



St Margaret's

A Christian presence in the heart of North Oxford

Parish of St Philip and St James with St Margaret

Annual Report for 2018

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Introduction

The aim of St Margaret's is to provide for the worship of God in a welcoming atmosphere where all people sense they are members of the family of God. Our prime concerns are to:

- Enable people of all ages to worship God and to develop their faith and see its relevance to their daily lives
- Through liturgy and prayer to encourage people to a greater awareness of the presence of God
- Show practical concern for those in need, both in the community and in the world at large
- Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth
- Seek to promote social justice

Membership of the PCC during 2018

Incumbent: Revd Canon Dr Andrew Bunch, The Vicarage, Church Walk, Oxford, OX2 6LY

Associate Priests: Revd Tom Albinson - until December 2018, Revd Georgie Simpson – until July 2018

Church Wardens: H Series, R Cooper

Diocesan Synod Representative:

Deanery Synod Representatives: V Cunningham and E Barsham

Elected Members (with dates of election):

M Ward (2016)
 R Kirkland (2017), PCC Secretary
 K Nicholas (2017)
 Chris Levick (2017)
 D Marshall (2017)
 T Holmes (2017)
 T Carver (2018) Treasurer
 M Crawford (2018)
 R Trafford (2018)
 R McShane (2018)
 L Bennett (2018)
 T Carr (2018)

- The PCC met 6 times during 2018 with an average attendance of 10 PCC

representatives/ Church Wardens people per meeting. There were 2 members of the clergy team present at most meetings.

- The Standing Committee met 6 times.

Additional support has been provided to St Margaret's Church by Bernard Silverman, who has Permission to Officiate and also Anne Holmes, who has Permission to Officiate.

Church Attendance

- On December 31st, 2018, the number on the Electoral Roll was 171
- The worshipping community is around 230 people
- Average attendance at 8.00am Eucharist is 5
- Average attendance at the Parish Eucharist at 10.30am on Sundays is 55 adults and 15 children and young people (under 16 years old)
- Average attendance at 6.00pm Evening Prayer is 12
- There were 5 Baptisms, 4 Marriages and 2 Funerals

1. PCC report

Yet again, it has been another busy year for the PCC with progress made on several important issues. As a matter of course, we discuss worship, social activities, finances, health and safety, safeguarding and fabric of the Church at every PCC meeting. Other issues are addressed as they arise. The following issues are of particular note in 2018:

- Children's worker: St Margaret's has now appointed a children's worker, who is due to start in May 2019, which is exciting news.
- Charitable work: in addition to St Margaret's regular support to charities (as outlined in Section 8), the PCC also agreed a one-off donation for an Edge Housing proposal to allow them to prepare a new house for homeless people and agreed that St Margaret's could be used as an evacuation centre for Wyndham House. Discussions were held on the management of the Age UK project, which transitioned over to St Margaret's in September 2018 (see Section 8 for more details).
- Development plans: numerous discussions were held on various iterations of the development plans and more information on this is available in Section 15.
- GDPR: thanks to the efforts of a small working group, St Margaret's is now GDPR compliant.
- Phil and Jim school: the PCC has discussed support to the school, including approving financial support for a number of different initiatives such as the garden project and the library. There is now an initiative to strengthen links between St Margaret's and the school.
- During the year, we said goodbye to Georgie Simpson and Tom Albinson. The PCC is immensely grateful to both of them for all of their support of St Margaret's.

The PCC Secretary is very grateful to everyone who has contributed to this report and for all the support from the PCC throughout the year.

2. Liturgy Report

Last year, 2018, there was little change to the pattern of worship offered at St Margaret's, rather the significant changes have come from the personnel involved in leading worship. After an association of almost twenty years with St Margaret's, Georgie Simpson decided the time was right to retire from working in the Benefice. Although her time with us had been reducing over the last two or three years, her full retirement has left a hole which will take some time to fill. I am sure that many will remember her ministry with great affection and appreciation. At the end of 2018 a further change to the ministry team occurred with Tom Albinson emigrating to the United States to take up an appointment in St Louis, Missouri. Tom's quiet and gentle presence was a great asset to this Benefice. He calmly got on with ministry, giving people an example of living in the light of Christ and showing that Christianity and IT can work well together. Fortunately, at the end of 2018, we have been joined by Anne Holmes, an SSM and a trained counsellor. She is helping to ensure that the worshipping life of the church is not unduly affected by the recent departures. Already Anne is making a very positive contribution and giving a new perspective to our worship.

