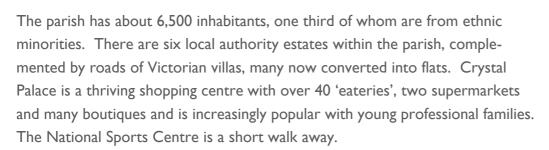


The parish of Christ Church Gipsy Hill

The Parish

Welcome to Gipsy Hill

We are a small South London parish in Crystal Palace near the point where five boroughs meet. The parish lies on the north-west slope of Crystal Palace and commands magnificent views of Central London eight miles away. Crystal Palace Park lies to the east and Norwood Park to the west. The church is situated on Highland Road in a leafy conservation area, a few minutes walk from the bustling streets of the Crystal Palace Triangle.



The area is home to a richly diverse and multi-cultural mix of people – rich and poor, black and white, young and old – many of whom live happily cheek by jowl in our constantly changing area. There is a high level of resident involvement in tenants' and residents' associations, the Safer Neighbourhood Panel, amenity and cultural groups.

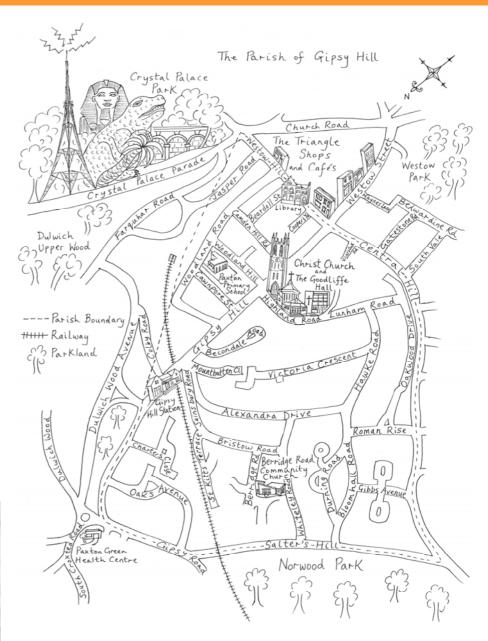
Gipsy Hill Ward, of which the parish forms the southern half, is in the top 5% of



the most deprived areas of Greater London. The 2001 census showed that 27% of adult residents had no formal qualifications, and there were many one-parent families and deprived elderly people. Crime has tended to be relatively high in the area, with a proportion of robberies, gun- and drug-related incidents.



London SE19





Paxton and Kingswood are the two primary schools within or on the edge of the parish. There are eight other primary schools and six secondary schools within a couple of miles, some of which have been rated 'outstanding' by OFSTED, as well as the highly rated independent schools in neighbouring Dulwich and Sydenham. There are excellent main-line travel links to central

London and the City (20-25 minutes away) and Croydon, with a local bus terminus at Crystal Palace. A very good health centre is just outside the parish at the bottom of Gipsy Hill and two large NHS hospitals are within four miles of the church.

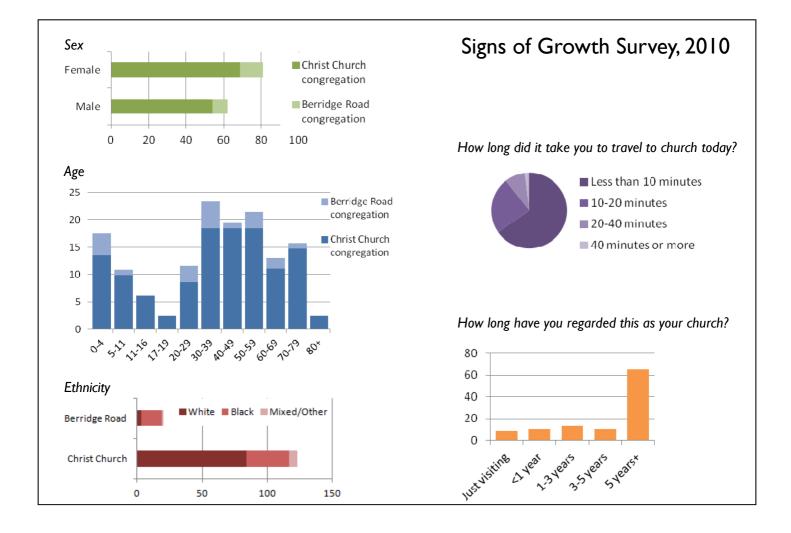


Who we are

To minister to this population the church has two sites. The main building, with its adjoining mid 1960s hall, has been a centre of evangelical ministry since the 1860s under the patronage of CPAS. The church was re-built after a fire in 1982. There is also a community church, which was built in 1995 on the nearby Berridge Road estate.

