

THE PARISH AND WARD CHURCH OF ST BOTOLPH-WITHOUT-BISHOPSGATE

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31 December 2022

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 Rector, 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 (to 2 August)

Metro Bank, 117-121 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 7PP (from 2 August)

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 Dip Proj Man, KSA Property, 6 Midland House, 109-113 Victoria Road, Romford, Essex RM1 2LX

AIMS AND PURPOSES

The Parochial Church Council of St Botolph-without-Bishopsgate has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector 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 the 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 sacrament, music, prayer, and exegesis.

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 2018 Quinquennial Inspection, and undertaken during 2019, although sway tests on the bells necessary to complete the tower work, intended to be undertaken in 2020, remained postponed. Improvements made during 2022 to the church lighting included making the East Window and the surrounding elements of Christ's Passion more visible inside, and illuminating the window from outside at night, as well as lighting up the normally hidden 'Cana' stained glass at the North Door. Planning continued throughout the year for our major project to rebuild the pipe organ within its historic case.

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 all 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 have very much in mind the Diocese of London's collective 2030 Vision, with its aim 'for every Londoner to encounter the love of God in Christ' and its themes of Confident Disciples, Compassionate Communities and Creative Growth.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Despite the lingering effects of the Covid pandemic, and in a year dominated by news of war in Ukraine and other countries, protests, transport strikes and other disruptions, we continued to maintain St Botolph's as much as possible as 'a place of calm, sanctuary and God's love in the City'. We remain proud members of Inclusive Church and believe that the Church should celebrate and affirm every person and does not discriminate in any way. Our 'open door' policy was maintained throughout the year, to ensure a ready welcome to all visitors, and we were delighted to be able to return to full opening hours for the majority of the year. We continued our work with the homeless community in Bishopsgate and beyond, and a secondary focus on mental wellbeing in the City.

The staff continued to work hard – for the majority of the year, in the Verger's and Administrator's cases, from their remote outposts at home - to ensure that the day-to-day administration of the church, Hall and Court were kept up, and new ideas researched 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 (Rector)

Mr Frank Curtiss (Churchwarden)

Ms Chris Watkins (Churchwarden, to 24 May)

Mr Alex Coles (Churchwarden, from 24 May)

Mrs Christine Ferris (Deanery Synod representative)

Mr Alex Coles (Deanery Synod representative)

Elected members

Mr Christopher Butten, Mr Nick Creswick Gough, Mr Simon Davis,

Mr Alastair Harris, Ms Wendy Hyde CC, Mr Peter Kibble,

Mr Christopher Lawrance, Miss Mary Moore, Ms Chris Watkins (from 24 May)

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, both including the Rector and Wardens. The Standing Committee meets as 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: from the start of the pandemic in 2020 to the end of 2021 it had stepped up the frequency of its engagement, meeting monthly by Zoom to oversee the parish's finances, with meeting notes being regularly circulated to the full Council, but in 2022 members felt able to revert to a more normal pattern of quarterly meetings in advance of PCC meetings.

During 2022 the full Council met for business four times by Zoom, and in person following the Annual Meetings for the election of officers and the renewal of the Safeguarding Policy. Council members who could not be present at meetings were encouraged to ask questions and raise concerns in advance so their voices could be included. The Council was consulted electronically in between meetings as necessary (and the results of such consultations were ratified at the succeeding business meeting).

The Annual Meetings took place on Tuesday 24 May, in church for the first time since 2019. The Churchwardens elected at the Annual Vestry Meeting were admitted to office by Fr David, acting as the Archdeacon of London's Commissary, in church at the beginning of the Patronal Festival Mass on 15 June, as it was not yet possible for the usual large gatherings for the Area Visitations to Churchwardens to take place.

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 in advance of meetings background reports on Finance, Fabric, and Services, Events and Activities. The January meeting received an update on the organ rebuild project from our Organ Consultant, Professor David Titterington, and Iestyn Evans, our Organist and Director of Music; and the Independent Examiner, Mrs Julie Griggs, attended and addressed the May meeting when the 2021 Accounts were reviewed.

Dates of meetings and attendance

The number of members of the Council throughout the year was 13.

Full business meeting, Wednesday 26 January	<i>Present 10, apologies 3</i>
Full business meeting, Tuesday 10 May	<i>Present 11, apologies 2</i>
First meeting of the new Council after the APCM, Tuesday 24 May	<i>Present 8, apologies 5</i>
Full business meeting, Tuesday 28 July	<i>Present 10, apologies 3</i>
Full business meeting, Tuesday 18 October	<i>Present 11, apologies 2</i>

