

The Church of St Peter and Holy Cross, Wherwell
Church Street, Wherwell, Hampshire, SP11 7JJ

Annual Report
of the
Parochial Church Council

For the Year Ended 31 December 2018

Incumbent:

Reverend Jacqueline Machin

Correspondence Address:

Mrs Alice Higham
PCC Secretary
Field House, Wherwell
Andover, Hampshire
SP11 7JP

1. Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. Appointment to the PCC is governed by and 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. Our current members are as follows:

PCC Members (11)

At 31 December 2017 the PCC comprised: Mrs Susan Ansell, Mrs Sue Coleman, Mrs Diana Dyer, Mr David Etchells, Mrs Judith Herridge, Mrs Alice Higham, Mrs Anna Lipa, Mrs Pam Prince, Mr William Prince, Mr Nigel Waters, Mr Ken Wilson.

The PCC has ultimate responsibility for a wide range of matters affecting the church, including such matters as compliance with health & safety, disability discrimination legislation and child protection.

2. Objectives and Activities

The primary objective of all PCCs is the promotion of the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC (Powers) Measure 1956 requires the PCC to co-operate with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical.

In addition, your PCC has prepared a Mission Statement that reads as follows:

Our mission is, as a Community, to grow in our understanding of God the Father, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. We will be a vibrant church, a focal point for the village, and we will support our neighbours and the wider community through our love, actions and care.

To achieve our mission, we have set forth a statement of our values, (objectives).

3. Our Values

Our values and associated actions should speak louder than words. They will make it easy for people to see and experience our contribution to the Community.

- The atmosphere of our worship and fellowship should encourage others to join us and take part
- We should communicate a welcoming message 'inclusive' to everyone, e.g. to welcome newcomers to the church and to introduce them to others in the community
- We should show love, care and support to our neighbours and the wider community, e.g. to provide support for the sick in our community.

4. How we will make our mission succeed

A. We will seek to be a vibrant church in order:

- to be an example to the community, living by the word of the Gospel
- to review our current worship and make changes to provide services and facilities for the existing congregation and to attract others, including families and children
- to provide on-going support and services for baptisms, weddings and funerals
- to work with other parishes in the Benefice to share views and resources
- to raise funds in order to pay for the maintenance and running of the Church of St Peter & Holy Cross, Wherwell

- to ensure that St Peter & Holy Cross Church should be a familiar place to everyone, no matter whether someone worships regularly or not
- B. We will seek to be a focus for the Community in the village by:
- bringing the Community into the Church and the Church into the Community.
 - conserving the heritage and fabric of the church building
 - continuing to stage events: Church Fete, Christmas Fayre, Auction of Promises, etc. to involve the wider Community
 - increasing our pool of volunteers from the wider community and to involve newcomers to the village
 - looking for ways to help and support other village organisations: the Primary School, the Parish Council, the Playing Fields Association, the Home Guard Club, the History Group, etc.
- C. We will seek to support the vulnerable in our midst by:
- identifying and training volunteers to visit, comfort and support the lonely, those recuperating, the sick and bereaved
 - scoping the need within our Community and work with the Chilbolton Care Group to meet the requirements.
 - being involved in supporting local charities, for example: Countess of Brecknock Hospice, Naomi House, The BOAZ Project, etc.

5. Achievement and performance

Church attendance

We are grateful that Mrs Joyce Payne, our Electoral Roll Officer, prepared a new Roll. At 31 December 2018, the Electoral Roll numbered 59 members, 11 of whom are not resident within the parish.

During the year, we held Advent and School Carol services, an Advent Compline service, a Mothering Sunday service, a Crib & Posada service, two Harvest services, an All Saints service and a pet service.

During the year 5 weddings, 5 baptisms and no funerals were held at the Church.

6. Review of the Year to 31 December 2018

Five PCC meetings have been held throughout the year at Dancing Ledge by kind permission of Michael and Joyce Payne, as well as the Annual Parochial Church Meeting at the Church; the latter three meetings were held in conjunction with Chilbolton in order to try to reduce the work load on the Reverend Jax. Meetings commence with a joint session where Reverend Jax can discuss matters of joint interest, after which we break apart for separate business. There are currently 11 members on the Wherwell PCC.

We are sorry to report that a new assistant priest has still not been appointed to the Benefice, the result being that the Reverend Jax is very overworked, and that the non-stipendiary members of the Ministry Team have been called upon to make a higher than normal input into services around the parishes. However, the fact that we are entitled to an assistant priest in the Benefice, has meant that the Diocese meets the cost of Registry priests when they are required.

