



**The Parish of Harpenden, St John  
St John's Road  
Harpenden**

**MEETING PAPERS**

**FOR THE**

**MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS**

**AND THE**

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

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## **AGENDAS**

### **MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

*to be held on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016  
in Church at 11:15am*

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes of the Meeting of the Parishioners held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- 3 Matters Arising
- 4 Election of Churchwardens

### **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

*to be held on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016  
in Church following the Meeting of Parishioners*

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes of the APCM held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- 3 Matters Arising
- 4 Electoral Roll Report
- 5 Churchwardens' Report
- 6 Secretary's Report
- 7 Treasurer's Report
- 8 Report from Deanery Synod
- 9 Election of representatives to the Parochial Church Council
- 10 Appointment of
  - i) Sidesmen
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- 12 Any Other Business
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**ST JOHN'S CHURCH, HARPENDEN**

**Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners**

**held on Sunday 26th April 2015**

**in the Church**

The meeting opened with prayers.

**Present** 35 members of the congregation were present.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

David & Elizabeth Brown, Michael & Doris Hughes, Liz Sergeant, Simon & Sally Creedy, Brenda Cottle, John & Muriel Hammond, Liz Newell, Heather Nye, Mary Jean Pritchard, Sheila & Derek Satchell, Rev Julia White, Jo Klein, John & Di Borthwick, Tom Venner, David Christian, David & Jo Young, Michael Readman, John & June Jones, Tracey Kennedy.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

An amendment had been made to the minutes, as initially drafted, in item 4, to accurately record the appointment of Mary Jean Pritchard, not Matt Barter, as churchwarden. The meeting's attention was drawn to this amendment. Adoption of the minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014 was proposed by Margaret Charlston, seconded by David Nye and carried unanimously. The minutes were then signed as a correct record.

**3. Matters Arising**

There were none.

**4. Election of Church Wardens**

Two nominations had been received prior to the meeting:

**Mary Jean Pritchard**, proposed by Bill Moore and seconded by David Christian, and

**Margaret Creighton**, proposed by Susan Holt and seconded by Michael Hughes.

In the absence of any other nominations, Mary Jean and Margaret were elected unanimously to serve as churchwardens for the year 2015/2016.

Margaret said that she thoroughly enjoyed working together with Mary Jean and that they both really enjoyed working with Nicholas, who was very generous with his time. All in all, she was pleased to be able to report that they all worked together as a very happy team. She acknowledged the contribution of the members of the Standing Committee and thanked them for their contribution.

The meeting closed at 11.22 a.m.

## Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

held on Sunday 26th April 2015

in the Church

### 1. Apologies for absence

Members present and apologies for absence were the same as for the Meeting of Parishioners.

### 2. Minutes of the last APCM

Adoption of the minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014 was proposed by Matt Barter, seconded by Moira Carrington and carried unanimously. The minutes were then signed by Nicholas as a correct record.

### 3. Matters Arising

There were none.

### 4. Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll Officer, Neil Middleton, delivered the Electoral Roll Report. This year, the electoral roll was merely updated, following the complete revision in 2013.

The revised Roll has been completed and displayed in church since Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April. It has 235 entries.

Of this number:

- 155 are female
- 80 are male
- 95 are not resident in the Parish
- 8 were not on the previous Roll

The number on the Roll is just one entry lower than last year, when there were 236 people on the Roll. There have been six deaths and eighteen changes to the existing details.

Adoption of the electoral roll was proposed by Nick Pearce, seconded by Ian Richmond and carried unanimously.

Nicholas thanked Neil for undertaking this work as Electoral Roll Officer

### 5. Churchwardens' Report

The report was circulated with the paperwork for the meeting, and had been delivered verbally to the PCC at the last meeting. There were no comments or questions.

## 6. Secretary's Report

The report was circulated with the paperwork for the meeting and no queries were raised.

## 7. Treasurer's Report and PCC accounts

Steve Creasy ran through the main points of his report and the PCC accounts for 2014. He provided an overview of money coming in and going out and explained the financial position at the end of the year.

The Financial Statements had been circulated with the paperwork for the meeting, after being adopted at the last PCC meeting in March. Once again, this year, the accounts had been independently examined by Michael Coleby, as the income and expenditure in the year did not exceed £250,000.

### Summary of Accounts:

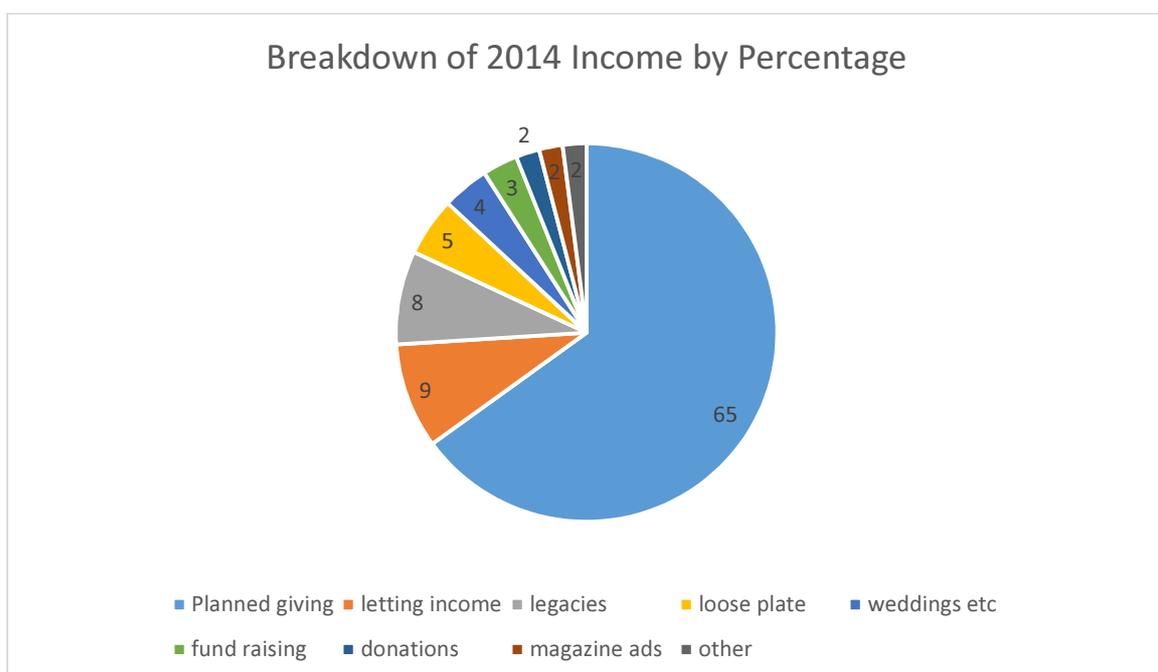
**Income** - Total income for 2014: £192,446

**Expenditure** - Total outgoings for 2014: £178,331

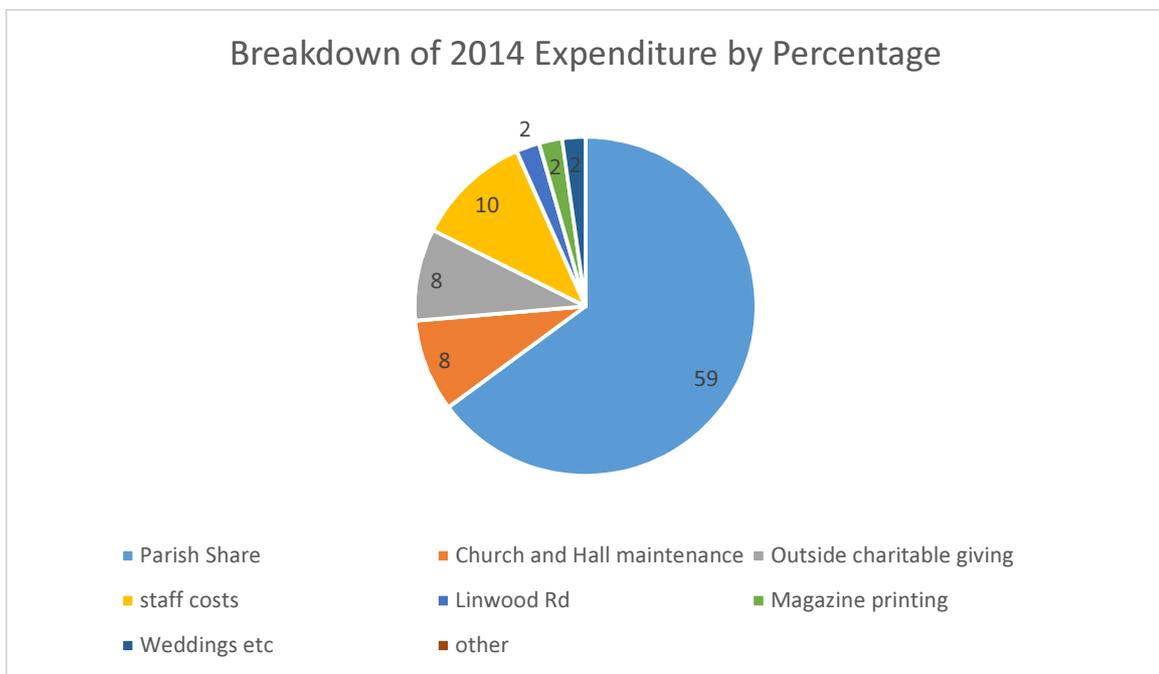
**Surplus for the year** - £14,115

### Key points:

£15,000 of legacy income had been received, without which there would have been a small deficit this year.



## Breakdown of 2014 Expenditure by Percentage



The surplus in 2014 was £14000, £6000 down on that generated in 2013 due in particular to reduced legacies and a higher parish share. Planned giving and fundraising were both higher this year plus there was the benefit of a change to tax legislation, allowing for a claim for Gift Aid tax refunds to be made on some of the plate collection. Repairs on Linwood Road were less this year and there was an increase in income from Easy Fundraising.

Steve urged those purchasing goods online to use Easy Fundraising which has so far raised £1700 – from just 34 members of the congregation.

A number of one off items have been included in the budget for this year including repairs to the Hall, decoration of the Committee Room, and professional upgrading of the website.

Legacy income cannot be budgeted for, but without the benefit of the Ted Ward bequest it should be noted that we are still dependent on legacy income to balance the books and avoid a deficit.

In answer to a question regarding the financial position after Amanda, our curate leaves us in May, Steve confirmed that the parish share would be reduced and that a short term tenancy of Linwood Road would be sought once it is vacant. There were no immediate plans to sell Linwood Road.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Matt Barter, seconded by David Halsey, and carried unanimously.

