

PARISHIONERS' OPEN MEETING
25 MARCH 2021

PRESENT: Stephen Warde, (Chair) Fr Simon, Deacon Geoff, Sarah Sykes (Minutes) (plus 12 attendees at the start rising to 19 in total)

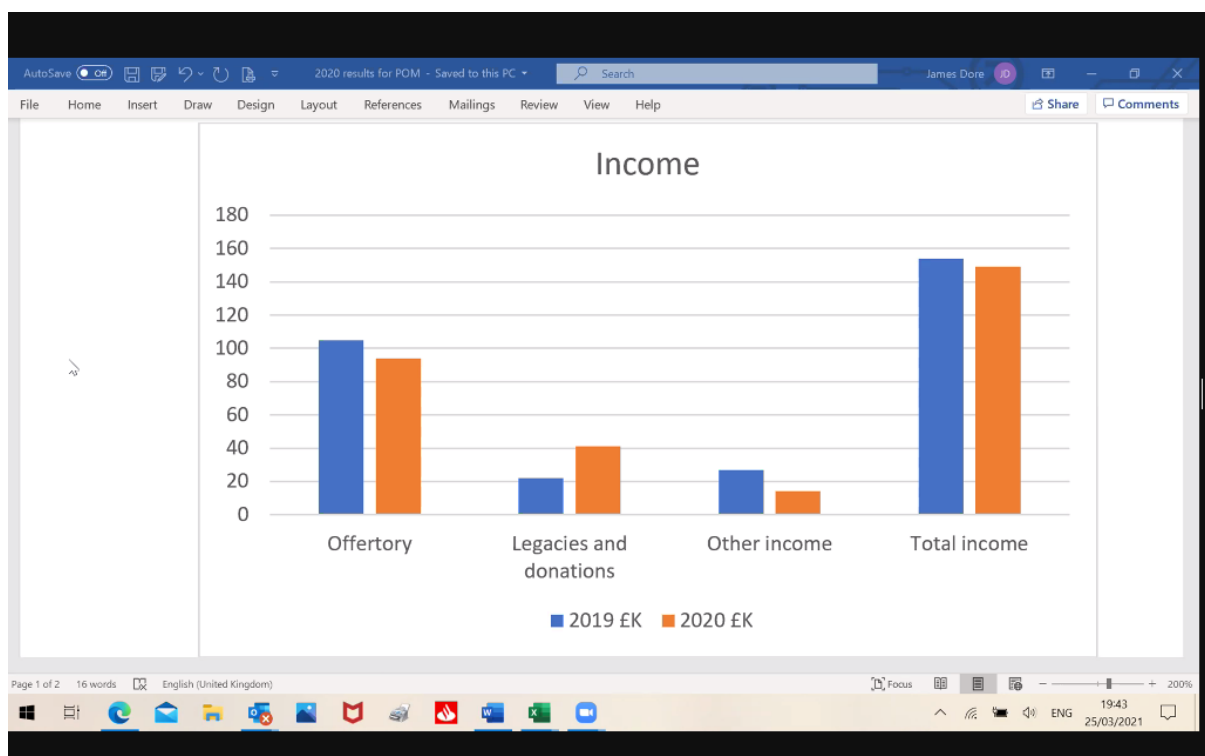
APOLOGIES: Ronald Haynes, Barbara Quail, Jeanette Milbourn

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record of the last meeting.

