

***** INVITATION *****

**to our bring and share lunch on Vision Sunday/Annual Meeting
on 2nd April
from 12.30pm at Northcourt Road.**



Christ Church
Abingdon

Being Disciples, Making Disciples

Annual General Meeting

Sunday 2nd April 2017

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March 2017

Dear friends

... *but God*... Those two words are so often the turning point in biblical narratives.

The waters flooded the earth, *but God* remembered Noah (Genesis 8:1). Joseph brothers sold him as a slave into Egypt, *but God* was with him (Acts 7:9). 'You killed the author of life, *but God* raised him from the dead' (Acts 3:15). 'We were harassed at every turn, conflicts on the outside, fears within, *but God* comforted us' (2 Cor 7:6). 'I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, *but God* made it grow' (1 Cor 3:6). ...*but God*... Search your Bible and you will see how the 'game-changer' is when God intervenes.

The reports collected here show how Christ Church is holding to its God-given mission of 'Being Disciples, Making Disciples.' But there's no hiding the fact that Christ Church is also in an unusual season at present, with our vicar Tim's absence from church for such an extended period. This has placed extra challenges on leadership and clergy resourcing, and limits the extent to which we can cast fresh vision.

... *But God*... God is still working in and through us. God the Father still loves his world and this church. Jesus Christ remains the head of this church. The Holy Spirit is still active in this world and in this church. I hope as you read this annual report you will be encouraged that, despite our challenges, God is still very much at work in Christ Church – Long Furlong and Northcourt Road. And therefore His church is in a good place. ...*but God*...!

My thanks to everyone who has contributed to this report, pointing to God's work among us. And my thanks to everyone who serves and prays so faithfully month by month, on the many teams being empowered by God to fulfil His ministry and mission through Christ Church. To Him be the Glory!

With my love in Jesus

Keith Dunnett
Associate Vicar

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North Abingdon PCC Registered Charity Number 1153844

**The Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of North Abingdon**

Registered Charity No. 1153844

Annual Report And Financial Statements

1st January to 31st December 2016

Administrative Information

The Parish of North Abingdon is part of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Christ Church, Northcourt Road, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 1PL.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of North Abingdon is a charity registered with the Charity Commission, charity number 1153844.

Trustees

The following served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) during 2016.

Incumbent	Revd Tim Davis	Chair of Trustees
Clergy	Revd Keith Dunnett	
	Revd Kath Cooke	From May 2016
	Revd Simon Steer	
LLM Representative	Miss Anne Taylor	
Wardens	Mr Philip Bingham	Vice-chair
	Mr Roland Knight	
Deanery Synod	Mr John Alcock	
	Mrs Leilani Jeevaratnam	
	Mr Andy Jones	
	Dr David Hancock	Treasurer
	Mr Mark Stavers	
	Prof Rachel Taylor	
	Mr Andy Voyce	
Elected Members	Mr Paul Brombley	Deputy warden. From April 2016
	Mrs Diana Bryan	
	Mrs Rachel Buckingham	Until April 2016
	Mr Mike Crosbie	Until April 2016
	Dr Andrew J Dent	Secretary
	Mr Andrew Dubock	Deputy warden
	Mr Simon Farres	
	Mrs Sarah Fry	Deputy warden. Until April 2016
	Mrs Sue Gibbins	Deputy warden
	Mrs Janice Gordon	
	Mrs Rosemary Green	
	Mr Andrew Kitchener	
	Mr Hermann Matheson	From April 2016
	Mr Aidan Melville	From April 2016
	Miss Helen Mitchell	
	Mrs Sandra Pike	From April 2016
	Mrs Lynn Ross	Until April 2016
	Mrs Lizzie Shipman	
	Mr Martin Steel	

Bankers: Natwest, 11 Market Place, Abingdon, Oxon., OX14 3HH

Independent Examiners: Wenn Townsend, Victoria House, 10 Broad Street, Abingdon, OX14 3LH

WARDENS' REPORT

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Parish of North Abingdon is responsible for the activities at Christ Church, operating on two sites in North Abingdon (the church site on Northcourt Road, and within Long Furlong Primary School).

The Peachcroft Christian Centre is located within the Parish of North Abingdon. It is an ecumenical church, recognized by the Baptist Union, the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. The incumbent of Christ Church and a former churchwarden sit on the Joint Council of the Peachcroft Christian Centre. However, the Peachcroft Christian Centre is independent of the PCC and its activities and finances are not included in this report.

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England and registered with the Charity Commission. The governing documents for the PCC are the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure 1956 as amended and the Church Representation Rules (contained in Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 as amended).

Trustees of the PCC are either *ex officio* or lay members who are elected in accordance with the provisions of the Church Representation Rules. Lay members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) held in April. Elected lay members serve for a three-year term, with approximately one-third retiring each year. All eligible church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. On appointment, PCC members receive a document which outlines their legal responsibilities as trustees. In addition, the Chairman provides an introduction to the structures of the Church of England and the role of the PCC during the first meeting following the APCM.

The *Standing Committee* (comprising the Incumbent (Vicar), Associate Vicar, church wardens, deputy wardens and treasurer) has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC.

The PCC operates through a number of Working Groups, which meet as required between full meetings of the PCC. The chair of each Group is responsible for reporting back to the PCC. Other members may also be from the PCC or from the church body.

- The *Mission Support Group* (MSG) manages the budget and other support given to mission partners working overseas and in the UK and short-term mission activities by church members. The MSG seeks to raise awareness of the world-wide church and to encourage every member of the church to participate through prayer, giving or direct involvement.
- The *Buildings Group* supports the wardens in their responsibility to maintain the fabric and contents of church buildings. The group works to identify, prioritise, and oversee/undertake the upkeep and maintenance of the church site at Northcourt Road and the curate's and youth pastor's houses. A master list of maintenance and repair tasks has been used to support a Five Year plan to assist in the phasing and budgeting of major expenditure.
- The *Human Resources Group* oversees the recruitment of staff and other personnel matters and supports the PCC in developing good personnel policies and practice in the church.
- The *Finance Committee* oversees the financial activities of the parish, prepares the annual budget and financial statements.
- The *Health and Safety Group* was established during the year to monitor all matters relating to health and safety and to ensure relevant policies are kept up to date and risk assessments carried out.
- The *IT Group* was established during the year to oversee the church's IT equipment and to develop the use of the church websites and social media.

The day-to-day operations of the church are delegated to the staff team employed by the PCC under the direction of the Incumbent.

The PCC is exposed to risks associated with buildings, finance, legislative compliance and food safety.

- Buildings are insured and regularly inspected. The PCC continues to budget for and carry out a rolling programme of repairs and maintenance. The Long Furlong congregation meets weekly in Long Furlong Primary School (under a

formal Transfer of Control Agreement entered into by the School and the PCC) with the children's work, Godzkidz, taking place in the nearby Long Furlong Community Centre. These arrangements have worked well for many years and appear to be of mutual benefit.

- Finances are managed by the parish treasurer within a budget approved by the PCC and performance is regularly reported to the PCC. The majority of our income comes, under God, from the regular giving of our current members, so the importance of prayer and also communication with donors is recognised. The church has an annual "Focus on Giving" early each financial year when the congregation is asked to review their financial support for the year. Information on financial performance is reported to the congregation at the autumn meeting and at the APCM. All regular donors are thanked at least annually.
- Legislative compliance. The PCC is committed to fully meeting its responsibilities relating to Health and Safety, Data Protection, Safeguarding, employment law and other pertinent legislation.
- Policies are in place for Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, Use of Social Media in Youth Work, Data Protection and Health & Safety.
- The Barns Café Ltd follows the "Safer Food, Better Business" food management system. The operations, systems and procedures of the Barns Café were inspected in June 2013 and awarded a five star rating – this was renewed in December 2014. All staff and volunteers are appropriately trained in food safety and preparation, and receive training in health and safety procedures. Staff and supervisors are also trained in first aid. To mitigate risks to the PCC, the Barns Café Ltd is incorporated as a Private Limited Company (Company No. 08794014), with the PCC of the Parish of North Abingdon as the sole shareholder. The Vicar and wardens are *ex-officio* directors with up to three others appointed by the shareholder at PCC meetings.

The charity trustees have considered the major risks to which the charity is exposed and have reviewed those risks and established systems and procedures to manage those risks.

Objectives and Activities

The main objective of the PCC is (in accordance with the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended) to co-operate with the incumbent in promoting the whole mission of the Church; pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The main areas of activity this includes are:

- Regular public worship open to all.
- The provision of sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation.
- Pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved.
- Teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups.
- Taking of religious assemblies in schools.
- Promotion of Christianity through the staging of events and meetings, and the distribution of literature.
- The provision of Christian youth activities.
- Promoting the whole mission of the Church through provision of activities for senior citizens, parents and toddlers and other groups.
- Supporting other Christian charities in the UK and overseas.

Over the last few years, there has been a clear sense that God is calling the church to face outwards, engaging with and serving our local community. The Barns Café, the Foodbank (hosted by Christ Church), Street Pastors (under the auspices of the interdenominational Church in Abingdon) and hospitality activities such as 51 Fellowship and Friendly Cuppa are all examples of such engagement. A significant number of volunteers from the church serve in all these activities. In addition, as reported in the next section, this community focus is reflected throughout the life of the church, with many groups experiencing greater involvement with the wider community. This activity is led by the Holy Spirit and flows from a deepening dependence on God and the priority given to individual and corporate worship and prayer.

Volunteers

Since its inception, Christ Church has had a strong tradition of lay involvement and leadership in all areas of ministry. Members are actively encouraged to use the gifts, skills and passions that God has given them for service within and outside the church. The role of the church leadership is to provide oversight and to equip volunteers to fulfil their calling. The PCC recognises the essential contribution of volunteers in the giving of time and finance to the life of the church. An impressive number of volunteers are regularly involved in leading or supporting preaching, worship, children's work, youth work, Foodbank, the Barns Cafe, Prime Time, pastoral ministry, setting up Long Furlong School each week, hospitality, welcome and many other areas of church life.

Grant-making

The PCC believes that it is right to use part of our income to support people and projects engaged in Christian mission outside the church. Through the Church in Abingdon, we contribute to mission and social action projects around Abingdon. Through the Mission Support Group, we use approximately 15% of our disposable income to support long-term mission partners and church members undertaking short-term mission projects. This year two new mission partners were supported for the first time: Chris and Suzy Wilson in Ethiopia and Ashleigh Gibb in Thailand.

Public Benefit

The PCC is aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in "The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit" and have regard to it in their administration of the Parish. Examples of this public benefit can be found in the activities reported above and other parts of this report.

Achievements and Performance

Membership and Attendance

At April 2016, the electoral roll of Christ Church was 537 adults with a further 21 Anglican adult members based at the Peachcroft Christian Centre, giving a total of 558 adults for the Parish of North Abingdon.

PCC Meetings

The operational running of the church is largely delegated to the staff team and wardens, enabling the PCC to focus on matters of policy and strategic direction. PCC meetings also include time for reflecting on God's word and prayer for the life of the church.

At first meeting of the year in January the PCC discussed the season the church is in and what actions should follow, updated bank mandates and received the terrier and inventory. At the March meeting, the PCC approved the 2015 annual report and accounts and a proposal for the auto-enrolment of staff into a pension scheme and considered what the church could do to improve people's confidence in evangelism. The May meeting welcomed new members of the PCC, elected PCC officers, appointed the PCC sub-groups and approved the updated Safeguarding Policy & Social Media Policy. In July the PCC discussed a matter concerning land and heard about the work of the Church in Abingdon and the planned Thrive initiative in South Abingdon. At the September meeting the main matters were the proposed housing development to the north of Abingdon and a report on the worship ministry in the church; the Barns Café accounts were also approved. At the November meeting, the PCC approved the church budget and the Mission Support Group budget for 2017; the Buildings Group reported on the work during the year and the PCC considered a number of legal issues relating to the church properties.