As noted above, 2018 saw five weddings being conducted at the church. Wherwell remains a popular destination for young couples, and we are thrilled that young couples have chosen Wherwell Church for this very important occasion.

Apart from the traditional religious festivals of Easter and Christmas, there were several special services during the year: Mothering Sunday; a Patronal Service; an Advent Carol service; a pet service; the Harvest Festival which was followed by a repeat of the delicious bring-and-share lunch

in the Church itself - an idea which was started the year before; and an All Saints service shared with Chilbolton. In addition, the School makes good use of the Church: once again there were special School Harvest and Carol services.

We continued the very successful series of meditations held on Saturday evenings in the Spring and Autumn. Six subjects included St Peter, Martin Luther, John Wesley, Corrie ten Boom, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Br Andrew van der Bijl. These services are lay-led and are interspersed with passages from the works of the subjects and carefully-chosen music, the whole providing a useful focus for thoughts on the meaning and purpose of our daily lives.

Family Services continue to be popular with a good number of young families attending each month. Regular refreshments are available after services and have these provide a popular occasion for communication and neighbourly chat. One Family Service in the Autumn took the form of a pet service which was very popular with the children and adults alike!

We would like to thank Mrs Diana Dyer for hosting Evensong at her house during the winter months once again, providing a warm and comfortable setting for this monthly service, especially during the 'Beast from the East' period of bad weather. One Sunday service was completely cancelled at this stage on account of snow, ice and slippery conditions.

The very enjoyable series of Lent talks around the Benefice provided the opportunity for Wherwell to host the Reverend Jill Bentall who talked about her life as a priest in the Andover area.

The coffee morning, known as 'Midday Mums', for those with babies and toddlers in the villages, has continued to be held monthly in Wherwell Village Hall. A time for mums/carers to meet each other and for the children to play. The team involved was Susan Ansell, Lesley Kent, Joyce and Michael Payne.

The new GDPR regulations came into force on 25th May, for which preparations had been made by a Benefice Data Protection Committee. In addition, Anna Lipa and Joyce Payne (Electoral Roll Officer) attended a GDPR course at Old Alresford Place. The Diocese has also required every PCC member to undertake a minimum of the C1 course in Safeguarding.

The transfer of the ownership of the car park land from Lord Camden's ownership to the Winchester Diocesan Board of Finance was completed, ensuring a secure future for the land in the use of the Church.

Activities

A very successful Auction of Promises was arranged in the Spring, raising over £7,000. Attendees were able to bid for a range of exciting lots provided by villagers and supporters, whilst enjoying a delicious supper and good company. The evening was organized by Mrs Alice Higham and Mrs Anna Lipa.

In addition, the summer fete was held in June raising nearly £7,000. Stalls were arranged along Church Street and in some of the gardens, as well as behind the village hall. There were all the normal attractions, including a barbeque, afternoon teas and a Pimm's Tent. This annual event is a very important part of keeping the church alive. The fete was organized by Mrs Susanne Horne and Mrs Anna Lipa.

Our regular Christmas Fayre was held on Advent Sunday with many seasonal stalls and a visit from Father Christmas! This was followed by a candlelit Advent Carol Service as usual and was extremely well patronized by many young families. The Fayre raised nearly £1,500 and was organized by Mrs Susanne Horne and Mrs Anna Lipa.

Church Fabric and Goods

There was an Archdeacon's Visitation during the year when the inventory, terrier, records and administration of the church were checked by a representative of the Archdeacon. We are pleased to say that Wherwell passed with flying colours!

During Lent when they are not needed, Mrs Jo Baughen, head of the Flower Team, arranged for the repair of several flower pedestals and containers.

Mr David Etchells revised and arranged a reprint of the Church history booklet which is now on sale, the profits of which provide income for the Church.

A project is being considered for the reordering of the Vestry areas, along with the possible removal of some pews in the North aisle. A Faculty will be submitted once plans are agreed.

Churchyard Maintenance

Enham have continued to keep the churchyard grass cut and edges tidied in a satisfactory manner.

Permission was gained from Test Valley Borough Council and a large bough was removed from the large cedar tree in the churchyard to the South-east of the lychgate.

Mr Ken Wilson and Mr Bill Prince have continued a regular round of churchyard maintenance throughout the year: clearing leaves, cutting tree branches and hedges, spraying paths and controlling bonfires.

