

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

Annual Report and Accounts

For the year ended 31st. December, 2018

**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:

**Adrian Ringrose Dip Arch BA Arch RIBA AABC
Stimpson Walton Bond
Chartered Architects
59 York Road
Northampton
NN1 5QL**

Report Of The Parochial Church Council (PCC) Year ended 31st. December, 2018

MEMBERS OF THE PCC

The following persons served as members of the PCC from the date of the Annual Meeting, 17th April 2018:-

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., 29/5/18

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.

There were 52 people on the Electoral Roll at the start of 2018. By the end of the year the number of Electors was 51, nine of whom are not resident within the parish. There will be a revision of the Electoral Roll prepared for the Annual Meeting in April.

The “usual Sunday attendance for Normal Services” during the year to 31/12/18 was 19 (in 2017 the attendance was 21). 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 a Holy Communion Service and a Family Service across the Benefice on each Sunday. Valerie Kerr joins Jeremy Hopkinson as a Licensed Lay Minister taking services in each of the four parishes.

Services:

The service on the third Sunday service every month is generally lay led. This gives the opportunity to hold a variety of different services. These include Mattins, Morning Worship, Café Church, Songs of Praise and Evensong. The service sheet is projected onto a screen for some Family Services where appropriate.

Two services were held away from the church. The Family Service in May was again held in one of the marquees at the cricket field immediately before the opening of the Brickstock music festival. The Nativity on 23rd December was held in the garden of The Old Red Lion with children doing all the readings and taking all the parts.

Other services of note were:-

- a). There was a Pentecost Prayer Pilgrimage across the Benefice using the theme “Thy Kingdom Come”, which is a global prayer movement inviting Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus for the 11 days from Ascension Day to Pentecost. The walk was from Stoke Hammond to Bow Brickhill visiting each church for a service en route.
- b). The Benefice service in September when the theme was “We refuse to be enemies”, reflections with photographs throughout the service by the Rector on his recent visit to Israel/Palestine.
- c). The Remembrance Sunday Service when nearly 200 people attended to commemorate 100 years since the Armistice Day in November 1918. There was a display around the church of servicemen from Great Brickhill, the names of those who survived the war and those who died during the conflict or shortly afterwards from their wounds. The research was done by Tom Rolls and Edward Maley. A special poppy wreath was laid by members of the GB WI.

Five funerals were held during the year but there was only one wedding. There were five services of baptism, four of which were held within the normal Sunday service.

Courses:

The three-week Lent course “Exploring the Beatitudes” offered a choice of afternoon or evening sessions at venues across the Benefice. The course followed the Bishop of Oxford’s initiative “Called to be Christ-like: contemplative, compassionate and courageous”.

The eight-week Bible Course using updated material was held in March and April – a daytime course at The Rectory and a very popular Wednesday evening session in the small meeting room of the Parish Hall. The course explores the world's bestseller, discovering how the key events, books and characters of the Bible all fit together.

Regular Meetings:

The Bible Group continue to meet on a Wednesday evening on a monthly basis. The prayer board is available by the entrance to the church for people to add a note of anyone for whom they would like to offer their prayers. In March a weekly Prayer Group started on a Thursday morning, meeting for coffee followed by an informal gathering in the Lady Chapel with an opportunity for quiet, private and open prayer. After the summer break the Prayer Group met twice a month, on the second and fourth Monday at 11.00am at the end of the coffee morning.

The Happy Cup Coffee Club, the child-friendly drop-in coffee morning for parents and carers

meets on Monday mornings during term time. The Drop-In also continues on a Monday afternoon in the Parish Hall; the Post Office facility is open at the same time as the Drop-In.

Events:

A series of fund-raising activities was held throughout the year, including the February Snowdrop Walks, the Plant Fayre in April, a tombola and teas at Brickstock in May, regular Ladies Who Lunch events and an Advent Coffee Morning in the church. Due to the drop in value of waste paper, sadly after many years the Newspaper Collection came to an end.

Over a weekend in July there was a photographic exhibition “Our Village Past and Present”, a display around the church of scenes from around the village, past and present. On the Sunday afternoon Jerry Breslin and the Cryers Singers gave a performance “King James - a Royal Progress”, renaissance music for a summer afternoon, followed by cream teas in the churchyard.

