

The Parish of Chorley Saint Laurence  
*In the Church of England Diocese of Blackburn*



**Desiring the desire for Mission**  
*a discussion document for the PCC*

**Advent 2018**

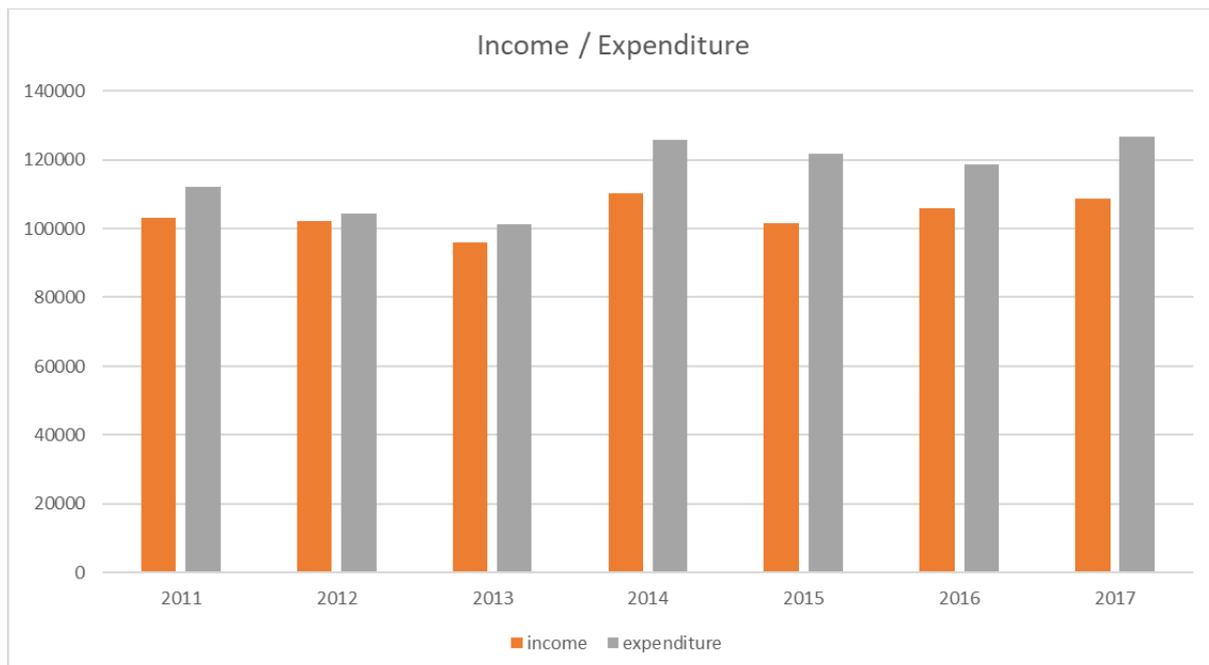


## Introduction and context

When he was Archbishop of Canterbury, near the start of the new millennium, Dr. Rowan Williams spoke about how the Church of England faced opportunity and anxiety in equal measure. The same is true some years on, and certainly true of us at St. Laurence's. With the close partnership of Church and School we are fortunate to have immediate growth potential, something that would definitely elude us if our church school ever ceased to be. We have opportunities for growth handed to us on a plate unlike every other parish I've served where connections with those who didn't come to church were much harder to identify, establish and maintain. This means that we probably buck the trend in St. Laurence's both locally and nationally with regard to the current decline in the Church of England. That said, it is not difficult to predict what future patterns will look like based on the data that is readily available, even if they may take a while to reach us. The latest statistics from the Church of England can be found following this link <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/2017StatisticsForMission.pdf> The Church of England's report *From Anecdote to Evidence* is an interesting read and makes some pertinent points about growth and churches that are intentional about growth (<http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/FromAnecdoteToEvidence1.o.pdf>).

## Here and now

Back to our own setting, it's true to say that the latest Quinquennial Inspection Report (QIR) not only gives us much-needed detail about what financial resources will need to be spent on our building over the next 5 years or so, it also raises huge challenges to our fundamental understanding of mission and ministry. So it may be true to say that St. Laurence's Chorley stands at a crucial junction! One path could lead us to slowly winding down a building we can no longer afford based on the pattern of income and expenditure shown below.



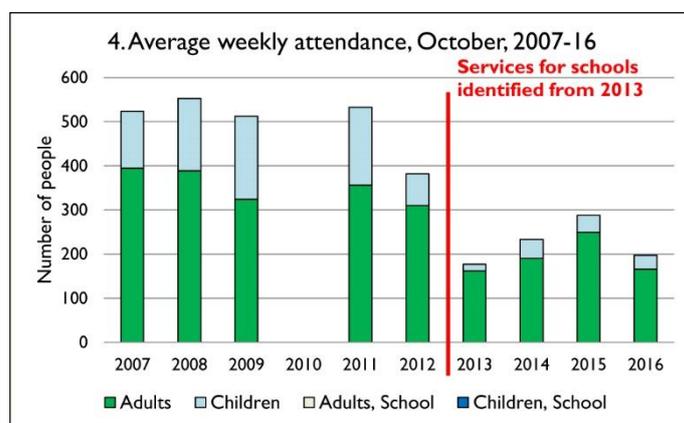
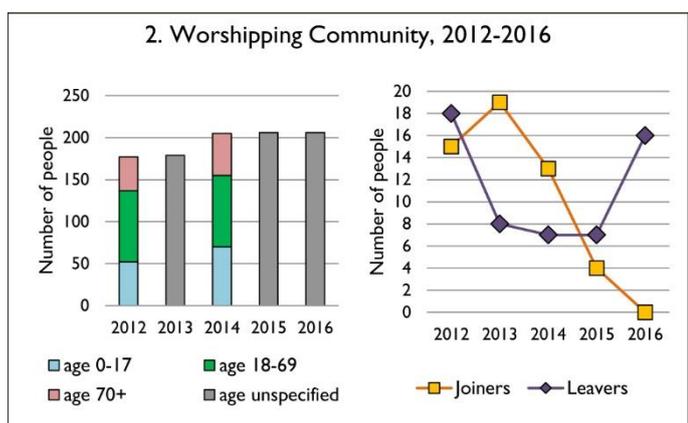
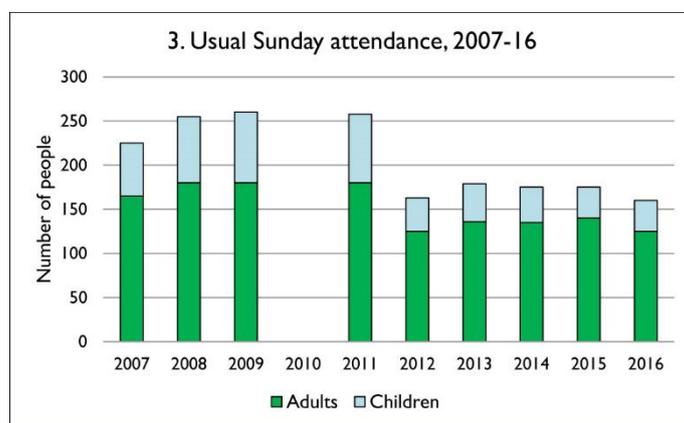
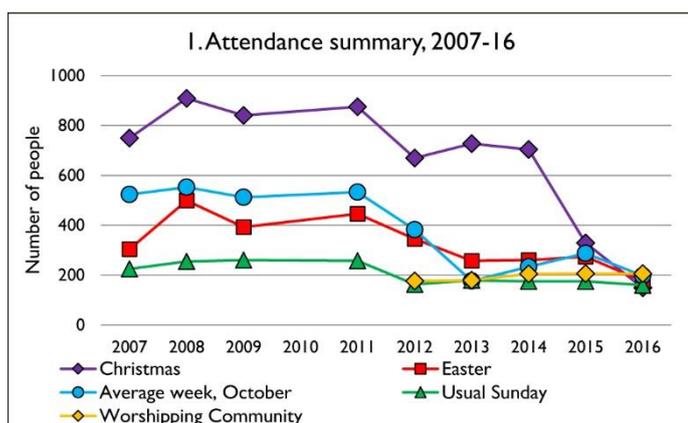
A second potential path is to carry on as if the problem isn't there – burying our corporate head in the sand. The fact that many have said "oh we've been here before" is deeply worrying even if it is true. Does that mean we have to accept this as the 'norm' at St. Laurence's? We have only avoided insolvency earlier this year by spending money earmarked for charities and by using a legacy for day to day costs. If we've been there before, what strategies were put in place then to ensure we didn't return to financial crisis mode?