Health and Safety

Following the Health and Safety report undertaken in 2017, Mr Nigel Waters has provided an evacuation plan for the church. In accordance with the report, a Faculty has been requested to undertake the following, Architect supported, works. Subject to approval, it is anticipated that these will be completed within a few months:

- Install emergency lighting/signage either side of the inner main door and Vestry door.
- Install a grab rail and hand rail for the final wooden steps up into the Bell Ringing Chamber.
- A successful trial to infill one of the former heating grills in the Nave floor with resin was undertaken leaving two further grills to be completed.

One accident has been logged when a member of the PCC's thumb unfortunately became trapped in the safe door. Whilst badly bruised, luckily no bones were broken and, in consultation with our Insurers, warning notices have been placed on the safe, all regular users advised and the safe has been levelled.

The 5 year electrical inspection was completed in January 2019 with only a few small items requiring attention. Regular testing and/or inspection is also undertaken in respect of:

- Fire extinguishers - Serviced annually & inspected monthly
- Emergency torches - Tested monthly
- First Aid Kit - Contents checked monthly
- Aisles and walkways - Checked quarterly
- Footpaths, gravestones and trees - checked annually
- Portable electrical appliances - Tested annually

The review of gravestones highlighted one headstone which is becoming dangerous and the family have been asked to undertake repairs by 30th June 2019 otherwise it will need to be removed and laid flat.

At the present time the internal vestry door can be locked/unlocked from the inside only when the toilet is being used. It is planned to remove the current bolt and replace with a vacant/engaged indicator bolt which, in an emergency, may be unlocked from the outside and provide access to the secondary escape route.

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with its duty to consider the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults; this being a permanent agenda item at meetings of the PCC. Mrs Pam Prince, our Safeguarding Officer, is pleased to say that no reports have been made to the Council of any incidents during the year.

General Data Protection Regulations

Following the introduction of new the GDPR law on 25th May 2018, the PCC will follow procedures agreed by a Benefice committee comprised of a representative from each parish.

Music Team

Duties at the organ are shared by Ray Blazdell and David Wright. We continue to use Ancient and Modern Revised hymn books, supported by Junior Praise to give more a modern flavour at Family Services. A&MR is one of the least used books in the church as a whole, but suits the Wherwell congregation.

David Etchells and his team chime the Church bells using the Ellacombe chiming system, brightening Sunday mornings and other special services throughout the year, as well as providing a wonderful atmosphere for weddings. A special ring of the bells was played at Remembrance on 11th November. This was in conjunction with other churches across the country to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. There was traditional ringing, along with some WWI tunes 'It's a Long way to Tipperary', 'Keep the home fires Burning' and 'Pack up your troubles' arranged by Ray Blazdell.

Parish Magazine

The excellent parish magazine which is distributed to all households in Chilbolton and Wherwell, and is produced by a dedicated team of volunteers led by Stephen Macdonald. During the year the magazine once again made a generous donation of £2000, split between the two parish churches - this is much appreciated as a useful contribution towards keeping the churches running.

Residential Care Homes

This year our commitment and support of residents in Care Homes, Hospital and Hospice settings within our benefice has continued apace, with a significant increase of requests to Revd Jax for sacramental and pastoral 'end of life' care. Monthly Holy Communion services at Westholme, Flowerdown Care Homes and our connections to residents in Sunrise and The Dower House continue to be deeply valued by all who receive them. Many pastoral relationships have flourished at critical points in people's lives, bringing the comfort of Jesus' grace to patients and their families.

Revd Jax is grateful to all those who offer their gifts and skills in this challenging work in Christ's name, leading and supporting the Communion services, visiting the sick in their rooms and in playing the organ at our lively worship services.

Parish Visitors

2018 has seen a continued growth in the work of our Benefice Pastoral Visitors team.

Revd Jax is grateful to all those who offer their pastoral gifts in this valuable work in Christ's name.

The Team has welcomed Anna Cockram as our Parish Visitor Administrator, and she is doing a fabulous job in allocating and monitoring trained Parish Visitors as they visit the vulnerable, sick and bereaved in each parish. In addition, our Benefice is blessed by the ministry of Licenced Lay Home Communion Assistants who support Revd Jax in the provision of Communion to individuals and groups in Nursing Homes, Hospice and home settings. Holy Communion to the sick in hospital settings continues to be conducted by Hospital Chaplaincy staff via a formal request from Revd Jax.