Thanks were expressed by Nicholas to Steve Creasy to whom we owe a great debt for employing his time and expertise in managing the finances of the church so well and for keeping the accounts in such tip top order.

### 8. Report from Deanery Synod

The report had been prepared by Elizabeth Brown and was circulated in advance with the meeting papers and there were no further questions.

## 9. Elections

- **Deanery Synod**

There was one vacancy on the Wheathampstead Deanery Synod this year due to the resignation of Simon Creedy. One nomination had been received to represent the laity for the remainder of the triennium which commenced on 1st June 2014:

**Elizabeth Brown**, proposed by Margaret Creighton and seconded by Matt Barter

- **Parochial Church Council**

Those whose term of office expired this year were: Ian Ashton (resigned August 2014), Emma Bresslaw, Steve Creasy, Paul Jessop and Tracey Kennedy. There were therefore a total of five vacancies.

Five nominations to serve as members of the PCC for the next three years had been received prior to the meeting.

<b>Emma Bresslaw</b>	proposed by	Mary Jean Pritchard	seconded by	Steve Creasy
<b>Steve Creasy</b>	“	Ian Richmond	“	David Halsey
<b>Jane Donati</b>	“	Margaret Creighton	“	Susan Holt
<b>Paul Jessop</b>	“	Matt Barter	“	Jonathan Holt
<b>Tracey Kennedy</b>	“	Moira Carrington	“	David Nye

There were no other nominations so the single nomination for Deanery Synod and the five nominations for the PCC were presented to the meeting ‘en bloc’, proposed by Anne Edwards and seconded by Moira Carrington. The meeting unanimously elected the fore-named nominees to serve in the capacities and for the terms specified above.

The terms of four members of the PCC will expire in 2016: Ginny Cooper, Tim Davey, Jonathan Holt and Sarah Poppleton.

### 10. i) Appointment of Sidesmen

The list was available for perusal. Adoption of all the names was proposed by Matt Barter, seconded by Lauryn Awbrey and agreed unanimously. The list of names would be displayed on the porch noticeboard.

### ii) Appointment of Independent Examiner

Due to the financial limits, the PCC accounts will not require an auditor. Under the Charities Act, the PCC can appoint an Independent Examiner. Margaret Charlston proposed that Michael Coleby be appointed as the Independent Examiner for 2015. This was seconded by Neil Middleton and agreed unanimously.

Nicholas thanked Michael for continuing to undertake this responsibility.

## **11. Any Other Business**

- **Group Reports** – 10 reports had been submitted this year from different groups. Some had been received after hard copies had been prepared in readiness for the meeting. A complete set of the reports would therefore be placed on the porch noticeboard for perusal.
- A vote of thanks was given to all those on the lift rota who bring members of the congregation to church and to Pat Hudis for organising the rota.
- Nicholas held up the painting of the Last Supper for which a faculty had been acquired permitting its disposal. The painting is not of any intrinsic value and the frame is in a poor state of repair. It will be available in the porch for one week, for a member of the congregation to take, if they wish, after which it will be disposed of.

## **12. Vicar's Report**

A copy of the Vicar's report is set out in a separate document.

Ian Richmond closed the meeting with a vote of thanks to Nicholas who, in the year that he had been with us, had shown much thoughtfulness and dedication in his ministry. He acknowledged that Nicholas had provided us with inspiration and hoped that we had reciprocated by helping him and his family to settle in with us. Change was always difficult but we should welcome rather than fear it. On behalf of the congregation he thanked Nicholas for being so generous with his time, for his dedication and guidance.

## Vicar's Report

2015

"The first thing to do is thank Margaret and Mary Jean. One of the real strengths of the C of E is having Church Wardens in every parish. Anneke tells me the Lord has kept the best to the last and it certainly feels like that. I am also greatly appreciative of those who sit on the Standing Committee where we can mull things over in a relaxed atmosphere.

### **A Provisional Mission Action Plan for St John's Harpenden**

If you look at current research two key messages were identified in relation to the future growth of the Church in England:

- There is an urgent need to attract and involve young people and children in the life of the church – the research showed that 48% of churches have fewer than five under 16s. Fortunately we are not in that position but we cannot afford to be complacent.
- There is a need to explore new ways of expressing church. Within a parish setting, this is likely to mean churches being outward looking and ready to introduce new styles, times, and context of church. Alongside this are fresh expressions of Church, new worshipping and witnessing communities - more than half of which (56%) don't meet in church, and which are reaching those who have previously been unreached by church.

If you look at our Service pattern we have an

8.00 am Parish Communion

9.30 am Parish Communion (All Age Family Communion, first Sunday of the month)

6.30 pm Evensong

Amanda attempted to start Messy Church, but it has not got off the ground. We probably should revisit Messy church that links in with the Grove School in some way and possibly is ecumenical in dimension.

Given the time on still available to us on Sunday we have space to consider other styles and contexts for worship, for example, monthly cafe style worship in the parish hall. What might that look like?

### **Here is an example from the Parish of St Mary in the Diocese of Chester**

"Encounter is a relatively new service, very different from anything else offered at St Mary's. Lay led, it has a different format, timing and style of worship. Described as *"a place of Christian exploration and worship"* Encounter meets in the church hall and is a place where anyone is welcome, wherever they are on their journey of faith. People are encouraged to: *"bring your laughter, bring your questions, bring your faith, bring your doubt, and all in the hope that we might encounter God afresh."* Barry himself is a regular member of this small but growing group. *"By the time I've done six services, I love to go to Encounter. There is an emphasis on wonderful, creative worship and teaching, alongside fresh coffee, chocolate and fruit. I really feel as if I've learned something after being there."* Some who attend Encounter also go to other services but for most it is their main service. Some are mature Christians, but it also attracts people who have had contact with the church at some time in the past but have not been regular church goers for some time. Others who have recently completed Alpha have chosen to attend Encounter because they are more comfortable with this style of meeting. Barry believes that it is important to grow and develop

more leaders, using people's different gifts in the church. He has asked the Encounter team, therefore, to lead the church's Lent course this year – an opportunity for them to use their gifts and also to encourage others to experience this style of worship and encounter and see if it's for them."

We can learn from this: offering a variety in style and timings, the aim is to enable as many people as possible to worship and feel part of our parish community. We have to deliberately focus our efforts on the services where there is growth already or where there was potential for growth.

The other thing we probably need to explore is using the services of a Youth Worker so we can engage with our teenagers. We will need to take advice and gain a clearer understanding of the range of arrangements that are possible and the funding commitment involved, although that may not be so great if we opt for someone in training.

One of the paradoxes here is that despite having a well-established All Age Communion service once a month attendance actually drops. Partly I think because it was actually longer and followed a similar format. We have begun to make changes, and I have made no secret of the fact that the service time should be no longer than 50 minutes. We have used lay preachers, to good effect. We need to use this service to welcome young families on a regular basis and in order that its average attendance grows. And we need to encourage families with children not to take this Sunday off.

Every diocese in the Church of England is asking parishes to grow: numerically and spiritually. St Albans is no different. Bishop Alan wants to know what we are doing so don't think for a moment we can ignore these things.

### **What will lead to numerical growth?**

- Being intentional about growth in numbers and working to bring people alongside our strategy;
- Involving people early on and making small tangible changes to help all to be more open to further change;
- Providing different styles and timings of worship for different "markets" and, importantly, doing what we do well; Remember to live is to have changed often. (JH Newman)
- Encouraging growth where there is growth already;
- Taking up new opportunities as they arise and following up baptism families who might attend church afterwards;
- Not being afraid to stop or change
  - Sharing leadership and encouraging and developing leaders already in the church.

### **Spiritual Growth Prayer and Spirituality**

We ran in Lent a highly successful morning which covered a range of issues. I propose we do something similar in Lent 2016: an in house morning of prayer Lent 2016 Saturday 27 Feb or Saturday 12 March not to talk so much as to experience different sorts of styles of prayer.

In 2016 we should arrange a weekend retreat at an established retreat house such as Launde Abbey in the Diocese of Leicester

Celia flagged up a parish weekend away last September. We need to revisit this but not confuse it with a retreat.

New style of contemplative prayer

Embrace: Visit\pilgrimage to Israel/Palestine in 2017/18 probably in conjunction with other parishes that support Embrace.

A few things we need to think about and wrestle with in the next year as we seek to discern what the Lord is asking of us, as he seeks to use in this place, filling us one again with boldness and fresh hope that we may have the strength to proclaim his risen life in this parish and be bearers of his peace to the people we meet outside our doors. “

## **St John the Baptist Harpenden - Electoral Roll**

### **Report for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

Since the compilation of the new Electoral Roll for the APCM last year:

- Five new applications have been received
- Two Parishioners have resigned from the Roll
- Five deaths have been advised to me

This gives a net reduction of two. There have also been five changes to the details of existing entries.

The revised Roll has been displayed in the Church from 31<sup>st</sup> March and has 233 entries on it.

Of the 233 entries:

- 151 are female and 82 are male (this is an approximation)
- 134 are resident in the (ecclesiastical) Parish and 99 are not

Neil Middleton  
Electoral Roll Officer  
31<sup>st</sup> March 2016



**The Parish of Harpenden, St. John  
St. John's Road  
Harpenden**

**The Annual Report  
of the  
Parochial Church Council**

*presented  
to the*

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

*on*

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

**ST JOHN'S CHURCH, SOUTHDOWN, HARPENDEN  
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS  
2015 – 2016**

<u>Vicar</u>	Nicholas Anderson	
<u>Curate (until May 2015)</u>	Amanda Duncan	
<u>Churchwardens</u>	Margaret Creighton Mary Jean Pritchard	
<u>Readers</u>	David Nye Lauryn Awbrey David Halsey	(Diocesan Synod)
<u>Permission to Officiate</u>	Anne Edwards	(Diocesan Synod from Nov 2015)
<u>Diocesan Synod (2015-2017)</u>	Elizabeth Brown	
<u>Deanery Synod (2014 - 2017)</u>	Elizabeth Brown Helen Davies Mary-Jean Pritchard Michael Readman	
<u>Secretary</u>	Emma Bresslaw	(2015 - 2018)
<u>Treasurer</u>	Steven Creasy	(2015 - 2018)
<u>Council Members</u>	Matt Barter Margaret Charlston Ginny Cooper Tim Davey Jane Donati James Hillman Jonathan Holt Pat Hudis Paul Jessop Tracey Kennedy Sarah Poppleton Ian Richmond Tom Venner	(2014 - 2017) (2014 - 2017) (2013 - 2016) (2013 - 2016) (2015 - 2018) (2014 - 2017) (2013 - 2016) (2014 - 2017) (2015 - 2018) (2015 - 2018) (2013 - 2016) (2014 - 2017) (2014 - 2017)

## CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT 2015-2016

Our annual report is intended to provide a record of the major events that have occurred in the life of our parish in the past year and focuses on our spiritual growth, the fabric of our buildings and our financial situation. We would like to thank our deputy wardens, Matt Barter and James Hillman, treasurer Steve Creasy and PCC secretary Emma Bresslaw for their commitment and support throughout the year. Most especially we wish to express our sincere gratitude to our Vicar, Nicholas, who has given us so much of his time and his patience.