1. Finance update

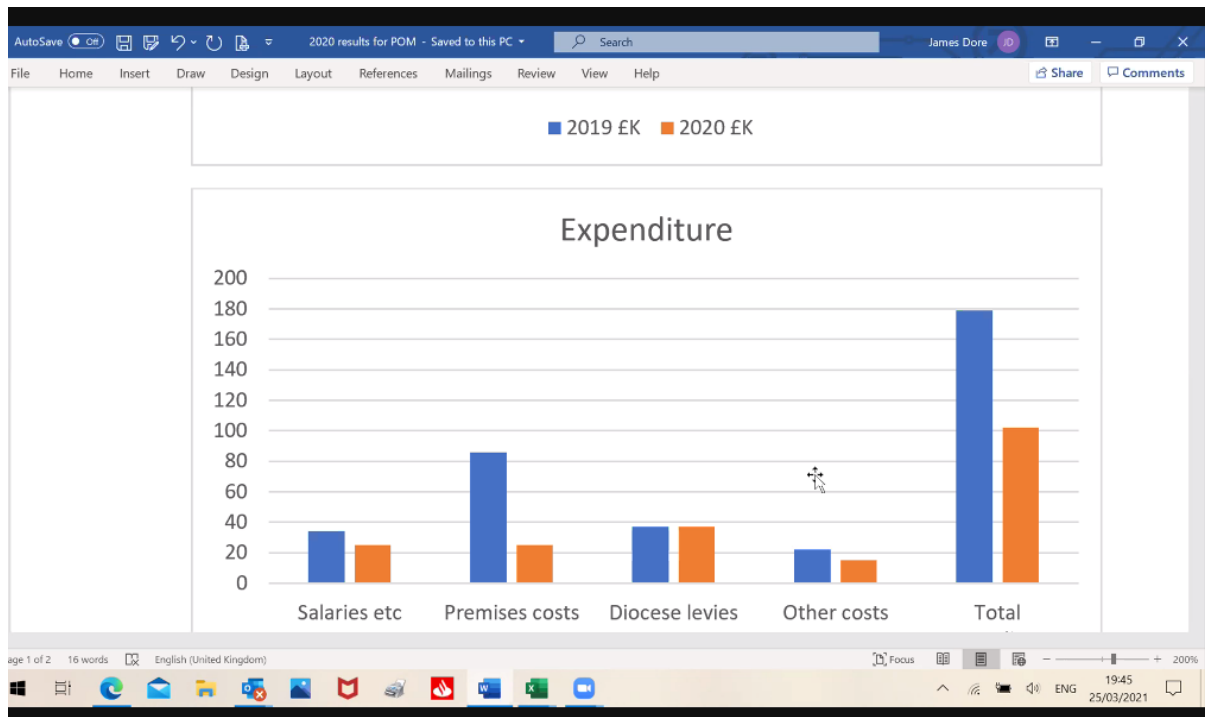
Treasurer, James Dore, reported on the Parish's 2020 finances. The accounts for the last year have been to the Diocese.

Despite the church being closed for a large part of the year, and reduced congregational presence when open, we have nevertheless been able to maintain our level of income well due to the fact that many people have switched to making offerings directly via the bank at a level which nearly matches 2019's offerings, meaning that we are only a few thousand pounds down on 2019's income. Receiving a couple of legacies have helped provide a surplus of income and boosted our reserves, which are now a little in excess of £200,000.



Our costs have been a little lower than normal, remembering that the premises costs were particularly high in 2019 due to work on the church roof. There have been less outgoings in connection with liturgical expenses such as candles, hosts, incense etc. We also stopped taking Catholic newspapers, and had lower salary costs when there was no parish secretary in place for several months. However, we do have a programme of repairs and maintenance planned for the coming year with £35,000 earmarked for this. Work on re-ordering the

Sanctuary when agreed by the Parish and electrical work have been factored into the forthcoming year's expenditure, and include additional issues of repair and renewal noted in the 5yr plan.



Fr Simon hoped that as pandemic restrictions lift that following the Diocesan architect's visit last May that the Diocesan Liturgical commission will visit the church and assess potential plans for the Sanctuary re-ordering. He is however appreciating the new radiators recently installed, and plans to move from the Presbytery for a couple of weeks while the electrical work is being done.

The Chair thanked all involved with the financial management of the Parish over the last year, particularly with the organisation of online giving and gift aid. James will arrange to the accounts to be posted in more detail on the Parish website.

Fr Simon mentioned that the Alive in Faith Diocesan 5-yr fundraising initiative is reaching an end. The Diocese have appointed a stewardship adviser, Sandra Portas. She will be visiting Parishes to talk about aspects of stewardship including ways to support the broader work of the church through time, talents as well as, treasure (ie financial support).

ACTION

Send the accounts to the Parish webmaster and put a note in the newsletter to notify the Parish – James Dore

2. Return to Church and Holy Week

Fr Simon reported that weekday Masses have been open for the last week and we will be opening for the coming Palm Sunday weekend and onwards.

Maundy Thursday Mass will be at 7.30pm and there will be watching after Mass in the church.

There will be 5 Masses over the Palm Sunday weekend which will include a 5pm Mass run by the Ablaze team. There will not, however, be a 5pm Mass on Easter Sunday. There will be 70 spaces available for reservation at each Mass. Stewards, readers and musicians need to book for the Mass that they are serving at so that capacity can be adhered to.

