

PCC 2018 TRUSTEES' REPORT TO APCM, April 2019

AIMS AND PURPOSES

This last year the PCC has continued to work with our Priest in Charge, Rev Linda Washington, and Associate Minister, Rev Nigel Washington, towards our vision of being a welcoming, vibrant, Christ centred church, growing, loving and at the heart of our community, aiming to be a well-resourced, family orientated safe place.

We have the responsibility to our congregation and to the village at large to care for the church building, its upkeep and its contents. In this endeavour we owe a great debt of gratitude to the Friends of St George's who have given remarkable financial assistance. We also have the care of running, maintaining and letting of the Wilkinson Hall, an asset enjoyed by the whole village.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES.

We have enjoyed increasing contact with the Churches of the "Quintet", the five parishes served by the Revd's Linda and Nigel Washington. There is a monthly 'Quintet' publication, produced by Penny Denman, giving details of services and events in all five parishes, which keeps us informed of shared courses and events. We appreciate the effort that goes into its preparation and are very grateful. The Quintet choir, led by Nick Hopton, is also a great asset providing excellent singing for special events such as special services at St George's at Christmas, Easter and Remembrance. It also offers opportunity across the Quintet for members to share the inspiration and to rehearse together regularly.

Over the last year Revd Linda Washington and the PCC have worked to re-establish close relations with the schools, the uniformed organizations and the British Legion (especially important in the centenary of World War 1) and with Churches Together in Toddington and Chalgrave.

As a PCC we have worked at producing and implementing new Health and Safety, Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and GDPR policies. We have been reminded of our duties by attending a course on the legal responsibilities of Trustees. We have reviewed our Mission Action Plan.

We recognise our responsibility towards other parishes in the Deanery and Diocese to pay our Parish Share, and this year have paid a much higher proportion than previously, but not yet the full amount. We are enormously grateful to the Diocese for writing off our Parish share debt up to the end of 2015, and to the Deanery for their support. Without this we would be carrying an impossible burden of debt.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

There are always problems with ancient buildings so it is worthwhile noting the issues we have overcome. The boilers failed completely on 21 September but with the speedy action of Revd Linda Washington, the PCC, the Diocese, the Architect, the Builder and the Plumber and with considerable financial help from the Friends, the new boilers were installed and all the

associated building work achieved before the big Remembrance services and before the cold weather set in.

The work to repair the organ is in progress after many years of discussion and should be completed before December.

In July, a wooden carved roof 'Cleric' figure collapsed to the ground due to wood decay. Emergency repairs were carried out to secure the roof, under the Architect's guidance. The existing carvings in both porches were tested to assess any further decay and risk. In due course, work will be carried out to repair the north porch decayed carvings but until that time, the north porch remains closed for safety reasons.

Following the theft of lead from the roofs of some local churches, we prioritised the need to install a roof alarm to protect our church. With an alarm the church should be fully covered by insurance in the event of a roof lead theft. The Friends have been extremely generous in all matters relating to the fabric of the Church and the PCC are most grateful.

A very successful Alpha course was held in Toddington in the early part of 2018 and this was followed up with the "Just 10" course on the Commandments. There have also been courses within the Quintet on prayer ministry and a LYCIG (Leading your church into growth) vision day was held.

Messy Church continues with increasing popularity, so much so that we must continue to work to ensure that it is a real learning opportunity for the children and their families. Messy Church is, for many of them, their only contact with church and the message of God's love. It is important that the children have this chance to hear Christian stories, enjoy crafts with a Christian theme and, of course, have a chance to get Messy.

The Ploughman's lunches and coffee mornings have again given the opportunity to the village at large for fellowship and extremely good cakes. They are a continuing source of income for us and, in sales from the stalls, provides donations to a variety of charities

The congregation have been involved in numerous village and Churches Together events; Light up Toddington; the Summer Fete; Carols on the Green; Christian Aid Breakfast, Good Friday Walk of Witness, and the holding of a monthly cake stall on the Green; whilst often providing and serving refreshments in the Wilkinson Hall.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

As well as the weekly Eucharist at 11am on Sunday and Morning Prayer on Monday, and occasional weekday Eucharist, there have been many extra services, the Samaritans Purse Shoebox Service, Christingle, Nine Lessons and Carols with the Quintet Choir, the Crib Service, In Loving Memory Service, The Scout Carol Service, and in conjunction with the CTTC, quarterly new informal evening 'Worship, Word and Wonder' services. The Easter Prayer Stations were a good success, being used by school, messy church and other visitors. Both the Lower School and the Middle school have visited this year.

The Friends again held a very successful Christmas Tree Festival in the Church, which is much appreciated by the village as a whole, and this year we finished with a children's Six Lessons and Carols family service at 5pm. Members of the PCC help with the festival.

