

# CHARLTON

## ST LUKE AND ST THOMAS

### REPORTS TO St LUKE'S ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2021

#### **CHURCHWARDENS**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the past year has been without precedent in living memory. Risk assessments and social-distancing measures were already being implemented at St Luke's ahead of the national lockdown when it was introduced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. However, by the time Canon Law had been suspended and places of worship closed with effect from 26<sup>th</sup> March, the pandemic had already struck close to home. On 24<sup>th</sup> March, St Luke's suffered the tragic loss of churchwarden John Chipperfield, a much-loved member of the community and long-standing member of the congregation. Joseph Spooner has stepped in to fill the 'casual vacancy' and was confirmed as 'acting warden' in June.

Covid-19 legislation remained in force until 4<sup>th</sup> July, when Canon Law was reinstated. Churches were then able to reopen for public worship and private prayer, subject to social-distancing measures. We are most grateful to Liz Buck for her frequent revisions of our many risk assessments. Revised statutory guidance issued on 4<sup>th</sup> July remains in force nine months later; however, with resurgence in the pandemic, London was given Tier 4 status on 19<sup>th</sup> December, with the expectation that everyone should stay at home wherever possible. Although there was no direction that places of worship be closed again, the benefice churchwardens decided that closure was the best course of action, a decision that was subsequently taken by the vast majority of churches in the diocese of Southwark and greatly appreciated by civic leaders.

The Benefice of Charlton brings together St Luke's and St Thomas'. Although many significant services and social events are celebrated together, the two parishes retain their distinct identities, and under normal circumstances weekly services are maintained in both churches. Under the leadership of the rector, there is a close working relationship between the four churchwardens, and the relationship between the two churches remains strong. This is nowhere better demonstrated than in the two churches having worshipped as a single online congregation over the past twelve months; this online presence has been supplemented by several WhatsApp groups, and a re-launched benefice newsletter. There has been a live-streamed service every Sunday since 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020. Services are also recorded and can be seen at other times on YouTube and easily accessed via the benefice website, which has been revamped by the Revd Joe Lee. In addition to online morning

and evening prayer and weekly compline, a number of one-off services and reflections have been created and uploaded to the benefice website as well as being made available on DVD for local care homes and members of the congregation who might not have internet access. The work to create the online presence is little short of phenomenal and owes much to the time, energy, skills, and commitment of a group of individuals who have come together as a team.

At the time of writing, St Luke's has been able to reopen for Easter, albeit with social distancing likely to be in place at least until summer. The church is still very much alive online in the meantime, and a challenge for the future will be how to run 'online church' and 'building church' services at the same time. As noted elsewhere, despite being closed for much of the past year, considerable work has been needed at St Luke's.

We note the considerable workload on the rector, who serves both parishes. Ali Edney has been engaged to provide part-time administrative support. We welcome the arrival of the Revd Adelaide Davies to serve her title curacy under the rector's supervision. Liz has worked tirelessly with great support from the Revd Bennett Spong and the Revd Joe Lee. Mention should also be made of Michael Griffiths and Ali Edney, who have ensured we have an effective presence on social media; the revamped weekly bulletin re-established by Joe is a great success.

In the face of the pandemic and 'lockdown', the past year has seen much progress to update the Mission Action Plan to focus on discipleship, justice, connection, and environment. Progress of the Mission Action Plan is monitored by the PCC. In addition, St Luke's Masterplan Group is a body responsible to the PCC and charged with developing the vision for St Luke's building. The intention is to be mindful of its rich heritage at the same time as developing the building as more fit for mission and consistent with the goals of the Mission Action Plan.

St Luke's PCC has remained committed to developing St Richard's Church Centre and opening up its use.

The past year has been hard for all and has thrown up many challenges. We have suffered much loss of loved ones. In addition to John Chipperfield, we have lost Kath Skinner and Sharon Cullis, who until recently were both members of St Luke's PCC. We mourn the loss of Rosemary Gill and Lily Carter, both long standing members of the congregation. And we mourn the recent loss of the Revd Jean Griffiths, whose years of pioneering ministry have been such a positive influence at St Luke's for many years.

We are ever grateful for the support and advice of the Venerable Alastair Cutting, Archdeacon of Lewisham and Greenwich, all the more so knowing how much responsibility he has had to carry while the Bishop of Woolwich has been limited by his health.

**Joseph Spooner**    Acting churchwarden  
**Rick Newman**      Churchwarden

## **FABRIC AND FURNISHINGS OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD**

Part of the churchwardens' charge from the archdeacon is a requirement for us to report on the furnishings and fittings of the church as well the state of the churchyard.

St Luke's is Grade 2\* listed, noted as having "exceptional historical significance", and as a building requires much by way of upkeep. The PCC observes the requirements of the Diocesan Advisory Committee and seeks to ensure relevant permissions are sought before any work is undertaken.