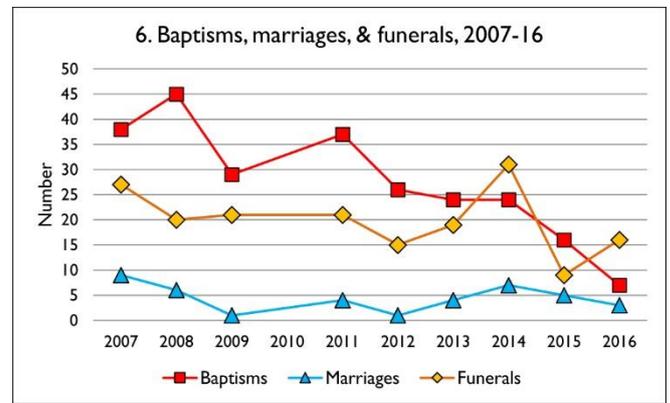
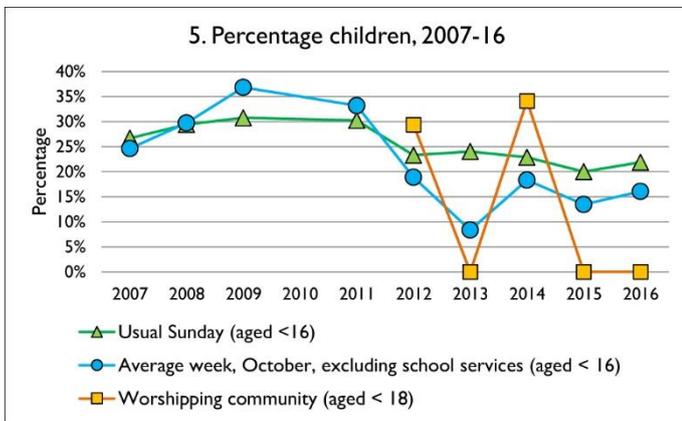
A third path is open to us, that of trying to engage with a proper strategy for growth in all areas – spiritual, numerical and financial - will hopefully not just take us out of the financial crisis but place us on a firmer footing to try and ensure that we are guided by a healthy desire for mission.



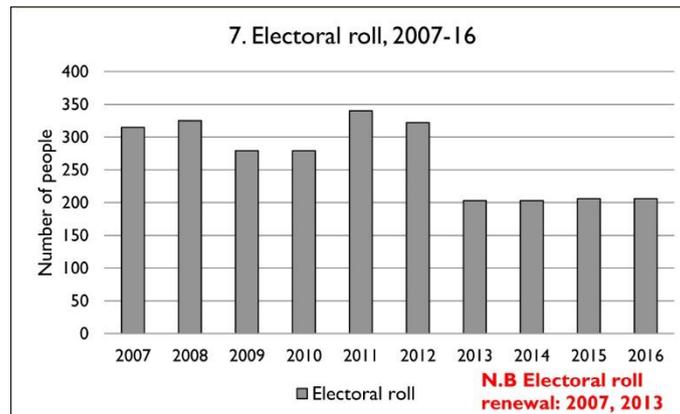
As I said on more than one occasion when preaching during the Stewardship Campaign in Lent, I have never believed that our current financial crisis was about finance. It was about a crisis of identity and a crisis of confidence in who we are and what our role in the community is.

The crisis of confidence may be explained to some degree using the data available on the Diocesan website:





One of the first questions I asked after my Induction was where the database was that contained details of all our church members. I was told we didn't have one – but we did have the Electoral Roll (that document viewed with suspicion by all C of E parishes because of our fears that the higher the roll the larger the parish share!). Consequently between 2013 and 2017 only 4 people were added to the Electoral Roll at St. Laurence's. Yet, over a period of 3 Sundays in November 2017, some 70 regular worshippers filled in forms for the database whose names have never featured anywhere and therefore we had never seen these people as 'belonging'.



I'm sure that a renewed emphasis on helping people feel they belong to St. Laurence's was one of the key factors in the highly successful Stewardship Campaign that took place in Lent. Whilst some churches assert that belief is required before belonging, many of us are firmly of the opinion that a sense of belonging comes first, and from that flows a journey of faith-exploration. Asking the congregation during the sermon "do you feel you are a host or a guest" elicited some interesting responses in the discussions that took place in the sermon slot!