Despite the disappointment of St John's not being allocated a curate this year, Nicholas has continued, undaunted, in his vision for our present and future growth. He is ably supported by our three readers, David Nye, David Halsey and Lauryn Awbrey and by our two retired clergy members, Mary Monk and Julia White. Nevertheless, we are very much aware that he shoulders a huge workload and we would ask for your continued prayers and support for his leadership of St John's.

The Worship Committee, with the full support of the PCC, was pleased to introduce a new edition of the hymn book which also incorporates the music for our guidance, and we look forward to learning new hymns and tunes over the coming months. The Communications Committee, with great commitment and dedication to detail, has produced our excellent and attractive service booklet, which allows for greater flexibility in our worship, particularly the inclusion of all the Eucharistic Prayers.

Steve Creasy has continued as PCC Treasurer and we thank him for dealing with our day-to-day accounting procedures and his immaculate production of our annual accounts, a demanding and time-consuming task. Our report does not document our current financial status, as this is covered by Steve's Treasurer's Report. We must also thank Tony Armstrong, who has taken on the Stewardship Recorder role as well as being responsible for weekly banking and recording. There was a positive response to the recent Planned Giving Programme, which was devised and presented by James Hillman and greatly enhanced by Nicholas's thought-provoking sermons encouraging existing members to increase their pledges and inviting new members to join the scheme.

The Fabric Committee has met on a regular basis since our last report and, led by David Christian, has dealt with a variety of topics concerning the maintenance and upkeep of our buildings, grounds, fixtures and fittings. Our gardens have been tended with much care and imagination by Steve Howard, who now also takes on the role of sexton, with the responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the Memorial Garden. We are very grateful to Steve for his many hours of hard work, and our thanks also go to Jo Klein, who now steps down after some years as leader of Fellowship in the Garden.

We are indebted to the generosity of many parish members who pledged money for the purchase of the colourful and comfortable new Lady Chapel chairs and also allowed us to replace the unsafe and noisy chairs at the back of church; this has provided us with attractive and flexible seating for our varying services. Our congratulations and gratitude must go to James Hillman for leading this successful initiative.

Our policy of charitable giving has been maintained and our financial commitment to Embrace, the Church Urban Fund and the St Albans and District Food Bank has continued. Cash collections over the year have gone to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal and Crisis at Christmas. Our thanks to all who continue to contribute items to the Food Bank and to those who deliver them on a regular basis.

Our monthly Tea at Three get-togethers in the Church Hall on the last Friday of every month have proved to be hugely popular and have attracted many parishioners who enjoy the opportunity of shared fellowship in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The numbers attending are steadily growing, and we are most appreciative of all those who have helped to make these events so warmly welcoming and successful. Although led by St John's Visitors, this is very much a parish initiative and we were delighted when members of the Junior Choir led by Madeleine Venner entertained our guests with carol singing at the Christmas meeting.

We are pleased to report that our Christmas celebrations produced many memorable highlights. The re-enactment of the Nativity story delivered with such reverent and prayerful understanding by the members of our Junior Church led by Celia Halsey was most moving, and the choral greeting by the Junior Choir at the church door on Christmas morning set the scene for our worship. Congratulations too must go to Roger Carter and the Choir for their contribution to our service of Nine Lessons and Carols, which proved to be so uplifting and joyful. Our Crib Service, which started with carols and prayers in Café Aroma in Southdown and then travelled via the Carpenters Arms and the Engineer to St John's was a new initiative and took the true meaning of Christmas out into the parish.

We have been pleased over the last year to enjoy a growing and enjoyable social life. The Beetle Drive, so well organised and hosted by Steve, Ellie and Carla Creasy, was well attended and great fun, and the Auction of Promises, equally entertaining, raised a remarkable total of £4,000 for church funds. Our thanks to Lauryn Awbrey and her team who worked so hard to make all this possible.

In our report to the APCM last year we promised changes and challenges, and this year we are promising more changes and challenges to come. The PCC has wholeheartedly supported the appointment of a youth worker who will encourage children of secondary school age in their Christian faith and education, and we also continue to pursue the prospect of a new Parish Centre for St John's.

This report has given us the opportunity to thank all who have given of their love, time and commitment towards the wellbeing of this parish and we have already acknowledged so many people who have given so much. There are, however, some background roles that sometimes go unnoticed but are nevertheless vital for the smooth running of St John's, one being that of Sacristan, which Betty Hollows has held for many years and which she now wishes to relinquish. Where would we be without someone who washes chalices and glassware, fills decanters, lays out linen and wafers, refills candles, cleans the Sacristy, polishes silver and brass, and re-orders wine? So we would like to take this opportunity to record how very grateful we are to Betty for her many years of quiet service and dedication.

And finally, please be assured that we are most appreciative of all the support we have received from so many.

**Mary Jean Pritchard**

**Margaret Creighton**

## **PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT 2015-2016**

### **The Objective of the PCC**

The aim of the PCC is 'to co-operate with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical' [PCC(Powers) Measure 1956].

### **The Organisation of the PCC**

St John's Parochial Church Council met six times in 2015 – 2016 in May, July, September, November, January and March. Attendance at meetings was approximately 77% of the maximum possible number of 25.

Prior to each PCC meeting, a Standing Committee meets to draw up the agenda of items to be discussed. At least two weeks before a meeting, all PCC members receive the agenda, the minutes of any sub-committee meetings that have taken place since the last meeting and any briefing documents for items under discussion. Within two weeks of a PCC meeting, minutes of that meeting are circulated to all members.

The PCC has continued to operate by devolving its work to sub-committees, a system established last year and which is working well. All members of the PCC sit on one committee which meet on a regular basis. The sub-committees are: Communications, Mission & Evangelism, Ministry & Worship, Pastoral and Fabric. Each committee has a chair and a secretary and operates within agreed terms of reference, produces written minutes and bring proposals to and provide updates at all PCC meetings. The PCC also receives updates from the members of the Deanery and Diocesan Synods.

### **Volunteers**

Enormous thanks go to all the volunteers who work so hard and give so generously of their time to make St John's the lively, vibrant and caring community that it is. It would be impossible to name everyone who plays a significant role but, in particular, thanks must go: to Margaret Creighton and Mary Jean Pritchard, our churchwardens, for their tireless commitment to so many aspects of our parish life; to Steve Creasy who has efficiently and professionally been in charge of organising our accounts and finances; to Matt Barter and David Christian for looking after the fabric of our church buildings; to Steve Howard, our green-fingered gardener, who ensures that horticultural delights treat us season after season and to all those who have taken up the gauntlet to organise social events for us to enjoy.

Many group activities take place at St John's, led by volunteers of remarkable talent and commitment. A brief overview of the range of our activities is given here but many groups publicise further details of their activities either in the parish magazine, on the website or in our e newsletter. The spiritual well-being of the many children in our parish is currently met in the crèche, "Little Gems", Junior Church and Youth Group as well as the affiliated Brownie pack. In addition, there is a flourishing and beautifully harmonious Junior Choir. (Madeleine Venner is now taking maternity leave from her role as Junior Choir leader and is to be thanked and congratulated on the progress that has been made by the Junior Choir who can sing quite beautifully. We wish her all the best for the coming year and the safe delivery of her new baby. The Junior Choir are incredibly fortunate that Terry Charlston has kindly offered to take on this role in her absence.) Men meet on Wednesdays for topical Christian based discussion and we also have a Fellowship and Study group. Mothers' Union is active in the parish and meets regularly. Dorcas meets to sew together, the Flower Guild to beautify our church and there are regular horticultural Fellowship in the Garden meetings. (Grateful thanks go to Jo Klein for all the time and effort that she has put into organising these gardening sessions; going forward, Steve Howard will carry on her wonderful work.) A group of volunteers organise Baptisms and St Luke's Cell meet to pray for the sick. St John's Visitors go out into the parish and visit those in need of support. They also, together with additional members of the congregation, host the very popular "T@3" once a month, to provide companionship and refreshments for the elderly. We are most fortunate at St John's to have two choirs, a talented organist and many musical members of the congregation, both young and old, resulting in uplifting singing and inspirational music-making. Thomas Hillman's violin concerto following one Sunday morning

service was an absolute treat and hymn singing at the All Age Good Friday Service was hugely enhanced by an instrumental group of young players all with great talent and musical sensitivity.

As a congregation and a parish we are sociable and fun loving. One has only to look at the success of both the Beetle Drive in November and the Auction of Promises in February, which raised a staggering £4000, to realise that we all enjoy having fun together. There is a lot more to St John's than praying and we hope to be able to demonstrate this to everyone who attends our Open Day on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2016. This will be followed on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May by a special service of Songs of Praise to be hosted by the BBC's Pam Rhodes, an event not to be missed. We are always in desperate need of volunteers to man our social events but there was a positive response to a recent call for help, resulting in a "bank" of approximately 20 names which will be drawn on in the future. The social aspect of our life at St John's is very important, it does much to ensure that we know our neighbours, are there to support one another and thrive as a caring and close knit community.

