and the Rifles. The Leathersellers came to church both for their Election Day Service and their annual carol service, and 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, and the Institute and Ward Club had their own annual carol services. During the course of the year Fr David was delighted to accept the Chaplaincies of the Bowyers' Company and the Bishopsgate Ward Club, and got to know them better by attending various events.

Fr David and the Administrator had a splendid lunch and tour of the HAC's headquarters at Armoury House in the company of the new Court Secretary and the Archivist, and came away laden with historical material. They were also both honoured to be invited to represent St Botolph's at the June and Christmas gatherings of the Rifles Veterans, forging new bonds with these doughty and dignified old soldiers.

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. It can sometimes be difficult for a member of the clergy to gain access to businesses in the parish, so Fr David was pleased to be one of the faith leaders asked to speak at the opening of the Ohana Floor in Salesforce Tower opposite the church. The floor is part of a community outreach programme led by Salesforce, and the audience also heard from speakers including Dame Jayne-Anne Gadhia, Salesforce's UK CEO, and Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London. The event represented a successful and useful in-road to a major organisation in the parish.

St Botolph's Choir crossed the road to St Ethelburga's in October to continue a neighbourly tradition by providing the music for their patronal festival celebration, at which Fr David officiated. Members of St Botolph's congregation were invited to join this celebration, as well as venturing further afield for the patronal services and carol services of our friends at St Mary's Cable Street and St Francis at the Engine Room, Tottenham Hale.

We continued to work in collaboration with the City of London Corporation and the Ward of Bishopsgate, with regular liaison with various departments of the Corporation, our local Common Councillors in Bishopsgate, and the City Police. Towards the end of the year an experiment began in hosting in the Hall a series of Homeless Hubs run jointly by the

Corporation, the Police and agencies including St Mungo's: these had formerly been held under canvas in various parts of the City, including in Alderman's Walk in the parish.

Churchwarden Wendy Hyde CC continued to be an enthusiastic and valuable link between St Botolph's and the Corporation, and our thanks go to her for this helpful liaison. In her capacity as Chairman of the Keats House Consultative Committee she was able to broker introductions between the Administrator and Keats House staff, which led to St Botolph's - the church where John Keats was baptised - marking the poet's birthday on 31 October by hosting a Keats200 event, an evening of readings from his letters and poems, with appropriate music provided by Iestyn Evans and one of the St Botolph's singers. We hope that this will be the first of multiple collaborations in the run-up to the 2021 bicentenary of Keats' death. Earlier that day, the Administrator had been privileged to join Churchwarden Wendy Hyde, the Curator of Keats House and others at the annual short service and wreath-laying at Keats' memorial in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey.

The Churchyard continued to host for the first part of the year the David Annesley sculpture 'Untitled, 1969' as part of the City of London's 'Sculpture in the City' initiative. It was replaced in the summer by 'Reclining Nude 1' by Kevin Francis Gray.

St Botolph's was selected in 2018 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 David took his place *ex-officio* on the Boards of the Bishopsgate Institute, The Central Foundation Schools of London, and the Samuel Butler Foundation. By the end of the year he was thoroughly versed and immersed in their work, and had been asked to chair the Bursaries Committee at the Schools. The Church's presence in these governance *fora* is an important part of our contribution to our area, and a further example of our acting to enable public benefit. Fr David also visited the Coopers' Company and Coborn School twice during 2019.

### **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 monthly, online and in paper form, and from February 2019 these bulletins also featured regular reflections from Fr David. Special services and events are also advertised on A Church Near You and Eventbrite.

We celebrated our Patron St Botolph in style as usual with a wonderful Choral Festival Eucharist on Wednesday 19 June. Fr David was the Celebrant, and we were delighted to welcome The Very Revd Nicholas Papadopoulos, Dean of Salisbury, as the preacher. The service was attended by an encouragingly large number of the St Botolph's 'family' including representatives of Bishopsgate Ward, our associated Livery Companies, the Bishopsgate Ward Club, and neighbours including St Ethelburga's and XLP. Iestyn Evans directed the choir in fabulous music by Victoria, Bruckner and Mendelssohn (and as there were so many coming up to Communion the choir performed an additional motet, Mozart's *Ave verum Corpus*, from memory!) After the service all enjoyed sparkling refreshments, and John Marshall produced another of his delicious cakes decorated with 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. Among many moving readings and musical items, Iestyn and the Choir gave a further performance of an anthem specially written for the service by members of the haemophiliac community. Fr David led the whole service himself, as the Methodist minister who normally assists with it, himself a member of the haemophiliac community, was prevented at short notice from attending by a family matter. There was once again a considerable congregation, partly owing to increased awareness generated by the Public Enquiry into the contaminated blood tragedy which continued its work during the year.

