

St Mary the Virgin, Wheatley

Registered Charity No: 1159100

**ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS**

OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2017

St Mary the Virgin, Wheatley

**ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS**

**OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2017**

Incumbent
Reverend Nigel Hawkes
The Vicarage, London Road, Wheatley, OX33 1YA

Banks
Barclays Bank plc

Independent Examiner
Mr A Bradburn
18, Barlow Close, Wheatley, OX33 1NL

St Mary the Virgin, Wheatley
Independent Examiners Report to the PCC of St Mary the
Virgin Church, Wheatley

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31st December 2017 which are set out on the following pages.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Churches trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The churches trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act.
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) Act) and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiners report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiners statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

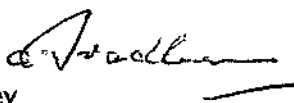
which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act ; and

To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met or

To which in my opinion attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Anthony Bradburn
18 Barlow Close, Wheatley



Date 19th March 2018

Parochial Church Council of St Mary the Virgin Wheatley
Statement of Financial Activities
Year Ended 31st December 2017

Year to 31/12/2016	Notes to the Accounts	Parish Ministry £	Designated Funds £	Total £
Incoming Resources				
12456.25 Congregation Income	3	12421.3		12421.3
35374.00 Monthly Standing Orders		34372.9		34372.9
5376.10 Other Planned Giving	4	9363.03		9363.03
1.52 Bank Interest		5.7		5.7
0.00 Friends of St.Mary's		0		0
12658.16 Gift Aid From HMRC		12683.23		12683.23
15108.32 Other Income	5,10	31887.97		31887.97
727.56 Stewardship		727.56		727.56
£81,701.91 Total Incoming Resources	1	101461.69	£0.00	101461.7
Resources Used				
7581.68 Buildings	6	9161.19		9161.19
736.75 Charities	9, 12	897.19		897.19
773.51 Congregation				
1514.00 Fees ODBF		1994		1994
86.42 I.T.Costs		111.68		111.68
755.00 Magazine	7	821.4		821.4
6865.88 Ministry	8	7305.96		7305.96
2335.76 Office		2523.87		2523.87
58218.93 Parish Share		56843.82		56843.82
1404.00 Utilities		1980		1980
Project 20-20		9750		9750
Bank Charge			3.16	3.16
80271.93 Total Resources Used	1	91389.11	3.16	91392.27

1429.98 Income in Excess of Expenditure 10072.58 -3.16 10069.42

FUND BALANCES

1429.98 Net Movement in Funds in Year		10072.58	-3.16	10069.42
49158.24 Fund Balances Bwt Fwd at 1st Jan 2017		20116.92	30471.30	50588.22
Fund Transfers	11	-20822.17	20822.17	0
		2136	-2136	0
50588.22 Fund Closing Balances on 31st December 2017		11503.33	49154.31	60657.64

BALANCE SHEET

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CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

2280.52 Coventry Building Society	2286.22
17836.40 Barclays Bank Current Account	9217.11
30471.30 Barclays Bank - 'Capital Projects Fund'	49154.31
50588.22 Total	60657.64

Notes

Designated Funds: The PCC agreed in 2013 that these funds be termed 'Designated Funds' i.e. they are not to be used for day to day running expenses, but held 'towards future capital expenditure'.

Other notes are referred to overleaf.

Notes on the Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2017

These accounts cover the two community accounts held by the PCC. In addition, and during the course of the year a third account was opened to support the Maple Tree Children's Centre. This was run by the Children's Centre with a zero opening and closing balance. This third account does not appear below, as it had no direct bearing on the running of the Church accounts.

