



The Parish of Upper Stour

Looking to God, Looking to Care, Looking to Grow

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Dear Members of Upper Stour

APCM Postponed

At this time of year, the church normally meets for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). This is when there is an opportunity for the church to present its Annual Report, elect members of the PCC and Deanery Synod Members and appoint the Independent Examiner for 2020. The APCM will obviously be delayed this year because of Covid 19 and a revised date will be announced in due course. While we must wait to report, appoint and elect until the later APCM, this letter is a chance to inform you all about the delay in holding the APCM, and to inform you about the church's financial position. If you wish to see a copy of the Independently Examined Accounts for 2019 which have been approved by the PCC, they are available online on our website www.upperstour.co.uk/apcm2019.

In the run up to every APCM the Electoral Roll is revised – this year we had started the revision before the isolation began. Having consulted the Salisbury Diocesan Registry, we have completed the revision of the 2020 Electoral Roll which has been placed in the porch of St Martin's Zeals for inspection. The roll is now closed to new additions until after the APCM - whenever that may be.

Position for 2019

At the moment, the accounts for 2019 have been signed off by the Independent Examiner and approved by the PCC. The bad news is that our finances are not in a strong position, and if 2020 continues with the lockdown, the situation will get worse.

The table below sets out the cash position for the designated and unrestricted funds of the parish (i.e. money in the bank free for the PCC to use for the running of the parish) at the end of 2018 and 2019 and the surpluses (in black) and the deficits (in red) in 2019.

	2018 End Year Cash	2019 Surplus/ Deficit £	2019 End Year Cash £
Bourton	2,587	-1,783	804
Kilmington	93,355	-55,475	37,880
Stourton	1,293	1,709	3,002
Zeals	19,309	-1,008	18,301
PCC	15,617	-3,922	11,694
TOTAL	132,161	-60,479	71,681

The surplus or deficits above have been calculated as the difference between the donations and other income received by the local church and the expenditure at that church, which is principally the cost of

utilities, insurance, and their contribution to the Diocesan share. The situation at Kilmington was unusual as over £60,000 was spent on repairs to the church building.

The important point that we would wish to highlight is the very limited cash in each of the local church bank accounts and in the PCC bank account at the end of 2019. So that if nothing changes, we will struggle in 2020 to meet all our costs and in particular we will struggle to pay our Diocesan Share.

Position for 2020

But 2020 is not going to be a normal year. In 2020 we will have very limited opportunities to fund raise. We will not be meeting in our weekly church services until the current ban is lifted so there will be a reduced income from our weekly service collections. We are unlikely to have any weddings so no fee income from that source. So the main source of income in 2020 is going to be the monthly standing order donations from members.

Put simply, it cost us about £86,000 to run the parish in 2019. If things continue as they are in 2020, making savings where we can and with some costs reduced because our churches are shut, this will probably reduce to around £73,000 this year.

But, whereas last year our total income was £88,000 so that we had a small surplus, we will not be able to match this income this year. The only way that we will be able to improve our finances will be if members are able to increase their personal contributions to the church.

If nothing changes, we are likely to have an income of around £47,000 which will mean that there will a deficit of £26,000 this year. This is based on an estimate set out below.

Upper Stour Parish Estimate 2020		
(£000s)		
	2020	2019
	Estimate	Actual
Expenses		
Diocesan Share	54	53
Clergy Expenses	1	4
Church Running Costs	12	16
Church utilities	5	6
Repairs	1	7
Total Expenses	73	86
Income		
Fundraising	5	28
Standing Orders inc gift aid	29	29
Other income (boxes)	2	10
Collections	6	12
Fees	4	8
Other	1	1
Total Income	47	88
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	-26	2

Where next?

In the Parish of Upper Stour, we provide a great resource to our communities. As a Christian Community we look to God, to grow, and to care. This works in a number of ways: through being there in people's many phases of life (weddings, baptisms, funerals); by providing a centre for our villages as a place for community; and by coming together as Christians to explore what it means to live a life of faith, hope and love. If Upper Stour is to continue as a strong and viable Christian community, we must attempt to reduce the estimated deficit in 2020 and to be able to plan to balance our books in future years. It would also be fantastic if we as a parish could be in a position where we could confidently raise money for other charitable causes, helping other charities in their work to strive for the common good.

We have a membership of about 100. At the moment the church receives regular donations from 49 members. It would be a wonderful situation if all members were able to contribute through a monthly standing order – particularly as we are currently not receiving any donations through the collection plate. The great benefit of a monthly standing order is that it enables a real sense of long-term commitment to the future of our church. If you can only afford £5 per month, be assured that any contribution would be much appreciated.

Thank you if you already contribute through a standing order. But in the current circumstances in which we find ourselves can you consider whether you can increase the amount that you already give?

Please call the Parish Office if you would like to discuss anything with me. If you would like to set up a standing order, Brian Martin has a form which you can use to complete to make a standing order. If you would like a form, please contact him on 01747 840433 or email him at thebourtoneagle@gmail.com

Through our worship, time and financial support, we all give of ourselves, and so as ever, thank you for all that you contribute to the parish already.

With our best wishes,

The Rev'd Ben Rundell-Evans (Priest in Charge) and Brian Martin (PCC Treasurer)