

Chair Report 2022/23

The Parish Council has met six times over the past year with many issues being raised and discussed. It takes time from a proposal being first raised to be implemented. This is not due to procrastination on the part of PCC members but of pausing to ensure no rash decisions are taken with Parish money. When, after discussion, something is decided on we then have to find a lead person, seek sources and quotations, select a supplier, seek Finance Committee approval then arrange for the work to proceed.

Cycle Shelter. We decided in August to purchase a cycle shelter – this has been commissioned and is due to be installed in the car park area as an encouragement for people to cycle to church – we have had though some teething problems which hopefully will soon be sorted.

Health and safety in the parish continues to be an issue, partially being driven by our insurers and also following advice from the H&S Group. Altar rails have now been installed as an aid to both our Friars and Parishioners accessing the BS Chapel and nave. We also have a new, safer, votive candle stand in front of the Our Lady side altar.

Car Park. The first stage of improvement of pedestrian safety in the car park has been completed with improved lighting, highlighting of steps, increased signage and extension of the path handrail. Further changes are planned. The car park is still an area of concern but also of divergent opinions. At certain times on Weekdays and on Sundays, when we have Mass, the car park is often completely full and overflowing. This has been compounded by Redbridge introducing parking restrictions in the surrounding area. We are constantly reviewing the situation but finding a solution to appease all is proving difficult.

Huts. New huts were installed in 2022 the final cost being £27,000. Planning permission is available for a third hut until 2024. This may be required as the remaining hut is in poor condition.

The Tennis club has planning permission to install lighting on the courts and this is likely to go ahead soon when financial issues are clarified.

Youth. Currently our schools are having difficulty in coping with an increase amongst their pupils of mental health issues, some of which are associated with the Covid pandemic. This year we have therefore contributed £4000 each to Trinity and St Anthony's Schools. This will enable Brentwood Childrens Society to provide psychological help to some of those affected. This has been greatly appreciated by the schools and enabled many additional pupils to be helped.

The Bishop recently offered financial help to Parish Partnerships wishing to employ a youth co-ordinator. We approached our partner parishes but they have expressed no interest. We must continue to look for other ways to help the young in the future.

Church Sound System. We have previously mentioned the poor sound system in the Church. Last year plans were made for this to be upgraded however in the Autumn the chosen company indicated it could not fulfil the contract so we have had to re-tender. Approval for a new company was agreed at our last meeting and hopefully installation of a new system will go ahead in the coming months.

Becket Centre. Whilst the upstairs in the Becket centre has been upgraded the Henrietta suite area is still the subject of discussion. An architect was commissioned to review the area but as I write he has withdrawn so further plans are underway to finalise what is required. In the meantime investment in new kitchen equipment has been approved and is proceeding.

PCC members have been involved throughout the year in facilitating new and regular events. A retreat was organised in March, whilst the Garden Fete, Adoration, Outdoor Mass, Xmas Fayre and other functions have all had PCC member involvement.

This is my last year as Chair. May I take this opportunity to thank the PPC members, Friars, the Parish Office and Parishioners who have all helped with their advice and encouragement over the last few, rather turbulent, years!

Kit Tranmer