

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

Annual Report and Accounts

For the year ended 31st. December, 2017

**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:
Nick Cox Architects
77 Heyford Park
Upper Heyford
Oxfordshire
OX25 5HD**

Report Of The Parochial Church Council (PCC) Year ended 31st. December, 2017

MEMBERS OF THE PCC

The following persons served as members of the PCC from the date of the Annual Meeting, 25th April 2017:-

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

Deanery Synod Representative:- Elected for a three-year term:-
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., 23/5/17

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 52 people on the Electoral Roll. Two 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 remained at 52, ten of whom are not resident within the parish.

The “usual Sunday attendance for Normal Services” during the year to 31/12/17 was 21 (in 2016 the attendance was 20). 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, plus services held at venues away from the church – 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 11.00am.

Every alternate 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 - this third Sunday is used as an opportunity to hold a variety of different services. These include Mattins, Morning Worship, Café Church, Songs of Praise and Evensong.

Three very successful services were held at different locations. The Family Service in May took place in one of the marquees at the cricket field immediately before the opening of the Brickstock music festival. In September the Archdeacon of Buckingham, the Venerable Guy Elsmore joined us for our Harvest Family Service at Rectory Farm, which was followed by a Bring and Share Lunch. On 17th December The Nativity was held at the rear of The Old Red Lion pub, with thanks to the host, Helen Ivory.

The Lent Groups met both on Tuesday afternoons at Stoke Hammond or a weekday evening at venues across the Benefice. The theme was "Pilgrims: Meeting God on the Journey", focussing on particular bible stories based on journeys / pilgrimages. The Bible Group continue to meet on a Wednesday evening on a monthly basis. Monthly Prayer for Healing meetings for the United Benefice are held at The Rectory. A prayer board is now available by the entrance to the church for people to add a note of anyone for whom they would like to offer their prayers.

The Happy Cup Coffee Club, the child-friendly drop-in coffee morning for parents and carers continues on Monday mornings during term time. After a break over the Christmas period the decision was made to discontinue the fortnightly Thursday Group. The Drop-In takes place in the Parish Hall on Monday afternoons; in November the Post Office facility re-opened on Mondays at the same time as the Drop-In.

During the year we lost 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 series of fund-raising activities was held throughout the year, including the February Snowdrop Walks, the Plant Fayre in April, a raffle and teas at Brickstock in May, regular Ladies Who Lunch events, plus a highly successful Auction of Promises where we were fortunate to have the renowned Charlie Ross as our auctioneer. There was a great atmosphere of friendship and fellowship at all of these events.

David Marlow continues to take photographs at all the special events and services. He produces a St Mary's Year Book which is on display in the church. The photos can be seen on David's website:- www.davidmarlowphotography.com.

Work on the Fabric of the Church:

The main area of work carried out during the year was in relation to the roof. At the very start of the year thieves returned to the church to take away the remaining lead on the south side of the roof. This resulted in rain coming into the church. Our roofing contractor did a repair using a waterproof membrane to make the roof water tight. The few remaining strips of lead from the north side were taken down and disposed of before they were taken.

The advice we had been given was that the temporary repair to the roof should last for at least two years, which would have given time to raise funds and make arrangements for the permanent repair work. During heavy rain in late May water again came into the church. The roofing contractor came to secure the membrane, but with the high winds that evening, the same

thing happened with the rain pouring down the walls and soaking the south aisle. The contractor then found the membrane had degraded and was letting the rainwater through. To make the roof water tight, plastic sheeting was laid over the membrane.

There then followed a long dry spell but in late July water poured into the church each time that it rained. This could have resulted in serious damage but thanks go to all who helped to deal with the flooding and in particular to Andrew Smith who spent many hours working on the areas of the roof that had been the cause of the various leaks. A new roofing contractor laid a temporary covering of felt on both the north and the south aisle, replacing the plastic sheeting as a more robust temporary measure to prevent more water coming through until a more permanent solution can be done. In the interest of the fabric of the church and for safety reasons the felt was laid at the earliest opportunity and retrospective permission to do the work was applied for.

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.

An annual safeguarding report was prepared for the November PCC meeting. 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 new Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd. Dr Steven Croft toured each of the Deaneries in the Diocese. His visit to the Mursley Deanery in March included Holy Communion, lunch, farm visits, evening meal with lay people, and an Open Meeting in the evening at Little Brickhill.

The Deanery Synod met on two occasions through the year. A discussion paper was distributed to parishes following the Bishop of Oxford's initiative "Called to be Christ-like, a call for Christians to be contemplative, compassionate and courageous".

Jeremy Hopkinson was re-elected to serve another three-year term 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. Thanks go to the Benefice Choir who did a fantastic job at the Christmas services in the absence of Jerry Breslin who was unable to attend the practices or to be at the service due to illness. John Wearmouth and Rosemary Howell played the organ at short notice for the Christmas 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.

The Messiah concert in September was due to be held in the church but was re-located to a theatre in Milton Keynes due to concerns about the church roof.

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. There are two Foundation Governors at the school, appointed by the Oxford Diocese:- Reverend John Waller and Mrs Joy Wilson.

The School gathers four times throughout the year for worship in the church. At each of these services the church is full to capacity. Mrs Louise Eaton left the school in July and Mrs Sara Boyce took over as Headteacher from the start of the September term.

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.

The charities supported by our year end Outside Giving are:- National Churches Trust and Bucks. Historic Churches Trust. The chosen Christmas Charity was The Teenage Cancer Trust, receiving donations made primarily at the Charity Songs of Praise in November.

Support for other charities include the Christian Aid House-to-House Collection, the Poppy Appeal from the Remembrance Sunday collection in Church.

The total of disbursements to charitable causes during the year was in excess of £3,155. This represents approximately 9.2% 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 forthcoming 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 Café Church was held in March, an informal gathering in place of a formal service with a short time for worship, to give thanks to all those who support the church.

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 Happy Cup Coffee Club, the child-friendly weekly drop-in, held in the church every Monday morning during term time continues to be very popular. A few changes were made in the Lady Chapel and in the Children’s Corner to make a more comfortable space for the Coffee Club, but also retain the Lady Chapel as an area for quiet contemplation. This is work in progress and a temporary measure, until more substantial improvements can be made.

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 deficit of £457 for the year giving a balance in Unrestricted Funds of £24,777.

Due to one very large donation in 2016 the figure for Gift Aid Donations is well down compared to last year. The total Expenditure for the year has increased by £1,913 from 2016, mainly due to the increased cost of the Parish Share and a rise in heating costs. The amount of Outside Giving was £500, the same as the last three years.

Payment of the Parish Share:

This year the P.C.C. paid its Parish Share of £24,098 in full – this is an increase of 5.0% from last year. The Parish Share for 2018 will be £25,615, a further increase of 6.3%.

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 decreased to £93,955, mainly due to the costs of the surveys that were carried out and architect's fees.

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES IN THE CHURCH

Progress on the installation of additional facilities suffered as all available time and energy was diverted to minimising the damage caused by the water ingress through the roof following the theft of lead and the failure of the temporary roof covering. A Measured Survey and full tree survey was carried out during the year in preparation for when plans will be drawn up and submitted to the various authorities.