At a half-yearly congregational meeting in November, presentations were made on the church on Long Furlong and on the proposed new housing development, as well as on staffing, finances and the work of the PCC.

Review of the Year

BEING DISCIPLES

A key theme this year has been Prayer and Evangelism. The PCC devoted time to this area at its March meeting and, as a result, sermon series were arranged on prayer and evangelism and on being confident disciples. In the autumn the church ran a course on personal evangelism for those wishing to grow in confidence in this area. The church also heeded the archbishops' call for all Christians to pray for the evangelisation of our nation during Pentecost by holding a 24/7 week of prayer

As well as those on prayer and evangelism and being confident disciples, sermon series in the past year have included the Sermon on the Mount, 1 Corinthians, the God of Elijah, 1 Thessalonians and 1 John. At Northcourt Road there is a regular pattern of 3 or 4 services every Sunday. Long Furlong has a regular morning service and a monthly service in a more contemplative style, called Wellspring. The Christmas carol services were once again packed and we were blessed this time to have the new Bishop of Oxford, Rt. Rev. Dr. Stephen Croft, as our preacher.

We are blessed in our Sunday services to have a number of gifted church members who lead services, lead the music and preach. A number of young people are involved in the music and are encouraged to lead services. Behind the scenes, many more church members are involved in welcoming people, serving refreshments, sound and projection, setting up and clearing away (Long Furlong) and driving people to church (Northcourt Road).

Prayer is central to our life as a church. There is a regular time of contemplative prayer called “Meeting God in Silence” and monthly “Hungry for God” worship evenings, in addition to an intercessors group. Long Furlong has also held varied termly Prayer Events, including a prayer walk round the estate. Intercession is offered to anyone who wants it during communion services at Northcourt Road and at the end of all services at Long Furlong. During the week leading up to Easter, we organised a week of 24/7 prayer: many members of the church joined in and the prayer room was occupied at all times by people spending time in prayer.

Many adults are involved in a midweek Life Group: these are places of belonging, learning together from God’s word, fellowship and prayer. In addition five missional communities met regularly for fellowship and with the aim reaching people beyond the church: Workout, Fragile Earth, Outnumbered, Connect, Art and Soul.

As ever New Wine was an opportunity to gather as a whole church from both sites and all 5 regular services - with over 130 attending this year. This gives the opportunity to become a different kind of community during a week of worship, workshops, prayer, and socialising – all as part of God’s family.

MWM activities for retired men has flourished over the year - deepening fellowship, friendship and support over meals, walks, visits and discussions - meeting monthly to develop an honest and refreshing discipleship. Our “51 Fellowship” seniors group meets fortnightly on Thursdays, drawing in many members from both within and outside the church, with a focus on offering love and friendship and to help each one to come to know Jesus as their personal Saviour at regular times of fellowship, teaching and worship.

In addition to the natural personal support offered by members of the fellowship to each other, Pastoral Care Teams (visiting newcomers, pastoral prayer, prayer ministry, care home, bereavement support and intercessory prayer) have provided a backbone structure of additional support. Long Furlong also took steps to establish a Pastoral Care Team. A listening course was twice held during the year to equip those involved in this pastoral ministry.

MAKING DISCIPLES

Alpha continues to be a key way we reach out to those with a spiritual hunger to come to know God. Once again the launch in January was popular, with the speaker this time being former policeman and criminal Simon Pinchbeck. It was followed by Alpha groups being held weekly where people could explore the essentials of Christian faith and come to their own commitment to Christ. Many thanks must go to the serving team, those who prepared meals, and the table leaders who led discussion and sought to encourage those on their tables, and to Matt and Sam Luscombe.

The children’s work has continued to flourish under Heather Hughes’ leadership, with Anne Taylor leading at Long Furlong with 213 people involved in this work across both sites, either regularly or occasionally. The children have been involved in biblical teaching, worship and fun each week, and 107 children (plus 56 adult leaders and 35 teenage helpers) attended the August holiday club with the theme of “Kingdom Adventure”. Members of the Children’s team lead assemblies in several primary schools, hold week-long Prayer Space events, and host school visits to church. James Elward joined the team in September, working half of each week with children and half with youth.

The Youth ministry continued to flourish under Matt Luscombe and Emma Bogue’s (and latterly James Elward’s) leadership – growing in following Christ through bible teaching, worship and fellowship, the annual trips to Soul Survivor and New Wine, as well as mission into their communities. In addition to the groups which meet during the Sunday services at both sites, Genesis (for 11-14s on Thursday evenings), RAW (for girls), the new Medium Rare (for boys), and Space (for older teenagers on Sunday evenings) provide important spaces for learning, fun, worship and growth. The Genesis and Space weekends away have again been significant for our teenagers’ journey in faith. Matt Luscombe and other members of the Desire network have enjoyed opportunities in most of the secondary schools in Abingdon, leading assemblies, teaching classes, holding lunch clubs, and creating prayer spaces.

Christ Church continued to offer support for parents in a variety of ways. LINK (Northcourt Road) meets weekly for parents and carers of babies and toddlers to share the journey of parenting together whilst the little ones enjoy a play, a snack and a singsong. Singing circle (Long Furlong) for pre-school children and their carers also meets weekly. In addition there are a number of support networks - “Home for Good” for those involved in foster care and adoption, “Shift” (which we host) for parents with children with additional needs and “Food Ministry” to provide support at times of crisis. During the year a marriage course was run and the youth team hosted an evening on parenting teenagers.

Prime Time's ministry to those over 50 continues to grow, with involvement in Alpha, Life Groups and Bible study groups, as well as outings, socials, walks and table tennis afternoons. The Prime Time Holiday in Grange-over-Sands (Cumbria) in June attracted 40 guests, and the popular Activity Week in August drew about 240 attendees, many of them not members of the Church. Friendly Cuppa at Long Furlong provides a monthly space for members of the local community to meet, enjoy a drink and games and make friends.

On two occasions, at Easter and during Advent, members of Christ Church and other churches took over the community shop in the town centre for a week, turning it into a reflective space for anyone to visit.

The Barns Café continued to flourish as a welcoming place for the local community and the setting for a wide range of groups to meet. Over 40 volunteers offer a warm welcome and serve wonderful food and drink (with a 5* food safety rating), and the café is often full.

The church hosts or is involved in a range of projects in and for the community. The Abingdon Emergency Foodbank is based at Northcourt Road and provides emergency food for people in real need; a group visits a local prison and holds monthly services there; several of our members are involved in Archway which ministers to those hurt by loneliness; Street Pastors (organised by the Church in Abingdon) are out in the town centre every Saturday night and also have prayer pastors praying for our town; Fishy Music provides resources for Primary Schools.

Our connection with and support of the Church in Abingdon includes shared events (Alpha launch, Passion Play, Good Friday Procession, Fun in the Park, Bereavement Service, Prayer Spaces in our Primary Schools) and support of a number of projects (the Desire Youth Network, the Abingdon Bridge, Street Pastors, 35 Ock Street, Twinning), and is a key witness to the unity we enjoy in Christ. During the year our support of the local Deanery was also strengthened by the appointment of Martin Steel as Deanery Treasurer. In December Karen Landon agreed to stand as Deanery Secretary from the start of 2017.

Staffing

Our incumbent, Rev. Tim Davis, was absent throughout the year on sick leave and the staff team has been led by Associate Vicar Rev. Keith Dunnett. In May the team was strengthened when Rev. Kath and Rev. Phil Cooke joined us as Assistant Ministers with particular responsibility for the congregation on Long Furlong. In August Emma Bogue left to study at university after three years' service as Parish Assistant and in September James Elward joined as Assistant Children and Youth Minister.

In August, a letter from the Bishop of Dorchester was read out in all services containing information that Tim Davis, as well as being absent through ill health, was also being suspended from acting as Incumbent as a consequence of the Church of England official Clergy Disciplinary Measure (CDM) following a formal complaint against him.

There was also change in the team at the Barns Café. During the year the founding Café Manager, Sarah Grange, went on maternity leave and subsequently offered her resignation. Hannah Kitchener stepped up to the role of Acting Café Manager, ably supported first by Jo Greenaway and later by Beth Summers as Acting Deputy Manager. In August the Café took on an apprentice Jacob Edwards who will serve for a year on the team.

Several other individuals form part of the staff team in a part-time or honorary capacity. These include: Ros Steel (Pastoral Coordinator); Sarah Fry (Communities); Ed Wiles (Worship Coordinator)

We recognise the strategic importance of good leadership, and since September Keith Dunnett has been using the Growing Leaders training course with the staff team on a monthly basis.

Our thanks, as ever, go to those who have continued to serve faithfully behind the scenes, notably Christine Talbot and Andy Walker, our administrators, Stuart Twinn, Mark Chapman and Naomi Challis, our cleaning staff who keep the premises clean and welcoming for regular users and visitors, and Simon Powdrill who ensures security of the premises each evening.

The staff team meets weekly for prayer and discussion and has at various points in the year taken time out together, all of which is important in building the team.

As part of the PCC's desire to follow good employment and personnel practice, during the year the Human

Resources Group successfully developed and instituted an annual appraisal system for all employed and volunteer staff. Appraisals will now be held annually.

We want to give our sincere thanks to God for all He is doing among and through us, and to thank our staff team, the leaders and members of our ministries, those who preach and lead services, our cleaning staff, the network of volunteers who help as unsung heroes in so many ways and the members and officers of the PCC and the various PCC sub-groups for their dedicated service.

Fabric

Northcourt Road Site

The buildings available over the site are varied and we seek to maximise the use of rooms, both for regular and occasional individual and community groups, as well as church groups. The premises are a valuable community asset and rental charges, when appropriate, contribute to our financial revenue. We have updated the hire agreement documents including Terms and Conditions in line with best practice. Supervision of the room bookings is carried out by Facilities Administrator, Andrew Walker, who has seen an almost 100% increase in room occupancy.

The Buildings Team, led by Andrew Turner, has continued to oversee the management of the upkeep and maintenance of the church site at Northcourt Road and other properties for which Christ Church is responsible (in Mattock Way and Geoffrey Barbour Road) - including regular testing of electrical equipment, fire extinguishers, boilers etc. Regular review and prioritisation of any work or repairs, purchases that may be required to maintain the site and properties are undertaken within budget guidelines supplied by the Treasurer.

An important initiative during the year was the organising of four Saturday work parties, drawing in a number of people outside the regular Buildings Team and enabling a wide range of maintenance tasks to be completed.

The more significant tasks undertaken to church buildings during the year include:

- 1) Correction of malfunctions in alarm system and transfer of alarm contract to a new service provider.
- 2) Purchase and installation of public access Defibrillator
- 3) Provision of soak-away and drainage system to the area west of Tithe Barn
- 4) Re-staining or repainting of external woodwork on church, Hall and Barns.
- 5) New fire-resistant doors installed in boiler room, kitchen, corridor, and corner suite kitchen.
- 6) Doors in Lounge and Upper Room modified for smoke resistance.
- 7) New front door for Corner Suite.
- 8) Repainting of doors, walls and ceilings, refreshment of noticeboards, and installation of Church banner in Lobby at Northcourt Road
- 9) Repainting of doors in corridor, lounge, and upper room.
- 10) New disability ramp from car park to courtyard
- 11) Repair of storm drains in courtyard
- 12) Installation of secondary glazing to upper windows of north end of Tithe Barn.
- 13) Installed new central heating boiler at 33 Mattock Way

In November the quinquennial inspection by the Diocesan-appointed architect revealed no new or urgent work to be done on the buildings, itself a witness to the planning and work of the Buildings Team.

