

September 2021 Edition 68

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have,
for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. **Hebrews 13:16***

On the Monday after I had returned from holiday, I had to go into the church building to check a detail in the Book of Remembrance. As I often do, I entered the church through the adjoining door from the Parish Centre, and was both surprised and delighted to find a group gathering in the Cuddington Hall.

Two years ago, this would not be worthy of mentioning – the hall was regularly in use by a wide range of groups. This year, though, I can probably tell you every individual or group who has hired the hall because there have been so few.

When the PCC approved the budget for this year, we were already aware that a deficit was likely. Unfortunately the hall hire situation has proved worse than expected. We had hoped that some groups would begin to return after Easter, but we are only now beginning to receive our first bookings.

This puts a strain on our finances. While we do have money in reserve, it does not take long for those reserves to be depleted. And if we use our reserves for regular expenditure, we will be unable to put it to more fruitful use in God's service.

The Stewardship Committee has therefore decided to hold a Gift Day on Sunday 26th September. We are asking you to consider making a contribution to St Mary's in order to make up for the shortfall in hall income and keep our finances on a secure footing. I believe passionately in all that we do at St Mary's to reach out in love to the community. If you are in a position to support this work, your gift will be most gratefully received.

St Mary's has weathered the storm of the pandemic and our desire to be together has never been greater. I am excited about all that lies ahead.

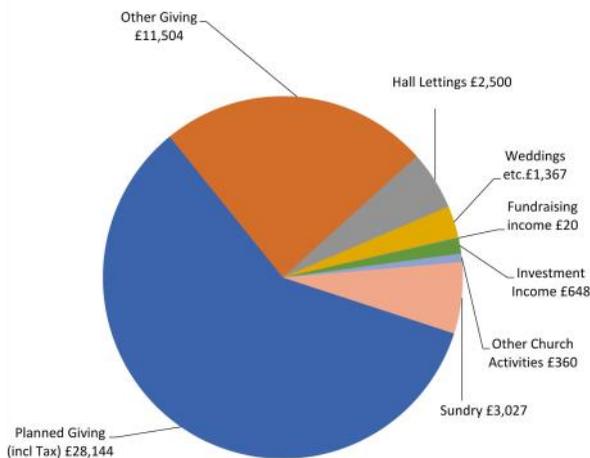
Half Year Finance Update

By the time you read this we will be nearly three quarters of the way through the year and not far from Harvest Festival. Like 2020 it has been very different to pre-pandemic times but still seems to fly by as in previous years! I have continued to follow the services on Zoom but intend to return to church soon and look forward to seeing you all in person again.

I thought you may like an update on the church finances for the first half of 2021.

You will recall from my last update that we have a deficit budget for 2021. This is largely driven by the expectation that we would not be getting back to a more “normal” pattern of life until towards the end of the first half. At that point it was expected that hall income would steadily begin to get back to the pre-pandemic levels.

In the event, the opening-up has been slower than expected and it is now clear that some of our regular hirers of the halls will not be returning. Consequently, the budgeted income from this source is likely to be lower than we hoped. Against this, the government furlough scheme continued longer than we budgeted for, albeit on a tapering basis. Additionally, we received two unexpected donations totalling £8,000 in the first six months of the year for which are very grateful.



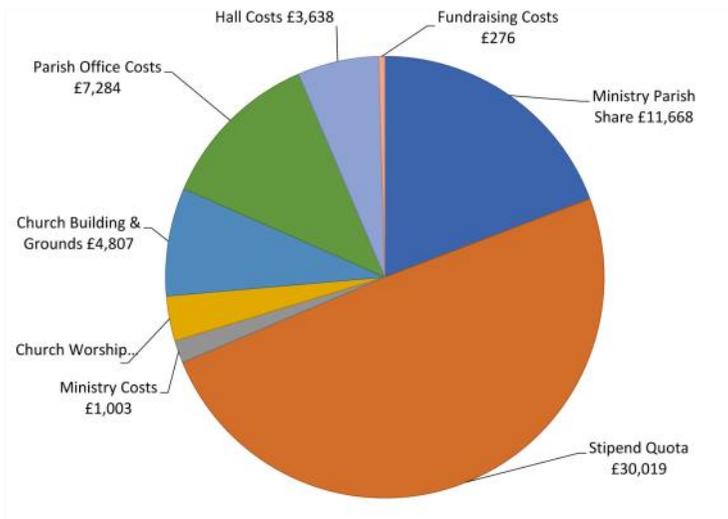
Income January to June 2021 (£47,570)

The outcome of all of this is that we have a deficit in the General Fund of £13,766 (£13,125 for all funds) in the first six months of 2021 compared to a budgeted deficit of £20,717. You will see the breakdown of our total income and expenditure (for all funds) for this period in the charts below.

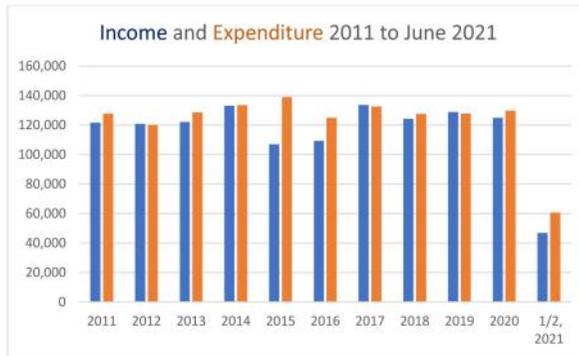
We had a further deficit in July of £3,273 and had to undertake some plumbing repairs and redecorate following a leak in the halls, although this was largely covered by an insurance claim.

You will see from the graph on the back page that we have had a fine balance between income and expenditure over the years, but the current situation has been made worse, primarily due to the lack of income from hall lettings. Sadly, we have also lost a few of our planned givers over the last year.

Income in the chart excludes legacies, which over the period have totalled £187,000. Most of these have not been restricted and therefore have supported us in times of deficit, as now. Clearly, however, there is a limit to how long we can rely on these and we must find a way to ensure we are at least breaking even on an ongoing basis.



Expenditure January to June 2021 (£60,695)



As we budgeted, we will soon be announcing a gift day which, among other things will help us pay for some of the additional expenditure and lack of income we are currently facing. I hope you will be able to give your support to this.

Hopefully, this update gives you an understanding of our current finances but if you would like any further information or explanation, please let me know.

David Eames, Treasurer

September Services and Events

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| Saturday 4 | 08.30 | Men's Breakfast at Café Affair |
| Sunday 5 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Holy Communion and Children's Groups |
| Friday 10 | 10.00 | Toddler Group restarts |
| Sunday 12 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Holy Communion with Hymns |
| Wednesday 15 | 20.00 | PCC meeting |
| Thursday 16 | 14.30 | New Look Thursday Club |
| Saturday 18 | 10.30 | Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall |
| Sunday 19 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Holy Communion and Children's Groups |
| Sunday 26 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Holy Communion with Hymns |
| Wednesday 29 | 19.00 | Men's Dinner at the Hogsmill Tavern |

Morning Prayer is said every weekday morning at 9am