

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

**Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended 31st. December, 2012**

**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, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE PCC

The following persons served as members of the PCC during 2012:-

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

Deanery Synod Representatives:-

Clare Amies
Valerie Beardmore-Baldwin
Jeremy Hopkinson (Co-opted) (Licensed Lay Minister; PCC Vice-Chairman)

Simon Bennett
Phillipa Cook (Secretary)
Robin Dawson (elected at Annual Meeting, 24/4/12)
Rosie Dawson
David Duncombe
Kay Seaman (elected at Annual Meeting, 24/4/12)
Julia Turner
Joy Wilson (elected at Annual Meeting, 24/4/12)

Neil Cook continued in the role of Treasurer, co-opted to the P.C.C., 29/05/12

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 50 people on the Electoral Roll. Two joined the Electoral Roll during the year; there were no deaths and no-one moved away. Hence the number of Electors at the end of the year increased to 52, 9 of whom are not resident within the parish.

The usual Sunday attendance for Normal Services during the year to 31/12/12 was 21 (in 2011 the attendance was 22). 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 Rector and takes the majority of the Services throughout the Benefice. From March the time of the service on the first Sunday of the month was changed from 9.30am to 11.00am, which enables the Rector to lead that service on alternate months. Every other month visiting clergy take this Prayer Book Holy Communion service. Father Colin Griffiths leads the service whenever possible and is often accompanied by Sister Hazel.

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 were two special services held during the year. In January a Memorial Service was held to celebrate the life of Sir Philip Duncombe, former Patron, Church Warden and member of the P.C.C. The service was relayed into a heated marquee adjacent to the church to provide for overflow seating arrangements. A special Prayer Book Service of Holy Communion was held on Sunday 3rd June to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the form of service favoured by Her Majesty and the 350th anniversary of this form of worship. After the service, in the churchyard there was a ceremonial tree planting by Sir David Duncombe and unveiling of a new seat, which was donated by the Great Brickhill Parish Council to mark the Jubilee.

The Family Service in June was used as the first stage in the process of developing the Mission Action Plan (see the Deanery Synod report below). The congregation were invited to write ideas and suggestions under two headings and these formed the basis of discussion for Great Brickhill with the other three churches in the benefice.

As there was a fourth Sunday in December before Christmas, and The Nativity was not being held this year, the opportunity was taken to hold a Crib Service. There many young families at the service and "Mary, Joseph and Jesus" made an appearance, along with shepherds and their sheep.

In February the Rector visited the Holy Land. He shared his experience of the trip at a meeting of the Thursday Group and used the visit as a theme for the United Benefice Service held in Great Brickhill in April.

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 whenever possible, and is open to all who would like to attend.

Dr. Christine Agambar as the sole Church Warden works tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of the Church. Mrs Julia Turner, Mrs Betty Kinsey and Mrs Rosie Dawson kindly help out with services in the absence of the Warden 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 three meetings were held 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. Robin Dawson, Miss Kay Seaman and Mrs Joy Wilson were elected as new members of the PCC.

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.

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.

Various fund-raising activities were held throughout the year, including the Snowdrop Walks, Plant Fayre, Barn Dance and Christmas Fair.

Deanery Synod:

The representatives for the Parish are Clare Amies and Val Beardmore-Baldwin. Jeremy Hopkinson is co-opted to the Synod and continues in his role of Deanery Treasurer.

The Deanery Synod was concerned almost exclusively with the Mission Action Plans (MAPs). This initiative comes from the Bishop and is filtered down through the Deanery. The approach is something along the lines of a Mission Statement, to be considered at Deanery, Benefice and Parish level. After discussion at Parish level each Benefice then drew up an eight minute presentation, which was given to the November Deanery Synod Meeting.

Other issues have been mostly related to finance and the difficulties some parishes have with payment of their shares. A vote was passed for the deanery to pay for membership of ACAT for the benefit of each Parish. A discussion took place on the proposed Anglican Communion Covenant - the motion to sign up to the Anglican Covenant was lost.

The Deanery Synod does not currently have a Secretary.

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. Midland Organ Hele & Company prepared a report detailing the work required to clean and overhaul the organ. Interim work is planned for 2013 but the major work can be carried out within the next five years. The cost of the overhaul will be in the region of £30,000.

On some occasions a piano is used rather than the organ. An excellent piano was given to the church to replace the old piano. 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.

There were no concerts held in the church this year. The annual performance of Handel's Messiah was held at All Saints Church, Leighton Buzzard.

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 2012 – 2013 these positions were held by Reverend John Waller, Mrs. Joy Wilson and Mrs. Juliet Bennett who took over from Mr. Butch Baker.

At the end of the year the school had 267 children aged 4 to 11 on roll, an increase of 16 children from the same date last year. The school continues to be oversubscribed with half of the incoming 42 pupils drawn from the school catchment area of Great Brickhill, Little Brickhill and Stoke Hammond. Half of pupils at High Ash are “Out-of-County” children, with the most children coming from Milton Keynes.

The SIAS inspection process has been superseded by SIAMS (now Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) and is more rigorous than the previous inspection regime. A new requirement is for collective worship to ‘enable the participants to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ and of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.’ The school would appreciate help or guidance with teaching this difficult concept to such young children.

Funds from the Great Brickhill Charity have been used in previous years to enable all children, whatever their circumstances, to attend the week-long trip to Flatford. Unfortunately, no grant was made to the school fund this year.

The children held their ‘helping hands’ project in the summer term, including planting flowers in the church yard.