Long Furlong

Long Furlong Primary School continues to be used as an established place of worship every Sunday. In addition, we are able to use the school for additional courses or events on weekdays. The children's work, Godzkidz, takes place in the nearby Community Centre. Whilst we are freed from the responsibilities of property maintenance, a heavier burden falls on the teams of volunteers needed to ensure that both buildings are prepared and cleared for each service and event.

GROUP REPORTS

LONG FURLONG ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The Long Furlong congregation continues to grow – not only in numbers, but also in relationships, activities, joy & compassion. 2016 has seen a change in clergy at Long Furlong, from May Keith moved to focus on Christ Church as a whole while Phil & Kath Cooke joined the team to primarily work with Long Furlong for this year, while Tim remains signed-off from work. Lynne & Keith are much missed, but we are very thankful for their significant ministry among both church & community. It is great that they are still part of services & events at Long Furlong and their recent sermon on parenting/grandparenting was much appreciated. The servant leadership team meet monthly and their input & wisdom is invaluable. Long Furlong is definitely a body in which many are part of the vibrant life. We are all thankful for those who serve faithfully on the many & varied teams.

Sunday mornings are lively & welcoming, average attendance on Sundays in 2016 has been 135, consisting of approximately 97 adults and 38 children each week. The year began with a focus on Kingdom attitudes in Matthew's gospel, after Easter we explored the small but challenging book of 1 John, summer All-Age services focused on the God of Elijah. In the autumn term we looked at the early church in the book of Acts under the theme of 'Love in Action.' Woven throughout the year has been a number of 'Big Issue' Sundays grappling with our responses to the refugee crisis, end of life questions & heaven. There are a wealth of gifts and an incredible willingness to serve at LF – many are involved in set-up, welcome, leading, preaching, prayer ministry, coffee, sound, music, etc. We have valued input from a number of Mission Partners including Tabitha Jorden, the Warner family & Sheila Furlong. It was great to have the young people lead a November service on the theme of 'Christ the King' – the service provoked laughter, tears & challenges, even ending with biscuits which linked in with the theme. Christmas is a very special time at Long Furlong, the Christingle service held in the community centre attracted 261 people this year, many from the local community. A new venture was 'Carols in the Park' held outside at 4pm on 18th Dec. With lanterns twinkling in the trees and ably accompanied by the excellent Abbey Brass we sang carols and read the Christmas story, finishing with mulled wine & mince pies in the Community Centre. Around 200 people came, many from local area and it was a wonderful event facilitated by a great team from Long Furlong congregation.

This year, our quiet service Wellspring has become a monthly feature. Designed partly to alleviate the lack of space in the main hall and partly to offer something complementary to the general style of our 10am service, Wellspring has a regular attendance of around 12-15 people per service, but many more who have been a few times (rota responsibilities prevent many people from coming to every session). As a relatively recent initiative, Wellspring is still 'on probation' and there has recently been a survey to review the year, but is scheduled until June and is likely to continue while both purposes remain.

The leadership team continue to grapple with issues which emerge in a growing community, particularly how people are welcomed, belong & grow in discipleship. One way which is certainly part of the LF DNA is to eat together and this year we have enjoyed Bring & Share Sunday lunches, an Italian evening, curry evening and a picnic in the park. In November we agreed to have a 'hospitality month' and many had a great time sharing in the 'Link-up Lunch' one Sunday. Hospitality is something we intend to continue encouraging & developing further in the coming year

A significant part of LF is the Lifegroups, during 2016 six groups have met regularly and numbers involved were about 60. Material used as a focus of group life has included studying books of the Bible (Colossians Acts, Ephesians, and Galatians), resources such as Uncover, God Hunting and New Wine Hearing God DVD, as well as topics (e.g. death and grieving, discipleship). Pastoral support is a key feature of our groups – including prayer and practical help – such as providing meals for members in need; helping with the catering for Alpha – and having fun together! The Friday group has a termly outreach brunch and most of the groups have "adopted" Mission partners.

This year has seen the development of the pastoral team at Long Furlong. There is much caring work already happening naturally, so this team will mainly facilitate & pray for this wider ministry. The pastoral team aim to share God's love with those in need, essentially being alongside others with faith & humanity demonstrating compassionate care. There is already a deeply appreciated Food Ministry, co-ordinated by Chloe Wilson who with her team of chefs do an amazing job providing meals for those who may have had a baby, are unwell, have moved house or need blessing. We are now in the process of creating a pastoral visiting team and have run a Listening Course jointly with Peachcroft church for folk who will be part of this team. A small core team are leading this

ministry forward: currently Diana Bingham, Janice Wenninger, Jane Robinson & Kath Cooke. We were much helped in the early stages by the wisdom of Kathryn Rogers & Wendy Crocker and are well-supported by Ros Steel.

Long Furlong congregation continues to be outward-looking, reaching out to the local community in a number of ways. We are very thankful for the good relationship with LF School staff. It is great that Heather Hughes & team have been able to go into school for Assemblies and to facilitate a prayer space in May. Singing Circle meets in the LF Community Centre on Thursday mornings in term-time. This term has seen another 6 or so mums/carers arrive at Singing Circle, bringing the numbers on the register to 27, with around 22 adults & 26 children coming each week. Some have church connections; but in the main, families are from the Long Furlong estate or South Avenue. In addition to the weekly singing sessions, we have a termly "adult without children" event, to enable people to get to know each other better. We've had a "Chill, chat and chocolate cake" evening, a walk across the fields to the Flowing Well at Sunningwell, and a "Pamper evening". Jill Ward continues to play guitar, even with her fostering commitments and Tina Hearn has taken over from Sandra Pike and Sally Foulsham as our "Polly" to put the kettle on for drinks at the end of each singing time. Graham Robinson is now the official "washer-upper". Jane Robinson continues to head up the team with great faithfulness & care. The group has linked mums into Hannah Hornsby's Friday morning Lifegroup, which is a great encouragement and several others come to church from time to time.

The monthly meetings of the Friendly Cuppa also take place in Long Furlong Community Centre and include a quiz or similar icebreaker, a jigsaw puzzle, and a prayer table. The Tuesday Morning Life Group is the brilliant team running this event and the number of guests varies from 10 to 17, depending on the time of year. In between these meetings, the group has lunch together at a local pub (often the Spread Eagle) with attendance rising to 18 to 20 as spouses join. Christmas was celebrated at the Cosener's House. The challenge is to engage in meaningful conversations to help folk on their journey of faith.

Prayer is the foundation of LF – each service is preceded by prayer and prayer ministry is offered after every service. Once a term we meet on a Tuesday evening to pray in the school, we have also been part of the 24/7 prayer week at Northcourt Road and have prayer walked in the local area. The leadership team recently spent a Saturday morning away praying & listening to God, we are aware there is much to be thankful for and we also look forward with hope & expectation.

Phil & Kath Cooke & Long Furlong Leadership Team – Diana Bingham, Julie Kemp-Harper, David Lever, Jane Robinson, Anne Taylor, Del Walker & Stu Wilson

SUNDAYS AT NORTHCOURT ROAD

Sundays are the time when God's people throughout the last two millennia have gathered together to worship God because it's the Day of Resurrection. We meet in five Sunday congregations, four at Northcourt Road and one at Long Furlong. Our desire is that the times of corporate worship are characterised by reverence, passionate worship, faithful teaching from scripture, a Spirit-lead response, prayer for the needs of the church and world, and a monthly communion in each congregation. We've also had regular interviews with our mission partners, ministry area leaders, and hearing about people's workplaces.

The **8am Book of Common Prayer communion services** have a steady congregation of around 20 people, drawn by the quiet reverence of encountering Christ in a familiar liturgical service. The occasional breakfast after the BCP service has proved popular, giving people time to spend together.

In the **9:30 and 11:15 morning services** we started the year with a series in Matthew, looking at a Kingdom Lifestyle, exploring the first part of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), and passages that lead up to the cross. During the summer we unpacked 1 John "From Head to Heart" and then "The God of Elijah" from 1 Kings. The Autumn started with an excellent series on Apologetics asking some of the tougher questions of faith, and finished looking at prophecies of Jesus from Isaiah. During the summer we also consulted the 11:15 congregation about the service; this was affirming, and as a result we widened the scope of songs and hymns, included a little more liturgy, and would love to develop the worship bands with more members.

At the **6:30 evening service** we started the year with a series from 1 Corinthians on Kingdom Relationships, Gifts and Life. During the summer we explored Mark 1-3 (Authentic Jesus), and some "3:16" verses from the New Testament. We spent the first part of the autumn looking at some background passages to the Uncover series in John's gospel,

gave some training in personal evangelism, and then considered Living in the Light of Eternity through 1 Thessalonians.

We're very grateful to the **team who lead and preach**; the core team is drawn from clergy and licenced ministers and authorised preachers. The understaffing of clergy at present has given us the opportunity to widen the scope of those we invite to preach and lead on occasion - we've had nearly 40 people leading or preaching over the year. We welcomed visiting speakers as well: Martin Lee of Global Connections for our Mission Weekend, Bruce Gillingham, Bishop Henry Scriven, former curate Peter Walker, Peter Harris one of our Mission Partners, former vicar Geoff Maughan, and the new bishop of Oxford Steven Croft at our Carol services. We welcomed Ros Steel's licensing as an LLM (Local Licenced Minister) in the autumn.

There's a **wider team** of about 210 people who are essential to helping us worship the Lord on Sundays, including the welcomers, sound and projection team, worship leaders and band members, flower arrangers, bible readers, prayer ministry team, communion helpers, those who clean linen, and those who prepare and serve refreshments. These people often the unsung heroes of the church but we are so grateful to God for them. It's a reminder that we all form the Body of Christ and everyone has a gift to offer and a role to play. We are also blessed with amazing **children, youth and worship teams**, and their reports follow this one.

Keith Dunnett

WORSHIP AT NORTHCOURT ROAD

"Worship starts with seeing You, our hearts respond to Your revelation" (Matt Redman)

At the heart of the music ministry at Christ Church is a desire to see God's people released into true praise and worship of our Father God and Jesus our Saviour. In our Sunday services, we seek through the Holy Spirit to create an environment where we can encounter God and respond to Him with heartfelt worship. One practical way in which we do this is to maintain a music group folder of 100 songs, which we refresh every year to ensure that what we sing reflects our beliefs and direction as a church. As worship leaders, we also keep listening to God during times of sung worship to discern what direction He would like us to take; this may involve something quite different from what we planned during rehearsal!

We continue to be blessed by having many people willing to give their time to the music ministry here. There are 47 active members in total: 28 musicians (including 8 worship leaders), 13 sound people, and 11 projector operators. We have been delighted to welcome Phil Adams to the team this year as a violinist; we have also said goodbye to several this year, including John Shore who has decided to "hang up his boots" after a remarkable 40 continuous years on the sound desk. We are indebted to you, John!

As well as Sunday services, the music group engages in various other activities. The monthly Hungry For God evenings are a chance to soak in God's presence and come close to him through worship. The group has also been involved in Burn 24/7 Oxford events, another opportunity to spend significant time in God's presence and to pray for the city of Oxford. Finally, many thanks to all who were involved in the music (particularly the choir) for the Carol Service last December – feedback was particularly positive this year which is really great.

As ever, we'd greatly appreciate all your prayers for this ministry.

Ed Wiles, Worship Coordinator

SUNDAY DRIVING ROTA

This service is offered to members of the 11.15 Sunday Congregation at Northcourt Road who have difficulty travelling to church from their home. This year we have had 3 cars picking up 1, 2, or 3 passengers each Sunday, with most drivers taking one slot in the rota per month. During the year, one new regular passenger has joined the rota, but two or three others have ceased to use the service for a variety of reasons. There are therefore vacancies to be filled if anyone knows of an individual who would like to be given a lift to church, either regularly or

occasionally. With thanks from all the passengers to all the drivers. Much appreciated.