## **PCC Business – Summary of meetings**

### ***May 2015***

- Mary Jean Pritchard was appointed to act as Lay Vice-Chairman.
- Emma Bresslaw and Steve Creasy were appointed as PCC Secretary and Treasurer respectively.
- A faculty was approved to purchase replacement chairs for the Lady Chapel
- Communications Committee reported that work had started on redesigning our website
- Mission & Evangelism Committee requested all committees to consider and comment on their paper "Towards a Refreshed MAP"
- Worship Committee had started testing new hymn books
- A frugal lunch was to be held on Poverty Sunday (Patronal Festival)

### ***July 2015***

- Roger Carter, Director of Music attended the meeting.
- Worship Committee reported that a new service booklet had been prepared and would be launched on 13<sup>th</sup> September. A new Eucharistic setting will be introduced on Advent Sunday. Roger presented his briefing paper on a new alternative hymn book - Ancient & Modern Hymns for Refreshing Worship was the preferred option. This proposition was accepted unanimously by the PCC.
- Matt gave a power point presentation to update the PCC on progress being made on the plans for a new Parish Centre. It was acknowledged that by keeping God in the centre of all our plans and decision making we should ensure that our scheme succeeds.
- Plans for social events were announced, a Beetle Drive with fish and chip supper in the autumn and an Auction of Promises with supper in the New Year. A flier was to be circulated asking for volunteers names to assist at forthcoming social events.
- The ad hoc Welcome Committee proposed an Open Day followed by Songs of Praise for consideration by Nicholas and the Standing Committee.
- Disappointingly, Nicholas reported that St John's will not get a curate in 2016
- The revised Terrier and Inventory was accepted by the PCC

### ***September 2015***

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy was reviewed.
- Worship Committee reported that the new hymn books had been delivered and the new service booklet used for the first time.
- Mission & Evangelism Committee presented the new draft Mission Action Plan which was accepted by the PCC as our evolving document.
- James Hillman was thanked for leading a very successful fundraising campaign to meet the cost of the Lady Chapel chairs. Sufficient money was raised to purchase new stackable chairs for the back of church too.
- Fabric Committee reported on the works needed to the Linwood Road Property

- Tony Armstrong had been appointed as Stewardship Recorder.
- James Hillman had launched the Planned Giving Programme

### **November 2015**

- The Creasy Family were thanked for arranging the very successful Beetle Drive.
- Jane Donati was appointed Safeguarding & Child Protection Officer
- The proposed retreat to Launde Abbey was shelved for lack of uptake.
- A new Junior Choir leader was needed as Madeleine would be on maternity leave from Christmas.
- Mission & Evangelism Committee proposed and the PCC agreed unanimously that Christian Aid be added to the congregation's nominated charities for outside giving to recognise our desire to make a tangible contribution to the alleviation of the refugees' suffering in the current migrant crisis. EMBRACE will continue to receive 30% of money set aside for Outside Giving, St. Albans and District Food Bank, Church Urban Fund and Christian Aid will receive 20% each leaving 10% for urgent and special needs.
- Pastoral Committee reported that "T@3" was increasingly popular and a Christmas special was being arranged with presents for our guests and carols sung by the Junior Choir.
- An Open Day will be held on Saturday 7th May between 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Songs of Praise will be held on Sunday 8th May and Pam Rhodes, who presented the programme for the BBC, has agreed to host.
- Steve presented the draft budget for 2016 which shows a deficit. Fortunately there are considerable reserves. The PCC adopted the draft budget.
- Details of planned Christmas services were given.

### **January 2016**

- The autumn Stewardship campaign had been very successful and resulted in an annual increase of approximately £12000 (with Gift Aid).
- A parish vision for our new Parish Centre must be ascertained and a half day session with a facilitator and lunch was proposed.
- PCC adopted the recommendations of the Mission & Evangelism Committee's paper outlining a proposition for a Youth Worker at St John's.
- The Child Protection register of all those in the congregation with current CRBs or DBSs
- is being updated.
- Details of planned services for Lent and Holy Week were given
- Shopping bags – plastic and cotton – with the St John's logo were to be researched
- 

### **March 2016**

- Steve presented the PCC Accounts for 2015 which showed a deficit of £12,000, slightly less than was budgeted for. Reserves are still high at approximately £200,000.
- The Financial Report and the Churchwardens' report were both adopted by the PCC for presentation to the APCM in April.
- It was agreed to increase employees' salaries by 2%.
- Comments were given on the draft advertisement for a Youth Worker, presented by the Mission & Evangelism Committee.
- Biodegradable plastic and cotton bags bearing the St John's logo will be ordered, Sara Chapman to review final design.

### **PCC Policies**

- The Health and Safety policy and the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy are reviewed annually.
- Paul Bedding is available to advise and monitor our use and storage of data within the church, with regard to the Data Protection Act.



**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF  
THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF  
HARPENDEN ST JOHN  
REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED**

**31 DECEMBER 2015**

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The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Harpenden St John is registered with the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales  
(Charity no. 1131603)

# PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

## TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

### AIM AND PURPOSES

The Parochial Church Council of Harpenden St. John (the PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with our vicar, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church and Church Hall.

### VICAR

The vicar during 2015 was Canon Nicholas Anderson.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC is committed to enable as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St John's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live 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, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific 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; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church and Hall.

### ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

#### *Worship and Prayer*

All are welcome to attend our services. St John's is an Anglican Church which has traditionally described itself as liberal-catholic but has always had an openness to a more evangelical approach; this diversity is fully represented in our staff team of the Vicar and the Readers. We seek to enthuse those who have a deep and well established faith and those who are new to faith. In the course of the year we introduced a new Common Worship booklet for use at the majority of our services and a new hymn book *Ancient & Modern Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship*. We have a strong musical and creative arts tradition and are delighted that the Junior Choir has led our worship at All Age Services. We replaced the wooden chairs in the Lady Chapel with more modern church furniture which offers us the possibility of using the space in a more versatile way. The plastic stacking chairs have also been replaced at the back of the main nave with more comfortable chairs.

St John's was one of the first churches in the country to adopt a weekly Parish Communion service, and the 9.30 a.m. Eucharist has remained at the centre of parish life and worship ever since. Common Worship is used at all Eucharistic services. We have changed the way we offer the monthly All Age Service ensuring that each is carefully prepared and free standing.

There is also an 8.00 a.m. Communion service each Sunday with a short homily. Evensong is sung (BCP) on most Sundays. There have also been occasional Taizé services during the course of the year.

*Faith and Light* hold a short service in church in the afternoon on the first Sunday of the month.

Each Sunday there are usually between 20 and 35 children participating in Junior Church, with even more in the period before Christmas when they are preparing for the Nativity Play. The children are aged between 4 and 11. Secondary school-age children attend the Bedrock group, and children under 4 attend our crèche, Little Gems.

We continue to host a number of Christmas Carols services involving the Scouts and local schools. This year we began our Children's Christmas Service in a local café before walking via Public Houses to the church telling the Christmas Story en route.

Ash Wednesday is observed with a Parish Communion. Other festivals are moved to the appropriate Sunday. Holy Week is observed with daily services.

## PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

### TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015 (continued)

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 to commend the person into God's keeping. During 2015 we celebrated 15 baptisms and 4 weddings, and held 20 funerals and memorial services in our church.

#### *Diocesan and Deanery Synods*

Members of the PCC sit on both deanery and diocesan synods. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

#### *Pastoral Care*

Members of the ministry team and other members of the congregation visit those in the parish who are sick or need support. *Tea at Three*, a new venture that takes place on the last Friday afternoon of each month continues to grow in strength and meets a real pastoral need among the elderly.

St John's church hall also hosts '*Faith & Light*', a non-denominational support group for people with learning difficulties, their families and carers and the Daylight Club, a social club for adults of working age with physical disabilities.

#### *Mission and Evangelism*

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. Once again the usual PCC policy of donating 10% of normal income to outside charities was implemented. In addition, we donated the collections of services over Harvest and Christmas to charity.

Our parish magazine is distributed quarterly to every household in the parish free of charge and is available at Church. The magazine keeps our parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our Church and articles that help develop our knowledge and trust in Jesus.

#### *Ecumenical Relationships*

There is only one non-Anglican church in the parish, Southdown Methodist Church, with which we have links. There is some sharing of resources during Holy Week. In January we were invited to their Covenant Service and during August we joined them for a Prayer and Praise Service.

The church is also a member of Churches Together in Harpenden. There are monthly meetings of the clergy and three ecumenical evening services and a United Nations Service. In Advent we held an ecumenical Advent Carol Service.

### **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Total income during 2015 was £196,937 (2014 £192,446), an increase of £4,491 from the prior year. The largest contributor to this income was donations to the planned giving scheme of £121,994 (2014 £123,931) including the tax reclaimed.

Total expenditure during 2015 was £209,211 (2014 £178,331), an increase of £30,880 from the prior year. The largest item of expenditure was the parish share of £102,737 (2014 £105,082). Expenditure in 2015 included £11,517 (2014 £3,192) for internal refurbishment and upkeep of the Linwood Road property which is fully expensed as incurred.

Expenditure includes £17,295 for donation by the PCC to charities (2014 £15,200). Our planned missionary giving of 10% of our normal income to outside charities was £13,050 (2014 £13,500).

The net of the total income and total expenditure for 2015 is a net deficit of £12,274 (2014 net surplus of £14,115). Therefore, total net assets as at 31 December 2015 of £201,292 are £12,274 lower than total net assets as at 1 January 2015 of £213,566. Total net assets are represented by general, designated, and restricted funds.

# **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN**

## **TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015 (continued)**

General funds decreased by £21,179 from £37,146 as at 1 January 2015 to £15,967 as at 31 December 2015.

Designated funds increased by £4,887 from £175,384 as at 1 January 2015 to £180,271 as at 31 December 2015. This increase consists of an increase in the legacy fund of £5,810, a decrease in the flower guild fund of £42, an increase in the organ fund of £450, and a reduction in the church hall fund of £1,331 relating to a non-cash depreciation charge.

Restricted funds increased by £4,018 from £1,036 as at 1 January 2015 to £5,054 as at 31 December 2015. This increase relates to a legacy during the year which is restricted to the choir fund.

### **OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE**

The financial position of the PCC as at 31 December 2015 is relatively healthy. However, in recent years we have relied on legacy income to cover certain running and repair costs of the church and the church hall. We carried out a successful stewardship campaign towards the end of 2015 which resulted in an increase in planned giving donations which should benefit 2016 and beyond.

### **RESERVES POLICY**

The PCC seeks to operate on a balanced budget basis but periodically sets aside such amounts as it deems prudent to meet anticipated abnormal expenditure. Such amounts are held in designated funds and are represented by bank balances and accounts receivable within the general assets of the PCC. It is the policy of the PCC to hold in general reserves at least the equivalent of two months of general running costs, which is currently approximately £30,000.

### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St. John's the membership of the PCC consists of the vicar, the ministry team, churchwardens, and those elected by members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The full PCC meet six times during the year. The Standing Committee, a smaller committee made up of the vicar, the Churchwardens and Deputy Wardens, the Secretary and the Treasurer, also meet six times a year. The PCC has a number of subcommittees responsible for aspects of the running of St. John's, including the Communications Committee, Fabric Committee, Finance & Stewardship Committee, Ministry and Worship Committee, Mission and Evangelism Committee, and Pastoral Committee, which provide regular updates to the full PCC meetings.

# PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

## TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015 (continued)

### ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

St. John's Church is situated on St. John's Road, Harpenden, Herts. It is part of the Diocese of St. Albans within the Church of England.

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission, number 1131603.