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

- Fabric, including renovation of WW1 memorial Cross, gift of engraving from Veterans Aid, Court maintenance
- Organ rebuild project – Faculty application, preparation for dismantling pipe organ
- The Good Coffee Kiosk, operating from the Bishopsgate porch of the church
- Homelessness, rough sleeping and mental health issues in the City – liaison with Corporation, Police and charities, Homeless Hubs in the Hall
- PCC policies – updated and reviewed during the year
- Financial matters, including budget, Accounts, Voluntary Church Rate, Rectory letting, salaries and fees, hire charges, change of banks from AIB to Metro Bank, stewardship
- Common Fund, including decisions on top-ups in support of partner churches for 2022
- Charitable giving, including Lent and Advent charities, support for linked organisations including St Francis at the Engine Room, Christian Aid, Help Ukraine Emergency Appeal, St Mungo's, Caritas Ukraine, The Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Church, Hall and Court running, including the termination of the arrangement with the Antiochian Orthodox Church for Sunday use of the Church and Hall, increase in fuel costs and potential ways of saving energy, replacement boilers and photocopier,
- Liturgy and music, including appointment of Associate Priest, Director of Music's annual report, revision of service patterns, new forms of service and service books necessary at various seasons of the year, the renewing of chalice-bearers' licences
- IT and communications, including regular communication with parishioners and wider community, new equipment to enable staff to work flexibly in office and at home, legacy publicity
- Staffing and security, including staff work patterns, additional caretaker help to enable the church to return to full opening hours and cover leave
- Safeguarding audit and issues
- Outreach, and reinforcing existing relationships with neighbouring organisations and charities including St Botolph's representation on the boards of the Bishopsgate Institute, Central Foundation Schools and the Samuel Butler Foundation, and Fr David's presence and engagement with partner charities and livery companies

The Finance Committee's regular items for discussion at its monthly meetings included income, expenditure and cashflow, investment valuations and market performance, Rectory income and expenditure, charitable donations, and staffing matters.

Archidiaconal Visitation

In addition to regular business meetings, the PCC met the Archdeacon of London by Zoom on Thursday 23 June for their part of his Triennial Visitation. Although the staff had put in a good deal of time preparing and submitting all the documents requested in advance, a train strike put paid to the parts of the Visitation which need to be conducted in person at church; several further postponements followed in the second half of the year, and these parts of the Visitation had not taken place by the year end.

Safeguarding

The Council takes seriously its role in the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults: it annually renews its adherence 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 Chris Watkins, and the parish safeguarding audit was reviewed during the year.

Data protection

The Rector and Council take seriously their roles as Data Controllers in complying with the protocols for the processing of personal data governed by the Data Protection Act 2018, the 'UK GDPR' which is the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679, and other legislation relating to personal data and rights such as the Human Rights Act 1998, 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 refreshed their online 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 much used and appreciated by people from the surrounding businesses and by commuters from Liverpool Street Station. During 2021, owing to a lack of enough caretaker cover, opening hours had had to be restricted, but following the successful recruitment of an additional caretaker to cover afternoon hours, we were delighted to be able to return to full opening hours of 7.30am to 5.30pm from mid-January 2022.

The Church Hall, Netball/Tennis Court and Churchyard occupy a central place in the life of many who work around Bishopsgate, and it was good to see them all being used once again with the lifting of restriction. With the recruitment of the afternoon caretaker more Court bookings could be taken on resulting in a record high income to help keep the church open. The Churchyard is a busy thoroughfare as well as a place of rest, reflection and recreation, and we are grateful to the Corporation's Open Spaces team who keep the garden and the Court so well maintained. We see this as the provision of a very 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.

Fr David continued to keep in close touch with members of the congregation and the wider St Botolph's 'family' with email updates, and received many messages expressing gratitude for his encouraging thoughts and prayers. A larger than usual number of Easter cards were sent, and Christmas cards, with another wonderfully uplifting photograph of Fr David and Freddie the church dog, were circulated to a wide range of friends and contacts.

An active and inclusive church

The Electoral Roll underwent its annual revision in advance of the Annual Meetings on 24 May, and at the end of the year had reached a milestone number of 100 members, all of whom live outside the parish.

The temporary service schedule - established towards the end of 2020 to reflect the working patterns of those starting to come back to work in the City - of Said Masses on Tuesday and Thursday, and Choral Mass on Wednesday and Feast Days, all at 1.10pm, continued to attract both parishioners and visitors for the first part of the year. Thanks to the audio-visual equipment installed late in 2020, many more were able to follow services from their homes, either live or at a later time, which proved especially helpful when the Government once again advised people to work from home if possible during January and early February because of

the spread of the Omicron variant of Covid. By September it was decided that it was time to reintroduce the early morning Said Mass on Tuesdays, and the times of the Tuesday and Thursday lunchtime services reverted to their more normal time of 12.10 pm.

From September to December a further addition to our weekly offering of services came in the form of Morning Prayer on Mondays led by The Revd Toby Thomas, a newly ordained curate at St Leonard's Shoreditch, as part of his ministerial training.

The highest standards of Covid safety hygiene continued to be maintained at all services, and clergy and congregation members were careful throughout the year to respect, and encourage others to respect, those who felt more vulnerable in gatherings and indoor spaces. As congregants were once more able to kneel together at the altar rail, new kneelers were designed with colours picked out from the East Window and look very splendid.

