

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 2017

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 2017, the Electoral Roll numbered 66 members, 17 of whom are not resident within the parish.

During the year, Advent and School Carol services, a Christingle, a Mothering Sunday service, a Holy Cross Patronal service, a Crib service, two Harvest services, a pet service and two Remembrance service were held.

During the year 4 weddings, 2 baptisms and 4 funeral were held at the Church.

6. Review of the Year

Five PCC meetings have been held throughout the year at Dancing Ledge and Field House by kind permission of Michael and Joyce Payne and Alice and Quentin Higham respectively, as well as the Annual Parochial Church Meeting at the Church. We have 11 members on the PCC, leaving one seat available for membership to bring us up to a full complement.

2017 saw four 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; a service of Remembrance; an Advent Carol service; a pet service; and the Harvest Festival which was followed by a delicious bring-and-share lunch in the Church itself – a new idea which was extremely successful and enjoyable. In addition, the School makes good use of the Church: once again there were special Christingle, Remembrance and Carol services. Trinity Sunday was celebrated at Northwood Park, with Wherwell Parish providing drinks.

Following the successful introduction of meditation services, in 2016, two further series of three meditations were held on Saturday evenings in the Spring and Autumn. Subjects comprised St Anselm, George Herbert, Bishop J V Taylor, Hildegard of Bingen, St Francis of Assisi, and Julian of Norwich. These lay-led services are all constructed by Desmond Graves, 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. We are extremely grateful to Desmond and to Mrs Diana Dyer who has been a great influence in the presentation of these services.

Family Services continue to be popular with a good number of young families attending each month. Regular refreshments are now available after these services and have proved 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!

We would like to thank Mrs Diana Dyer for hosting Evensong at her house during the winter months, providing a warm and comfortable setting for this monthly service.

Legal arrangements to transfer the ownership of the car park land from Lord Camden's ownership to the church were put in place, but had not been concluded by the lawyers by the end of the year.

Midday Mums for those with babies and toddlers has continued on a monthly basis, and provides a chance for pre-schoolers and their parents to meet and form friendships. Midday Mums meets in Wherwell Village Hall, and is run by a team comprising: Susan Ansell, Lesley Kent, Di Wild and Joyce and Michael Payne.

The Diocese drew up a 'Parish Safeguarding Audit & Action Plan' in 2017. No Safeguarding issues were reported in our Parish during the 2017 year.

Activities

An evening of entertainment with Dougie Squires, a local person who had been a television dance troupe leader and trainer and choreographer for national events, was staged in April, proving most interesting, and providing the church with a welcome profit of £700.

The annual summer fete was held in June with stalls which were arranged as usual in Church Street and 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. The significant

sum of money raised at 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.

In October, our biennial Harvest Flower Festival was held in the church, this year including a wonderful display of art by local artists. The art and display panels were kindly organized by Mary and Mike Gee, while Jo Baughen coordinated all things floral.

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 was organized by Mrs Susanne Horne and Mrs Anna Lipa.

Church Fabric and Goods

Repairs to the Nave ceiling were required on 2 occasions during the year, necessitating the use of scaffolding to reach the area. The second occasion proved more extensive and several bays of plasterwork had to be replaced, the scaffolding coming down just in time for Christmas. No roof problems were detected – it is thought that the plaster was suffering from age-related deterioration, and as such, repair was classed as ‘regular maintenance’ on account of ‘wear and tear’ by the insurance company.

In 2017, Nigel Waters took responsibility for Health and Safety for Wherwell Church. His report recommended various improvements and remedial action within the church:

- A widened platform with guard rail was erected in the ringing chamber to make clock repair and servicing safer.
- The exit from the Back Vestry had been down a steep step into the churchyard, and was partially obstructed by the cellar hatch, thus presenting a dangerous obstacle for anyone of limited physical ability or wheelchair users. A new step was crafted and a gravel path laid by Nigel Waters, Robert Lawrence and Ken Wilson. A new ‘Break Glass for Key’ box was installed at this exit.
- Rechargeable torches on permanent charge were placed around the church and in the bell-ringing chamber.
- Electrical items were PAT-tested.
- Exit signs were displayed in case of fire.

A new lock was fitted to the audio cabinet.

