

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

Annual Report and Accounts

For the year ended 31st December, 2020

**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, 2020

MEMBERS OF THE PCC

The following persons served as members of the PCC from the date of the Annual Meeting, 30th April 2019:-

The Reverend John Waller (Chairman)
Jeremy Hopkinson (Licensed Lay Minister; PCC Vice-Chairman)
Julia Turner (Church Warden)
Phillipa Cook (Secretary)
Mary Maley (resigned 18th March 2020)
Angela Northen (resigned 7th July 2020)
Margretta Smith
Joy Wilson

Deanery Synod Representative:- Jeremy Hopkinson (resigned at Annual Meeting, 1/10/20)
Position vacant from 1/10/20

Neil Cook continued in the role of Treasurer, co-opted to the PCC, 12/11/20

N.B. The maximum number of lay representatives on the PCC is 6, as per the prescribed formula for Electoral Rolls up to 50.

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 PCC. 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 PCC, and the incumbent is ex-officio a member and the Chairman. The LLM, Warden and Deanery Synod Representatives are also ex-officio members of the PCC.

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 42 people on the Electoral Roll. There was a revision of the Electoral Roll prepared for the Annual Meeting in October, at which time there were 42 people on the Revised Roll. There were no additions, no deaths and no one moved away during the year. Hence the number of Electors at the end of the year was 42, four of whom are not resident within the parish.

The usual pattern of services was suspended from 17th March. A limited number of services across the Benefice resumed from 2nd August. From 5th November church services were suspended again until 2nd December. The average attendance for the services held in 2020 was 17 (in 2019 the average attendance for normal services was 17).

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Reverend John Waller continues as Rector and Jeremy Hopkinson as LLM. The Rector had been granted a three-month sabbatical from April to July but this had to be postponed. Gill Wilson took over from Marian Ridgway as Admin Assistant to the Rector but stepped down in September due to her impending move to Devon,

All normal activity continued to the middle of March 2020. All the usual services were held and the regular activities took place. The Snowdrop Walks were held in February but were severely hit by bad weather on the two Sunday afternoons. Then everything stopped due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Effect of COVID - Time Line:

- Sunday March 15th last service held in church
- March 17th all public worship and meetings were suspended until further notice
- March 18th: PCC Meetings cancelled
- March 22nd: Weekly Worship Details incl. the Rector's reflection were sent out to those on the E Newsletter data base and all this information was uploaded each week to the website. Printed copies were delivered to the few not on e-mail. The information was also posted on the notice board each week.
Also, on 22nd March decision to:-
Keep the church open during normal hours, daily 10.00am 4.00pm
Continue with the Prayer Chain
Keep the Food Box in the church porch
Offer assistance to those who need it
Plant Fayre due to be held on 18th April was cancelled
- March 23rd: full lock down. All church buildings had to remain closed until further notice. The bi-monthly Wardens' meetings were changed to monthly meetings.
- June 13th: Places of worship allowed to reopen for funerals and individual private prayer. The Church here reopened for private prayer from June 21st on Sundays: 10.00am 2.00pm & Wednesdays: 2.00pm 5.00pm
Risk Assessment guidelines had to be completed and:-
Hand sanitizer had to be available at the entrance
Much of the church was cordoned off
All bibles, books etc were removed
- 4th July: Places of worship were allowed to re-open providing guidance was followed. Weddings could also resume with limited numbers.
- June 28th: The Rector's weekly reflection and prayer, plus a story were recorded and the link was made available on You Tube. This continued to the end of the year.
- July 5th: Thanks to Jerry Breslin and the choir the first virtual service of Evensong was held. Choir practices had been held weekly via Zoom.
- August 2nd: Live services resumed with one service at one of the four churches each week. No singing but the organ could be played by Jerry. The occasional virtual services continued.
- August 9th: The first service was held, here in Great Brickhill. Another Risk Assessment was completed regulations:
Hand sanitizing on entry to the church
Seating in accordance with social distancing rules
Masks a mandatory requirement