1. **Total Income** was £101,461.69, an increase from 2016 (£81,701.91), largely because of a bequest (Withy King) of £20,822.17 received during the year. Expenditure was £91,392.97. (£86,277 in 2016), but this includes expenses undertaken as part of Project 2020 (£9750). There was a surplus of £10069.42*.
2. **Assets.** Our assets are the funds held in our Bank accounts and the **Building Society Account** amounting to £60657.64. The funds held in the **Millennium Account** (£49154.31) have increased proportionately. (See note on Transfers (11. below). The **Coventry Account** (£2286.22) has remained virtually static throughout the year.
3. **Congregation Income.** – (£12421.3). This includes all collections made during services, the numbered envelopes and the one-off Gift Aid envelopes. It does not include collections made on behalf of other charities.
4. **Other Planned Giving** – (£9363.03). This includes Donations received through the Charities Trust and some generous individual donations, together with contributions relating to the Magazine, Coffee, Flowers and Floodlighting requests.
5. **Other Income** – (£31887.97) This includes the bequest (see item 1. Above) Fund Raising events (£5113.80) (see note 10.) and Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals – (£5952)
6. **Building Costs** – (£9161.19). These are costs incurred for the day to day running of the building excluding the heating and lighting. They include the Insurance (£3456.20), Cleaning (£2029.50), Health & Safety (£180.67), a new door lock to the church (£1988.87) and the Clock (£250.80) but it excludes repair to the Bier House roof, which has been funded by "The Friends of St. Mary's", which amounted to £3438.00.
7. **Magazine Costs** – Printing the magazine cost £821.40. It did however generate some donations amounting to £357.00 (see 4. Above)
8. **Ministry Costs** – £7305.96 - include small items such as candles, communion wine and some Diocesan costs, as well as **Music Costs** which amount to £5680.21. One major music cost was the purchase of a new piano (£1919)
9. **Charitable Giving** - (see also note 12.) This excludes Fund Raising events for the Church. The congregation has contributed towards a wide range of charities. Some donations have been supplemented by the PCC to the tune of £897.19, including regular funding of Fusion - £600 p.a. Total giving to Charities was £ 2759.74
10. **Fund Raising** – This includes: A Christmas Carol, Summer Garden Party, Pimms and Strawberries, Musical Events, The Christmas Fayre, Ride and Stride, Harvest Supper (£5113.80)
11. **Transfer of Funds** – The Bequest (£20822.17 – see 1) above)) was transferred to Designated Funds, whilst £2136 was moved from Designated Funds to current account to cover building work, including the new door lock.

Notes on the Accounts for the Year Ended 31st December 2017

12. Charities

	<u>Congregation</u>	<u>PCC</u>
Asylum Welcome	205.55	
British Heart	80.08	
Cecily	50	43
Children's Society	74.5	
Christian Aid		
Church Urban		
Domestic Violence		
Firefighters	295.88	
Fusion		<u>600</u>
Jo Homan		24.99
Merlin	75	47.20
National Churches Trust		50
New Leaf		65
Oxford Domestic Violence	20	
Porch	130.01	
Rosy	350.33	
Shelter Box	406.2	
Sobell House	100	
Toilet Twinning		67
Violence		
Yellow Submarine	75	
	<u>1862.55</u>	<u>897.19</u>

TOTAL £ 2759.74

**Friends of St Mary the Virgin
Wheatley**

Report and Accounts

for the

Year Ended 31st December 2017

FRIENDS OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN , WHEATLEY

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE OF FRIENDS OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, WHEATLEY

I have independently examined the accounts of the Friends of St Mary the Virgin, Wheatley for the twelve months ending 31st December, 2017 as set out on page 1 as required by the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 to 2001.

The Committee has elected to prepare the accounts on the Receipts & Payments basis, and the requirement for independent examination allows me to report under Regulation 7 instead of Regulation 25.

My responsibilities are to:

- identify whether or not proper accounting records have been kept;
- check that the Friends of St Mary the Virgin, Wheatley accounts agree with the accounting records;
- look for possible significant errors in the accounts;
- check that the accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the church Accounting Regulations in so far as these apply to the Receipts & Payments basis;

Where matters have arisen from this examination that give cause for concern it is my duty to report it.

My report:

No matters have arisen during the course of my examination where I have to give an adverse report.

.....
Anthony Bradburn
18 Barlow Close
Wheatley

Date 22nd 17th Feb 2018

Friends of St Mary's Wheatley

General Fund Receipts & Payments Account

for the twelve months ended 31 December 2017

	Twelve Months ended 31 December 2017	Twelve Months ended 31 December 2016
Receipts		
Planned Giving	3,690	3,637
Donations	100	714
	<hr/>	<hr/>
GiftAid recoveries	3,790	4,351
	883	2,166
Total Giving	<hr/>	<hr/>
	4,673	6,517
Fund raising	-	-
Total Income	<hr/>	<hr/>
	4,673	6,517
Payments		
Donations to St Mary's for Fabric repairs	3,438	2,643
Total Payments	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,438	2,643
Excess of receipts over payments	1,235	3,874
Reserves at 1st January 2017	22,954	19,080
Reserves at 31st December 2017	<hr/>	<hr/>
	24,189	22,954