Churchyard Maintenance

Enham have continued to keep the churchyard grass cut and edges tidied in a satisfactory manner, with the exception of one date in June when a pre-wedding cut was omitted – the situation was saved by a last minute cut by Ken Wilson, Mike Gee and Jamie Howkins.

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. In August, Ken Wilson righted a path light stake which had been knocked down by Enham. Test Valley Borough Council operatives altered the placement of the rubbish bin from one side of the lychgate to the other.

It was necessary to take down four trees overhanging the mausoleum in the churchyard, but this was managed by the Hoggs as they were growing on Priory land. A dead spruce in the church car park was removed by the PCC.

Repairs were completed to the churchyard wall which had been damaged by a tree which fell in a storm in 2016.

Signs reading 'Church Car Park' and 'Parking for Minister' have been erected in the church car park.

Music Team

Duties at the organ are shared by Ray Blazdell and David Wright, along with a new recruit, Ros Penny. 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 across the Church of England, but it suits us perfectly well.

The church bells which are chimed with the use of an Ellacombe system, enabling a soloist to ring peals, and has brightened Sunday mornings and other special services with chiming throughout the year. There were also four weddings in 2017 that requested the bells be rung in celebration. A bell is tolled on Remembrance Sunday and prior to the School Remembrance service

It is possible to play simple tunes on the bells: Ray Blazdell has arranged some well-known seasonal hymns for Christmas and Easter celebrations. Another favourite is Happy Birthday to you, which has delighted many young and not so young villagers on their special day! The chiming team of nine members continued to meet twice every month for practice..

Highlights of the musical year were the summer and Christmas Concerts by the Wherwell Singers – not a church choir, but they use the church for months of rehearsals and fill the pews on the big nights. They are also in demand for Wherwell weddings.

Residential Care Homes

We have seen another busy year in service to residents of Care Homes and Hospice settings within our benefice. Monthly Holy Communion services at Westholme and Flowerdown Care Homes are deeply valued by all who receive them. Many pastoral relationships have flourished at critical points in people's lives, bringing them the comfort of Jesus' grace.

Revd Jax is grateful to all those who offer their gifts and skills in this (often 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

2017 has seen the re-shaping and equipping of our Benefice Pastoral Visitors through a Pastoral Visitors Course designed and executed by the rector. Revd Jax is grateful to all those who offer their pastoral gifts in this valuable work in Christ's name.

Through the central control of a Parish Visitor Administrator, we now have a good spread of trained visitors to the vulnerable, sick and bereaved in each parish in addition to a number 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. In general, Holy Communion to the sick in hospital settings is 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 through the Benefice Office on: (01962) 880845 or by email at: office@downsbenefice.org.uk

General Data Protection Regulations

In preparation for the introduction of new the GDPR law on 25th May 2018, a committee of one representative from each parish was formed and will meet regularly in the benefice Office to formulate a way forward for each parish.

7. Financial Review year ended 31st December 2017

Summary

The General Fund had a deficit of £9,226 due mainly to the heavy expenditure incurred in repairing the plaster ceiling in the nave. Further detail is provided in the General Fund Section below.

Building Fund activity was mainly focused on the repair of the churchyard wall which was almost totally covered through an insurance claim. With no income other than monies from an insurance claim, there was an overall deficit of £1,891. Further detail is provided in the Building Fund review below.

At the end of the year the monetary assets of the PCC stood at £10,164 as against £21,283 at the beginning of the year. Additionally there remained a monetary liability, now reduced to £1,000, 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 marginally up by 2.7%. Unfortunately the number of regular donors remained static with little progress being made to attract new donors. To simplify the giving process and enhance our cash flows we joined the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) during the second half of the year and now have six 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 2018 and increase the numbers using the PGS.

The Annual Fete and particularly the Christmas Fayre resulted in valuable contributions and our fund raising efforts with the Dougie Squires talk and Flower Festival were also particularly successful. The church was the venue for four weddings, down one on last year, which with baptisms and funerals resulted in fee income being maintained at £1,427.

But with no Auction of Promises and no large donations or legacies, total receipts were down 21% on last year.

