

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF
ST. MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, GREAT BRICKHILL**

**Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended 31st. December, 2011**

**St. Mary The Virgin Church,
Lower Way
Great Brickhill
Bucks.
MK17 9AB**

Bankers:

**Barclays Bank PLC
Leighton Buzzard Branch
The Aylesbury Group
34 Market Square
Aylesbury
Bucks.
HP20 1TT**

Independent Examiner:

**Mr. D. Beatty
Roxburgh House
Pound Hill
Great Brickhill
Milton Keynes
MK17 9AS**

Church Architect:

**Mr. P. W. Crawford R.I.B.A.
Caroe & Partners
18 Deane House Studios
27 Greenwood Place
London NW5 1LB**

Report Of The Parochial Church Council (PCC) Year ended 31st. December, 2011

MEMBERS OF THE PCC

The following persons served as members of the PCC during 2011:-

The Reverend John Waller (Chairman)
Christine Agambar (Church Warden)

Deanery Synod Representatives:-

Clare Amies
Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin (PCC member until election at Annual Meeting, 14/4/11)
Jeremy Hopkinson (Representative up to Annual Meeting, 14/4/11 - then co-opted to
Deanery Synod) (Licensed Lay Minister; PCC Vice-Chairman)

Simon Bennett (elected at Annual Meeting, 14/4/11)
Phillipa Cook (Secretary)
Rosie Dawson
David Duncombe
Julia Turner (Church Warden until Annual Meeting, 14/4/11)

Neil Cook continued in the role of Treasurer, co-opted to the P.C.C., 31/05/11

N.B. The maximum number of lay representatives on the P.C.C. is 9, as per the prescribed formula for Electoral Rolls of 51 to 100.

OBJECTS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE PCC

The object of the P.C.C. of St. Mary the Virgin Church, Great Brickhill, is to further the work of the Church of England in the parish of Great Brickhill. The Council is constituted under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 and as amended by the 1969 Measure, and is required to co-operate with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in 2004 provision was made for the annual appointment of representatives on the P.C.C. All members of the church electoral roll are entitled to vote and stand for election. There is also provision for the co-option of members of the P.C.C., and the incumbent is ex-officio a member and the Chairman. The Wardens and Deanery Synod Representatives are also ex-officio members of the P.C.C.

ELECTORAL ROLL AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Membership of the electoral roll is open to any lay person who is baptised, over sixteen years of age and has signed a declaration that he or she is a member of the Church of England and is either (a). resident in the parish, or (b). has habitually attended worship in the parish during a period of six months prior to enrolment.

At the start of the year there were 51 people on the Electoral Roll. Four joined the Electoral Roll during the year; there were three deaths and two moved away. Hence the number of Electors at the end of the year decreased to 50, 9 of whom are not resident within the parish.

The usual Sunday attendance for Normal Services during the year to 31/12/11 was 22 (in 2010 the attendance was 20). However there were more special services held throughout the year when the attendance was much larger than on a normal Sunday.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Reverend John Waller continues as both Rector but retired from his role of Area Dean. He takes the majority of the Services throughout the Benefice. Each month visiting clergy take the Holy Communion service on the first Sunday of the month. Due to ill health Sister Hazel was unable to continue taking these services on alternate months and so Father Colin Griffiths led the services whenever possible.

The Morning Worship Service on the second Sunday is locally led. As a licensed Lay Minister Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson regularly takes Services at Great Brickhill and at the other Churches within the Benefice.

Thanks go to Marian Ridgway who arranges for clergy/lay cover for services within the Benefice for whenever the Rector is unavailable.

There have been no changes to the general pattern of services across the Benefice. However since the Rector returned from his sabbatical the previous year, there has not been a resumption of the Special Family Service each month at one of the four churches.

October saw a month long celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible. Most of the readings for the services were taken from the King James Bible, often alongside a modern version of the text. The highlight was a special "Songs of Praise" service held on 9th October - the readings were all from the King James Bible and all the hymns and readings were chosen in advance by members of the congregation.

The Gift Aid Envelope Scheme continues to be used for Church collections and whenever possible for fund-raising activities. Dr. Christine Agambar together with the Treasurer is in charge of the administration of the scheme.

The Rector holds regular meetings with the Wardens of the four churches. A "Prayer for Healing" meeting for the Benefice is held at the Rectory on a Wednesday evening once a month and is open to all who would like to attend.