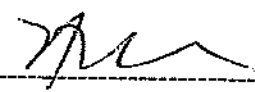
Statement of Assets & Liabilities at 31st December 2017

	31 December 2017	31 December 2016
Assets		
Bank account (Barclays)	24,189	22,954

After the current Gift Aid claim is processed in 2018 about £922 for qualifying donations received in 2017. Gift Aid received in 2017 relates to those donations received in 2016. In 2016 Gift Aid amounts received were for 2014 and 2015.

Signed on 20 March 2018


Peter Fanning, Chairman


Henry Turman, Hon Treasurer

Church of St Mary the Virgin, Wheatley

Annual Report 2017

The PCC of St Mary the Virgin Church, Wheatley, has the responsibility to promote, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the responsibility for maintaining the fabric of the Church.

1. Wheatley Ministry, Local Ecumenical Partnership and Wheatley Area Churches: St Mary's shares an ecumenical partnership with Wheatley United Reformed Church and St Bartholomews's Holton. The Rev. Nigel Hawkes is our minister licensed by the Bishop to take services at St Mary's. Wheatley is part of The Shotover Group Benefice with Albury, Holton, Waterperry and Waterstock with Nigel as its vicar and he was assisted by Rev. David Bendor-Samuel, an Associate Priest based on Holton from June and in the main looks after the four additional parishes. In November Alexandra Hewitt was licensed to serve as LLM to preach and assist with pastoral work in this parish.

Local Ecumenical Partnership: Close links were maintained; joint services and social activities were shared.

Wheatley Area Churches: The WAC consists of St Mary's Church, United Reformed Church, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, St Bartholomew's Church and Wheatley Community Church. It continues to hold core events, such as Good Friday's Prayer breakfast, Procession of Witness, Meditation service and Stations of the Cross; Remembrance Day Service and Village Carol and Crib Services, Women's World Day of Prayer and Community events held by 'Fusion'. Lent Lunches were held with proceeds donated to Christian Aid. The Christian Aid Collection in the village is organised by this group.

2. Administrative Information

St Mary the Virgin Wheatley is situated in Church Street, Wheatley. It is part of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is the Vicarage, London Road, Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1YA
Registered Charity Number 1159100

PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2017 until the date the report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent The Reverend Nigel Hawkes* (Chairman)

Church Wardens Mrs Elaine Parsons*
 Mrs Meg Barbour* (until April 2017)
 Mrs Jane Fanning* (from September 2017)

Deanery Synod Representatives

Mr Gareth Hatton

Mrs. Valerie Farmer

Elected Members

Mrs Meg Barbour.	Mrs Zannifer Mason
Mrs Pat Bunniss	Mrs Carole Newman
Mr Chris Clements* (Vice Chair)	Mr Adrian Scott
Mr Peter Fanning* (Treasurer)	Mrs Anne Walker
Mrs Jane Fanning (until Sept.2017)	Mr Tony Wigley*
Mrs Louise Hatton (until April 2017)	Mrs Margaret Wilson* (Secretary)
Mrs Alexandra Hewitt,	

The PCC met six times during the year.

The F&GP met five times (membership marked with an *)

3. Worship

BPC Holy Communion: Sundays at 8.00 a.m.

Parish Eucharist: Sundays at 10.00 a.m. with a Family Service on the first Sunday of each month.

Holy Communion: Wednesdays at 12 noon.

Special Services and Events: Mothering Sunday, Ash Wednesday and Women's World Day of Prayer services were held. Lent groups were attended and the Palm Sunday Service was preceded by a procession with palms. During Holy Week a Maundy Thursday Vigil was kept. On Easter Saturday we held a family Stations of the Cross. Easter Sunday consisted of 6.00am Vigil Service, 8am Holy Communion and 10am sung Eucharist Service. A Fusion Holiday Club Service, a Choral Evensong for the Patronal Festival, Family and School Harvest Festivals were held. A service to Commemorate the Departed was held in November and the Family Christingle Service in December.