Christ Church has an evangelical tradition and the current congregation, many of whom have been attracted by the biblical and accessible preaching and pastoral care, exhibits a breadth of churchmanship. This is reflected by some members going to Greenbelt, New Wine, Faith Camp and Lee Abbey. While many have joined the church in the last ten years, there are those who have been members for many years – a few are in their fifth interregnum. Our electoral roll numbered 122 in April 2011, including 74 who live outside the parish, the majority of these within a mile of the church. One of the things many people say they like about our church is the ethnic and social diversity within the congregation, which reflects the local area. Our numbers on the electoral roll have stayed fairly stable over the past years and we have been pleased to welcome new faces as others have left to move on elsewhere.







Seeking God's Kingdom in Gipsy Hill

Our mission statement is "Seeking God's Kingdom in Gipsy Hill". We strive to be a church where everyone is welcomed and able to find faith, and where those from outside the church are comfortable using the building in different ways. We seek to draw in those in need of help and on the margins of society.

A church in the community

The church supports the work of Street Pastors and is in the process of establishing the Gipsy Hill Parish Forum; Christ Church enjoys good relations with local amenity and residents' groups.



We want to be even more available to our local community, and realise that we have some way to go in fulfilling our mission statement. One of the comments frequently made in a recent questionnaire on the future of the church was that people want the church to be more involved in the community. Our last vicar

was very well-known and respected in the wider community for his involvement in many different areas of life; we hope that our new incumbent will also see him/herself as vicar of the parish not just the church, and encourage us, as a congregation, to become more involved in the parish.



Going forward

We want to build on our strengths to make Christ Church the centre of Christian influence in Gipsy Hill and Crystal Palace. We have a reputation now for being a welcoming church, fully representative of the ethnic mix of the local community, with the involvement of many of the congregation in Sunday services, and with a well thought-out children's programme including a popular and busy mid-week toddler group.



In extending our outreach into the community we hope to see

- A congregation growing in depth of commitment through prayer and regular worship, reaching out into the local community and engaging with local problems
- Christ Church and Berridge Road becoming more significant as places where local residents can find support and encouragement
- An extension of our work with young people both from within and outside the congregation
- A careful appraisal of areas where we do not yet engage sufficiently with those with particular needs (for example the Signs of Growth Survey identified single parents and the older residents on local estates)
- The renewing of the Goodliffe Hall so that we can offer more extensive and attractive facilities for local events and for church use



A new incumbent

To this end we are seeking a new incumbent who is

- A prayerful, pastorally sensitive minister with a warm personality who
 enjoys meeting people and has the ability and concern to nurture a diverse
 congregation
- A biblically based preacher, able to combine theological and intellectual rigour with an appealing communication style; and who is sympathetic to the church's evangelical tradition and use of liturgy
- Committed to discipleship within the congregation and evangelism

And who has

- Skill and passion for engagement in the local community, both in meeting those from the community and by taking our mission directly to the parish
- Leadership skills, especially motivation and delegation, so that he/she is able
 to actively involve people in the life of the church and its activities in the
 parish, thereby encouraging them to recognise and develop their gifts and
 ministries
- Managerial ability to maximise the future use and care of all our church resources, including staff and buildings and especially the Goodliffe Hall

A person who has a readiness to develop a role in supervising curates in training, and in assisting church members to identify a vocation for ministry (either lay or ordained) would be welcomed.



Sunday services

Sunday services are at 9am and 10.30am at Christ Church, 11.30am at Berridge Road, and evening services as arranged.



10.30am at Christ Church

Our main service is the 10.30am Parish Communion (Morning Worship once a month) which has attracted about 90 adults and 35 children on an average non-baptism Sunday. During the interregnum the numbers have dropped; in the autumn we averaged 74 adults and 23 children. The service has a fairly informal feel to it; we broadly follow Common Worship Order One, using different service booklets for the seasons. There is a mixture of traditional hymns played on the organ, and more modern worship songs, led by the small, dedicated music group around the piano.