Aside from the full rota of regular services, St Botolph's own 'special' services during the year began with Ash Wednesday when there were three Masses with Imposition of Ashes; a holy Lent culminated in a full programme for Holy Week including our now traditional non-Eucharistic choral service on the Wednesday which this year included music by Byrd, Stainer and Franck, interspersed with readings from Scripture and other sources, all on the theme of 'Forgiveness', and Choral Mass with Maundy Ceremonies on Maundy Thursday

St Botolph's joined in the national rejoicing at H M the Queen's Platinum Jubilee: there was a good congregation in church for the Choral Mass on Wednesday 1 June which featured splendidly regal music. The Choir sang movements of Mozart's 'Coronation' Mass, and music by Parry, Purcell and Vaughan Williams associated with Her Majesty's Coronation. Our bellringers were also on hand to join in the celebrations and we circulated with the July newsletter their Platinum Jubilee ringing certificate. Sparkling refreshments for all followed the service, marking the return of post-service refreshments after the pandemic dearth.

The Patronal Festival was celebrated with our usual style on 15 June (the closest Wednesday to St Botolph's feast day of 17 June). Our guest preacher Fr Andriy Tsyaputa, who came to us via a connection with the Ukrainian Cathedral of the Holy Family in London, moved many in the congregation to tears as he spoke of the violent invasion of his home country, how Ukrainians are endeavouring to go about their daily lives with the constant threat of attack by Russian forces, and how churches and monasteries have found themselves taking up their ancient roles as of places of physical sanctuary. In an emotional end to his sermon, Fr Andriy thanked the people of St Botolph's for their prayers and friendship, and the people of the UK for their strong support. Later in the service a substantial collection was taken to support the people of Ukraine, and at the end of the service Fr David presented Fr Andriy with an icon of St Botolph. After the service refreshments were served in glorious sunshine in the Churchyard. Fr Andriy and Fr David cut a splendidly rich St Botolph cake, as ever baked by loyal friend of St Botolph's John Marshall, Mhairi added a Ukrainian Yoghurt Cake for those who might prefer to try a lighter option, and delicious sandwiches were provided by Jeff Claxton.

Since the initial invasion by Russia we had displayed the Ukrainian flag in church to show solidarity with the people of in that beleaguered land; when Mhairi started work on the Patronal order of service she was struck by the similarity between the blue and yellow colouring of the flag with the colours of St Botolph's shield, and had the idea of designing a St Botolph banner to hang opposite the Ukrainian flag. The design was realised by our printers, and there has already been interest in the banner from other churches dedicated to our Saint.

Another joyful event took place on Friday 7 October as animals and their human companions gathered for our annual Animal Blessing Service. This service received additional publicity by being linked with the celebration of World Animal Day and advertised on their website. Also present that day was journalist Catherine Cartwright who interviewed Fr David and chatted with congregation members to obtain material for a podcast about services and activities at St Botolph's for her series on the City Churches.

Wednesday 12 Oct fell in Homeless Week, when the collection and alms are passed to St Mungo's. That day also marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of the great English composer and hymn-writer Ralph Vaughan Williams, so all the music and hymns at the lunchtime service were by him, as was some of the music at the Coopers' Company Henry Cloker service that evening.

Our December offerings of the Advent Carol Service (moved this year for the first time from its customary position on Wednesday to a Thursday lunchtime), the Parish Carol Service, an early evening service of Carols by Candlelight, and the Christmas Eve Family Mass and Crib Blessing,

brought many people into church and had many online views. Our Advent theme of 'Peace and Reconciliation' proved a memorable choice, and there were high levels of donation for our Advent charities Caritas Ukraine and The Fellowship of Reconciliation.

The Parish Carol Service took place on Thursday 15 December, sadly with a limited number in church thanks to rail strike action. The Choir of the Coopers' Company and Coborn School were able to come this year, and for the first time to join forces with our own Choir. Readers for the Carol Service represented some of St Botolph's varied responsibilities and links, coming from the Corporation, the Coopers' Company, Liverpool Street Station and Bishopsgate Police Station, with Fr Andrew finishing the list with the Gospel of the Incarnation. To fit with the Advent theme and to honour the people of Ukraine, Mhairi was pleased to find a simple but powerfully effective Ukrainian carol which our Choir sang (in Ukrainian) on a number of occasions during Advent, including at this service; this gesture received many appreciative comments and congregation members were noticeably moved by its performance.

December was an extremely full month, with many external organisations booked in for carol services in addition to our own established pattern of Advent and Christmas services. There were so many requests that some of the carol services had to move back into November, necessitating early delivery of the church and Hall trees, and in addition we were able to offer All Hallows on the Wall as a suitable 'overflow venue' for some of the smaller services. We had to turn away several firms and charities which came to us later in the year hoping for a date, which made it particularly galling when our linked regiment The Rifles cancelled their carol service at relatively short notice because it clashed with a World Cup football match. Four choirs held their Christmas concerts at St Botolph's with great success, three on successive Saturdays, and one gallantly squeezing itself in for rehearsal and concert after two early evening carol services.