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2015 until the date this report was approved are:

Vicar  
Nicholas Anderson

Assistant Curate  
Amanda Duncan (until Jun 2015)

Readers  
Lauryn Awbrey (also Diocesan Synod)  
David Halsey  
David Nye (also Diocesan Synod)

Permission to Officiate  
Anne Edwards (also Diocesan Synod from Nov 2015)

Churchwardens  
Margaret Creighton  
Mary-Jean Pritchard (also Deanery Synod)

Secretary  
Emma Bresslaw (also Council member)

Treasurer  
Steven Creasy (also Council member)

Council Members  
Matthew Barter  
Emma Bresslaw  
Margaret Charlston  
Ginny Cooper  
Tim Davey  
James Hillman  
Jonathan Holt  
Pat Hudis  
Paul Jessop  
Tracey Kennedy  
Sarah Poppleton  
Ian Richmond  
Tom Venner  
Jane Donati (from Apr 2015)

Diocesan Synod Members  
Elizabeth Brown

Deanery Synod Members  
Simon Creedy (until Apr 2015)  
Helen Davies  
Michael Readman

Trustees Report approved by the PCC on 17 March 2016 and signed on their behalf by:



Rev Canon Nicholas Anderson  
Chairman

Mrs Margaret Creighton  
Churchwarden

Mrs Mary Jean Pritchard  
Churchwarden

# PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE PCC OF ST JOHN HARPENDEN

I report on the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2015, which are set out on pages 7 to 15.

### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The PCC is responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC considers that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Michael Coleby F.C.A.

Date: 22 March 2016

74 Station Road  
Harpenden  
Hertfordshire  
AL5 4TZ

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015**

		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted	TOTAL	
	Note	General	Designated	Funds	2015	2014
		£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>						
Incoming resources from generated funds:						
Voluntary income	2	131,238	10,000	10,979	<b>152,217</b>	152,859
Activities for generating funds	3	29,060	450	665	<b>30,175</b>	25,451
Investment income	4	488	-	-	<b>488</b>	487
		<u>160,786</u>	<u>10,450</u>	<u>11,644</u>	<b>182,880</b>	178,797
Incoming resources from church activities	5	<u>13,209</u>	<u>848</u>	<u>-</u>	<b>14,057</b>	13,649
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<u>173,995</u>	<u>11,298</u>	<u>11,644</u>	<b>196,937</b>	192,446
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>						
Cost of church activities						
Missionary Giving	6	13,751	-	3,544	<b>17,295</b>	15,200
Parish Share	6	102,737	-	-	<b>102,737</b>	105,082
Fabric and Running Costs	6	45,027	5,521	4,082	<b>54,630</b>	27,921
Mission & Education	6	4,156	-	-	<b>4,156</b>	4,312
Staff Costs	6	20,433	-	-	<b>20,433</b>	19,263
Other Costs of church activities	6	9,070	890	-	<b>9,960</b>	6,553
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<u>195,174</u>	<u>6,411</u>	<u>7,626</u>	<b>209,211</b>	178,331
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers</b>		(21,179)	4,887	4,018	<b>(12,274)</b>	14,115
<b>Transfers between funds</b>	12	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) for year</b>		(21,179)	4,887	4,018	<b>(12,274)</b>	14,115
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>						
<b>Total funds at the beginning of the year</b>		37,146	175,384	1,036	<b>213,566</b>	199,451
<b>Total funds at the end of the year</b>		<u>15,967</u>	<u>180,271</u>	<u>5,054</u>	<b>201,292</b>	213,566

The notes on pages 9 to 15 form part of these financial statements.

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN**

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2015**

	Note	2015 £	2014 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	8	<b>67,662</b>	68,993
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	9	<b>13,747</b>	9,526
Bank and cash balances		<b>135,550</b>	149,845
		<b>149,297</b>	159,371
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Creditors payable within one year	10	<b>(15,667)</b>	(14,798)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
		<b>133,630</b>	144,573
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>			
		<b>201,292</b>	213,566
<b>THE FUNDS OF THE CHARITY</b>			
Unrestricted income funds:			
General	11	<b>15,967</b>	37,146
Designated	12	<b>180,271</b>	175,384
Total		<b>196,238</b>	212,530
Restricted income funds:	13	<b>5,054</b>	1,036
		<b>201,292</b>	213,566

Prepared by:



Steven Creasy  
Treasurer

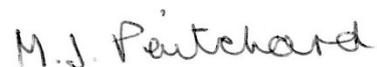
Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 17 March 2016 and signed on its behalf by:



Rev Canon Nicholas Anderson  
Chairman



Mrs Margaret Creighton  
Churchwarden



Mrs Mary Jean Pritchard  
Churchwarden

# PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015

### 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### *Basis of preparation*

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (FRSSE) (published on 16 July 2014 and effective 1 January 2015) and the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared in order to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following the SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the FRSSE rather than the SORP effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The adoption of the FRSSE and the new SORP in 2015 have had no material impact on the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body, nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

#### *Funds*

*Restricted funds* represent donations or grants received for a specific object or invited by the PCC for a specific object. The funds may only be expended on the specific object for which they were given. Any balance remaining unspent at the end of each year must be carried forward as a balance on that fund. The PCC does not usually invest separately for each fund. Where there is no separate investment, interest is not apportioned to individual funds.

*Unrestricted funds* are general funds which can be used for PCC ordinary purposes.

#### *Incoming resources*

Income is recognised in the statement of financial activities when a transaction or other event results in an increase in the charity's assets or a reduction in its liabilities and is recognised in the accounts when all of the following criteria are met:

- Entitlement – control over the rights or other access to the economic benefit has passed to the charity;
- Probable – income is recognised when there is sufficient certainty of receipt (receipt is more likely than not); and
- Measurement – the monetary value or amount of the income can be measured reliably and the costs incurred for the transaction and the costs to complete the transaction can be measured reliably.

In practice this means that planned giving, collections and donations are recognised when received. Tax refunds are recognised when the incoming resource to which they relate is received. Grants and legacies are accounted for when the PCC is legally entitled to the amounts due. Interest is accrued. All other income is recognised when it is receivable. All incoming resources are accounted for gross.

#### *Resources expended*

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded, if that award creates a binding or constructive obligation on the PCC. The diocesan parish share is accounted for when due. All other expenditure is generally recognized when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

## PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015 (continued)

#### *Fixed assets*

Consecrated and benefice property is not included in the accounts in accordance with s.10 (2) (a) of the Charities Act 2011. Movable church furnishings held by the vicar and churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal are inalienable property, listed in the church's inventory, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time). Such assets are not valued in the financial statements. All expenditure incurred during the year on consecrated or benefice buildings and moveable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvement, is written off as expenditure in the statement of financial activities.

Complete cost information is not available for the Church Hall, so is included in the accounts at a deemed cost (estimated from the insurance valuation in 1968 when it was built, plus the cost of the extension completed in 1984) less depreciation to date. It is being depreciated at £1,331 per year.

The Linwood Road property is held at cost and is not depreciated on the basis that it has a long remaining useful life and its estimated recoverable amount exceeds its carrying amount on the balance sheet.

At each reporting date an assessment is carried out of whether there is any indication that an asset should be written down (i.e. whether the carrying amount on the balance sheet is more than its recoverable amount). If there is no indication that an asset should be written down, it is not necessary to estimate the recoverable amount.

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF HARPENDEN ST JOHN**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015  
(continued)**

	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	TOTAL	TOTAL
	General	Designated	Funds	2015	2014
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>2 VOLUNTARY INCOME</b>					
Planned Giving:					
Gift Aid donations	91,905	-	-	<b>91,905</b>	95,839
Tax recoverable	23,371	-	-	<b>23,371</b>	23,884
Non gift aid donations	6,718	-	-	<b>6,718</b>	4,208
Other Tax Efficient Giving	473	-	-	<b>473</b>	906
Income Tax Recoverable on Other Giving	118	-	-	<b>118</b>	227
Collections (open plate)	6,352	-	-	<b>6,352</b>	7,880
Tax recoverable on collections	1,271	-	-	<b>1,271</b>	1,999
Donations, appeals etc.	1,030	-	5,979	<b>7,009</b>	2,916
Legacies	-	10,000	5,000	<b>15,000</b>	15,000
	<u>131,238</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,979</u>	<u><b>152,217</b></u>	<u>152,859</u>
<b>3 ACTIVITIES FOR GENERATING FUNDS</b>					
Church Hall lettings (non-church activities)	19,259	-	-	<b>19,259</b>	16,553
Church Hire	1,050	-	-	<b>1,050</b>	250
Fundraising Events	-	450	665	<b>1,115</b>	6,402
Linwood Road property lettings	5,834	-	-	<b>5,834</b>	-
Other Income and funds generated	2,917	-	-	<b>2,917</b>	2,246
	<u>29,060</u>	<u>450</u>	<u>665</u>	<u><b>30,175</b></u>	<u>25,451</u>
<b>4 INVESTMENT INCOME</b>					
Bank interest	488	-	-	<b>488</b>	487
	<u>488</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>488</b></u>	<u>487</u>
<b>5 INCOME FROM CHURCH ACTIVITIES</b>					
Flower Guild income	-	848	-	<b>848</b>	1,012
Income from Social events	712	-	-	<b>712</b>	444
Parish Magazine advertising	4,134	-	-	<b>4,134</b>	4,085
Fees for Weddings & Funerals	8,363	-	-	<b>8,363</b>	8,108
	<u>13,209</u>	<u>848</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>14,057</b></u>	<u>13,649</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015  
(continued)**

