

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

**Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended 31st. December, 2010**

**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, 2010

MEMBERS OF THE PCC

The following persons served as members of the P.C.C. during 2010:-

The Reverend John Waller (Chairman)

Christine Agambar (Church Warden)

Julia Turner (Church Warden)

Clare Amies (Deanery Synod Representative)

Jeremy Hopkinson (Licensed Lay Minister; Deanery Synod Representative; Vice-Chairman)

Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin (elected at Annual Meeting, 22/4/10)

Phillipa Cook (Secretary)

Rosie Dawson

David Duncombe

Kay Seaman (retired at Annual Meeting, 22/04/10)

Neil Cook continued in the role of Treasurer, co-opted to the P.C.C., 13/05/10

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 no deaths and three moved away. Hence the number of Electors at the end of the year decreased to 51, 8 of whom are not resident within the parish.

The usual Sunday attendance for Normal Services during the year to 31/12/10 was 20 (in 2009 the attendance was 23). 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 and 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 – it is usually Sister Hazel or Father Colin who lead this service. 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.

The Rector took a three month sabbatical from 21st June to 20th September. The PCC were most grateful to all those who helped in any way during that period and particularly to Marian Ridgway who arranged for clergy/lay cover for services within the benefice for the three months while the Rector was away.

The highlight of the year was Sunday 17th October when there was a morning Harvest Communion service, followed by a service of Re-dedication of the Bells in the afternoon, presided over by Alan, Bishop of Buckingham. This was followed by a Harvest and Bells celebratory tea.

There have been no changes to the general pattern of services across the Benefice. Except while the Rector was on sabbatical, the Special Family Service was held each month in one of the four churches. An open meeting is held for all those who would like to be involved in the planning and preparation of these services.

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 and Dr. Christine Agambar in their role as Wardens continued to work hard to keep the Church running smoothly. Mrs. Betty Kinsey and Mrs. Rosie Dawson kindly help out with services when the Wardens are not able to attend.

The P.C.C. met in full on five occasions, plus an additional short meeting was held after a Joint PCC Meeting at Bow Brickhill School on Ascension Day. The Rector continued in the role of Chairman with Mr. Jeremy Hopkinson as Vice Chairman. At the Annual Meeting Mrs. Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin was elected as a new member of the P.C.C. and Miss Kay Seaman retired, having been on the PCC for many years including several years as a Deanery Synod representative. A special service of Evensong was held in December to mark Miss Seaman’s considerable contribution to the church and donations were made to Nuevo Reto in recognition of this.

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.

Deanery Synod:

Jeremy Hopkinson and Clare Amies represent the parish at the Deanery Synod meetings, which take place four times a year. Synod elections take place every three years and their current term of office comes to an end in March 2011

Deanery Synod Meetings usually give reports of events happening around the Deanery and show there is a substantial amount going on. A number of meetings this year, including the first, concerned the restructuring of the Deanery particularly the situation in central parishes.

It has been decided that there should be a team ministry in the area from Stewkley down to Cheddington, and advertising for this new post is currently ongoing.

There was a presentation from the Food bank explaining how they operate and the good they provide for Milton Keynes. The next meeting was concerned with the state of finances in parishes in the deanery as so many parishes were now not meeting their shares. It involved many treasurers from the Deanery and there very positive comments of the meeting. A report was circulated after the meeting for responses from Parishes, which was to be discussed at the Synod Meeting in February 2011.

Finally in November we were shown a DVD "Heaven in Ordinary", which is the latest DVD on Living Faith – Sustaining the Sacred Centre, produced by the Diocese.

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.

The "Music in the Brickhills" singers under the direction of Jerry Breslin performed a concert in the church in May. The programme included Bach's Cantata 172 and Rutter's Gloria. The evening raised £1,374 which was split equally between the St Francis Society (MK) and our Church. Jerry Breslin also masterminded the "Music in the Brickhills" fourth annual performance of Handel's Messiah in September. The magnificent sum of £3000 was raised for Willen Hospice.