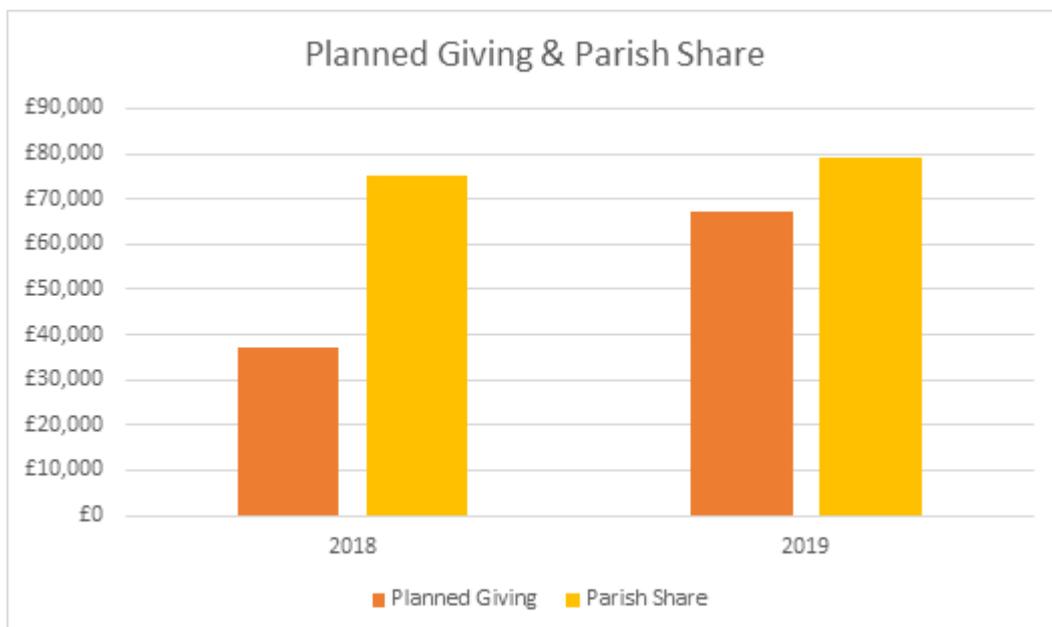


It's very important that, amidst all the challenges that are presented (particularly in financial terms) we don't lose sight of some great achievements in 2018.

1. At the start of 2018 we anticipated an operational deficit of some £40k. As you will see, towards the end of this year we will end with a small surplus. Thanks be to God!



2. I've always believed it to be vitally important that, as much as possible, a parish ought to be able to meet its Parish Share from planned giving. Here you will see how much progress has been made in this area looking to the 2019 budget. This is a phenomenal step in the right direction. Again, thanks be to God!



***If you want to build a ship, don't summon people to buy wood, prepare tools, distribute jobs and organize the work, rather teach them to yearn for the wide, boundless ocean.***

*(Antoine de Saint-Exupery, The Little Prince)*

Key to being in a place where we can begin to formulate a Mission Action Plan (MAP) should be a yearning for the wide, boundless ocean which we call God's Kingdom. Our starting point shouldn't therefore be money, attendance figures or clever ideas, but a personal awareness in each of us of the amazing God we worship and serve. We need to be passionate about the Kingdom, and not so much concerned with our own bricks and mortar!

We currently have no strategy for numerical growth and the fact we are relatively full on a Sunday probably leads many to believe that "we're alright." We are supported well by children from church schools but we have no effective ministry to the non-church schools in the parish or engagement with them. Our church building (and associated space) is reasonably limited (we can't build out in any direction) which suggests that serious numerical growth will only come about with two principal Sunday services at say, 0930 and 1100, with the same provision offered at both. Or it may be we explore a main service on Saturday at 1700 in addition to our 1000 service. Sunday is no longer the day of rest it used to be – many of our young people are heavily involved in sports activities and we don't want them to grow up resenting the church because the only time we offered for worship was one that competed with so many other things. We need to be prepared to think 'outside the box' as many other churches have done.

## **The desires we have already expressed**

### **Our Opportunities** *as expressed in the Parish Profile of 2017*

- Though we have a lot going for us as a parish, we recognise that there is more that we can do on Astley Village and in new housing developments
- We are open to change and new ideas and look forward to working with an incumbent who can drive change forward
- Revisit our parish mission action plan and refresh our networking scheme
- More involvement of children and young people in our services
- Though we have always met our parish share, our financial position is quite tight and further education is needed on giving levels. We recently ran a mini stewardship campaign which had a modicum of success
- We are open to the idea of exploring new technology for use in our services
- An increase in the numbers for our Bible study group and introduction of more courses
- We need to be more pro-active in implementing strategies to address the issues above

## Building our Church on solid rock rather than sand

The PCC at its October meeting chose in effect to pursue a path which entails a proper strategy for growth in all its forms. We spoke in September about the things we need to address in order to place our church on a firm foundation going forward. We said that to build our church on rock requires us to:

1. Seek to mend broken relationships
2. Seek to model a way of life which honours God and commends Him to others
3. Take our own discipleship seriously.
4. Re-visit our Monday to Saturday ministry
5. Use PCC meetings as part of our discipleship learning
6. Speculate to accumulate

## Unpacking what this means

### 1. Seek to mend broken relationships.

As part of spiritual growth this will necessitate an exploration of how we heal some wounded history and seek external help for the spiritual battles which seem to have been present for some decades now. And if financial growth is to be achieved this will come about in part as the church experiences reconciliation and healing and therefore becomes a more attractive church for people to join. We are fortunate that a retired Bishop with much experience, Bishop Cyril Ashton, has indicated his willingness to help us in this area with the encouragement of the Diocese. It is often good to have an external consultant; clergy and laity can become so emotionally attached to places and people that it is sometimes difficult to see things objectively. We look forward to exploring the help, wisdom and assistance that Bishop Cyril may be able to bring to us.

### 2. Seek to model a way of life which honours God and commends Him to others.

This may well be the biggest of all the challenges, perhaps even bigger than the financial challenges. We need to work more on setting an example re "time and place" (some conversations are definitely not appropriate to the "time and place" and we need a greater awareness of this, particularly on Sundays). We need to use Church "properly" i.e. to build relationships and not moan about one another! We need to learn how to be more welcoming rather than friendly and we have already spoken of the need to cultivate a "zero-tolerance approach to gossip"

When our lives are filled with grace, the way we relate to each other changes. We see people in a different light, even those who do not share our views and values! In 2019 we are seeking to have a "Year of Grace" where an awareness of God's grace can be encouraged as often as possible. This may help us to see disagreements and differences in a new light too and we hope to find ways of being able to celebrate more positively and creatively the differences which make each one of us the unique person God has created.