Our Priest Missioner, Fr Andrew Williams, was able to assist with services monthly throughout the year, and we are most grateful to him, and to other visiting clergy who were able to assist when necessary.

We are also grateful to all those who give generously of their time to play particular roles in regular worship, although the normal rotas for sidesmen, readers, lay intercessors and servers remained suppressed for the time being.

Baptisms, marriage blessings and weddings were back to a more regular level in 2022, and we had plenty of opportunity to practise the new requirements for marriage registration brought in following the revision of the Marriage Act the previous year. One particularly happy blessing took place in July when Ruth and Keith Farnfield returned to give thanks for fifty years of marriage on the exact anniversary of their wedding in St Botolph's, and while there raised a toast to the memory of Ruth's father, former Rector Prebendary Stanley Moore.

On Sundays, until mid-August when the arrangement was brought to an end, St Botolph's continued to offer the hospitality of its fabric and space to the worshipping community of the Antiochian Orthodox Church of Great Britain. The other congregation which uses the Hall on Sundays, the Ethiopian Lutheran community of Mekane Yesus, had been worshipping from home throughout 2020 and 2021 but returned to us in mid-March.

A musical church, supporting the young

St Botolph's has an enviable reputation for the consistent excellence of its musical liturgy. The Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Iestyn Evans, who together with his team of singers and deputy organists has provided such a high standard of music.

At the end of 2021 the PCC had declared its enthusiastic aspiration that St Botolph's firmly wished to rebuild its pipe organ within the historic case, and that they wanted C B Fisk Inc of Gloucester, Mass. to be the builders. At its first meeting of 2022, the PCC passed a Resolution for Faculty, following which the staff and Wardens, aided by Iestyn and our distinguished organ consultant Professor David Titterington, worked intensively together to get the necessary papers together for the Faculty application. The Chancellor granted the Faculty, with certain conditions, in May: the major proviso concerned fundraising, and from then on steps were pursued to secure assistance with this aspect of the project. Following hard work on the part of Paul, our technical experts and our web designer, a new page went live on 5 December on the website about the organ rebuild project, and this has already encouraged comment and donations. Towards the end of the year plans were being put in place for the dismantling of the old organ in January 2023. The costs of the preliminary stages of this project continue to be covered by grants from the Bishopsgate Church Foundation.

The PCC agrees with Iestyn that the new organ will enhance the musical aspirations of the parish and the City at large, as well as St Botolph's desire to develop outreach, both musical and social, reaching deep into the community. Education is, of course, a priority, and already there is very keen interest in St Botolph's organ rebuild project from London conservatoires including the Royal Academy of Music which has an internationally renowned organ department, and the Guildhall School of Music which has no organs available for teaching, and there would doubtless be interest from the music departments of schools as well. It is hoped that a new organ would open up wider social engagement with the community in the parish and beyond, and help continue the church's mission for generations.

Additional music is brought to our Wednesday services, weddings and occasionally memorial services by our loyal team of bellringers, led by our Tower Captain, John Adams. It was also good to see visiting bands of ringers starting to return from the middle of the year.

We were delighted as usual to be able to make church and Hall available to visiting musical groups for concerts and rehearsals. There were concerts, choral workshops and 'come and sing' days, as professional and amateur choirs from London and beyond made use of the splendid acoustics of both buildings.

In recent years it has become increasingly appreciated that making music together promotes confidence and is good for individual and collective wellbeing within workplaces. St Botolph's has worked over the years with two of the organisations formed to assist getting music into workplaces, Music in Offices and City Music Services, and continued in 2022 to facilitate music-makers within local firms by providing a venue for the rehearsal and performance of their in-house choirs and orchestras, and occasionally staff members practising the organ in the church, or solo singing in the Hall.

A church working in partnership with others

Close and fruitful liaison 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 in June and their annual carol service, and the Bowyers attended for Master's Day in July their own carol service. As well as attending the Parish Carol Service, the Coopers came for their June Installation Service (normally held at HM Tower of London) and the Henry Cloker Service in October. The Ward Club used the Hall for their AGM and lunch and other functions, and had their own annual carol service.

During the course of the year Fr David was delighted to accept the Chaplaincies of the Coopers' Company and our new charity partners Veterans Aid, and got to know all these organisations better by attending various events. Veterans Aid held a special service to mark the 90th anniversary of the charity's work with homeless veterans, during which, to mark our new partnership, the charity's gift to the church of a framed etching of Hogarth's painting of the Parable of the Good Samaritan was received and blessed.

Fr David and the Administrator were honoured to be invited to represent St Botolph's at the June and Christmas gatherings of the London Rifle Brigade 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, but Fr David continued to persevere with local links. There was an unusually high return on Voluntary Church Rate requests in 2022, with two very substantial contributions from firms in the parish among many others. Our thanks go as always to our Voluntary Church Rate Officer, Andy Newman, for his diligence and attention to detail in all aspects of the rate administration.

