

2009 St Paul's Church Sound System Appeal

Our target for this Appeal is £10,000. If you are able to help, please place your donation in one of the special envelopes available at St Paul's Church. If you are a UK Taxpayer, the Church can reclaim the tax paid on your donation, so please complete the information on the right hand side. Then please place the sealed envelope in the collection plate at any service, or hand to the Vicar or a Churchwarden or post through the letterbox at The Vicarage. For anybody not living in the Longridge area who wishes to make a donation please telephone 01772 783281 or email vicaroflongridge@aol.com for more information.

THANK YOU

If the Appeal is oversubscribed any oversubscription will be held over for any future appeals for our Churches.

From Vernon Kinrade - Churchwarden

Communication has become ever more sophisticated and, in all areas of life, we've come to depend upon - and expect to receive - clear and accurate information. Corporate worship is no exception. In Hebrews Chapter 4 we're reminded that "...the Word of God is living and active" a statement which, among many biblical references, implies the pre-eminence of speech in communicating God's Word. Which brings us (or not) to the sound system at St Paul's... and its sometimes noticeable shortcomings.

As anyone who attended the Annual Parishioners' Meeting in April will know, plans are afoot to enhance the system at St Paul's - an initiative seemingly popular with members of the regular congregation, who have become accustomed to compensating for a rather variable standard of sound.

A small group of individuals was charged to identify and liaise with audio specialists, with a view to bringing the system at the church in line with current needs and expectations. Quite rightly, these have become somewhat more demanding since the existing system was installed.

The Church has now approved a plan proposed by the most promising of three consultants briefed; one whose comprehensive response demonstrated a clear understanding of our requirements.

Central to their recommendation will be the installation of sixteen specialised line-array loudspeakers within the main body of the church, with an additional two speakers in the upper gallery, all optimally positioned and accurately synchronised to compensate for time delays between the east and west ends of the church. Compare this to the four ageing speakers currently struggling to do the work and you'll appreciate the anticipated improvement in sound quality. Added to this will be far greater flexibility afforded by various different microphone options and other inputs and much better control, facilitated when required by a sound mixer positioned in line of sight with the nave and chancel. An upgrade to the induction loop system is included and requirements in the Centenary Room have also been taken into account.

The Church views this project as of major importance and the cost is significant. Finance for the work will need to be raised and various plans are in hand for special fundraising activities. Some money has been earmarked from church funds courtesy of a donation of £5,000 already received and we'll be aiming to raise a further sum in excess of £10,000 through the generosity of parishioners and the community. It will be quite a task but the benefits, we're sure, will be crystal clear and we hope it's an initiative that will engage people's interest.

If you feel you can lend support please do

From Nigel Spooner our Organist

There seems little doubt that the time has come for complete replacement of the sound system in St Paul's. I'm one of those who rarely sit in a pew in the Nave, but, when I have, the experience has been of a strangely unfocused sort of sound which could be coming from anywhere – hardly abundantly clear and quite an effort to listen to! Central to our worship is the spoken word and, indeed, if the Word does not come across to those throughout the building, then the efforts of those leading our worship are not having greatest effect and our potential for mission is diminished. If we think about it, there are few activities in our typical week when we rely on listening to so much of the spoken word (without much visual stimulus) in one hour. More recently, it has also become important for the sound system to cope with projecting sufficiently in services with larger attendances, so that all can hear (sometimes over inevitable background noise). Speaker technology has moved on remarkably over the past 20 years and it seems sensible to go for speakers which are best suited to speech, not only making every word crystal clear in every position in the church, but also effortless and a pleasure to listen to. "Line-array" speakers are designed specifically for the spoken word and are housed in units of similar profile to the present ones (though a little taller), each containing a number of small rectangular speakers. Moreover, they are designed to limit "vertical spread" so that the sound is all projected at "ear height".

The vast majority of the cost of the new system is in these speakers and in the quantity of them, compared with the present number. The new system will also allow the use of many more microphones for the dais so that, when a number of different people are involved, all individuals can be heard equally. We are assured that this new system will last, certainly, for 20 years and so the 5-figure outlay seems then a more reasonably annual investment for a real improvement in the overall quality of our services. Rarely has the Church been so united on a single cause and keen to vote for this transformation! Let's hope and pray that we can quickly and easily amass the necessary funds to put it into effect and reap the benefits.