

**ST MARY-THE-LESS PARISH CHURCH
CHILBOLTON, SO20 6BQ**

ANNUAL REPORT

AND

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

OF THE

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER
2020**

**Incumbent
Reverend Jax Machin**

Secretary
Mrs Wendy Fakes
Grafton
Village Street
Chilbolton
Stockbridge
Hampshire, SO20 6BE

**THE PARISH OF ST-MARY-THE-LESS, CHILBOLTON
IN THE DEANERY OF ANDOVER
AND THE DIOCESE OF WINCHESTER**

INTRODUCTION

The responsibility of Chilbolton Parochial Church Council (PCC) is to cooperate with the Rector in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church - pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the church Representation Rules.

During the year 2020 the following served as members of Chilbolton PCC.

Incumbent	Reverend Jax Machin	
Churchwarden	Vacant	
Deanery Synod Representatives	Mr Andrew Kent Mr Colin Sheath	
Elected Members	Mr Neil Bowen Mrs Wendy Fakes Mr Andrew Kent Mrs Lesley Kent Mrs Charlotte Nash Mr Michael Payne Mr Colin Sheath Mr Lawrence Wild	(PCC Secretary) (PCC Chairman) (PCC Treasurer)

Electoral Roll

There were 55 names on the Electoral Roll.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL IN 2020

With the July meeting being cancelled, Chilbolton PCC met four times during the year with an average attendance of 91%. The PCC is divided into five sub committees, which meet between PCC meetings. The sub committees may co-opt parishioners to serve.

1. FINANCE

The effect of COVID-19 resulted in the General Fund decreasing by £6,757 in 2020. This compared to a surplus of £5,634 in 2019.

Fund-raising was limited to an appeal for donations and this attracted £6,490. (In 2019, when both an Auction of Promises and a Fete were held, £16,459 was raised net of expenses.) Other donations of £3,114 were designated to the General Fund and a grant of £600 was received from the Parish Council towards the cost of churchyard maintenance.

Standing Orders have held up and sincere thanks go to those who contributed regularly. Because of these and other donations, Gift Aid worth £5,843 was reclaimed on this fund - only a £380 drop on the previous year. In the absence of regular services, weekly collections were well down, as were fees received from weddings, baptisms and funerals.

Benefice administration costs were £5,539 - up by £1,000 on last year largely because of a lower contribution from weddings, etc. The £24,927 paid to the Diocese was also up by £1,000.

Despite a tariff increase, electricity costs fell from £889 to £721 as a result of the lockdown and a rebate was granted on the water bill.

Charitable donations in 2020 were £1,690 compared to £2,352 last year. Of this, £350 was given to Karis Kids, £250 to Andover Food Bank, £250 to BOAZ, £250 to Cruse, £150 to Andover Young Carers and £200 to the Countess of Brecknock Hospice. Also, £210 was sent to Andover Crisis Centre along with some food donations from the Harvest service.

At the end of the year the General Fund stood at £31,083. Our policy is to keep this above £25,000.

The Building Fund reduced during the year to £1,229, having paid out nearly £6,000 for repairs to the boundary wall. The Legacy Fund stood at £4,911, having received £1,000 from an estate.

The Joint Fund stood at £6,278 of which £3,000 is designated for half a year's printing costs and £1,639 is restricted as Wherwell's share. In 2020 advertising revenue fell by £2,000 to around £8,000 as a result of the pressures on businesses. Even so this fund was able to transfer £1,500 to the Building Fund as well as £1,500 to Wherwell PCC.

There were no material changes to the Organ Fund (£1,240) nor to the Choir Fund (£219). The annual service of the organ was postponed because of under-use but the electrics were checked.

Total funds at 31 December 2020 were £44,960, of which £36,802 is in the CBF deposit account earning 0.2% interest. A further £1,446 was due to the PCC, mainly from tax reclaimed. Total Funds fell by £10,657 in 2020 after rising by a similar amount in 2019.