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’s own work is in ‘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 with the Rector, and also the Bridge Builder Trust and Barnabus Live. The choir has sung at Little Brickhill Church and for the Senior Citizens’ Christmas Lunch at Stoke Hammond.

Midweek Groups and Charitable Giving:

The Wednesday morning House Communion was again held on a fortnightly basis with appropriate breaks during the year. The sessions are normally led by the Rector but occasionally by visiting clergy.

The Thursday Group continued to meet fortnightly on Thursday afternoons for discussions, talks, tea and chat. The programme also includes a number of outside visits.

The Thursday Group takes a break during the five weeks of Lent to make way for the weekly Lent Lunches followed by discussion. The theme of the 2012 Lent Course was “A Way Through the Wilderness”, each week taking a passage from Isaiah Chapter 40 and using it as

the focus for the Lent Group session and the service on the preceding Sunday. The chosen charity for the £185 collected at the Lent Lunches was “Combat Stress”.

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 56 shoe boxes were despatched in November 2012. Money from the Drop-In Centre is also donated to help medical needs in Constanza, Romania. Drop-In also gave a donation to the Snowdrop Walk and also towards the cost of the tree and refreshments at the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Service.

The annual Macmillan Coffee Morning was held in the Cricket Club on 28th September. A splendid total of £1,153 was raised.

The charities supported by our Outside Giving are:- National Churches Trust and Bucks. Historic Churches Trust. This year's Christian Aid House-to-House Collection in Great Brickhill raised a total of £867. The sum of £429 was sent to the Poppy Appeal from the Remembrance Sunday collection in Church. The Christmas Card Tree and collection at the Charity Evensong in December raised £1,063 for Willen Hospice.

The total of disbursements to charitable causes during the year was in excess of £4,000. This represents approximately 11% 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.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. 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 Monthly Rota Sheet and the weekly Pew Sheets are uploaded as soon as they are available. The website continues to have a large number of “hits” to the site – 9,026 recorded in December, a record for any one month since the website went live in December 2009.

Children and Youth:

During the year there were no Junior Church activities such as Junior Quest or Crusaders.

However, Marco Loxley, the Youth Leader, reports the following:-

“ In 2012 the Youth Café in Great Brickhill entered into its fifth year of operation. The project continues to be a positive, safe and welcoming environment for young people to hang out together and engage in a range of exciting activities.

We have been very blessed over the year to gather such large numbers of young people and continue to develop the culture and atmosphere of transformation. With an average of 50 young people attending each week, the Youth Café has been hugely busy and has seen great success in developing significant relationships with a number of individuals.

After running a successful Alpha Course off the back of the relationships that have been built up in the Youth Café, we have now developed a Cell Group, which meets weekly in the village. Bible study, discussion and time together make up a fantastic group atmosphere each week and we hope to see this group grow, as well as new groups opening in the future.

With Young people attending this project from across the benefice, as well as a significant number from the Milton Keynes area, an opportunity was seen to develop similar projects such as this across Milton Keynes. In order to make this vision realised a new developing Youth Ministry called “Pulse” has now taken on the running and management of the Youth Café. This project has now become very much a flagship centrepiece of the ministry and has exciting prospects going forward.

Our thanks go out to the Parish Council who are continuing to fund the project and encourage its development. Also a big thank you to the Church for its prayers and support for not only the Youth Café but also the new ministry, which it is managed by.

As always we would like to extend an invitation to any members of the Church who are interested in finding out more, to come over on a Friday night and take a look at what we do. Our young people would be glad to show you around and introduce you to their Youth Café. ”

REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS

The Church had a surplus of £2,743 this year (2011 surplus £731). There was an increase in Church Collections and Gift Aid Donations including tax rebates amounting to £1,326. The increasing trend for donations being made through the Envelope Scheme rather than through bank payments continues. The increase in general Donations of £2,510 is due to collections at funerals and a bequest.

The total Expenditure (excluding the figure for Assignables) increased by £336. The amount of Outside Giving was decreased to £500 (2011 - £1,000).

Payment of the Parish Share:

This year the P.C.C. paid its Parish Share of £21,724 in full - this was an increase of 1.2% of the Parish Share for 2011 (£21,452). The Parish Share will remain at £21,724 for 2013.

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 a net £2,782. The total amount raised for St. Mary's 2000 came to £4,961 – the most notable worthy items were Kay Seaman's Enterprises £1,022 and Donations £2,200. The final payments (totalling £2,179) were made for the Bell Project.

PROJECT ST. MARY 2000

The Bell Project:

All work in the tower was completed this year with the laying of the carpet in the ringing chamber and the settling of the final account from Halstead Associates (CDM). The Bell Project is now at an end.

The New Facilities:

Design work by Caroe and Partners and the sub-committee continued. The sub-committee took plans to the PCC for discussion on a ground plan for the extension. Before proceeding any further some of the PCC wanted to explore putting the/some of the/ facilities within the church building; the Rector suggested asking the DAC to visit to advise on that possibility.

Tina Marshall from the Oxford DAC met the PCC and gave an informal view that facilities would be allowed within the church building. She also appreciated that whilst the project was on-going we were still without a toilet so kindly gave us permission for a temporary toilet, which was purchased and placed in the churchyard in November.

Simon Bennett was asked to contact three architects of the PCC's choice to select a company to propose a scheme to accommodate the new/some of the/ facilities within the church building. Caroe and Partners, Acanthus Clews and Bruce Deacon were approached to submit their readiness to approach the task and for examples of work already executed by them in this respect.