

**Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, Bexhill-on-Sea**  
**St Mary Magdalene & St Martha's.**

Table of Income & Expenditure: 2018 v 2019 v 2020

<b>Incomes</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Offertory & Collections	£131,708	£141,352	£93,782
Donations	£6,185	£7,098	£13,820
Legacies	£0	£0	£0
Tax Rebates	£21,530	£26,166	£21,586
Fundraising	£5,041	£5,707	£834
Bank Interest	£46	£40	£0
Repository	£2,588	£2,062	£407
Rents	£18,892	£22,463	£5,309
Insurance	£1,410	£0	£0
Nursery	£2,733	£0	£0
Sundry	£3	£1,946	£1720
<b>Total</b>	<b>£190,136</b>	<b>£206,834</b>	<b>£137,457</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Personnel	£62,997	£78,747	£49,260
Travel	£664	£1,929	£1,137
Office	£29,942	£10,095	£6,861
Establishment	£35,296	£48,111	£34,268
Domestic	£4,531	£6,558	£10,466
Bank Charges	£0	£0	£0
Repository Costs	£1,163	£464	£329
Property	£37,096	£12,407	£13,392
Fundraising Costs	£976	£1,815	£834
Projects and Equipment	£2,607	£39	£0
Liturgy & Pastoral	£23,792	£23,604	£7,936
Nursery	£9,245	£0	£11,521
Transfers to Diocese	£42,751	£37,638	£41,900
Sundry	£4	£0	£0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£251,064</b>	<b>£221,407</b>	<b>£177,907</b>

## Parish Priest's Statement

### Introduction:

Please find the Parish Accounts for 2020, the most extraordinary year in the life of the parish seeing unprecedented demands on the parish estate and accounts.

Although, it is normal to make comparisons to previous years, we should do so with caution because:

1. We are now the Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, Bexhill and the estate has changed since 2019 and,
2. COVID means we have all been working in-line with national and diocesan restrictions.

The Finance Committee had discussed a provisional budget at our January and February 2020 meetings and were on the verge of approving it when the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown was suddenly announced and the budget immediately became meaningless, as we were closed from 20<sup>th</sup> March to 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020, and again for the month of November in the 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown.

Between 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020, we had a very limited opening. As Christmas approached, with rising infection rates in Hastings and Rother due to the '*Kent Variant*', a further period of uncertainty was being experienced at year end.

2021 proves to be a challenging year also, with at least half of the year disrupted by COVID but also by the heating failures in January 2021. Despite, the formal restrictions being lifted on 19<sup>th</sup> July, parish operations are far from back to normal. Therefore, we invite all parishioners to consider their financial giving, looking to see how they can support the parish both financially and with their time, to further minimise expenditure.

With my prayers and best wishes,

Fr Simon Dray, Parish Priest.