The PCC has a church opening and closing rota so that the church can be open daily for private prayer and closed at night for security.

WEDDINGS, FUNERALS AND BAPTISMS

There have been two weddings and one wedding blessing this year. Six weddings have already been booked for the following year and couples have met with Revd Linda to reserve their dates. Couples were this year, invited to attend the 'Quintet' Marriage Preparation Course held by the Revd's Washington. Lynne Sherriffs has provided valuable support with wedding administration.

Nine babies were baptised at Toddington Church this year, with most of the baptisms taking place during the 11am Sunday Morning Service so that members of the congregation could offer the families a warm welcome into the Christian family.

Eleven funerals took place at St George's church this year, with two further funerals being held at a crematorium. One family also valued holding a small private family memorial service in church.

DEANERY SYNOD.

The PCC have two representatives on the Deanery Synod, which meets three times a year. Apart from reports from General Synod, we have discussed and reviewed the Deanery MAP which aims to support parishes in the achievement of their own MAPs, whilst giving emphasis on the loneliness experienced in all age groups. The Deanery continues to support a Credit Union.

WILKINSON HALL

Over 2018 the Hall has lost some of the regular bookings (like the Dance group) which is financially difficult; however it does mean that the Hall is more freely available for church events and is in regular use for the Coffee Morning, Ploughman's lunches, St George's Fellowship, Messy Church and Brownies. It has also been used regularly by Slimmer's World; a Toddler group; for bookings for parties; socials and Friends events. The electrical equipment has been PAT tested and the water boiler serviced.

PASTORAL CARE

The church congregation are very caring and supportive towards each other, and also look to support members of the wider church family, or village, as opportunities arise. Visitors are offered a warm welcome. Home Communion is available. The sick, bereaved and their families are held in our prayers and are visited, where possible. One of our mission goals is to discern pastoral needs within the village community and to identify how to respond. With this aim, one

member runs a music Dementia Café and also organises Friday lunches at the Village Hall. Some members of the congregation are also members of the village 'Helping Hands' organisation.

As our numbers grow, it will be good to develop a pastoral team to offer regular Home Communion and home visits to those in need and to find available funds to employ a Family Worker to develop deeper links with our younger Messy Church families, schools and pre-school links.

EDUCATION AND LINKS WITH SCHOOL

Rev'd Linda and Dee Curtis are Governors at St George's Lower School and visit the school regularly for governors' meetings and other opportunities.

Dee organises the ecumenical 'Open the Book' weekly assembly and is regularly involved in the weekly 'Bible Buddies' lunch time group and also attends school trips and activities. Rev'd Linda takes occasional assemblies; participates in OTB; supports the RE curriculum study through class visits to school, or through school visits to church to discuss a theme eg baptism. SIAMS curriculum planning will require her greater commitment and responsibility.

It has been a delight to welcome the lower school choir to sing at the Christmas tree festival and also their involvement at Remembrance service and Carols on the Green. This year, Year 3 also attended the church for their own carol service. The Headteacher Mrs Spencer has been extremely supportive and both she and Rev'd Linda are keen to develop further, deeper links. The school's willingness to publicise church events and to support Messy Church is very much valued.

Good links have also been maintained at Parkfields Middle School with Revd's Linda and Nigel leading one or two assemblies each month to Key stage groups or to the whole school. The school offers a warm welcome and this year a new development was for a class to enact a 'mock' wedding at church. Nigel and Linda are also very pleased to attend the Rotary Christmas lunch held at the school each year which gives a wonderful opportunity to meet and serve so many parishioners.

MISSION AND EVANGELISM AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

Over the year we shared a Lent course, a Lent poverty lunch, the Walk of Witness, Carols on the Green, Remembrance and a Christian Aid breakfast with all the churches of the CTTC. There have been regular meetings as CTTC and two additional vision meetings to seek to develop closer links and to identify a shared missional focus. As mentioned previously everyone from the villages of the Quintet were welcomed to an Alpha and Just 10 courses in Toddington.

BELL RINGERS

The report is little changed from those of recent years. Our practice nights are reasonably well attended, thanks partly to the presents of visiting ringers. However, our ringing for the Sunday

services is less regular. That's mainly because our home band is small in number: it only takes a few absences, such as sickness or holidays, and we are left with a number too small to make a viable band. The late service time can also pose a problem. Consequently, we often operate the mechanical chimes.

Regarding the hardware, we finally replaced our set of eight ropes, having made do for some time with several repaired (spliced) ropes. To buy the new set we dipped into our bell fund, a registered charity. So the show carries on.....

Peter Boon

ELECTORAL ROLL

As at 4th April 2018 we had 64 names on the Electoral Roll, of whom 5 are non-residents of the parish, since the APCM in 2017 two of our members have sadly passed away, while nine of our members have moved. One new member has joined so our Electoral Roll number has decreased by 10 overall. With no rector in place for the first half of 2017, it was difficult to attract new members to keep our numbers stable. However now we have Rev Linda Washington established as Priest in charge we hope to see an increase in attendees and new members throughout the year.

