

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

**Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended 31st. December, 2016**

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

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:
[From May 2016]
Nick Cox Architects
77 Heyford Park
Upper Heyford
Oxfordshire
OX25 5HD**

Report Of The Parochial Church Council (PCC) Year ended 31st. December, 2016

MEMBERS OF THE PCC

The following persons served as members of the PCC from the date of the Annual Meeting, 27th April 2016:-

The Reverend John Waller (Chairman)
Julia Turner (Church Warden)

Deanery Synod Representative:-

Jeremy Hopkinson (Licensed Lay Minister; PCC Vice-Chairman)

Phillipa Cook (Secretary)
Mary Maley
Angela Northen
Margretta Smith
Joy Wilson

Neil Cook continued in the role of Treasurer, co-opted to the P.C.C., 24/5/16

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 54 people on the Electoral Roll. No-one joined the Electoral Roll during the year; there were two deaths and no-one moved away. Hence the number of Electors at the end of the year decreased to 52, ten of whom are not resident within the parish.

The “usual Sunday attendance for Normal Services” during the year to 31/12/16 was 20 (in 2015 the attendance was 24). There were several special services held throughout the year and these normally attract a larger congregation than for a normal Sunday, e.g. Songs of Praise, Family Service with Baptism, Nativity Service – these figures are not included in the calculation for the “usual Sunday attendance for Normal Services”.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Reverend John Waller continues as Rector. There has been no change to the general pattern of services – the Rector takes two Sunday services a week across the Benefice, a Holy Communion Service at either 9.00 or 9.30am and a Family Service at 11am.

Every other month at Great Brickhill visiting clergy lead the Prayer Book Holy Communion service on the first Sunday. One service per month is generally lay led. The third Sunday of the month in Great Brickhill is used as an opportunity to hold a variety of different services. These include Mattins, Morning Worship, Songs of Praise and Evensong. On the third Sunday of December the Family Service and Nativity was again successful.

The Lent Groups met on Tuesday afternoons at Stoke Hammond or on a weekday evening at venues across the Benefice. The theme was “The Psalms – Prayers for Today’s Church”. The Bible Group continue to meet on a Wednesday evening on a monthly basis. Monthly Prayer for Healing meetings are held at The Rectory. The Thursday Group met on a fortnightly basis and the Drop-In takes place in the Parish Hall on a Monday afternoon although from October the Post Office facility is no longer available. All are welcome to attend these sessions.

During the year we were very sad to hear of the loss of a number of our regular worshippers. Their support and friendship will be missed both here at the church and within the wider village community.

A programme of fund-raising activities was held throughout the year, including the February Snowdrop Walks, the Plant Fayre in April, a Midsummer Supper, the Sponsored Bike Ride and Christmas Coffee Morning, plus a new event, a History Weekend over the August Bank Holiday which brought many visitors into the church to view the many displays of old photographs and artefacts from around the village. All these events were both successful in raising funds but were also good social events.

David Marlow very kindly takes photographs at all the special events and services. He produces a St Mary’s Year Book which is on display in the church. The book and individual photos can be seen on David’s website:- www.davidmarlowphotography.com.

Work on the Fabric of the Church:

There were two main areas of work carried out during the year:-

i). In September Mike Bunning, the stone mason carried out work in the church to remove the plinth from the altar in the Lady Chapel and to take away the overhang on the base of the font. This will make both areas safer and the space in the Lady Chapel more versatile.

ii). Theft of Lead from the church roof. The church was targeted again in August when an amount of lead was stolen from the north west side, and also from the porch on the south side. A temporary repair was done to make the roof watertight. We then suffered another theft of lead in early October when virtually all the lead was stripped from the south aisle roof and more strips were taken from the north side. On the day we discovered the theft we learnt that permission had been granted to install an alarm system to the roof – the PCC had done its utmost to expedite matters hoping that the alarm could have been fitted in September but the approval was not forthcoming.

The roofing contractor worked very hard to do a temporary repair as the rain was coming into the south aisle. He has since done a permanent repair to the south porch using slates and also taken off the small amount of lead remaining. There is now no need to have an alarm fitted on the roof. Due to the number of thefts that we have incurred permission has been granted to use a substitute material. The permanent repair necessary for the north and south aisle roof will doubtless be an expensive operation and it may be that the work has to be phased.

Policy Documents:

The Health and Safety Policy was reviewed after Val Baldwin had carried out the annual Risk Assessment. The signed Certificate is on display in the church porch.

The Safeguarding Policy was updated following the recent changes to legislation – the Policy is displayed on the notice board in the church porch. There is now a requirement for the PCC to consider an annual safeguarding report. For the year to 31st October the report is a nil report – no safeguarding incidents had been reported in the last twelve months.