Mrs. Julia Turner retired from her role as Warden but continues as a member of the PCC. Dr. Christine Agambar as the sole Warden since the annual Meeting, works tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of the Church. Mrs. Betty Kinsey and Mrs. Rosie Dawson kindly help out with services in the absence of the Wardens and Mrs Jean Poynter takes on the Warden's duty for the Evensong service.

The PCC met in full on five occasions, plus an additional meeting was held in December for the sole purpose of discussing the New Facilities. The Rector continued in the role of Chairman with Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson as Vice Chairman. At the Annual Meeting Mr. Simon Bennett was elected as a new member of the PCC. At the March PCC Meeting a Fundraising subcommittee was formed – the group met on several occasions through the year.

Mr. Patrick Crawford of Caroe and Partners based in London continues in the position of Architect both for general Church work and also for the Project St. Mary's 2000.

Various fund-raising activities were held throughout the year, either for general running costs or for St Mary's 2000. One notable event was the "Spirit of Christmas Bazaar" held in the church on a Friday morning in late November. It was hugely successful both in the money raised (£1,806) but also in the atmosphere that it generated.

Deanery Synod:

The representatives for the Parish changed to Clare Amies and Val Beardmore-Baldwin at the Annual Meeting. Jeremy Hopkinson was however co-opted to the Synod to continue to act as Deanery Treasurer.

During the year the following issues were raised:

- Deanery finance and the inability of a growing number of Parishes being able to meet their Parish Share.
- It was agreed to assist Stewkley with the cost of clergy during their inter-regnum, which came about under unusual circumstances.

The Diocesan environmental group made a presentation on the ways that churches could become more environmentally friendly, including a reference to Wing's solar panels.

Archdeacon Karen spoke about our links with the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman in South Africa - it is the size of France and has only 21 clergy (a number which includes the Bishop). Each member of the clergy will have to take about 20 funerals every Saturday! We need to be thankful for the number of clergy that we have.

The Deanery Synod have lost their Secretary and are looking for someone to take on this role.

We had a presentation from a representative from Mother's Union to explain that this is a growing organisation overseas, but is still active in the UK.

Music and Choir:

The organ continues to be played by various organists on a weekly basis. Mrs. Julia Turner organises the rota of organists for each service. On some occasions the piano is used rather than the organ; the set of CD's are used when there is no organist available. There is not a resident Organist/Choirmaster but the choir sing at two services per month whenever possible, and regularly join with the Brickhills choir. Mr. Jerry Breslin again co-ordinated the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols with the help of Mr. Robin Dawson and organist, Mr. Paul Dickens.

In May the "Music in the Brickhills" singers under the direction of Jerry Breslin performed Mozart's Requiem at All Saints Church, Leighton Buzzard as there was not enough space in Great Brickhill church. The concert raised £4,500 with the proceeds going equally to the Alzheimer's Society and All Saints Church. Later that month the local MitB musicians joined the Kaznowski Wind Quintet to perform a concert in aid of Macmillan Nurses; a varied programme included Mozart's Gran Partita. Jerry Breslin also masterminded the "Music in the Brickhills" fifth annual performance of Handel's Messiah in September. The magnificent sum of £3,505 was raised, split equally between the church and Willen Hospice.

Bell ringing practice takes place on a Wednesday evening and the bells are rung before most services. David Middleton continues in the role of Tower Captain and organizes a team of ringers for weddings and funerals as required.

High Ash School:

High Ash Church of England School has a governing body of fifteen members including three Foundation Governors appointed by the Oxford Diocese. From April 2011 – 2012 these positions were held by Reverend John Waller, Mr. Butch Baker and Mrs. Joy Wilson who took over from Dr Christine Agambar.

In January 2012 the school had 250 children aged 4 to 11 on roll, an increase of 6 children from the same date last year. The school continues to be oversubscribed with half of the incoming 40 pupils drawn from the school catchment area of Great Brickhill, Little Brickhill and Stoke Hammond. The majority of pupils at High Ash are “Out-of-County” children, with the most children coming from Milton Keynes. This puts the school at continued risk. The future status of the school continues to be reviewed. Governors are researching the government’s support for outstanding schools to convert to academy status.

The school was inspected by Ofsted in May 2012 and was found to be outstanding. Only 5% of primary schools have achieved the outstanding status on consecutive inspections. The Ofsted inspection was followed by a SIAS inspection and again High Ash was found to be outstanding. The inspector said that High Ash was the sort of school he’d like his grandson to attend.