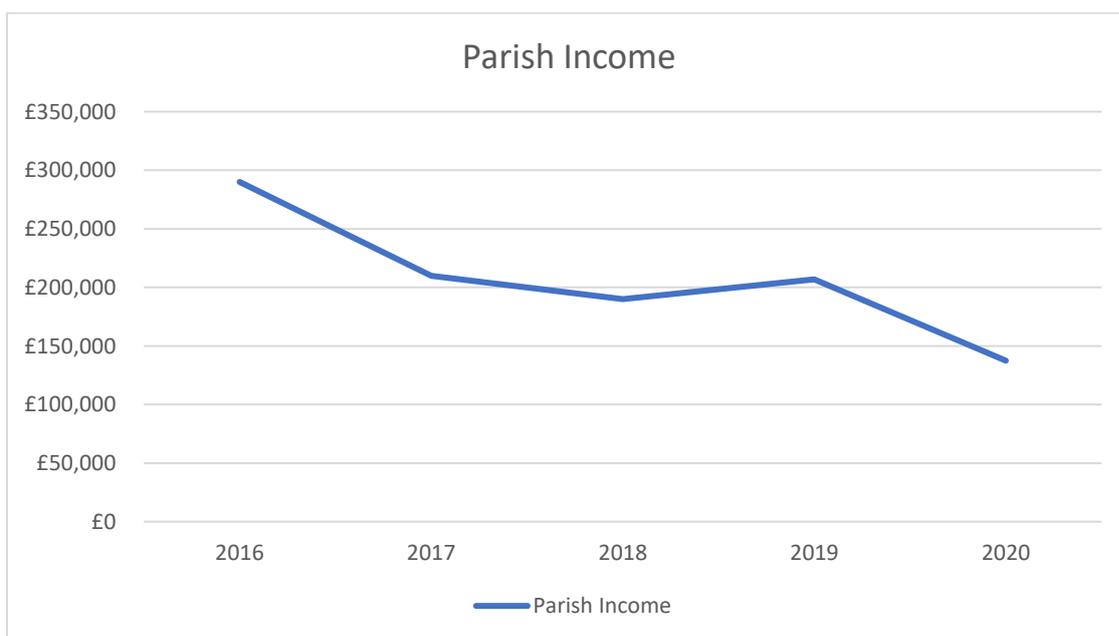
## Finances

**2020 Income:** In 2019, we had made a good step in increasing the income that supports the maintenance and mission of the parish. In the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2020 (*before COVID*), the income of the parish was tracking and giving a forecast of landing between the 2018- and 2019-income levels, and we had provisionally set a budget that predicted an income of £202,000.

The announcement of a national lockdown closed our halls to all hires from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, a loss of income of around £17,000 to the parish. Even when the lockdown eased, we were prevented from re-opening as the requirements of the diocesan insurers meant we could not guarantee COVID-secure opening. As it turned out there were also further lockdowns to come.

Yearly Comparisons:

- £290,000 in 2016
- £210,000 in 2017
- £190,000 in 2018
- £207,000 in 2019
- £137,457 in 2020



**Weekly Offertory:** The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic has exposed our over-reliance on the weekly plate offertory, as in the first lockdown we saw a loss of plate income about £2,000 cash a week. In the period of 1<sup>st</sup> Lockdown alone, that was a loss of income of about £30,000.

From 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020, when we were allowed (*and ready*) to open, the average cash income per week only averaged £400 a week, consistent with our reduced capacities, which was roughly 25% of normal. At every Mass, including weekday Masses we reminded people that they could still give their offertory but also encouraged people to move on-line. Recognizing many people have experienced financial challenges this year, we might still reflect on whether we can make up any of the difference in offertory.

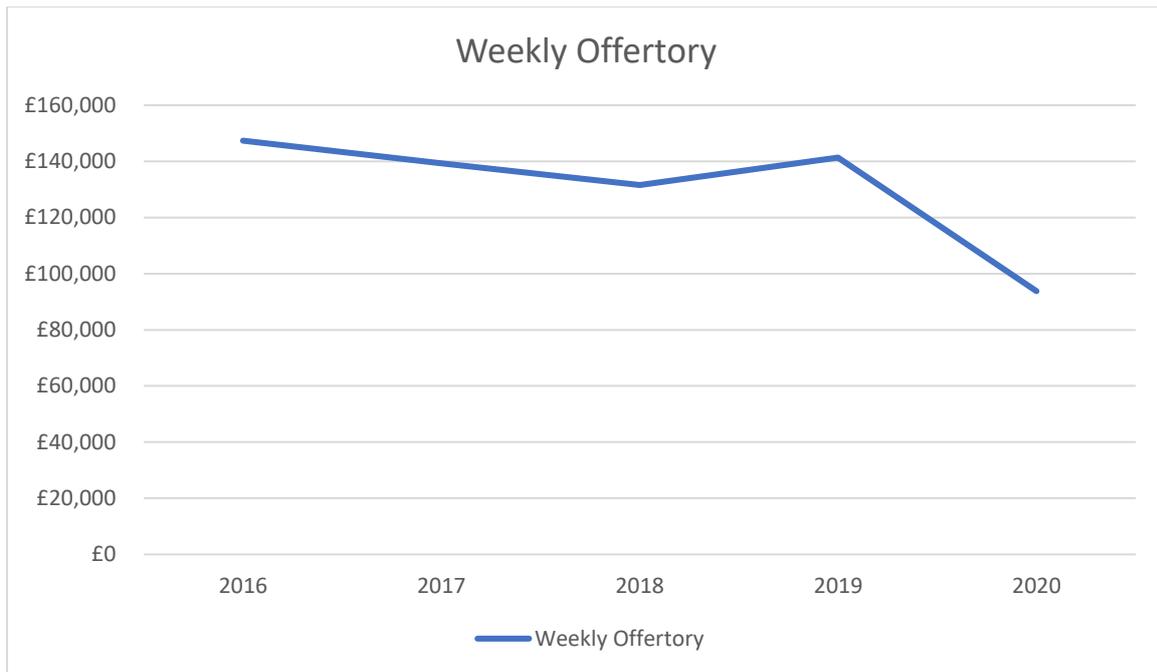
If you have not managed to give an offertory to the parish in 2020, perhaps you could consider a one-off donation to the parish funds. If you can afford it, a one-off donation of £100 would go a long way in making up for your lost offertory.

