

# APCM Team Rector's Report

Last year my report focussed on the year ahead and my desire to discern the purpose and direction for the Parish.

In pursuit of that I intended to set up a group to reform the governance of the team, run a Team Away Day, and get a better oversight of finances of the team. In addition to these aims, over the year we have also started thinking about the possibility of a team IT System, seen the ordination of Yunghee has a Deacon and the beginning of her curacy as the Parish Curate and we have also reviewed and revised the role of the Parish Operations Manager following the resignation of Caroline Revill prior to the appointment of Jane Johnston.

I have to say that I have not got to where I had expected or achieved the objectives that I had hoped to this time last year. Over the year I have had a growing sense of the complexity of the parish and the challenges of finding the way ahead.

With regard to team governance, while still aware of the challenges and difficulties that are caused by the lack of structure in the team and the issues around power and accountability lying in different places, it has become clear to me that we cannot reform the governance without a clearer understanding of the structures, purposes and directions of the team. I am more unsure about how the team works and should work now than I was when I started as Team Rector. I do think that it would be foolish to adopt permanent structures until we have a clear understanding of who we are and what we are trying to achieve and be as a team, so it has not seemed right to take forward the discussion of governance, even though the lack of sound structures creates an uncomfortable and insecure context for us to work in.

I was very pleased that 65 people from across our churches attended the Away Day in November, but again it was disappointing that no clear sense of direction and purpose emerged from that. It was a good day. We enjoyed each other's company, had an inspiring speaker who encouraged us to think about mission and had some lively conversations about important topics, shared interests and concerns. It was time well spent on getting to know each other but it has not moved us forward as I had hoped in terms of discerning our vocation as a team and clarifying our roles and relationships.

One of the most valuable meetings of the past year was the one for all the treasurers in the team. It was an impressively open and constructive meeting. I had got the impression from decisions about money that the Parish had taken in the past that such conversations had tended to be rather defensive, with people not willing to talk straightforwardly about how their finances were. I did not find this to be the case and all of us came away from that meeting with a clearer sense of how the finances worked both for our individual churches and the team. I would like to take this opportunity to give my heartfelt thanks to the team treasurers and the treasurers of

each of the churches not only for undertaking the heavy burden of administrative work that their role requires of them, but also for their generous contribution to that day, both in terms of the time they gave and their approach to sharing information openly and straightforwardly. It was a real sign of hope.

One of the fruits of that meeting has been a review of the property owned by the parish and a start on developing a new strategy for clergy housing. Of necessity, this work needs to remain confidential to the PCC until we can make concrete announcements, but it was again very encouraging to find that proposals were received constructively and almost unanimously on a potentially very sensitive topic.

A second positive step forward around finances has been the agreement of a Parish Clergy Expenses Policy. This has been running for nearly a year now and the PCC will shortly be reviewing it. The policy seems to be working well and have the confidence of both the clergy and the congregations of the team. The plan of paying clergy expenses out of the revenue generated from the PCC fees for occasional offices seems to be working out with sufficient funds coming in to sustain the costs of the ministry of the clergy. The clarity the policy gives to clergy on what and how expenses are claimed is also valuable. We need to do the same for lay ministers, although this is rather more complex will have a direct impact on each of our churches. I hope we will be able to find a mutually agreeable solution to this question so that lay ministers are treated equitably across the team.

The PCC have also been working on clarifying our employment policies and we are in the process of making sure that all the staff employed in the parish are on equitable terms with each other. All our staff need appropriate policies to guide them and their management. This year the parish has adopted a new maternity policy and a pay policy. I would like to Mike Leeson, one of our parish wardens for his work on this.

The proposal of one of the lay members of the team about exploring adopting a new IT system across the team has led to two of the four churches, St Mary's and St Mark's working together on this. I think that it is a project that has great potential both to enhance the mission and ministry of the team and to make our administrative systems more efficient. It is a complex subject and I am very grateful that St Mary's new Associate Vicar, The Revd Nils Bersweden has agreed to take the lead on it. It is also timely as a new system also gives us an opportunity to review the way we manage and use people's information to makes sure that we are compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulations which come into force at the end of May.

I am intending to bring proposals on actions to implement it to the next PCC meeting and I am confident that we will be moving in the right direction as a parish and that our congregations will be able to feel confident in trusting us with their data.

Yunghee has been functioning as Parish Curate since the beginning of July 2017. She spends two Sundays a month in the wider team, while being based at St Mary's. I hope you are all getting to know her and are supporting her in her ministry. She is also beginning to get involved in projects in the wider parish and I hope that before her curacy ends she will have contributed towards at least one project in each of the team churches. My concern is that moving around between churches so much is making it more difficult for her to feel established in her ministry and in any of our churches. I am very grateful to her for pioneering this new style of curacy in the team, but we will need to reflect together on how it is working both for her and for the parish. It may be that as we reflect on our experience we will need to adjust the model in the future.

I am pleased to report that Jane Johnston has settled well into her new role as Parish Operations Manager and her appointment has now been confirmed as a permanent one.

In some ways I feel that we have not got very far in the primary goal that I set of discerning the purpose and direction of the parish, indeed it seems more complex and opaque now than it did when I first arrived. However, as I take stock of the last year I can see that there has been a significant amount of good will, a deepening of relationships and much that we have learned.

I think that we are in a good position to take forward thinking together about those essential questions of purpose and direction, but I am not sure how to do that. I do think that it needs to involve prayer and worship together, because that is what makes us the Church. However, beyond that, I am looking forward to thinking with you on how exactly we take the next steps forward and to discovering together what our vocation is and who we are.

Thank you for your part in our life together and for all you contribute to the team.

The Revd Mandy Hodgson  
25<sup>th</sup> April 2018