

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. What a great afternoon Saturday 15 June was. The village fete - in support of St George's Church - was another tremendous team effort and success. It was very hard work in the set-up, and breakdown afterwards, but all the hard work and effort was so worthwhile. It was a tremendous community event. So, thank you to everyone who came, had fun and put their hands in their pockets (more than ever, I reckon); thank you to those who ran the stalls, refreshments and entertainment; thank you to those who donated either their time, resources or prizes; thank you to the fete committee for making it happen. It was a wonderful, fun, village event, supported by our MP and, I'm told, Capt. Jack Sparrow - but I never saw him. You have probably heard that it also raised a record amount for the church funds. Thank you for that, too.

There are still some expenses to come in and outgoings to be settled, but so far we have made just over £10,500, our largest total ever and an incredible sum of money to raise in a four-hour village fete on The Green. Many, many other villages would, I'm sure, be green with envy at such a feat, but where does the money go? What does 'the Church' do with it? Nearly £10.5k is a lot of cash, but to put it into perspective our running costs this year are just over £8.2k per month.

As I wrote last year, as briefly and simply as possible: it goes into the general fund of St George's Church account, which pays for the costs of running the church and towards its upkeep.

Our budget for 2019 is £98,700. This is up on last year as a result of our increased allocation to mission and maintaining the fabric of the church. As the contribution from our major fundraiser goes into the general, unrestricted fund, it is not possible to state specifically what the £10,500 raised at the fete will be spent on, but our outgoings for the running and upkeep of your village parish church are on such things as:

- The Diocesan Quota, known affectionately as the Parish Share, which covers things such as the incumbent's stipend (salary) and pension contributions, the training costs of current and future priests and lay people, the Diocesan running costs and staff costs, safeguarding and support of non-parish clergy (eg bishops and archdeacons). Benenden contributes £50,300 to the Diocese.
- Our day-to-day running costs (ie Rector's and office expenses, and assistance from other clergy); this year totals £9,850.
- The costs associated with worship (organ, piano, vestments, choir, Messy Church, etc) are £8,300.
- The running costs of the 'fabric' of the church - the building (insurance, churchyard maintenance, lighting/heating/water and minor repairs) totals £11,300 this year.
- Last year we gave away £5,650 to the work of other charities, locally, nationally and overseas.

As I said last year, people's opinions as to what the money should be spent on will differ, but all of these outgoings are important for the successful running of your village church. Thank you again for supporting the fete, for enjoying yourselves and, in the process, helping others.

Revd David Commander, Rector