

## FINANCE COUNCIL UPDATE

It is now approaching 2 years since the Finance Council for St Peter's was set up. The purpose of this note is to update parishioners on the activities of the Council and to invite any questions or observations on our work.

### Parish Finances Generally

This has been an extraordinary period for many reasons not least the substantial limitations on Church Services, collections and so on. It is worth noting at the outset that the commitment of parishioners to maintaining their contributions by standing order or in other ways has been incredibly positive and essential to the maintenance of the Parish's financial position. Continued use of standing orders once the Church is able to re-open fully will be very useful to the Parish for the maintenance of steady income streams and for budgeting purposes.

In general terms the Parish's income on a year to year basis does not cover expenditure, when taking into account a budget for ongoing maintenance of the church building. Beyond that there have been significant building costs in the most recent period which are described further below. To that end maintenance and improvement of income and financial discipline on expenditure will continue to be very important for the Parish now and as "normality" hopefully returns.

### Building Works

A great deal has been happening with the Church building in the last year or so and there are further plans afoot for more development. There are three main areas to this:-

1. **Asbestos and Heating** - This work has been substantially completed. Removing the asbestos and installing an effective heating system were both essential works. The total costs of the projects are in the order of £190,000. Achieving these projects has involved the participation of many parishioners and the outcome, especially the heating, will clearly be felt at the Church.
2. **Planned Projects** - There are currently plans being progressed to achieve an enhancement to the altar in part for health and safety reasons and part to recognise the historic nature of the building. This is being augmented by works to reinstate the wooden floor and also improve sound and lighting. These three projects are significant and it is believed will enhance the Church and the ability of parishioners, altar servers and so on to enjoy, and hear, mass safely in a suitable environment. Costs around these projects are envisaged to be in the order of £175,000. We have recently had the required approval of the Archdiocesan trustees to these works. I know it is Fr Kevin's intention to consult with parishioners on what is proposed in order to refine plans appropriately.
3. **Ongoing Maintenance** - Consultants have been supporting all aspects of these projects to ensure relevant works are carried out properly. A report has been obtained on an annual programme of repairs to the Church building to ensure that the building is kept in good order. The costs of these works vary from year to year but might average in the order of £20-30,000.

The Finance Council have been able to get the benefit of central Diocesan resources to cover one half of the heating/asbestos project. For Parish and Diocesan financial management purposes these receipts from central resources are treated as a return of funds previously remitted from the Parish. This model is being replicated for the altar, flooring and sound works to cover costs beyond what has been raised specifically for these purposes within the Parish. We have to recognise that there is significant pressure on Diocesan resources which mean efforts we can pursue for fundraising at Parish level are particularly important to achieve progress with these projects.

The contributions to the Building Fund now total in the order of £83,000 which is an incredible contribution from the Parish, including a number of significant individual donations.

The Finance Council actively investigates appropriate grants available for works of this nature and submits applications for such funding accordingly.

### **The Council**

All Parishes are expected to have a Finance Council to advise and support the parish Priest on financial issues. The group is currently meeting on a monthly basis. Members of the Council would welcome any comments or questions from parishioners or interested parties. Any parishioners wishing to discuss any financial matter, including the building works, building fund and legacies should feel free to do so via Fr Kevin, or one of the members of the Council.

Furthermore anyone wishing to participate in the Council would be welcome to do so. The Council is anxious to ensure that its work is communicated effectively to parishioners and makes best use of the skills and experience available.

Chris McGill  
Finance Council Chair  
December 2021