

## We made it (Nearly!)

Colin Bird

You will remember that we had a deficit up to the end of September of nearly £10,000 and were struggling to make it up in the last 3 months. Jo launched her (now regular!) appeal for financial help by launching a request that 100 people give a special birthday gift of £100 – well that brought in £5,000 which was half the deficit! We also had a terrific result from the Christmas Bazaar – with Dorothy selling wreaths and cakes after the event as well, we made £1,500 more than budget.

We were helped by St John's Hall which was able to contribute £1,000 more than budgeted and finally generous giving in December, including from Simon Balle School who allowed us to keep the retiring collection from their amazing carol concerts meant that we ended up with a deficit on our General Funds of (only!) £1,049. All this was the result of a lot of hard work by a lot of people and we can feel proud of what was achieved, even though we still ended the year with a deficit!

In the same period, we raised nearly £7,000 to pay for the conservation work on the Reredos, which will be underway by the time of publication and our insurance will pay up to £6,000 of the cost of permanent repairs to the Vestry roof. At the year-end we had £18,700 in our Fabric Fund so we are sailing a bit close to the wind on Fabric and the South Aisle roof still leaks in the South Westerlies! We also need to support the Bell-ringers in their quest to raise £25,000 for essential works to the bells.

Soundbites continues to be a very important source of funds for us, and the Music Development Fund ended the year at just under £12,000 – level for the year having contributed £3,500 towards church costs.

We were lucky again with the warm weather keeping our heating costs within bounds, but the winter is now upon us.

2019 will be a really tough year financially with planned giving forecast to go down somewhat. At the same time, Parish Share (our contribution to the Diocese to pay for the Parochial Ministry) has risen by 4% to over £75,000.

Given that this equates to 100% of our giving and Gift Aid receipts, this means that every penny we spend in and on the church (nearly £50,000 per annum) has to be raised through St John's Hall, special services, church hire and events – which is a huge challenge. We have such a lovely but very large building and we need to develop plans to achieve financial sustainability for the long term – which is the big issue for this year.



The church heating fund could only stretch to buying a copy of 'Boiler Repairs For Dummies'

### Think about it..

Men who have pierced ears are better prepared for marriage. They've experienced pain for fashion's sake, and also bought jewellery.