### **3. Take our own discipleship seriously**

The time spent focussing on finance can be draining and we can easily find we've lost sight of why we are here in the first place! In 2019 we will intentionally use our PCC meetings as an opportunity to do some faith-sharing and discipleship so that, as the Church's elected leadership, we are able to have an holistic approach to everything we do. In his excellent book "Reignite", Ian Parkinson (Regional Director of New Wine) illustrates how the leadership of his church changed direction significantly by 'upping the ante' in his PCC. If we are to lead a congregation in spiritual growth we have to be seen to be committed to that ourselves first.

### **4. Re-visit our Monday-Saturday ministry**

Like many prominent Town, Civic and Minster churches, this is an area with boundless possibilities. We are currently open on Tuesday and Friday for visitors with refreshments served in the Refectory; this is done by an amazingly committed team of people. This is an area that could be developed further by additional openings on Monday and Thursday. This would require a proper desire for true Christian hospitality (not just selling food) which included some pastoral ministry too. More human resources would be needed so that we had 4 interchangeable teams for each day, a proper welcome ministry and an intentional ministry of companions and befrienders. In addition to this the church could be publicised more as a place of prayer and reflection with audio-guides (particularly important as we approach the Myles Standish anniversary) and printed guide books, as well as encouraging church to be a place of stillness and reflection. A good-quality merchandise stand could also help to generate more income. Chorley Council have already pledged their support in helping to raise the profile of St. Laurence's as a tourist destination and this is something I believe we should welcome.

If our ministry develops in this way we may want to consider other lunchtime (1215) services (whether Eucharist or Middy Prayer) so that there is always an opportunity for prayer and worship when we open our doors midweek.

Given the huge financial deficit we will face if we attend to the required buildings works, an alternative may have to be to explore renting out the refectory commercially Monday-Friday (at present we cannot rule out anything that may generate significantly more income), but a better use of the this resource would be a properly focussed ministry of hospitality as the previous paragraph suggests.

### **5. Using PCC meetings as part of our discipleship learning**

As well as finance-raising we need to be faith-growing PCC members; please see (3) above

### **6. Speculate to accumulate**

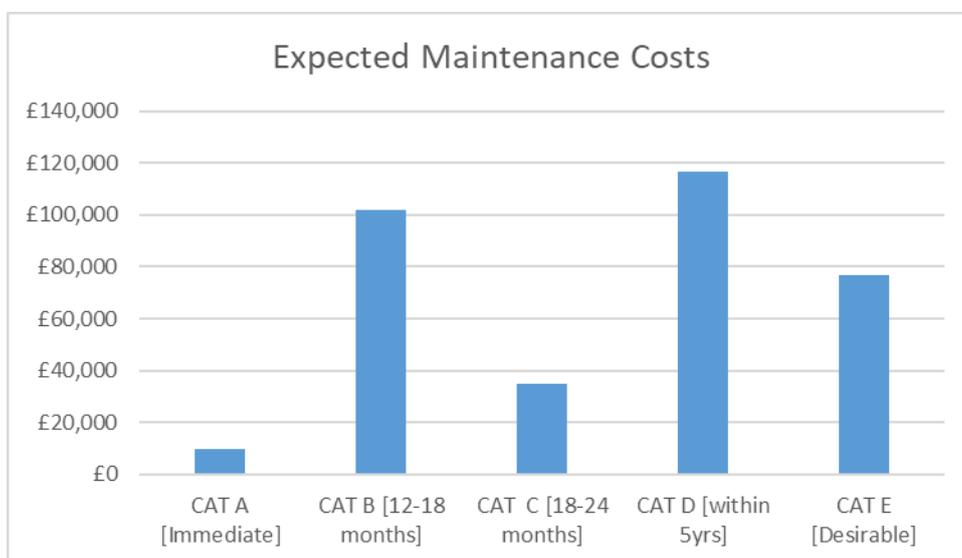
This will be an area of life most people will find impossible as many believe that significant change and turn-around can be done on the cheap or by spending nothing at all! But major changes will be required if we are to work towards St. Laurence's church building making a significant contribution to future income generation. Some possibilities are:

- I. The addition of a drop-down screen and projector fixed to the ceiling would mean the refectory is a desirable meeting space for renting – the current arrangement of projector and stand placed on the floor effectively takes out one third of the space that can be utilised and therefore minimises potential for small groups and business to use our facilities which are otherwise good.

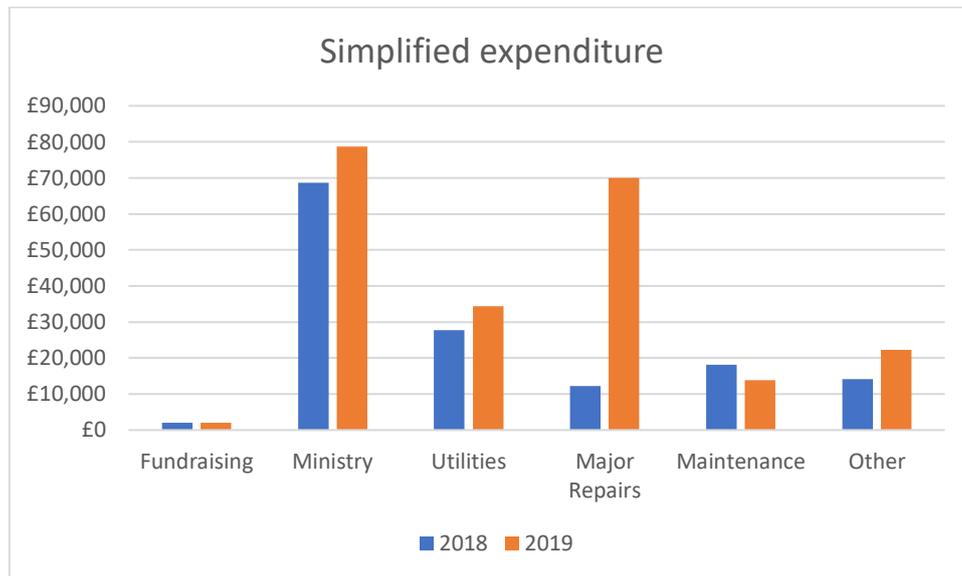
- II. Explore replacing the current 'gents' toilet with the provision of a lift in order to facilitate access to the Upper Room. That area, whilst it is a good meeting space, is currently only accessible to people who have no mobility issues. If we are working towards being a more inclusive church then our building needs to demonstrate that. We also need to be able to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act if our church building is to have wide appeal. This may be one project that the newly-formed Friends of St. Laurence's could take forward, though as with many an exciting scheme, a lot depends on the human resources available to undertake the work required in order to secure funding and grants.
- III. As we re-think our administrative structures so that they serve the needs of the church going forward, rather than basing them on 20 years ago, we may well discover that our current office spaces need rethinking. As more human resources are needed to cope with the increased workload and income generation, the PCC may wish to designate the Standish Room as an 'admin hub' with up to 8 desks for who need to work on a regular basis (Rector, Curate, Reader, Administrator, Rector's PA/Secretary) as well as all those who may be giving significant amounts of voluntary time (Friends of St. Laurence's, Events co-ordinator, Fundraiser, concerts admin, Publicity officers). We would also need a working space for any youth workers we may engage.