Remembrancetide was once again memorable in 2019. We placed the 'There but Not There' soldier figures back in the pews in time for All Souls' Day, near the Honourable Artillery Company memorials in the North Aisle, and near the London Rifle Brigade and Parish memorials in the South Aisle, and they remained in place until Armistice Day. The standing silhouettes of 'Tommies' remained positioned near the Bishopsgate entrance, and outside by the memorial Cross in the Churchyard (the first memorial to the Great War to be erected in London). Our own Choral Requiem for the Commemoration of All Souls, including beautiful music and the ceremonies of the solemn reading out the names of the deceased and lighting of candles in their memory, was well attended. On Friday 8 November the Honourable Artillery Company attended

St Botolph's for their choral Remembrance Service, during which a new wreath was laid by the HAC memorials; prior to the main service the old wreath was placed outside at the Cross with a short act of remembrance. There was a full turnout, and a substantial collection for ABF The Soldiers' Charity. On Armistice Day Fr David once again assisted the Railway Chaplain with the leading of Remembrance prayers by the vast war memorial on Liverpool Street Station, along with a musician provided by St Botolph's supporting the singing of the hymns.

St Botolph's is now very near capacity for December services—in 2019 more new organisations were hosted for carol services and concerts, in addition to many returning firms and charities. The Parish Carol Service on Thursday 19 December was well-attended, and the congregation enjoyed favourite Christmas carols supported by the Choir of the Coopers' Company and Coborn School. Readers included representatives of the Corporation, the City of London Police, the Coopers' Company, and local business. Our Advent Carol Service and Crib Service were also well supported, and as mentioned above an additional short Rush-Hour Carol Service put on at very short notice turned into a highly successful event.

We are lucky to have the Hall and Court as additional facilities to offer our community, and Paul Gibson makes sure that both are booked to the highest capacity by firms, charities and other organisations both local and from further afield. Hall users from WeightWatchers to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Philharmonia Orchestra to film crews, the Heroes Band to the City Historical Society, are made welcome by our team of diligent caretakers, supported by our efficient new cleaning firm Clean for Good.

### **A church well-restored and well-staffed**

Following the major refurbishment works undertaken during 2015-17, visitors have continued to comment on how splendid the Georgian interior of the church looks. In 2019 it was the turn of the tower to have a make-over, as repairs to the stonework had been flagged up as urgent in the 2018 Quinquennial Inspection, and these works were completed during the summer. Along with a necessary upgrading of the electrics completed in the early part of the year, these works were paid for by a grant from the Bishopsgate Church Foundation, and a successful claim was made for the recovery of VAT.

St Botolph's benefits greatly from knowledgeable and dedicated staff. Paul Gibson and Mhairi Ellis have contributed greatly to the success of St Botolph's for many years, yet remain innovative and focused in their work. We are fortunate to have such loyal staff who share the ethos and aims of the church. Since Fr David's installation, formal staff meetings are held weekly each Monday morning. Annual staff reviews took place in November with the opportunity to look afresh at job roles and desires.

Our caretaking team, Tommy Lacken, Jeff Parkinson and Ade Salau, have for their part continued to work happily and efficiently in welcoming our many church, Hall and Court users. At the start of 2019, with PCC approval, we increased caretaker pay in line with the London Living Wage.

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. Occasionally we are offered gifts of historical items relating to the church, and in 2019 we were pleased to receive a family bible and architectural drawings of the church to add to these.

Mhairi Ellis, having been appointed Parish Clerk of St Botolph's following the resignation of John Hughesdon in 2017 and elected to membership of the Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks in 2018, continued to represent St Botolph's with attendance at the Company's services and functions during 2019, getting to know the representatives of other City churches.

### **A church working charitably at home and abroad**

We are deeply grateful that charitable giving of £15,786 has been possible in 2019—the PCC is committed to its role in assisting in a small way other charities wherever possible, and in 2019 continued its deliberate policy of supporting charities already linked in some way with us.

During the year we continued our partnership with St Francis at the Engine Room in Tottenham Hale, and while this partnership continues the support of the Priest Missioner will continue to be the object of our Lenten collections and almsgiving. We were pleased to be able in 2019 to send £1,500 raised from Lenten alms towards Fr Andrew's expenses. As in previous years (when they were seen as Common Fund top-ups) it was agreed to make grants towards parishes less well off: St Francis at the Engine Room and St Botolph-without-Aldgate both received support in this way. In addition, grants were made among others to Christian Aid, and to St Mungo's for its work with the homeless.