	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted	TOTAL	TOTAL
	General	Designated	Funds	2015	2014
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>6 COSTS OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES</b>					
Missionary and Charitable giving (also see note 7)					
Missionary societies	4,350	-	340	<b>4,690</b>	4,500
Relief and development agencies	5,019	-	1,431	<b>6,450</b>	5,000
Home mission	4,382	-	1,773	<b>6,155</b>	5,700
	<u>13,751</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,544</u>	<u><b>17,295</b></u>	<u>15,200</u>
Parish share					
Ministry Support Contribution	102,737	-	-	<b>102,737</b>	105,082
	<u>102,737</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>102,737</b></u>	<u>105,082</u>
Fabric and running costs:					
Church running costs	7,830	-	-	<b>7,830</b>	5,563
Church maintenance	4,170	-	-	<b>4,170</b>	2,419
Church installations	175	-	3,100	<b>3,275</b>	-
Depreciation of fixed assets	-	1,331	-	<b>1,331</b>	1,331
Organ/ piano tuning & maintenance	740	-	-	<b>740</b>	997
Grounds upkeep	2,621	-	-	<b>2,621</b>	1,194
Hall running costs	3,595	-	-	<b>3,595</b>	3,735
Hall maintenance	2,890	-	-	<b>2,890</b>	1,838
Hall major repairs and improv'ts	4,484	-	-	<b>4,484</b>	1,666
Linwood Road property upkeep	11,517	-	-	<b>11,517</b>	3,192
Upkeep of services	2,464	4,190	982	<b>7,636</b>	2,388
Parish Office Admin Costs	4,541	-	-	<b>4,541</b>	3,598
	<u>45,027</u>	<u>5,521</u>	<u>4,082</u>	<u><b>54,630</b></u>	<u>27,921</u>
Mission & Education					
Parish magazine	3,500	-	-	<b>3,500</b>	3,337
Education	610	-	-	<b>610</b>	672
Pastoral & Mission Action Plan	46	-	-	<b>46</b>	303
	<u>4,156</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>4,156</b></u>	<u>4,312</u>
Staff Costs					
Working expenses of incumbent	340	-	-	<b>340</b>	482
Assistant staff expenses	192	-	-	<b>192</b>	1,013
Vergers fees	-	-	-	<b>-</b>	50
Organists' salary and fees	6,531	-	-	<b>6,531</b>	6,583
Parish administrator salary	8,772	-	-	<b>8,772</b>	6,485
Hall cleaner salary	4,598	-	-	<b>4,598</b>	4,650
	<u>20,433</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>20,433</b></u>	<u>19,263</u>
Other expenses					
Vacancy costs	-	-	-	<b>-</b>	768
Flower Guild expenditure	-	890	-	<b>890</b>	1,019
Sundry expenses	4,760	-	-	<b>4,760</b>	824
Wedding & funeral fees to Diocese	3,740	-	-	<b>3,740</b>	3,552
Cost of social events	570	-	-	<b>570</b>	390
	<u>9,070</u>	<u>890</u>	<u>-</u>	<u><b>9,960</b></u>	<u>6,553</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015  
(continued)**

<b>7 MISSIONARY AND CHARITABLE GIVING</b>	<b>2015</b>	2014
The missionary and charitable giving is made up of the following donations	£	£
Embrace the Middle East	<b>4,690</b>	4,500
Church Urban Fund	<b>4,905</b>	-
St Albans & District Food Bank	<b>4,350</b>	-
St Albans & Harpenden Stroke Club	-	4,500
Harpenden Money Advice Centre	-	4,500
Crisis (collections from Christmas services)	<b>1,250</b>	1,200
Bishops Harvest Appeal	<b>900</b>	500
Christian Aid re refugee crisis	<b>1,200</b>	-
	<b><u>17,295</u></b>	<u>15,200</u>

<b>8 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>Curate's House</b>	<b>Hall</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	
	£	£	£	2014
Actual/ deemed cost:				£
Brought forward at 1 January	<u>63,888</u>	<u>48,299</u>	<b>112,187</b>	112,187
Carried forward 31 December	<u>63,888</u>	<u>48,299</u>	<b>112,187</b>	112,187
Depreciation:				
Brought forward at 1 January	-	(43,194)	<b>(43,194)</b>	(41,863)
Charge for year	-	(1,331)	<b>(1,331)</b>	(1,331)
Carried forward 31 December	<u>-</u>	<u>(44,525)</u>	<b>(44,525)</b>	(43,194)
Carrying value at 31 December	<u>63,888</u>	<u>3,774</u>	<b>67,662</b>	68,993

The Curate's House at 2 Linwood Road was independently valued on 2 March 2010 at £380,000

<b>9 DEBTORS</b>	<b>2015</b>	2014
	£	£
Gift Aid Tax recoverable	<b>7,122</b>	6,223
Prepayments and accrued income	<b>5,647</b>	2,961
Other debtors	<b>978</b>	342
	<b><u>13,747</u></b>	<u>9,526</u>

<b>10 CREDITORS</b>	<b>2015</b>	2014
	£	£
Outside giving	<b>8,300</b>	7,500
Accruals and deferred income	<b>5,397</b>	4,373
Other creditors	<b>1,970</b>	2,925
	<b><u>15,667</u></b>	<u>14,798</u>

<b>11 GENERAL FUNDS</b>	<b>2015</b>	2014
	£	£
Brought forward at 1 January	37,146	7,929
Transfer from Fabric fund	-	30,000
Other movements in general funds	(21,179)	(783)
Carried forward at 31 December	<b><u>15,967</u></b>	<u>37,146</u>

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015  
(continued)**

<b>12 DESIGNATED FUNDS</b>	<b>2015</b>	2014
The PCC operates seven Designated Funds:	£	£
Organ - Reserve to fund future organ repairs	<b>16,643</b>	16,193
Legacies - Legacies received and spent	<b>71,024</b>	65,214
Flower Guild	<b>490</b>	532
St John's Players	<b>700</b>	700
Fabric - Reserve to fund future fabric repairs	<b>23,752</b>	23,752
Church Hall	<b>3,774</b>	5,105
Linwood Road property	<b>63,888</b>	63,888
	<b><u>180,271</u></b>	<u>175,384</u>

The movements on the Designated Funds during the year were:

	<b>Organ</b>	<b>Legacies</b>	<b>Flower Guild</b>	<b>St Johns Players</b>
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward at 1 January	16,193	65,214	532	700
Income	450	10,000	848	-
Depreciation	-	-	-	-
Expenditure	-	(4,190)	(890)	-
	<u>16,643</u>	<u>71,024</u>	<u>490</u>	<u>700</u>
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Carried forward at 31 December	<u><u>16,643</u></u>	<u><u>71,024</u></u>	<u><u>490</u></u>	<u><u>700</u></u>

	<b>Fabric</b>	<b>Hall</b>	<b>Linwood Rd property</b>	<b>TOTAL 2015</b>
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward at 1 January	23,752	5,105	63,888	<b>175,384</b>
Income	-	-	-	<b>11,298</b>
Depreciation	-	(1,331)	-	<b>(1,331)</b>
Expenditure	-	-	-	<b>(5,080)</b>
	<u>23,752</u>	<u>3,774</u>	<u>63,888</u>	<u><b>180,271</b></u>
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Carried forward at 31 December	<u><u>23,752</u></u>	<u><u>3,774</u></u>	<u><u>63,888</u></u>	<u><u><b>180,271</b></u></u>

The expenditure shown above paid out of the legacy fund relates to the cost of new service booklets and new hymn books for the congregation.

The PCC approved the transfer of £20,000 from the Legacy fund to the General fund on 17 March 2016. This transfer will therefore be reflected in the 2016 accounts.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2015  
(continued)**

**13 RESTRICTED FUNDS**

The PCC accounts include certain Restricted Funds, where the monies can only be used for the specific purpose for which they were entrusted to the PCC. These monies are not at the disposal of the PCC for any other purpose, and represent:

	2015	2014
	£	£
Choir Fund	4,054	36
Education Fund	1,000	1,000
	<u>5,054</u>	<u>1,036</u>

The movements on the Restricted Funds during the year were:

	Church chairs £	Education Fund £	Choir Fund £	Charity £	TOTAL 2015 £
Brought forward at 1 January	-	1,000	36	-	1,036
Voluntary Income	3,100	-	-	3,544	6,644
Legacy	-	-	5,000	-	5,000
Expenditure	<u>(3,100)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(982)</u>	<u>(3,544)</u>	<u>(7,626)</u>
Carried forward at 31 December	<u>-</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>4,054</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,054</u>

The expenditure shown above paid out of the choir fund includes £960 for the new hymn books for the choir.

**14 PAYMENTS TO TRUSTEES**

Members of the Ministry Team who were also members of the PCC (Rev Canon Nicholas Anderson, Rev J White, A Duncan, A Edwards and L Awbrey), were reimbursed working expenses totalling £532 (2014 £1,495).

## DEANERY SYNOD REPORT 2015-2016

Wheathampstead Deanery Synod is made up of parish clergy and lay representatives elected by your PCC for three years according to the numbers on the electoral roll, together with members of Diocesan Synod (who are also thereby members of Deanery Synod and their PCC). It meets three times a year under the leadership of the Rural Dean and Lay Chairman, and provides a forum for discussion of current issues within the deanery and beyond, as well as receiving regular reports from Diocesan and General Synods. During the year Deanery Synod members have been responsible for electing members to the new Diocesan Synod for this triennium and for electing members to represent our diocese on the new General Synod who will serve a five year term.

Synod meetings open with prayers led by the host parish which also has the opportunity to talk about its life and work. It soon becomes apparent that every one of the nine parishes and twelve churches in the deanery is different. An Ascension Day service and Deanery Evensong in the autumn provide opportunities for church members across the deanery to worship together in different churches and to build relationships with other congregations.

The Revd Jeanette Gosney, the Diocesan Parish Development Officer, came to speak in July about developing a strategy for all baptised people as the Body of Christ to contribute to the Church's mission and ministry using their particular skills and knowledge. A number of courses are available to encourage those wishing to build the kingdom of God in their communities; some have already been run successfully in our parishes.

Synod's autumn meeting was 'An encounter with cancer and the healing role of the Jesus prayer' by the Revd. Simon Manley-Cooper, a former chaplain at the QEII hospital. We were privileged to hear a very personal and honest account of Simon's own experience of being diagnosed with cancer, the investigations, scans, the waiting for results and all through it he was sustained by the prayer *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*

During the coming year the Deanery will be reviewing its Mission Action Plan and as part of that process the most recent Synod meeting was a presentation by Mr. Jim May on 'Building for Growth', the rebuilding project recently completed at St. Mary's, Redbourn, in which he outlined how the works were planned, funded and managed. It was a most informative evening, and a demonstration of how the deanery can work together in mutual support.

Elizabeth Brown  
Deanery Synod Secretary



**The Parish of Harpenden, St John  
St John's Road  
Harpenden**

**GROUP  
REPORTS  
2016**

Version 2, 14 April 2016



## **Annual Report April 2015 - March 2016**

The 19<sup>th</sup> Harpenden Brownies and Rainbows continue to thrive with many more girls on our waiting lists.

The Brownies celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> birthday in June with a big party on the common where we were joined by many past Brownies, leaders and associates of the unit. We have been out and about as usual including a trip to Butterfly World and a Pack Holiday, as well as our visit to the Pantomime and the Gang Show, and not to forget carol singing at Walker's Court.

The Rainbows joined the Brownies at the Pantomime, and the units also combined to hold a Bring and Buy Sale and raise £200 for Children in Need.

All this as well as working for badges, enjoying various arts and crafts, playing games and singing. We have a lot of fun!