## More facts and figures

The graphs show the amount of money we might expect to spend on the building alone over the next five-year period, based on the findings of our architect's report.



You can see here just how much of an increase is required on major repairs in 2019 compared to this year:



People say that the priorities of any Christian are seen by the contents of their bank statements! By the same token a church that is serious about mission and evangelism will demonstrate this by their budget. In 2018 there was no provision made for mission and evangelism in the budget. That needs to change in 2019 if we are to avoid simply managing a financial crisis year on year to, literally, keep the roof on.

It's also important that we look closely at the church's attitude to finance and we might be helped in this by addressing these questions:

- *Do we preach and encourage sacrificial giving?*
- *Are people invited to consider finance in the context of discipleship?*
- *Are we able to set a budget and operate within it?*
- *Have we a long-term strategy concerning finance or do we live 'hand to mouth'?*
- *Is finance serving our mission or disabling it?*

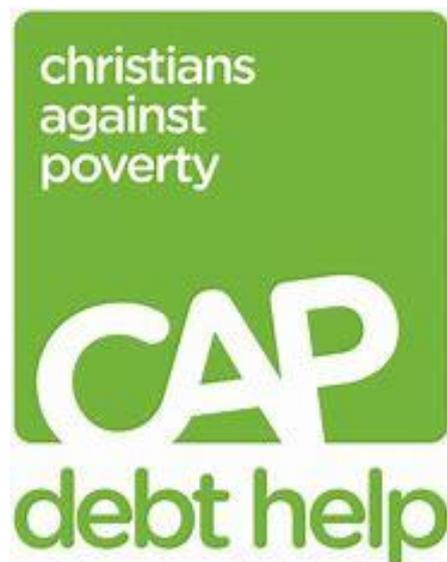
# Friends & Partners!

Through the hard work of Michael Welsh and a team of people working closely with him, we are near to launching the **Friends of St. Laurence's** as a company limited by guarantee. This is an amazing achievement in a relatively small amount of time. This has come about as we realise that the financial resources needed over the next decades will almost certainly be beyond the capacity of the PCC and congregation alone. This may be particularly so when we consider certain projects that may not been seen as 'core costs' but we would wish to see as vital. An example of this might be the £100k we are certain will be needing to be spent on the organ over the next 10 years.

The Friends' have successfully recruited two people to volunteer roles in order to take the work of the Friends' forward. This has resulted in two appointments - **Volunteer, Social Media and Website Management** and **Volunteer, Social Media and Website operations**.

I believe that the PCC needs to explore recruiting for two further posts – Volunteer, **Events co-ordinator** and Volunteer, **Fund-raiser**. We are currently blessed to have a number of individuals who are taking the lead on specific events. But as we develop our events, together with the need for more substantial income-generation events, this work will become significant and someone will need to have the strategic oversight of everything that takes place. That person can no longer be the Rector!

A PCC fundraiser may be necessary in order to help the PCC to realise any financial strategy it may attempt to formulate. If such a volunteer cannot be found then we may wish to explore some financial remuneration based on a % of income generated. It's important for us to remember that the Friends of St. Laurence's is not the financial equivalent of a "get out of jail free" card!



This very important agency has branches in many parts of Lancashire but not one currently in Chorley. We may wish to explore partnering with them with the current parish office used as a space to house them. To view the CAP Debt Centre information brochure please [click here](#). To view a helpful video which highlights some of the key areas in a CAP Debt Centre please [click here](#).



Our recent Vision Day showed that we are a congregation which is able to see the bigger picture and is prepared to take risks. This is the first and most important starting point and is very exciting indeed.

With the presentation about the Pais interns we were made aware what could be achieved with the resources of gap-year students who could potentially work with us on our engagement with young people

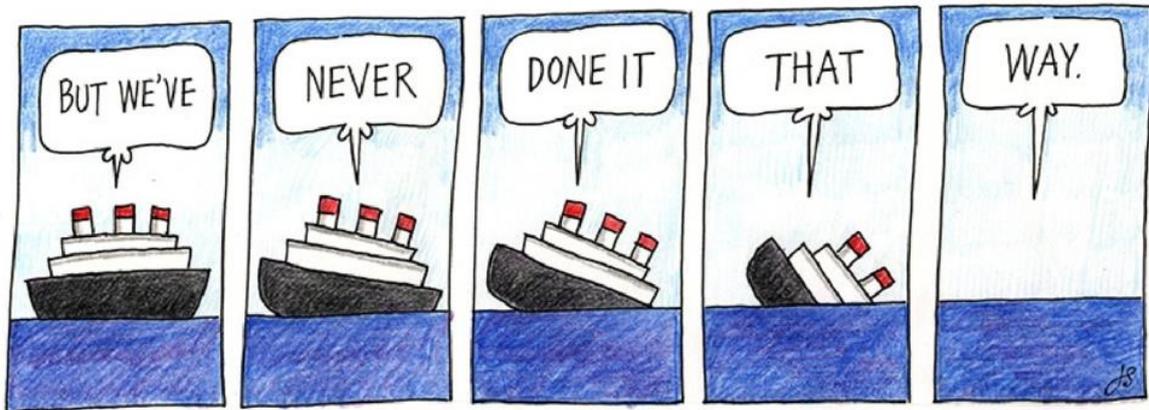
in the parish in so many different ways. This will require us to create an exciting new budget heading for 2019 – Mission and Evangelism. There would need to be the desire and willingness of our own members to invest their time and gifts in ministry to young people – paid interns wouldn't do all the work for us – but they would partner with us and help us to find confidence and new ways in reaching out more effectively to young people in our parish.

