

Administrative information

St Stephen's Church is situated on the corner of St Stephen's Road and the Avenue, West Ealing. It is part of the Diocese of London within the Church of England. The correspondence address is:

St Stephen's Church, St Stephen's Road, West Ealing, London W13 8HB.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is registered with the Charity Commission (No. 1133772).

PCC members who have served in the period 1st January 2020 until 31st December 2020:

<i>Incumbent</i>	The Revd Steve Newbold (Chair)	
<i>Curate</i>	The Revd Sam Sanya	
<i>Associate Vicar</i>	The Revd Caroline Newbold	
<i>Licensed Lay Minister</i>	Enid Barron	
<i>Churchwardens</i>	Caroline Jamieson (Vice Chair)	
	Dele Fasanya	to 19 th October 2020
	Mary Ann Auckland	from 19 th October 2020
<i>Representatives on the Deanery Synod:</i>	Mary Ann Auckland	to 19 th October 2020
	Liz Cooper	
	Linda Rivans	
	David Gillingham	from 19 th October 2020
<i>Elected members:</i>	Lily Ledwith	to 23 rd March 2020
	Sue Charlton	to 19 th October 2020
	Ian Jamieson	to 19 th October 2020
	Ann Toley	to 19 th October 2020
	Nancy Yang	to 19 th October 2020
	Lucy Harding-Anderson	
	Tina Yarrall	
	Jessica Ely	
	Qin Li	
	John Anniss	from 19 th October 2020
	James Morrow	from 19 th October 2020
	Rob Yates	from 19 th October 2020
<i>Secretary (co-opted)</i>	Jane Maffett	
<i>Treasurer (co-opted)</i>	Sanjay Joshi	
<i>And the following who is not a member of the PCC</i>		
<i>Safeguarding Officer</i>	Jen Whadcoat	

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC also appoints Trustees to the St Luke's Trust, a separate charity with the stated aim to manage the assets of the Trust *'for use for the religious and other charitable purposes of the Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Stephen, Ealing.'* The Vicar is an ex-officio Trustee.

The Vicar is also, ex-officio, a Trustee of the Gurnell Grove Community Trust, active in the parish.

Objectives and activities

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC has agreed a Mission Action Plan (MAP) which details the specific actions we seek to fulfil to extend the Kingdom of God in this community. During the year we updated our Vision Statement to:

Community growing in the love of Jesus

The PCC has maintenance responsibilities for the Church buildings which include the hall and a cottage for residential use. The PCC also owns and maintains a separate house at 26 Drayton Gardens.

General statistics

Church membership

2020 was a year of enormous challenge but surprisingly the St Stephen's Electoral Roll was only marginally affected with a small decrease of just two people so that at 31st December 2020 there were 201 people on the Roll. Of these 53% were resident in the parish and 47% were not, 62% were female and 38% were male.

Occasional offices

During 2020 all occasional offices were impacted by the effects of the pandemic. There was just one baptism. There was one marriage at Church and the clergy conducted the funerals of seven parishioners (two of the services were at St Stephen's).

Review of the year

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (at which three new PCC and three Deanery Synod members were elected) and the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (at which two churchwardens were elected) were held on Monday 19th October 2020 in accordance with the Church Representation Rules and The Churchwardens Measure. This was a later date than usual, authorised by the Church of England due to the pandemic. The full PCC met five times during the year with an average level of attendance of 83% of members.

2020 was of course dominated by the global Coronavirus pandemic. At the beginning of the year, we had plans, like all other organisations and churches, for our mission and outreach during the year but by early March things were gradually being cancelled and then overtaken by the first national lockdown.

In mid-March churches were instructed to close their doors and cease public worship. We immediately started an online pre-recorded Sunday service, available on Facebook and YouTube. We also moved some of our mid-week services online. Other activities such as our mid-week 'in person' meetings and groups were initially suspended although many subsequently resumed online.

The church partially reopened in July 2020 and both morning services resumed in October although the numbers who could attend were severely restricted by the social distancing requirement. So, at this stage, we started livestreaming the second morning service to YouTube. A second national lockdown again closed the church for public worship for the month of November and, although we were able to resume services in December, the worsening situation meant that many were reluctant to return.

During the year we ran Alpha online with 13 participants many of whom made commitments to Christ or renewed their faith in different ways. Mid-week Connect Groups moved online and were an important source of support during the lockdown periods. Our Pastoral Care Team and Leadership Team also increased the support provided to church members.

There were a number of staffing changes during the year. Chris Willis our Youth Pastor left us in May and we appointed Beth Skelton to the post in September. In the intervening period the role was covered by Caroline Newbold (Associate Vicar). Jo Leeds our Worship Pastor began a period of maternity leave in December and her main duties were overseen by Sam Sanya (Curate).