Anyone requiring a Pastoral Visitor or Holy Communion in Hospital, Hospice, Care Home or home setting should contact Revd Jax Machin or Anna Cockram through the Benefice Office on: (01962) 880845 or by email at: office@downsbenefice.org.uk

7. Financial Review year ended 31st December 2018

Summary

The General Fund had a surplus of £2,461 due mainly to the biennial Auction of Promises held in April. Further detail is provided in the General Fund Section below.

There was a small deficit of £844 on the Building Fund resulting from costs incurred in design work on the proposed refurbishment of the Vestry. Further detail is provided in the Building Fund review below.

A new feature in the Accounts this year is the creation of a Designated Fund. This is to accommodate a generous donation from the Gordon-Creed Family. While the decision on how to use these funds has been left to the PCC, the family has asked that they are consulted before any money is spent. Further detail is provided in the Designated Fund review below.

At the end of the year the monetary assets of the PCC stood at £24,281 as against £10,164 at the beginning of the year. Additionally there remained a monetary liability, now reduced to £500, being the balance outstanding on a loan from Littleton PCC, commented on later in this report.

As in previous years the Accounts are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis rather than an Accruals basis.

General Fund

Incoming resources from donors was worrying down by 17.5%. While the number of regular donors remained static, with little progress being made to attract new donors, the fall in income is in the main due to significant decline in collections and other givings, down 50% on 2017, although only a lesser decline of 29% over the average for the last five years. But this is nevertheless a worrying trend that needs to be redressed. The number of persons taking advantage of the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) increased by one only, to seven persons on its register. This helps the cash flow because the related tax benefit is immediately paid over. We will continue seek out new regular givers in 2019 and increase the numbers using the PGS.

The Annual Fete and the Christmas Fayre again resulted in valuable contributions enhanced this year by the introduction of a new endeavour, namely a request for donations specifically to support the Fete, which produced an additional £1,356, inclusive of Gift Aid benefits. The church was the venue for five weddings, up one on last year, which with baptisms and funerals resulted in fee income being maintained at £1,188.

However, as in previous year's it was the very popular Bi-Annual Auction of Promises, held in April, that again produced an excellent result with bid income at £7,649, up 4% on the previous Auction held in 2016.

With no legacies, total receipts were 9% up on last year.

Costs, other than the Common Mission contributions were, where possible, rigorously controlled. The Common Mission contribution, which this year represented 48% of the overall costs, was up 2.9% on last year which now seems to be levelling off after several years of well above inflation increases year on year.

One cost to be noted was £676 spent on a revised and updated booklet on the church and its history. This was last updated over twenty years ago and was in need of revision. The new booklet, with a stock of 400, is normally placed at the back of the church is on sale at £3.50 and has been well received.

Under the PCC Charitable Donations policy we made two donations to local organisations during the year being The Chilbolton Pre-School and The Origin Training Project both receiving £300.

As previously agreed we paid the third tranche of £500 of the loan from Littleton PCC during the year leaving £500 outstanding. This liability is noted in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities of the Published Accounts.

At the end of the year the monetary assets within the General Fund stood at an increased level of £8,364 as against £5,903 at the beginning of the year.

Designated Fund

A new feature in the Accounts this year is the creation of a Designated Fund. This is to accommodate a generous donation of £10,000 from the Gordon-Creed Family. While the decision on how to use these funds has been left to the PCC, the family has asked that they are consulted before any money is spent. These funds were gift-aided, so a further £2,500 of Income Tax was also recovered.

The current proposal is that the Funds will be used to contribute to the refurbishment of the Vestry.

Building Fund

The only income was from VAT recovered for work undertaken last year. Costs related to architectural design work on the proposed refurbishment of the Vestry. Overall there was a small deficit of £844 on the Building Fund.

At the end of the year the monetary assets within the Building Fund stood at £3,417 as against £4,261 at the beginning of the year.

Outlook for 2018

General Fund

With no biennial Auction of Promises this coming year, there must be increased effort to attract new regular donors and try to reverse the downward trend of collections. At a minimum we want to increase our planned givers contributions by a minimum of £1,500 p.a. In addition we will again look to raise money through specific donations for the Fete and research innovative ways of raising further funds. This will be a challenging year.

One fund raising idea to be pursued is to set up a St Peter & Holy Cross Friends (SPHCF), based on the St Catherine's concept at Littleton within the Downs Benefice. This idea focuses on people within the community who, while not necessarily church goers, see the Church as an important part of our community that therefore should be supported.

There will also be a focus on trying to put in place a strategy for legacies.