Nevertheless, two developments in our pattern of worship did take place in 2108. After some trial runs, a shortened liturgy for the Sunday Eucharist was put in place for use on the 2nd Sunday of the month. The order of service is structured to be significantly shorter while maintaining the same form used on the other Sundays of the year. The introduction of this service is our most recent attempt to provide a service which is easier for families with young children to attend. The coming year will probably see this service evolve further. The other development is in the range of people being asked to give the address at the 10:30am service on Sunday. Over the Autumn a range of people were invited and this extension to our worship has been welcomed.

The recent loss of children and young people as acolytes is a sadness to many of us in the church. This is not due to a lack of encouragement from adults, it has followed from a growing reluctance of the younger members of St Margaret's to take part in the liturgy in this way. Our hope is that a new group of children will move into being acolytes in the near future.

Plans to incorporate the north aisle more fully into the worship area of the church are now at a final phase and are awaiting the approval of the DAC to see how they will fit with what is planned for the development of the west end of the church.

Thank you to all who contribute to the worship in St Margaret's in a whole variety of different ways. Your participation makes St Margaret's a very special place for worship.

3. Faith Development

A variety of different approaches were used to promote Faith Development in 2018. These included taking school assemblies, a Bible Study Group, Confirmation Classes, sermons during Holy Week, Thursday lunch-time talks at St Giles, thoughts for the day delivered by e-mail and guest speakers at the main Sunday service. This wide diversity of approaches has been tried to try and find the most appropriate way to promote faith development in our current time. Across Oxford, many churches have been finding that the ways used to

promote faith development in the past are no longer as attractive as before. For many in our congregation, it appears that faith development now comes either from Sunday worship or personal reading or enquiry.

School Assemblies: The clergy of this parish take a weekly assembly at Phil & Jim School and a Values Assembly six times a year. The school assemblies focus on getting the most significant stories of the Bible across to the pupils. Whereas, the Values Assemblies explore the teaching Jesus gave on the meaning of love and its essential characteristics.

Bible Study Group & Confirmation Class: These groups are run at various times throughout the year. The attendance in the group is relatively modest but these groups do provide an opportunity for adults to deepen their understanding of the Bible and the implications for daily life in a group setting.

Holy Week: In 2018, Angela Tilby was the guest preacher at our services during Holy Week. Having such a high-profile person to preach stimulated greater interest in the attendance of our Holy Week celebrations in the first half of the week. However, in the second part of the week, from Maundy Thursday onwards, there was less of a noticeable effect. Angela's presence was much appreciated by those who came to the services.

Thursday talks: Two series of Thursday Talks were run during 2018, the first on Resurrection and the second on "My top Ten" books, readings and quotes that inspire. Although these talks were inspiring and raised many interesting ideas, they only attracted a modest degree of public attention.

Thoughts for the Day: The idea of sharing faith development material by e-mail on a daily basis does appear to appeal to a significant proportion of the parish. In the autumn a synopsis of a different book was presented at the start of the week, followed by significant thought from the book on each of the following days. This was repeated for ten books. This proved to stimulate a good level of interest.

Guest speakers: Over the autumn, a series of guest speakers were invited to give a talk at the 10:30am Sunday service. This development in the life of the church was well received by members of the congregation.

We will continue to adjust the ways of presenting faith development material but it does appear that study/ discussion groups are the least popular approach.

4. Churchwardens' Report

In April 2018 at the APCM P Lafeber stepped down as churchwarden. His work had been very effective and much appreciated, and we are very grateful to him. R Cooper was elected as his successor. H Series was re-elected.

The usual maintenance work on the church has continued. The decision was made to clear the gutters of leaves twice yearly instead of once because of the continued problem where sudden bursts of heavy rain overwhelm the guttering at the junction of the roofs of the Lady

Chapel and the south aisle, causing water to come through the roof. Clearing the leaves should improve this.

The acolyte candlesticks have been re-silvered and are now back in use.

The problems we had last year with the church audio system appear to have been greatly improved by repositioning the aerial for the radio microphones.

Externally, two important changes have been made. New paving has been laid sloping gently up to the south door so that there is now level access. Eventually this will be connected with new paving sloping upwards from the pavement through the porch into the nave, but for now there is a gravel strip separating the two areas of paving. The slippery bricks by the outside toilet have been replaced with much safer tarmac. The two sets of steps into and out of the upper vestry are being rebuilt with elegant new handrails to improve their appearance and their safety. The double pair of doors in between the vestries is being replaced with a single pair of doors.