We generally follow the Lectionary (OT and Gospel) and are used to sermons of 15-20 minutes length expounding one or both readings. About 40 people are on a rota to read lessons, lead intercessions or assist with the chalice at Communion. We are fortunate to have three Licensed Readers, one of whom is the leader at Berridge Road, and nine others who either lead services or preach. Many people have commented that we are a friendly, welcoming church, and a large number of people stay behind after the service for coffee or tea. We have a regular Traidcraft stall and offer prayer ministry in the chapel after the 10.30am service.



Sunday services

We have a quiet, reflective service of Morning Prayer (Holy Communion once a month) at 9am for up to twelve people, most of whom do not stay on for the 10.30am service. This incorporates a short reflection on the gospel reading (or a five minute homily at Communion).



Sunday evenings have a less formal structure; these have included occasional programmes such as Rob Bell's *Nooma* series, informal discussions based on Michael Lloyd's book *Café Theology* and Mission Evenings with a speaker. An 8.00pm Compline continues with much smaller numbers – its present form and venue may change in the New Year.



Baptisms and other offices

Baptisms are held during a morning service for children of members of the congregation, or those who live in the parish following attendance at two preparation classes with the vicar or another member of the baptism team (which has been expanded in the interregnum). Baptisms of adults or teenagers sometimes take place in the baptism pool, which has also been used by other churches on occasion. In 2010, the last full year of our previous vicar, we had thirteen baptisms, two thanksgivings, two weddings and eight funerals, of which two were in church and the others at one of the local crematoria.

Our baptism team encourages families, who bring children either to be baptised or to be blessed, to feel welcomed into the church family and we continue to support them in prayer.





Special occasions

Christmas

The Sunday before Christmas we have an all-age Christingle service in the morning, when it is quite moving to see the whole congregation in a circle around the church with their lighted Christingles during the last hymn.



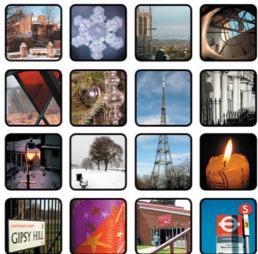
Eve.

In the evening we have 'Carols by Candlelight'; a choir specially formed for the occasion with both children and adults sings about 3 carols on its own, and in 2011 we had readings from the King James Bible to celebrate its 400th anniversary. This is followed by mulled wine and mince pies and usually attracts a number of visitors.

We also spend an evening carol singing around the parish, with lanterns and occasional brass accompaniment.

On Christmas Eve we have a 'join in' Nativity play and tea, at which children can play any part they choose in the nativity story; they either come dressed up or are provided with costumes when they arrive. This attracts a large number of families from the area, with record numbers attending in 2010 (81 adults and 82 children); it has become an event which for many people is the place to be on Christmas

We then have a much more reflective Holy Communion service at 11.30pm and Christmas morning worship.



A Christmas Card with details of church services is delivered to most homes in the parish.

Special occasions



Holy Week and Easter

On Maundy Thursday we have an informal 'Agape Supper', at which about 60 people gather in the Narthex for a Communion service with breaks for two courses of a fairly simple meal. We finish the evening by passing the bread and wine to one another. On Good Friday some of us walk around the parish carrying a wooden cross, stopping at various places to sing a hymn, read scripture and pray for the area. We finish at church for an hour long service.

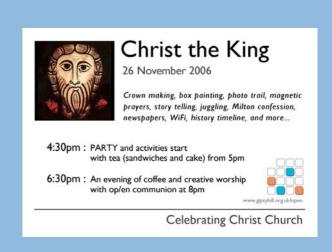


Easter Sunday morning has in recent years seen a small group of hardy souls gathering outside the church as early as 5am for the vigil service, at which as well as renewing our baptismal vows and sharing Holy Communion we have an opportunity to share testimonies. The main morning service usually attracts quite a number of visitors from the area for a joyful celebration of the risen Christ.

op/en

A creative part of life at Christ Church Gipsy Hill, **op/en** is playful, multisensory and subversively formal. We open up traditional Anglican liturgy to new expressions of faith and identity, marking high days and holy days in fresh ways for the whole congregation.

