



Mrs Helen Ball
Town Clerk
Shrewsbury Town Council
The Guildhall
Frankwell Quay
Shrewsbury SY3 8HR



Thursday, 15th January 2015

Dear Helen

It is now some 16 months since I became Vicar of St Chad's Church. It has been a most enjoyable time, albeit a fairly turbulent one as a result of the changes we have had to face, not least because of a significant number of deaths amongst our staff and senior church members during 2014.

This has meant that much of this first stage of my incumbency has been spent fire-fighting, with little time to spare to look to the growth and development of our mission. However, we are now addressing this and plan to hold a meeting of our church members this month to discuss all aspects of mission, both at home and abroad. My purpose in writing now is twofold, firstly to ask if we might set up a meeting with representatives of the Town Council to discuss how we might best move forward on the home front, and secondly to ask if the Council might consider transferring its grant made towards our abortive 2014 Music Festival to our Christmas Tree Festival.

ST CHAD'S MISSION

It goes without saying that St Chad's is proud to be the civic church of Shrewsbury, and I personally have enjoyed the many occasions on which we have worked together this year, not least the recent Queen's Dragoon Guards Service, which many have reported to me as being profound and moving. There are also many ways in which St Chad's fulfils its mission within the town of a less formal nature. Many of our members are key figures in the town's voluntary sector organisations, The Ark, Shrewsbury Street Pastors, Signal, Homes for All, A4U to name but a few.

Some 3 – 4 years ago, at the request of our Diocese in Lichfield, we undertook the first stage of a Parish Audit to determine, within the scenario of challenging times for churches today, how best we

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might grow and develop our mission. This first stage was an internal one, and it has already led to the growth of a number of activities. The next stage is to consult with our wider stakeholder group, both in the town and beyond. We would therefore like to meet with the Town Council, as our chief strategic partner, to see how best we might go about determining our future roles and activities. We would like to suggest that, to begin with, a small meeting of a few key representatives from each side might help us to get the process of consultation and planning going. I look forward to your response.

ST CHAD'S MUSIC AND CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVALS 2014

Shrewsbury Town Council has supported our annual Music Festival (held over the Mayday weekend) for many years. This year we were pleased to receive a grant of £2000.00 towards the Festival. Sadly, we could not go ahead as a result of the illness and then death of David Leeke, our Director of Music. We reported this to you, and were advised to hang onto the grant, until such time as we knew whether or not we would be able to continue with the Festival in 2014 – 15. David Leeke's successor, Tony Pinel, took up the post in early September, and after an induction period, participated in a meeting of trustees in December to discuss the possibility of holding the Festival. Unfortunately, it did not prove to be possible, not least because of the availability, or rather lack of it, of performers.

We are, of course, ready and willing to return the grant, if that is your decision, but wonder if you might consider transferring it to our Christmas Tree Festival, which has just taken place in the run-up to Christmas. We are proposing this for two reasons.

1. The two festivals have identical purposes. Quoting from our application to you for this year's grant: "Shrewsbury is both the county town of Shropshire and an increasingly important tourist centre. It has diverse musical life; but, prior to the establishment of the St Chad's Festival, did not have a music festival to sit alongside the many others which attract visitors and local people into the town (eg Cartoon; Folk; Street; Book; Carnival plus the nationally significant Flower Show and a major agricultural show). The festival began in 2009 with a commitment to provide high quality entertainment to the local community and visitors each year at prices that are affordable for the whole community. The festival has always promoted quality events with both local and national performers. The aim has been to draw as many people into the activities of this Festival weekend as possible, not least the increasing role of the local community and our engagement with schools and children's groups."

In addition, this year's Festival planned to commemorate the life of Charles Burney, a son of Shrewsbury, the 200th anniversary of whose death falls next year.

The involvement of schools, community groups and local businesses in the Christmas Tree Festival has been enormous, much larger than last year and indeed even more than for the Music Festival. You may gain some idea of this from the attached schedule of participants and sponsors.

2. The main prompting for this request is financial. Since the necessary building works to our Tower 2 years ago, and the reordering of our organ, together costing over £1 million, our finances have been very difficult indeed, and it is no secret that we are currently being sustained by a loan from our Diocese.