Although the entire church lighting scheme will be redesigned as part of the development plan, the current high-level lighting in the chancel is particularly poor (three out of the four spotlights are broken) and discussions are ongoing about improving this in the interim.

We had the first fire practice in many years at the end of the 10.30 service at Candlemas. This went very smoothly (everybody had left the church within 2.5 minutes), and it was a very useful exercise as part of the review of fire safety at St Margaret's.

St Margaret's could not function as it does without the efforts of very many people with tasks great and small: organising rotas, looking after children, emptying bins, tidying up, repairing things, washing tea towels and linen, singing, being sidespeople, preparing coffee, providing Sunday schools, planning events, maintaining robes, ordering candles... The list goes on. We are very grateful to everyone who helps to make St Margaret's the community that it is.

5. Sidespeople

Once again, all thanks to the group of volunteers for this work. Willing souls all and doing the business with pleasing results, I think, for this important work, especially making people attending services feel welcome. We manage with the customary pressure points around holiday times and seasons. We have one new resignation from the rota, by a long-standing server (many thanks to that person for years in the work), and so could do with one or two newcomers. This population problem might be solved by the scheme now under discussion of enlisting young persons (with an attendant parent/carer) and I hope the results may soon be visible at the door.) I would still value, though, one or two more volunteers right now.

6. Children and Young People

We are delighted that so many children attend our services, choir, groups and classes where they and their families build friendships with all ages and absorb our Christian faith through lessons, activities, fun and relationships. Although the following report is divided into “age-related” paragraphs, all enjoy each other’s company, bright ideas and talents! The weekly activities are described below, and we are also grateful to our young people who regularly help the Sacristy team, light candles, act as servers, sing in the choir, and are enthusiastic and efficient helpers at social occasions. We are very pleased to welcome visitors and friends to all of the classes, groups and events and we are grateful to all who help with classes and activities throughout the year or act as Children’s Officers within our Safeguarding Policy. We look forward to the arrival of our Parish Children’s Worker and are always glad to hear of any adults who would like to share in our work with children in Sunday School classes or activities. (MC)

Toddlers: We meet every Friday during term-time in the Lady Chapel, for a short Bible story which we bring to life with puppets or toys, and sometimes asking the children to join in with acting out roles. We sing a few short hymns and some children’s worship songs and pray together before serving hot and cold drinks and biscuits in the Baptistry. We are at present a team of 3 leading the worship- Andrew, LB and KR, a mum whose daughter comes to the service. We hold a longer service at Christmas and on Good Friday which children (and adults!) of all ages are most welcome to attend. Mums and carers speak very positively about the nurturing and peaceful nature of this service, and we often have to ask people to leave at 10.30, when we need to lock up the church. They spend plenty of time chatting and supporting each other whilst the children play. One mum said to me, ‘This group is different to all the other baby and toddler groups locally, and I value it so much because it’s so peaceful and I feel so welcomed here.’ I would like to grow this group and have spent time advertising quite widely locally. I would like to advertise within the school and will ask Ms Awuye this when she comes to the PCC meeting in March. I am also planning on liaising with the children’s work team at St Andrews as they have a lively attendance to their weekday groups. (LB)

SAMMYS is a music-making group for the very young and their families. We sing a wide range of action songs, simple rounds, folk songs, songs from films and lots more! Each session also includes an opportunity to play a range of percussion instruments such as tambourines and maracas, to learn some basic music theory and to eat a lot of cake! We perform informal concerts at the end of each term - all are very welcome to attend. SAMMYS provides an opportunity for families to spend time together and to meet other families from the local community. It’s wonderful to see friendships develop, both amongst the children and the adults. (LH)

SAMS continues to run on the first Saturday of each month, with the exception of January. It consists of about 7 art & craft activities and 1 cake/biscuit decorating activity aimed at junior school children and below. There is also coffee, croissants, fruit and newspapers. There is no charge made for attendance but donations are gratefully received and collected at the coffee station. Attendance is very high and it is a very popular community event. We currently have 65 email addresses registered in our mailing list and between 50-75% of the

monthly information emails are opened. Contacts are able to unsubscribe if they no longer wish to hear about SAMS. (KR)

Junior Sunday School meets during the 10.30 service on Sundays, catering (very roughly) for children aged 2 to 7. We follow the lectionary and study one reading each week. Activities include listening to the reading, acting out the reading, drawing, writing, cutting, gluing and eating biscuits! It's always lovely to welcome parents to these classes and to see the increasing independence of the children when they are ready to attend Sunday School without a parent. (LH)