Moving from an evening service programme, **op/en** has run two recent Christmas Carol services, led the Good Friday liturgy in 2011 and has twice brought contributions to the Greenbelt Festival.



Children and Young Families

Sunday School groups for the children consist of Scramblers for those from Nursery to Year 2 and Explorers for those in Years 3 to 6. The church also has a crèche for younger children and a Youth Group for those of secondary school age. During school holidays we run a separate programme with all the primary school age children together. At present the Sunday School uses material from Scripture Union.





A Children's Service is held in the Goodliffe Hall on the first Sunday of each month. This offers us a great opportunity to hold a service which is accessible to children, in which they can worship, pray and learn in a variety of styles.

We run special events for children and young families at Christmas and Easter, which include crafts, baking, gardening mornings and a puppet show with some events attracting as many as 50 children, many of whom come from non-church families. These are a great opportunity to engage with our local community over coffee – while the children are enjoying the activities.

Christmas Baking Morning

For children from 5-11 years old 10.30am on Monday 19th December.





This work is organised and supported by the Children and Young Families team which meets regularly to plan and pray.

Youth Group

"I think with
Youth Group you
learn a lot of
things and it's
always fun and
everyone's always
welcomed"

The Youth Group at Christ Church was re-launched at Easter 2011 after a short period of reassessment of how we provide for teenagers. We asked for volunteers to lead and now have a team of six who, in pairs, lead the group on Sunday mornings, attended by between 6 and 12 young people aged from 11 to 16. We meet during the service on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month whilst on the 1st Sunday members often take part in the service by reading, stewarding, leading intercessions or making coffee. We have recently been trialling material from *Urban Saints*, with the idea that we will become an *Urban Saints* youth group and thus have access to their resources, holidays and training.

"I go to church because of the Youth Group"

Our young people are predominantly those who have parents in the church although in previous years we have had a significant number of young people from the nearby estates who came without their parents. They are enthusiastic, willingly contribute during youth group sessions and are confident in their faith. Most have been confirmed through Christ Church.



"The thing I like best about Youth Group is the games"

"I like learning things that are different"

"I come to Youth Group because it's fun and because it's really entertaining and we learn lots"

Berridge Road Church

The Berridge Road Community Church was set up as a church plant by Christ Church in 1993 on the Berridge Road Council Estate. The estate had been built in the 1980s and people affected by the Brixton riots came to live there, but it had no community centre. The church met initially in the tenants' association premises, but the site for the church building was purchased following a miraculous gift day when £96,000 was raised. The money to put up the building in 1995 was raised from trust funds.



Dave Scroby, Berridge Road Church leader

When the church was first planted, many on the estate were unfriendly and hostile. The police said that we would last three months. However, the church and the tenants' association persevered to make the estate a good place to live. Now, nearly 20 years later, although there are still a few problems, the estate is pleasant and safe, with greenery and attractive children's play areas. The church has an excellent relationship with the tenants' association.

The II.30am congregation averages around I5 adults and seven children and is predominantly of Afro-Caribbean and African origin. Whilst they may be small in number, many members are committed and active, participating fully in all aspects of church life. Dave is supported in his

preaching ministry by members of Berridge Road and Christ Church congregations; the expository sermons normally follow through a book of the Bible. A small music and singing group leads the wor-

ship. There is a different feel to the services at Berridge Road, with a charismatic flavour to the worship. Holy

Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of the month. The Berridge Road congregation joins the Christ Church congregation at Christ Church three or four times a year, and the Christ Church congregation comes to Berridge Road once a year.

Berridge Road Community Church is seeking to develop spiritual gifts and ministries among the congregation, and has a vision to extend God's kingdom on the estate. From time to time the church prays for one street of the estate over a month. This is accompanied by putting cards through the doors on the estate, inviting people to get in touch if they would like prayer. During the lighter evenings, there is also 'prayer walking' around the estate. An annual barbecue attracts people who live locally. Once a month, the Friday prayer meeting acts as the host

and prayer base for a team of Street Pastors, who patrol Gipsy Hill and Crystal Palace.

