



# THE BRIDGE

MAKE A DIFFERENCE EVERYDAY





# WELCOME

Welcome to The Bridge Coventry & St James Fletchamstead, where we are seeking our next Vicar & Priest in Charge.

We invite you to explore this benefice profile, which offers a comprehensive insight into our diverse and vibrant cluster of three churches, our unified belief and mission, dynamic ministry, and ambitious aspirations for the future.



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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

As the new Bishop of Coventry, I am delighted that you are considering the possibility that God may be calling you to The Bridge & St James Fletchamstead. It is a challenging time to be a church leader in the Church of England and here in Coventry we are committed to helping clergy to flourish and grow in their vocation, to know themselves loved and called by God and to find that they are valued by the bishop, the senior team and their colleagues both lay and ordained.

We seek clergy who find their joy in the good news of Jesus Christ and are passionate to share that joy with others. These three churches are lively communities with a rich history and a real heart to reach the people of their community with God's love. Like many churches they want to find new ways to support the growth of the church among all ages and have a particular sense that nurturing children, young people and families will be key in this. There is a very committed team who will want to welcome and work with you going forward.

Coventry also has a special calling to be a place and people of reconciliation. Our world is far from peaceful, and God calls us to be peacemakers, so if this is something you feel drawn towards then Coventry Diocese may well be the place for you. Everyone has a part to play in this, and we are excited about the shape of this in the years ahead.

Please be assured of my prayers as you discern your future.

*Bishop Sophie of Coventry*





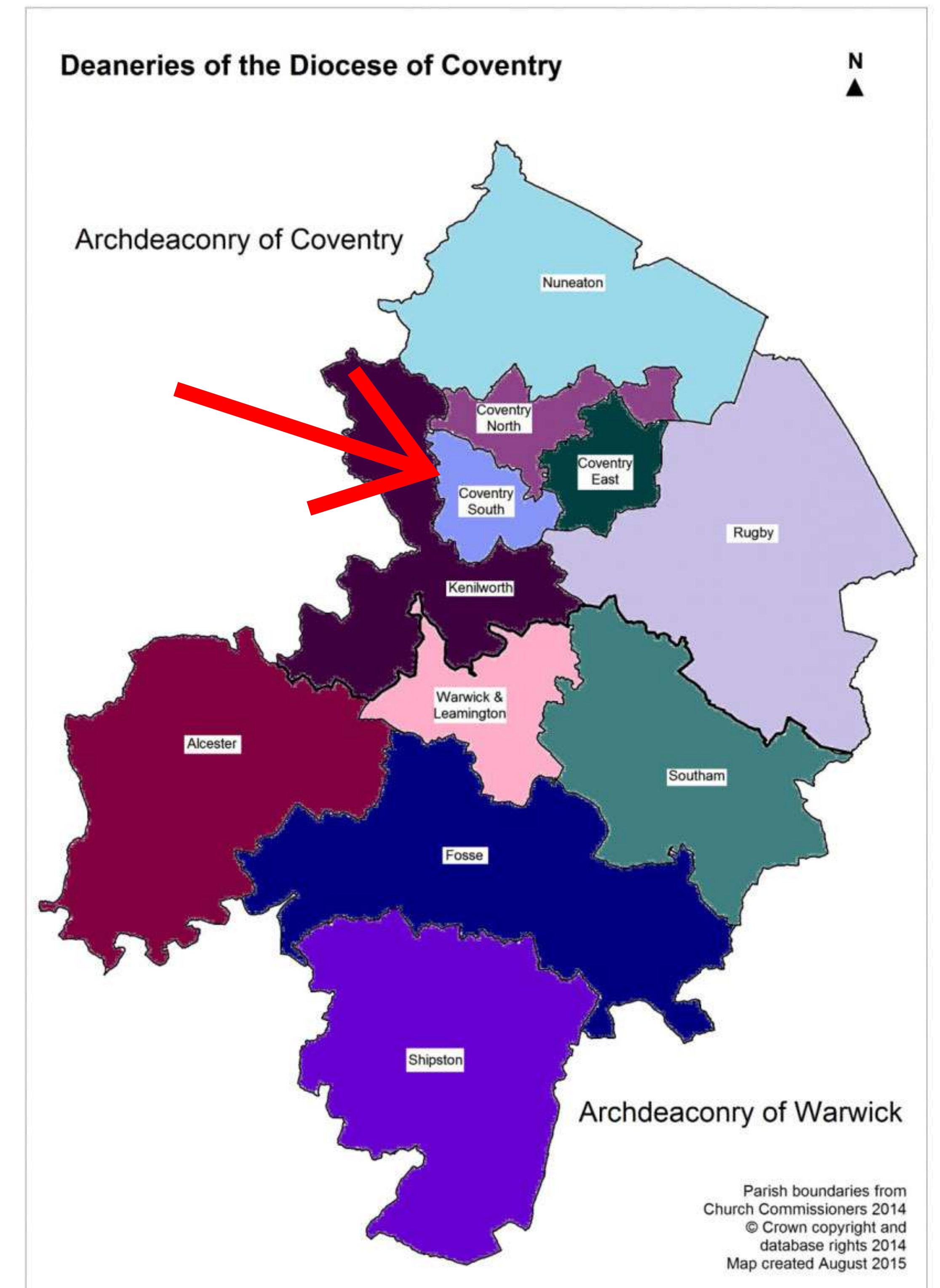
# SOUTH COVENTRY DEANERY

The Bridge and St James are in the deanery of Coventry South. The deanery is very supportive and has a friendly and caring clergy chapter. Chapter meets over lunch and includes space for mutual support and prayer. Most clergy make chapter meetings a priority.

The majority of the 11 parishes have lively and growing churches and are involved in ecumenical groups. Most churches have an evangelical and charismatic tradition with the exception of 2 which have lively catholic traditions.

The area encompassing the Coventry South deanery is a richly diverse and complex community. It features a stark contrast between some of Coventry's most affluent and well-established residential districts—such as Finham and Earlsdon, characterised by high rates of homeownership and professional households—and more socioeconomically challenged areas like Tile Hill and Canley, which face high levels of deprivation and have a younger, more transient population influenced by the nearby university. While some neighbourhoods are predominantly white and have a more settled, older demographic, others, particularly those near the university, are highly diverse with a growing presence of different ethnic and cultural groups. This blend of prosperous, working-class, and student communities, each with its unique demographic profile, provides a rich tapestry of needs and opportunities for ministry and outreach.

