



ST FRANCIS DE SALES CATHOLIC CHURCH

Hampton Hill, 31st January 2020.

Dear Parishioner,

Your Parish family urgently needs your help

Families across the country have been hard hit by the pandemic. Your Parish family is no exception. **We are now in a very serious financial position.** Without action, the Parish will run out of money in the near future. That would be a sad way to mark our Centenary.

Before the arrival of Covid, the Parish annual income from collections was about £76,000 which, coupled with Gift Aid tax reclaims and other income such as Parish Hall rental income, enabled us to break even in most years.

We had plans to seek your help to push up our collection income to about £90,000, which it had been in 2010, to allow us to create an annual surplus to build our reserves and allow us to make improvements to our Church and Hall. Those plans were defeated by the closure of churches in March and the subsequent restrictions. Those same conditions have meant that our collection income has fallen dramatically. For the year to 31 December 2020, our collection income fell from about £76,000 in 2019 to about £52,000; a fall of over a third. We also saw a fall in Parish Hall and other income from about £34,000 to about £13,000; making a total fall in income of about £45,000. This was partly offset by a double recovery of Gift Aid tax.

Over the same period, by furloughing our Parish secretary, not heating the Church and other economies, including saving running costs when the Church was closed, we were able to reduce our underlying outgoings by nearly £3,000 a month.

In addition, expenditure of just over £20,000 was required in 2020 on essential or much-needed maintenance projects. For example, instead of completely replacing the Church lighting, we have managed to upgrade the existing lighting to LED which improves the light and will save future running and maintenance costs; the Church has been redecorated after nearly 20 years, in preparation for our Centenary celebrations; the Welcoming Area has been refreshed and ; the outside entrance to the Crypt has been made safer with new fencing; and we have carried out a general upgrade of our safety measures to satisfy a Diocesan risk survey. In the Parish Hall, we had to replace the boiler, the water main to the Hall and upgraded the emergency lighting.

In summary, we made an operating loss last year of about £1,500 a month. Without action this will increase to about £3,000 a month as a result of reduced Gift Aid receipts, a regular electricity bill and an increased Diocesan levy.

Our reserves will not allow us to continue at this rate for long. Those reserves, which were very healthy, have, over recent years, been invested in major projects such as: the refurbishment of the Crypt (with Growing in Faith funds) to make it usable for sacramental preparation and other Parish meetings; the rewiring of parts of the Parish Estate to make it safe and subsequent redecoration; and, with the help of a grant from the Hampton Allotment Fund, the upgrade of the Hall kitchen to modern standards. **Our reserves now stand at just over £40,000 but will be reduced further by an electricity bill for the last 18 months estimated to be between £15,000 and £20,000 and a large bill, for which we are obtaining quotes for, urgent repairs to the church's bell tower.**

So how can you help?

The Parish needs urgently to increase its annual income back to around £90,000. That will require all of us to make sacrifices. We each need to review our giving to the Parish and to ask ourselves: Can I afford to give more? The Gospel calls upon all of us to help those in need and for those who have more to give more. Never before has your Parish family needed each of our Parishioners – whether you are currently attending mass or not -to heed that call. This is not a situation when we can look to others.

Something else you can do, if you do not already do so, is to make your giving by means of a standing order. Instructing your bank to make a weekly or monthly payment ensures that the Parish receives what you want it to receive without you having to remember your wallet or envelope and without losing income when you are away. It is easy and entirely within your control. It reduces the Parish's administration and can be set up by you using the details below. There are also forms in the Welcoming Area.

Account Name: **WRCDT Hampton Hill**

Sort Code: **40-05-20**

Account Number: **61095447**

Please add your Surname and First Name as a reference

It also allows the Parish, if you agree and are a UK tax payer, to receive an extra nearly 25% from the Government under the Gift Aid scheme (and you may receive tax relief on your gift).

You can also join our envelope scheme, if you do not have a bank account or want to make an additional gift in the plate when you attend Church. This too can bring the benefits of the Gift Aid scheme, if you agree. As with cash in the plate, giving by envelopes, whilst most welcome does increase Parish administration and does not have the benefits to you and the Parish of a standing order.

We are sorry to be the bearers of bad news but we sincerely hope that this appeal to the members of our Parish family will enable us to weather the Covid storm and to put the finances of our Parish family on a firm footing for the future. We understand that every family is facing hardship and that some will not be able to respond. We only ask everyone to make an honest and prayerful assessment of their support for the Parish and to respond according to that assessment.

If you have any questions, please email the Parish Office (hamptonhill@rcdow.org.uk) and one of the Finance Committee will contact you.

Thank you,

Yours sincerely,

Edward Sparrow

Fr Wojciech Stachyra SChr

Peter Stuart

Chair of the Parish

Parish Priest

Chair of the Parish

Finance Committee

Pastoral Council