The Berridge Road Forum is a sub-group of the PCC which meets two or three times a year to discuss matters of relevance to the church at Berridge Road, including the organisation of Sunday services, special events, outreach in the community, and the

maintenance of the building. The chairman of the Forum reports to the PCC three times a year.

Fellowship and social

Bible Study and Prayer groups

We currently have two home groups meeting fortnightly, each with about ten members, plus a weekly Tuesday morning bible study in Church and a fourth group which meets on an occasional basis. We would love to see more of the congregation involved in these groups, and at our monthly prayer meeting, and we hope that our new incumbent will be able to motivate and encourage this to happen. The Berridge Road congregation sometimes meet for Bible study after the morning service. We meet every Saturday morning to pray together during the interregnum.

Social Activities

From time to time we have social activities which are usually well supported by both congregations. In recent years we have had both a Christmas party and a Bonfire party; we have also had Harvest Suppers, some quiz nights, church lunches, two craft fairs and auctions of promises, and a successful day trip to Eastbourne in September 2011.







Church weekends away

We have a weekend away roughly every three years with a visiting speaker and plenty of time for relaxation. In 2010, 84 of us, including children and teenagers, went to Pilgrim Hall in East Sussex, a new venue for us, and one which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Our speaker at this was Dr Paula Gooder,

whose teaching was thought-provoking and inspiring. At these weekends we enjoy a mixture of excellent teaching, fun and games, entertainment or a quiz, and the chance to spend time with others in beautiful surroundings away from the pressures of day-to-day life. The cost is made affordable for all thanks to donations.



Life at Christ Church

Mothers' Union

The Christ Church branch exists to support the aims of the Mothers' Union, as well as to provide opportunities to grow in friendship and in our Christian lives. Our branch was opened in December 2007 and has a small but committed core membership. We are a "Mothers' Union sans Frontiers" – both members and non-members attend its gatherings and events.

At present, we are led by an Acting Branch Leader and officers. We meet about three times a year with a scattering of other activities that support Christ Church and its community. The format for our meetings is a shared supper and fellowship, followed by a programme that may include a speaker and/or a led discussion. Activities have



Sourie

included re-upholstering the communion rail kneelers, Christmas wreath making and supplying food and other essential items for those in need in Zimbabwe. Members lead the Children and Young Families team, the Playpen Baby and Toddler Group, serve as Readers, have facilitated and engaged in parenting groups and give baptism support.

Brownies

The 3rd Gipsy Hill Brownie pack was registered in December 1920 and is part of Lambeth South district. We have 22 Brownie Guides in three 'sixes': Badgers, Foxes and Hedgehogs. Members come from all around the local area, inside and outside the parish. During school terms we meet weekly in the Goodliffe Hall and enjoy games and activities such as craft, cooking and working for badges. There are also occasional weekend trips. Activities are based on three sections – YOU (focusing on personal development and individual interests), COMMUNITY (looking at the community, citizenship and community action) and WORLD (learning about different countries in the world and celebrating diversity). This term's focus is on Fire Safety and Craft badges. We are always ready to welcome new members and new helpers.

Church and Community

Playpen

Playpen is a 'Stay and Play Baby and Toddler Group', which runs in the Goodliffe Hall on Wednesday and Thursday mornings. It is run by a small team of volunteers from the church and, next April, Playpen will be celebrating its 24th birthday; testimony to the success of and need for a local, well run playgroup. We are currently running at full capacity of 40 children each morning and people frequently say Playpen is the best group in the area, a reputation of which we are proud.

Playpen is a place for parents and carers to come and meet and forge new, supportive relationships with each other; for people to feel a sense of community and a sense of belonging (which can be a challenge when you live in London); and to come and have some quality time with their child, getting messy and sticky and glad in the knowledge that somebody has put out the paints, so they don't have to do it at home! Playpen creates a happy, stimulating environment where children can come and have fun and make new friends. The adults can see the smiles of their children as they play in the home corner, on the slide and join in the songs at Song Time and leave knowing that was a morning well spent.

Playpen is a wonderful outreach opportunity and it is always encouraging to see so many children, past and present, from Playpen attending the Christmas Nativity Service and holiday craft and cookery mornings, run by Christ Church.