Our churches seek to serve the areas in which they're based, which means they are involved in a range of ministries, from traditional Sunday services to community outreach programs, food banks, and support for vulnerable residents; seeking to reach people of all ages with God's love in whatever ways we can. As a chapter we seek to support one another through prayer and where appropriate, through partnership in mission. This has been greatly aided by the development of Hope Coventry's regional work, which brings together churches of all denominations in prayer and outreach for the good of the people whom God has called us to serve.





# OUR JOURNEY

## AS THE BRIDGE COVENTRY

The Bridge Benefice is currently made up of two Anglican congregations on the southern edge of Coventry, situated next to Warwick University: St John's Westwood and St Stephen's Canley.

St James Fletchamstead, a neighbouring parish is the third Anglican church that will be led by the person we are seeking as vicar and priest-in-charge. The three churches are in close communion and are exploring whether it is right for St James to join the Bridge Benefice. We hope our next leader will continue to explore that option and build on our existing relationship.

Our vision is to be part of a disciple-making missional movement that sees our networks, neighbourhoods, city, and beyond transformed through God's love and power.

The Bridge vision is centred around a question that we believe God is asking of us:

### 'What is the limit on the flow of my grace, power and love?'

We dream of being a church where we go deep in discipleship and know God so well through His Word and Spirit **that we are utterly transformed.**

We dream of being a church where we go deep in discipleship and love one another so well in word and deed that we **put the fullness of God's love into action.**

We dream of being a church where we go deep in discipleship by **making disciples**, wherever we are, of those yet to have experienced the joy of Jesus, His Cross and resurrection.



#### The Widows Olive Oil

"Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a small jar of olive oil." Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side." She left him and shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one."

2 Kings 4 v2-6



# THE BRIDGE FAMILY

The Bridge is more than just two individual churches and St James; we are an extended family united by a shared vision and commitment to seeing God's love and power transform our communities.

## **Our Congregations:**

The diverse and vibrant communities of St James, St John's, and St Stephen's, with their unique strengths and expressions of faith.

## **Our Volunteers:**

The dedicated individuals who generously give their time and talents to support a wide array of ministries and outreach initiatives across the benefice.

## **Our Partners:**

The local schools, uniformed groups, and charities with whom we collaborate to extend our impact beyond the church walls.

## **Our Networks:**

The broader connections and relationships we build within the city and beyond, as we seek to be part of a larger disciple-making missional movement.

We believe that our strength lies in our unity and the collective gifts of this extended family, working together to fulfill God's purposes.





# COMMUNITY FIREWORKS

The Garden of Hope hosts an  
annual firework display





# OUR VISION

Our vision is to create structures which expect an overflow of God's Kingdom, where everything we do is scalable and multipliable so that God can continue his work unhindered.

It is recognised that The Bridge vision needs better ownership across the church members and whilst it is not our belief that a new vision is needed, further collaboration and exploration is needed to ensure the vision is well understood and translated to local and individual contexts and thus the vision is embodied by all of us. We are therefore at the beginning of a process of re-engagement with the vision, seeking to build upon our strengths and imagine what God could grow us into.

We are continuing to explore together how this vision translates to our varying contexts, spaces and communities and expect our next leader to help us own and embody this vision as individuals and as a church.

Our main mission strategy is to plant new worshipping communities, but we seek multiplication across every expression of church. This shared vision, alongside centralised operational support, aims to release clergy for mission and discipleship, fostering a scalable and multipliable church culture rooted in transformation and outreach.

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Whilst our vision is still being fully developed and implemented we see the following as our priorities for the coming years.

- A. We take seriously the teaching of God's word and want to be great communities of learning & discipleship where **knowledge grows into wisdom and believers are effective witnesses.**
- B. We want to **build capacity and grow five new centres of outreach in the next ten years** and **support many other churches** in their call to mission.
- C. We want our church communities to be **one in vision but not uniform in style.** Shaped by evangelical theology we will worship in a rich and varied way.
- D. We are seeking to grow a **wider and warmer welcome** to those with neurodiversity and across perceived cultural divides.
- E. We want our **buildings and spaces** to be refreshed and well suited to the missional opportunities in each area.
- F. We pray that in our churches, **new faith, new skills, new vocations and new gifts of the Spirit** will be discovered regularly.





# OUR NEW VICAR

We are seeking someone who will lead us forward and help us fulfill our vision to see our communities and people transformed for Jesus.

When thinking about our future leader our leadership team described their desired characteristics as:

- A **leader of leaders**, who can support our church leaders and new worshipping community leads.
- An **encourager of people with a heart of compassion**.
- Has an **infectious love for Jesus**.
- Full of the **Holy Spirit**.
- A leader who will **oversee the ministry and empower others** and take us towards unity and clarity.
- Someone who **makes others shine**, a supportive leader and someone we can talk to and pray with.
- Someone with **significant experience of managing staff & volunteers**.
- Someone who will **maintain a focus**, perhaps with experience of planting new worshipping communities and reaching out across different communities.
- Someone who will **help us speak courageously and prophetically** across our communities.
- Someone able to support our church leaders in various **building projects** to make our centres mission ready.
- Someone who is able to lead worship across a **variety of styles** and able to bring **good biblical teaching and prophetic insight**.
- A pastor who has learned how to **care for others and for themselves**.

## OUR HOPES

Our new vicar will link with the diocese and deanery, attending chapter and study days, be involved in the training of curates and other ministries and generally engage with and support the wider church family in Coventry.

The Bridge and St James need a leader who can help us expand our mission and take us beyond our current size and shape. Helping us to be expectant for kingdom growth by overseeing and cultivating the next season in which we expect to see 5 new centres of outreach in the next 10 years and with it large numbers of new disciples finding Jesus across the churches.

We need someone with sensitivity and grace to navigate diverse theological perspectives, particularly concerning national church developments regarding prayers of blessing for same-sex couples. Our new vicar will need to lead with unity as the national church moves to expect all churches to decide whether or not to offer these prayers of blessing. The current church leaders share an orthodox view of marriage however the church has not made any decisions on offering prayers of love and faith and has not debated the topic of same-sex marriage.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEW

Here's what our **young people** said they'd like to see in our new vicar.

- Sense of humour
- Approachable and friendly
- Open minded and inclusive
- Good Listener
- Community Builder
- Kind and Caring
- Relatable and friendly
- An engaging speaker
- Good Bible knowledge.