Contact details to be kept for 21 days
Special cleaning regulations

- September 10th: First PCC meeting since the start of the pandemic
- October 3rd: Wedding was held, 15 only guests allowed
- October 24th: Covid QR code exhibited on church door
- November 4th: Churches had to close from midnight until 3rd December, except for private prayer.
- Remembrance Sunday: Wreath laying service at the War Memorial was filmed, 116 YouTube viewings
- December 2nd: Resumption of public worship was allowed. Services in the Benefice resumed on Sunday 6th December. Bell ringing remained suspended.
- Christmas Services: The Village Nativity planned for 20th December at the Cricket Club and the Christmas Eve Carol Service were cancelled. A socially distanced, no congregation Nine Lessons and Carols service in the church with the choir was recorded on 16th December and made available via YouTube, 110 viewings.

A really positive activity was: THE ADVENT WINDOWS

With thanks to Claire Pincott for coordinating the windows, this initiative was a great success. There was an amazing display of festive 24 windows around the village the final one was lit at the church on Christmas Eve.

The Annual Church Meeting 2020:

The Meeting was postponed from 16th April to 1st October.

Julia Turner remains as Church Warden.

Mary Maley and Angela Northen had sent letters of resignation from the PCC. All other members of the PCC remain as before.

Work on the Fabric of the Church:

The minimum amount of work was carried out during the year. Bill Beange had repaired and lowered the wall by the War Memorial. There is a damp patch on the north wall to the right of the top of the big picture, by the area of a downpipe, which is causing concern. Joe D'Agostino had carried out some minor roof repairs.

Deanery Synod:

At the end of the third of his three-year term, Jeremy Hopkinson resigned as the Deanery Synod representative for Great Brickhill – he continued in his role as Deanery treasurer. The position of Deanery Synod Representative remains vacant.

A Chapter Meeting had been held via Zoom, attended by Bishop Steven and Bishop Alan. There had been no Deanery Synod Meetings.

High Ash School:

High Ash is a Church of England school. Reverend John Waller is one of two Foundation Governors at the school, appointed by the Oxford Diocese. Sandra Maher is the second Foundation Governor.

The school had been unable to gather for worship in the church due to the pandemic. It was also not possible to continue with the "Open the Book" sessions at High Ash School.

Policy Documents:

The annual Health and Safety check was carried out in January and the Policy is on display in the church porch.

The annual review of the Safeguarding Policy took place at the November PCC meeting. Minor changes were made to the Policy, which 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.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was reviewed in November. There were no GDPR issues to report and no change required to the Data Privacy notice, which is on display in the church porch and available on the website in the Great Brickhill section.

Church Finances for 2020:

The pandemic inevitably had a major impact on the finances of the church. Without the Church collections, the regular income was well down and there was virtually no income from fund raising activities. The Accounts, prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, for the year to 31/12/20 showed a deficit for the year £2,670.

The PCC was only able to pay £11,000 towards the Parish Share to the Diocese (44% of the amount due). The Parish Share allocated to Great Brickhill is extremely high - discussions to reduce our Parish Share to a more realistic figure are ongoing.

Restricted Items: As well as general income the PCC 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 PCC 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.

Update On The New Facilities:

The project is for an exterior toilet extension, a servery / interior gathering area behind the font and a new path. There was a terrific response to the local fundraising appeal in the summer. Grateful thanks go to everyone who has contributed to the project. Through the generosity of those people in the village, others who support the church, and other grant givers we were able to secure the money required to begin the work.

Permission from all the necessary authorities took a long time, a significant delay was caused by AVDC Planning Dept. Work eventually started on 29th September but even more delays were incurred:

- An archaeology find required significant time for recording and reporting
- Plans had to be slightly changed due to this find
- Delay by AVDC in approving the revised plans missed a deadline for ordering and cutting the stone
- The weather was then too cold for work to continue due to the minimum temperature required for the lime mortar

The work was due to finish at the end of February but this will not be achieved because of the delays. The architect and builders have been extremely patient and helpful during this difficult time. The level of workmanship is superb and the end result will be facilities befitting the wonderful church that we are so fortunate to have in our parish. It has to be remembered that permission to have these facilities was only granted because of the high specification.