RE and Spiritual Developments

The school has continued to hold spiritual development at the centre of its work. Children have been responsible for producing their own worship, working in mixed age groups as part of the ‘challenge’ sessions which take place each week. The children have also put in additional time outside of lessons to prepare and rehearse their material. Children have also created their own ‘reflection areas’ in each classroom where they can express their spiritual thoughts and reflections.

The school continues to have strong links with all the churches in the Benefice and particularly with our church (Harvest Festival, Christingle, Easter Service, Leavers’ Service). These links have been strengthened with the work undertaken the Rector, and also the Bridge Builder Trust.

The head teacher, Louise Eaton, has completed her training to be a SIAS Inspector, to work for the Diocese inspecting RE and Spiritual Development in schools across the whole Diocese.

Midweek Groups and Charitable Giving:

The Wednesday morning Communion and Bible Study continues on a fortnightly basis with appropriate breaks during the year. The sessions are normally led by the Rector but occasionally by visiting clergy. The study sessions generally used the reading for the day as the theme.

The Thursday Group continues to meet fortnightly on Thursday afternoons for discussions, talks, tea and chat. The programme also includes a number of outside visits, the highlight in 2011 was the visit to Broughton Church, which has a connection to the Duncombe family. During the five weeks of Lent the Thursday Group takes a break to make way for the weekly Lent Lunches followed by discussion. The theme of the 2011 Lent Course was “At The Table”, a course designed by the Rector. Donations from the Lent Lunches are given to charitable causes.

The Drop-In Centre continues to open each week on a Monday afternoon at the Parish Hall. Monies received by the Drop-In, in excess of expenditure incurred, were used towards the carriage cost of sending Shoe Boxes to Romania under the auspices of “Link Romania”, an organisation which works with the many poor and needy families in Romania. A total of 61 shoe boxes were despatched in November 2011. Money from the Drop In Centre is also donated to help medical needs in Constanza, Romania.

The annual Macmillan Coffee Morning was held in the village on a very warm day in September. A splendid total of £1,304 was raised.

The charities supported by our Outside Giving are:- National Churches Trust; Bucks. Historic Churches Trust; Nuevo Reto and Aylesbury Vale Youth for Christ. This year's Christian Aid House-to-House Collection in Great Brickhill raised a total of £666. The sum of £400 was sent to the Poppy Appeal from the Remembrance Sunday collection in Church. The money from the Lent Lunches £220 was sent to the Long Barn Appeal, Society of Mary and Martha, the retreat for clergy in Sheldon, Devon. The Christmas Card Tree and collection at the Charity Evensong in December raised £339 for The Magical Taxi Tour, a charity set up to enable children with life threatening illnesses to go on a trip to Disneyland, Paris.

The total of disbursements to charitable causes during the year was in excess of £5,000. This represents approximately 16% of the Income Received (excluding Assignables) for the year.

Church Rota and Communications:

Various rotas are drawn up (flower arranging, coffee, churchyard mowing, church locking, cleaning, reading, intercessions, clergy, assistants at Holy Communion, organists) to ensure the smooth running of the Church. The Monthly Rota detailing all the rota information on a single sheet is displayed on the Notice Board in the Church porch.

Dr. Christine Agambar produces the weekly Pew Sheet for all services for which the P.C.C. and members of the congregation are most grateful. The schedule of Services for each month also appears in the Parish Newsletter. The Church continues to pay the Editor of the Parish News an annual amount to cover the cost of the inclusion of Church items in Parish News.

Since December 2009 there has been a Benefice website (www.brickhillchurches.org.uk) with a section dedicated to each of the four churches. The website includes the schedule of all the Church Services, a calendar of events, photos, contact lists etc, plus information about the diocese and deanery. Each week the readings for the following Sunday are given on the front Home page, along with the monthly service sheets for the four churches. The Great Brickhill section is updated with the Monthly Rota Sheet and the weekly Pew Sheets as soon as they are available. The website continues to have a large number of "hits" to the site - on average 6,200 per month, peaking at 7741 in July 2011.

Children and Youth:

During the year there were no Junior Church activities such as Junior Quest or Crusaders. However, the Youth Café continues to thrive with around 50 young people attending most weeks. There is a 'settled' atmosphere with the more mature members helping to model and shape the environment for the new intake to feel in a safe, friendly, welcoming place.