The bells and bell ringing news is included within the "Bell Project" item later in this report.

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. During 2010 these positions were held by Reverend John Waller, Dr. Christine Agambar and Mr Butch Baker. Christine Agambar stands down from this April 2011, having completed her term of six years. Mrs Joy Wilson, a current community governor, has agreed to take on the role of Foundation Governor from April 2011.

In January 2011 the school had 240 children aged 4 to 11 on roll, an increase of 12 children from the same date last year. The school is now oversubscribed but only one quarter of the incoming 40 pupils are drawn from the school catchment area of Great Brickhill, Little Brickhill and Stoke Hammond. The majority of pupils at High Ash live in Milton Keynes and are therefore "Out-of-County" children, putting the school at continued risk. Some preliminary thoughts have been undertaken into the future status of the school.

The school continues to operate with extremely high standards and rates itself as "Outstanding" on the OFSTED scale. New initiatives and projects are embraced readily. The school has successfully upgraded its Arts Mark Award to 'Gold'.

RE and Spiritual Developments

The school has continued to hold spiritual development at the centre of its work. It continues to have strong links with all the churches in the Benefice and particularly with our church. (Harvest Festival, Christingle, Easter Service, Leavers' Service) The school sang at the

Dedication of the Bells Service and the Bishop of Buckingham particularly included the children in his address. These links have been strengthened with the work undertaken the Rector, and also the Bridge Builder Trust.

The head teacher, Louise Eaton, is about to complete her training to be a SIAS Inspector, to work for the Diocese inspecting RE and Spiritual Development in schools across the whole Diocese. She has also recently completed a short secondment to a church school with poor standards in Milton Keynes. She was able to take the school to a more healthy state while there.

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 lead by the Rector but during his sabbatical, by visiting clergy. The majority of the study sessions concentrated on readings from Ephesians.

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. During the five weeks of Lent there is a break for Thursday Group while the weekly Lent Lunches followed by discussion groups are held. 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 71 shoe boxes were despatched in November 2010. Money from the Drop In Centre is also donated to help medical needs in Constanza, Romania. A donation was also made to the PCC for the purchase of a new vacuum cleaner and to pay for the mounting and framing of the new Cradle Roll.

A Macmillan Coffee Morning was held in the village in September. A splendid total of £1330 was raised.

The charities supported by our Outside Giving are:- Historic Churches Preservation Trust; Bucks. Historic Churches Trust; Nuevo Reto. This year's Christian Aid House-to-House Collection in Great Brickhill raised a total of £939. The sum of £384 was sent to the Poppy Appeal from the Remembrance Sunday collection in Church. The money from the Lent Lunches £222 was shared between Lee Abbey and the Society of Mary and Martha, both located in Devon. The Christmas Card Tree and collection at the December Evensong raised Nuevo Reto, an orphanage in Guatemala, raised £692.

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.

In December 2009 a website was set up for the Benefice (www.brickhillschurches.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. The Great Brickhill section has the Monthly Rota Sheet and Pew Sheets uploaded as soon as they are available. The website has been very successful in the number of “hits” to the site, peaking at 7357 in December 2010.

Children and Youth:

During the year there were no Junior Church activities such as Junior Quest or Crusaders. However, the Youth Café has gone from strength to strength this year. A new Manager was appointed in September, Marco Loxley, who has great leadership skills and is a dynamic role model for the young people. His faith shines and infects all that he does in his work and the young people relate to him as he encourages them to make good choices as they relate with each other, putting others first, serving one another, being forgiving. They also help with setting up the equipment and putting it away and storing on the trailer for Mike Turner to collect, and serving refreshments throughout the evening. Junior Volunteers have been appointed from among the youth who take their responsibilities very seriously.

Each evening there is a time when the whole Cafe is brought together for a team activity and at the end of the evening there is a time of debrief with all the volunteers (Junior and Adult) and any others who choose to stay. Marco gives a short talk and bible reference to provide a thought to take away followed by a short time of prayer. This seems to be greatly appreciated.