Advent Carol Service, School Carol Service, Crib Service and Christmas Day Services. A production of Joseph, several music concerts and a play were held in the Church.

Deanery Synod

Two members of the PCC sit on the deanery synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between parish and the wider structures of the Church. Please see Deanery Synod Report.

Music: Please see Music Report.

Servers, Sacristans, Sidespersons and Bellringers

One Sacristan prepares for our church services and a rota of Servers and Eucharistic Assistants carried out their duties. Liz Clements co-ordinated the 14 sidespersons, who support the Churchwardens in welcoming those who come to worship. The Bellringers have rung regularly for services, including weddings and special events throughout the year. Please see Bellringers Report.

Attendance 2017

The annual attendance has decreased slightly over the year mainly due to bereavements, people moving away from the area or to another Church.

There were 131 Communicants on Easter Day, with a total attendance of 155. There were 150 Communicants on Christmas Day & Christmas Eve, with a total Christmas attendance of 346 (65 of which were young people). A further 200 attended the Village Carol Service. Prior to Christmas the Primary School had their Carol Service with an attendance of 250.

Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals:

There were 14 baptisms and 3 weddings. Clergy officiated at 12 funerals: Five of which were burials and 7 cremations. There has been 1 further interment of ashes.

Young People

King's Club a group for children aged 5-13 runs every week except the first Sunday of each month. Children have their own teaching and prayer session during the sermon, creed and intercessions, in the Edward King room.

4. Church Activities: Social Events and Fundraising:

The Events Committee organised several events: Christmas Fayre, Pimms's Strawberries and Jazz, Summer Garden Party in the Vicarage Garden, Quizzes, Toy and Book sales and a Harvest Supper raising £3253 overall. The Oxfordshire Historic Trust Ride and Stride of which St Mary's received £553. Sponsorship for Floodlighting of St Mary's raised £390. Production of Joseph £1233 and musical events £75. A visit to Pershore took place. Monthly Sunday lunches at the New Club organised by Meg Barbour are popular and appreciated by those who attended.

Mission and Outreach

£2759.74 (excluding any Gift Aid declarations) was raised to support mission projects at home and overseas. St Mary's along with Wheatley Area Churches, shared in the distribution of Christmas and Easter cards to every household in the village. St Mary's parishioners made regular donations to the Community Foodbank and actively support Christian Aid week collections in the village.

Fusion: An after-school club, Xtream (for year 2-6 children) is held weekly. Xplore runs weekly at lunchtime in Wheatley Park School. The Youth group is running fortnightly in the URC hall. Other events included/ a St George's Fun Day and a summer Holiday Club. A lively Holiday Club Celebration Service was held in August. A Light Party for kids was held in conjunction with WAC in October at St Mary's.

The Church Magazine

The Church magazine is produced on a monthly basis, except for joint editions in July/August, and December/January. This excellent magazine keeps everyone up to date with Church family news, events and services and is provided free of charge.

Fair Trade

St Mary's operates a Fair Trade Church and provides a Fair Trade Stall on the first Sunday in each month after 10.00 am service.

Men's Group Report

The group continued to meet through the year at various places with no set pattern for our meetings. Please continue to pray for us.

Ladies Group Report

The ladies group met throughout last year, usually on the first Friday of each month. They are an eclectic mix of people and have enjoyed various events including BBQ, walking, a demonstration of printing and bookbinding, party games, shared supper, theatre visit, support of women's world day of prayer and women's refuge.

St Mary's Guild

We are a friendly group who meet monthly, the fourth Tuesday in the month. We have regular speakers each month, a summer outing and a summer tea party along with a Christmas party. New members welcome.
Wendy Rogers, Chairman.

Wheatley CE Primary Academy School

The school has had a tough year with Ofsted inspections and the stress this produces. The children during all this have remained happy, and continue to make progress. The head Mrs Karen McKenzie resigned and the interim heads have been making steady progress and we look forward to the appointment of a new head. The vicar has visited regularly to hold assemblies, and the children have visited Church for Easter, Harvest and Christmas Services. Our prayers are with the school at this critical time.

Vision Group

Project 2020 is the only project currently being undertaken by the Vision Group albeit it is supportive of any remedial work necessary in repairing the St. Mary's Bells.

During 2017 we made reasonable progress with project 2020 and we entered 2018 with renewed energy and confidence that we can deliver on a project which will deliver significant benefits to the congregation and the community.