# OUR WIDER LOCATION & ENVIRONMENT

The Bridge Coventry parish offers an exciting blend of urban vibrancy and serene rural living. The vicarage at St John's Westwood church epitomizes this, providing a peaceful, semi-rural retreat on Coventry's western edge. It's a place where you can enjoy quiet reflection while still being moments from city amenities – truly the best of both worlds.

Coventry is a city of resilience and innovation. Its modern Cathedral stands as a symbol of hope, while a thriving arts scene, from Warwick Arts Centre to the Belgrade Theatre, ensures there's always something worth seeing. The city celebrates its automotive heritage at the nationally significant Coventry Transport Museum and offers plenty of green spaces like War Memorial Park for relaxation. With two universities, Coventry also boasts a youthful and dynamic atmosphere.

Beyond the city, the surrounding area is rich with history and culture, all within easy reach. Explore the magnificent Kenilworth Castle with its fascinating ruins and restored gardens. Visit the iconic Warwick Castle for immersive historical experiences. And, of course, discover Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace, offering world-class theatre at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and charming riverside settings.

This prime location, with excellent transport links, makes The Bridge Coventry an incredibly diverse and fulfilling place to live, work, and serve.

## THE VICARAGE

A four bed detached property adjacent to St John's church and the Garden of Hope. Providing large garden and growing space. Countryside views with the convenience of local amenities and a good number of local primary and secondary schools.

The vicarage consists of 4 bedrooms, an office, two living rooms, a large kitchen/diner, a utility and garage.





# KIDS TRIP TO MCDONALDS

Children and young people are a missional priority.





# CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

We see children and young people as a priority for our church ministry and mission across the Bridge and have a strong history of investing and prioritising this demographic. We employ dedicated staff focusing on children and young people, working to engage with our church members through both Sunday and mid-week groups and to reach out to those in our communities through schools' and youth work.

We continue to see this area as key for our mission and outreach moving forward and hope to invest further in it.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE

What do you love, appreciate or hope for from our churches?

- Family based, welcoming
- Really fun and engaging for the youth
- The sense of community. The peace that the community gives me. The way the church feels like a family and everyone knows everyone else.
- I like that it feels like a community and everyone is really nice and cool
- I love how inclusive they are for other people and that they appreciate who people are, though I wish there was an easier way to express opinions, but apart from that they are really nice churches.
- Spread more word to kids because that is where God's love starts. Also we would like to have better/ stronger structure in Church in a way in preparing whats next week. (E.g: if its Communion)
- We would like to express Christianity to more people. Especially kids.
- More youth group participation in activities and fundraisers for the church

How could our churches better serve the local community?

- Do a car wash run by youth group
- More notice about food banks
- More outreach for youth in the less well off areas.
- Helping the homeless through charities, inspiring other people to be baptised and become Christians.
- More 'casual' events









# OUR STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

The Bridge is made up of two charismatic evangelical Anglican congregations on the southern edge of Coventry, next to Warwick University, and within the Diocese of Coventry. Our basic structure consists of church congregations and missional small groups and communities.

**Governance:** The governance of The Bridge is overseen by the Joint Council, which is responsible for legal, financial, and strategic decision-making.

**Joint Council:** The Joint Council consists of representatives from each of the congregations of St John’s and St Stephen’s, including clergy and lay members. The Joint Council has a healthy working practice currently with a Lay Chair in place for leading the meetings.

**Centralised Operations Team:** All of our functional support, including HR, finance, safeguarding admin, health & safety, and general admin support, is provided by a central Operations Team. This allows clergy and leaders within each church to focus on spiritual and missional priorities.

St James, Fletchhamstead is currently a separate benefice and operates with its own PCC. A pastoral scheme to unite the two benefices has been drafted but has been paused to allow for the recruitment of a new vicar who we hope will help us explore this opportunity further.

## OUR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE





# ST JAMES

## FLETCHAMSTEAD





## PARISH

Welcome to St James. The Parish is located in the South West of Coventry. There are five housing estates, with 4 primary schools and 1 secondary school, with another senior school just over the boundary. Shops include a large Sainsbury's plus several smaller ones, including takeaways. There are also several pubs, social clubs and a large number of industrial and commercial businesses along the south border. St James is a culturally mixed congregation with members from several different nations. We are evangelical charismatic in our churchmanship.



**Congregation:** A culturally mixed body of believers, reflective of the parish's diverse population, with an ethos of inclusion and relational hospitality.

**Service Style:** Liturgical and evangelical in churchmanship with a strong emphasis on the presence and power of God.

### Strengths:

- Warm and friendly.
- People describe feeling the presence of God.
- New people have recently arrived and are joining in.
- There is a playfulness about the community - relaxed.
- There is a strong desire to serve the Lord in the community.
- Sharing God's stories of faith in action.
- Preaching the gospel with practical applications.
- Prayer based groups.

### Leadership:

- A full-time associate minister (Mohammad) is currently deployed to St James'.
- A dedicated lay leadership team supports a wide array of ministries, though there is a recognised need to further build the volunteer base for sustainability.

### Mission & Outreach:

- Open Doors
- Jigsaw
- Community Shop
- Knitting Group
- Seasonal Events



# ST JOHN'S WESTWOOD



WELCOMES  
ST JOHN'S

ST JOHN'S  
CHURCH

MADE IN WESTWOOD

[STJOHNSWESTWOOD.ORG.UK](http://STJOHNSWESTWOOD.ORG.UK)



# ST JOHN'S CHURCH

MADE IN WESTWOOD

## PARISH

The parish of Westwood Heath is a residential area in southwest Coventry, known for its peaceful, semi-rural atmosphere. It's situated between Tile Hill, Canley, and Cannon Park, with the University of Warwick campus nearby. Historically part of the Stoneleigh Estate, Westwood Heath has developed from common land and agricultural use to a mix of housing, businesses, and green spaces, including ancient woodlands.

There are a large number of new houses being built in the parish which represents a significant missional opportunity.

The St John's Church building is located very close to Warwick University. Its congregation is made up of people living within the parish and those travelling from further afield.

**Congregation:** A balance of ages across the congregation (14-17 year olds and young adults 24-29 are currently lower in representation).

**Service Style:** Evangelical charismatic, with a strong emphasis on Bible based teaching, modern contemporary worship with two children's groups and a youth group that operate during services.