Senior Sunday School is a class for children of approximately 8 – 13 years. When they enter year 8 at school, they may join the teenage discussion group if they wish. There are usually between eight and ten children each week, representing many schools in our area. Some act as acolytes, others sing in the choir and members of this class take part in informal services if they wish to read or lead prayers. We follow the cycle of the Christian year, marking all the major festivals and maintaining our tradition of producing decorated cakes at Advent and Trinity. Our sessions usually include a Bible reading, discussion, quizzes and word searches. During this year we have followed accounts of St Peter and others in the Acts of the Apostles, and we have also looked at some of Jesus's miracles. (MC)

Teenage discussion group: In the teenage discussion group we discuss a wide range of topics some religious, and some not. We talk about a variety of current issues happening in the world. The sessions are very enjoyable as they make the younger and older teenagers aware of the problems with today's society. Some topics lead to debates which not only makes us aware of the issues but helps us develop our discussing and debating skills. (LMcS)

7. Safeguarding

The **St Margaret's Safeguarding Policy and the Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults** and the **Parish Recruitment and DBS Disclosure Policy** were passed on Thursday January 17th 2019. Copies are displayed in the porch and have been forwarded to the Diocese. The list of 10 Children's Officers is also displayed in the porch; these are adults with DBS certification, one of whom must be present at children's activities in addition to the Leader to be available to look after the welfare of children and to listen to any concerns.

The focus this year has been on the new **Safeguarding Training** implemented across all Church of England communities. A range of Core and Specialist Training modules have been developed and it is expected that training will be refreshed every three years. The Basic Awareness level is C0, an online course essential for all in contact with children or vulnerable adults, either as leaders or helpers. It is also recommended for all members of a congregation. All leaders and helpers with such activities must also complete C1: Foundation Training, which is delivered either online or in a meeting with a Diocesan Trainer.

At St Margaret's this training programme was implemented in September 2018 and a trainer from the Diocese delivered the C1 course on two occasions in November at church; leaders and volunteers from St Giles were also invited and over 40 people were thus able to attend this course. We are grateful to Pat Hudson, who not only delivered the two training sessions, but was able to answer our many questions and develop our understanding of safeguarding issues. Numbers of those completing courses and records are forwarded to the Safeguarding Officer by the Diocese; at the end of February in St Margaret's 14 people have completed C0 and C1 with an additional 5 people doing just the C0 online course and another 12 people completing C1. The next stage is for all leaders is to attend a C2 course run by the Diocese throughout the year at different venues.

We are very grateful to all who have undertaken these courses and who give their time, energy and inspiration to lead and help with our activities for young people. Leaders and helpers are given the updated version of the Oxford Diocese "Good Practice Guide for Church workers with children and young people" or the equivalent guide for those who work with vulnerable adults.

The **Confidential Children and Young People's Roll** which we are obliged to keep has been totally revised and updated during this year and includes GDPR consent for children's and parents' contact details to be held. This Roll is kept by the Safeguarding Officer and is available to clergy, the Parish Children's Worker and a copy is kept in the vestry safe for emergency use. Children over 14 meet the Safeguarding Officer to give their own consent. There are at present (the end of February) 64 children under 18 on the Roll, but this number will rise during the year. No child may attend any St Margaret's class or activity without a parental consent form and thus entry on the Roll unless a parent or guardian is constantly present.

As required the Safeguarding Officer reports at every PCC meeting. There have been no Safeguarding issues reported during the year 2018 – 2019.

Future considerations:

- a) When the Parish Children's Worker is in post, there will need to be careful consideration of all matters of Safeguarding, such as the need for an additional Children's Officer at activities, the sharing of contact information and any training needs and requirements for additional volunteer helpers. It is expected that these and other areas will be addressed as soon as practicable.
- b) With the requirement to organise, record and monitor all training undertaken, the role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer has expanded and additional help is now sought. If you feel you could help by joining a very small team to manage these areas, please speak to Michele Crawford.

8. Community and Charitable Work

Age UK Project

2018 has been a positive year for this project that supports older people in the parish. The contract with Age UK Oxfordshire ended in June and I now work directly for the parish, managed by Andrew Bunch. Andrew and others have been very supportive and I feel that the role is now working in the way that best serves the community.