We will also continue to increase donor participation in the Parish Giving Scheme which will benefit cash flows and reduce the administrative effort.

Costs will continue to be carefully controlled. It should be noted, that for the first time, the Diocesan Common Mission contribution of £18,225 will represent in excess of 50% of our overall costs.

The best we can hope for this coming year, is to minimise excess of costs over receipts to as small a deficit as possible with our budget projecting a deficit of around £2,000

Building Fund

The focus in 2019 will be on progressing the Vestry refurbishment project. As already noted the Gordon-Creed donation has been allocated to this project and as necessary we will seek further grants to cover the shortfall.

DJ Etchells
Wherwell PCC Treasurer

SCRIPTURE FOR 2019 Blossom Where You Are Planted (1 Corinthians 7:20–24)

What is the

mission of the church? Matthew's Gospel tells us that our commitment before Jesus is to go out, make disciples, baptise all who seek Him and teach all who will hear His truth.

In 2018, our parishes have been committed to this work - sharing the love of Christ with others and encouraging people to be the best they can be, serving in and through the Holy Spirit. This comes with my gratitude and thanksgiving for all that you do in service to the Lord, making a reality of the church to people who have little or no understanding of Christian faith so much more than bricks and mortar. We have been where people are, where they need us to be, at times of great sadness and of celebration – in all avenues of life and death. In weddings, baptisms and funerals, we have been opening people's eyes to the love of God for them personally. Our Prayer Chain and Parish and Care-Home Visiting are flourishing, meeting the needs of those in difficult spiritual, physical and emotional situations and, by our walking alongside them, offering Jesus' compassionate love. Our Lent Lectures drew remarkable people to share their fascinating life and faith experiences, giving all who attended new perspectives on how we can live out Jesus' teachings in our own lives. Their honesty about the difficulties of the situations they have faced and the ways by which they have been challenged by their faith were uplifting and empowering. Some of us found great joy in spending time together at Rydal House in Cumbria, walking in the beauty of God's glorious creation and deepening bonds of Christian fellowship. Mother and Toddler Groups, Messy Church and the many school services across the year have helped our young people to similarly grow in understanding of the Christian faith. We have been particularly blessed by the Children of Sparsholt and Wherwell Primary Schools leading services in our churches. Out of the mouth of babes has come a deepening of faith and discipleship across all ages and backgrounds. The fellowship of celebrating the seasons of our Christian year has, once again, been memorable. Benefice mission activities with Karis Kids were boosted by Carol and Alice Coleman's visit to Uganda. Our Summer Fete's were blessed with glorious weather and good crowds. We have had some lively special services for Pets and Harvest; breath-taking results from Auction of Promises; and the Trinity Service at Northwood Park welcoming Jill and Greg Vine from MAFF to share their very real ministry in East Africa was at once moving and motivating. Our missional spirituality has brought forth some excellent Peace and Wholeness services, prayer gatherings and Meditations across the year along with a Deanery Half-Night of Prayer at Crawley. All Souls remembrance, Advent and Lent meditations sat alongside a number of beautiful choral offerings – the highlights for me being the Wherwell Singers' Advent Compline and Winchester Cathedral Boys Choir at Sparsholt for Lenten Evensong in March. All this has happened in a flurry of regular services and national events such as the Centenary commemorations for the end of World War One. National safeguarding and GDPR regulations have been incorporated into our benefice administration across the year – my thanks to all who have worked hard to effect this. We have been blessed with yet more disciples coming forward as Licenced Lay Workers under the diocesan BCM training programme. Our congratulations to Carol Coleman, and to Di Payne and Andrew Kent who undertook a diocesan conversion course to update their previous training. One of the moving experiences of my year was to witness four of our parishioners being Confirmed in Winchester Cathedral on Easter Saturday. Our love and prayers are with Nia Davies, Kiera Bateson, Jenna Bunce and Robin Allardyce.

As we go forward into 2019, the Holy Spirit encourages us all to continue in this good work and to blossom where we are planted. Whoever and wherever we are, we each have the opportunity to share with others what it means to live the Christian way – as we respond generously with a cup of tea for a friend in need or cooking meals for Winchester Nightshelter; popping into Boaz to buy some of their delicious produce and sharing the joy of the community as we do so; in prayer for our fragile world and in our stewardship of God's creation. These are just a handful of ways in which we can reach out and dig deep in mission-shaped ways, encouraging others to find the joy we have discovered in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Yours in Christ, **Revd Jax Machin** Rector, The Downs Benefice 1st March 2019