The feasibility study is now complete and our proposal was submitted to the Diocese Advisory Committee (DAC) on March 12th, it received a very positive response. Our expectations were exceeded and we have been granted verbal approval for all aspects of the project except for the decision about replacing the pews and the choir stalls. Our homework is to complete our survey work and prove conclusively that this very significant decision is supported by the needs of the congregation and the wider community.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Liz Kitch from the DAC who has helped and steered us through this journey. Her advice has been invaluable and we remain confident that the final hurdle will be overcome. Thanks also should be recorded to Leap Design for their contribution.

From a PCC perspective we have spent our allocated funds wisely and despite some optimism about reclaiming VAT on the feasibility phase this has not come to fruition. We were very grateful for Meg Barbour's kind donation and we look forward to another £2500 from the Archdeacon. Overall we will need to draw another £2000 from reserves to break even on costs relating to the feasibility stage. This overspend came from a Diocese recommendation to undertake a design summary to show how we concluded on our preferred option. Leap Design completed that work for us.

We have also started to explore mainstream funding opportunities, which are numerous, and again linked to completing the survey work and gathering letters of intent. Funding organisations will also want assurance that there is a need and an intent to use their investment to best effect

The real project(s), of course, is delivering the community benefit from the investment. Our aspiration is that our warm, comfortable and welcoming church will be in great demand from a wide range of groups, clubs and event organisers. They will have at their disposal a fully equipped facility which because of its flexibility will be valued by everyone.

St. Mary's will compliment other facilities in the village and not attempt to duplicate them. It will offer scale that other buildings cannot, without significant capital investment.

At the heart of this will be St. Mary's Church which will continue to be a place of Christian worship, touching the lives of all of the villagers and providing support where it is needed.

Well done and thank you to the project team, so far!

Peace be with you

Chris Clements Chairman, St. Mary's Vision Group

Project Team

Chris Clements, Nigel Hawkes, Howard Stones, Elaine Parsons,

9. Church Fabric Report

The buildings and churchyard remain in relatively good health, despite the attention of various storms and extremes of weather. Little of the outstanding work from Quinquennial 2014 was completed in the year; the original contractor was busy and the necessity of fitting in small amounts of decorating, repointing or individual roof tile repairs was questioned in the perspective of Vision 2020 that began to dominate thoughts. Unless there is a definite chance of ongoing damage, it seemed prudent to determine what overlap the major works might have on the general day to day maintenance of the church fabric, with a conclusion to allocate some of the Quinquennial works to the 2020 programme.

Long awaited pollarding of the east boundary limes was eventually approved and carried out, and tree limbs fallen under the weight of snow in the churchyard were removed by the churchyard team without damage to any gravestones. High winds removed the lead mono-ridge to the newly re-roofed bier house, but fortunately the lead was able to be straightened and re-fixed.

Faulty lighting to the Edward King Room and chancel was replaced as was the electronic lock on the main porch entrance. In September the toilet blocked when the pumping station outside the west door seized under a deluge of paper hand towels and baby wipes etc. Thinking we might have to replace the very expensive pump, we were saved by the tanker driver who pumped out the chamber and then cleaned out the macerator pump for no extra charge. The bells have just inspected and given their annual maintenance during the coldest day of the year. There has long been concern about the state of the headstocks and strap adjusters to four bells, so it was worth the climb to see the issues and discuss them first hand with the inspector. Whilst it is impossible to say if or when any bell might become unsafe to be rung in the long term, there appeared to be no immediate issues. However, if the 2020 works to the Edward King room go ahead, the bells will need to have been

given their new 100 years of life first as the only sensible way to remove the bells for work ahead of rehanging is down and back up through the roof of the Edward King room whist access exists. There is also a need at this stage to structurally inspect and repair if needed the bell hanging framework.

Richard Cosier March 2018

10. Deanery Synod Representatives Report

Thursday 1st June, St. Peter's Church, Church Hill, Great Haseley The key message of this meeting was the presentation discussing the challenges facing a PCC and congregation in the absence of a vicar. It was suggested that every PCC should have a lay vice chair and that during these time of turbulence there is a strong need to keep communicating especially to the wider community. Encourage to pray for those who have responsibility (ie the Church wardens) cover for Sundays. Pastoral care is important and it is important that this continues. Benson had these challenges and found that confidence was lacking, did not know what they could do. They had to advertise 3 times to get a new vicar taking 2 years.