Last year (2019), we averaged £3.51 per parishioner per week but had hoped to see that increase to an average of £5 per parishioner per week. Any attempt to calculate offertory per person in 2020 would be impossible due to the significant disruption to Mass attendance.

We are grateful to those who either moved their offertory on-line or increased their giving, without whom the parish income would have suffered further. In 2021, we would ask more people to move away from weekly cash giving to an online offertory.

Yearly comparison of offertory:

- £147,374 in 2016
- £139,311 in 2017
- £131,578 in 2018
- £141,352 in 2019
- £93,782 in 2020



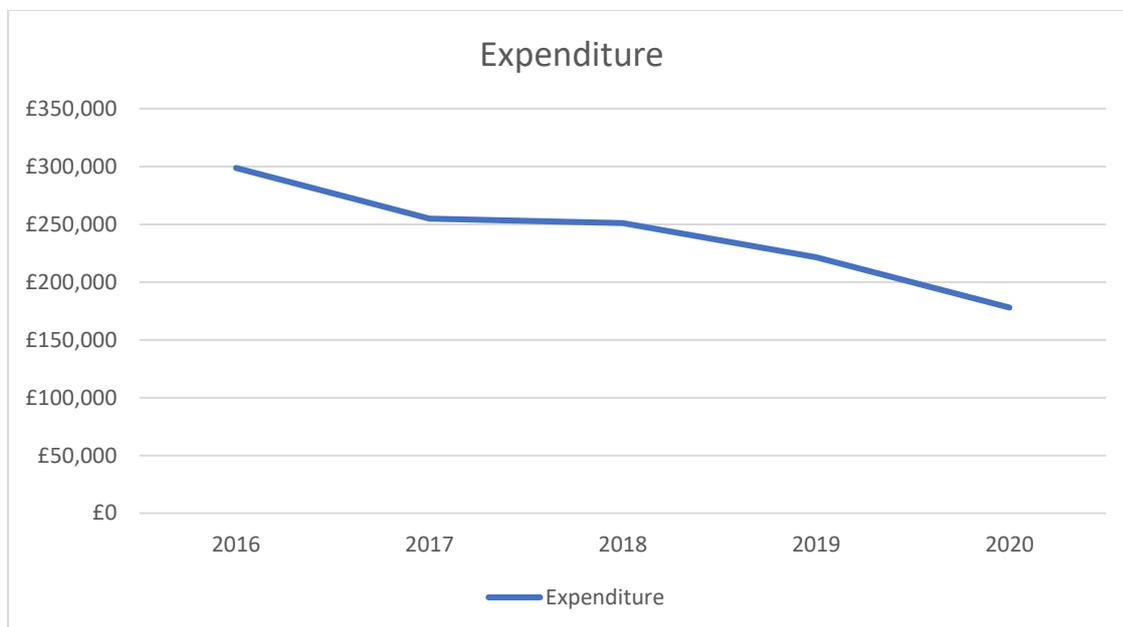
In last year's report, we said it was our hope to invite Mia Stace, the diocesan fundraising officer for the diocese to come and see us in 2021 and help us increase our offertory and fundraising. However, 2021 has proved to be an equally disrupted year and so this is now likely to be delayed until 2022 at the earliest. Having said that, we repeat the message from last year, that anything we can do to move away from a few coins in the collection would be of a huge benefit to the parish.