The school which we built in the parish of St Barnabas, Songo, Uige, Angola (in conjunction with our former US partner church St Barnabas, Greenwich, CT) was completed in 2012, and is now overflowing with many hundreds of local pupils. During the year we received updates from Songo and exchanged seasonal greetings (with the help of Portuguese-speaking translators). Mhairi Ellis was honoured to be asked to represent St Botolph's by reading at the annual ALMA (Angola, London, Mozambique Association) service in St Paul's Cathedral in July, and after the service was introduced to the Bishop of Angola, The Rt Revd Andre Soares; this contact led to the PCC's decision to raise funds in Advent for the ALMA Angola Schools Fund to help in building additional schools and classrooms in church schools in Angola, including our own.

The other charity for which we raised funds during Advent was XLP (the ExCeL Project) based at All Hallows on the Wall, the Guild Church in our parish. Fr David got to know the youth charity's staff during the year, and on a visit to one of their projects in Lewisham saw their work in action. In addition to our direct fundraising for them, we had arranged for the Section 106 monies from the Heron Tower project earmarked for youth work to be used for the support of their 'Ready to Work' programme. The final tranche of the funding of £75,000 was handed over to XLP in the course of the year, and the report on the previous year's work received.

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, and also to be able to offer our premises at greatly discounted rates for the use of local, national and international charities. One highlight in this area was the second City Sleep-Out organised by XLP, where supporters of the charity from various City firms spent a night in March first hearing about the work of the charity in the Hall and then sleeping out on the Court – we were delighted to hear that once again the event raised over £32,000.

### **A church playing its part in the Diocese, and beyond**

St Botolph's has continued to pay its full share of Common Fund – at a significantly higher level now we have a full-time priest - and so support the wider charitable work of the Diocese.

In April, Fr David and the Administrator represented St Botolph's at the start of a new City ministry as The Revd Katherine Hedderly was installed as both Vicar of our neighbouring church of All Hallows by the Tower, and Area Dean of the City. Later in the year Fr David attended Bishop Sarah's first Two Cities Clergy Conference in Merville, France, and found it a good opportunity to explore areas of mutual interest with other clergy in the Two Cities.

In 2019 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 the Diocesan initiative 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.

Christine Ferris, and since June 2019 John Marshall, sit on the City Deanery Synod—their report on its proceedings is 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.

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, allowing even greater liaison, help in need, and sharing of information across the Two Cities Area, although following a change in personnel in the Area Office the very helpful administrators' training programme fell into a hopefully temporary desuetude.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

### Income

In general, parish income was considerably lower in 2019 at £407,151 than the much higher figure of £977,921 in 2018 which reflected the liquidation of the Easement Monies Fund to provide funds of around £655,000 to acquire the Rectory, but more in line with the figure of £391,571 in 2017 and prior years. General Fund donations increased in 2019 over 2018. Service collections were broadly stable and alms box giving saw a modest fall but together continued to form a small proportion of the overall income. Income tax recovery increased over the year through new claims after the lower figure in 2018 which followed the substantial catch up on Gift Aid claims from previous years during 2017. Other donations increased from £17,405 in 2018 to £22,813 in 2019. The grant from the



Bishopsgate Church Foundation was £108,416 in part to assist with Quinquennial works expenditure against a lower grant of £35,252 in 2018. The Parish Voluntary Rate has increased over the year by just over 6% as a result of the good work done towards this in communicating with our business community. Hall lettings and income from the Court were slightly lower in 2019 at £115,872 against £122,941 in 2018 but continued to provide substantial income for the parish.

#### Expenditure

The total expenditure figure for 2019 contrasts with the far higher 2018 figure of £967,279 which, however, included a one off contribution to the acquisition of the Rectory of £655,000 in that year. Activities directly relating to the work of the Church, financed from unrestricted funds, were higher at £411,203 in 2019 against £307,899 in 2018, in part due to higher expenditure on Quinquennial works at £69,781 and an increased contribution of £13,500 to the Diocesan Common Fund. Overall, total expenditure in 2019 of £415,573 exceeded total income of £407,151 giving rise to a small deficit of £8,422 for the year compared with a surplus of £10,642 in 2018.

#### Investments

The valuation of investments managed by CCLA benefited from the improving market during 2019 which led to unrealised gains of just over £200,000 or an increase of around 16.5% over the year from an opening balance of £1,281,722 to a closing balance of £1,493,035. The Rectory whose acquisition was funded by the realisation of investments assets in 2018 is shown in the balance sheet under tangible fixed assets at an acquisition cost of £655,000.

