

JEMT Report (2015/2016)

During the year Julia Lewis's membership of the Trustees has been ratified by Synod. Synod 2016 will be asked to ratify the reappointment of Mr Ken Wiseman. The process we have followed for appointments is that vacant posts which cannot be filled by the retiring Trustee (by virtue of age, resignation, moving away etc) are advertised throughout the parishes on the island. Applications are then considered by the existing Trustees who make a recommendation to Synod. If the retiring Trustee is eligible for reappointment, and wishes to be reappointed, the remaining Trustees are asked to confirm the reappointment. In Mr Wiseman's case, the recommendation has been unanimous. He has served the Trustees well. His technical knowledge and willingness to conduct site visits, both in respect of technical issues and 'duty of care' have been invaluable.

We have appointed new auditors, following the lead of the diocese, and the research of the Finance Officer, Evangelia Georgiakaki. We have also appointed a new legal adviser, and concluded our former retainer arrangement with the Chrysostomides firm. Pavlos Agapitos, a former employee of that firm has dealt with our business over the past few years, and successfully prosecuted our claim for a refund from the bank following the notorious 'haircut.' He has now established an independent practice. Both these appointments save us money. We continue to be exceptionally well served by our treasurer, Mike Shearsby and Secretary Anetta Stylianou.

Our new system for reporting to JEMT on the state of our buildings is now up and running and administered by Rob Findlater, who has visited all the Chaplaincies to explain what is involved. A simple tick box form is sent to the office at six-month intervals so that JEMT can have early notice of problems, and maintain proper oversight on maintenance.

We have continued to support rents for clergy homes not owned by the diocese. Our 'duty of care' visits are continuing under the supervision of Ken Wiseman. These are inspections of parsonages, owned by JEMT or rented by them, or by parishes with JEMT help, to ensure that they adhere to diocesan expectations for the housing of clergy, in terms of safety and facility.

During the year we have made a grant to St Paul's Nicosia, to help with the installation of new air-conditioning units. There has been considerable discussion about our properties in Kyrenia and Famagusta, some of it prompted by the St Andrews Society in Kyrenia, an arms length organisation with links to the church, whose concern is that our properties there be legally secured. The Trustees are continuing to ensure exactly that, in a situation where the political situation on the island is itself changing rapidly. They have also suggested a framework to allow the commercial letting of the Hartley Cottage, within the Hermitage curtilage. The area around the Houston Cemetery is now landscaped, and there is close liaison between the church and the civic authorities with regard to its upkeep.

The situation of St George's Troodos is becoming a major agenda item. This unique church has been without electricity for the past year, following new arrangements about maintenance that have obtained with the MOD, on whose good will we formerly relied. The church is under-used, and it appears to many that it is unfair for St Paul's to have to carry the full burden of its oversight. The Dean has put forward some proposals, which may lead to a different management system for the church, with a view to both maintaining the building effectively, and developing its wider use. The provision of electricity is our first priority for the coming year. Other priorities identified include the provision of St Paul's disabled facilities, and the making safe of the plaster cladding at St Helena's Court in Larnaca.

One issue at that church is disabled access, and the availability of toilet facilities suitable for use by disabled people. In fact, the Trustees are aware of this as a wider issue. The Nicosia campus, that includes both the Cathedral and Diocesan Offices, has no disabled toilet facility, and no disabled access audit has been carried out in recent times. Work is in hand to improve the situation there, but this wider issue will be a major focus for the Trustees in the coming year. They are determined that all our buildings should be safe and accessible for use by people with any disability, allowing them to participate fully in the activities that take place there as they wish.

The income of the Trustees has been strengthened by the successful renegotiation of the Lukoil contract for a further three years. It had been feared that we may have to settle for a substantial reduction in the rent, but in fact we managed a small increase. All our other income-bearing properties are currently let.

Congratulations have been sent to St Barnabas' Limassol on the occasion of their Centenary.

The Trustees are

Ven Dr John Holdsworth (Chair), representing the Bishop
Mr Robert Findlater
Mr Ken Wiseman
Mr Chris Gibson
Mrs Julia Lewis.

John Holdsworth December 2015