On Good Friday there will be an online celebration of the Lord's Passion with only ministers and musicians present. This will be followed by hourly veneration using votive candles and Communion between 1pm and 5pm.

The general feeling of the meeting about whether ticketing should continue after the Easter weekend was that we should proceed initially without ticketing and only reconsider this if numbers became regularly higher than the number of spaces available.

DISCUSSION

Fr Simon plans to have an altar of repose in the Parish Room and leave it to people's discretion as to whether it is safe to be in the Parish Room. Numbers watching tend to dissipate after first 10-15mins. Watching will finish at 10pm. If this is the case then it was suggested that the stewards could regulate the people coming in and out of the Parish Room for the first half hour.

Martin Avery wondered whether the first half hour of watching could be held in the church which would give more room for those who initially stay to watch and for those watching online. Fr Simon agreed that this would be possible and the Meeting agreed that this was a good idea.

Jim O'Sullivan put in a request that the parts of the Liturgy that could be spoken rather than sung should be spoken to encourage participation with recorded music just being for the hymns in the Mass.

Martin Avery pointed out that it is important that some Mass parts are sung and that people at home are able to sing.

It was agreed that the Sanctus and Memorial Acclamation will be said but the Gloria and Gospel Acclamation would continue to be sung.

It was also felt that one or two pieces could be sung/played live with the help of one or two musicians.

It was confirmed that the ability to have sound and video extending into the Parish Room has been set up.

Fr Simon elaborated on his ideas for Good Friday veneration. He has in mind that quiet music will be played as people enter the church. The service will consist of an opening prayer a short reading from Isaiah, a shortened version of the Passion, a few bidding prayers

and 3 general intercessions followed by more quiet music while people approach the Sanctuary, light a candle and place it on the altar steps in front of the Cross, receive Communion and leave.

There will be 40 tickets available per session lasting about 25minutes.

Leonie Isaacson spoke about the plans of the Children's Liturgy group for Children's Stations of the Cross on Good Friday morning. They plan to do stationary Stations taking place on the steps of the altar with the children in the pews following the format of a Reading by one of the children, music and reflection for each Station. They aim to start at 10am and finish within 45 minutes. They will be inviting older children to do the readings so that those watching via live streaming are able to hear the readings clearly.

ACTIONS

Put a note on the outside noticeboards about how to book for the Triduum Masses, particularly if you are not online – **Fr Simon**

Recirculate updated Stewards' instructions (although there is a link on the website to these too) and include information on how to manage checking people have reservations and what to do for those who arrive without having booked and advise the stewards to strongly encourage parents to keep children with them not letting them move around the church. – **Stephen Warde**

Arrange Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, Stewards and servers for the Triduum – **Nora Darby/Stephen Warde** to coordinate

Check supplies of masks, hand sanitiser and cleaning products and restock as required – **Fr Simon**

3. Parish Groups updates

CAFOD – Serga updated us on the progress of the 'Walk for Water' challenge. We have reached our walking goal of Afar in Ethiopia and exceeded our financial target of £5,000. We have now raised £51/2k and will aim to continue to increase this amount which will mean more wells can be installed. We will also continue walking and adding steps to the step counter in the hope that we can walk back from Afar to the Vatican by Easter Day.

Serga thanked everyone for their help in making this a success, in particular Richard Birkett, Ron Haynes and Jim Infield. She also mentioned that she will be interviewed about our efforts on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire.

SVP – Catharine Warren explained that the SVP Maundy Thursday Collection will be used to support poorer Parishes around the country who don't have the same level of support that we are lucky enough to have at St Laurence's and SVP projects in Sudan/South Sudan. Parishioners will be able to contribute funds through a contactless machine, online and traditional cash.

4. AOB

Because we have not been open news about births, deaths and marriages aren't always widely shared and it was requested that the recently deceased and recently baptised section of the newsletter be restarted and, if permission is given by next-of-kin, to include details of when funerals are to be said

Why is there no playback of Mass available for people to watch at their convenience? Because nearly all Masses have music included and it would require additional copyright licenses on our YouTube channel. And, because we broadcast a 24 hour stream which needs very little hands-on day to day management, to supply recordings of Masses would incur a big step-up in time commitment for the Tech Group who manage the system.

5. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 27th April at 7.30pm via Zoom