We continued to work in collaboration with the City Police, especially the Bishopsgate Station, the City of London Corporation and the Ward of Bishopsgate, with regular liaison with various departments of the Corporation. We were delighted that our strong team of Common Councillors in Bishopsgate were re-elected without opposition at the Wardmote in March, and to hear that long-standing Bishopsgate Councillor Simon Duckworth had been elected Chief Commoner. In September we welcomed Kawsar Zahman as the new Alderman for the Ward.

The fortnightly Homeless Hubs hosted in our Hall and run jointly by the Corporation, the City Police and homeless agencies remained on a firmer footing with substantial financial support, resulting in many homeless people being given accommodation and being able to access other services. Fr David has also developed a working relationship with the Chair of the Corporation's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee, Marianne Bernadette Fredericks CC.

Wendy Hyde CC, PCC member and sometime Churchwarden, 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 is our link between St Botolph's, where the poet was baptised, and those at Keats House planning events commemorating his life and works. In October Wendy added to her City portfolio the Chairmanship of Sculpture in the City, the annual 'urban sculpture park' using the City's streets and iconic buildings as a rotating gallery space. St Botolph's has been involved with Sculpture in the City since its inception as part of the 'Celebrate the City' cultural festival in 2012, and throughout 2022 continued to host the artwork 'Burial' by Alice Channer, which has received much comment.

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's *ex-officio* roles on the Boards of the Bishopsgate Institute (now with additional responsibility for the future strategy of the charity), The Central Foundation Schools of London, and the Samuel Butler Foundation continued. At the request of the Coopers' Company, Fr David has also become a board member of the Coopers' Company and Coborn School's recently founded Representative Religious Body advising on admission policy. 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.

A church engaging with its community

Our refreshed 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 listings in City Events. We publish full lists of services and events monthly online; special services and events are also advertised on A Church Near You and Eventbrite, with postings on the latter proving particularly successful in bringing new congregation members to carol services and raising awareness of our presence among different demographics. There is now a monthly email newsletter to which it is easy for people to subscribe via the website. Colourful posters are displayed on exterior and interior noticeboards so those who pass or enter the church can see St Botolph's is an open and active church. The new logo emphasising St Botolph's status as 'a place of sanctuary' has been widely incorporated into our paperwork and communications.

We are aware how lucky we are to have the Hall and Court as additional facilities to offer our community, and it was good to see users coming back to both in greater numbers during the year, although changes in working patterns in the City inevitably had an impact on the way they were both used. The lunchtime netball league was not able to return, but the ability to book and pay for Court use directly through the website resulted in an upsurge of casual bookings, which together with the use by the main evening and lunchtime hirers PowerPlay meant that the Court was operating at nearly full capacity. The Court Manager continued negotiations with the Corporation about essential and long-term maintenance of the Court.

Although we had lost some former regular Hall users who during the pandemic had moved their business either away from London or to new online models, other regular users returned along with new bookings. Following the departure in 2021 of WeightWatchers, who had hired the Lower Hall daily for many years, an active search continued for new uses for the Lower Hall; in the meantime we were pleased to be able to offer storage space to the charity Suited and Booted, which provides interview clothing donated by companies and professionals to men who are unemployed or on a low income to help them get into employment.

All hirers were made welcome by our team of diligent caretakers, supported by our efficient and ethical cleaning firm Clean for Good.

The Good Coffee Kiosk, an independent and ethical takeaway drinks outlet, open since September 2021 in the Bishopsgate entrance of St Botolph's, continued to be manned by our charming and enthusiastic barista Jose from 7.00 am to 2.00 pm daily, offering Fairtrade hot drinks to City workers and visitors, and attracting a good number of loyal regulars.

A church that remembers

We continued to hear during the year of the deaths, from Covid or other causes, of people both closely connected to the church and among its wider family. 2022 began with the news of the death of Reg Lee, our former caretaker who had served St Botolph's with loyalty, patience and good humour for many years to 2015, who had died on 1 January after a long illness.

The thirtieth anniversary of the Baltic Exchange Bombing on 10 April 1992 - the first of the two IRA bombs which damaged St Botolph's in the 1990s - was marked by a reunion in the Hall of former Baltic Exchange staff and other families who had been affected by the bombing.

April and May saw a number of memorial services in quick succession, and others followed later in the year, including one in December amidst all the carol services. We heard with sadness of the death of former server and PCC member Ian Shadforth in August, and Fr David and several of Ian's friends from the St Botolph's congregation attended his funeral.

Another longstanding PCC member and server, David Lee, had been away from church for a while nursing his wife Chris through a long illness. She died towards the end of the year and Fr David and Chris Watkins attended her funeral on 9 December.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September, and along with churches across the nation immediately made plans for the commemoration of her passing. Fr David celebrated an additional Mass on the day after her death for the benefit of the many who came into the church to pray, and a book of condolence and flowers were put in place, soon enhanced by an enlarged Coronation portrait. Our normal Wednesday Choral Mass on 14 September became a Requiem in her memory; special prayers were also included in the following week's Choral Mass in the week of her State Funeral.

In October we welcomed the Haemophilia Society for their annual Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for those who have died as a result of the contaminated blood tragedy.