Thursday 12th October, St. Mary's Church, Thame

Invited speaker: Meet the Science Missioner, Revd Jennifer Brown

SR welcomed Revd Jennifer Brown, the Science Missioner, who spoke about her work.

See contact details and further information at the website at:

<http://www.sciencemissioner.org.uk/>

JB is based in the Didcot area so Harwell Science Park is among her parishes. Many people are employed in the science and technology industries in South Oxfordshire. As the science missioner, JB is able to talk about science and faith as compatible by hosting public lectures, working with schools to discuss science in the Bible, e.g. in the Old Testament, Noah as a scientist with his experiment with the birds.

JB also works with the Living Churchyard scheme, exploring the nature within churchyards and raising awareness of looking after these environments as they help our wildlife to thrive.

JB runs workshops at Harwell where theologians, scientists and others discuss the philosophy of science and faith. If any parishes or churches wish to host an event relating to science and faith, please ask JB.

JB answered questions on looking after bees as an important part of the Living Churchyard scheme; addressing creationism as there was no reason to think that evolution was incompatible with the Old Testament especially Genesis;

tackling the issue of the Resurrection in a scientific way is a bit more difficult as good science cannot explain everything but it is good to live with ambiguity and encourages inquiring minds; climate change issues were encouraging churches to be more climate friendly e.g. fossil fuel alternatives and reducing energy in buildings.

SR thanked Revd Jennifer Brown for her illuminating talk. He commented that the Archdeaconry Mission Action Plan will look at ways to support the future funding for the science missionary role, initially funded by the benefice via a private donation and now by charity funding.

Alan Garratt said that he would be stepping down as the Area Dean at the end of the year

Wednesday 31st January, St. Mary & St Berin's Church, Berinsfield

It was the first meeting for our new Area Dean, the Rev Dr Emma Pennington who is also the Vicar at Cuddesdon, Garsington and Horspath.

We had a very interesting talk by Jonathan Farnhill, Generous Giving Adviser at the Diocese of Oxford. He explained that Church of England costs have increased dramatically in the last few years and introduced us to the Parish Giving Scheme. This enables people to give to their church by direct debit and has been shown to increase giving by up to 57%. Jonathan is willing to come to a PCC meeting and explain in more detail about the scheme.

We also heard how Bishop Steven has highlighted some of the sobering statistics around mental health and how as a Church we need to bring the gospel of hope, value and self-worth to those who suffer with mental health issues. In addition, Bishop Steven has challenged us to ask – 'what's stopping us sharing our faith?' The Diocesan Synod, we heard, held workshops to consider key questions such as 'to make a bigger difference in the world and serve the poor' and to plant new churches and congregations everywhere we can.'

At the end of the meeting we were invited to send Emma ideas for shaping future meetings of the Deanery Synod.

Gareth Hatton and Val Farmer March 2018

10. Other reports

Friends of St Mary's Report

Peter Fanning has succeeded Chris Sprent as Chairman of The Friends. Chris helped to create and nurture The Friends for many years. His contribution to the maintenance of the Building itself has been invaluable.

Last year, the Friends paid for the cost of repairing the Bier House Roof (£3,438).

Membership will need careful scrutiny, as a number of the supporters whom Chris Sprent recruited have either moved or passed away. Nevertheless, there is continuing support amongst a solid group who are not regular church goers. Meanwhile, Meg Barbour has joined the Committee with the specific brief of assisting with further recruitment.

A new flier has been published and it is hoped that a gathering of The Friends of St Marys will take place at a later stage this year.

Peter Fanning, Chairman 16th March 2018

Pastoral Care Report

Pastoral Care at St Mary's plays a major part in our day to day life of the Church, and there is a small sub group of the congregation involved in carrying out pastoral care on a day to day basis and in a variety of ways. It could be shopping, or taking them to Church, getting them a meal, taking Communion and even just a chat.

Supporting the bereaved and terminally ill continues to feature in outwork which often extends beyond our immediate Church family into the community. Hospital visiting to the many hospitals in and around Oxford has played a major part over the year as we have had many of our congregation hospitalised. Or just visiting the sick and lonely at home is always very well received.