Deanery Synod:

The Deanery Synod met on three occasions through the year. At the start of the year documents were circulated for discussion and feedback on the Archbishop's Reform & Renewal Program. The main part of the May meeting focused on a talk given by the Diocesan Rural Officer. At the September meeting there was a report from the Diocesan Synod and the vicar of Wing spoke on the subject of training for preaching and intercessions.

The Rt Revd. Dr Steven Croft was appointed the new Bishop of Oxford and he took up his post in September. The new Archdeacon of Buckingham, Canon Guy Elsmore has a background of urban ministry and is likely to concentrate on the urban expansion in the area.

Jeremy Hopkinson serves as the Deanery Synod representative for Great Brickhill.

Music and Choir:

The organ continues to be played by various organists on a weekly basis.

Jerry Breslin holds weekly Benefice Choir practices on Monday evenings at Great Brickhill. Jerry plays regularly at the Sunday services and generally at any special services. Susan Noon plays the organ on the second Sunday of the month and Andrew and Margretta Smith provide most of the music for the Family Services.

After a few years' absence the Messiah returned to Great Brickhill. A concert in aid of Willen Hospice was held in the church in September, featuring Vivaldi and excerpts from Messiah.

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. New ringers are always welcome.

High Ash School:

High Ash is a Church of England school and the Christian ethos is central. There are two Foundation Governors at the school, appointed by the Oxford Diocese:- Reverend John Waller and Mrs Juliet Bennett who resigned before the end of the year. Mrs Joy Wilson has subsequently been appointed as the second Foundation Governor.

The School gathers four times throughout the year for worship in the church. At each of these services the church is full to capacity. The staff and pupils from High Ash School also used the church during Holy Week for their project "Experience Easter". The church was transformed into a new Jerusalem, with tableaux set up around the church, each station depicting part of the Easter story. In June the school returned to hold a POP UK concert in the church.

Charitable Giving:

Support continues for the “Link for Hope” Shoe Box appeal. “Feed the Hungry” charity is supported by a number of ladies who knit garments to send to Africa for new born babies to wear when they leave hospital.

A donation was made to the Bridgebuilder Trust in Milton Keynes at the start of the year as part of our mission giving. The charities supported by our year end Outside Giving are:- National Churches Trust and Bucks. Historic Churches Trust.

Support for other charities include the Christian Aid House-to-House Collection, the Poppy Appeal from the Remembrance Sunday collection in Church. The Vivaldi and Messiah Concert raised funds for Willen Hospice. Funds were raised through the Christmas Charity for SolarAid, a charity helping to provide solar lights to transform peoples’ lives in Africa.

The total of disbursements to charitable causes during the year was in excess of £5,025. This represents approximately 11% of the Income Received (excluding Assignables) for the year.

Church Rota and Communications:

Information is sent out where possible by e-mail and the website is continually updated to provide all the up to date information regarding services and activities. E-Newsletters giving a summary of recent events and details of upcoming events are distributed to around 100 people on an occasional basis whenever there are items to report.

A weekly Pew Sheet is produced for all services and the schedule of Services and other items of news are sent each month for inclusion in the Parish Newsletter. There are over 80 people who take a turn on the various rotas - a coffee morning was held on a Saturday morning in February to say thank you to them all.

Children and Youth:

The Family Services remain the best attended services. The Lady Chapel is used very successfully to hold activities for the children during services. The very successful Happy Cup Coffee Club, the child-friendly weekly drop-in, continues to be held in the church every Monday morning during term time.

REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS

The Accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, falling in line with most other churches and thus avoiding the onerous regulations that apply to accruals accounts.

The Church had a surplus of £14,073 for the year giving a balance in Unrestricted Funds of £25,235. Due to one very large donation the figure for Covenants and Gift Aid Donations is well up compared to last year. The total Expenditure for the year has decreased by £2,715 from 2015. The amount of Outside Giving was £500, the same as the last two years.

Payment of the Parish Share:

This year the P.C.C. paid its Parish Share of £22,955 in full – this is an increase of 3.1% from last year. The Parish Share for 2017 will be £24,098, a further increase of 5.0%.

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 Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

The total for Restricted Funds at the end of the year has increased to £99,808, mainly due to receipt of the insurance claim for the theft of the lead from the roof with the permanent repair work outstanding.

PLANNING OF ADDITIONAL FACILITIES IN THE CHURCH

Following a tender process Nick Cox Architects have been appointed as the church architect. Emma Gander is in charge of our account. She has conducted a feasibility study and the PCC has a preferred option for providing the additional facilities in a stand-alone building. The PCC are undergoing the process of obtaining the necessary surveys before requesting further detailed drawings.