

Stewardship in 2007

Colin Bird, Church Treasurer

At the APCM in April last year I presented a budget for 2006 which envisaged a deficit of over £7,000 – nearly a third of our available cash reserves - primarily because of rising utility prices and higher than inflationary increases in the Diocesan Contribution to cover clergy pensions. So how have we done?

The answer is - really well!

We look to have broken even in 2006 – a result which has come about from the whole church combining to achieve a very satisfactory financial performance:-

- ✓ Our giving increased over 2005 by 10%
- ✓ The income from baptisms, weddings and funerals increased
- ✓ The Christmas Fayre beat budget
- ✓ Income from other events was up
- ✓ The magazine did well
- ✓ Soundbites did well
- ✓ Church hiring held up

On the costs front the utility bills came in well ahead of 2005, as expected, but were not quite as high as budgeted, mainly through efforts to keep the heating at a slightly lower temperature without creating a scream of protest.

The vacancy, somewhat perversely, reduces our costs because the Diocesan Contribution goes down as it is partly based on the costs of ministry. This helped us in the last quarter to restrict the expected rise in the Contribution and contributed to our financial result. At the same time our vacancy clergy team of Gerry and the Readers have shouldered the burden of most services so that we have not had to pay out much for visiting priests.

Overall, as a consequence of just about everyone's response, we broke even in 2006.

So, what about 2007?

The vacancy reduces our Diocesan contribution from a normal level of £53,000 to a budgeted £47,000. This means that we can break in 2007 if we can achieve an increase in giving of 7%.

You may remember the General Synod's recommendation in 1992 that we should aim to give 5% of take-home pay to and through the Church. We should individually reflect on whether we are approaching this, but whatever you do, please review your giving for 2007 as we will not be having a major stewardship campaign this year; nor do we want the new vicar to walk into a situation where we need an urgent infusion of money to cope with the increase Diocesan Contribution which will kick in when he or she arrives at All Saints!

CVM

CVM stands for Christian Vision for Men. An organisation based in Bath run on a shoe string budget that has the simple aim of 'Equipping the church to introduce every man in the UK to Jesus Christ'.

Two local initiatives have been organized. The first to improve communications is a '2 year pub crawl'. On the third Monday of every month guys will meet together in a different pub in Hertford, just for a modest sample of the fare on tap, (Feb.19th The Great Eastern, Railway St, then March 19th, The Sportsman).

Then on Saturday morning 08:00 for 08:15 March 10th, there is a Men's Breakfast in St Johns Hall, next to All Saints Church, Hertford. The Subject is the 'God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity' our speaker is Martin Goldsmith a very entertaining and knowledgeable speaker who has written books on this subject, this is one you could bring a friend to if you wish.

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