**Legacies and Donations:** Although we should not be budgeting on legacies and donations, they certainly remain a welcome boost to our finances, but they should not be relied upon to balance the operational budget. It was good to see a small increase in donations in 2020 and would ask you to consider when writing or updating your will that you leave to your parish 'family' a small percentage of your estate or a fixed gift amount:

- £81,121 in 2016
- £16,847 in 2017
- £6,185 in 2018
- £7,098 in 2019
- £13,820 in 2020

**Expenditure:** As we reported last year, the drop in income over the past years have meant we have struggled to balance our budget, and our cash reserves have been used. Year on year, however, we have worked hard to keep bringing down the parish expenditure, and again expenditure was further reduced:

- £298,718 in 2016
- £254,917 in 2017
- £251,061 in 2018
- £221,407 in 2019
- £177,907 in 2020



Yes, there has been a further reduction in expenditure, but it does need to be read in conjunction with the income, so that the year-on-year deficits can be seen, as these lead to an overall decline in the bank balance:

- -£8,716 in 2016
- -£44,126 in 2017
- -£60,928 in 2018
- -£13,797 in 2019
- -£40,450 in 2020<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Includes a £11,500 payment to the Nursey Bank Account to clear the outstanding overdraft and close the account

Part of the lower deficit in 2019 may be attributed to the retirement of our parish accountant and his duties being assumed into the duties of the administrators, **who must be singled out for a special mention for their dedication to the parish.**

We also closed the Nursery in 2019 and no further support payments were paid to it. There was a debt (*overdraft of £11,500 at the end of 2019*) and in 2020, we paid it off. Although that contributes to the parish expenditure for 2020, it was deemed prudent to clear this debt. We are also receiving a payment of £5000 a year from St Mary Magdalene School for use of the Nursery Site. This will continue for 7 years, at which time we will relinquish all rights to the building.

The biggest outlay for Parish Expenditure remains personnel, buildings, administration, and diocesan levies (*which in 2020 is 35% of parish income from the previous year*). The diocesan levy for 2020 was £42,000. [*Obviously because the income for 2020 was much lower than originally forecast, the diocesan levy for 2021 has been reduced to £26,777 plus £1,751 for retired priests and education*].

**Contractor:** On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, as we were in lockdown, we suspended the services of the cleaning contractor. On re-opening in July, **the task of cleaning the Churches fell to parishioners to clean their own Church and Hall.** The diocese had asked us to review the use of contractor and had given us a clear steer that regular cleaning should be completed by volunteers and so we have no plans to use the contractor, except for those tasks where it is demanded by a health and safety risk assessment.

**Furlough:** Following the strong endorsement of the Bishop and the Finance Office in Hove, the parish made use and continues, in part, to make use of the Government Furlough scheme which pays 80% of an employee's wages. The Bishop and the Finance Office, as a matter of charitable justice, decided that parishes should pay the individual the remaining 20% of income, so that the individuals in question would not experience financial hardship. The administrators were furloughed between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, and much of the parish administration was picked up by the Parish Priest while in lockdown. When the parish re-opened for public liturgies, this could not be sustained and the administrators were brought back to work, but with all COVID precautions in place, meaning that parish office remained closed to casual callers.

The Housekeepers were furloughed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, and one remains on furlough until further notice, which at present is permissible until the end of September 2021.

**Redundancy:** Even before 2020, the Diocese asked us to review our staffing levels, which led to the retirement of the parish accountant. In February 2020, we began a review of the housekeeping arrangements in the parish. At that time, we had 20 hours of housekeeping, but before that review could be completed the first lockdown hit. That review was picked up again in the autumn and, following the legal process of consultation with staff, a decision was made to reduce the housekeeping hours to 12 hours, meaning we made one of the housekeepers redundant. The other remains on furlough for as long as the scheme allows. *[This saving of one housekeeper will be used to fund the service charges on both flats which will house the priests while the refurbishment and restructuring of the presbytery takes place].*

**Summary of the Financial Position:** When we set the provisional budget for 2020, we did so, of course, with a view of balancing the operational budget. Realistically, we knew that would not happen and although progress was being made, we would still have seen a deficit. A similar deficit from previous years would mean the real possibility that our bank balance would be reduced from £76,155 to £26,000. However, at the end of the first quarter it looked, tentatively, that the deficit might be only around £25,000 for the year, which would have reduced our bank balance to £51,155. Then COVID lockdowns hit and by the end of 2020, as we have already said, our budget deficit was £40,746, meaning the bank balance at year end was £35,409.