A large part of our local mission is actively to support The Grove Missional Community (overseen by a separate charitable Trust) working on the Gurnell Grove Estate in the Parish. As well as direct giving by the PCC, a number of people have been involved in various activities with *The Grove* and Mark Tate (leader) attends the fortnightly St Stephen's Leadership Team meetings.

The rebranding exercise was completed just before the first lockdown and, although some activity was undertaken to refresh our image, there remains more to do as we begin to return to a more 'normal' pattern of life.

Environmental concern has remained high on our agenda and we continued to work towards a Silver Award with Eco Church (gained in early 2021).

The PCC continues to be grateful to the St Luke's Trust for their ongoing and generous financial support.

Much of the work of the PCC is conducted in its formal subcommittee structure so we can fulfil our agreed Mission Action Plan. The four sub committees or teams continued: Finance, Buildings, Mission and the Children and Youth Teams.

Key activities are described in the individual reports detailed below.

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team met regularly to support the Vicar in the day-to-day management of Church life. Most of its time was spent focusing on issues of discipleship, outreach in the local community and resourcing the Church for future growth. The Leadership Team shares with the Vicar in the pastoral responsibility for the Church and regularly discusses and responds to individual situations.

Finance Team

The Finance Team – comprising the Vicar, Treasurer, a Churchwarden, Giving Coordinator, and two other PCC nominees – and the Standing Committee oversaw the financial position throughout the year. Their work included review and discussion of the annual accounts, the 2020 forecast versus actual results, and levels of planned giving income – the latter particularly important during the pandemic, when we expected and saw drops in giving and hall rental income. We continued to manage budgets carefully, in order to monitor more closely the Church's finances and plan for the future. More detailed information is given below.

Buildings Team

This last year has been mainly a time of investigation and formulating proposals to the PCC for building work. The Team identified problems with the hall and oversaw work to sand down and re-varnish the hall floor and refurbish the folding doors. They also worked with a Consulting Engineer to investigate the subsidence problems in the Church car park, and the PCC has approved a costed budget to provide new paving and sub-base thus rendering it safer and easier to access the Church building. They are drawing up detailed plans for this work. A few minor works were also undertaken including re-felting the boiler room roof, replacing the electricity circuit board and updating the heating system.

Mission Team

The Team managed St. Stephen's relationship with the wider world at local, national and international levels aiming to increase awareness and understanding of issues as well as providing practical and financial help. The Team maintained links with our six core Mission Partners. 10% of St Stephen's regular giving amounted to £17,900, most of which was divided between these six partners. Additional monies were raised by events and special appeals for other specific causes. Programmes of social action were led by members of this Team and involved people from St Stephen's. The Church took part in the Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter during February and March but had to close early on 19th March due to the pandemic. We hosted four nights before closure providing meals, a warm welcome and a safe place to sleep for 14 homeless people. The Church is also actively engaged with the Ealing Churches Soup Kitchen and the Ealing Foodbank with donations and practical support. £936 was raised during Lent for the London Diocesan Appeal for ALMA 'Wheels for Climate Change Emergencies', replacing jeeps to supply aid and pastoral care to rural areas in Angola and Mozambique. A total of 78 boxed Easter eggs were given to the Marylebone Project for Homeless Women. Christian Aid Week fundraising could not go ahead as usual during lockdown but the week was marked in our online services and members of the congregation were encouraged to donate directly online. Hampers of Christmas goods were assembled by Connect Groups and delivered to The Grove Missional Community for distribution to residents known to be in financial hardship. A weekly collection of food throughout the year was given to Ealing Foodbank with further donations of food and £1,848 for Tearfund and Christian Aid at Harvest. The usual Christmas Fair could not go ahead but an online shop was created for the sale of handmade soaps, homemade preserves, Christmas cakes and puddings. The sale of these raised £1,176 which was donated to the Amos Trust for their work in Bethlehem. The Mission Team was only able to hold occasional Traidcraft Sales in 2020, due to COVID restrictions, but was able to sell some goods, Christmas cards and gifts before the third lockdown.

Children and Youth Teams

These Teams seek to ensure that the needs of children, young people and their families are met within the life of the Church and the Church Mission Action Plan, steered by the Leadership Team, which manages links between different children and youth activities, and oversees integration between these and the adult life of the church. The Leadership Team also ensures that our activities are in line with the 'children' element of our Safeguarding Policy and that we are in line with best practice processes of the Diocese and Church of England (including the identification of a 'Children's Champion').