### Strengths:

- Vibrant intergenerational community.
- Warm, friendly and inclusive, familial.
- Evangelical teaching and worship.
- Engaging kids and youth work.
- Active student work.
- Good experience, capabilities and skills in the congregation allow for strong volunteer involvement in both leading and supporting the life of the church.
- The Garden of Hope - a unique asset, being used in mission.

### Leadership:

A part-time lay leader is employed by the Bridge to lead St John's. The current leader (Steve) and his wife (Susie) previously led a small church which joined and became part of St John's in 2024. There is an effective team of lay leaders involved in various roles including a development team who support, implement and contextualise the vision, strategy and direction at a local level.

### Mission & Outreach:

- Seasonal mission events: Christmas (Carols by Candlelight, Christmas Quiz, Pop up Nativity), Easter/Spring (family-focused Easter Adventure, 'Hot Cross Bun' parties), Summer (Summer Festival, BBQs), Autumn (free Fireworks event in the Garden of Hope).
- Alpha and similar courses offered after every set of missional events.
- Deepening relationship with local schools.
- Wide range of groups delivered by volunteers from the church such as Art Group, Memory Cafe, Dandelions (babies and toddler group), Refresh (women's gathering), Soup Lunch, Renew Wellbeing Cafe.





# ST JOHN'S CHURCH

THE GARDEN OF HOPE



## THE GARDEN OF HOPE

Created from the St John's church field, this has become a place of retreat and solitude for Christians and those seeking peace and hope. It's frequented by students, local parishioners, dog walkers and parents and carers of preschoolers. It offers different areas that are both sensory and aesthetically stimulating. It's curated and cared for by a dedicated team of volunteers every Monday morning with a coffee morning.



ST STEPHEN'S  
CANLEY





## PARISH

St Stephen's is located in an area of significant deprivation, among the lowest 10% in England. Canley is a suburban area with predominantly social or ex-social housing and has a varied community including students due to its proximity to the University of Warwick. The church is made up of local families and families who moved from St John's as a graft in 2016.

**Congregation:** More children than adults. A high percentage of children have additional needs.

**Service Style:** Relaxed multi-generational evangelical worship; aiming to be more accessible to those with neurodiversity. A high importance is also placed on accessibility of services to children and young people.

### Strengths:

- Intergenerational and accessible gatherings.
- Bible based talks and activities each week.
- Very involved in the local C of E primary school.
- Strong community connections.
- Committed individuals seeking to grow the Kingdom in their local area.
- Exploring collaborative missional opportunities with neighbouring community church.

### Leadership:

Rev Erin Gilmour currently leads St Stephen's as part of her associate minister role. There is an effective team of lay leaders involved in various roles including a development team who support, implement and contextualise the vision, strategy and direction at a local level.

### Mission & Outreach:

- Weekly Foodbank.
- Growing Faith Hub Church working in a local C of E school.
- Breathe - a fresh expression of church specifically for parents and carers of individuals with additional needs.
- Working collaboratively with other churches to reach out to youth in the area.
- Part of Canley Stakeholders and taking an active role each year in the Canley parade.
- Annual mission focussed community events including Easter and Christmas trails.





# OUR SERVICES

The Bridge and St James offers a diverse range of services across its congregations:

## **St James Fletchamstead:**

- Holistic Weekly Worship and Teaching: Offers a rhythm of recorded and band-led worship services, midweek communion, and community-wide worship gatherings, catering to diverse spiritual preferences and needs.
- Sunday at 9am: Liturgical and traditional Holy Communion
- Sunday 10.30am: Structured family worship with Sunday School
- Wednesday at 10am: Simple and liturgical service round the table.

## **St John's Westwood:**

- Sunday 10:30am: Spirit-filled charismatic and evangelical worship. Vision-led Bible-based sermon series. Equipping and outward-focused teaching. Well-engaged volunteers.
  - All Age Service: 1st Sunday at 10:30am, to include Infant Baptisms.
  - Communion Service: 2nd Sunday at 10:30am.
- Evening Worship: 1st Sunday at 6.30pm starting in January 2025.
- Sunday 8:30am: 1st Sunday, a more traditional Communion service.

## **St Stephen's Canley:**

- Sunday 10:30am: Beginning with refreshments. Relaxed evangelical worship, the majority of which is intergenerational and accessible. Bible based talks and activities each week (1 kids group a month).
- Bi-weekly Communion Service: One relaxed and one more traditional.





# OUR PEOPLE, ETHOS & STAFFING

The Bridge Benefice operates with a staff team structured around providing support to the 3 churches and the mission hub.

We value our staff and volunteers highly and want to ensure we provide a place where people can thrive. We are still learning what this looks like, especially under our combined church structure. The culture we are aiming to build is safe, challenging, secure, and joyful, designed to maximise our potential and build God's Kingdom together. We want clear working practices for day-to-day operations to help our people deliver their best for our shared mission.

As part of our commitment to maximising our potential and building God's Kingdom, we are currently undertaking an ongoing staffing review. This process aims to ensure our team structure best supports our evolving vision and mission, and that we have the right people in the right roles to facilitate our Kingdom growth and impact. We hope our new vicar can bring fresh ideas and experience to this area.



## BRIDGE STAFF TEAM

The Bridge benefits from centralised resources for HR, finance, safeguarding, and communications, with the intention that church leaders are more available to focus on spiritual and missional priorities. With several new faces joining our dedicated staff team recently, we are blessed with a growing group of people committed to the future of the Bridge.

### Church leaders:

- Rev Erin Gilmour - Associate Minister (Incumbent Status, Full Time) - Licensed until September 2027 - Leading at St Stephen's & Mission Hub.
- Rev Mohammad Eghtedarian - Associate Minister (Incumbent Status, Full Time) - Leading at St James'.
- Steve Elton - Licensed Lay Minister (Locally funded, 22.5hrs). Leading at St John's.

### Operations staff:

- Operations Manager (25 hrs)
- Operations Administrators x2 (16 hrs)
- Finance Officer (18.75 hrs)
- Cleaner (10 hrs)
- Children's Discipleship Enabler (18 hrs)
- SEND Outreach & Young Peoples Discipleship Enabler (16hrs)
- Youth and Students Worker (currently recruiting)
- Parish Safeguarding Officer (Volunteer)

Additionally we have one Ordinand based at St James who is training for ministry in secular employment.



# OUR NETWORKS

The work of our churches is supported by a variety of organisations and networks.

Our churches have a long history of connection with **The Order of Mission**, with both congregation members and our previous St John's incumbent and St Stephen's incumbent being members.