#### 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 in 2015-17.

#### 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.

#### Alternative methods of donation

The Council had started research into alternative methods of donation in 2018, and early in 2019 decided to enter into contract with the contactless and mobile payment company SumUp. Take-up of contactless payment as an alternative to cash donations in services was slow, but became more common as the year progressed and awareness was raised; it was also good to be able to offer contactless payment as an option for Hall and Court payments and one-off donations.

#### 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 2019. 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.

#### Significant Post Balance Sheet Event: COVID-19

Since the financial year end on 31 December 2019, with the unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic, the parish has experienced two significant impacts. The activities of the parish have been directly and adversely affected by the pandemic. The church has been closed and income from Hall lettings and the Court and other sources has been curtailed as a result of the lockdown imposed by the authorities from 23 March 2020. There have also been significant effects on investment markets, with great volatility from March 2020 onwards, which has had implications for the valuation of investments managed by CCLA and the income arising from those investments. Our activities as a parish together with our investment strategy and asset allocation are being kept under review and managed in accordance with the varying of government restrictions and in the light of further developments. However, notwithstanding these developments, the parish has sufficient reserves to continue operating.

#### **FR DAVID REFLECTS ON HIS FIRST FULL YEAR IN POST**

Before I was interviewed by Bishop Sarah *et al.* for my post as Priest-in-Charge at St Botolph's, incognito, I attended one of the Wednesday Choral Eucharists. What I found there has been one of the bases upon which I am building my ministry in this place. I sat admiring the beautiful interior of the church. I found myself drawn into the calm and reverent worship by the outstanding liturgy,

music and singing. And then, in pauses of would-be silence, there was the sound of the purring snore of a homeless man finding sanctuary in the nave.

For some detractors, the seemingly high-church music and liturgy we enjoy is at odds with the poverty and homelessness we see literally on our doorstep. To me they are one and the same, they are part and parcel of our Christian witness here in our part of the City of London. They are both paths by which we can show the beauty and wonder of God.

As you will all know, in the days when the great gates of the City of London were closed in the evening to keep the inhabitants safe at night, the church of St Botolph, the patron saint of wayfarers, provided sanctuary and safety for those who found themselves locked out. It provided a haven for those left without. I chose "without-ness" as the theme for our Choral Eucharists during Advent in 2019. Without-ness is still very much in our midst today and I evidenced it again and again during 2019.

We have the without-ness of homelessness. At St Botolph's we take seriously our duty of care and sanctuary to those who unfortunately find themselves without a place to call home. We offer spiritual and practical support as well working with other agencies and services to attend to a homeless person's needs. In Autumn of 2019 we started to host a fortnightly homeless drop-in hub in the Church Hall. Run by the City of London Police, the Corporation and agencies such as St Mungo's, the hub provides valuable support to homeless people in the area, showing that someone cares for them.

However, try as we might, we are unable to help everyone. One grey Monday morning in September last year I held the hand of a young homeless man, Danni, as he died in our churchyard, only in his thirties. A woeful end to a young life. Things like that should not be happening in our society and it is our Christian duty to work to alleviate this kind of suffering. A few weeks later another member of our homeless community also died.

As we have done historically, so we must do now, stand up for the one without, the outsider. Our continued association and work with XLP ensures that we are helping young people who live in some of the more challenging housing estates in London. The intervention means that many who are in danger of being recruited into gangs, instead find rewarding and fulfilling lives. I witnessed this first-hand in 2019, and it is impressive.

The first memorial services I took at St Botolph's during 2019 were all for successful professional men in their 40s and 50s who had taken their own lives. They felt pressurized and trapped in a corporate environment which often provides little leeway for discussing mental health issues. In the summer of 2019, I was privileged to be part of Bishopsgate Institute's mental health awareness scheme aimed at staff. The programme was run by the charity Mind, and I have been exploring with them ways in which we at St Botolph's might offer a similar programme for our staff and our wider community.

It is our without-ness, and the recognition of without-ness in others, which makes us what we are within. I want us to draw deeper on our rich pastoral heritage, the heritage of sanctuary and show it in how we minister to all in our care regardless of status. It is my aim to continue this whilst also adding to the glory of our liturgical offering., part of that being our plans to rebuild the pipe organ in St Botolph's.

Thank you to the staff, Churchwardens, PCC and members of our congregations for all your advice and support during 2019, and most of all for your Christian friendship.

*With God's love and blessings, Fr David*

## **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*



The Revd David Armstrong, Priest-in-Charge, Chairman  
17 June 2020