Children's activities continue to be focused on four strands: our junior Church (now known as JAM); Youth group; Shining Stars midweek toddler group; and children's activities at outreach events (see below).

JAM (Jesus and Me) 2020 has been a very different year for everyone. We changed the name of our Sunday School to JAM which stands for 'Jesus and Me'. Due to the pandemic we had to change completely how we arranged teaching for our children aged 0-11 years. During the first lockdown (March – July) a weekly email was sent to parents with suggested activities for the families to carry out in line with the theme being taught at our main service which was broadcast online. This was supplemented with occasional 'Families at 4' live Facebook sessions. As in previous years we took a break during school holidays. As the restrictions eased by October we were able to start up 'in person' Sunday School sessions for up to 13 children with two leaders and these were well received by the children and families who were able to attend. The second national lockdown in November interrupted 'in person' sessions but we were able to resume again in December. This year Hospices of Hope was chosen as our supported charity and we were able to send them £158. As in previous years we collected books for Ealing Home-Start but were not able to carry out many of the usual 'in person' activities. However, a highlight of the year was hosting our annual party for the children on Zoom and a Christian magician entertained them.

Our youth We are blessed by a good number of young people aged 11-18 in the Church family but this year has presented particular challenges with keeping them engaged and encouraging their growing faith. Chris Willis continued as Youth Worker for the first part of 2020 before leaving to take up a full time post at Herne Hill Baptist Church in April after three years at St Stephen's. Caroline Newbold covered the post for the next four months, which included the rest of the first lockdown and the summer holidays. Meetings went online and contact was maintained with the young people and their parents. A highlight was a socially-distanced outdoor game in August when the young people roamed the area performing different challenges – thanks to everyone who helped make that possible. In September we were pleased to welcome Beth Skelton as our new Youth Pastor. When Church services resumed she met with those in Y7-11 during the 11:00am service. When church wasn't meeting sessions were online on a Sunday afternoon. Young people in Years 11-13 had a group on Wednesday evenings at 7pm. This has been mostly online with a few sessions in Church when it was possible to do so. Both group sessions include games, activities and Bible studies. Social meetings took place with both groups together in person on a Sunday afternoon in October when we had a pizza party and in November Beth organised a hot chocolate party online! There were also joint games sessions online every month which were popular. Chris, Caroline and Beth have been assisted by a team of dedicated volunteers.

Shining Stars (a Tuesday morning Christian group led by members of our staff and congregation for toddlers and their parents/carers) Until March, the group met and regularly had 25-30 children attending each week. Children had a variety of toys to play with and an arts and craft table. Healthy snacks and drinks were provided for children and fresh tea, coffee and biscuits for the adults. A Bible Story and action songs ensured a strong Christian focus. When the first lockdown was introduced in March all 'in person' sessions had to cease and restrictions remained in place for the rest of the year preventing the reopening of 'in person' toddler groups. At first, weekly online sessions were recorded and uploaded to our Facebook page with the aim of keeping in contact with children and families. Unfortunately, these were resource intensive and few parents took up the opportunity to attend so were stopped in the early summer.

Other events In a normal year children in all the different groups and from the local community would be invited to special events throughout the year. As it was not possible to host these we had planned to run a socially-distanced Light Party Trail outside our building and in the surrounding roads. We had also planned to hold a socially-distanced Nativity Trail in the local area. Both of these events were unfortunately cancelled at short notice because of changing restrictions. However, we were able to run an alternative Nativity activity on Zoom which was attended by 14 families.

All our usual involvement with children's activities at community events – such as Party in the Park and Light up the Lane – did not of course happen as public events were cancelled.

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the 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 children and vulnerable adults. We have also adopted the Diocesan safeguarding policy, and continue to review, and where necessary strengthen, our processes to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable people (children, young people and vulnerable adults) whilst at the same time trying to avoid too much bureaucracy in our various ministries. Key to all decisions are the assessment of risk and the core adherence to our policy.

Outreach

Outreach and mission is integral to all aspects of Church life throughout the year. During this extraordinary year our usual community events we lead or participate in were suspended – including our planned Community Fete in Cleveland Park. So Outreach had a very different face – but the streaming of services, promoted on social media, enabled a wider audience to join with us from home and from overseas.

From 23rd March until August we issued a daily Thought for the Day to Church members which many shared with friends and relatives, and was itself a form of outreach. These were published in a booklet at the end of the year.

Our Friday afternoon drop-in café aimed at the over 55s was suspended 'in person' but a programme of direct telephone contact, newsletters, gift drops and (for those who could use the technology) social Zoom and WhatsApp, meant that we could keep well

in touch. This was particularly important as many were isolated or shielding – and non-Church members asked to receive the *Thoughts for the Day*.