David Marlow continues to take photographs at all the special events and services. A presentation of his photos was shown at the Annual Meeting. David 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:

There was relatively little work done in the church this year. Plaster has been removed from the south wall to the rear of the font to allow the damp patches to dry out. Roof ventilation holes have been made in a few areas of the ceiling to allow for air circulation to the roof timbers where most of the water came in last year.

At the beginning of the year pews were removed from behind the font to give space for the coffee station to be located there, allowing the area in front of the vestry to be kept clear for the choir and clergy. Some of the chairs in the Children’s Area and the Lady Chapel were replaced. This was done to make best use of the whole area we have available within the church. The vestry has also been tidied to give more space.

Policy Documents:

The Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policy are reviewed on an annual basis and the signed policies are 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.

A great deal of time was spent ensuring that everything was in order when the GDPR were implemented on 25th May 2018. In accordance with the regulations a Data Privacy Notice has been drawn up and is available to view on the website.

Deanery Synod:

The Deanery Synod met on three occasions through the year. The main topic discussed was the Mission Action Plan. Templates were sent to all parishes to be returned by July for the Mission and Pastoral team to consider before submitting to the Synod in September. Other topics were the implementation of GDPR in May and the three-day Living Waters Clergy Conference in May.

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.

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. There were several visits from outside bell ringers including the Oxford Diocesan Youth team.

High Ash School:

High Ash is a Church of England school. There were 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. When the whole school attends the church is full to capacity. On some occasions there is a separate service for the younger children and one for the older children.

Charitable Giving:

Support continues for the “Link for Hope” Shoe Box appeal. The scheme was also used for gifts at the Harvest Service – everyone was encouraged to take an item that could be put in the shoe boxes. “Feed the Hungry” charity was again 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 Willen Hospice, 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 and the Youth Café.

The total of disbursements to charitable causes during the year was in excess of £2,824. This represents approximately 11.1% 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 – the P.C.C. is very grateful to all those who support the church in this way.

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.

In April Yvonne Morris, Diocese of Oxford Children's Advisor, came to talk and guide those from the benefice involved with the Family Services on how we can support children of all ages. Two further benefice meetings were held focusing on Children's Christian Journeys.

From these discussions Valerie Kerr has been leading “Open the Book” in High Ash and Bow Brickhill Schools, a project which offers primary school children an opportunity to hear the major stories of the Bible in weekly assemblies.

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 £708 for the year giving a balance in Unrestricted Funds of £24,069. Total Receipts for the year are down - Gift Aid donations reduced and the Tax Rebates were down significantly due to the claim in 2017 for one very large donation received in 2016. The total general Expenditure for the year decreased by £8,524 from 2017, due mainly to the reduced payment of the Parish Share (see below). The amount of Outside Giving was £200 (£500 for the last three years). All other expenditure was in line with last year.

Payment of the Parish Share:

The amount of Parish Share for the year was £25,615 up 6.3% from 2017. Due to the projected deficit for the year the amount paid to the Diocese was £15,000 (59% of the amount due). The Parish Share due for 2019 will be £25,243, a slight reduction of 1.5%. With the current level of income, it will not be possible to pay the Parish Share in full in future if the Share stays at the present level.

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 £91,790, mainly due to the costs of the architect’s fees.

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES IN THE CHURCH

Following the appointment of the new architect in January, Adrian Ringrose drew up plans for the toilet extension and the refreshment point. These have been approved in principle by the DAC and the formal planning application was submitted to AVDC in November.

The refreshment point will be housed in the area to the rear of the font, which has been used successfully to serve teas and coffee since the start of the year. The DAC were helpful with their advice regarding the removal of the pews to accommodate this. There will be no reduction in the overall seating capacity of the church as there will be sufficient storage capacity for chairs. The toilet facility will be within a small extension through the west door with a short link to the church. The DAC have given their advice on the structure and materials to be used.

When the planning application is approved detailed drawings will be produced and the tendering process will take place. Only at this stage will there be a clear indication of the cost of the work but it is hoped that a substantial portion of the cost will be covered by grants. The P.C.C. believes that the plans provide for facilities that are both achievable and affordable and will meet the needs of the church in the years ahead.