We have a number of our congregation permanently in care homes in the Oxford area plus of course the Triangle Care Home. We visit the Triangle on a monthly basis for a Communion Service where there are quite a number of residents and staff that join in. The service is held in the lounge and anyone is welcome to come along. There are often former Wheatley patients at the home plus they supply a number of NHS beds for the wider community.

The annual Carol Service at the Triangle is very popular and it is lovely to see so many of the residents joining in with the carols, we manage to take a small choir along which certainly keeps us on track with the singing.

Tony Wigley March 2018

Safeguarding

As a Church we take these matters quite seriously and our main areas of concern are in the dealing with young people and the elderly:

The choir immediately springs to mind.

Bell Tower when they have younger members training.

Servers

Kings Club

Pastoral Care particularly of the elderly.

Clergy & Lay Ministers plus a number of the Laity have completed the Diocesan Safeguarding Course and courses from other organisations.

An advanced DBS check is carried out for those that it is necessary owing to their work in the Parish. This service is available to the five parishes of the benefice.

Our Safeguarding Policy document is re visited each year in accordance with Diocesan policy and was renewed in January 2018.

Tony Wigley March 2018

Health & Safety Report

A PAT check has been carried out in October 2017 on all our portable electrical appliances and everything passed without the need for further attention. It was suggested that the test should be carried out annually and the company will contact us in a year's time to repeat the testing.

All fire extinguishers and the alarm system have received their annual service and are in working order

The locking system on the main door has been replaced, which is a considerable improvement, giving immediate and safe access and exit facilities. The fire procedure documents adjacent to the reception desk have been updated with regard to this and other minor changes and a notice giving

instructions for the use of the locking system is displayed prominently next to the operation box.

Exit signs are clearly marked and we have 2 wind up torches and a mains supply torch which is continually charged in case of emergencies in the hours of darkness. These are all sited in the reception area and easily accessible as is the Accident Book and First Aid box. No accidents have been reported to date. A further wind up torch is situated in the bell ringing chamber.

The annual audit carried out in June 2017 by John Almond highlighted several issues still requiring attention.

- 1) Consideration should be given to the safe storage of candles in a fire proof container
- 2) General housekeeping could be improved with particular attention to the Edward King room to ensure that unimpeded access to the Bell Tower, loft ladder, kitchen facilities, heating switches and particularly the West door, which is a fire exit, is constantly maintained.
- 3) Consideration should be given to the storage of items above the EK room. The use of shelving would avoid any accidental tripping over items stored on the floor.

There was also a question regarding the use of the aluminium ladder in the bell ringing chamber and a review of the First Aid box sited there to ensure that all items are still in date.

Storage problems will be addressed if/when the reordering takes place.

Given the nature of the churchyard with monuments and stones marking the graves there is a need for care to be taken when visiting graves to avoid tripping but the paths are sound and visitors must take responsibility for their own safety. Our gardeners do a good job of mowing the grass and looking after the churchyard so there are no hidden hazards. We are grateful for their diligence in the performance of this valuable task.

Whilst we make every effort to maintain safety standards it is impossible to eliminate all potential hazards in a building such as ours with the design of the pew supports, steps in the chancel, candles, edges of carpets, microphone leads etc and it is up to the individual to pay due care and attention when

using the building and to familiarize themselves with the fire and First Aid procedures. It is hoped that a fire drill can be organized in the near future.

Elaine Parsons 18th march 2018

Choir and Music Group Report Membership

We have been delighted to welcome Ruth Burdett as a regular singer after many years as a choir parent, as well as Jennifer Stonard, who is new to the village and splits her time between choir and bell tower. Some choir members are becoming more regular while others are finding that family commitments make it difficult to attend, but overall we continue to average around 7-10 singers each week. Having two good tenors amongst our semi-regulars is a blessing, so we have all four parts covered more often than not. However, we still only have one bass unless Nigel is able to sing with us.

Junior Choir

Head Chorister Scarlet Thomas is growing in confidence and has sung more solos during the year. I did not have time to organise Voice for Life sessions this year, the major casualty of my LLM training. We plan to restart this after my final essay and Scarlet's GCSE exams.