We will be challenged to find financial resources to enable this to happen – but where will we be if we don't? There may be members of our own congregation who would be willing to act as hosts for the interns.



Following on from the reference above to human resources, the PCC will need to decide what paid resources we need for our future plan and we also need to recruit given the vacancy in the Parish Office. We've added in some fairly major pieces of work in the last 12 months (a proper hall/room bookings system with dedicated email address, the production of a consolidated rota for Sunday morning duties as well as the introduction of a large number of fund-raising initiatives). We are blessed with a number of very capable people who are voluntarily placing their time and gifts at the disposal of the church, for which we are enormously grateful. I have also found this past year particularly difficult as in my last parishes I always had the services of a PA/secretary for some 10-12 hours a week *in addition* to a Parish Administrator who had a quite separate workload. My suggestion to the PCC is that we re-define some of the admin roles and seek to appoint a Rector's PA for 10 hours a week and a Parish Administrator for 10 hours a week whose primary role is the strategic oversight of the voluntary administration that is being done, coupled with any tasks where finding volunteers is impossible and we therefore recognise the need to pay someone to do them. We may need to review this as the year progresses and as we know more detailed costs about the revenue we will need to generate in 2019.

We perhaps also need a review of PCC sub-groups and committees; are they functioning in a healthy way and as we need them to do? Currently some are very much lay-led (and do not require anything from me at all), others are more dependant on input from the Rector, which is probably not a healthy way of operating long-term.



There is most certainly a fear of change among some at St. Laurence's. As humans, we're all made differently. What may seem exciting for one is fearful for another. But we have to be honest and ask if the way we have been doing things is actually taking us forward or whether it has been part of the reason we find ourselves in the current crisis.



During this past year we have experienced phenomenal growth in many areas. But there have also been tensions and conflicts that have arisen as a result of change. This is largely because, whilst many parishes can be ambitious in identifying areas of parish life that need to be addressed, what most PCCs fail to do during a vacancy is to identify what new resources will be required to bring vision to reality; the other main thing overlooked by most parishes is asking the question "if we achieve what we have stated, how will the church *feel*?" Unless we are ready for church to feel different when developments take place, then tensions will continue to arise because we haven't thought through what will happen if our prayers are answered! It's almost as if we offer the prayers but not expecting them to be granted. When they are, we're not ready for it! Proper planning for the future will include an awareness of the cost of change involved.

## Where's the strategy for spiritual growth?

Spiritual growth is always far more difficult to quantify than financial or numerical growth. For one, how is spiritual growth measured? The Diocese of Liverpool have recently launched a "Rule of Life" initiative (<http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/Called-to-Pray---Bishop-Paul-on-the-Rule-of-Life>) and our own diocese is majoring on discipleship during 2019. Perhaps we need to be working towards some 'rule of life' for every member of St. Laurence's congregation. We already have a number of spiritual growth events planned for 2019 which include quiet days, talks and pilgrimage. We have already discussed the need for

PCC members to grow in their discipleship and as a result of PCC members meeting in small groups earlier this Autumn there has been a desire for some prayer partner teams to be established. This is something we may want to encourage the whole congregation to be part of.

We are fortunate to have a Prayer and Spirituality Group firmly established who are working on some practical ways members can grow in faith. We have established a second house group, Pilgrim courses and from 2019 a regular monthly service of Healing and Wholeness. A strong presence from the Cursillo community also contributes very positively to the spiritual life of our congregation. I'd like to think that we are not a church seeking to nail its colours to one particular brand of churchmanship, but, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, willing to embrace all that is good in the many different church styles that exist.

Although we have now introduced a monthly Sunday Sanctuary service (contemplative prayer/Taize/Plainsong Compline) the church building itself is only used for worship Monday-Saturday on average for 4 hours (2.7% of the week).

## A Church in dry dock, or on the move?



The danger is that our conversations revolve around what is needed for the building without a true understanding of what our building should help us to achieve beyond its four walls. As Archbishop William Temple once said "the Church of England is the only organisation that exists for those who are not its members." A proper engagement with the community around us, and a desire to serve their needs, will enable our ship to be used effectively to reach more people with the love of God and the Good News of the gospel. Such a turnaround will mean that church no longer feels the same – if our focus is more on those outside than inside, it cannot possibly feel the same. It is a voyage of discovery, discovering what God is doing in His world and joining in with it.

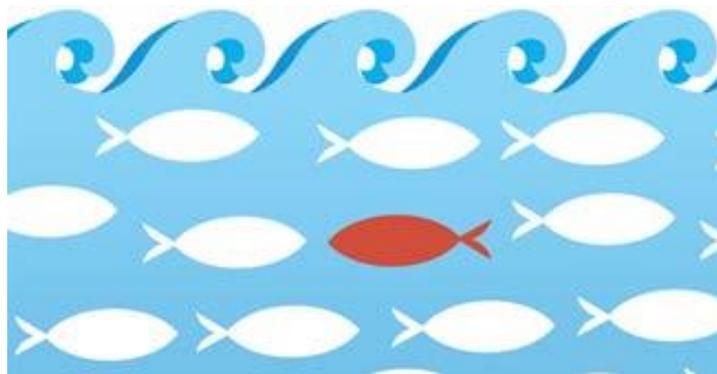


Many of us are acquainted with the phrase “rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic!” Churches can often be very good at this. That is to say, we find it easy to talk about the small detail which is insignificant whilst overlooking the more pressing and real issues. I experienced this at my first PCC meeting after ordination in 1991 when we spent half an hour debating whether the parish magazine should have one or two staples in it!

We need to ensure that our conversations going forward are connected to the growing of the Kingdom and not akin to rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic! So, for example, it might be our response is “but where would we keep the stapler and rubber bands if we rearranged the Standish Room” whereas we need to ask the questions about what the future of St. Laurence’s will look like if we do not embrace these significant changes in our structure and outlook! Titanic questions will always be easier to deal with, but Kingdom questions will be what ensures we are here for the next generation as well as the current generation.

## In conclusion

On first reading, much of this may seem impossible and beyond us. Have we left all this too late and are we desperately trying to swim against the tide?



There is much we have to take on board which pertains to the current generation we find ourselves in and we cannot ignore the culture and context of 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain:

- Stress and anxiety features in more homes and families than ever before. People simply do not have time to commit to more jumble sales and coffee mornings!
- Large numbers of adults and children live with depression. According to the Mental Health Foundation, nearly one in 10 children and young people aged five to 16 are affected by a mental health

problem. Survival is the name of the game for many families – we need not to be adding to their pressures.