**Restricted Funds:** There is in the accounts, money marked for the specific purposes, (Charity, Poor, and Lourdes Fund) which must be used in line with what the money was given for. This equates to £17,207. Therefore, we have effectively borrowed from these funds, and our true bank balance at the end of 2020 is: £18,202

These funds need to be repaid first, especially those which support the poor, as our obligations to support those in need remain an essential and primary part of the mission of the gospel in our parish. Indeed, we were still able to make grants from these funds to the Homeless Unity Group (H.U.G.) and the Foodbank and wish to do so again from these funds moving forward.

## **An Update on the Parish Estate**

**Boilers:** In January 2021, we were left in an unfortunate position. The boiler at St Martha's would not start, and the boilers at St Mary Magdalene failed. These proved to be complicated issues taking four weeks to resolve, and as the ambient temperature dropped to 4°C it was no longer safe to open the Churches. Fortunately, turning to the manufacturer for help, we were able to get them working again. The boiler in St Mary Magdalene Hall is at the end of its life expectancy and will need to be replaced.

**Clergy Accommodation Update:** In July 2020, the Bishop and the Chief Operating Officer agreed that the quality of the clergy accommodation had dropped below a reasonable standard, recommending the clergy move to temporary accommodation. The priests moved out on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 into flats near the Church. The flats are owned by the diocese (not the parish), but the day-to-day costs are paid by the parish.

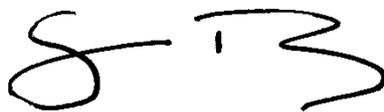
In the summer of 2021, we will carry out the quinquennial (*five-year*) buildings inspection and use this as a basis to decide what might be possible with the old monastic style building, so that it can appropriately hold the office, pastoral rooms, and clergy accommodation. We need to achieve three goals: refurbishment and restructuring that allows for appropriate boundaries and privacy between home, office, and pastoral so it may be fitting for 21<sup>st</sup> Century ministry. The quinquennial will also report on other repairs needed to the estate, and any works required will be a challenge because of our low funds and reduced income.

**The Finance Committee:** We need to appoint a new finance committee for 2022-2027. This does not preclude existing members being reappointed if they wish to consider serving. Membership of the committee is depleted, and it has been hard to hold formal meetings. We have in effect been in a state of emergency operation. Two members, who has served for many years, stepped down after discharging their duties regarding the closure of the Nursery and Our Lady of the Rosary, two others retired from the roles they held as parish accountant and manager of the Nursery, and two other members left for personal reasons. If you feel you can contribute to the finance, management of the estate or in a similar capacity please do speak with Fr Simon.

**The Sale of Sidley:** The site at Our Lady of the Rosary has been independently valued and offers accepted in line with this. The difficulty that developers have is in getting their planning permissions approved, and the local authority is keen that there be community amenity included in those plans. The current offer on the table is £587,000 which an option to reduce to £500,000 if the local authority continues to insist on the community amenity aspect. There were two higher offers of £621,000 and £612,000 but both fell through because of this insistence of a community amenity in the developers plans.

After an attempted arson attack at Sidley, we have secured the site with fencing all around. It is anticipated that this will be a cost to the parish of £12,000 to be deducted from the sale of Sidley. There are other deductions for surveyor's fees in the run up to the closure, and as the Chief Operating Officer wrote in her letter in last year's accounts, we must repay the diocese who have fronted a payment to HMRC for unpaid National Insurance on a former employee. We now know this is a payment of £34,500.

With my prayers and best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Dray', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fr Simon Dray

August 2021

*These accounts are published for information  
but are subject to a local audit to come.*