

St. Paul's becomes sound & visual!

Background & Objectives

An "Action-4-Growth" plan arising out of the 2004 questionnaire was presented to the membership as part of a Parish Funding Programme and included a priority to update our sound system as well as to install a seamless A/V system.

Ways to enhance our worship:-

- Connect worship with the visual age (TV, DVD, Internet)
- Provide enhancement of 'sound', e.g. speech, recorded music, live performance support (e.g. choir, soloists, drama)
- Display 'words' more clearly and creatively, e.g. hymns/songs, liturgy, prayers, Bible extracts, sermons, church notices
- Display 'visuals' e.g. images, photos, video clips, live video.

The Benefits:

- More accessible, interesting, welcoming, for newcomers and for regular churchgoers
- Receiving 'the message' in a way we are used to in non-church life
- Greater impact for all churchgoers
- Ability to present visual material for outreach, e.g. schools' services, Alpha, Messy Church

When could it be used?

- Initially at family type services, All-Age Communion, Festivals
- Possibly regular use at main Sunday services (as evidenced at other churches)
- Non-church events in church – concerts, illustrated talks, film shows etc.
- Weddings, funerals, baptisms etc.

Audio System

The main features of the audio system are:

- Ability to input via mixture of wired and radio mics, CD, MP3, instruments and sound tracks from video items.
- 16-channel mixing capability with pre-sets for different scenarios (main services, special services, events).
- Distributed speaker system – several speakers located at the front and on pillars to minimise reverberations in the building
- Sound output fed into the 'loop system' & into existing feeds to enable monitoring from the Creche and the Parish Room
- Ability to digitally record sound from services/events onto memory stick/CD
- Operator position (using laptop/panel) adjacent to the North-West pillar

Visual (A/V) System

The visual system provides:

- Sources of video to be displayed include: Laptop generated, Recorded video material (e.g. DVD, MP4, ...), Video cameras as a future option
- Laptop will be the main source of control of the video which will include hymn, prayers, bible, liturgy texts managed by a software application such as 'Song Pro', and or presentation material via Powerpoint.
- The main display will be 2 permanently mounted LCD screens (50" diag) located on either side at the front of the Chancel.
- Two Feedback/Foldback LCD screens (17" diag) will be mounted on the East side of the front pillars to provide visual feedback to the upfront areas.
- Selection capability to provide the operator/ worship leader with the ability to switch and control the video sources.

General

St Paul's is an 'open' church which means that security is an issue. Permanently located items, such as loudspeakers and display screens in open areas will be mounted securely to discourage theft or damage.

Most of the control for both audio and video will be done via laptop(s) which can plug in either at the NW pillar, or on the dais area. There are also simple control panels for audio and video, for use when there is no operator present.

Project History

The project was approved as part of the 2004 Action-4-Growth strategy and was started in 2007 when significant funds had been raised (£30,000)

Early 2008, after visits to local churches known to be actively using A/V facilities, significantly Holy Trinity Claygate, initially two companies were approached to provide quotations but these were beyond available finances – mainly because of expensive projector-based visual systems.

Faced with the choice of cutting back the project, another supplier, Deltasound, a local company, provided a quote late 2008 offering a simpler visual system making use of large size LCD/Plasma panels which was within our financial limits.

Delta provided a demo of the LCD screens in St Paul's in Feb 2009 which found a great deal of support among the congregation. In March 09, the PCC opted for LCDs in preference to projected displays.

The bidders were asked to re-quote and, as a result of this, Delta was selected as the preferred supplier with PCC approved given in March 09. The DAC (the diocesan planning process) visited St Paul's July 09 and requested smaller loudspeakers. Sound tests were carried out Nov 09 whilst the PCC approved the final quote with DAC's formal approval given at Christmas 09.



Contracts were signed Feb 2010 with work currently underway expected to be completed by the end of March. This will be followed by a training programme.

We now look forward to completing the implementation phase of the project in the near future.

Looking ahead, the project team believe that a major factor in the success of the use the A/V facilities will be the following:

- Training in the use of microphones
- Organising teams to operate the facilities – this starts with recruitment and training. The A/V system demands a much more 'hands-on' approach than the systems that we are familiar with.
- Training for the Ministry teams and other performers in the preparation of material for the A/V system.