- The current financial climate does not suggest that things will miraculously improve in the short term, if at all. We're seeking the financially impossible (whilst remembering that nothing is impossible with God!) and we do not have our own default position of good financial health on which to build.
- The trend of newly-retired people relocating nearer family members in order to provide child-care is ever increasing – churches no longer have the large numbers of 'recently retired' professionals with time to spare who will take on major chunks of work voluntarily.

We mustn't look at figures for 2019 in isolation – we have to taken into account our past history and the need for a strategic approach knowing the expenditure we can expect over the next 5 to 10 years.

It's no coincidence that many of these images feature water! It is our baptismal calling to "go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News" (Matthew 28:19). This is why I believe that we *have* to embrace a radically new and bigger way of operating. If we don't, we will find ourselves coming back to these financial crises every few years; of that I am certain. The financial data at our disposal will bear that out. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to launch ourselves onto the wide open waters with a renewed focus on worship, mission, hospitality, evangelism and community engagement. Anything less than that will cripple current resources and will be very short-lived. I commend this paper to the PCC for their prayer, deliberation and action.

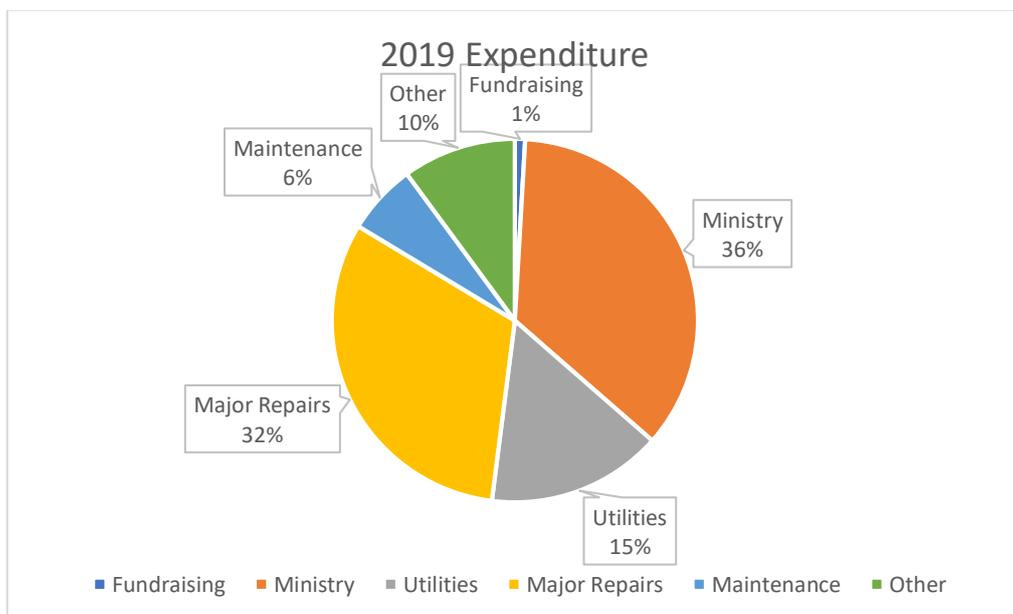
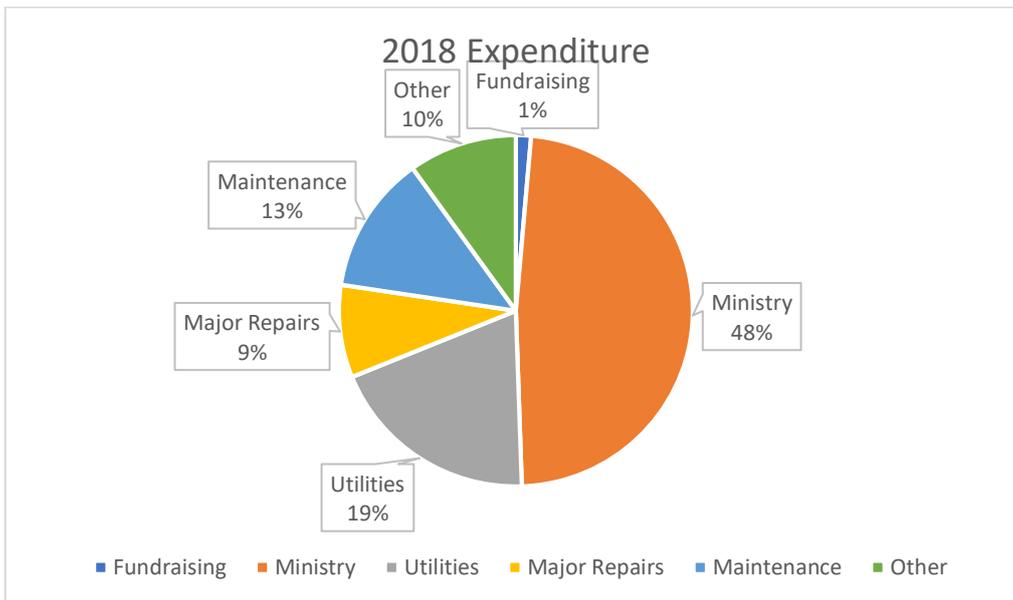
*Neil Kelley*

*Advent 2018*

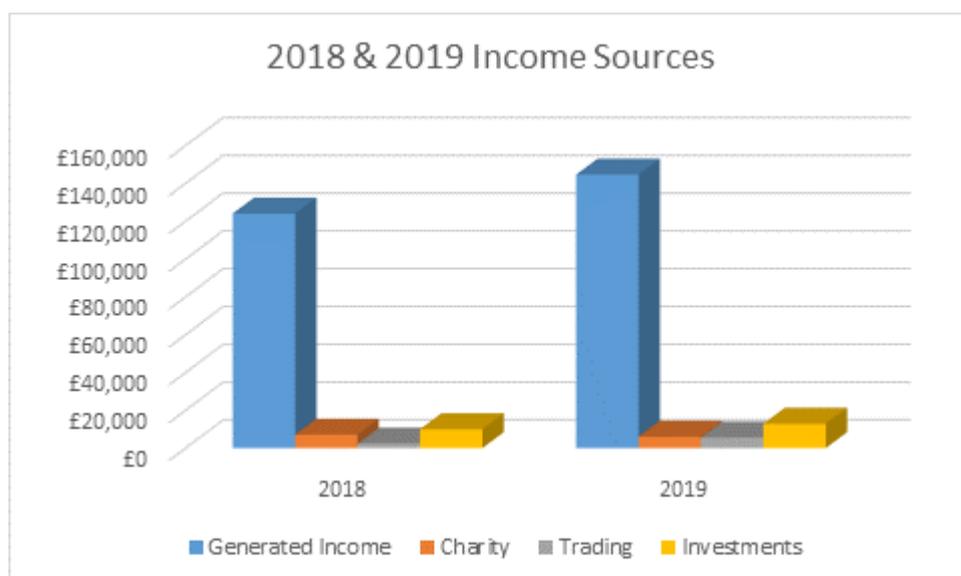
Heavenly Father, we embrace  
Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses and to grow leaders.  
Give us the eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit  
and courage to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.  
**Amen**