This moving service was closely followed by our own Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls) on 2 November which included the ritual, which many find so helpful, of the solemn reading out of the names of the departed while their relatives light candles in their memory.

Fr David and the Railway Chaplain, Michele Ashton, led the Armistice Day Commemoration at Liverpool Street Station on 11 November; as this was immediately followed by the HAC's Remembrance Service we took advantage of the Choir's presence for that service and took them round to the Station as well, resulting in many appreciative comments. PCC member Wendy Hyde CC kindly took one of the readings at the Station commemoration.

A church working charitably at home and abroad

We are grateful that, despite the ongoing depression in income, a small amount of charitable giving was possible in 2022. The PCC is committed to its role in assisting in a small way other charities wherever possible, and in 2022 continued its policy of supporting organisations already linked in some way with us.

We continued our partnership with St Francis at the Engine Room in Tottenham Hale, and while this partnership continues the support of the Vicar, our Priest Missioner Fr Andrew Williams, will continue to be the object of our Lenten collections and almsgiving. 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 Mary's Cable Street 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. Our Advent charitable donations, the highest total for many years, were divided between Caritas Ukraine and The Fellowship of Reconciliation.

We were pleased to be able to act as agents in the processing of further charitable donations, and also, to be able to offer our premises at greatly discounted rates for the use of local, national and international charities. We continued our close relationship with XLP (the ExCeL Project) based at All Hallows on the Wall in the parish.

The school which we built in 2012 in the parish of St Barnabas, Songo, Uige, Angola (in conjunction with our former US partner church St Barnabas, Greenwich, CT) continues to overflow with many hundreds of local pupils. During the year we exchanged seasonal greetings with the parish (with the help of Portuguese-speaking translators), and Fr David was delighted to be asked once again to record the Morning Prayer service organised by ALMA (the Angola, London Mozambique Association), the Diocese's link group with our partner dioceses in Lusophone Africa, on the very day in June that our own linked parish was being prayed for across the Diocese of London and beyond, coinciding nicely with our Patronal Festival.

A church playing its part in the Diocese and beyond

St Botolph's has continued to pay Common Fund – at a significantly higher level as we now have a full-time priest - and so support the wider charitable work of the Diocese. In 2022 it was decided to reduce the level of Common Fund contribution after it was noticed that some housing elements appeared to have been double-charged, but our slightly lowered bid was nevertheless accepted with gratitude by the London Diocesan Fund.

Christine Ferris and Alex Coles continued to represent St Botolph's on the City Deanery Synod. We are grateful to them for their faithful attendance at meetings, and for their report on the Synod's proceedings, presented to the Annual Meeting at the same time as this Report. This provides the PCC with an important link with the wider structures of the Church.

During the year Fr David continued to serve as one of the clergy representatives on the City Deanery Synod Standing Committee, and regularly attended Deanery Synod and Chapter.

St Botolph's once again took part in 'Thy Kingdom Come', the annual Global Week of Prayer from Ascension to Pentecost, in conjunction with the Diocesan initiative '2030 Vision'.

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.

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 more recently enhanced by the addition of the administrators from the Westminster Deaneries, continues to operate. Now with Katrina Bradley (Administrator at St Lawrence Jewry and a former member of St Botolph's congregation and PCC) at the helm, this network allows encouragement and support, assistance in need, and sharing of information across the Two Cities Area. The administrators now have a dedicated Chaplain, Fr Jack Noble, Rector of St Giles Cripplegate, who has organised retreats and gatherings for his flock.

A well-staffed church

St Botolph's benefits greatly from knowledgeable and dedicated staff. In all that we do we endeavour to reflect the Christian ethics by which we live, and in this respect we are very fortunate to have staff who openly share the ethos and aims of the church.

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. Fr David and the Churchwardens are particularly thankful to the staff for adapting with good grace and flexibility to the unusual and frequently changing working practices which have been necessary during the recent pandemic.

Mhairi and Paul came in to St Botolph's at least one day a week when travel and other restrictions allowed, but otherwise worked entirely from home, and continued to prove themselves willing and able to take on new roles and learn new skills whilst working in this new hybrid pattern. Regular staff meetings were held by Zoom, and in person at church. Further new IT equipment and support was necessary for these new working patterns, and we are as ever grateful to Andy Newman for his expertise, and for his willingness to spend the additional time necessary to visit St Botolph's remote outposts to upgrade and replace equipment and software.

Mhairi and Paul continued during the year to take advantage of online training sessions run at no or little cost by various organisations to extend their knowledge in various areas relevant to their work, and in September were both privileged to be asked to participate in Mental Health First Aid training with a group of clergy and other lay staff from the City Deanery – a very intensive two days covering some difficult material but very informative and rewarding.

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. They 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 which are gratefully received and carefully looked after.

Mhairi, 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 during 2022 with attendance at the Company's services and functions. Fr David was able to make his first visit to a Parish Clerks service and dinner on Ascension Day, in time to hear Mhairi make her maiden speech.