Marco Loxley, the Youth Leader, is held in high regard by the young people and together, especially with volunteer Kevin Forster, is developing a group of young people with a desire to serve their fellow man by seeing the potential that each individual has, to have a positive impact on the world where they are.

There is an opportunity each evening for the Junior volunteers and any others who would like to stay, for a short bible message and prayer after the end of the Café. Regularly about 10 -15 stay for this time of 'de-brief'. We are delighted that four of the teenagers are coming on the Alpha Course this term with Marco and Kevin as their small group leaders.

We are very grateful that the Parish Council continues to fund the Café and the Church, both here and in Stoke Hammond, have also given gifts to Aylesbury Vale Youth for Christ to support the work. Our Parish Council is in discussion with Little Brickhill Parish Council to see if they would be able to contribute some funding.

Apart from Great Brickhill the young people come from both Little Brickhill and Stoke Hammond and a considerable number from Milton Keynes. Although the village might feel the cost is rather a burden, we are supplying a need and the Café is a very real mission field. There is great reward in seeing the young people exercising their gifts and growing in maturity through attending the Café. The Café would really love it if members of the church would come along any Friday in term time and spend some time with us.

REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS

The Church had a surplus of £731 this year (2010 deficit £1,900). There was an increase in Church Collections and Gift Aid Donations including tax rebates amounting to £1,102. Donations are being made increasingly more via the Envelope Scheme than through bank payments. The decrease in general Donations of £4,785 is because the donation from the Great Brickhill Charity has this year been allocated to specific repairs in Designated funds.

The total Expenditure (excluding the figure for Assignables) decreased by £1,982. The General Maintenance figure decreased by £5,666 as the 2010 figure included the expensive repair of the central heating pipes (£5,373). There were increases in the cost of Heating etc (£1,239) and the amount of Outside Giving was increased to £1,000 (2010 - £650).

Payment of the Parish Share:

This year the P.C.C. paid its Parish Share of £21,452 in full - this was an increase of 2.9% of the Parish Share due in 2010 (£20,845). Due to the Deficit for the year and reduction in the amount in General Reserves, last year there was a shortfall of the amount of Parish Share paid to the Diocese (£19,845), which was £1,000 less than the allocation. There will be a further increase in the Parish Share in 2012 to £21,724.

Restricted Items:

As well as general income the P.C.C. has received donations which are restricted as to their use, the money having been given for specific purposes. Under the Charities Act accounting regulations, the restricted funds have to be identified separately in the main accounts. The P.C.C. is able to confirm that it holds sufficient and appropriate assets to meet the conditions of expenditure of all restricted funds. Details of the balances of funds and the assets which are held to represent those funds are contained in the Balance Sheet.

During the year the Project St. Mary's 2000 Fund increased by £26,469. The increase was mainly due to the recovery of VAT on the recent roof repairs and bell project. Payments were made to the architects and the final amount was paid to the contractors for the Bell project.

The total amount raised for St. Mary's 2000 came to £31,462. The following items are worthy of note: VAT refund £26,269 and Kay Seaman's Enterprises £1,030. Donations, Covenants, Gift Aid and many smaller activities contributed to the total.

PROJECT ST. MARY 2000

Bell Project:

The new ring of bells has been enjoyed by ringers and parishioners alike. This project was signed off formally at the end of the snagging period in September. All work had successfully been accomplished and the only remedial jobs to be done were the easing of cupboard doors and installing sparrow netting in the belfry so no birds have access to the bells and frame; Axatax returned and fixed the new netting at a cost of £200. David Middleton (the tower captain) assured the architect and PCC that Whites of Appleton (bell hangers) had returned to give the new installation a check over and found everything to be in order. Val Baldwin (PCC member) and David Middleton were asked to liaise, purchase and organise the laying of the ringing chamber carpet.

On completion of this project the VAT rebate for St Mary 2000 works was applied for and £26,269 was received.

New Facilities:

During this year our architects Caroe and Partners produced several plans for our consideration and discussion. At each stage they listened to the subcommittee's feedback and adjusted the plans accordingly. The toilets, kitchen, meeting room, office and garden store were designed to be in an extension through an opening in the north wall of the church. The inter action between the different spaces and people and keeping the cost down were the committee's main concerns.

Janet Pritchard has kindly spent much time in researching possible grant giving bodies; she has given Rosie Dawson a list of 21 different charities that might be able to help us when the time is right.