

CIL funds awarded for Sound Improvement Project

St Pauls has received a fantastic grant of £12,000 from the Poole CIL Neighbourhood Fund for the Sound System project.

CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) is a levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money should be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods want.

The St Pauls Sound System project committee consisted of Jim Green, Paul Brayshaw, Tony Ridgeway and Sasha Morgan who together with other church members researched what equipment was needed, liaised with potential providers to gain quotes and oversaw various fundraising initiatives. The committee put together a CIL bid application in January and despite being massively oversubscribed, the St Paul's Sound System Project was one of the successful applicants.

The Sound System is an integral part of the building and includes a combination of microphones, signal processors, amplifiers, and loudspeakers all controlled by a mixing console. It also integrates with a Loop system for the hard of hearing. The current analogue system is now estimated to be more than 30 years old and is failing.

The old unreliable equipment urgently needs to be replaced; additional speakers for the roof to better distribute the amplified sound; modern digital multi-channel controls will be installed to allow flexibility; sound absorbing panels will be placed around the building to reduce reverberation that currently spoils the clarity of speech and of music.

The Sound System project committee sought professional advice from a church sound system specialist on what we could do to improve the sound system, and it was recommended that we should re-distribute the sound around the main building by adding an array of additional speakers, we will also need to add a new amplifier to support the speakers. While the venue itself is a great setting for holding community meetings and events such as concerts and choir performances the building itself does present some interesting sound challenges. We will also be installing sound management devices including bass traps, plus we want to upgrade the existing mixer desk to a digital system, this will allow us to store optimal settings for different types of building usage, whether it's for the usual Sunday service, a musical/ singing event or for public speaking or group meetings, thus increasing our prospects for hire in the future, and also providing a better venue for serving the community of Canford Heath.

The total cost of the project is £17,200;

○ Microphones (Sennheiser)	£ 1,028
○ Digital Mixer (Allen Heath QU24)	£ 2,514
○ Re-distributed speakers (NewTech quote QT05097-2)	£ 7,708
○ Sound absorbing panels (own build)	£ 4,800
○ Re-build control console (own build)	£ 1,150

This was a huge target to achieve and was kick-started by our organist Jim Green's efforts. Encouraged by requests from parishioners for a CD of music played on St Paul's wonderful organ, Jim Green initially compiled two CDs with 46 of his favourite pieces for piano, organ and choir, recorded over 4 decades. Now he has produced two more CDs with the help of Rose Fisher and Natalie Williams. The total collection ranges widely within the realm of "easy listening" – from Bach's lively Trio Sonata to Sousa's stirring "Liberty Bell" through Annie's Song, Elvira Madigan, Downton Abbey,

Jenkin's Benedictus and many other modern and classic favourites. The four CDs provide 94 short pieces lasting nearly five hours!

In addition, we organised a variety of other fundraising initiatives such as the well attended Cream Tea Concert, a coffee morning with raffle and also received a generous anonymous donation. In total, over £5000 was raised by Church members towards the target which is an amazing achievement and was very encouraging to have so much practical, spiritual and financial support for the project. However, it was also evident that, to get the full amount for the project, other funding avenues would need to be sought. St Pauls has therefore been extremely fortunate to have been awarded the CIL grant of £12,000 to enable the project to go ahead. Once the Funding Agreement has been completed with BCP Council and the funds are in place, it is hoped the work will be undertaken in the Autumn.