

Our annual accounts are presented every year at the AGM and a copy is also available via the St Thomas web site; assessable via the Parish council page (scroll to the bottom.)

However, we understand that not everyone can attend the AGM and also lots of numbers can sometimes be uninteresting. Therefore this document is to hopefully explain better to a wider audience what happens to parish donations. How it is transferred into the parish and importantly: How parish funds spent.

**Income:**

The majority of our income (70%) comes through the offertory equal to £208,000. Of this, 59% is via Standing orders. Some 34% still comes in through the loose plate and 7% from weekly envelopes.

Standing orders and weekly envelopes with a signed Gift Aid covenant enable us to claim 25% of your offertory back from HRMC. Last year, Gift Aid rebates equate to 12% of our total income, some £35,286.

The balance of our income comes from Parish events such as the Christmas Bazaar, Summer Fete, the Becket centre and the Repository. Events have corresponding expenses that need to be subtracted. We have also been fortunate to have some individual donations in the last couple of years.

All in all our total income was up 1.3% to £296,000 for the financial year 2016/17.

**Expenditure:**

We are a large parish and it actually costs a lot of money to run and maintain. General expense headings in order of relevance are: Administration, Diocesan quota, Premises, Social events / Activities, Pastoral and Housekeeping.

Within Administration we account for staff wages, we have a number of office staff and a new manager, as well as cooks and cleaners within the Friary. This is the largest expense, but office costs for telephones, computers and postage were also £19,000 last year. Building insurance and rates were £10,000 and Heating and Lighting £18,000.

Premise maintenance was £26,000 (down from £35,000 in the previous year) we estimate it will be higher this year.

Getting work done in a large church is generally expensive! We had a major issue with the heating system last Christmas both in the church and friary. Money has been spent to refurbish the old system, but this may not be a long term solution and is on-going.

Replacing the boilers, pipes and radiators would be extremely costly and not viable.

The Premises expense is probably the most difficult one to forecast. So we continue to put aside reserves into a Building reserves fund for unforeseen large bills. It was thought at one stage that the church roof may need to be completely retiled; however we now intend to retile only the side chapels at this stage.

Our Diocesan quota is set by Brentwood and works out at around £1.20 a week for each parishioner attending mass or £67,000 for last year.

Pastoral is a broad category that covers items such as donations made from the church, Liturgical supplies, Priest salaries – which have not been taken for two years. School capitation: payments to our local schools and payments to other mass centres.

Social event expenses would include any costs to host the event. Normally our events are warmly received, well attended and generally cash positive.

Our total expenses were down 6% at £268,000.

**Overview:**

Last year we thought that our expenses would be greater than our income. Ultimately that was not the case, due mainly to some cost savings between the Friary and the church. For example; the Friars decided to pay all the costs associated with the retiling of the friary roof, saving the parish from making any contribution, we thought that would be a £50,000 bill. The church maintenance bills were also lower; however we expect them to be greater this year, especially as the car park surface may need attention and we may need new scouts huts as the old ones are falling apart. Administration and Pastoral were also lower; again we expect an increase this year. The Becket centre did better than expected post the good work of the BC committee.

Going forward we hope that more parishioners can join the Gift Aid scheme as this is an easy way to give to the parish from tax already paid from earnings. Forms are available via web site and also the parish office. Every little helps and this is a cost effective way of giving more without it costing more.

The church does have a healthy cash reserve of £330,000 and a buildings reserve of £65,000. This sounds like a massive amount of money, however we are always concerned that a large maintenance bill would reduce this significantly for example a new church roof is estimated to cost about £250,000. So we need to be vigilant that we are in good financial shape for many years to come.

The elected Parish council is responsible for deciding which projects are important for our parish and worth pursuing. Both the PPC and the Finance committee are responsible for making sure that we get good value for money on all projects undertaken.

Sincerely

Finance committee.