Other community groups

Both Christ Church and the Goodliffe Hall are used for community activities; we have hosted meetings of the Safer Neighbourhood scheme and other similar organisations. The church has been used for concerts and play readings, and the hall is hired by, among others, Christ Victory Church, the Donna Maria dance group who regularly perform in many venues, groups for young children during the day and after-school groups, a community choir and Cocaine Anonymous, as well as occasional private parties.

A youth group serving the estate meets at the Berridge Road church. It is not attached to the church, but is overseen and guided by a management committee which includes PCC members. The premises are hired to other groups during the week, including an after-school club and another church.

Organisation

Governance

For much of our last Vicar's incumbency we were fortunate to have a curate (either stipendiary or non-stipendiary) who was able to share the administrative, pastoral and teaching burdens. We have no curate at present. In the last two years, the PCC has spent two 'away days' considering how they and members of the congregation could further support the vicar by sharing his administrative and pastoral workload.

This prompted a detailed exercise looking at what people are already doing and how we can make best use of congregation members' talents. This has proved to be an excellent background for creating the interregnum leadership team.

Leadership

During the interregnum we are being led by a leadership team of eight people - wardens, readers, a pastoral leader, two lay chairs of the PCC and the acting treasurer. This team meets monthly but also communicates by email. The team is working well together and members are very supportive of each other.







Links with other churches

Christ Church enjoys good relationships with local churches, both Anglican and those from other denominations. We are part of the Lambeth South Deanery, in the Archdeaconry of Lambeth, in the Kingston Area of Southwark Diocese. We are also members of Churches Together in Upper Norwood, (of which our previous vicar has been chairman), which includes Methodist, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Baptist, Greek Orthodox and independent churches, as well as other Anglican churches. Members of Christ Church attend the joint service outside Sainsbury's Upper Norwood on Good Friday. There is also a Summer Event, Christian Aid collections, carol singing and weekly table tennis at the Methodist Church, some of which have been supported by Christ Church members. The Methodist congregation has occasionally joined Christ Church for services. During the interregnum we are enjoying the ministry of other Anglican clergy, both from the local area and further afield.

People and ministry

Staff and volunteers

We currently employ six staff, all part-time; the Berridge Road leader, church administrator, caretaker, two cleaners and Playpen leader. In the past, we have also employed both full and part time youth workers. We are grateful to all those who volunteer their time and talents by serving refreshments after the morning service, arranging the flowers, playing music and stewarding and in many more areas to maintain the life of the church on Sundays and during the week.



Monthly Saturday morning work parties were introduced in April 2010 in order both to get on top of a backlog of jobs that are too big for staff and too expensive to outsource, and also to provide another focus for the congregation to work together.



Pastoral Care

The pastoral leader has appointed eleven other members of the congregation as pastoral helpers. Pastoral care also happens naturally within home groups, after Sunday worship and among other informal groups such as the mums with young children who meet together.

Preparation for ordination

During the last ten years five members of our congregation have begun or completed training for ordination.

Buildings

Christ Church

Christ Church was opened in 1987 following a fire in 1982 which destroyed all of the previous Victorian church except for the tower, which was sold and is now a residence but still provides a landmark on Gipsy Hill. The new church building is light and airy, and warm in winter. The east side features two large ceiling-height windows overlooking the memorial garden and out onto Gipsy

Hill, thus linking us with the community. The space is very flexible with only the organ and baptism pool being fixed. Behind the worship area and open to it is a narthex which is used for meetings, small events and refreshments after services. There are separate rooms such as a vestry, prayer room and storeroom as well as a small chapel linked to the church by a stone window salvaged from the original building. The parish office is part of the building and is adjacent to the main entrance.

The area outside the church alongside Gipsy Hill has been laid out as a paved memorial garden which is accessible to the public going up and down Gipsy Hill.

The Quinquennial inspection was carried out in the autumn of 2010 and has identified mostly non-urgent external and internal work to be done, including some work to the roof.



Berridge Road

The building was put up in 1995 on the site of a former daughter church, which had also been a carpet warehouse. A simple design incorporates a hall which is used for worship on Sundays and for community groups during the week, a



kitchen, office and store rooms, with a small mezzanine area upstairs. Outside there is a small walled garden on one side of the building and a larger open space on the other. Much of the day-to-day maintenance is done by Dave Scroby and the Quinquennial's findings were relatively minor.