Roland Knight, Sunday Driving Coordinator

CHILDREN'S WORK AT NORTHCOURT ROAD

Overview

'Christ Church Kids' is the title that covers all the children's ministry at Christ Church, across both sites, including regular activities, seasonal activities and schools work. We have over 100 people on team, which is a mixture of 18+ leaders and 11-17 year olds. 1 new member of this team in 2016 was James Elward, who joined the staff team in September. He is working with both Matt and myself and splits his time evenly between youth and children. One of the benefits has been having someone who is a cross-over is being able to make more meaningful pastoral relationships with our teenage volunteers. James is also excellent at drama, leading from the front and brainstorming ideas for the teaching material! Welcome to the team James!

A massive thanks for your support and prayers across the year and a special thanks to our volunteers of all ages who work alongside our 0-11s.

Sunday Groups

Northcourt Road

Over the last year at Ignite we have been focussing on the vision of going deeper in worship and witness.

We have looked at:

- The Character of a King
- The Great Commission (using stories of Paul)
- Joseph
- Moses

All the material is written in-house, which is hard work, but enables us to tailor it to our format and children.

We have an amazing team in Ignite and at a recent team prayer and planning evening the team shared some of the things they love about Ignite:

- "God's presence"
- "How the kids love the Bible"
- "That it's a place for children to ask questions and express ideas"
- "Seeing new depths in the beautiful simplicity of God's word as we minister to the children"
- "Nugget moments when a child shows they "got it""
- "Awesome teenagers willing to come each week & are able to use their gifts"

...plus many, many more comments.

Sparks have continued to follow the Beginner's Bible curriculum and enjoy stories and songs. There's been a change in leadership in Sparks but it continues to be a fantastic volunteer team providing a safe fun place for our under 5s.

Long Furlong

Every month I go and join the Long Furlong kids team. I love spending time with the children at Long Furlong and feeling like part of the Long Furlong family. A huge thanks to Anne Taylor, who oversees the day-to-day running of the groups on that site, for her leadership. Please read her report for further details.

Seasonal Events

Sleepover

The annual sleepover is for years 4, 5 and 6. In 2016 we had 21 children for the event. Our focus for the day was on the Last Supper. The children spent the day preparing to lead the Ignite session on the Sunday morning. There were workshops for craft planning, worship leading, drama and talks. As well as all the usual fun and many sweets we enjoyed simply hanging out together and the children enjoyed the opportunity to lead the Ignite session in the morning (and bossing the leaders around).

Light Party

The Light Party in 2016 was slightly different from usual as the date didn't fall in half term. Instead of a longer party with food provided we held more of a Messy Church style service in the church building preceded by a bring-your-own picnic tea. Many families of all ages were there worshipping together from both sites and from outside of the church. As usual it was a lot of fun and such a lovely way to worship Jesus, the Light of the World.

Holiday Club

Holiday Club 2016 received 107 children with a team of 91 (of which 35 were youth). We wrote our own material around the theme of Kingdom Adventure. We looked at Kings and Queens in the Bible and how they stood strong for God. What was it that helped them to stand strong? The answers: The Bible, Worship, Prayer, Friends & Family and Trusting God. The week ended as usual with a fantastic party and final celebration in church.

Heather Hughes

PRIMARY SCHOOLS REPORT

Schools

We are blessed to be surrounded by great schools that have an open door for us to go in and support them.

Schools Ministry, however, isn't just about coming in occasionally and providing an assembly or lesson. Many people from Christ Church are governors, members of the Parent Teacher Associations, help in classes, or work at the local schools. Please pray for them as they witness day to day. There are also parent prayer meetings in Dunmore, Rush Common, Thomas Reade and St Nicolas Schools.

All 4 of our local schools have seen changes in their senior management team over the last year and a half. Please be praying for the new Heads and their teams as they lead.

Assemblies

During the Year the Open The Book Team have taken assemblies in Rush Common, Dunmore, Long Furlong and St Nicolas. The team use the Open the Book material to bring the gospel stories to the children in a fun, interactive way. We are blessed with a great, enthusiastic team and the children always enjoy the assemblies. In 2015/16 we had a running theme of 'Celebrations with Jesus' and in 2016/17 we are doing Old Testament stories for the first time.

Peachcroft Christian Centre serves Thomas Reade and Rush Common.

In the summer of 2016 I worked alongside Mr Spooner, head teacher of St Nicolas, to help him to produce a 2 year rolling programme of weekly Collective Worship for the school (to be provided by the school's senior leadership team). The programme is linked in with the school values and contains a weekly Bible story. The programme has been well received by the school and by the SIAMS inspector who visited in October!

Prayer Spaces

A Prayer Space is a space for children to take time out for prayer and reflection. The children move round the space in small groups with a volunteer from one of the local churches.

Across Abingdon the churches run lots of prayer spaces. During 2016/17 we will have run 9 Primary School Prayer Spaces, 1 Secondary School Prayer Space and 2 Town Centre Reflective Spaces. Due to the vast quantity of events of the year the role of the volunteers is vital, along with the necessity of churches working together.

The themes for the prayer space are varied due how new the school is to prayer spaces and the type of school. In 2016 we ran a 'STOP' (Sorry, Thanks, Others, Please) prayer space at Long Furlong and a Queen's Birthday themed prayer space at St Nicolas (praying for leaders, saying thank you for what we have etc.) amongst others.

Please be praying for this ongoing ministry, that it would continue to be a blessing to the school and that more people would get involved to enable it to happen.

We have been blessed to receive money from Church in Abingdon through Desire over the last 3 years to buy the equipment we needed for the Abingdon Prayer Space team to be independent and not need to borrow much kit from the national team to put on a Prayer Space.

Although outside the remit of this report (!) the first week of January 2017 we held a Prayer Space at Rush Common, linked in with their school values for this term (Honesty, Love, Cooperation and Encouragement). During the week the school were visited by OFSTED and it was great to be able to be there in the moment to support the school. Both the school and OFSTED were very pleased with the work we were doing in the Prayer Space and we got a positive mention in the report!

School Visits

During 2016 we had the annual visits to Christ Church from Abingdon Prep for talks on Baptism and Communion, visits from Rush Common, St Nicolas and Dunmore.

Heather Hughes

GODZKIDZ AT LONG FURLONG

GodzKidz at Christ Church Long Furlong is co-ordinated by Anne Taylor and overseen by Heather Hughes, Children's Minister. We have 3 groups: Bubbles, Splash and X stream.

Bubbles has 14 pre-school children registered to the group, however some of the babies under 1 year tend to stay in the service with their parents or carers. Chloe Wilson does the rota for this group. There are currently 8 people who run Bubbles. The children do Biblical activities as well as playing.

Splash has 15 children registered to the group, who include reception to year 2. We have 3 leaders and 4 helpers and one teenage helper.

X stream has 16 children registered to the group, who include year 3 to year 5. We have 3 leaders and 4 helpers and one teenage helper.

Splash and X Stream use the Urban Saints material for teaching.

The children are invited to all Christ Church events, including the annual sleepover and the holiday club. We have also had a night hike in December.

We take a collection and we were able to give about £350 to Tearfund for toilet twinning. We twinned some toilets in the community centre. Since September we have been collecting for Thrive, Abingdon.

Anne Taylor

YOUTH MINISTRY REPORT

Space (14-19s)

Youth ministry constantly changes and this year proved to be no different. The generations change and we said 'goodbye' to a group who have gone to University or to gap years and seen a whole new group come up from below.

Emma Bogue continued to lead Space at the beginning of the year and took a group out to the OneLife conference in February that proved a great time for those who went to grow and think about leadership. During this term we looked at 'the prayer course' and used the material to chat about and encourage each other to pray.

We finished our term with our Good Friday sleepover, getting involved with our 24/7 prayer week. Not a lot of sleep happened, but we had a great time.

In the summer term we worried about our exams, looked at worship, celebrated with those being confirmed and led an evening service. We had a 'wedding' theme and thought about what new wine skins look like. A big moment in the summer term was when we gathered to say goodbye to Emma with a BBQ and the barn decorated like a beach. Emma has started at LST and is enjoying her studies. This, of course meant saying 'hello' to James when we found him in the church pit in September!!

The summer is always a highlight, with involvement in New Wine, Soul Survivor and Holiday Club. It was great to see the young people growing and working through things at New Wine and bringing their friends to Soul Survivor. Many of our young people take a key role in our children's ministry and, as always, were brilliant at Holiday Club.

In the autumn term, Matt was back leading Space. We looked at being confident in our faith. Our weekend away was cancelled due to lack of numbers which was a real shame and we are trying to work out what this was about.

RAW continues to meet once a month and is an opportunity for the girls in Space to hear about what God has to say about the issues that affect girls in our culture. Naomi Lake has taken on this group and a small but committed group continue to attend. James and Matt have also started a boys group 'Medium Rare' that meets once a month and has so far proved very successful.

4-Filled continue to meet twice monthly, although the numbers were much smaller this year. Space band has stopped due to lack of musicians willing to get involved. Ed Wiles led this ministry for many years and has played a key role in the discipleship of our young people as he has done this. So a particularly big thanks to Ed!

Thank you to Emma Bogué, James Elward, Gareth Cook, Naomi Lake, Terry O'Neill, Mike Reading, Nat Spurling-Holt, Hannah Adams, Phil Adams, Caroline Peskett, Sam Luscombe, Nic Cook, Claire Brooks, Mark Jarvis, Rob Buckingham, Derek Walker, Ed Wiles and Logan Walker for the blessing you have been to the Space crew

Genesis (11-14s)

Genesis is made up of three different groups, Genesis, Pathfinders and Lazars. Genesis meets on a Thursday night, while Pathfinders and Lazars meet on Sunday mornings at Northcourt Road and Long Furlong respectively. Lazars is a group that is for those aged 10-13 and so is slightly different in its make-up.

The year of Genesis always starts with the weekend away. Andrew Gilmour from St Aldates joined us to speak to about being a healthy person and it was great to see all that God was up to that weekend. We started the year by looking at the story of Joseph with the Pathfinders and Lazars groups. Genesis looked at 'How to make friends and not annoy people' which focused on the relationships we have. In the summer term Pathfinders and Lazars looked at the Fruit of the Spirit and Genesis thought about 'The Apprentice' looking at what it means to follow Jesus. In the autumn term Pathfinders and Lazars looked at the disciples and what they were like. Genesis looked at the greatest story ever told.

We continue to try new things in our groups, as each new generation goes through. In Pathfinders we still eat bacon and enjoy leading morning services twice a year. Lazars brings great variety with a young people with a great variety of needs. Credit to Long Furlong members for holding them together with such love and grace. Genesis is our most consistent group with a core group of 25 every week.

We took another group to New Wine this summer and saw some of them make commitments to Christ and continue to get to know each other better.

In the summer one of the highlights was the MAI duck race organised by the guys in Genesis. We raised plenty of money for MAI and we had an absolutely brilliant time!

A massive thank you to Emma Bogué, James Elward, Beth Palmer, Claire Naylor, Richard and Clare Woodall, Julie Kemp-Harper, Andy Walker, Dave Millgate, Bethany Dunnett, Briony Slater and Josh Buckingham for your commitment and prayer.