**Snowy Owl**



T@3 T@3 T@3

### Tea at Three

T@3 T@3 T@3

Tea at Three, held on the last Friday of each month in the Hall, was launched in January 2015 and since then has become a very popular and well attended event. Aimed at providing friendly companionship over a cup of tea, home-made cakes and sandwiches, the numbers attending have increased significantly over the months. Everyone is very welcome to come along and join us, to meet up with old friends or indeed make new ones.

Although we get together chiefly to socialise, we were delighted with the entertainment which members of our Junior Choir provided for our Christmas meeting and our gratitude also goes to Joy Peak, who has occasionally provided musical accompaniment on the piano during the afternoon.

There is no charge for Tea at Three but we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the voluntary donations which have been received. These have been used to support MacMillan nurses, general church funds and St John's chosen charity Embrace. In an attempt to 'Live God's Love' our small team of helpers has co-ordinated well and worked hard to provide good food, a warm welcome and a happy, relaxed atmosphere. In return much appreciation, generosity and love have been received. Do consider joining us if you find yourself free on the last Friday of the month between 3:00 and 5:00, or alternatively help us to provide these most worthwhile afternoons of sharing God's love.

The Tea at Three Team



## **Flower Guild Report 2015-16**



At a meeting in January this year, I expressed a wish to relinquish responsibility for the Church Flower Guild but as nobody has volunteered to take over from me, we reorganised ourselves so that June Jones organises the rota for flowers in Church, Carol Harbord is the contact for weddings, funerals and memorials, via the Office, and Brenda Norwood is Treasurer. I am grateful for the extra support they have given me and to everyone in the Guild who give time and energy in creating beautiful displays to enhance our worship.

Last year I reported on the decrease in the number of weddings that we have arranged flowers for. This trend has continued so regrettably we have had to increase our charges. Were it not for the generous donations from the congregation at Easter and Christmas our finances would eventually run down so we are especially appreciative of this practical support.

We are concerned that the number of ladies on our rota is dwindling, mainly through ill health and so as not to overburden the remaining ladies we have decided to cut the number of arrangements done each month. If you would like to come and try your hand in this pleasant and satisfying task you will be more than welcome.

**Elizabeth Curran**



## **Music at St John's**

### **2015 - 2016**

The musical life of St John's continues to be diverse and busy.

It has been a huge pleasure to see and hear the Junior Choir grow in confidence and polish and we are indebted to Madeleine Venner for directing them and enabling them to achieve this. We are delighted that Terry Charlston, who has already sometimes directed them in Madeleine's absence, will be overseeing their continuity whilst Madeleine is on a period of maternity leave.

We have also had the pleasure of hearing some of our other young musicians join us in accompanying our worship with a range of instruments on several occasions.

It is good that the Senior Choir has gained a few new members during the last year. It is obviously important for any choir that its membership should keep developing in order to maintain a vibrant tradition. I am, as always, very grateful for all that they contribute. We were particularly pleased that last year's Carol Service proved to be such a highlight of our choral year.

Our fine organ continues to be in much use not only for accompanying services, but also for being played in concerts and as I teach for the Royal College of Organists. I am currently seeing some sixteen or seventeen students in this role, the majority of whom are playing for church services elsewhere. This important form of musical outreach is hopefully enabling them to develop their skills and thus enhance what they can bring to the music in their respective churches. (Their age range is an impressive seventy years, proving that development is a possibility whatever our age.)

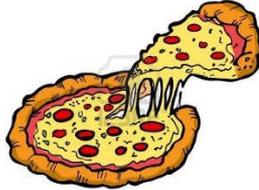
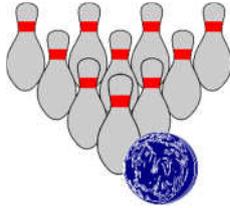
The church is increasingly in demand for use as a concert venue by various organisations. Our own series of Coffee Concerts also continues to flourish, offering a wide range of music and performers in a convivial atmosphere on about seven Saturday mornings of the year.

On a personal note, it was a delight to celebrate having been involved with the music at St John's for more than forty years and I am most grateful for the way in which this was so generously and enjoyably marked last May. I continue to count myself as very lucky to be involved in the music of a church where its place is so valued.

**Roger Carter**

# St John's Youth Group

2015 - 2016



Debbie Knight and I have been “running” the youth group since Amanda left the parish. We get together regularly to discuss possible activities etc. We brought new games for the cupboard, such as chess, Jenga, back gammon, cards, etc. and have had a football table donated to us adding to the table tennis table and other games which we already had in the cupboard.

We have had a successful year at the Youth Group. We attract approximately 13 to 15 youths each meeting, the majority coming from our congregation. Some bring friends from other churches. We mainly have boys at the moment, but hopefully that will even out more over time.

We have had trips 10 pin bowling, which are always popular, the latest trip had 18 of us bowling. This sort of activity helps bring the group together as a friendship group, therefore encouraging them to come along again. We felt this was important to get the group underway and enjoying themselves. There is a core group who come along to most meetings. We have made pizzas, had film evenings and games nights. The end of the summer last year we had a wild game in the woods opposite the church and had hotdogs afterwards on the common. A great end to our first term.

At Christmas we had a Nativity quiz, which proved great fun, and interesting for the youths to discover that the traditional Nativity story as told and performed in schools, is not what is actually written in the bible! The winning team won sweets.

At the meetings we have not continued the tuck shop but we have provided drinks with pizza or biscuits etc. Food always is a winner! In fact, one evening we had a trip down to the fish and chip shop in Southdown, very popular!

We hope in the future to have contact with the youth group from St Nicholas/All Saints/St Mary's churches. We attended their youth group evensong service in December and hope to have more links with them in the future.

**Rose Davey**

## **ST LUKE'S CELL PRAYER GROUP**

**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, AND SOUTHDOWN METHODIST CHURCH,  
HARPENDEN**

### **REPORT FOR 2015-16**



St Luke's Cell prayer group, named after the 'beloved physician', has members drawn from St John's and Southdown Methodist churches. We pray for those in particular need of prayer – this includes those mentioned in the weekly pew sheet, and others for whom we are asked to pray, who live in the parish or are friends or relatives of people living in the parish. By interceding in this way, we help to share God's healing power with other people.

Every month each of us prays for a different group of about five people. The ages of those we pray for range from the very young to the very old, and in addition to those on the weekly pew sheet, there are about fifty others whom we have been asked to pray for over a longer period.

Many of us attend the monthly meeting, at which we pray together for all these people, using a short service based on Common Worship in which we remember by name all those on the current list. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 2.00 pm in St John's Vicarage.

We always welcome new members (including those who are unable to come to meetings), as well as news of people in need of prayer. Please contact us if you would like to know more or if you know of people you wish us to pray for.

**Michael Hughes**

Tel 01582 765576

## St John's Fellowship and Study Group Report 2015 - 16

I joined the study group originally because I often wanted to ask questions about sermons or readings. It is helpful to discuss texts, ideas and themes with others as it can sometimes progress, or widen your thinking. The occasional visits to St Albans for special talks are another way to find out more in depth. The group is supportive, forbearing, enjoyable and good company.

Sharing insights with the rest of the group allows me to get a lot more out of the book we are studying – and it is a safe place to ask seemingly 'foolish' questions.

Reading and discussing 'The Jesus I never knew' by Philip Yancey shone completely fresh light on the gospel for me. The author seemed to ask our group: Why? In trying to answer that question my perspective of Jesus was completely refreshed. Our weekly discussions are challenging but warm-hearted, the shared prayers restorative.

*Truth to tell, I find the books difficult but enjoy the company and the perceptions of the group.*

'Learning to Dream Again' by Samuel Wells reminded me that reading the Bible is an act of worship and I should do so more regularly.

Each week we looked at a new chapter dealing with a particular theme with the Bible at its core. I left each meeting grateful for the warmth and fellowship of the group and encouraged to worship, serve, follow and love the Lord.

*Being a slow reader and not as disciplined as I should be, I don't always finish the reading but thankfully, the people in the group 'meet me where I am' and I have gained so much from listening to their views and making good friends.*

*I have found the sessions both enlightening and challenging. It's a place where I can go to explore God's Word and learn from other people to help try and apply it in my own life.*

**The group meets on Monday evenings at 8.00p.m. in the Committee Room, new members are very welcome. Contact Anne Edwards for more details. Tel 01582 767449.**

## St John's website, including Easyfundraising and e-newsletter

[stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](http://stjohnsharpenden.org.uk)

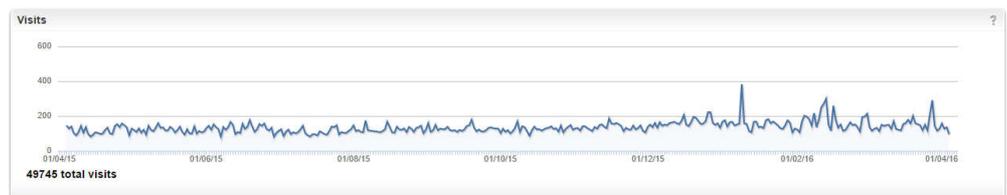
The St John's website continues to be a 'shop front' for our church community. The PCC Communications Committee has recently reviewed our needs for website content and management and we have concluded that (a) the design needs to be updated; (b) that there should be some content changes; and (c) that the effort to maintain / update the website should be shared. Consequent to this, we are currently reviewing options for operating the site in the future and expect to make a recommendation to the PCC and then make the necessary changes in the in the next 12 months.

During 2015/16, there have been no significant changes in the website functionality and goals. Over Easter we experimented by temporarily replacing the home page with updates about Lauryn Awbrey's trip to the Holy Land. We have continued with last year's initiatives to upload the Parish Magazine and to provide an electronic newsletter (9 were issued during the year, with a 10<sup>th</sup> due before the APCM). To be added to the mailing list, send an email to me at [newsletter@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk). The Newsletter Archive is at [stjohnsharpenden.org.uk/enewsletter.shtml](http://stjohnsharpenden.org.uk/enewsletter.shtml).

We continued to promote the use of the Easy Fundraising service through the website. This service allows St John's to benefit the commission that e-commerce web sites are prepared to pay for visitors. We have raised over £2.400 (just over £800 in the last 12 months – a reduction from the previous year) through the service at no cost to users.

