

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

Annual Report and Accounts

For the year ended 31st December, 2021

**St. Mary the Virgin Church,
Lower Way
Great Brickhill
Milton Keynes
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, 2021

MEMBERS OF THE PCC

The following persons served as members of the PCC from the date of the Annual Meeting, 1st October 2020:-

The Reverend John Waller (Chairman)
Jeremy Hopkinson (Licensed Lay Minister; PCC Vice-Chairman)
Julia Turner (Church Warden)
Phillipa Cook (Secretary)
Margretta Smith
Joy Wilson

Deanery Synod Representative:- 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 July, at which time there were 39 people on the Revised Roll. There had been one addition, one death, two removed from the list and one moved - hence the number of Electors was 39, five of whom are not resident within the parish. There were no changes from July to the end of December.

Services in church were suspended from 20th January and resumed again on 28th March. A Benefice Service was held at one of the parishes each week until the end of August. A new pattern of services for the Benefice was introduced in September, a four-month cycle with a Benefice Service held each month at one of the churches. As there was no pattern throughout the year, there is no meaningful figure for the average attendance for the services held in 2021.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Reverend John Waller continues as Rector and Jeremy Hopkinson as LLM. The Rector's proposed three-month sabbatical from April to July in 2020 again had to be postponed. On 14th December the Rector's wife, Pauline sadly passed away.

Due to the pandemic, no replacement had taken over the position of Admin Assistant for the Rector,

All services and normal activity were again impacted by the pandemic.

Effect of COVID - Time Line:

4th January:

National lock down, the government did not suspend public worship and services continued in all four churches in the Benefice.

20th January:

Notification received from the Director of Public Health for Buckinghamshire Council and from the diocese that communal worship should not continue during lockdown. All church services were therefore suspended until further notice.

6th March:

With the continuing success of the vaccination programme and the large drop in local COVID-19 case numbers, the Wardens of the four parishes, along with the Rector, agreed that live services in church should re-start on Palm Sunday, 28th March.

Update re Singing:

A limited amount of singing was allowed by choir members - 6 amateur singers could perform, or rehearse for performance with physical distancing being maintained at all times. There was no limit on the number of professional singers. Outdoor singing was allowed but no congregational singing in church. Members of the Benefice Choir sang for the first time at the Good Friday service at Great Brickhill on 2nd April.

30th June:

Guidance was issued allowing refreshments to be served after a service or as part of a community activity or event. Food and drink could be served for consumption inside, outside, and for takeaway or delivery.

19th July:

Covid restrictions were largely lifted on Monday, 19th July. The Church of England issued guidance saying that each church could recommend/advise/encourage certain restrictions to remain – they could not enforce any restrictions. The Rector in consultation with the Wardens at each church decided what is appropriate for that church. The main criteria for any decision were made on the size of the building and the likely number in the congregation. (The main differences were regarding congregational singing and the wearing of face coverings).

From 25th July the following was recommended at Great Brickhill:

- We will continue to ask people to socially distance, using every other pew
- The doors will be open for ventilation
- Communion will be administered in the same way as in recent weeks
- Hymn singing will take place but the congregation will be asked to remain seated
- Individuals to decide whether they wish to wear a mask during the service or not
- The QR code will remain on the door for those who wish to use it
- Contact details will be taken from those who wish to provide them
- The collection will be taken as in recent weeks, no passing round of the collection plate

From 7th October the above recommendations were revised:

- Communion will be administered at the altar rail in the form of bread only
- Hymn singing will take place and the congregation will be allowed to stand

Church Opening:

For most of the year, due to the building work, the church was open just once a week on Sundays from 10.00am – 12 noon. If anyone wished to visit the church for individual private prayer outside of these times, arrangements were made for that to happen.

From 5th September, the church was opened daily, as before the pandemic, from 10am to 4pm.

The Annual Church Meeting 2021:

The Meeting was delayed until 28th July.

Julia Turner remains as Church Warden.

All three current members of the PCC were re-elected (Phillipa Cook, Margretta Smith and Joy Wilson). Clare Hankins-Lewis was also elected to the PCC.

Work on the Fabric of the Church:

A small amount of work has been carried out during the year. The damp patch on the north wall to the right of the top of the big picture, by the area of a downpipe, continues to cause concern. Joe D'Agostino had carried out some minor roof repairs.

The drainage along the north wall had become blocked with tree roots. New pipe work has been laid.

Services etc:

A new Service Pattern for the Benefice was introduced in September, a four-month cycle with a Benefice Service at one of the churches in rotation each month, the only service that is held that day. Each parish has a Holy Communion and Family service each month. For those who were not yet ready to attend church, the weekly recorded reflections and stories continued until the end of December.

