

# WHITLEY ST. HELEN'S P.C.C.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The 2020 Accounts to 31st December show a slight decline compared with the previous year. While collections show a decrease of around 42%, Planned Giving increased by 27% while donations show a large increase of 241%. Gift Aid recovered decreased by 9% while receipts from fund raising were down by 96%. Church activities (mainly weddings and funerals) at £2,041 show a decrease of £583 but this figure does fluctuate from year to year. Total receipts amounted to £23,409 compared with £25,692 while total payments were slightly down at £23,191 compared with £24,063 for 2019. This shows a modest surplus for the year of £219.

The world has of course been turned upside down by the unwelcome arrival of the Coronavirus pandemic and the start of multiple lockdowns and restrictions from the end of March 2020. This led to complete closure of the Church for services for a number of weeks before the Church was able to reopen for the small number of people who felt able to attend services. The pandemic has therefore resulted in a steep decline in collections at services and also in fund raising activities.

At the onset of the restrictions we appealed to regular members of the congregation to give what they would have done if services had been held on a normal basis throughout the restrictions. This was only moderately successful. Some have done so but a lot did not. The upshot has been that we have been very dependent on the generosity of a small number of donors to whom I would pay a fulsome tribute and particularly here to our Vicar Andrew, who from his modest clergy stipend was one of the most generous givers. Moreover through his good offices in supporting the bereaved who had lost loved ones both in the parish and in the hospital the result has been that families of the bereaved have made some generous donations to the Church.

While it is quite understandable that those who have been badly affected financially by the pandemic are in no position to give to the Church, to others who are not and are more affluent, I would invite you to ask yourselves two questions: do you want St. Helen's to be able to continue to fulfil the function it has done for centuries and if so, can you do more to support it better? Secondly, is it reasonable to expect the Church to rely on the generosity of a very small number of regular donors? In this regard, while acknowledging the welcome increase in Planned Giving in the year, I would repeat my regular mantra of previous years that compared with other similar local parishes, we still have a low number of people who have been prepared to commit to give to the Church on a regular basis.

On a positive note, we have been successful in obtaining two grants from Northumberland County Council amounting to some £3,500 which will be of significant assistance in the current year and I would like to thank Claire Bradley for her sterling work in successfully applying for these. Such grants will certainly be a lifeline during the continuance of the pandemic restrictions but not thereafter of course.

D.J.M. Wilson  
Hon. Treasurer