**I strongly encourage you to register for this service if you have not already done so. I also suggest you download and install the toolbar as this will be a handy reminder. The URL to visit is [stjohnsharpenden.org.uk/fundraise.shtml](http://stjohnsharpenden.org.uk/fundraise.shtml).**

It is hard to say how exactly how 'real' visitors we receive to the website as the traffic analysis available will not always correctly distinguish between visits



from search engines such as Google and real people. For instance, the growth early in 2016 is unlikely to represent 'real people' – we also had a similar 'spike' in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015). Of greater note is that this does represent an increase of around 10% compared to last year an increase; it would appear that in a typical day, the website receives around 35 – 45.0 visits. The most common search terms are 'harpenden', 'ash', 'wednesday', 'sermon', 'church', and 'johns'/'john's' (as last year).

Neil Middleton  
8 April 2016

# Mothers' Union Report

2015 – 2016



The Mothers' Union promotes the well-being of families and has a membership of 4 million in 83 countries round the world.

At St John's, we have a membership of 39 but we would be delighted to welcome new members. We meet in the Committee Room on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30p.m. Apart from the regular meetings, there is also the opportunity for members to get together at Corporate Communion in the Lady Chapel at 9.30 a.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month, followed by coffee.

We are an informal and very friendly group and each member contributes to the work of the Branch in their own way. Some members sit on the committee, some use their knitting skills for babies and families overseas and many fill plastic bags with toiletries for Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre. Yarl's Wood is the only long term detention centre for women in the UK and usually holds around 300 women. The women may be asylum seekers, foreign prisoners, migrant workers or victims of trafficking. The toiletry packs are very much appreciated.

Branch members support a variety of charities, one of the most popular being AFIA (Away From It All). Help is given to families who might be under stress, financially or otherwise by providing a holiday or family day trip together.

All members are happy to serve tea and coffee and to bake cakes whenever needed and all seek to serve Christ in the community through prayer and fellowship. During the past year we have enjoyed a series of excellent talks by invited speakers on topics ranging from healthy eating to the life of a court usher.

The laughter and friendly chatter that can be heard in the hall when we gather to put together the posies for the Mothers' Day Service is an indication of how we all enjoy working together and being useful. There is a sense of job well done when we watch the faces of the children in church the next day as they present their mothers with the posies.

## Junior Church Report 2016

The year at Junior Church has seen a wide range of activities, a developing worship pattern and (we hope) a lot of fun.

We have been following a wide-ranging programme, working our way through the broad sweep of the Old Testament, starting from Abraham. This has been helped with the use of a Bible time-line encouraging the children to see the great stories of the OT in the light of the gospel and to start to discern God's great plan leading right up to the children themselves. This has been interspersed with periods when we follow the lectionary Gospel readings covering the festivals of the church's year and thematic topics covering prayer and the psalms.

Highlights for the Junior Church this year have been our monthly Action Stations which conclude each topic. These are free-flow and offer a range of activities such as craft, games, music and science, always concluding with creative worship. One of the more successful was during Lent when we explored ways of listening to Gods 'still small voice'. We discovered many quiet and creative ways to pray, concluding with some very meaningful worship together.

The Nativity Worship was another highlight for us. '*Light for Everyone*' presented the Christmas narrative as part of the main service on the Sunday before Christmas. Considerable work was put in by many leaders, parent helpers and by Madeleine who trained the children in singing beautifully. The aim was for the children to see their offering as their gift and act of worship which invited the congregation in. Many very positive comments were received and we are considering how to build on this for the future.

None of this could happen without the extraordinary dedication and commitment of a very small band of leaders. Rose Davey, Naomi Burnett, Sarah McClaren, Ellie Creasy, Rachel Poppleton and Carolyn Alexander provide inspirational sessions on average two Sundays a month, which in the medium to longer term is unsustainable. Although we have a number of willing parent helpers, we are urgently in need of additional leaders willing to take a greater role (with lots of encouragement, help and support) and we need to be actively seeking this help within the congregation.

Numbers have been down in recent months compared to previous years, although the age range is more focussed on the older group. A recent, typical Sunday found us with two children in Little Gems (pre-school) one in the Pebbles group (YR - Y2), three in Rocks (Y3 - Y4) and nine in Boulders (Y5 - Y6, including 3 in Ys 7-9). This highlights a need to be considering our young teenagers and their needs on a Sunday morning during the service, but perhaps also not losing focus in attracting younger families and encouraging them to participate in what we offer.

Our prayer is that as the children of the St Johns grow, they will increasingly feel part of the family, accepted, loved and encouraged in their faith, and that we may give them every opportunity to participate in and contribute to the life of the church.

**Celia Halsey**



## **A Reflection by Nicholas Anderson, Vicar**

**given at the St John's Harpenden APCM Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

A Lent hymn, in a Prayer Book I use most days, begins *Most merciful Creator Lord* and then carries on *You search our hearts you read our thoughts, you know our weakness and our faults...*

Well, after over two years here it is not only our Creator Lord but you who know my weaknesses and my faults. And so to all whom I have offended, forgive me and pray for me. Anyone who is a presbyter in the Church of God is only too well aware that he or she is a clay vessel into which the Lord, out of his gracious generosity, has poured his treasures, and that we, alas, are never worthy of our calling.

The Church Wardens Report always contains a long thoughtful list of thanks to specific people who keep St John's flourishing. To which I naturally add my own thanks.

There are people whom I wish to thank, not simply because it is courteous, but because we share in ministry together. Ministry in the Church of God is always a shared endeavour so my sincere and grateful thanks to Margaret and Mary Jean whose insights, suggestions and thoughts have been of invaluable to me. We have met most Monday mornings over the last two years and in a relaxed way have sought to discern what is the Lord asking of us here. Margaret is stepping down today after many years of devoted service to St John's. I am enormously grateful to her for her unfailing support and encouragement in my time here.

I also am immensely grateful to Emma, James, Matt and Steve, who along with Margaret and Mary Jean, make up the Standing Committee where, after a short Bible Study, and a glass of wine we have spoken about all manner of things pertaining to life in the parish. Matt is stepping down as deputy Church Warden and we are appreciative of all his work on our behalf over many years. Jane Donati has agreed to take over the role of deputy Church Warden and she will bring with her a great deal of experience and expertise. I also wish to thank all who serve on the PCC, you give up precious time and energy to serve on the PCC committees and the bi-monthly meetings; without this commitment many things we have accomplished over the last couple of years would never have seen the light of day.

Last but not least, I should like to thank my colleagues in the Presbyterate: Mary and Julia, and my other colleagues who are Readers Lauryn, David and David. We are, I am sure, delighted that David Halsey has been recommended to train for assistant ministry as a presbyter. Please hold David, Celia, Giles and Hugh in your prayers as the next couple of years is going to be challenging for them all. In a parish it is important to acknowledge that everyone's voice counts and in the arduous process of discernment it

really does make perfect sense to put aside time to pray and to listen attentively to God and to each other.

In the first two centuries of Christianity, theology was based in experience. Words that were later taken to refer to things that are outside the realm of experience were originally attempts to talk about things that the followers of Jesus were experiencing. For example, when Paul wrote about justification by faith, he was not talking about getting right with God by believing in Christ, but getting your life straightened out by trusting that what Jesus taught is true. When the Acts of the Apostles talks about being saved through baptism, it does not just mean washing away sin by going through a ritual, but being rescued from selfishness by being immersed in a caring community. We know how difficult that movement from the old order of sin to the new order of grace actually which is why Paul's Letters to the Corinthian Church are so invaluable for us today.

We know only too well that today baptism is no guarantee that people remain Christians, we are aware of those who left the church sometimes becoming agnostics or atheists, Buddhists, Jews or Muslims. All too often Confirmation has become a rite of passage not into deeper communion with Jesus Christ but rather the door through which many opt to leave formal Christianity. There is a growing gap between theology and experience. The sacraments we celebrate are not only disconnected from people's everyday lives, but they are also often disconnected from people's experience of worship.

Is there a way through this current confusion? There is, but it is neither a dogmatic reassertion of the past nor a freefall into cultural relativism. We need to rediscover what is essential to the Christian way of life, reinvent ways to ritualize that, and reformulate what those rituals mean in terms that are faithful both to the teachings of Jesus and to the experience of living in accordance with them. We have to work more diligently at building bridges into people's lives.

As a parish we are required to think more intentionally about how we engage with young families who come for Christenings. Last year I went on a training day called *Making a Splash*. I was surprised to learn that on an average Sunday 200,000 people attend a Christening; and that they are primarily in the 18-45 age bracket. It will be something of a challenge. The recent publication of *Christian Initiation: Additional Baptismal Texts in Accessible Language* will encourage us to make our Christening services accessible to those who are not used to being in church; we have an obligation to think seriously not only about the texts we use but also about the way the whole rite is performed. As you know a liturgical rite consists of more than words: movement, action, silence and gesture are also of primary importance. Linked to this is the issue of welcoming families into St John's in a manner that is appropriate and friendly.

Most parishes write to children who have been christened for the first three years and then stop. Research suggests we ought to carry this on with this exercise and send an invitation to those who are 4 or 5 to come and see our Children's church. I have spoken with Celia and we will be sending a letter out to every family living in the parish who has had a child christened in 2011/2012, inviting them to come with their children to Children's church in September and to join us for our All Age Services. Our Children's church is a successful venture so let's continue to build on it.

After a lot of thought and prayer has taken place in the Mission and Evangelism committee as to how we minister effectively to our young teenagers. We have begun the process of advertising for a part-time Youth Worker to help us engage more successfully with this age group. We really do have an obligation to invest in their lives and provide them with the tools to assist them in their faith journey. We want them to be confident in their faith so they can move on from home and parish life to university or further training and into the world of work.

In the October half-term a large number of us are going to Lee Abbey for a parish weekend. It is not something that has been done here for a number of years, but we still hope to have and together encounter different styles of worship. There are still some places if anyone is interested.

I said last year that I wished to take a group away to Launde Abbey for a more silent form of retreat. We have been unable to organise this at a parish level this year, but we will attempt to organise this on a more deanery wide basis for either 2017 or 2018 but I will plan a Quiet Day for Advent this year so that those who are a little uncertain about stillness and silence can gain a sense of what it might be like.

The Christian life is actually built on a very simple idea that true happiness, true serenity, true contentment can only be found in God. We are committed to this place, and it is also a way of placing our trust in God rather than in our all too human attempts to manage our fix our lives. Stability in God contradicts the idea that we are somehow not good enough unless we have the next thing which is inevitably bigger and better. We are a people with foundations: one internal the other external. The Scriptures and the lives of holy men and women who have gone before us provide us with an internal foundation, a foundation grounded in language, memory and wisdom. But we also require an external foundation of the places where we live and work, the communities in which we invest ourselves. Being lovers and custodians of this place helps us to affirm the God-given goodness of this foundation. May we never cease to pray for one another, and may we always hold the sick – those on the pew sheet and those on the St Luke's Cell prayer list – before the Lord.