

Messenger Article – PRISM – finances

Discussion about the project to restore St Michael's began in 2013, triggered by a routine 5 yearly report by our church architect, showing that urgent work was required to make the outside safe, and this galvanised the church into action.

The project vision expanded beyond the essential to every aspect of the building. As the vision extended, the (net) budget increased from £720,000 to over £900,000. If VAT recovered under a grant scheme was added back, the gross budget became over £1 million.

The challenge of raising funds seemed enormous. Grants were clearly important. Although a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund was the key plank in our fundraising plan we later decided not to pursue that. We applied unsuccessfully to National Churches Trust, Church Care, and the Government Roof Scheme, but successfully to Allchurches Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, and the Dame Susan Morden Charity, raising £79,000.

St Michael's poured all its reserves, £132,000, into PRISM. We received two legacies, totalling £100,000.

We held an alumni weekend and former church members gave generously. The parish responded with initial gifts.

The gap between amount needed and received still seemed daunting. We then employed Gill Moody, a local fundraising consultant. A small fundraising strategy group met regularly with Gill. We prepared a project brochure explaining what we wanted to do and how to give. We held several receptions in late 2016 to which Cator Estate residents were invited. These were successful and resulted in a good number of gifts.

The congregation responded well and gave generously. People raised funds through many events and fundraising initiatives.

When 80% of the money required to undertake essential work had been raised, we trimmed the project, took out certain items (the boundary wall eg), and some members of the congregation made interest free loans (£80,000).

We decided to sign a contract with Fullers to start work in November 2017. That still meant that we did not have enough money to redecorate the church after all the other work had been done. The "Last Push" campaign resulted in even more gifts from church members and others, and a grant of £49,000 from Viridor to cover the £75,000 cost. The amount donated and raised through events is about an amazing £649,000.

Underlying all of this is the Bible's teaching that God always provides for his work. We prayed many times for wisdom and for enough money for the project, and God did even provide.

SH 05.06.18