Our annual Alpha course took place online in the autumn and attracted 13 guests, nine of them were not Church members and most completed the course.

At Christmas we organised a 'Christmas Carol Trail' where people on their daily exercise could see some creative pictures depicting well-known carols in windows around the parish.

Deanery Synod

St Stephen's is a part of the Ealing Deanery and owing to the constraints of the COVID pandemic its Synod only met twice during the year, once in person and once via Zoom. The focus of the February meeting was to discuss, in groups, the emerging Deanery Plan which is being developed to meet the needs of 21st century London and is part of a wider vision exercise across the Diocese of London. In October the Synod re-elected a representative to the Twyford Academies Trust but the main focus of the meeting was promoting Eco Church across the Deanery. Following a helpful presentation from Revd Dave Bookless (Vicar of St Mary's, Norwood Green) attendees discussed progress and the challenges for their own churches in 'breakout rooms'.

Financial review

A formal budget process was again followed during the year to assist with financial planning, though many budgets became academic as the pandemic unfolded. Full details of the accounts are provided in the independently examined and signed-off Financial Statements.

Total receipts on ordinary unrestricted funds were £210,589, approximately £15,000 (8%) lower than the equivalent figure last year (having stripped out 2019 legacies).

Within this total, planned giving by Church members, Gift Aid envelopes, cash collections and related Gift Aid totalled £178,888, down 3.5% on the previous year. Though stewardship (mainly through bank accounts) held up well, cash collections and envelope giving dropped due to 'in person' services not being held. We introduced online giving through the website which helped. In the autumn, the Church asked all donors to review and update their giving pledges.

St Luke's Trust continued with their annual donation into the St Luke's Restricted Fund (SLRF) – the expected £40,000 plus a welcome extra £4,100. Lent, Harvest and Christmas Appeals continued.

Total unrestricted expenditure amounted to £209,831, approximately £11,000 (5%) lower than the equivalent figure in 2019. This provided the Christian ministry of St Stephen's Church, including the contribution to the Diocesan parish share which largely provides the stipends and other clergy overheads (including housing for the clergy).

Overall expenditure during 2020 was £256,929, down 6% from 2019, spread across a wide range of budget lines, although we did manage to carry out two essential building maintenance projects whilst the building was closed. We made it a priority to continue to tithe 10% of regular giving to our Mission Partners.

In terms of church staffing, we continued with four employees. The costs of our part-time Worship and Youth Pastors, and Children's Worker were fully financed by the St Luke's Restricted Fund. This Fund also covered the second instalment of a three year grant of £7,500 pa to The Grove Missional Community.

The freehold house in Drayton Gardens continues to be occupied by our Curate and family and the cottage by our Centre Manager.

We continue to pay off the loan raised for our buildings project in 2018, leaving just £12,000 to be repaid over the next three years, plus a loan from a congregation member of £5,000.

Overall we report a net surplus for the year, across all accounts, of £3,528 (£759 normal surplus and £2,769 Restricted). The fall in income due to the pandemic has been counteracted by much reduced expenditure from reduced activities. With both income and expenditure down, to achieve a small surplus in an extraordinary year was a real blessing.

After adding reserves brought forward at the beginning of the year, the balances carried forward at 31st December totalled £220,000 (£188,871 Unrestricted and £31,129 Restricted).

The Charity Commission has requested that charities report their ability to continue to operate as an ongoing concern during the Coronavirus lockdown. Since the end of 2020:

- We have again seen our hall income fall off during the third lockdown but expect it to recover for the second half of 2021
- The first few months have seen a reduction in giving, although this appears to be recovering and will continue to be closely monitored
- But we also continue to be prudent in our expenditure (This will start to increase as activities start up again.)
- Our reserves position is strong, although we will need to use some of these for essential building work
- We continue to monitor finances closely on an ongoing basis.
- The PCC is confident that these steps will ensure that we can continue to meet our critical commitments.

Reserves policy

The PCC aims to maintain a balance on free reserves of around two months' worth of average unrestricted expenditure, which is currently equivalent to £35,000. And whilst the General Reserve Fund is just below this, when designated funds are added in, at £94,000 we are well in excess of this. Appropriate reserves will continue to be set aside in anticipation of future spending on the Church buildings, through the Maintenance Reserve.

Conclusion

The pandemic made 2020 an unforgettable year. Despite all the challenges we still saw God at work as people came to faith, lives were changed and touched by God's love. Our aim is that by the second half of 2021 we might see new opportunities to share the good news of Jesus with our community and to enable our Vision Statement and Mission Action Plan to be enacted as fully as possible.

Steve Newbold
Incumbent and Chair
May 2021