We also have a long history of connection to **New Wine**, having been involved in running venues and attending what is now called the Summer Festival.

The Bridge Leadership Team has been involved in hosting and attending Community of Practices with **Kairos Connexion**. They have benefitted from the relationships of peers who also care deeply for missional discipleship.

There are lots of families in the church that include adopted or fostered children and we are building our relationship with **Home for Good** as a result.

We are founding member of **Hope Coventry** which aims to see the transformation of our city.

We are passionate about young people hearing the gospel so support and are supported by **Thrive Youth Ministries** and **Coventry Youth for Christ**.

Due to our location, students are a key ministry for our church and we are supported in this through the work of **Fusion**.

We are open to exploring new networks and affiliations that would support us in our vision and ministry.

The logo for NewWine, featuring the word "NewWine" in a blue sans-serif font, with the tagline "Local churches changing nations" in a smaller, lighter blue font below it.



# THE BRIDGE

## MISSION & OUTREACH

## Getting Courageous Together to Build the Kingdom.

The Bridge maintains a strong vision for local mission and a deep desire to support the wider church in evangelism and developing new ways of being Church. More recently, The Bridge has fulfilled an important strategic role in the Diocese of Coventry, participating in a focus initiative known as a Mission Hub to support growth. This work continues to be led by Associate Minister Rev Erin Gilmour, with the support of the leadership team.

The Diocese is currently reviewing its strategic vision, and while the framework for this particular initiative is being re-evaluated and will likely evolve, the core mission work carried out by The Bridge remains strong and continuous.

We are a proactive centre for mission through:

- **Partnership and Support:** We have a history of partnering with churches, providing support regardless of their tradition or worship style.
- **Learning and Development:** We have served as a centre for learning, encouraging good practices, and fostering mentoring relationships among local churches.
- **Enabling and Empowering Congregations:** We have contributed to the development of new congregations and empowered existing ones by strategically utilising resources and encouraging new missional communities.
- **Growing New Leaders and Sending Out:** The Bridge has a long and rich history of raising up and sending people out from its churches into various forms of ministry and mission. We remain committed to empowering and releasing individuals to serve God in their unique callings, both within the church and beyond.

### Growing Faith Learning Hub

A key and continuing part of our identity is our status as the only Growing Faith Learning Hub in Coventry Diocese. This vital work focuses on supporting families with SEND needs, providing crucial support and connection through our church communities and working directly with our local CofE academy school.

Our mission strategy moving forward is to continue to raise up leaders, plant missional communities, and seek multiplication across every expression of our church life, adapting to the Diocese's evolving strategy while maintaining our commitment to growth and service.





# PARISH LIFE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Parish life across The Bridge is vibrant and community-focused, with each church contributing unique initiatives:

- **Discipleship (across Benefice):** Primarily fostered through Connect/Life Groups.
  - Weekly new believers' Bible study at St Stephen's.
  - Daily Prayer meetings at St John's.
  - Worship and prayer mornings that are interactive and involve the whole family at St Stephen's.
  - Termly Alpha or similar courses are offered.
  - Growing student population supported at St John's supported by Student Nights.

These smaller groups are patchy across our congregations and are in need of fresh envisioning to ensure all our church members are a part of some form of group. We see these as where deeper discipleship takes place through accountability, support and study and helping fuel the outworking of our mission and outreach.

- **Community Programmes & Outreach:**
  - **St James:** Jigsaw playgroup, Open Doors for over-55s, youth ministries, seasonal missional events.
  - **St John's:** Art Group, Memory Cafe, Dandelions (babies and toddler group), Refresh (women's gathering), The Garden of Hope, Soup Lunch, Football team.
  - **St Stephen's:** Weekly Foodbank, Growing Faith Hub at a local school, Breathe (for parents/carers of children with additional needs), youth outreach in collaboration with other churches, active role in Canley Stakeholders and the annual Canley parade.

**Strategic Partnerships:** Collaboration with local schools, uniformed groups, and charities (e.g. Coundon Care, the Community Shop).





# CANLEY PARADE

St Stephen's participates in the annual parade





# CHURCH BUILDINGS

We are seeking a shared vision to bring our buildings up to scratch within The Bridge, recognising that:

**St James:** Needs to be repaired.

**St Stephen's:** Needs to be more accessible.

**St John's:** Needs to better serve as a community hub.

## St James

Construction of St James Church began in 1937, with an extension added in 1939. The building was finally completed and reconsecrated in 1969. It has a seating capacity of approximately 200 to 250 people. The church is used frequently throughout the week for various activities and services. The building consists of three floors, including a main hall, a small kitchen, a crèche room, and a spacious area on the third floor. Unfortunately, the church has had a ceiling leak for the past 30 years, which has gradually worsened. The heating system also needs to be replaced — we are currently relying on temporary heaters. In addition, the electrical system requires major repairs. An estimated £200k is needed to carry out essential maintenance and ensure the building is safe, functional, and well preserved for continued use.

## St John's

Built in the 1840's as a church for agricultural workers, St John's accommodates around 180 people in a stone built main church building with vestry and later additions of an entrance lobby, large meeting room, smaller meeting room, office and kitchen. The building is used as an operational base for administrative and finance staff. The building is regularly used by third parties for meeting rooms. The building's meeting area and lobby are in good condition however the main church requires a new roof, currently estimated to cost £1M. This is a significant challenge and the church is undergoing a programme of work to create a fundraising plan which would include the refurbishment of the main church as part of a community focussed revamp.

## St Stephen's

A post war building which comfortably holds around 80-100 people. It comprises a main hall, vestry, children's sensory room, kitchen and toilets. There is also a "family centre" building owned by the church near the church building which is used for children's groups once a month. The original building had a 50 year shelf life which we have far exceeded and it shows. There is a current programme of work for some upgrades and repairs to help make the building more accessible and welcoming however the building is not truly fit for purpose. Designs have been made in collaboration with the local community centre for a new building, though this would be a multi-million pound endeavour and requires significant injection of community engagement and city council engagement which has been hard to garner.



St John's



St Stephen's



# BRIDGE FINANCES

The Bridge Coventry is in a stable financial position. We're giving thanks to God that giving has increased in the first six months of 2025, and a balanced budget has been set for the year. We approach budgeting prayerfully and with a kingdom focus, seeking to steward resources wisely for God's purposes. We have faith to see continued financial growth to enable the mission that God has called our churches to as we step forward.