Our full-time caretaker, Tommy Lacken, continued to work cheerfully and efficiently at church, welcoming hirers and visitors to the church, and remained willing to turn his hand to any new

and unusual tasks requested of him. His willingness and enthusiasm has been greatly appreciated by all. But with Tommy working full time from early in the morning – even earlier when the coffee kiosk opened – it had become apparent that further caretaking assistance would be necessary to allow the church to return to its former normal opening hours, and a suitable candidate was found in Joe Baliddawa who joined the team in mid-January to cover the afternoon hours and some evening overtime. Our other existing assistant caretaker Jeff Parkinson continued to cover Sunday daytime hire and Monday evenings. Towards the end of the year, with a bumper crop of special services and evening bookings, a further assistant caretaker was hired: overseas student Sayanth George joined in early November and was able to help with cover during our busiest ever December.

St Botolph's is proud to be a Living Wage Employer, and caretaker pay was once again increased in line with the London Living Wage.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The 2022 financial year has seen an improvement over 2021 and from the dire position in 2020 and came closer to the pre-pandemic levels of 2019. Nevertheless 2022 continued to be a challenging year for the parish with overall income still below that of pre-pandemic years as a result of the slow return of people to the Bishopsgate area following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Expenditure increased in 2022 very slightly over 2021 resulting in an operating deficit of £10,227 representing a significant improvement on the 2021 deficit of £52,715 and broadly comparable to the modest pre-pandemic deficit of £8,422 in 2019. However, unrealised investments losses of over £200,000 during 2022 took the overall accounting deficit to £211,794 against a surplus of £159,162 in 2021.

Income

In general, parish income was significantly higher in 2022 at £353,242 over the 2021 figure of £304,088 but still well below the 2019 figure of £407,151. Income from commercial activities has recovered and in particular receipts from the Netball and Tennis Court of £65,716 in 2022 which was the most profitable year ever and well above the figure of £27,511 in 2021. Overall income from Church Hall lettings, Netball and Tennis Court receipts and the hire of the church recovered to £92,598 in 2022 from £54,109 in 2021 but still short of the figure of £115,872 in 2019 which represents a more typical year in the pre-pandemic period.

Income from General Fund donations recovered to £51,355 in 2022 from £37,665 in 2021 and well above the 2019 figure of £39,838. Service collections fell slightly from £4,193 in 2021 to £3,436 in 2022 and well below the figure of £8,902 in 2019. Other donations increased to £39,580 in 2022 from £24,477 in 2021 and well ahead of the figure of £22,813 in 2019. Income tax recovery fell slightly in 2022 to £6,944 from £7,617 in 2021, reflecting the slightly lower eligible income on which to make Gift Aid claims.

The grant received from the Bishopsgate Church Foundation was £36,162 for 2022 against £52,348 in 2021 to assist with various minor works expenditure and further preliminary works to replace the organ. The Parish Voluntary Rate increased substantially, including some very generous one off donations from local businesses, to £80,856 in 2022 from £41,659 in 2021, and ahead of the 2019 figure of £39,087, which is very encouraging at a time when most other businesses in the City are also facing major financial challenges and reflects the strong support of our local business community and the effectiveness of our continuing outreach activities to business.

In contrast, investment income arising from the unrestricted funds fell slightly from £29,620 in 2021 to £29,094 in 2022. The resilient income distribution policy of the CCLA CBF Investment Fund saw a slightly higher distribution per unit which has served us well, with much the same income on a reduced number of units following the sale of our CCLA property fund holdings in 2021, and notwithstanding the significant unrealised investment losses over the year which have not affected CCLA's conservative distribution policy.

Expenditure

The total expenditure figure for 2022 of £363,469 was marginally higher than the corresponding figure of £356,242 for 2021 as some activities such as church maintenance were less costly than anticipated and an accounting change has reduced music fees as non-PCC services no longer pass through our accounts unlike in previous years where the cost was debited to expenditure with the recovered cost shown under income.

Overall, total expenditure in 2022 of £363,469 exceeded income of £353,242 giving rise to a small operating deficit of £10,227 compared with a larger operating deficit of £52,265 in 2021. However, unrealised investments losses of £201,567 during 2022 took the overall accounting deficit to £211,794.

Investments

Investment performance during 2022 remained volatile with significant downturns across most investment asset classes in the wake of the Liability Driven Investments (LDI) / Gilts crisis following the market reaction to the UK Government's mini budget in September 2022. Although the Parish had no direct exposure to LDI or to Gilts, most other asset classes and investment markets were affected adversely in the face of continuing inflation and rising interest rates and unfavourable geopolitical developments including the war in Ukraine. No investment assets of the Parish were actually sold during 2022 so no realised losses were incurred but these headwinds still led to a significant unrealised investment loss of £201,567 with a closing valuation of £1,526,253 at the year end against an opening balance of £1,727,820 at the beginning of 2022. This unrealised loss effectively wiped out the unrealised investment gain of £200,480 during 2021.

