

Money Matters

November 2018

Standing and Finance Committee met on 15th October and as usual started with a time of prayer and reflection. We felt encouraged as we worked through our normal business.

The Parish Weekend Away had produced a very small surplus. Some had thought it brave of the PCC to continue with the weekend in the absence of a Rector but feedback suggested it had been a success in every respect. Sufficient numbers came to make it viable and our fellowship was enhanced. The talks from Bishop Rachel seemed to have hit the right spot and enabled us to see our Ministry within the overall Diocesan vision – she tee'd us up for exciting times ahead. There was plenty of time to just be, and to socialise with different ages from within our wider congregations. Thanks were expressed to the two Andys who had dealt with the main part of the administration. A final bonus had been a visit from Richard and Nicola Coombs on the Saturday ahead of them joining us officially on 17th November.

As acting treasurer Michael Barrett gave us our financial report for the first 9 months of the year. There were some variances against budget within the figures but overall we are operating within our budget forecast. Overall giving had shown a gentle rise through the last 18 months which was thought to be something of an achievement in the absence of a Rector.

The numbers within the Planned Giving system were also generally constant through the period.

We spent some time reconsidering where our money is spent and whether it is effective. Is our money spent to support our Ministry. In broad terms some 38% of our expenditure goes to the Diocese for Clergy stipends, housing, training, support and pensions. 13% is spent on running and maintaining our 2 buildings. 10% of our money is tithed and goes directly to other mission costs at home and abroad. 33% goes to our own staff costs supporting our pastoral, youth and children's work. The remaining 6% covers a myriad of other smaller costs from accounting fees to costs of photocopying.

As we move towards the end of the calendar year we will be launching our Christmas appeal in support of 'the Rock' in one of the poorer areas of our town. We already support them financially as one of our tithed mission societies and a number of our congregation are involved in more hands-on support. We will also be sending Shoe Box gifts to those abroad who may receive nothing for Christmas.

Richard Coombs will join us and lead us from 17th November following the service for his institution and induction at 7.00 on that evening. The church year starts with Advent Sunday on 2nd December and the day before that we will be hand-delivering publicity to every property within our parish inviting people to join us as we celebrate Christmas.

We still face the challenge of closing the present deficit which can only be achieved by cutting costs, thereby reducing our ministry, or increasing our income from additional giving. Standing and Finance have felt it right to continue as we are during these last 18 months, and we hope you agree. We live in uncertain times but retain the same ministry that has pertained in Cheltenham since the first church was started over 2000 years ago.

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