Youth ministry

In 2015 the Desire team continued to work in all the schools in Abingdon. We had a very successful week of activity in Fitzharrys, with the NOMAD team from Youth For Christ (YFC) planting their football cage in the middle of the school playground. We also had the STANCE team from YFC join us and they proved a great hit. Many members of the Desire team were involved in different ways taking R.E lessons and assemblies. We were very well received by the pupils and the school. Our evening event had the best response to the message that we gave that we have had in any of our previous years. We followed this up with a week of prayer space activities in November around

Remembrance Day. This was very well received as we embedded ourselves in the Philosophy and Ethics timetable. Our relationship with Fitzharrys is now very good. Please continue to pray that the Lord would open the door for our message and that the young people of Abingdon would hear and respond to the good news of Jesus.

Emma Bogué also had the privilege of being involved in the chapel week at St Helens and St Katherine's School. Please continue to pray for Katie Windle the chaplain, who does great work there.

A big thank you to the teams of people who have helped me out at New Wine and Soul Survivor and at weekends away and all kinds of prayers and support.

Matt Luscombe - Youth Pastor

PRAYER AND BIBLE READING

As a church we've often been drawn back to the picture of tending our roots; and the core focus on this is on prayer and engaging with the scriptures.

We're grateful to Gill Shore for overseeing the distribution of **daily bible reading notes**, and are always encouraged when we hear of people using these or other patterns and aids for feeding on God's Word.

As a church we are very aware that *unless the Lord builds the house the labourers labour in vain*, Psalm 127:1. I'm very grateful that our many ministry area leaders root their teams in **prayer**. As a church we pray together on **Sundays**. We are grateful to Janice Gordon for the comprehensive **monthly prayer diary** that informs our daily prayer. Each month we also gather for **Hungry** praise and prayer, and **Silent Prayer** (thank you Sarah Turner). We sought God together in the **24/7 Prayer Room** during Holy Week in March, themed around the journey in the gospels to the cross. And during May we took part in the **Thy Kingdom Come** prayer initiative launched by the Archbishops praying for the re-evangelisation of the nation; the week included prayer walking around parish, a parish boundary prayer walk, and producing resources for life groups and families.

Sarah Fry, our Community Worker, led a team from the Churches in Abingdon hosting a **prayer/reflective space** in the Community Shop in the town centre at Easter and at Christmas. This was a lovely opportunity for the churches in Abingdon to draw others into God's presence.

Keith Dunnett

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Our midweek small groups are a core strand in our pastoral support and in helping us grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

We started the year with **29 life groups**; over the course of the year two stopped, two started, and five had a change of leaders. Some meet weekly and some meet fortnightly. Around 350 people are member of life groups, but the reality is that with the challenges of work and family life, some groups find the actual attendance is somewhat lower than "on the books."

A few years ago we took the decision to have a staff team member (Keith) overseeing the life groups, so that there was a more direct link to the church leadership. We have three life group leaders meetings a year which we aim to be encouraging and supportive. We hear stories and good practice from life groups, offer some training, and pray together. During 2016 we had training on pastoral care, training on the autumn evangelism materials (Uncover John and J Johns Natural Evangelism Course); we encouraged life groups to form a link with a Mission Partner; and we explored whether groups could twin to build links across the generations.

I'm grateful to the life group leaders and all that they do, the way they reflect Jesus as the Good Shepherd. I recognise that since I've been covering Tim's role I've not had as much time to invest in the Life group leaders – thank you for bearing with me! I'm also grateful to Andrew Turner for overseeing the life groups at Long Furlong.

We had five **missional communities** at the start of the year. I've had to let go overseeing these as I've been covering Tim's role. Workout helped run a work-focussed prayer breakfast on 2 July, following the Brexit vote. Outnumbered and Workout came to natural ends in the summer. Several from Outnumbered have continued into a post-Alpha group, three from Workout are meeting in a prayer triplet, and Workout members would be willing to offer prayer support to church members in their workplaces. Art and Soul is having a break while its members are involved in other things, but has the potential to re-start.

Fragile Earth has come to a natural pause. There are beginnings of a discussion about an Eco-Church project that would be a catalyst for Fragile Earth and - if valuable - build up the structure for future opportunities. All those involved continue doing their stuff in their own arenas and there are others to mobilize.

Keith Dunnett

PASTORAL MINISTRY REPORT

It is always quite a challenge to write a pastoral ministry report because so much of what we do is carried out quietly and confidentially. This ministry happens over a cup of tea in someone's sitting room, in prayer after a service has ended, or in quiet attentiveness at a hospital bedside. It happens in the committed resolve of intercessory prayer, in the intentional setting aside of time to pray for healing, or in the unexpected arrival of a get well card, a bunch of flowers or a home-cooked meal. Pastoral care is what we do for one another within the Body of Christ and beyond. It is an expression of God's love. It is a ministry that we are all called to, in one way or another.

"We have had a steady stream of people requesting Pastoral Prayer Ministry and we have been encouraged as we have seen them grow in confidence understanding of how to move forward in their lives as a result of healing prayer."

Christine Bell, Pastoral Prayer Ministry

As co-ordinator of the pastoral teams my role is simply to help, encourage and support the leaders of the teams. The leaders get together regularly to pray for one another. Jane

Lane has run two Acorn Christian Listening courses this year, training people with pastoral gifting in effective listening and good practice. We saw more people than ever attending the Advent service for the Bereaved, appreciating both the service, the hospitality and healing conversations that follow. The teams also joined forces to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday, with a party for 90 year olds across the parish. It was a wonderful, joyous occasion with over 100 people present. My thanks go to all the teams, and to all those who give so freely of their time and talents to minister to others.

"I have been able to meet and chat with all members of the visiting team and am encouraged by their enthusiasm and commitment to supporting people in many and varied ways..... We will continue to respond to requests for visits from whoever feels they would benefit from this practical support."

Gabrielle Dent, Visiting Team

There have been some changes within the teams this year, and my warm and grateful thanks to those

who are stepping down for all you have done and all you are. Pauline Croucher has finished as co-ordinator of the Visiting team, and this role has been taken on by Gabrielle Dent. Pauline, together with Hilary Hart, has taken over the leadership of Footprints from Rosemary Green. (Please see separate report.) Maggie Snowball has stepped down from her role as a visitor within the chaplaincy team at the John Radcliffe. Michael Litt, with Rosemary Cooper, continue to lead the prayer ministry team, offering prayer ministry during and after communion services, and the intercessors, led by Richard Howard and Jeremy Starling, continue faithfully to pray for the pastoral needs of the whole church.

"We're always looking for new people to join the prayer ministry team especially from the 9.30 or 11 a.m. services...we see prayer ministry as something for the whole church ..."

Michael Litt, Prayer Ministry Team

"As intercessors, we have carried on unswerving."

Richard Howard, Intercessors

I conclude by thanking everyone who offers their time and their gifting to us all in this way. If you feel drawn to any aspect of pastoral ministry and would like to know more, please do get in touch.

Ros Steel, Pastoral Co-ordinator

BUILDING CHURCH COMMUNITY

One of the things the PCC identified during the year was the desire to build stronger relationships across the congregations and across the different generations. Over the year we've arranged several opportunities to aid this such as the "Link Up Lunch" one Sunday in May, a children's leaders picnic in June, a 20-30's Great Abingdon Bake Off in June, a picnic in August, and a bring and share Harvest supper in September. There are several community-focused groups across the church, including the community groups linked to the Barns Café, Monday evening football, a fortnightly Board Games evening, as well as the many groups described elsewhere in this report. Katrina Hancock continues to organise meals for families with Newborns, which is a beautiful expression of love within God's family.

Keith Dunnett

FOOTPRINTS 2016

Footprints (after the well-known 'Footprints in the Sand' poem) is one aspect of Christ Church's ministry to the bereaved. Most of our guests have lost their spouse, but some have lost another family member or suffered loss in other ways.

Our core activity is a monthly coffee morning in the Barn. We have a team of ten (never too many for serving and chatting, often with some unavoidable absences.) With the number of male guests increasing, we would welcome at least one more man on the team.

We aim for a welcoming atmosphere; chairs round small coffee tables, flowers on each table, largely homemade food, a welcomer at the door. There is time to eat and chat, usually followed by a simple programme; this has a rough rotation of an aspect of bereavement (or giving opportunity to talk about the person they have lost), a 'fun' item, and something more overtly Christian. One highlight was a celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday, with Coronation chicken lunch to follow.

Footprints is open to those who belong to any church, or none. At present about half the guests have a Christ Church connection, others are linked with another church, and many have no church connection at all. They come because a friend invites them – or they pick up a card in the Barns Café – or they 'happen' to hear about it from some other source. During the last year numbers have been growing slowly but steadily. In 2016 the average number of guests was 18 (twice as many as the average in 2015) with a maximum of 30 in December.

Ever since Footprints began, pastoral visiting at home (especially of newcomers), or invitations to a cuppa, has been an important part of our work. As well as the chance to get to know someone better in time spent 1-1, it spells out a message of 'I matter – they care.' Cards for anniversaries are appreciated. The pastoral care will change as the group grows and dynamics change; every team member cannot know every guest. During the year we have begun to extend our programme, with occasional events between the regular monthly meetings, e.g. lunch in the Café or at a pub. We also invite our guests to other events at Christ Church (both social and spiritual) e.g. craft and games in the Café, Prime Time events, and MWM. These offer social activity for those who are lonely, as well as a wider circle of Christian friends. The most important part of the ministry is probably the gradual development of friendships – between guests, and between guests and team members – and we hope that for some this will lead in due course to a new friendship with Jesus Christ. Coping with the changes in life now is in the forefront for those who have been bereaved; we can offer gently, but not thrust insensitively, the most important friendship of all.

Rosemary Green

ALPHA

Christ Church ran the Alpha Course again in 2016. With Jit having moved to Southsea, Matt and Sam Luscombe took on the work. They were ably supported by a great team who are a well-oiled machine. Michael Litt led a team of volunteers who were fantastic at practically supporting the running of the Alpha evenings. We had a team of experienced and wonderful table leaders who were great at welcoming and sharing the good news. We also had some great speakers from the church to take us through the material.

The launch event was, once again, at the Spice Valley Restaurant. The speaker was Simon Pinchbeck, an ex-copper, with the Metropolitan Police, turned criminal, who became a Christian. We packed the venue and had a great evening.

Following the launch we started two courses. One was on a Wednesday night. At this one we had four table discussions with twenty guests, who all kept going through the course. We also had a course on a Friday lunchtime run by Sandar Wade and Sarah Hunnings using the videos streamed from www.alpha.org.

The people who joined us came from a wide variety of places. Most came through personal invitation from members of the congregation, a few heard of us the website, and some were brought along by family members. The Alpha awayday was a key moment and a number were prayed for and experienced the blessing of the Lord. At the end of the course one lady was confirmed and another prayed a prayer of commitment, while others continued steps towards the Lord.

Andy Wallis and Sandar Wade started a follow on group that meets on a Friday afternoon that is still going strong.

Kath and Phil Cooke have taken it on for 2017. It is always encouraging to see people respond to the gospel. Maybe there are people in the community who are interested in the good news and just need someone to invite them along to church or to Alpha.

Matt Luscombe

BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS, FUNERALS

As a parish church we walk alongside people from the local community as well as the church during key transitional moments in life. We've had four **Thanksgivings/ Dedications** and ten **Baptisms** during the year. The services are taken by the clergy team, but baptism preparation is now lay-led by three couples (with another couple now in training) using the six session Uncover Luke material parallel to the 9:30am service. Many thanks to Jaz and Liz Bance, Viv and Greg Hitchings, and Helen and Jonathan Nash for taking this on in 2016.

Bishop Henry led a **confirmation service** in May, when four youth were confirmed and one adult re-affirmed their faith in Christ.

We've hosted three **weddings**, and took another wedding in Steventon. We offer couples Marriage Preparation – see the Family Life section of this report.