Groups: These aim to build community, bringing people together who often have common experiences or difficulties. All groups have done well this year in spite of the passing of one of the Sunday tea hosts and of other group members - a sad but inevitable part of working with this age group. The running of these groups would not be possible without the dedicated volunteers who help week to week. Groups include:

The Sunday afternoon teas meet in people's homes, aiming to bring people together who are alone on Sunday afternoons. New friendships have formed and for some it is the only social event they attend.

The Community Film Club is open to all and is dementia friendly. We aim to welcome everyone at the beginning, giving an opportunity for people to socialise, with refreshments provided before the film starts.

The Bereavement Support Group continues to meet twice a month and has flourished this year. The group has increased in size and members now meet together to socialise on a regular basis outside of the meetings. Many have said how helpful they have found the group and how supportive people have been.

The Memory Café aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment for carers to come with those who are suffering from memory problems. Most carers are caring for their spouse and doing so with little or no help. They find it beneficial to talk to others in the same position, mutually supporting each other.

The First Wednesday Lunch Club meets every two months, serving those with memory problems and their carers. I ran it for the first part of 2018 with Age UK taking over after the change in management. I am starting a similar lunch on the first Wednesdays of the alternate months. Our **St Margaret's Lunch** will complement the First Wednesday Lunch Club, meaning that clients can enjoy a sociable lunch every month.

Working with Individuals: This work is wide and varied, ensuring individuals receive the support they need. It goes hand-in-hand with the group work and is equally important. I help older people stay independent in their own homes for as long as possible by finding practical support and solutions for the problems they encounter.

Charitable Giving Review

Donations of £1500 were made in this the second year of our three-year cycle of giving, to each of our four chosen charities, Emmaus, Asylum Welcome, Home Start and the Diocese of Northern Uganda.

During this year we have had one speaker visit from Emmaus, who described their work providing a stable home, work and training for 28 formerly homeless people in Oxford, she was accompanied by a young man who was currently a member of their community, and he spoke movingly about his experiences.

Our gift to the Diocese of Northern Uganda was allocated this year to their Women's Development Centre, which works with young mothers who have missed out on formal schooling, providing them with training and skills that will lead to income generation and a way out of poverty.

9. Deanery Synod

I've attended the only deanery synod meeting I've been sent news of last summer, which I attended with the other St M's member. It was a not-well attended meeting, and I found it rather disappointing. The evening was taken up mainly with reports, accompanied by pics and vids, of a visit to Israel by a group of deanery synod members and friends. Of interest up to a point but too much resembling an evening with other people's holiday pics. Not the most pertinent way, I thought, to spend an evening. Hopefully subsequent meetings, about which I have not yet heard, will have more pith and point.

10. Events

The Vox Choir continue to use St Margaret's for rehearsal every Monday evening. The income from this - January to December 2018 - was £2,220

Oxford Pro Musica continue to use St Margaret's for rehearsal on a regular basis. The income from this - January to December 2018 - was £495

The Cornish-American Song Institute used St Margaret's for their summer trip rehearsals last June and have booked again for this year.

There have also been a number of ad-hoc bookings for rehearsals, pupils' concerts and concerts throughout 2018.

11. Music

Music in Liturgy

In my report to the APCM last year I observed, "the place and nature of the music in our services does not change fundamentally from year to year". But in 2018, as may be reported elsewhere, there was the introduction of the "informal" eucharist on the second Sunday of the month. The point is that, unlike other regular services for which readings are determined by the lectionary, the new "second Sunday" services are thematic, in the manner of the "Family Services" of the past. This therefore not only provides more scope for the speaker or celebrant in the choice of hymns but also more easily allows the use of other styles of music such as worship songs or chants, which may not easily dovetail with readings in the liturgical cycle.

Meanwhile, quite separately, I became aware of an interest within the church towards varying and/or expanding our hymnody and have had several fruitful conversations over the months. One practical result of this interest, which will also assist those who plan the "informal" services, is that St Margaret's now subscribes to a licence which allows the legal copying of words from hymn books other than our own. I see development of our hymn-singing as "work in progress", and hope that the gradual adding of new, meaningful, musical items over time will be an enriching process for all.

The subject of hymns, and the content and balance of music within our main services, was discussed in the Spirituality Report produced for the PCC in September. While I was not a contributor to this, and disagreed with many of its conclusions, such reviews can be a healthy thing; we should be wary of throwing the proverbial baby out with the bathwater! It seems to me that at St Margaret's we have evolved a comfortable balance in our liturgical practice over more than thirty years: our music is led by choir and organ but is still predominantly congregational at our main services.

