

Parochial Church Council of St. Stephen's Sparsholt and St. Peter's Lainston

A charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission

Annual Report for 2016

The Parish of St. Stephen's Sparsholt and St. Peter's Lainston comes within the Diocese of Winchester.

Correspondence should be addressed to;

The Benefice Office, The Rectory, Church Lane, Littleton, SO22 6QY Tel/Fax 881898.

PCC Members during 2016

Incumbent	Revd. Jax Machin
Assistant Priest	Revd. David Mapes
Churchwardens	C. Horrill & J. Wesley

Elected members

C. Anderson, R. Hodgson, E. May, S. Wesley (Treasurer) & T. Wilson

Deanery Synod representative

F. Blakemore

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Aims and Purposes The Parochial Church Council is responsible for co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibility for the maintenance of the fabric of St. Stephen's Church.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of the parish community at St. Stephen's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve groups such as the school community within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; providing pastoral care for people living in the parish and outreach work.

Our outreach in 2016 included a harvest supper which many in the parish attended and an Advent Doors event where individual houses had open doors inviting people to come and share in activities reminding them of Advent. To round off our APCM in 2016 we invited all those who volunteer to help the PCC to a 'thank you' event in the church following the APCM.

To facilitate our work we maintain the fabric of the church of St. Stephen's and keep it open for private contemplation and prayer.

Achievements and performance

Worship and Prayer The PCC is keen to offer a range of services over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. For example we offer a pattern of services including family communion, matins and welcome worship on a regular monthly basis. We have provided special services throughout the year including the celebrations for Easter and Christmas, a Mothering Sunday service, a Maundy Thursday service with vigil, an All Souls service, a Pet service and a Remembrance Day service. House group meetings took place throughout the year.

All are welcome to attend our regular services. At the annual meeting in 2016, there were reported to be 50 names on the Electoral Roll. The average weekly attendance at morning service, counted during September, was 22 but this number increased substantially at festivals. For example, the Easter Day service attracted an attendance of 89 and the Christmas Day service an attendance of 131.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and commend the person into God's keeping. We celebrated 8 baptisms and 6 weddings and marriage blessings in our church in 2016. We also held 7 funeral and interment of ashes services in our church in 2016.

Deanery Synod.

The PCC representation on the deanery synod provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. In 2016, the main task facing the deanery synod was to oversee the implementation of the Deanery Mission Action Plan into action at benefice and parish level.

Pastoral Care

Parish visitors are faithful members of local Churches who are trained to give Pastoral care to any in need in their Parish, whether they are Church members or not. They give their time, energy and compassion reflecting Christ's love for his Church. They respond to requests from Link members, Church members, people in the community and the Clergy.

Careful planning is given to the organisation of the All Souls Service which was attended by a congregation of 63. This service involves a personal invitation and where possible a visit to each bereaved person. Our special thanks go to Vivienne Aspin for her expert, detailed work in producing the cards and masterminding the preparation for this service.

As Christians we all care for our neighbours and those in need, and the selfless gifts of time and energy given by members of our congregation is acknowledged and much appreciated.

Sparsholt Church of England School

The PCC has maintained close links with Sparsholt Church of England School by inviting participation of the school in the Mothering Sunday service, the Harvest Festival and the Carol service. The school also conducted their own Harvest Festival and Christingle service in the church. The active encouragement of Revd. Jax with support from the church foundation governor has helped to maintain very high Christian values

within the school. The school is now embarking on a programme for 2017 to run a Sunday service in the church once a term.

Messy Church

Messy Church is a fresh expression of church, started in Portsmouth in 2004, and now taking place in over 2000 places around the world. Families come along to take part in activities based around a Biblical theme; join in a celebration with songs, Bible story and prayers; and finish with a meal. Our Messy Church was started in 2012 and circulates between Crawley, Littleton and Sparsholt. It is held on the second Saturday of every month except August.

Mission and Evangelism.

The PCC has a charitable giving sub group to recommend giving for charitable purposes. In 2015 the PCC gave £400 to each of the following 3 charities as follows;

- The Missionary Training Service
- Karis Kids
- Winchester Churches Nightshelter

The PCC also decided that £350 should be paid out of the church fete income to each of three parish organisations. The three organisations were Ham Green Volunteers, Sparsholt C of E Primary School and Sparsholt Village Playground Association.

Our Parish Paper is distributed bi-monthly to all the parishioners keeping them informed of the important matters affecting our church and articles that maintain the Christian message.

The PCC organised a village envelope drop for Christian Aid week in May.

PCC members gave personal donations to purchase Advent calendars for the Sparsholt Church of England School.

Financial Review (all figures rounded to nearest £100)

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £43,800 of which £21,900 was unrestricted voluntary donations, and a further £5,000 was Gift Aid tax rebate from HMRC. Restricted donations of £2,300 were also received. Planned giving through standing orders increased by 11%. Collections at Church services increased by 4%; £430 of this was from specific charity collections, such as Remembrance Sunday which was donated to the RBL Poppy Day Fund.

The main fund-raising events held in 2016 were the Church Fete, the St. George's Dinner & Wine Quiz and the Harvest Supper (net income: £7,100, £1,500 and £1,000 respectively). We were very grateful for donations totalling £1,600 from the Friends of St. Stephen's Church for the cost of the fall arrest system in the Bell Tower and maintenance of the Churchyard. Total receipts were up by £1,600, an increase of 3.3% on the previous year. Income on investments yielded 4.1%.

£35,300 was spent to provide the Christian ministry from St. Stephen's Church, including the contribution to the diocesan parish share that increased by 1% in the year. Our share of benefice expenses decreased by £3,800 over the previous year; £1,600 of this was paid out of Investment income on Restricted Funds and specific donations. The PCC continued their policy of donating a proportion of fete income (11%) to

three Sparsholt organisations in grateful recognition of village support for the church fete. In addition, the charitable sub-committee recommended three charities to which donations, totalling £1,200, were made.

Overall expenditure was 9% lower than last year. The net result for the year was an excess of receipts over payments of £700. The bank and deposit balances carried forward at 31st December 2016 on Unrestricted funds totalled £2,700 of which £700 relates to the Bell Fund (a designated fund).

There has been no change to the Reserves policy during 2016. Members of the PCC are regularly advised of the amount held in Reserves. £4000 was returned to Unrestricted Reserves during 2016. As at 31st December 2016, £106,900 was held as cash and investments (a valuation increase of 7.1%). £66,700 of this total was held as Restricted Funds. PCC policy is to maintain a balance on Unrestricted funds and investments which equates to at least 12 months' expenditure. This is currently £40,200 (up by £3,600 from last year) therefore the Reserves policy target in 2016 was not met. The PCC are fully aware that Reserves cannot continually be used to pay for the deficit between income and expenditure.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to support the church within the community of Sparsholt. In particular, we want to mention the commitment shown by our churchwardens Caroline Horrill and John Wesley who both work tirelessly on our behalf and Sally Wesley for her efficient handling of the accounts and finances. Christopher Anderson and Robin Hodgson have again provided strong leadership in raising finance for the PCC. We have a band of helpers including the flower arrangers, bell ringers and key rota volunteers who all contribute to welcoming people into the church.

Structure and governance

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. Elections to the PCC are conducted at each annual meeting by those who are on the electoral roll of the church. The PCC is responsible for making decisions on all matters of concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The parish is included within the Downs Benefice of 5 parishes and receives administrative support from the Benefice office.

Approved by the PCC