The highlight of the year was the Harvest Service of Thanksgiving and Reception for the facilities held on Sunday 10th October. It was a joyous occasion and Bishop Alan treated us to an uplifting sermon. As we had been waiting for this moment for many years, it was a very fitting way to mark this milestone in our history. It was wonderful to see, especially after the previous 18 months, the church really come to life, beautifully decorated and full of people who were so obviously pleased to be joining in the celebrations. Over the last few months of the year, we have been delighted to see the benefit of having the new facilities

Following the departure from the village of Ted Maley, the Remembrance Sunday service was organised by David Marlow who has published a book entitled "Great Brickhill Ex-Servicemen: A Compendium of Résumés", created from documents and personal memories about servicemen who have lived in or have an association with Great Brickhill. The books in three formats are available to purchase via the Blurb website.

A 5-week Lent course based on the new book by the Bishop of Oxford, "Pilgrim Journeys: The Creeds - 40 days of reflections" was held via Zoom. There were a small number of people attending but given the limitations, the course was helpful for people.

A number of funerals were held, some could only be held at the graveside. One wedding and one baptism was held.

Deanery Synod:

The position of Deanery Synod Representative remains vacant. Jeremy Hopkinson continued in his role as Deanery treasurer. Deanery Synod meetings were held on 22nd February and 15th November via Zoom. An inaugural meeting of the Mursley Deanery Steering Group was held on 20th September.

A Deanery Meeting was held at Cublington on 23rd September with Joshua Townson, the Diocesan Generous Giving Adviser for him to share ideas about motivating people to give productively and how to incorporate giving within the church's vision.

Church Activities and Events:

The Snowdrop Walks and the Plant Fayre were cancelled.

Christian Aid Week, 10th to 16th May was limited to on-line giving.

Teas were provided at the church for the afternoon of the Open Gardens organized by the Gardening Club on 4th July. Refreshments were also provided at Brickstock on 30th August at the Cricket Club.

A Church Clean up was held on Saturday morning on 1st October

Christmas was much more like normal:

- A Christmas Coffee Morning
- The popular Advent Windows took place
- Carol Singing around the village on two evenings
- With thanks to the Cricket Club, the Village Nativity was held on Sunday 19th December - a large number came to see the enactment of the Nativity Story with carols and readings. The mist gave a very atmospheric feel to the occasion
- Carol Service on 24th December, not as well attended as usual as people were very cautious due to meeting up with family members
- Christmas Morning Holy Communion

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 Head Teacher of High Ash made contact to ask for a meeting to discuss various things at the school. A Zoom meeting with Sara Boyce was held in February; since then regular meetings, at least one per term. It was agreed to hold regular meetings are held, at least one per term.

Some of the children made Easter and Christmas cards for the community which were distributed across the Benefice. 'Prayers for Pentecost' from one of the classes were displayed in the church, which showed a good understanding of a difficult subject.

The school were able to gather for worship in the church for the Leavers' Service at the end of the summer term. The Christmas services had to be cancelled. The school is too big for them to all come together and so there is a service for Foundation and KS1 pupils and a separate service for KS2 pupils.

Policy Documents:

The current Health Policy is on display in the church porch.

The annual review of the Safeguarding Policy took place at the November PCC meeting. No changes were made to the Policy, which is on display in the church porch and on the website. 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 updated in May to reflect the data recorded in the Ex-Servicemen's Book. The annual review took place in November. There were

no GDPR issues to report and no further 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 2021:

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 Church finances were again hit because of the pandemic. Church collections were curtailed due to the decrease in services and fund-raising activities were affected due to the loss of income from the Snowdrop Walks and Plant Fayre.

The Accounts, prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, for the year to 31/12/21 showed a deficit for the year of £1,444. In light of the projected deficit, only £17K (the same as in 2019) was paid towards the allocation of the £22,094 Parish Share to the Diocese (£11K was paid in 2020). The Parish Share allocated to Great Brickhill is extremely high - discussions have taken place to try and reduce our Parish Share to a more realistic figure.

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.

Credit / Debit Card Device: Following the installation of broadband it is now possible to take collections via a credit/debit card. Two devices are available for receipts at services and events.

Update On The New Facilities & Roof Repairs:

The building work for the new facilities was mainly completed by early September and so the church could then be opened daily. Apart from a few outstanding items, the work was finished just in time for our one and only wedding for the year on 11th September. The remaining items are taking a long time to complete.

The Planning Department took until November to give permission for the colour of the rendering, by which time the weather was too cold as the temperature has to remain above 7 degrees. The same applies to the top covering of the path. Due to supply difficulties, the builder has been unable to obtain the resin. There are a number of snagging issues still to be completed.

Work has started on the process of carrying out the roof repairs. Following the theft of lead, permission was given for a temporary covering of roof felt, which runs out in August 2022. The architect has submitted an application for planning permission to replace the temporary felt with terne coated stainless steel. Due to the ingress of water and subsequent drying out, many of the internal ceiling panels will have to be replaced. The total cost is not yet known but will be in excess of £100k.

A separate project is to install audio visual equipment – a quote for the work is being sought and an application for a grant will be submitted. Unless the application is successful this will have to be put on hold until after the roof work is completed.