

Churchwardens' Report to APCM – 18th October 2020

Olu Ogunoye and I (Deborah Gibson) are undertaking another year in the role of Churchwardens for Christ Church, Dartford as due to the COVID-19 situation the last APCM Meeting which should have taken place in April 2020 was postponed. This year, for all of us, has been like no other we have ever known. In March 2020 we had to close down our church building and church hall because of the global pandemic, something that has to my knowledge, never been done before in its history.

For the past year the church buildings have been in a reasonable state of repair. The potential water damage up in the church roof space, was investigated and the problem was felt to be due to the old wooden cross that was on the top of the church. Olu organised for it to be taken down and replaced by a new cross during lockdown. We have had some water damage in the newly decorated chancel area and we are hoping that the work done in the cross area on the roof will have resolved this. There is some water damage in the Church Centre in the main corridor and inside the vestry which may be due to the same problem, but we need to monitor and allow the walls to dry out before replastering and redecorating. The hall has also had a leak in the porch area and the main hall area during the year and the flat roof was re-felted at the front of the hall by the main door. As regards the main hall roof which is tiled, the old vent was removed (and sold for scrap) as it was felt that the interior leaks were running down from this area and new ventilation was put in the hall roof. I can report that so far, during heavy rain, there has been no sign of any further leakage occurring. The hall was also redecorated this year.

During the year, we tackled the historical problems with pigeons on the church roof. Olu arranged for the bell tower to be netted off and thoroughly cleaned by a company and some fire-gels (anti-pigeon discs) were purchased and placed in the groves above the 'old' church door to the side of the church which have been effective. The hall had its quinquennial inspection in July 2018. The Church quinquennial is due in 2021.

At the beginning of 2020, the PCC Facilities Sub-Group were meeting regularly to explore ideas following the submission of the architect's plans for consideration back in 2018 on how we can re-develop and utilise our church to allow for growth of our buildings for future generations. The meeting in March 2020 was cancelled and sadly we have been unable to meet since. There are two on-going faculty proposals; the sanctuary area – this faculty submission has been approved by DAC and has gone forward for public consultation. This is for removal of the curtain from the sanctuary, moving the altar table forward and for use of free-standing LED uplighters; the second is the nave area – we have a temporary licence which is due to expire in January 2021. Before lockdown we were at the experimental stage with this and because we have not been able to implement this during the current climate, we have applied for a faculty to maintain the situation as it is for a further 3 years to give us time to explore further options. The pews that were removed are currently being stored on the stage in the hall. We would like to thank Michael Smith for all his hard work with the application of these two faculties and preparing the public consultation documents.

Just before lockdown we had some extensive tree work done in the church grounds, as one of the trees was very diseased and had to be removed and some of them had got extremely tall and had spread out, affecting our neighbours, so these were cut back.

Olu and I would like to thank people for their continued attendance and participation at the Work Party in March; we are indebted to this group of volunteers and would love to actively encourage more people to join us. It is a time of great fellowship looking after our beautiful church. Sadly due to the pandemic, we did not have our June work party but we look forward to welcoming you all to join us when we are able to meet again.

During the period between March – Oct (and on-going) a Lockdown Leadership Team was formed to deal with the difficult job of closing down and opening up the church again for firstly private prayer and then our 9 a.m. Sunday Service and other urgent business on how to keep in contact and support our congregation during these challenging times. We have been able to offer an on-line service and a phone-in service on Sundays. Some of our usual Teams have not been able to meet, including the Buildings Committee Team and Standing Committee and the PCC have managed to meet twice via Zoom. Some of the members of the church House Groups have continued to meet via Zoom for bible study. The hall was unused for 4 months but the Pre-School returned in July 2020 and very recently the guides and brownies, who were meeting in the hall and church grounds, have been able to resume their activities inside the hall.

We would like to thank Andy Hulme the Buildings Supervisor and Colin Gibson the Caretaker for all their hard work and support and a special thank you to Jacky Robinson who has dealt with the bookings and has been the General Manager to the Parish Hall for many years. She is stepping down from this position, but has carried out these duties to an exceptional standard and will be greatly missed in this role.

Rachael Sheen became one of the Assistant Wardens but moved away from the area during lockdown and Tony Addison, who has been an Assistant Warden for many years has decided to step down from this role. Olu and I would like to thank them for their support to us during the last year and especial thanks to Tony who has been in this role for many years and has been a real asset to the Warden Team. Yinka Okikiolu and Ifeoma Emezie are in post as Trainee Wardens and we would like to thank them for their support.

We would like to thank Richard Mortimer, Laura Faturoti, Lynne Parkinson, Sharon Jarvis and Michael & Gill Smith our fellow members of the Lockdown Team who have been an incredible support to us; our co-workers in a really difficult time in the Church's history - their wisdom, tenacity, love and care have been invaluable.

The Terrier and Inventory (record of church belongings) has been updated and along with the Log Book (record of works) are presented to the Meeting should anyone want to look at them.

Deborah Gibson