Goodliffe Hall

The Goodliffe Hall was built in the 1960s and is a conventional church hall with a stage and its own street entrance. On the first floor, there are two smaller rooms, a coffee bar area and another good size hall. The Hall is connected to and shares a kitchen with the church; it has its own lavatories which are up four steps, and there is no lift to the first floor, thus the building is not DDA compliant. Some years ago we planned to undertake a major re-ordering of the Hall but we have not yet been successful in raising sufficient funds from outside sources for a capital project of that size. As a result, routine decoration and maintenance has been put on hold, and the Hall is not as we would wish at present, although it does provide the church with a good annual income.

We also have ideas for a less ambitious project, which could be split into discrete sub-projects, to make the Hall more attractive and DDA compliant. At the moment, these are only ideas and need proper evaluation, including how they would help us in our desire to be more involved in the community, before pursuing them further.

The Vicarage

The living is currently suspended because the aim of the diocese is to replace the existing parsonage with a new purpose-built, carbon neutral house. The new priest-in-charge will need to work with the diocese and the parish together as proposals continue to be discussed and applicants are welcome to contact the Archdeacon for further details if they wish. Short-listed candidates will be



briefed as to interim progress that may have been made since the writing of the Profile. The new priest-in-charge will live in the current vicarage whilst discussions continue. The current vicarage is I Highland Road. It has 5 bedrooms and 2 reception rooms and a separate study (the building also contains a separate 3-bedroom annexe which is currently empty but has housed curates in the past). Some modest improvement works will be undertaken to this house during the interregnum. The suspension will be lifted on completion of the project.

Finance

Procedures

An annual budget is approved by the PCC each year. The Treasurer, with the support of a small team, is responsible for day-to-day management and normally reports to the PCC at each meeting.

Each year we hold a Pledge Sunday when all church members are invited to review the level of their giving. 86 members of the Electoral Roll are committed to planned giving.

Clergy's reasonable working expenses are paid in full.



Mission Support

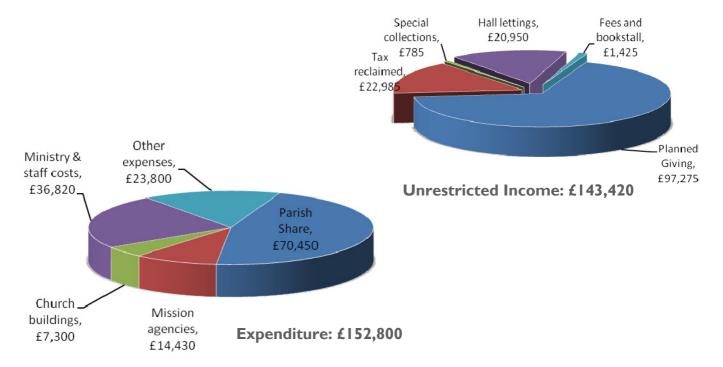
The PCC is committed to supporting six Christian mission agencies both at home and abroad; Church Mission Society including a family working in India, Tearfund, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, The Spires Centre (a centre for the homeless in nearby Streatham), Spinnaker (who take lessons, clubs and assemblies in primary schools), and Street Pastors (Ascension Trust.).

Performance

Our Parish Share was paid in full in 2009 and 2010 and we expect to pay our full Share of £72.315 in 2011.

In the previous two years our expenditure has exceeded our income, making it necessary to withdraw from reserves. A generous response of £35,500 to a special Gift Day held earlier this year has enabled us to repay a debt of £12,580 owed to the Diocese from some years ago and also to cover our other expected commitments for 2011. But the future outlook is that unrestricted income needs to be increased or expenditure reduced.

Figures from the 2010 accounts show



Reserves:

£51,550 (at the bank and in the Central Board of Finance Deposit Fund), of which £50,770 is restricted to work on church buildings.

£118,990 (Central Board of Finance Investment Fund), a permanent endowment the income from which is required to be spent on youth work in the parish.

A full set of the Financial Statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2010 can be seen on the Charity Commissioners' website, Charity No.1133804.