Costs, other than the Common Mission contributions, where possible were rigorously controlled but were dramatically affected by the heavy costs relating to the repair of the nave ceiling, tree work in the churchyard and ongoing costs relating to the transfer of the Car Park to the Diocesan land bank. The Common Mission contribution, which this year represented 41 % of the overall costs, was up 7.2% on last year and remains of concern as this above-inflation increase is expected to continue. In spite of the significant increase in costs we were still able to meet our Diocese obligations, although this has had a major impact on our cash position.

Under the PCC Charitable Donations policy we made a number of donations during the year with the Countess of Brecknock Hospice receiving £780 and the Andover Disabled Riding Charity receiving £250.

As previously agreed we paid the second tranche of £500 of the loan from Littleton PCC during the year leaving £1,000 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 a reduced level of £5,603 as against £15,130 at the beginning of the year.

Building Fund

The only income during the year was the payment from Ecclesiastical Insurance to reimburse the construction costs associated with the repair of a wall in the churchyard destroyed by a falling tree during the storms in March 2016. The repair work was undertaken in the spring and cost around £9,135 which was covered by insurance less a £400 excess.

Outgoings during the year were limited to widening the platform for servicing the church clock which was done for safety reasons.

At the end of the year the monetary assets within the Building Fund stood at £4,261 as against £6,153 at the beginning of the year.

Outlook for 2018

General Fund

With the bi-annual Auction of Promises due this April, plus an increased effort to attract new regular donors we will be looking to replenish our funds after the difficulties of last year. At a minimum we want to increase our planned givers contributions by a minimum of £2,500 p.a. In addition we will look for innovative ways of raising further funds. This will be a challenging year.

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 but there will be further one-off costs associated with the car park transfer to the Diocese.

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

Building Fund

With the Fund now standing at only £4,261 there is limited scope for using such funds. During the year the PCC will meet to specifically discuss priorities and where and how the funds needed could be raised. The idea mooted last year of a 'Friends of St. Peter and Holy Cross' drawing on the experience of Crawley Parish within the Benefice, will be further examined.

DJ Etchells

Wherwell PCC Treasurer.

1st February 2018

8 Vicar's Report for 2017

SCRIPTURE FOR 2018

Psalm 112 – Happy are the people who love the Lord!

Happy is the person who honours the Lord, who takes pleasure in obeying His commands.
Light shines in the darkness for those who are merciful, kind and just. Happy is the person who is generous.
A good person will never fail; they will always be remembered, whose faith is strong and trust in the Lord.
They who give generously to the needy and whose kindness never fails; they will be upheld by the Lord!

Wow! Another year has shot past in a flurry of activity across our five parishes wherein people of all faiths and none have been welcomed to share the sacramental and pastoral life offered out by our worshipping community through the living water Jesus offers us. Blessings on each and every one of you for making such a warm welcome in Christ's name possible!!!

In each parish, service numbers are up, and even though they do not worship weekly, people are regularly engaging with the values of Christianity and welcoming the many opportunities we offer out; inviting the wider community to be part of the worship by which they long to be fed. Because of a national shift in the patterns and frequency of worship, mere statistics do not always give us a true picture of the growing numbers and diversity of worshippers we now have. But they *are* coming!

We have been blessed by a buoyant number of weddings and baptisms, and sadly by a great number of funerals of dearly loved friends. These occasional services are a God-given opportunity for us to reach out to the hundreds of people who attend them, meeting them where they are and helping them to meet Jesus as we show them the way to the Gospel truths we profess. As I said in my Annual Report last year, this is slow, often painstaking work, but *it is* bearing fruit. Our congregations are growing as a result of people having been touched by our love and generosity of spirit towards them.

Revd David Mapes left The Downs Benefice at Easter. We are talking with Winchester Diocese about a replacement House for Duty priest. Naturally, the significant burden of services has fallen to me in this past year, but my heartfelt thanks go to Ministry Team colleagues, lay and ordained, who have supported me, ensuring that our services are maintained. My thanks also to each of you, the congregation, who support us faithfully through PCC and myriad other responsibilities which contribute to the smooth running of our sacramental and family-friendly services, together with the many other diverse and fabulously generous ways in which we give glory to God. Summer Fetes, Christmas Fayres, Harvest Festivals, Pet Services, Scarecrow Competitions, Flower Festivals, Northwood Park Benefice BBQ, Choral Concerts, Living Advent Calendar Doors, Lent Course, Faith in the Arts lectures, Peace and Wholeness, Whewell's series of Meditations, Airborne, REME and All Souls Remembrance services and many other meals and gatherings form the rich soil of our Christian fellowship throughout the year and extend a joy-filled, welcoming heart of Christ to all who seek Him.