Funerals are taken by the clergy team, both in church and local crematoria. We are grateful to have the Footprints bereavement group to signpost families too as they mourn the loss of a loved one. We've had the funerals of four church members during the year - Di Simcoe, John Crocker, Maggie New, and Gill Litt.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants. Psalm 116:15

Keith Dunnett

FAMILY LIFE

The **Marriage Preparation Course** usually takes place at the home of Bill & Rosemary Buchan, but as 6 couples planned to attend we decided to use the Barns to allow the couples to benefit from sufficient space & privacy during their discussion times. The course was planned over 2 Saturdays in March (rather than 5 evening sessions), to cater for several couples who were living out of the area. The catering was provided by Chris Waite & Trish & Alan Howkins. The sessions were led by Bill & Rosemary Buchan, & the IT was managed by Paul & Karen Brombley

Unfortunately due to personal circumstances and changes in wedding plans, only 3 couples attended the first week and 4 couples attended the second week. One couple were not church goers and were from Oxford, but had seen our course advertised. All couples expressed how much they had enjoyed & benefitted from the 2 days. We felt that

the Barn due to its size and adjoining distractions, and the smaller number of guests on the Marriage Preparation Course, did not provide the relaxed, private and informal atmosphere that we usually try to create, so it was decided to return the course to a home setting in the future. Two further couples (one from outside) received Marriage Preparation in December 2016/January 2017.

The Marriage Course ran from 26th January – 15th March. It was full to maximum capacity and attended by 13 couples. All were couples from Christ Church and we had 2 couples on the waiting list. A team of 4 people prepared the Barn and serving area in the afternoon, and 7 people (out of a team of 12) served on different evenings according to their availability. The team consists of people who are very committed to marriage ministry and many have served faithfully for a number of years. A short prayer session was held by the team before each evening began. Couples commented on their lovely tables, how pampered and special they felt, and how different sessions had impacted and benefitted their marriage. It is a real privilege and blessing to see and hear what God is doing in couple's marriages through the Marriage Course.

Heather Hughes and Katrina Hancock organised a **Parents and Puddings Evening** on 29 June, for parents of children up to 11 years old. The evening had input on Christian parenting by the diocesan Children's Adviser Yvonne Morris. With Keith focussed on covering Tim's work, we were not able to organise any other parenting courses during 2016.

Keith Dunnett

LINK

Link, our midweek group for families with pre-schoolers, continued to go from strength to strength this year. We welcome anywhere between 30 – 40 families each Wednesday morning, offering tasty snacks (many a toddler has been known to head straight for the snack bar and plant themselves there for the morning); a safe environment for children to play; and an opportunity for parents, grandparents and carers to get to know one another. We spend time together in prayer for the families each Wednesday morning, and our hope is that as they come through the doors, whatever their morning has been like up until that point, they find a warm welcome, encouragement, and demonstration of Christ's love and care for them.

In the past year, we enjoyed our usual Easter, harvest and Christmas celebrations in the church with the aid of Heather and James, welcomed Cat from tinyfootprints photography for a photoshoot, had a mini craft fair (thanks to Kate and Sarah for bringing along their beautiful cards and crafts), enjoyed our annual summer picnic, and got crafty together with the help of Beth Palmer, making mini bonfire-night-themed masterpieces.

We also ran Care for the Family's Parentalk course for parents of primary school aged children: a few of us met up over six weeks to share tea and cake, watch the DVD course and swap our parenting stories. It was a great opportunity to share the joys and challenges of parenting together, to learn from one another's experiences, and to benefit from Care for the Family's accumulated wisdom – a couple of those who attended described it as "group therapy" – and we would love to be able to offer the course on a rolling basis for Link parents and carers.

Link is blessed to have a dedicated and enthusiastic team – but we have seen lots of comings and goings over the past year, and always welcome extra pairs of hands! If you think you can help with furniture shifting, setting up of toys, coffee brewing, snack serving, or tidying up at the end of the session, please do get in touch with the church office. And please continue to hold both the Link team and the families who attend in your prayers: we anticipate that with the closure of the children's centres, groups like Link will become even more crucial to young families – and we need Godly wisdom to know how best to support, care for and encourage those we come into contact with.

Sam Luscombe

PRIME TIME

Prime Time is for those people aged over 50. This year I want to start by thanking a great committee some of whom have served alongside me for 10 years and without whom Prime Time would not function. Thank you to Chris Waite, Di Bryan, Ian Snowball, and Janice Gordon.

Also to Eileen Bontempelli (data administrator), Deborah Harford, Rob Beale, Kathryn and John Rogers, David Turner, Michael Chown, Maureen and Neil Weston. Ollie Lomax does a great job on A/V in the week. A number of others who are not on committee but give up the week to work - Chris Bryan, Elizabeth Chown, Ann Makepeace, and Hilary Beale. THANK YOU to you all and to your teams.

We had another happy **activity week** with a theatre visit to "Crazy for You" and ending with a lovely Pig Roast. In between talks, crafts outings, exercise and creative things kept all happy. Keith gave us interesting and amusing "Thoughts for the Day" with an Olympic theme.

The week was followed in the autumn with a Parables course led by John Rogers and with different speakers. Up to 39 attended some of the sessions followed by meaningful group discussion and a small group have continued to meet since.

Throughout the year Table Tennis continues to thrive under Alyson Mason. Last week when I went, two new ladies were there from the community who just love TT. Monthly walks co-ordinated by me continue from March to November. This year we had the added bonus of an HF walking holiday based at Abingworth, W Sussex in October for 5 days led by Elizabeth and David Wadham, 22 people went on this.

Coffee, Cake and Chat continues on the last Friday of each month. Plenty of people enjoy this and we thank Chris and Di for heading this up. In the Spring we offered a cream tea and at Christmas Di organised two trips to a Christmas lunch at Waddesdon Manor. This was a great occasion seeing the lights in the Manor and going round the Christmas Market.

The Prime Time holiday away continues to thrive and we want to thank Roland and Jean Knight for all they have put in to making the week successful. It is very hard work taking a group away with all the different needs. This year it was longer and in the Lake District. After 4/5 years the Knights have now passed this on to Maureen and Neil Weston who are leading 7 days this June in Paignton.

I met 3 ladies one day in a café and they said "couldn't we have more trips"? Well, yes if someone has time to organise more!!

So as I start to prepare Prime Time 2017 in January our prayer is that many more people in N Abingdon will come to experience the love of Jesus as we do activities together throughout the year.

Maggie Snowball

PRIME TIME HOLIDAY 2016

On June 20th 2016, 40 Prime Timers departed Abingdon in pouring rain for the annual Prime Time Holiday. Their destination was a Christian Holiday Hotel and Conference Centre called "Thornleigh" in the town of Grange-over-Sands overlooking Morecambe Bay in Cumbria. This was the first time that the holiday changed from four nights (Monday to Friday) to seven nights (Monday to Monday). This was entered into with some trepidation by the leadership, but despite the increased cost, everyone who went felt that it was one of the best PT Holidays yet. By the time the coach was passing Birmingham, the rain had stopped and the sun came out - heralding a week of fine weather, which is unusual (to say the least) for Cumbria. The welcome from Jane and her staff was warm and friendly and the catering excellent. During the holiday we were challenged each day by John Earwicker with a morning thought for the day based on Shakespeare's Ages of Man ("All the world's a stage") illustrated by a Psalm, and evening devotions based on the seven words of Jesus from the cross.

On two days during the week, guests had free days to rest, or to explore the town of Grange-over-Sands, or to visit other local attractions, but on three days we enjoyed group outings by coach. The first was a day around Lake Windermere, including a boat trip and steam train ride. Another day we visited a local stately home where we were entertained with a splendid cream tea and a demonstration of birds of prey. The final outing was to Blackpool and Lytham St Annes.

At the end of the holiday, Roland and Jean Knight announced that they were stepping down from leadership of the PT Holiday committee after 4 happy years, but were able to confirm that Neil and Maureen Weston had agreed to

take over the role. The next PT holiday will be at Paignton from 5th - 12th June 2017.

Roland Knight

MWM

The opportunity for men to get together, to share fellowship, conversation, and mutual support continued through the year, based largely around a series of monthly activities. These varied from the highly successful to the highly frustrating, from the popular to the disinterested, from the old favourites to the original, but overall they provided good opportunity for our friendships to grow.

The year started with an illustrated talk and discussion on Current Trends in World Development based on the surprising statistics of Hans Rosling. This was followed by a book sharing gathering around a roaring fire, and then a DIY discussion of Suffering, and how we coped with it. After Easter we had a highly successful trip to, and around, Winchester, a further trip around Oxford, including the Weston Library, the Bodleian Library and lunch in Merton. A surprisingly interesting visit to the Aston Martin museum at Drayton St Leonard and thence into Dorchester. The Oxford v Cambridge T20 cricket match was not rained off this year, but as only two men attended perhaps we had not missed much in the past. We should have learned from the earlier abortive ten-pin bowling event, that we preferred the passive rather than the active. In the Autumn we had a visit to Bletchley Park, with an opportunity to watch the Imitation Game film about it, and Alan Turing's part in it, the evening beforehand. We also had a very constructive, but not well attended, DIY session on Prayer and how we perceived it and coped with its joys and its problems. Finally, we joined with the Primetime group, and our wives, to visit Waddesdon Manor for a Christmas lunch and festivities. Over all, we had a good variety of activities, with numbers averaging around 12 +/- 10! Most were church folk but we usually had a couple of 'fringe' members in attendance.

We also had a rota whereby we visited on a weekly basis John Nicolson in his latter year. This was appreciated by John, and Joyce, and provided a means of sharing God's love for those involved.

At the end of the year Brian Woolnough, who had had the privilege of leading MWM since its inception about seven years ago, passed on the leadership to Michael Chown.

Brian E Woolnough

51 FELLOWSHIP

It is my privilege to lead this shared ministry to older people, within both Christ Church and other churches in the area and sometimes visiting friends and relatives too. For some it is their Church.

It is a really loving, caring and supportive group where everyone feels welcomed as individuals.

I am supported and encouraged by the other Committee members, all the many helpers and the faithful love and prayers of so many.

We have 80 members, around 10 of these are in care now or housebound. We try to continue our care of them, by keeping in touch, visiting and praying for them. We have an average 40-50 attending. People generally are only missing through illness, medical appointments or holidays!

God is faithful. We are grateful for the blessings of our various speakers, both Lay and Clergy from within our Church and other churches in the area. Themes this past year have been "The Holy Spirit", "I AM" and "God Calling".

On alternate weeks some of us meet in Elisabeth's home for Prayer Fellowship. A time to share, plan and pray for the ministry and for any special needs.

We support mission partners: Pat Herbert in Ghana, Tony and Carol Smith in The Cameroons, the Warner Family in Spain, as well as TEAR Fund, The Leprosy Mission and NSPCC.

We are grateful to Andy and Stuart for setting up for our meetings, to Ernie and Alison who prepare lunches twice a term and our drivers.

Our prayer is that everyone who attends will feel welcome, accepted, loved and cared for and will respond to God's love for them and grow in faith.

Doreen Cooper

GENTS WHO LUNCH

This is an informal group based mainly out of Long Furlong that meets monthly (on the third Tuesday of each month except for December) to develop friendship and support among (mainly retired) men and to enjoy an inexpensive lunch together at the Spread Eagle on Northcourt Road.

During that last year we have been joined by new friends who are not members of Christ Church, but have links with us - bringing us up to 18. Typically 8-10 manage to meet up on a typical Tuesday.

It was with great sadness that we mourned the loss of John Crocker during the year, as a founder member of the group.

Andrew Turner

RESIDENTIAL HOMES

Fountain Court is a Retirement/sheltered housing scheme in Boxhill Road, Abingdon, which has 29 one bedroom flats. The oldest resident is 96 years old.

