

**THAMES WATER UTILITIES LIMITED (THAMES TIDEWAY TUNNEL)
DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER**

**RESPONSE SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF
FR PAUL BUTLER, RECTOR OF ST PAUL WITH ST MARK'S, DEPTFORD.**

**Planning Inspectorate Reference: WW010001
Unique Reference Number: URN10017385**

The Examining Authority has invited responses to questions it has posed relating to St Paul's Church, Deptford. Responses to relevant questions prepared on behalf of St Paul's Church are set out below adopting the same numbering as in the Examining Authority's document:

27.18. Can Father Paul Butler or his representative comment on the role of the suggested heritage outreach worker and the extent to which this approach could mitigate any impacts on St Paul's Church?

Fr Butler has been provided with a draft description for the part-time role of a "heritage support worker". The post holder will be expected to work to support "the ongoing use of St Paul's Church during the construction works at Deptford Church Street in order to help safeguard this heritage asset." The description includes a commitment that "all activities undertaken by the heritage worker will be devoted to proactively safeguarding the Grade 1 St Paul's Church in line with the church's existing work and that of the parish." Thames Water emphasises the need for the post holder to focus "solely on matters in connection with St Paul's Church and not general engagement in relation to the Thames Tideway Tunnel". These aspects of the job description are all welcome.

The successful candidate will be appointed by and be accountable to Thames Water. It is, however, vital that the post holder has the Rector's full confidence. Fr Butler therefore welcomes a footnote in the job description indicating that he will be involved in the selection process.

It is, however, unclear from the job description what outcomes for St Paul's the successful candidate will be expected to achieve. The post holder's first task will be to develop a plan "on how best to safeguard the ongoing use of St Paul's". It would be helpful if Thames Water could identify some broad objectives which can then be fleshed out in the plan.

The appointment of a heritage support worker could prove useful, but for Fr Butler to give the proposal his unqualified backing he needs more information on how it is envisaged that the role will mitigate the adverse implications of the Thames Tideway Tunnel works.

33.13. What would be the advantages and disadvantages, in terms of community impacts, of precluding all work (including maintenance) on Saturdays and Sundays at Deptford Church Street?

Sunday is the most sacred day in the Church's weekly calendar and St Paul's attracts around 100 parishioners as well as people from outside the parish who wish to worship in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. The Deptford Church Street Site Specific Requirements in Part B of the Code of Construction Practice stipulates that the contractors may carry out maintenance work on Sundays between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm. Maintenance work could therefore take place during at least part of Morning Prayer (which begins at 9.30 am) and throughout the duration of the parish Mass (which begins at 10.30 am). Maintenance activities are said in the Code to comprise "general mechanical maintenance to construction machinery and plant such as cranes, excavators, compressors, grouting equipment and dewatering equipment.". Maintenance work is often noisy and disruptive even if it does not generate the same levels of noise as construction work. Moments of stillness and solemnity in the Mass should not be ruined by external clatter. The Code of Construction Practice restricts the maintenance work which can be carried out on

Sundays to what is “essential”. If plant and equipment require maintenance on a Sunday, such work should be carried out on Sunday afternoons in preference to Sunday mornings.

Saturday is the preferred day for weddings for most parishioners. Weddings generate significant revenue for St Paul’s. People getting married understandably want a day to remember and will be extremely troubled by the prospect of construction work and traffic movements taking place as people gather for the service, during the service and as they congregate for photographs after the service has ended.

Fr Butler anticipates that no bookings will be taken for weddings on Saturday mornings since under the standard working hours which are applied by the Code construction work may be undertaken between 8.00 am and 1.00 pm, with an hour either side for “mobilisation”. Under the standard working hours, maintenance activities can be carried out between 1.00 and 5.00 pm. While these might not be as invasive as construction work, they will generate unwelcome noise at what for the couple and their guests is a day of huge importance in their lives.

Worse still, the Code allows the standard working hours to be extended from 1.00 to 5.00 pm on Saturdays “to cover certain construction activities that will not be completed during standard working hours”. There is no limitation in the Code on how many times standard hours may be extended. Furthermore, there is no requirement on Thames Water to give advance notice of a decision to extend the hours to be worked. Fr Butler would have to warn any marriage candidates of the risk that construction and/or maintenance work could be carried out before, during and after the service and that he would not necessarily be told in advance. Few are likely to treat such considerations lightly in selecting a wedding venue.

St Paul’s also holds Morning Prayer (at 9.30 am) and Mass at (10.00 am) on Saturdays.

Weekends play an important part in the life of what is an open and inclusive church welcoming worshippers and visitors, many of whom have left the parish, but return (sometimes to marry) because they have established a deep affection for St Paul’s.