Our choir membership is more flexible compared to that found in some churches. It comprises the experienced, the inexperienced, those with life-long devotion, and the young and keen; it encompasses singers whose commitment is dictated by work, singers who sometimes want to sit in the congregation, and, for example, pregnancies! Among the young this past year, because so many are busy with multiple activities, we have exchanged our former Head Choristers for a team of four comprising two Heads and two deputies, so that there is always support and leadership for the younger singers.

I continue to be grateful to all of our singers for whatever level of participation they are able to give, and especially to Martin: a colleague who is highly skilled, experienced, and steeped in the liturgy of the church. In July we bade an official farewell to HB as he relinquished his post as Oliver Heaton Organ Scholar to take up a Scholarship down the road at Oriel College. As yet I have not begun the search for a successor but record with gratitude the assistance given at the piano on Fridays by RC-E. It is important that all our children should have the opportunity to participate should they wish to do so. Finally, I continue to remain very grateful to MC in supervising all the robes and badges, and to her and other choir adults who assist in safeguarding of choristers.

Music Week 2019

In September 2018, having mooted the idea with Andrew and Churchwardens, I put forward to the PCC a proposal for an autumn week of music making in church, which could be advertised to the local community. I saw the purpose of such a week as threefold:

- to celebrate the musical activities and talents which form part of life at St Margaret's, including existing activities such as the choir, SAMMYs, Thursday Singers, and in-house concerts
- to provide an opportunity and focus for interaction with the local community
- to simulate the possibility of new initiatives for the local community, hosted by St Margaret's

I was delighted to receive consent for the idea from the PCC and, through consultation with Andrew, the dates for a 2019 Music Week were agreed as Saturday 5th to Sunday 13th October. This positioning avoids both Harvest and the schools' half-term, and also dovetails with 0th week of the University Term when students are not yet fully engaged in study. Meanwhile a basic principle is that regular services and other existing activities such as SAMs and SAMMYs will not be compromised; but these will hopefully benefit from the publicity for the Week as a whole.

In January 2019 an informal steering group was formed by a few of us responsible for organising music activities in the church, to plan a timetable for the week. It is hoped that this plan will largely be in place by Easter, so that some advance publicity can take place before the summer holidays, and logistics can be planned. Obviously, a big publicity drive will then follow in early September. The key principles which we hope we can achieve are for the Week to offer a range of different musical events, not all “classical”, and all will be free of charge. In terms of worship, on the first Sunday morning of the Week the Confirmation Service will take place; then in the evening a “Songs of Praise” style service will replace Evening Prayer, for which music may be chosen in advance by members of St Margaret’s (details to follow!) The Week will conclude on the second Sunday with a Festival Choral Evensong, with invitations to choir alumni to join current members.

Needless to say this venture is somewhat experimental, and we may not get it all right, but I and the steering group will try to make sure that over the nine days there will be something for everyone – within reason: maybe no heavy metal, at least the first time around!

Thursday Afternoon Singers

I took over the leadership roughly this time last year, at a point where it was a well-established group with a solid membership but was struggling to maintain momentum without a leader able to make a regular commitment. Thanks must go to those who’d kept it going thus far, especially CG, DM, and CB, with SC providing eloquent support at the piano, and CR masterminding the essential tea rota.

My remit was to affirm the joy of singing, with the added directive of providing the wherewithal for improvement for any who wished to take advantage. Armed with this manifesto, a mailing list of enthusiastic singers, the helpful musical resources owned by the group, and repertoire I’ve sourced from elsewhere, I set about testing the water. It soon became clear that lack of confidence was the biggest barrier to full enjoyment for many singers and addressing that would be a central aspect of my mission. Laughter is an essential element of each session, as it helps everyone relax and lose their inhibitions, and consequently sing more lustily. We do use printed music, though being able to read it is not required. Occasionally I teach a round by ear to flex different musical muscles, and I sneak in small amounts of terminology and technique pertinent to each piece. After singing ‘The Coffee Canon’, MB and I were challenged to write a companion round on the subject of tea. We both obliged, to much hilarity, and now have a veritable drinks cabinet of rounds to which we are gradually adding. We can also now sing SATB since the exciting advent of a real tenor, so vary our texture from unison to two, three or four-part songs, ranging from early music through folk music to pop and jazz.