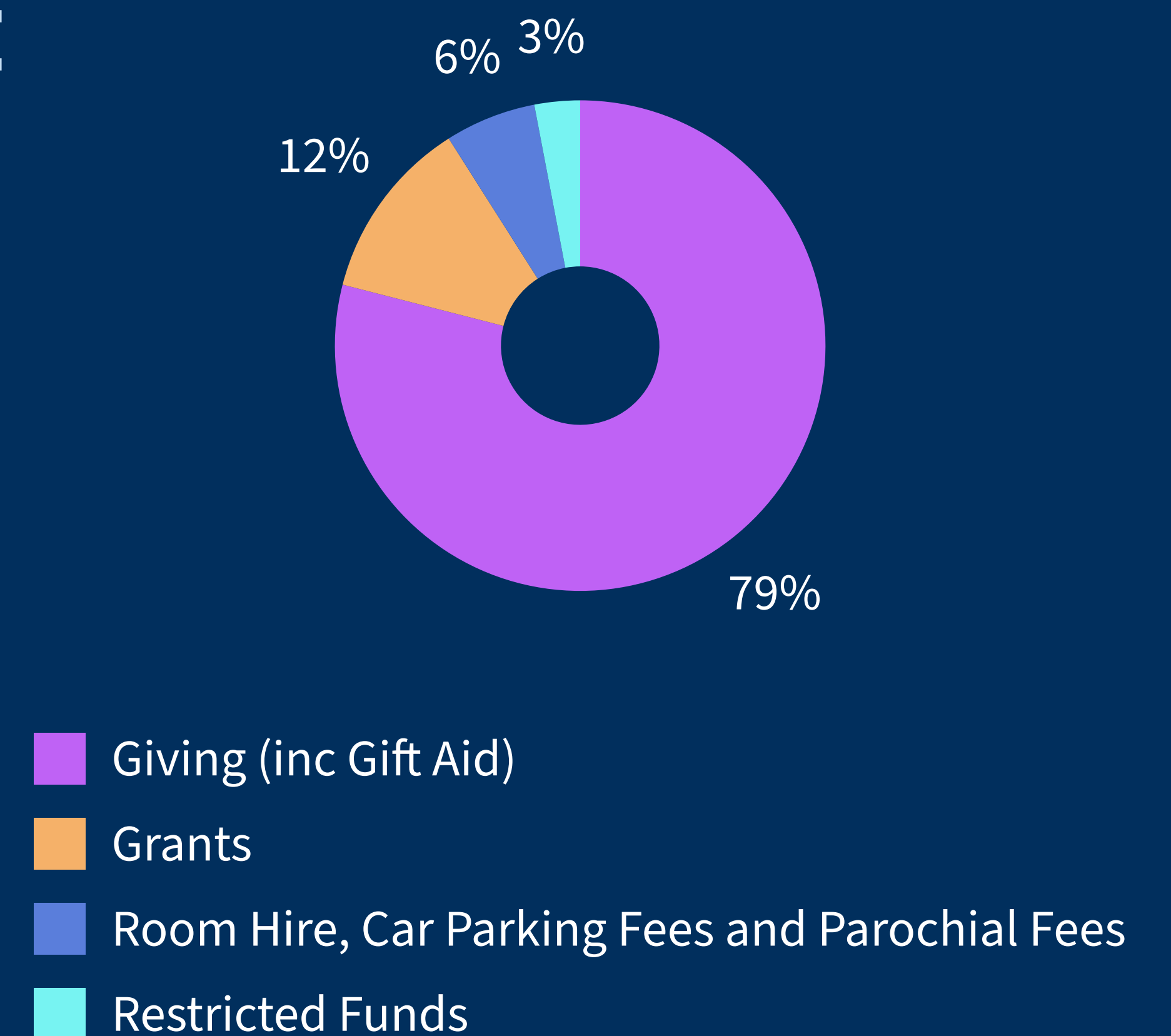
- Budgets across The Bridge are centralised and developed by the Treasurer in collaboration with the Operations Minister, with initial input from the Joint Council before final approval at a subsequent Joint Council meeting.
- Operational budgets (e.g. buildings, digital systems) are set, but remain flexible to respond to perceived needs or areas of growth, within the total agreed expenditure for The Bridge Coventry.
- Shared ministry budgets are overseen by the Operations Minister and the Treasurer.
- Specific budget leads include the Children's and Youth Discipleship Enablers for their respective areas. Each lead is responsible for managing their budget within the agreed parameters.
- Missional events are costed and agreed with the Operations Minister and Treasurer before proceeding, unless they are regular, pre-approved activities. Church leaders are invited to consider events for the year ahead, and these are planned into the annual budget.

The Finance Officer plays a central role in managing payments, expenses, and financial updates. Their work is overseen, where appropriate, by the Operations Minister and the Treasurer. Cash reserves are in the region at c15% of planned expenditure.