The Rectory, whose acquisition was funded by the realisation of investment assets in 2018, is shown in the balance sheet under tangible fixed assets at an original acquisition cost of £655,000, and represents one of the largest individual assets owned by the Parish. Rental income remains stable and exceeded expenditure during 2022.

The Finance Committee continues to monitor investment performance and conducted a thorough review in 2021 resulting in the production of a new detailed investment policy and some asset allocation changes. In particular it was decided to disinvest the holding in the CCLA CBF Property Fund, which had been subject to suspended trading during 2020, to reinvest in the more liquid CCLA CBF Investment Fund. As noted above, there were significant effects during 2022 on investment markets with rising inflation and geopolitical events leading to great volatility in markets with implications for the valuation of investments managed by CCLA and income arising from those investments. However, income distributions from CCLA in 2022 have been stable and in line with expectations and have not been affected by unrealised losses. Our investment strategy and asset allocation will continue to be kept under review in the light of further developments.

Significant Post Balance Sheet Events and Going Concern Status

Market turbulence as a result of geopolitical events and macro-economic developments since the year end may affect the capital value of our unrealised investments with CCLA. Our activities as a parish together with our investment strategy and asset allocation are being kept under continuous review in the light of further developments. Rising inflation and increasing costs also pose a challenge. However, notwithstanding these developments, the Parish has sufficient reserves to continue operating. Hence the Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the PCC's ability to continue as a going concern.

Change in banking arrangements

Allied Irish Bank, with which St Botolph's had banked since 2007, gave notice in the Autumn of 2021 that it was withdrawing from UK banking and that we would need to make alternative arrangements. Research soon showed that none of the main high street banks were taking on new business or community accounts, and an approach to the Co-operative Bank also proved abortive. When the deadline loomed for AIB to withdraw we approached the Bishopsgate branch of Metro Bank situated next to the church, and there ensued a long drawn out application process before a current account was opened on 2 August 2022. The Council's hope is that Metro Bank will also provide credit cards and deposit accounts, but none of these additional products had been achieved by the year end.

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, CAF voucher and other means. Gift Aid is reclaimed wherever applicable.

Alternative methods of donation and support

The church's income continued to be depressed by the lower levels of bookings of church, Hall, and Court, and cash given in service collections and alms boxes remained low as well. Throughout the year service sheets, email circulations and website announcements gave gentle encouragement to those who would normally give regularly in services or occasionally by other means, to consider, if their own financial circumstances permitted, making a regular or one-off donation to support St Botolph's, and this approach bore some fruit.

The Council entered into a contract with the contactless and mobile payment company SumUp in 2019, and contactless payment as an alternative to cash donations in services became more common as awareness was raised. A new static contactless device was installed in church in February 2021, and its use continued to increase steadily throughout 2022.

Since the launch of the new website it has been very easy for donors to make credit card payments online via the Stripe platform.

The Administrator had registered St Botolph's with Amazon Smile during 2020, and in 2021 added two further organisations which facilitate charitable donations during online shopping: Give as you Live and Easy Fundraising. Sadly there has been very little take-up on these, although some small donations have resulted.

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 2022. 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.

FR DAVID REFLECTS ON THE YEAR 2022

There are few places in the world where tradition and modernity live so evidently cheek by jowl than the City of London. Peculiar ancient ceremonies and practices associated with the Corporation of London, the Livery Companies and other established institutions contrast markedly with the gleaming and soaring towers of commerce which surround St Botolph's church building. It is our job at St Botolph's to serve each enthusiastically with respect and support as is appropriate.

As the City continued to return to a more normal mode of operation during 2022 and post-pandemic, the tradition and stabilizing presence of St Botolph's has been a lifeline to many who live and work here. We welcome literally thousands of people through our doors each year as we act as all things to all people. People come in silence on their way to work to pray or simply have a moment of calm before the clamour of the day. People, in a small and faithful community, come early morning to take part in our intimate Said Mass in the Lady Chapel. People come in joy to weddings. People come together in their hundreds to celebrate the life of a friend or colleague in the many memorial services we conduct. People come in unusual Harry-Potter-like costumes to Livery Company events. Homeless people come to find company, safety, and warmth. City workers come alone to talk to a priest when the strains and stresses of life become too much. St Botolph's as a church and community serves all of these. We do so effectively only by being present for all.

Post-pandemic, at St Botolph's we have welcomed a significant number of new and regular visitors to the church, including new, loyal and active members of the congregation. We have developed deeper and more meaningful relationships with the plethora of organisations and communities which use St Botolph's, encouraging them all to regard us as their spiritual home.

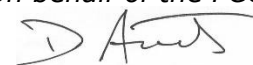
None of this I can achieve on my own. My sincere thanks go to our loyal and hard-working staff not only for their exceptional work, but for their support. Thank you also to those who give of their time to contribute to the community at St Botolph's; those who help out at our Masses, readers, servers and sidesmen. Thank you to all those who give of their time to serve on the PCC and in other ways. It is only as a community that we can truly serve the communities who rely on us.

In fellowship with Christ and 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 Rector, 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, Rector, Chairman
May 2023