We were invited to join the ‘Music with Friends’ concert in memory of Anthony Aston Smith in late September 2018, singing the Mozart Requiem. This is a challenge for inexperienced and nervous singers, but we chipped away at the accessible parts from April to September: it caused some consternation at moments but resulted in triumphant participation for those of our number who were able to join the church choir in this venture. At Christmas we held an informal performance – including our grand rendition of Gaudete with my bodhran! – to which we invited trusted audience members, then joined with them in singing carols and enjoying a sumptuous Christmas tea. This was the first experience of musical performance for some of the members, and its success has inspired us to work towards more in the future.

The group has the potential to be a powerful bridge between the church and wider community. After a slight dip in attendance midway through the year due to staunch members moving away or suffering ill health, it has been rising steadily – largely due to members bringing their friends – and is thriving. I'm grateful to everyone for their encouragement and enthusiasm, especially Sarah Coatsworth and Michael Brooker for their staunch and accomplished support.

12. St Margaret's Institute Management Committee

During 2018, our Administrator, increased the Institute's revenue by more intensive booking and some hiring charge increases. This revenue increase was absorbed by continuing high levels of expenditure on building maintenance, some of which fell within the category of building improvement as we gradually upgrade the community centre facilities.

In May 2018 the top floor tenants were granted a limited home business licence under their AST and this has given rise to an increase in our revenue.

The south wall of the building was re-pointed at a cost of £7,360 during the year and a project to replace and extend the external fire escape to include the top floor as well as the first floor was started at a cost in 2018 of £8,610. The fire escape will be completed in 2019 at a further cost of approximately £50,000.

Charitable support for the aged was continued in the year though Age UK, the Limes Club and, latterly directly through the PCC's employment of TB - at an overall cost to the Institute of £14,401.

Overall, the top two floors were in financial surplus of £2,963 and the SMI had an overall surplus in the year of £3,499. After allowing for 2019 expenditure of approximately £50,000 to complete the fire escape, the SMI will have adequate reserves and the financial position remains strong.

13. Phil and Jim School

Sarah Awuye's first year as headteacher has been marked by beneficial change, and the fruits can be seen in the two inspections the school faced in January and February 2018. The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) resulted in a rating of 'Good' under new and more demanding regulations. In a long overdue and rigorous OFSTED examination the school retained its 'Good' rating.

Pupils have generally attained well this year compared to local and national standards, with strong Year 6 SATS results in summer 2018 (87% Reading; 85% Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar; 83% Maths), and the school remains in the Sunday Times top 250 primaries in the country. Sarah and all the staff are to be warmly congratulated on the speed with which they are raising standards, and the imagination and sheer hard work which they have put into the school.

Innovation has been matched by consistency, openness and structure. Enhanced data collection means that governors (and parents) are more in touch with children's learning, and on open days governors can meet staff, parents and pupils, observe classes and monitor school improvement more effectively. Parents are welcomed into the school for topic celebration days (e.g. China Day, the Viking Museum). There are coffee mornings and prayer meetings for parents with staff.

The indefatigable PTA has provided new Astroturf, and sport provision for all abilities has been widened during the school day and in clubs (new ones include hockey, cross-country and karate), with successful internal and external tournaments.

A new Chinese club has been sponsored by the Swire Foundation (Mandarin is being phased in alongside German for some year groups). The school took part in Oxford University's Multi-lingual project, culminating in a concert at the Sheldonian and a play at the North Wall. Phil and Jim now has music lessons and an orchestra. Older children in the school garden group are liaising with local businesses to fundraise and design a new garden.

Mental health, mindfulness and growth mindsets are cultivated, and the school has set up 'The Place to Be,' a friendly room with books and sofas where children, parents and staff can talk through worries with the Pastoral Support Lead, or just take a little time out. A new library is also in process.

Attendance is generally good; there are 411 children on the roll (February 2019), with most years full or nearly full. Like other local primaries, the school had a few empty places in Early Years for 2018-19, but a mobile population means places are often filled in the year. Safeguarding is robust, and a 'lockdown' procedure in case of intruders has been sensitively practised. New cleaners have made the school more salubrious.

The future is challenging financially, even at the micro level of providing sufficient classroom supplies and reclaiming lunch money. Other areas of focus include behaviour for learning, (although behaviour overall is good); writing (especially boys' writing); phonics; Early Years; the progress of disadvantaged pupils; the 28% of pupils who have English as an additional language; ensuring higher achievers are intellectually stretched; recruiting and training teaching assistants. But the leadership team willingly seeks and implements professional advice and shares best practice. The school is both high achieving and steadily improving.