## Appendix 1



In the chart below, **generated income** refers to planned giving, fundraising and events, hospitality and church/room hire as well as other miscellaneous sources of income



## Appendix 2 – Marks of a healthy church (PCC January 2018)

### Mark 1: Are we energised by faith

6/10

*rather than just keeping things going or trying to survive*

- *worship and sacramental life*: move people to experience God's love
- *motivation*: energy comes from a desire to serve God and one another
- *engages with Scripture*: in creative ways that connect with life
- *nurtures faith in Christ*: helping people to grow in, and share, their faith

### Mark 2: Do we have an outward-looking focus

5/10

*with a "whole life" rather than a "church life" concern*

- *deeply rooted in the local community, working in partnership with other denominations, faiths, secular groups and networks*
- *passionate and prophetic about justice and peace, locally and globally*
- *makes connections between faith and daily living*
- *responds to human need by loving service*

### Mark 3: Do we seek to find out what God wants

4/10

*discerning the Spirit's leading rather than trying to please everyone*

- *vocation*: seeks to explore what God wants it to be and do
- *vision*: develops and communicates a shared sense of where it is going
- *mission priorities*: consciously sets both immediate and long-term goals
- *able to call for, and make, sacrifices, personal and corporate, in bringing about the above and living out the faith.*

### Mark 4: Do we face the cost of change and growth

5/10

*rather than resisting change and fearing failure*

- *while embracing the past, it dares to take on new ways of doing things*
- *takes risks*: admits when things are not working, and learns from experience
- *crises*: responds creatively to challenges that face the church and community
- *positive experiences of change*: however small, are affirmed and built on

### Mark 5: Do we operate as a community

6/10

*rather than functioning as a club or religious organisation*

- *relationships*: are nurtured, often in small groups, so that people feel accepted and are helped to grow in faith and service
- *leadership*: lay and ordained work as a team to develop locally appropriate expressions of all seven eight marks of a healthy church
- *lay ministry*: the different gifts, experiences and faith journeys of all are valued and given expression in and beyond the life of the church.

## Mark 6: Do we make room for all

4/10

*being inclusive rather than exclusive*

- *welcome*: works to include newcomers into the life of the church
- *children and young people*: are helped to belong, contribute and be nurtured in their faith
- *enquirers* are encouraged to explore and experience faith in Christ
- *diversities*: different social and ethnic backgrounds, mental and physical abilities, and ages, are seen as a strength.

(we ran out of time for the last two!)

## Mark 7: Do we do a few things and do them well

*Are we focused rather than frenetic*

- *does the basics well*: especially public worship, pastoral care, stewardship and administration
- *occasional offices*: make sense of life and communicate faith
- *being good news* as a church in its attitudes and ways of working
- *enjoys what it does* and is relaxed about what is not being done.

## Mark 8: Are we financially self-supporting

*'moving from maintenance to mission'*

- *Do we preach and encourage sacrificial giving?*
- *Are people invited to consider finance in the context of discipleship?*
- *Are we able to set a budget and operate within it?*
- *Have we a long-term strategy concerning finance or do we live 'hand to mouth'?*
- *Is finance serving our mission or disabling it?*

## Appendix 3

Vision Day November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018 - Comments and suggestions from those present.

### Precis and Summary of participants' comments

#### 1. What we wanted from the day.

A large proportion of contributions expressed a need for unity and harmony in the church. Words occurring frequently in this context were – peace, harmony, love, unity, reconciliation and understanding.

Most of these revealed a deep concern for the church community and its inner relationships and an awareness that all had not been well, and a yearning for inner change.

Quite a number of contributions were expressions of personal and individual need for growth, identity and a sense of belonging.

A line from the Bible passage used for the day “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” seemed to some to be very relevant and encouraging.

#### 2. Achievements of the past 12 months.

Most contributions recognized that there had been significant areas of growth and change. These ranged from a greater commitment of church members to worship and social life. Areas of fellowship, pastoral care, and greater variety in worship were also highlighted.

Partly because of some of these things, the church also seemed to be gaining a “higher profile” in the local community.

Significant also was a growing awareness and understanding of the financial situation in which the church finds itself and the implications of this for the future.

The importance of the admission of children to Holy Communion before Confirmation also provoked positive comment.

#### 3. Hopes for the Year ahead.

Some of these comments mirrored those expressed in Part One, but with an increased emphasis on how these hopes (especially those pertaining to young people and children) might find expression and how plans to fulfil them might be implemented. The presentation on “Pais” had made quite an impression and many saw this as one way of deepening our relationships with local schools, as well as contributing to the growth of our own young people.

Need for areas of “teaching” or exploration for existing as well as new church members, was expressed eg Alpha courses and groups for spiritual growth.

There might be a development of church leaders, including those who had special skills, such as administration,

Overall there was a concern for young people, a recognition that things must “move on” and maybe risks taken. There was expression of a need for spiritual growth for all ages, and a wider vision of the church in the community.

One comment summed up the feelings of many: “Leave past grievances behind and look forwards.”

## **Other information**

For more information about the context in which St. Laurence’s is set please see this link:

[https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/storage/general-files/shares/About%20us/Our%20Deaneries/Chorley/CHORLEY\\_530079\\_Chorley\\_St\\_Laurence.pdf](https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/storage/general-files/shares/About%20us/Our%20Deaneries/Chorley/CHORLEY_530079_Chorley_St_Laurence.pdf)

attendance statistics taken from the Diocesan website [https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/storage/general-files/shares/About%20us/Our%20Deaneries/Chorley/Parish%20dashboard%202016/CHORLEY\\_530079\\_Chorley\\_St\\_Laurence.pdf](https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/storage/general-files/shares/About%20us/Our%20Deaneries/Chorley/Parish%20dashboard%202016/CHORLEY_530079_Chorley_St_Laurence.pdf)