In contrast to previous years, it is saddening to report that the past year has seen St Luke's and St Richard's damaged by vandalism, with both having been targets for metal theft. At St Luke's, a small quantity of lead was stolen from the roof but massive damage was inflicted in the process of the metal being ripped out. Not only was there considerable damage to the roof, there was also extensive internal damage as a result of water ingress. The final repair bill will be in excess of £70k, for which our insurance policy only covers to a maximum of £15k. Repairs have been completed and the roof is now weather-proof. Some of work to the roof has been able to address a number of repairs identified as necessary in the 2019 Quinquennial Report.

Belatedly, though better late than never, a roof alarm has been installed at St Luke's. Even if there is no further lead to steal, this would only be apparent once would-be thieves gained access the roof and their likely inflicting yet more costly damage.

There are ongoing submissions for upgrade of the telecommunications equipment in the tower as well as steps to be taken to prevent further overheating which was a problem last summer and required frequent site visits being accommodated, often at short notice.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is legally responsible for maintenance of the churchyard, but its improved appearance – especially in the Memorial Garden – owes much to the dedication of a team of green-fingered volunteers. We are in the process of representing the main door, which is already partly restored to its original (1630) dark brown. Plans are in place for further work to improve the external appearance of St Luke's and improvements in the churchyard.

Repairs to the roof imposed a further delay to the start of the long-awaited renewal of the internal lighting. This is recently completed. While there is much satisfaction in being able to light the church at all times, the new lighting reveals the extent to which the walls have been damaged as a result of water ingress following the vandalism last summer. With most of the walls requiring repair as well as redecoration, the opportunity will be taken to redecorate throughout. It is hoped to progress this before the end of the year.

**Joseph Spooner**    Acting churchwarden  
**Rick Newman**      Churchwarden

## **ST LUKE'S PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

The PCC traditionally meets on the third Monday of each month, excluding August and December. It is supported by a Standing Committee (composed of the rector, churchwardens, PCC secretary, treasurer, and up to two elected members of the PCC) and usually meets two weeks before a PCC meeting to plan the agenda as well as addressing minor / urgent items of business.

St Luke's PCC has continued to meet regularly, doing so for most of the year online, as a result of the many steps necessary due the Covid-19 pandemic. Meetings have been excellently chaired by Joseph Spooner and have frequently been broad ranging in the amount of items they have had to address. It is disappointing to record that attendance at meetings has diminished simply due to lack of numbers. The PCC carried over vacancies after two members stood down in 2019, following which we have lost John Chipperfield and Kath Skinner. Additional responsibilities have therefore fallen on the remaining members, which has prompted further considerations as to how the PCC operates and how sub-committees might be developed.

Within the benefice there continues to be close partnership with the parish of St Thomas, including joint meetings of the PCCs held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

On a personal note, I share that having ended up covering the role of PCC secretary has been an additional responsibility for me, which is unsustainable and furthermore is unhealthy for progress and development at St Luke's.

**Rick Newman**

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

In 2020 St Luke's paid in full its agreed Parish Share (the annual contribution to the Diocese), which has again been increased for 2021 by a percentage above the rate of inflation. Were the Rector being paid a full stipend, St Luke's would receive more from the Diocese in financial terms than it is able to contribute. As it stands, Charlton Benefice is a net contributor to the Diocese of Southwark.

The annual accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 are attached to this report. The accounts again indicate considerable variance from the previous year even without the impact of COVID-19. Income in 2019 included a substantial legacy as well as an unexpected gift. Expenditure on repairs in 2019 was delayed until 2020, during which we incurred considerable additional costs for repair to the vandalism perpetrated against the roof. Expenditure for 2020 also includes the projected expenditure on the renewal of the internal lighting. Although the accounts show a net expenditure of

£105k, this has been fully documented and shared with the PCC at every stage. The costs of repairs have to an extent been ameliorated by a number of successful grant applications as well as settlement by Ecclesiastical Insurance, albeit that the vandalism revealed shortcomings in our policy due to a limit on claims that could be made in the event of metal theft. Grant applications in respect of the lighting system have been successful in raising well over 50% of the considerable cost.

Planned giving has remained stable and increased slightly however, with the church closed, collections at services are well down on 2019. There is also a marked decrease in income from church activities, particularly from lettings at St Richard's which were just beginning to establish regular bookings when COVID-19 required the hall to be closed. As well as repairs at St Luke's, work has progressed with planned re-development at St Richard's to create more space for public / community use.

The budget has been revised for 2021 and we are looking to develop 'management accounting', for which external support is being sought and which will need to be paid for. Stewardship is now an 'ongoing item' rather than a one off event. We continue to receive a significant income from the telecommunications base station rental as well as from investments. In approving the budget for 2020 the PCC had agreed to draw on investments held in reserves in order to progress repair and renovation at St Luke's, as well as for the Mission Action Plan, however, it has not been necessary to do so over the past year.