A team of six from the church have been visiting twice monthly, one for a morning service and another as a social afternoon because there were some who didn't want anything spiritual. With no resident warden, it was difficult at first to get them to join us, but with time they learned to trust us and we built a good relationship. Our aim has been to share God's love and to make Christ known, so when they refer to us as 'the church', we find it very encouraging.

At the service we sing popular hymns, read a bible passage, which is then followed by a short talk with a Christian message, and prayers for specific requests they may have. Once a term we've had Rev Keith Dunnett, and recently on more occasions, Rev Kath Cooke has come to lead a communion service, which has meant a great deal to the residents.

At each session we serve tea/coffee and a homemade cake, and spend time chatting. We remember birthdays by giving them a card and try to make it special by having candles on the cake and singing.

The Social afternoons included a quiz which they always enjoyed, and in the past we have tried various activities like sing-alongs, and filling shoe-boxes for the Samaritan's purse.

Recently there has been an Independent Living & Community Officer appointed to organise social events, so we didn't feel the need to continue with the social afternoons.

Every year we organise an evening Carol Service to which all residents and their families are invited, and mince pies and mulled wine are served. We have a special speaker, and last year we had the JAM Band provide the music. Attendance for this is generally a little higher than normal.

We also encourage them to attend the Prime Time week of activities, which some have attended and enjoyed.

Our visits do not attract many residents and attendance is often low due to illness, hospital visits and other appointments. Over the years, the number of residents joining us has diminished with illness, transfers to nursing homes or bereavement. Regrettably new residents do not seem to want to join, even though we put leaflets through doors with details of our visits for each term.

Saying that, we have built a close relationship with a few residents, and feel we have been able to address some of their concerns and provide spiritual support when needed, and they have learned to trust and confide in us. Whenever possible we've tried to visit them in Hospital, or when they've been moved to other nursing homes. Recently when one of the residents who had been moved to a home in Oxford died, we were the first to be notified by the family, and one of the team was able to attend the funeral.

Leilani Jeevaratnam

Abingdon Court Care Home

A team from Christ Church - Maggie Baker-Rawle (guitar), Barbara Gyde, Joyce Higgs, Judy Riggs, John and Gill Shore and Dorothy Warner (piano) - visits Abingdon Court Care Home on Marcham Road on the first Wednesday of each month to take a short 'service.' This is a home for people affected with dementia, who often relate well to hymns that they have known from their younger days. We take it in turns to lead and keep the talking to a minimum using hymns and visual aids as much as possible. Conversation with the residents is a valuable part of what we do. The number attending varies from about six to twelve, depending on how many the staff manage to bring along. The staff are generally very helpful and welcoming. The current Activities Coordinator is very new to the job and we would appreciate prayer for her as she settles in. Her name is Andra.

John Shore

THE FATHER'S TABLE

The Abingdon Bridge

The Abingdon Bridge as set up by The Church in Abingdon and supports vulnerable young people who find themselves in challenging circumstances. As well as helping young people who have problems with alcohol and substance abuse, there is an increasing demand for 1:1 counselling from young people – particularly girls – who are suffering from anxiety, stress and depression.

TAB could not continue this essential work without the generous support of local churches, schools, businesses, voluntary organisations, charitable trusts as well as individual donors. TAB has become a lifeline for those young people who need our help and support in order to refocus their lives and get back on track. Together, we can bridge the gap.

Chris Bryan

The Archway Foundation

God made us to be in relationship with one another and we are encouraged to see people come alive as they engage with Archway's opportunities for supportive social contact. Thanks to a successful (short) trial of an afternoon meet up in Abingdon for tea, company and conversation, we are extending this pilot project to provide a day time contact point on the weeks when the Abingdon Friday Evening Social doesn't meet. The two social groups in Oxford continue to grow with two thirds of those attending requiring Archway transport. We are grateful for our dedicated team of volunteer drivers and looking for more people to help with this vital service. Our befriending service has over 70 volunteers providing fortnightly visits to adults in Abingdon, Didcot Oxford & surrounding area but with high referral rates there are 40 people on the waiting list to be linked. We are actively seeking to recruit more volunteers for all areas of our work but especially Befriending and Driving.

Sheila Furlong

The Abingdon Emergency Foodbank

It's been our busiest year so far supporting local people who find themselves in a time of crisis. We've had nearly 700 referrals, each receiving a tailor made pack of food to feed their household for three days.

People are often at their lowest ebb when we first meet them, but it's an amazing privilege for our team of volunteers to be part of their lives for a short while as they get back on their feet.

Thankfully we're blessed with a very generous community who are keen to give and get involved in the life of the Foodbank. It's been great to be able to share their generosity with those in need, especially at Christmas when we were inundated with delicious treats to pack into our hampers.

Hilary Beale and Sarah Fry

Street Pastors

Street Pastors continues to be a hugely appreciated part of the Saturday night community in Abingdon town centre with strong and vocal support from police, businesses, the council and those we meet out on the streets. In 2016 teams made up of representatives from a wide range of Abingdon churches managed to be on the streets for 41 out of a potential 53 shifts, attended 139 significant "incidents of note" and handed out nearly a thousand lollipops as well as numerous pairs of flip-flops and bottles of water. In addition, Abingdon Street Pastors was awarded a Vale Community Award from the district council. We have three new volunteers nearing the end of their training, but have sadly lost three of the trained Street Pastors this year so are still in real need of more team members both on the street and as prayer support each week.

David Hancock

Fishy Music

Fishy Music is a music ministry and recording studio run by Trevor and Karina Stevens, making Bible story CDs for young children. Distribution of CDs has been overtaken by downloads from the Internet and Fishy Music CDs and tracks can now be streamed on Spotify, SoundCloud and YouTube or purchased on iTunes and Amazon. This is giving an international flavour to our work as we now have children playing our music in more than 30 countries, including Malaysia, Iceland and Russia.

Our current project is a CD of well-loved hymns, including *Just as I am*, *Blessed Assurance* and *O the deep, deep love of Jesus*. The CD is already at the mix-down stage and should be available in the summer - an ideal gift for adult friends.

"We will tell the next generation the praise-worthy deeds of the Lord" (Psalm 78:4)

Trevor & Karina Stevens

Prison Ministry

We now have a team of five volunteers who go into Huntercombe Prison once a month to take services, lead worship and preach. Trevor and Karina also go in every week to take part in two morning services and support the Chaplain.

About 50 men come to the chapel services and the worship is very lively, often resulting in a queue for prayer at the end. The men are all foreign nationals awaiting deportation so please pray for favour when their cases go to court. We still want to extend our team so if you have a desire to preach, contact the church office.

Trevor & Karina Stevens

THE BARNS CAFÉ

Our vision is for the café 'to be a welcoming place that is a pleasure to come to, which demonstrates the love and values of Jesus and succeeds as a business'. We have introduced five Missional Aims this year to help us focus on this: to be the best hosts we can be, to show kindness, to aim for excellence, to provide a place of sanctuary, and to act as one.



The café is open Tuesday-Friday 9am-4:30pm and Saturdays 10am-3pm, run by a superb team. The team is made up of around 45 volunteers (6 of whom are café supervisors) from churches in and around Abingdon, an apprentice, a deputy manager, a manager, and of course our bright and bubbly cleaner.

2016 was a roller-coaster of a year for the café staff. Our manager, Sarah Grange, went on Maternity Leave in March, and after the traumatic birth of Isaac in April, the team were left in shock. Our response was to gather and pray, and have continued to pray fervently for Isaac's recovery and development, and the Grange family as a whole. Our first acting deputy manager, Jo Greenaway, also left in August to have her baby. Our first ever apprentice, Jacob Edwards, joined us in September. Our new acting deputy manager, Beth Summers, got married in October. Sarah then resigned as manager at the end of the year in order to continue to look after Isaac. During this year of constant change, God has been our rock and has sustained us.

Three times a year we all gather as a whole team to eat together, worship, seek God's will and pray for the community, the café and each other. Each day, the shift teams pray together in the morning and evening, committing that day to the Lord, inviting the Holy Spirit in to the café, and supporting each other. We know we are carrying His peace and every week we see how God has his hand in all the details, giving us all we need and enabling us to show His love and care in a practical way. It's amazing to hear customers comment on the peacefulness they feel in the café, even when they've been in over a really busy lunchtime. God has breathed his life into the café and people are experiencing this when they come in.

Our café activity groups are well established now, and continue to grow and deepen in relationships. We are praying about how to go deeper in these relationships to discern how to introduce members to Jesus. You can find out more about our activities programme on our website www.thebarnscafe.co.uk

We have continued to do our 'acts of random kindness' giveaways. Often focused around a certain day (Valentine's day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas) but our biggest impact giveaway happened shortly after the country voted to leave the EU, and we watched a wave of racial abuse sweep across the country. Some members of Long Furlong had an idea to combat this hate with love, and so we provided flowers and sweets for the community to pass on to people in our town to make sure everyone knew they were loved and welcome in Abingdon. The beauty in this was that while we were providing the gifts, and were suggesting the idea, it was actually the community that took and passed on the flowers and sweets, and so took responsibility for this wave of love through Abingdon. Sales are continuing to increase and were just under £120,000 for the year. We have given a donation of £1700 to BEAM (Business Enterprise as Mission), a charity to support and start similar Christian missional businesses, as well as a donation to the PCC. We have been paying VAT on sales all year, and after some price changes on our stock after Brexit, we'll need to put up some of our prices soon.

Find us on [facebook.com/barnscafe](https://www.facebook.com/barnscafe) or follow us on twitter @thebarnscafe if you'd like to keep up with what's going on!

Hannah Kitchener

OTHER MISSIONAL INITIATIVES

Jesus calls every follower of his to be a witness to others; our primary "frontline" of mission is the daily life of each church member. Many of the groups in the church are also committed to mission and evangelism. This section describes several other missional initiatives during the year.

Some members of Christ Church were involved in the team performing the **Abingdon Passion Play** a couple of weeks before Easter. In June we invited octogenarians from north Abingdon (those aged 90 and above) to a party celebrating the **Queen's 90th birthday**. We are finding God keeps opening doors in the local schools for **assemblies and prayer spaces**. We have been seeking God's leading on our response to the **proposed 900 new homes in North Abingdon**: PCC has explored this, we've held a prayer meeting as a church, and with local church leaders, responded to the public consultation from the developers, and liaised with the diocese about the new school possibly being a church school. During November we offered a four session training course on **personal evangelism**. Michael Green has had many opportunities to speak at **university missions** and we've been praying for the many students from Christ Church who are at university as they engage with student mission. We hosted a **Riding Lights Theatre Company play** (Simeon's Watch) in November which sensitively explored issues around Dementia, and this drew in people from the community (thank you Sally Mears for arranging this).

Keith Dunnett

MISSION SUPPORT GROUP

The Mission Support Group (MSG) is a sub-group of the Church Council, with the following mandate:

- To promote mission beyond the borders of Abingdon
- To create a greater awareness of the world church
- To ensure prayer and financial support for selected Mission Partners

- To encourage church members (of all ages) to participate in short-term mission
- To set a budget and distribute funds for mission that are allocated by the PCC

The church is currently committed to the support of 11 Mission Partners and we were fortunate to have visits from all but one of them during the course of 2016 (or early 2017). Two of our Mission Partners were newly adopted in 2016: **Chris and Suzy Wilson** (with Abigail and Matthew) who left for Ethiopia in August, where they will be working in a theological college training pastors for the South Sudan church in exile; and **Ashleigh Gibb** who was commissioned in Church in January 2017 shortly before she departed for Thailand, where she is preparing to work with women and girls rescued from trafficking. 90% of the budget of £61,000 was used for regular financial support of our mission partners, with the remainder for other short-term mission projects.