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In response to a question put to us by Andy Watkin, I would stress that we have never applied for a grant on the basis that the Festival would not go ahead if we did not get it. Our response to this question has always been that the Festival would go ahead, willy-nilly, but a failure to get adequate grant aid or sponsorship might bring into question the reality of mounting Festivals in future years.

This year's Christmas Tree Festival, our third, proved far more popular than we could have imagined, and as a result more costly. Attendance was more than 3 times that in 2013, and this is reflected substantially in the added costs of staff time, heating and lighting the church, refreshments etc. Indeed, the Christmas Tree Festival is much larger than the Music Festival, and involves many more individuals and organisations within the Community, although this is not reflected in the finances, since we do not pay performers, nor charge admission. In addition, to compensate for the cancellation of the Music Festival and the associated Charles Burney celebration, we are this week holding a charity evening celebrating the life of another renowned son of Shropshire, Wilfred Owen MC, in conjunction with Shropshire Horticultural Society and Combat Stress. I enclose information about both the Christmas Tree Festival and this charity evening.

We are not yet in a position to provide final figures for the Christmas Tree Festival, but those given in the accompanying report are unlikely to change substantially. They do not include figures for the Charles Burney evening which has yet to take place. We would therefore ask at this stage if it might be possible in principle for the grant to be transferred and, if so, we would of course provide any information you might require in support of this request.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,



Fr. Mark Chadwick
Vicar

St Chad's Church Christmas Tree Festival 2014

Background

1. This is the third year in which St Chad's has mounted a Christmas Tree Festival. Its original aim was in pursuit of our mission as the civic church of Shrewsbury, by providing inspiring events and entertainment to the wider community at Christmas, in addition to the regular programme of services. One unexpected outcome over these three years has been the massive increase in attendance at our Christmas Services which is directly attributable to the success of the Festival.
2. Work on the Festival starts in earnest at the end of the summer, when tree sponsors and performers are contacted. This is an intensive activity which can only be carried out and co-ordinated by our paid office staff. The next stage is promoting the Festival through traditional media and social media and the final stage is the practical work involved in the weeks running up to the Festival.
3. The trees were set up in the week beginning 8th December and dressed over the weekend of 13th /14th December. The Music Programme ran from 15th to 20th December and involved many local schools and colleges. The trees remained in the church for the whole of the Christmas and New Year period and were taken down during the week beginning 5th January 2015.
4. Until now, the Festival has only been made possible with the help of a large body of volunteers, and this is likely to remain the case. Unlike the Music Festival, there is no charge for anyone who wishes to participate, and the only income is from tree sponsors and donations. Refreshments throughout the Festival period are provided by the Friends of St Chad's who retain the proceeds (The Friends exists to support the fabric of the church, and their income essentially covers repairs and maintenance of the buildings). To date, therefore, the church has considered the Festival to be a part of its own contribution to the community at Christmas Time and has never sought funding towards it other than that mentioned above. This will need to change in future if the growth pattern that is emerging is to be sustained.
5. 2014 saw a quantum increase in attendance throughout the whole period, which put an immense strain on the staff and volunteers. It also added substantially to the costs of the event which to date have been absorbed within the church's overall annual budget.

Tree Sponsors

6. This year, there were some 41 trees inside and outside the church, of which 37 were sponsored and 4 provided by St Chad's. The sponsors were:

Attingham Park, National Trust
Aubrey Kirkham
Award Productions
Belle Vue Sign and Print
Brompton Cookery School
Coach & Horses
Co-operative Funeral Directors
Drapers
Dyke Yaxley

Hatchers
Jigsaw Marquees
King's Shropshire Light Infantry
Lanyon Bowdler
Linder Myers
Military Museum
Mothers' Union
Philpott Family Tree
Priory School
Pugh's Funeral Directors
Salop Leisure
Saxonby
Shrewsbury 6th Form College
Shrewsbury Family Chiropractic
Shrewsbury High School
Shrewsbury Horticultural Society
Shrewsbury Morris
Shrewsbury Street Pastors
Shropshire Young Health Champions Sponsored by Andrews, Orme & Hinton
St Chad's Bell Ringers
St Chad's Choir
Tanners Wines
The Ark
The Big Busk Sponsored by John Brown Consulting
The Children's Tree Sponsored by Aktrion Group Ltd
The Friends of St Chad's
TREOWE
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Music Programme 15th—20th December