Not having an Assistant Priest this year has kept me from developing a number of plans to encourage growth in our parishes. Nonetheless, with your support and encouragement we have still achieved a huge amount! We have broadened the provision of family-friendly services in Wherwell and Chilbolton, offering a short, tailored worship liturgy, along with crèche space and activities for the very young. St Catherine's at Littleton has recently opened up a resourced space for children to play during services, and has developed a firm following at Café Church: offering well thought-out themed worship in the comfort of the Church Room, replete with a yummy selection of home-made cakes! We have begun a fabulous joint worship initiative with Sparsholt Primary School, in which, to the delight of the congregation, school children take over a 10am Welcome Worship service space at St Stephen's Church, leading worship twice a term! It is my hope that such services could roll out to the other parishes in Sparsholt School's catchment in 2018. Across the parishes of Crawley, Littleton and Sparsholt, Messy Church services continue to flourish, and the faith of those (of all ages) attending are deepening in relationship with Jesus as a result of the accessible and fun combination of scripture, craft, worship and food. Lively and engaged Christian witness to our children and to the wider community has evidenced many baptisms and even a wedding or two birthed in this missional work. Next year, we have a cohort of people going forward for Confirmation: faith flourishing in rich soil!

Through Norman de la Mouette's inspirational ministry, we have seen the growth in attendance at our mid-week Holy Communion service at St Catherine's (9.30am on the first and third Wednesdays of each month) from all corners of the benefice. Likewise, our 8am BCP Eucharist and Evensong church and Fireside Praise

congregations are growing in number. I marvel at the near carnival atmosphere in some parishes even on the coldest of winter days. Where once two or three were gathered, now a good number of individuals and couples (especially prospective wedding couples) are enjoying the opportunity to begin their Sunday in prayer rooted in Thomas Cranmer's much-loved poetic liturgy, which is as spiritually relevant in our modern world as it was in 1662.

As a deanery, we have been applauded by diocese for meeting our Common Mission Fund commitments, and I know that behind these statistics, again, there is a hidden story of great sacrifice and sheer hard work in fundraising across the year to ensure The Downs Benefice is able to meet the payments. Thank you so much to treasurers and fundraisers alike for working so hard to achieve this.

As a result of our commitment to the global church programme, '*Thy Kingdom Come*,' which encourages people to pray together for more people to come to know Jesus Christ, we have run a successful discipleship programme, '*The Pilgrim course*.' We have developed the Parish Visitor Scheme across the Benefice, training and equipping many people to be the heart of Christ in pastoral care. We have also been blessed to support three candidates on the Diocese of Winchester's BCM training programme, (Bishop's Commission for Mission) which has been developed to support the work of parishes and deaneries by equipping lay people for service. As a result, Gaynor Childs, Sally Wesley and Alastair Barron have begun to offer themselves as pastoral and lay-worship leaders, sharing the love of Christ with those around them as they exercise their ministry.

My role as your servant-leader, rooted in the foundation of the holy Trinity, is to continue encouraging people to be the best they can be, serving God to the fullness of the gifts and skills they have been blessed with in and through the Holy Spirit. As a community before God, we are journeying inwards, deepening our relationship with Jesus, journeying outwards, sharing that love of Christ with others thirsting to drink, and we are growing in grace: a happy people who love and serve the Lord.

The message is clear. People are coming! We must continue to welcome them and be where they are. May Psalm 112 be the prophetic wisdom for the year ahead: *They who give generously to the needy and whose kindness never fails; they will be upheld by the Lord!* If, God willing, we make it through the current snow blizzards which are falling as I write, my family and I very much look forward to a glorious 2018 with you all, working to prosper God's kingdom and spreading the Good News of Christ's redeeming love to all.

Yours in Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin

Rector, The Downs Benefice

1st March 2018