2. SOCIAL

The only event of the year for the social committee was to provide refreshments for the Lent Talk in the church.

Unfortunately due to the pandemic the concert by the Bexley Phoenix Choir which was due to be held in April in the church had to be cancelled. The fete in June and the Harvest lunch were also cancelled.

In December the Social Committee usually provided a Christmas lunch for about 25 parishioners held in the village hall. As gatherings were not allowed due to the pandemic it was decided to buy a hand carved, olive wood Christmas tree decoration made by the Bethlehem Nativity Group which, with a card, were sent to all the people who would normally have been invited to the lunch. These were very well received.

3. FABRIC AND HOUSEKEEPING

Churchyard Maintenance

In early April the Church of England issued guidelines on the management of churchyards during the coronavirus pandemic. The guidelines said that it could be an opportunity to change mowing regimes by allowing suitable areas to remain unmown. This coincided with our grass cutting contractor giving notice that it could no longer continue to provide a service. A self-employed groundsman was then engaged. Paths were cut to give access to graves likely to be visited by people tending graves and other areas left uncut. In June, to everyone's surprise, a wonderful display of wildflowers appeared in the area between the flagpole and lychgate. Fourteen varieties were identified, including a solitary bee orchid. There has been a positive reaction with people supportive of areas being set aside as wildflower meadows. The intention is to manage suitable areas in this way. Interestingly the Diocese, in its newly developed God's Green Fingers Initiative, is actively promoting 'going green' policies. It is, in effect, a complete change of policy on how churchyards should be managed.

Boundary Wall Repairs

Patchwork repairs have been completed to the length of churchyard boundary wall adjacent to the lychgate. Its condition had deteriorated to the extent that it was prudent to do this before further deterioration occurred. Gary Seymour was satisfied with how the work had been carried out.

Tower Clock

Placing an order for repairs to the clock has been delayed until 2021. The clock has been working but without chiming the hours.

Garden Benches

Two requests had been received, however the applicants have decided to delay their formal applications into 2021. Faculties are necessary.

4. WORSHIP AND EDUCATION

The year began normally with only rumours of the outbreak of a new coronavirus. Little was it known that 2020 would be the year of a world pandemic which would have a devastating impact on so many lives. On 11 February the virus was named COVID-19.

Services took place during January and February as planned. Due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 and a national lockdown announced for 23 March all church services across the Benefice and nationwide were cancelled. The church was open on Sundays for private prayer.

Services resumed in August with strict measures in place. Congregants and service leaders respected social distancing, the use of hand sanitiser and wearing of face coverings. At the Eucharist Communicants could only receive the bread. No singing was permitted and service sheets were produced for each service with congregants asked to take their service sheet home to dispose of. Restrictions were in force about how many people could attend a service and places had to be booked via the Benefice Office. A new Benefice rota of services was produced. The first service in Chilbolton was Holy Communion led by Reverend Jax on 2 August. It was a beautiful morning and was held outside. This was repeated on 6 September. Harvest Festival on 4 October was a quiet, reflective service. As it was not possible to host the usual auction of produce, donations of non-perishable food and a collection were given and very gratefully received by the Andover Crisis Centre.

COVID-19 continued to spread rapidly in the autumn and national Lockdown 2 was announced on 5 November and remained in place until 2 December. A small outdoor service on Remembrance Sunday was permitted, and was held around the flagpole in the churchyard led by Neil Bowen. Christmas services were severely disrupted and due to rapidly rising infection rates it was with very heavy hearts that the decision was made to cancel the service on Christmas morning. The church remained locked over the Christmas period. Janie Painter led a project to decorate the church porch and Lawrence Wild organised an outdoor Christmas tree. These were greatly appreciated by locals and passers-by.

On Boxing Day the Government announced national Lockdown 3. The church was again closed for public worship, and this time for private prayer.

