

Questions submitted by church members prior to the meeting

Q: Why are we still having the same sermon series across all four congregations at St Ebbe's (in the city centre) and how long will this continue?

A: Following the same series has enabled us to address certain issues and topics together across all the congregations, for example in the "Gospel, Church and Culture" series in Ephesians. It has also allowed for more coordination of midweek discipleship and training, such as at the Digging Deeper evenings. We plan to continue this pattern for the time being but will keep it under review.

Q: The recent student worker appointment has not increased the diversity of the St Ebbe's staff team. How did the importance of diversity and difference factor into the process of appointing a student worker? And what action will be taken to increase the diversity of the staff team in future?

A: These words were included within the details of the application process for the Student Minister: "Increasing the diversity of our staff team to better reflect our church family context is a priority for us". Attracting applications from a range of people is obviously a crucial first step, so any help from church members sharing vacancies far and wide is also valuable. Diversity will remain one of the important factors which the panels bear in mind in making appointments.

Q: How can a vulnerable adult know that they are safe in your congregations?

A: We seek to do all we can to ensure our church is a safe place for all, by fostering a culture in which respect and care for every individual is central, as well as by following all statutory and Diocesan safeguarding procedures and policies. If anyone has any safeguarding concerns, they should contact one of our own safeguarding team (details on our website), the Diocesan Safeguarding Team or an independent agency such as Christian Safeguarding Services (0116 2184420, contact@thecss.co.uk).

Q: How can a historic victim of church-related harm be encouraged to trust that church again?

A: The answer would depend very much on the circumstances, so it would not be wise to make generalisations. In situations where abuse may have occurred, it is important that appropriate authorities have been informed. Churches need to be always open to learning from the past and, where there have been faults, they should be acknowledged and any necessary changes should be made. What the path towards healing and reconciliation might look like will vary considerably, depending on the nature of the harm. Victims will need the support and wisdom of godly friends.

Q: Is there a discrepancy between the fact that p.20 of the Annual Report says "No remuneration was paid or expenses reimbursed to the Trustees during the current or preceding year" and the fact that a number of church staff (Pete, Al Horn, Tim Dossor, Ben Vane, Annabel) were members of, or attended the PCC? (And, I presume, these staff plus, Vaughan, Joel, and Glenn may have had expenses paid.)

A: Thank you for pointing this out. Licenced clergy are automatically on the PCC and are therefore trustees. The wording on the annual report has been amended. The Governance Committee of the PCC had already alerted us to this issue and we are seeking advice from the Diocesan Registrar. It has long been our practice that clergy do not vote at PCC. When lay staff members attend, they do so as visitors and are not PCC members.