That St Luke's accounts appear healthy is despite it not having been possible for the Treasury Team to meet over the past year. In addition, Liz Buck stepped down as Treasurer and Rick Newman stepped in as churchwarden to oversee finances in the interim. Laura Wingrove has recently come forward as new treasurer, with Oluremi Sodimu taking on responsibility for stewardship, however, neither has had the opportunity to develop their roles until the current restrictions on meetings can be relaxed. The PCC is aware that in the absence of our current banking being able to accommodate dual authorisation of payments, as recommended by the Charity Commission as best practice, Rick Newman is the sole authorised signatory with access to the online account. An arrangement is in place whereby all other authorised signatories are informed in advance of any online payments being made.

We remain ever grateful to Barbara Drew, St Luke's accountant, for her financial oversight and for producing the annual accounts

**Rick Newman**  
Churchwarden

## **ELECTORAL ROLL**

The Church Representation Rules require that, *"There shall be a church electoral roll in every parish, on which the names of lay persons shall be*

*entered ... the roll shall be available for inspection by bona fide inquirers."* The decision as to whether an inquiry is *bona fide* rests with the PCC, to which any inquiry must be made in the first instance. St Luke's Electoral Roll was fully revised in 2019 in accordance with Church of England procedures and is "*revised annually by or under the direction of the PCC. The electoral roll officer is responsible for keeping the roll constantly up to date by the addition and removal of names as from time to time required and to report such additions and removals at the next meeting of the parochial church council.*" Unless the electoral roll is maintained effectively it is little more than a list of names. Being on the electoral roll is primarily an act of committed membership and entitles individuals to stand for office as well to vote in church elections and to speak at the APCM. Anyone wishing to join the electoral roll should speak with me in the first instance.

Ahead of the APCM the electoral roll has been reviewed as required. There have been a number of losses as well as recognition that several people have moved out of the area. In reviewing the electoral roll we are informed that some who live at distance but have been regular attenders of on-line worship are eligible to apply to go on the electoral roll. There are currently **102** names on St Luke's electoral roll, only one less than twelve months ago and sees St Luke's entitled to elect up to twelve members to the PCC at the 2022 APCM and to elect three lay representatives to Charlton Deanery Synod. Although there were 103 names on the electoral roll at this time last year, the Church Representation Rules require use of the electoral roll number from 2019 when the electoral roll stood at 97 and as such the 2021 APCM can only elect up to **nine** PCC members.

**Rick Newman**  
Electoral Roll Officer

## **CHARLTON DEANERY SYNOD**

With an electoral roll of between 75 and 150, St Luke's qualifies for three lay representatives to Charlton Deanery Synod. Liz Buck, Michael Griffiths and Rick Newman were elected at the 2017 APCM to serve for three years, a period which was extended in 2020 until elections could take place this year. The Rector and Assistant Clergy are automatically members of Deanery Synod as well as being members of the Charlton Chapter. Rick is Lay Chair of Charlton Deanery and as such is a de-facto member of both Charlton Deanery Synod and Southwark Diocesan Synod.

Charlton Deanery is made up of eleven parishes and also includes Queen Elizabeth Hospital Chaplaincy, The Old Royal Naval College Chapel, Morden College, Grace Church Greenwich and Open Space at Kidbrooke.

As noted previously there is an ever-greater importance placed on the work of deaneries and lay involvement. Charlton Deanery has been active in developing its Mission Action Plan, which includes the creation of a Deanery Leadership Team and to progress Charlton as an Eco-Deanery as well as

considering how the deanery might engage with local initiatives to address food insufficiency. Deanery Synod normally meets four times a year but over the past year this has not been possible. Instead there have been two meetings held online. St Luke's has had at least one representative at every meeting.

**Liz Buck, Michael Griffiths and Rick Newman**  
Deanery Synod Representatives

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

In accordance with Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure of 2016, St Luke's PCC remains ever mindful of its duty to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. St Luke's PCC is committed to reviewing its safeguarding policies and practice annually in accordance with the revised version of *A Safe Church*. All members of the PCC are required to have a DBS check and to sign the diocesan confidential declaration form.

*"A Safe Church"* (a copy of which is in the vestry) contains procedures and guidelines that apply to day-to-day working and are particularly important for events organised by the Children's Mission Team. Best practice in safeguarding also extends to the use of St Richard's where compliance with St Luke's established safeguarding procedures is a condition of hire of the hall.

The past year has seen the Church of England particularly focussed on the IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) and the lessons to be learned. There have been no significant changes to policy and procedures, though there is to be increasing attention paid to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. Revd Liz regularly meets with safeguarding officers from St Thomas's (Ali Edney) and St Luke's (Rick) to review and recognise any outstanding matters. The benefice remains committed to safeguarding and is grateful for continuing support from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team over the past year at a time of great challenge.

**Rick Newman and Rob Simson**  
Parish Safeguarding Officers