It is worth noting that a completely new Electoral Roll has to be compiled every six years, when existing members have to re-apply if they wish to remain on the roll and this will take place in 2019.

Lynne Sherriffs Electoral Roll Officer.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

St George's got closer to meeting its parish share payments and we were fortunate again to have parish share for 2015 written off. This leaves the balance as at 01.01.19 at £46622. This is still a worry to the PCC and the congregation but there may be an opportunity to get the more recent years written off also.

There was a slight decrease in from giving income and hall income but the income from weddings/funerals and fundraising was up, total income was down from the previous year. Church giving is down on 2017 at £14715 and this is a concern as our parish share for 2019 is £23,366.

There was a welcome increase in income from Weddings/Funerals. Other fundraising income was also up and on behalf of myself and the PCC would like to thank everyone for their efforts.

Day to day expenditure for the year was lower than 2017.

Work has started on the organ and we continued to fundraise throughout 2018 and added a further £9502 to the fund, this brought the total raised to £31498. We still need just over £10k

to reach our target. Thank you to everyone who has donated to the fund and a big thank you to Dee for applying for all the grants.

The Wilkinson Church Hall has lost some regular bookings in 2018 which meant with expenditure going up it made a loss of £2791 for the first time in a few years.

In line with the PCC policy, the PCC maintain the importance of having a reserve, ensuring that any unforeseen issues can be dealt with.

As always I would like to thank all the members of The PCC for the tireless work they do and a big thank you to Lynne for all her help with the financial affairs.

Nicola Brown, Treasurer

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

St George of England church is situated in Church Square Toddington, correspondence should be addressed to the PCC secretary at 3a Park Hill Toddington LU5 6AW. It is part of the Diocese of St Albans in the Dunstable Deanery. The PCC is a body corporate excepted from registering with the Charities Commission. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation rules.

PCC members in 2018

Rev Linda Washington (Chair)

Mrs Nicola Brown (Treasurer)

Mrs Lynne Sherriffs (Electoral Roll Officer)

Mrs Patricia Keymer (Wilkinson Hall Administrator)

Mr Richard Wood (Deanery Synod Rep and Christian Aid Rep, Readings and Intercessions co-ordinator)

Mrs Deirdre (Dee) Curtis (Fundraising)

Mrs Helen Mindenhall (Secretary)

It was in 2018 we lost our good friend and tireless worker for the parish, June Barton. The PCC owes her so much over so many years, not least over the time of the vacancy when she held everything together. Personally I remember her excited face and delighted smile when she knew who was going to take over as Priest in charge. For some of this time she was suffering the unremitting pain of the cancer which did eventually kill her. I hope she was aware that we were very grateful.

In 2018 we held monthly meetings dealing mainly with the day to day business of the church and hall, with the emergencies that come with the care of the buildings, with the policies which are part of any organization nowadays and with the repair of the organ.

We have so many people to thank, within the PCC we are grateful that Nicola Brown has continued as Treasurer, that Dee Curtis not only organises the fundraising events but also takes responsibility for so much and is prepared to be in the church to greet workmen/architects/organ repairers/ plumbers/electricians at all and any times of day. Lynne Sherriffs, not only is Electoral Roll officer but also counts and banks our collections and donations but is a careful reader of documents which I, for one, skim over. We have to thank members of the PCC and many others for all the effort that goes into fundraising and Messy Church. We thank David Owen for marvellous music and we hope he will enjoy the repaired, restored and renewed organ when at last it is complete.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Friends who have given generously when the church fabric has required it, as often happens. Without them and their financial assistance things might literally fall apart.

We are also very grateful to Tricia Humber, Rev Bernard Minton and all in the Deanery and Diocese for again "writing off" our Parish Share debt from 2015 of £27,140. The PCC is very aware that we must not allow these debts to build up again.

Above all these, however, we have to thank Rev Linda Washington for taking us on and leading us through building and repair projects without letting us lose sight of our, the parish's and the village's need for God's love.

Again throughout 2018 we were without churchwardens; this has meant that the PCC has worked as a tight knit and supportive team. This, however, does not mean we would not welcome new members – and with open arms.

SAFEGUARDING

The PCC has complied with its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. We have adopted policies on Safeguarding Children, Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and on Domestic Abuse. We have appointed a Safeguarding Officer and are beginning the process of DBS checks.

CHARITY COMMISSION GUIDANCE

When planning our activities for the year, the PCC have considered the Charity 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; developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus. We provide pastoral care for people living in the parish and we focus our direction on mission and outreach.

Helen Mindenhall PCC secretary

April 2019