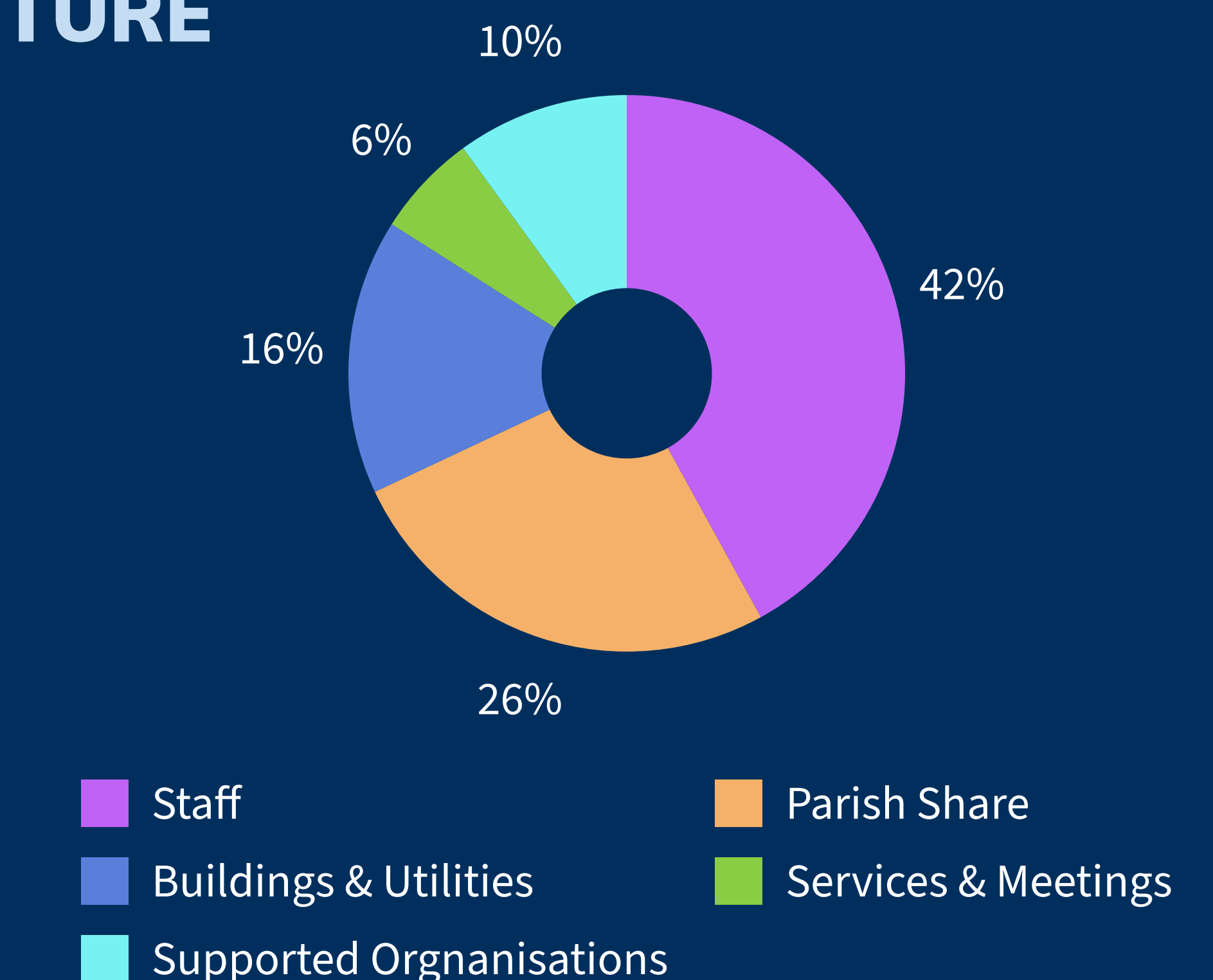
At present, there are no specific fundraising plans. However, the recovering of the roof at St John's, along with the associated ancillary work, will require grants, as the project is expected to cost over £1 million.

Several grant applications have been successful over the past two years, resulting in a person being recruited to work from St Stephen's into the local CofE primary academy, and the extension at St John's having its roof recovered and made watertight.

## INCOME £305k



## EXPENDITURE £310k





# ST JAMES FINANCES

Financial affairs are managed by the treasurer, who in turn reports to the Standing Committee bi-weekly and the PCC every two months.

The Standing Committee are responsible for deciding if any strategic changes are required, which are then taken to PCC for final approval.

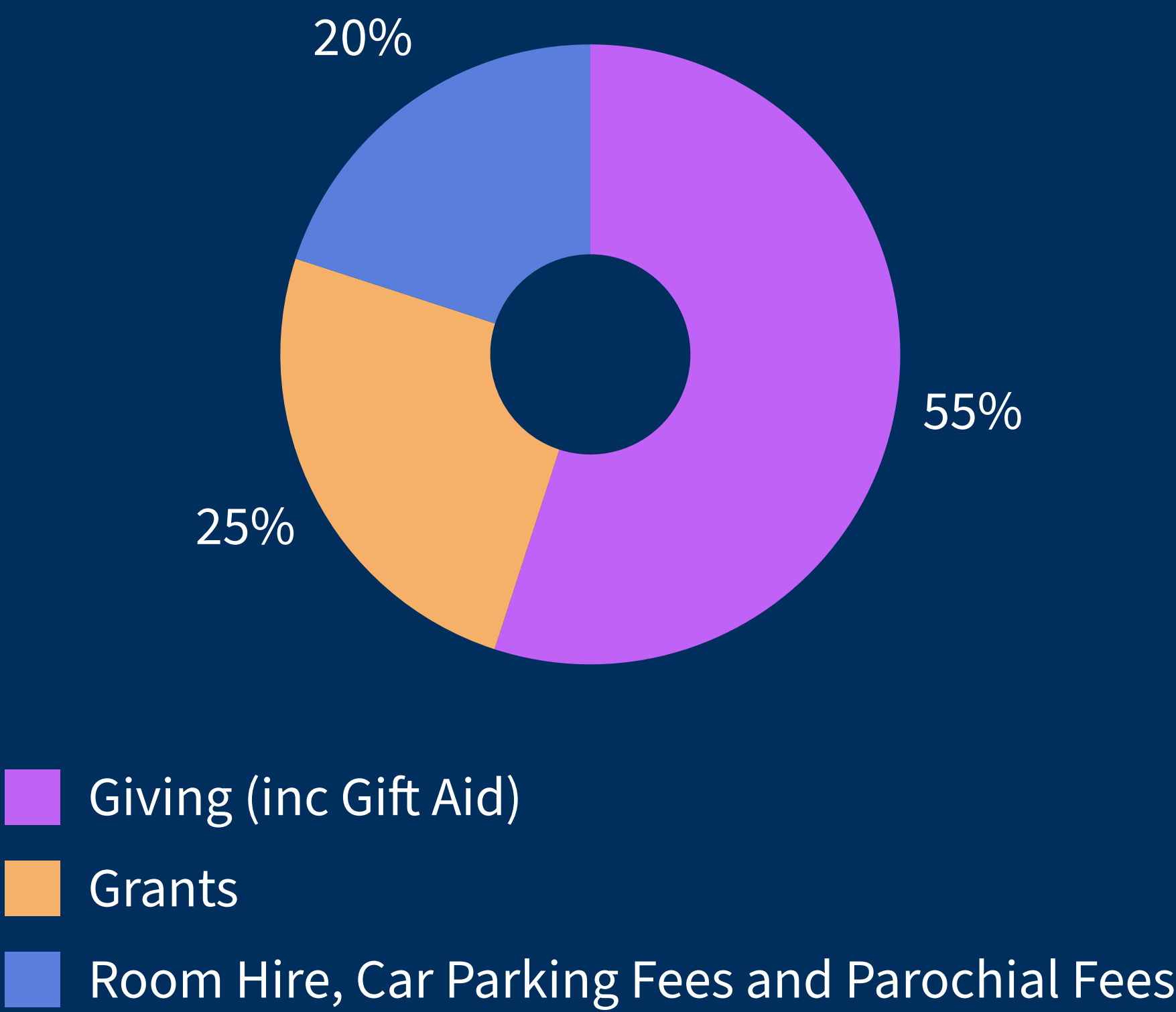
An overall summary of the financial position, both current and forecast, is presented at every PCC meeting. Any significant issues, including cash flow position, are identified along with proposed solutions.