Organ Scholarship

Joe Grogan completed his three years as organ scholar in June. His enthusiasm and cheer are much missed. The experience has had a significant impact for him, and his sight-reading and sight-singing have improved so much that they have been identified as particular strengths in auditions.

Scarlet Thomas has now been appointed as our third organ scholar. She seems to have a natural flair for the instrument, taking to pedal exercises like a duck to water. When pressures of work allow her to practise, she makes exceptionally good progress. As with our previous scholars, the transition from piano music to playing hymns is proving the biggest challenge.

Music

We learned 3 new anthems this year, the most challenging of which was John Blow's gorgeous setting of the text 'Salvator mundi, salva nos', for Ash Wednesday. We have been able to sing more 4-part anthems, but still rely heavily on our 'Flexible Anthems' book as it is sometimes difficult to predict how many singers we will have.

Special Events

The highlight of the year was singing in Christ Church Cathedral for the Annual Lay Ministers' Service, which gave many extra members St Mary's front row seats for my licensing! St Mary's provided the majority of the 'Liturgical Choir' of over thirty singers (including several LLMs as well as some of my friends and relations), leading the hymns and liturgical music. The descants soared and the anthem was exquisite. It was good to put St Mary the Virgin, Wheatley on the map, as the Dean welcomed the choir in his introduction. They may not have been as memorable as the Zimbabwean Mothers' Union, but our singers acquitted themselves brilliantly and were, in their more restrained way, just as good. We have been invited back for next year.

For the Choral Evensong marking our Patronal Festival in September we stuck to repertoire we knew, but the singing of Howard Skempton's spine-tingling setting of 'There is no rose' was most effective.

In line with our recent practice, the combined choir of over thirty voices learned three new carols for the Village Carol Service, and revisited one we had sung before. Rutter's arrangement of 'Past three a clock' proved more challenging than anticipated, and the choir were immensely grateful to Ed for stepping in to conduct, rather than managing with me directing from the piano. However, the singing of original carols by Alan Bullard and David Willcocks and my own arrangement of 'Il est né' was confident and effective.

Practical Issues

Please does anybody know any basses?! Children aged 9 or over (or from age 7 if they come with a parent) are also particularly welcome. It would be nice to start a new Voice for Life cohort.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to our deputy organists, Danny Baker, Caroline Baynes and John Buckley, as well as to Joe. As always we are grateful to John Buckley and to Nigel for swelling the tenor and bass sections respectively on occasion: we wouldn't be able to manage without them. Particular thanks to Ed for rehearsing and conducting the choir at the Cathedral as well as his constant support during the year. Thank you also to all the choir members for their continued commitment, hard work and excellence.

Alexandra Hewitt, Organist and Director of Music 19th March 2018

Bellringer's Report

2017 was a year of improvement and development for the Wheatley Bellringers.

The number of regular ringers increased again. We were joined by experienced ringers who are residents of Wheatley – Charlotte Furneaux and Jenny Stonard – and rejoined by an old friend, Kevin Harris, who has lost none of his touch from the time in the 1970s when he was an advanced ringer at St Mary's.

We also have one new ringer – David Benny – whom many of you may recognise from his performance as the Dame in Jack and the Beanstalk at the Primary School in January 2018.

The highlight of the year was our outing in June to six towers around Brackley, organised by James MacDonald, and his wife Rachel, who moved to St Peter's in Brackley after studying at Cuddesdon. Our sunny day out ended at the beautiful church in King's Sutton with its majestic spire, as the shadows were lengthening on a perfect summer's day.

Other highlights of the year included

- Our annual dinner in January at the Fox and Goat in Tiddington
- Visitors from Canada, Japan, Italy, Yorkshire and Sussex
- Ringing for three weddings in the summer
- Hosting visiting ringers from the Radley course in April
- A group of Nigel's friends rang an excellent quarter peal in the summer

At the end of 2016 the annual maintenance inspection reported that the bells would need major repairs, possibly soon after the 2017 inspection. The inspection has been carried over to 2018, and so we have no firm information on when or for how long the bells may be out of action. Hopefully it can be arranged to coincide with any other church closures. In the meantime we are taking steps to ensure that we can continue to ring as a group in one of the neighbouring parishes.

We would like to thank the church for the support we have received, and look forward to welcoming any visitors who would like to be shown the ropes on a Friday or Sunday.

Peter Bayliss,

Tower Captain March 2018