During the pandemic Reverend Jax encouraged us and kept us informed through her written sermons and her weekly newsletters distributed by email. She and members of the ministry team recorded some special services available to be watched on the

Benefice website. We are deeply grateful for Reverend Jax's care and ministry throughout this difficult year.

In May a service of Benefice Morning Prayer on Zoom started, held on Tuesday mornings at 9.30 am each week, and was well received.

Chilbolton Homegroup continued to meet throughout the year on Zoom to offer friendship, fellowship and prayer.

5. **CHOIR**

Unfortunately 2020 has not been a very good year. It began with the usual Sunday Services in January but then COVID-19 hit the country and church services had to stop. However when restrictions were lifted the choir joined in services outside the church although for those taking place inside it was necessary to wear masks and meet social distancing guidelines but SINGING was not permitted.

Choir members have missed not being able to sing and all look forward to when it will be possible to get together again.

A 'thank you' to everyone for their support.

6. **MIDDAY MUMS**

As a result of the national lockdowns due to COVID-19 the coffee mornings, for those with small children, was only held in January and February.

The team was the same, consisting of Susan Ansell, Lesley Kent, Michael and Joyce Payne.

7. **RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES**

The year began with the usual flurry of visits to care homes and the Holy Communion services at Flowerdown and Westholme. Reverend Jax expressed her thanks to Shirley Lupton and her team for their devotion to the residents of Flowerdown, and to Sylvia Arnold and Deirdre Wratten for playing their keyboards at these services; helping to bring folks alive through a shared memory of beautiful, classic hymns.

Thanks to the swift action by hospitals, hospices and nursing homes in this area, external visits were cancelled early on in the pandemic and, as a result, the impact of Coronavirus in these settings has been mercifully limited. However the consequence of isolation from family and friends, and from visits such as ours, has been devastating for residents. Regular contact was made with Sunrise, Westholme and Flowerdown, though these opportunities were sometimes brief, owing to the very great pressure on care staff at this time. The nursing homes were provided with resources so they could hold Festival worship for themselves. In a few cases Reverend Jax had been able to visit the sick and the dying, communicating with them through open doors and windows; for others she had spoken with them by telephone. She had also supported some families who were unable to visit by seeing residents from outside the building on their behalf; by sending prayers and verses of scripture; and by letting them know she had lit a candle for their loved ones.

Care teams and residents, along with their families, have felt upheld by our prayers during this difficult year. Bless you all for your commitment to these important places of care. May our prayers fill them with a sense of our loving Father's healing presence and bring them the blessing of His merciful peace, strength and comfort.

8. PARISH VISITORS

During 2020 parish visitors were hard at work re-imagining what it meant to 'visit' in a pandemic. They managed to forge 'remote' relationships with those visited by telephone, email and other social messaging mechanisms. In many cases their generosity of spirit included collecting shopping, prescriptions and delivering the odd cake to the doorsteps of those they cared for. During the year, when everyone has felt moments of loneliness and isolation, it has been so moving to hear from individuals how much these kindnesses by PVs have been appreciated. Along with the wider village networks which have also operated to help neighbours cope with the exigencies of shielding, the work of our PVs has helped many people to feel connected to the life and witness of our church community. They have done all this whilst also having to manage their own and their families' safety and care.

This comes with Reverend Jax's thanks before God for all our parish visitors and to Anna Cockram for her invaluable support in administering the PV programme during this unprecedented time; and with the assurance of her prayers for each of you and those to whom you minister.

Should anyone reading this feel a call to be a PV, please contact Reverend Jax on 07761 055228.

9. GENERAL

Finally the PCC wishes to thank all the many volunteers who help with the running of the church – they are too many to name individually. Thank you to all who help with:

- (i) organising the various rota duties for services
- (ii) maintaining the churchyard
- (iii) cleaning the church
- (iv) displaying flowers in the church
- (v) providing refreshments for services
- (vi) organising the church fete and other fund raising activities
- (vii) opening and closing the church daily
- (viii) winding the clock.

Your support is invaluable to us. THANK YOU.