Five members of the Youth Cafe have signed up to join 25 other youth cafe members from across Aylesbury Vale, on a trip with Youth for Christ to Snowdonia in April. It has been said that this will take them “out of their comfort zone”.

The Youth Cafe led a celebration service in the church in December to thank the community and Parish Council and Mike Turner for making it all possible. It was a special occasion though the snowy conditions prevented some of them attending and affected the numbers from the village who might otherwise have liked to be there. The Cafe would welcome villagers coming to see their activities any Friday night in term time.

REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS

The Church had a deficit of £1,900 this year (2009 deficit £380). There was a decrease in Church Collections and Gift Aid including tax rebates amounting to £2,803. The decrease in Donations of £1,553 is due to the donation from the Great Brickhill Charity being £1,500 less than last year.

The total Expenditure (excluding the figure for Assignables) decreased by £2,095 – notable decreases were payments for the Parish Share (£417) and heating and lighting (£660). The amount of Outside Giving this year was reduced to £650 (2009-£1,190) due to the deficit for the year and resulting decrease in the figure for General Funds.

Payment of the Parish Share:

Due to the decrease in the General Funds, the PCC did not pay its full amount of Parish Share in order that sufficient funds are available to cover any large item of expenditure that may be incurred at the start of the year. The PCC paid £19,845 towards its Parish Share, which was £1,000 under its allocation of £20,845. The amount paid was 2% lower than the payment made for 2009. There will be a further increase in the Parish Share in 2011 to £21,452.

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 decreased by £40,526 as payments were made for the re-hanging of the bells and repairing the tower structure.

The total amount raised for St. Mary's 2000 came to £64,526. The following items are worthy of note: Great Brickhill Parish Council £24,667, Bucks Historic Churches Landfill grant £20,000, Barron Bell fund £2,000, Sharpe Trust £450, Oxford Diocesan Bell Fund £6,525, English Heritage £7,440, Kay Seaman's Enterprises £870. Donations, Covenants, Gift Aid and many smaller activities contributed to the total.

PROJECT ST. MARY 2000

Bell Project:

During this year the repair of the church tower and the re-hanging of the renovated bells and the installation of the two new bells were completed. The work was well underway by December 2009 with a hope for the project to be finished and the bells ready to ring by Easter 2010; that target wasn't quite achieved. English Heritage required us to reinstate the three oldest bell frame timbers into the ringing room ceiling, which put the project back a few weeks. The new bell frame fitted snugly but perfectly into the belfry and the new ring of bells sounded beautiful when rung for the first time on Sunday, 7th July 2010. The ringing chamber has been painted and successfully furnished with European oak panelling and benches.

The project to date has cost £152,540. The retention period ends at the end of March 2011 when the final cost will be determined. The PCC is very grateful to Caroe and Partners (church architects), Whites of Appleton (bellhangers), Whites (builders) for all their hard work and to everyone who has contributed in any way to the successful conclusion of this project.

During the time when the tower was out of commission our team of bell ringers continued to practise in neighbouring towers. The PCC wishes to thank them for their dedication to ringing the bells, especially each Sunday before our church worship and to David Middleton, our Tower Captain who leads the team and has been instrumental in completing this project. It is hoped that ringers and parishioners alike will take pleasure in ringing and listening to the eight bells for the next 200 years unhindered by any more restoration work! Bishop Alan of Buckingham led a service for the re-dedication of the bells in October.

New Facilities:

During the year Caroe and Partners had considered our "statement of need" and met with our sub-committee to discuss all aspects of the project. They agreed to submit two plans for the committee to consider; these were received and discussed. The sub committee's comments were sent to Caroes who agreed to draw up one single plan that would then go to the PCC for comment...we are awaiting this plan.

Thanks go to the Church Wardens, cleaners, congregation and parishioners who have been very tolerant of the sometimes messy and inaccessible church building during this project.