14. Oliver Heaton Trust (OHT)

The trustees of OHT, a registered charity, are currently the vicar, church wardens, U Balbier and C Levick (Treasurer). C Osmond resigned and U Balbier was pointed as trustee during 2018.

The Trust continued to benefit from net income arising from eight small premises for letting, which are in Abingdon and Oxford, as well as from income from investment in CCLA's Charities Investment Fund.

Under Oliver Heaton's will, the funds are to be used for the religious purposes of the parish and grants may be made for this purpose. The Trust's policy is that grants shall be considered and approved by the PCC before submission to the Trust. Within this context, if members of the congregation have projects in mind which they would like the Trust to consider, they are encouraged to bring them to the PCC or may wish to discuss ideas with PCC members or trustees.

During 2018, the Trust continued to support the extension of the half time Associate Priest to full time and also paid fees in respect of the Church development project. Further grants were made to support St Margaret's Church activities (including SAMs) and administration, local homeless projects and Parish education support. The Trust stands ready to give financial support for the PCC's initiative to finance a children's support worker as and when this comes about.

Trustees continue to anticipate that the Trust will, in due course, be asked to consider supporting the Church's development project as and when various costs are incurred, external permissions are granted and the PCC progressively approves project stages.

15. St Margaret's Development Plan

The planning group has continued to meet regularly throughout the year. Its current members are the vicar, the churchwardens, D Smith, W Hodgson, and R Trafford, together with our architect, Christian Randall. I am deeply grateful to them all for their continued commitment to this lengthy but immensely important project. We have also benefited greatly from the large number of comments that members of the congregation have made.

After some three years of work it is wonderful to see the start of the changes which Oliver Heaton's generous bequest has made possible.

York stone paving has been laid outside the south door in a gently sloping rise to ensure level access to the church. A number of people have pointed out that there is still a strip of gravel in between the paving up to the porch and the new paving, which is awkward for wheelchair and pushchair users. This will be taken care of as part of changes to the porch itself. The plan is to improve the access from the pavement through the porch into the nave. As part of that the external paving from the pavement to the porch door will be slightly raised (to eliminate the step) and connected up with the new south door paving.

As I write, the two sets of steps in and out of the upper vestry are being rebuilt to improve their elegance and safety (handsome new handrails are being added), and there will be a

new double door with glazed panels in between the vestries, replacing the current two rather awkward pairs of doors. The external slippery brick surface between the lower vestry door and the outside toilet has been replaced with much safer tarmac.

We are awaiting final approval from the DAC for the removal of the old chamber organ and the repositioning of the All Saints altar and reredos into the south aisle near the font, placed against the wall between the windows, moving the font cover into the south-west corner where the cupboard now is. We will keep the children's area in the north aisle and there will be a new panelled wood screen separating it from the flower preparation area, and the wooden rail between the children's area and the aisle will be remodelled.

We are working on the final details of the new extension at the west end of the church which will give us three new toilets, a larger kitchen, some more storage, and a new meeting room approximately the size of the baptistery. The baptistery screen will be redesigned so that it can be opened up much more fully, connecting the baptistery much more effectively with the nave. We plan to convert the space in the tower above the porch into a store room. The final stage will be to improve the heating, lighting, seating, and choir stalls.

All of this has to be approved by the DAC (a very slow process) and the Council (a preplanning proposal is already with them for consideration) and discussed with the Victorian Society and local residents. A brochure describing the development is being printed and will soon be distributed (2,500 copies, so your help with the distribution would be much appreciated!), and we will be holding some open days for anyone interested to come and talk about the plans. We have opened discussions with the eight local residents associations.

Our aim in all of this is to make St Margaret's fit for its role as a parish church serving its local community in the 21st century. We want it to be a welcoming and comfortable place for users, whether they are members of the congregation or external users.

The group is always keen to hear suggestions, comments, criticisms about the plans, so please feel free to contact any of us. It is your church, and your ideas are important.

16. Finance Report

This is provided separately with the 2018 Accounts for St Margaret's.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF SS PHILIP AND JAMES WITH ST MARGARET		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2018	Charity no (if any)	1154947
Set out on pages	1 to 2		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2018

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect,:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

10 October 2019

Name:

Gerard Simmonds

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

Fellow of Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales

Address:

44 Charlbury Road

Oxford

OX2 6UX

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

Not applicable