Over the past few years, cash reserves have been used to pay a part time Family Mission Enabler. Consequently, we are now in a position we are running with a cash flow of circa 15%, and have taken the position that we can only spend on projects when we know we have available funds.

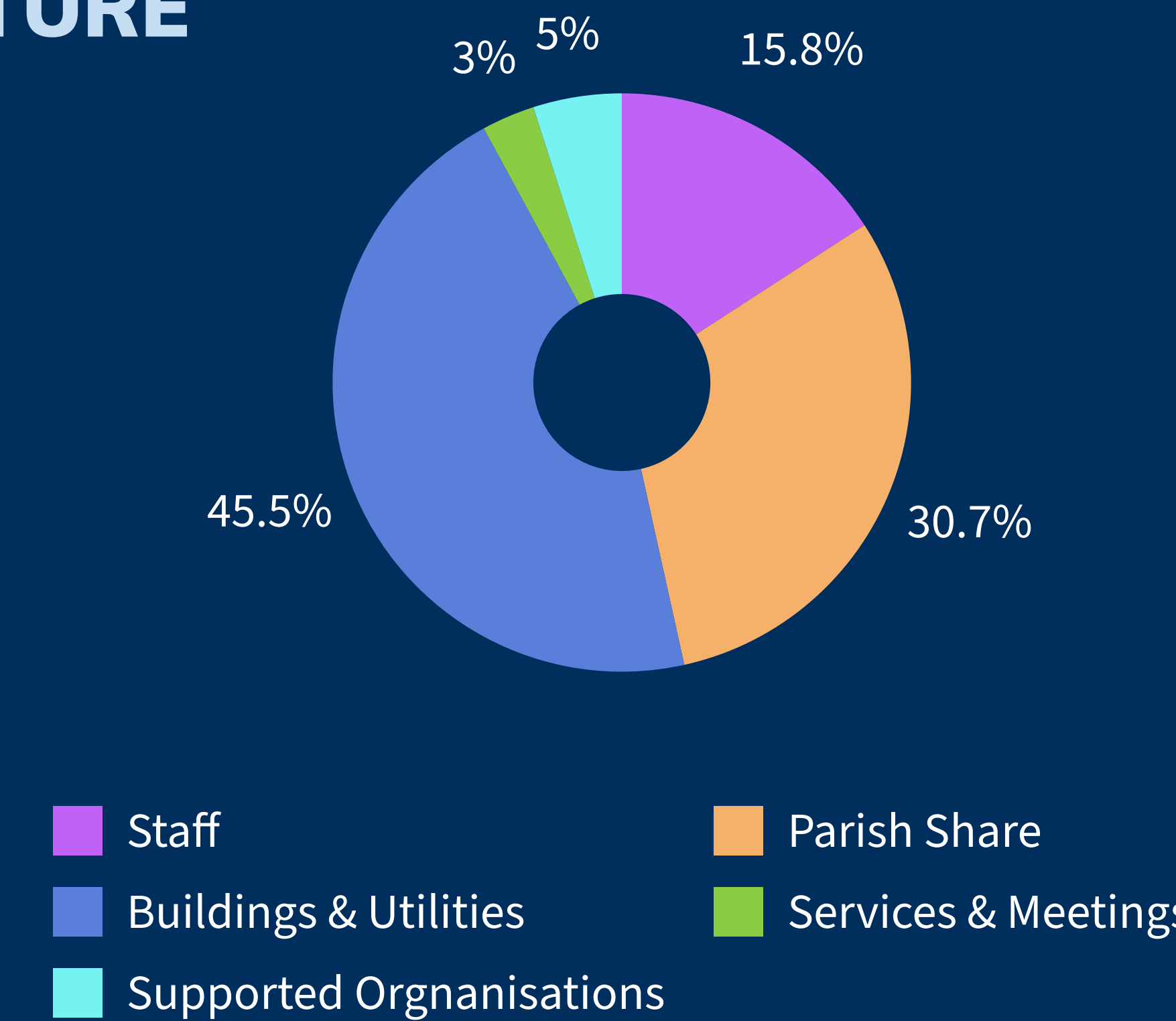
Despite this situation, we have engaged with a professional fund raiser and project manager, which has resulted in a major refurbishment of our church hall. Last year our manager raised circa £90k and we completed a £60k refurbishment of the hall kitchen in April. We are continuing to raise funds for further work on the hall and are now planning to develop this into raising funds for our building work (namely replacement of the heating system and repair of a leaking roof).



## INCOME £121k



## EXPENDITURE £121k





# WHAT NEXT?

## WE ARE PRAYING FOR

- A growing church community with new believers.
- A well supported staff team, managed with compassion and vision for what's ahead.
- People equipped to tell the story of God.
- Wise and mature leadership.
- Continued impact in the community.
- A restoration of passion and energy and more young families.
- Unity across the Bridge.
- Buildings fit for purpose.
- More ways of generating income from our assets.

We are looking for a Leader of Leaders. We want someone with a deep spirituality and relationship with God, who is willing to open themselves up to share their journey of faith and thus to draw others along that path as they hold oversight of these churches and lead the staff team.

We hope that you have enjoyed getting a flavour of St James and The Bridge from reading this profile. Our church communities are blessed with people of many gifts and with a heart to serve God faithfully, but there are also many things we want to do better. Our new Vicar will be given a special welcome and they will be very well supported as they take up their ministry. We can't wait to meet you!

## HOW TO APPLY

For informal conversations, please contact:  
Tom Hickinbottom, Bridge Joint Council Lay Chair by email:  
[tom@ststephenscanley.org.uk](mailto:tom@ststephenscanley.org.uk)

For further details and an application form please contact:  
Debbie Niblett, HR Officer and Archdeacons' Administrator  
by email to [Debbie.Niblett@Coventry.Anglican.org](mailto:Debbie.Niblett@Coventry.Anglican.org)

An application form can be downloaded from the Diocesan Website:

<https://coventry.anglican.org/who-are-we/vacancies/currentvacancies/clergy-vacancies.php>

An Enhanced DBS disclosure is required for this post