7. Monday 15th December

Wilfred Owen School 4.00pm

Tuesday 16th December

Greenfields Primary School 11.00am; Shrewsbury High School 12.45pm; Trinity CE School 1.45pm;
Sundorne Community Choir 3.45pm; SYFC Gospel Choir 4.30pm; Oxon CE School 5.30pm; Shrewsbury
Hand Bells 6.00pm

Wednesday 17th December

Mereside CE School 2.00pm; St Andrew's Choir 3.45pm; Bicton CE School 4.30pm;
Shrewsbury College of Arts & Technology 6.30pm

Thursday 18th December

Saxophone Solo 11.00am; Woodfield Infant School 2.00pm; Meole Brace Community Choir 3.45pm;
Crowmoor CE School 4.30pm; St Chad's Choir 7.00pm

Friday 19th December

Concert in the Round: Baroquenroll 12.40pm — A programme with a Christmas flavour. Louise Salmond Smith (recorders) David Butler (piano)

Saturday 20th December

Shrewsbury Suzuki Violin Group 10.30am; The Gallery Singers 11.15am; Shrewsbury Concert Band 12.15pm; Shropshire Ukulele Massive 2.30pm; Music, Dance and Morris Bells from The Shrewsbury Morris Dancers 3.45pm

Other Events

8. In addition to the music programme, the following activities took place:
 - Children's activities organised by Compost Kids
 - The Shropshire Young Health Champions held Upcycling events before and during the festival for young people to create Christmas gifts and decorations out of old materials
 - An event for recipients of the Food Bank on how to make the best of the food provided
 - Buskers performed while the The Big Busk tree was being decorated
 - Shrewsbury College performed at the reception for sponsors and helped with stewarding on the night
 - All schools involved received certificates which count towards their Ofsted assessments.

Media Coverage

9. We received excellent media coverage. BBC Shropshire, in addition to holding their own Carol Service, interviewed sponsors while they decorated their trees, and broadcast pieces throughout the Christmas period. We also received a great deal of coverage through Twitter.

Attendance

10. Because this is an event for which we do not seek grant-aid, and because we do not charge for admission, attendance figures are inevitably an estimate, other than for services which we are required to provide to the Diocese.
11. Of course, many parents and other supporters came to watch the schools perform and a conservative estimate would be around 900 people. On the Saturday, we are confident that there were more than 1000 people visiting the Festival on that day alone. Our best estimate of the total attendance at the Festival, including members of the public as well as church members and families, is something over 3000 people.
12. The attendances at the main Christmas Services was:
 - Nine Lessons and Carols 750
 - Crib Service 800
 - Midnight Mass 200
 - Christmas Morning 350

Donations to Charities

13. The following donations were made to charities from events and services held as part of the Festival:

- Hope House Hospice £291.47 50% Shropshire Radio Carol Service collection
- The Shrewsbury Ark £286.12 50% Crib Service collection.

Finance

14. The figures in the schedule below have not been finalised by this stage, but are an accurate statement of anticipated income and expenditure. 2014 is compared with 2013. The only major guesstimate is the additional income received from Festival participants as donations in our collection boxes, which are mixed in with general giving. We arrive at a figure based on comparisons with giving in the years before we held the Festival. We have not attempted to quantify, in financial terms, the input of volunteers, though this could be done if required. We could also not include figures for the associated Wilfred Owen event which has yet to take place.

Expenditure	2014 £	2013 £	Notes
Christmas Trees	1183.20	1005.67	
Decorations and Flowers	250.00	130.00	
Marketing	450.00	100.00	
Printing	400.00	130.00	
Heating of Church	750.00	450.00	
Loss of Car Park Income	105.00	0.00	
Grants	766.69	220.00	
Refreshments for Reception	200.00	70.00	
Miscellaneous	150.00	50.00	
Staff Costs	5500.00	3000.00	Development Officer, Vicar, Administrator, Vergers, Cleaners
Total Expenditure	9754.89	5155.67	

Income

Tree Sponsorship	1846.00	1670.00
Collection Boxes	1000.00	800.00
Other Donations	360.00	0.00
St Chad's input	6548.89	2685.67
Total income	9754.89	5155.67

Wednesday, 14th January 2015