One of the key events each year is the annual Mission Weekend. This took place on the weekend of 21st and 22nd May, 2016. On the Saturday evening the focus was on what God is doing in His world and where Christ Church fits in. The speakers were **Tabitha Jorden** (Mission Partner working in student evangelism and discipleship, home for a short break from East Asia); **Suzy and Chris Wilson** (new Mission Partners); **Bishop Anthony Poggo** (from Kajo Keji in South Sudan, who told us about a health clinic which Medic Assist International is sponsoring); a report from **4 members of Christ Church** who had attended the enthusiastic dedication of the new Bible in the Deg language in Ghana in April (**Pat Herbert**, Wycliffe, Ghana); and a skype conversation with **Andy Warner**, church planting in Castellon, Spain. The evening clearly demonstrated the breadth and strength of our church involvement in what God is doing in the world. The following day the preacher at Northcourt Road was Martin Lee, chief executive of Global Connections, the umbrella body for mission societies in UK, who grounded all mission firmly in the Bible, without which our efforts would be puny and futile. Meanwhile, at Long Furlong, Tabitha Jorden spoke at the 10.00am service.

Another focus of the mission weekend in 2016 was to link each mission partner with at least one of our Life Groups, with the aim of making our support more personal and grounded in reality. Some progress has been made, but work still needs to be done.

Details of our Mission Partners can be found in the booklets which are on the Welcome Desk, and on the Missions display board.

Mission Support Group

THE CHURCH IN ABINGDON (CiA)

The CiA is a group of 14 churches who work together to bless the people of Abingdon. To proclaim the Gospel and encourage neighbourly care.

The CiA supports, both financially and practically, a wide range of groups and projects from across the town:

35 Ock Street

The Abingdon Bridge

Abingdon Street Pastors

The Christian Aid group

The weekly Christian Forum column.

The Church Twinning group

The DESIRE network

Experience Easter

Prayer Spaces

Abingdon Emergency Food Bank

Thrive

What the churches have been working on together over the past year:

January 2016:

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Alpha Launch took place followed by the Alpha course being run in various churches.

February 2016:

CiA Lent Lectures

March/April 2016:

*A 'shoe cleaning' event was held on Maundy Thursday in the Market Place.

*Good Friday, there was a procession of witness through the town.

*Abingdon Passion Play

*The Women's World Day of Prayer

*Reflective space at Easter in the community shop in town.

*Easter Experience took place and many schools brought along children to help them understand more of what Easter means to Christians.

May 2016:

Christian Aid week.

June 2016:

Various churches worked together to represent the CiA at the Fun in the Park event.

July 2016:

Oxford Play Day event in Southern Town Park.

October 2016:

Michaelmas fair service in town.

November 2016:

*The Annual Bereavement Service

*Several activities were hosted at St Nicolas as part of the Abingdon Extravaganza.

December 2016:

The prayer space team organised a reflective space in the community shop in town.

January 2017:

*The launch of the Alpha course

*Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ending with the CiA Annual United Service.

Sandra Pike, CiA Rep for Christ Church

NEW WINE

Once again 160+ people from Christ Church gathered together to be part of the New Wine United summer gathering. One of the highlights in our camping village was the amount of social events we had – cream tea for over 100, a wine tasting evening, board game sessions, and a 25th Silver wedding celebration, and we even had visit from Bishop Colin! There were many more informal gatherings – probably one of the most valuable bits of New Wine – spending time together as God's family.

The weather was mixed, with a couple of days of rain but nothing can dampen God's Spirit and the work He has planned. It was lovely to hear the stories that people shared with Keith afterwards. Stories of healing, pictures from God, words of encouragement, friendships deepened, and fantastic worship times.

We look forward to gathering at New Wine again this summer. We hope to see you there.

Karen Brombley

THE CHURCH OFFICE

The church office is often the first port of call for visitors and newcomers to the church. It is the central point for making arrangements for weddings, baptisms and funerals; for facilitating room bookings, and repairs and maintenance of the church premises and property; for preparing the weekly newsletters and service sheets; for dealing with enquiries and telephone calls, and for solving the miscellany of issues that arise.

The church office continues to be staffed by Christine Talbot, Church Administrator and Vicar's PA, and Andrew Walker, Facilities Administrator.

We appreciate greatly the faithful service of Mark Chapman and Stuart Twinn our cleaning staff who keep the premises clean and welcoming to regular users and visitors.

Christine Talbot

DEANERY SYNOD

Deanery Synod is now in the final year of a 5 year transition towards using the same model as the Diocese for calculating Parish Shares. Agreement was that this should be reviewed annually and recommending to continue with the final year of transition.

An Away Day was planned for March, to review the Mission Action Plan. The MAP review paper has been distributed and is to be discussed by PCCs before the Away Day.

General discussions were had about the proposed new housing developments happening across the Deanery and ideas were shared about various ways to welcome people to the area and towards building community – e.g. welcome packs, gifts, welcome events in the local pub.

There was an opportunity for the Parishes to meet with Bishop Stephen Croft in December, and Christ Church hosted the evening event.

Martin Steel from Christ Church was appointed as Treasurer in June.

Leilani Jeevaratnam

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FINANCE SUMMARY

[Full information in the Report to the Charity Commission *available separately*]

2016 Accounts

I am pleased to report that we exceeded our budget for the last year. We started the year with a budget that showed we would spend about £15,000 more than we got in. The PCC approved the budget in the expectation that God would provide the resources needed to balance the budget and He did. We had a cash surplus over the year.

General (“unrestricted” in accountancy terms) income in 2016 was £543,000 of which £466,000 came, under God, from giving by members and the Gift Aid that can be reclaimed on these donations. This is a £39,000 increase in unrestricted income from 2015 which is a healthy sign.

General expenditure comprises £511,000 costs and £42,000 depreciation. The majority of unrestricted expenditure relates to Parish Share, staff salaries and Mission Support grants. Unrestricted expenditure increased by £23,000 compared with 2015.

A total of £17,000 was donated for specific (“restricted”) purposes.

Our accounts are independently examined by a firm of Abingdon-based auditors and are approved by the PCC. They will be available for church members to examine before the annual church meeting.

Finance Team

I want to thank my very capable team of Andy Lowe (Utilities and general matters), Gill Privett (Gift Aid and Payroll), Christine Talbot (Payments and Book-keeping), Mike Warner (Pensions and Legacies) and Neil Weston (Banking and general matters). Let me reassure you that all information on giving is kept confidential to the relevant members of the finance team and is not shared with anyone else.

Thank you

Thank you for your continued financial support for the work at Christ Church. Please do continue to pray for the finances – give thanks for God’s faithful provision; pray for wisdom and good stewardship; and pray for every member of the church that He would release in us a spirit of joyful and generous giving – through money, time and use of gifts.

Mark Stavers, Treasurer

(01235) 203825 or treasurer@cca.uk.net

BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

The buildings committee of David Wadham, Chris Fox, David Hancock and Roland Knight chaired by Andrew Turner met on 14th January, 28th July and 20th October to review the condition of NCR site, 33, Mattock Way, 34 Geoffrey Barber Road, set priorities for a ten year plan of works and recommend budgets to the Standing Committee for adoption by the PCC.

A log of all maintenance and repair tasks was administered by Andrew Walker from Quinquennial inspections (most recently November 2016), those reported by users, cleaners or observed during periodic inspections. These were prioritized by the committee (either during meetings, or by e-mail) and allocated as appropriate to volunteers or contractors.

As well as tasks being undertaken by Committee members or other key volunteers, a series of Work Days were organized on Saturdays (19/3, 2/4, 18/6, 9/7, 27/8, 24/9) involving wide congregational support. Altogether 105 tasks were completed (32 outside and 73 inside). 54 remain to be completed, of which 12 are currently already in progress and 7 have been rated as high priority. Having identified members of the congregation with suitable skills and experience, a number of smaller teams have been working to undertake specific tasks in their own time. It is estimated that some £35,000 has been saved by church members undertaking these tasks. Regular maintenance tasks are posted on a Google Diary as a means of prompting inclusion in the monthly schedule including servicing of the church/property boilers and annual PAT testing of electrical appliances.

In addition to a myriad of electrical, plumbing and woodworking repairs and decoration, the more significant tasks undertaken on the Church site included: Removal of hot water tank and pipework in the cellar under the Hall and installation of a replacement in the Ladies WC; Barns Café and Church Foyer redecoration, conversion/redecoration of the resources room as a library and prayer room; installation of a defibrillator - available for community use; digging of a soak-away system on the West side of the Church for rainwater run-off from the roof; replacement of the disabled ramp from Car Park to the Courtyard Garden, repair of the storm drains in front of the Lounge, removal of Ivy from the south wall of the car-park and container; installation and decoration of Fire Doors; revarnishing of the Barns external Oak; wood rot repair and general painting externally and internally.

Major Jobs Planned for 2017

Church Foyer Door Replacement

Completion of Emergency lighting Installation

WC Refurbishment (after Easter)

Lounge ceiling replace; redecorate/replace carpet (over the summer)

Lounge lobby and stairwell redecorate

Foyer refurbishment – information screen, welcome desk, seating

Barn 4 replacement of external woodwork facing Northcourt Farm and installation of insulation (June).

34, Geoffrey Barber shower room upgrade; replacement of failed bedroom window and front door.

Ten year Plan Main tasks

2018: Resurface West side of Church; Main entrance ramp; Hall chairs.

2019/20: Church roof retile; Redecorate/refurbish inside Church; replacement chairs

2020: Is there a business case for Barns Phase III (Kitchen & Loos) refurbishment?

2025: Replace Lounge/Upper Room/Link Corridor/Corner Suite, as these will have reached end of life.

Many thanks are particularly due to the members of the committee and John Shore as well as many other volunteers for their valued contributions. Given the scale and age of the site, we would really appreciate those with electrical, plumbing, carpentry, decorating and general DIY skills to offer these to support this essential work. Please contact Andrew Walker in the first instance.

Long Furlong

Long Furlong Primary School continues to be used as an established place of worship every Sunday. In addition, we are able to use the school for additional courses or events on weekdays. The children's work, Godzkidz, takes place in the nearby Community Centre. Whilst we are freed from the responsibilities of property maintenance, a heavier burden falls on the teams of volunteers needed to ensure that both buildings are prepared and cleared for each service and event.

Our thanks go to Graham Robinson and Geoff Palmer for their significant contribution to maintaining the smooth operation of our equipment and sustaining a good working relationship with the school management.

Andrew Turner and Andrew Walker

REPORT FROM PARISH SAFEGUARDING OFFICER FOR 2016

Safeguarding is one of the activities which takes place “under the radar” - most people see little that goes on, except those who are impacted by it, but is very important.

During the calendar year 2016, the work of ensuring the safeguarding of the children and young people under the care of groups at Christ Church has continued. We have also kept a watchful eye on the safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults who are contacted by various groups linked to the church.

The main work undertaken has fallen into five areas:

1) Policy revisions or renewals:

- The Church Policy Statement on Safeguarding was revised and signed during the PCC meeting of 9th May 2016, and is now on display in the lobby and the Hall. This policy is reviewed annually.
- Version 3f of the Guidelines for Working with Children and Young People (WWCYP) was approved at the same PCC meeting on 9th May 2016. A copy of these guidelines is distributed to all adults in the Children’s and Young People’s leadership teams.
- A new policy and guidelines for the use of Social Media in the youth work at Christ Church was approved at the same PCC meeting.
- Version 1d of the Guidelines for work with Vulnerable Adults (WWVA) is due for revision at this time and it is hoped to have it ready for scrutiny and approval in time for the May 2017 PCC meeting.

2) Safe recruitment of new team members involved in aspects of Children’s, Youth and Vulnerable Adult ministries:

Full documentation has been completed (or nearly completed) for 39* new team members of various C&YP groups, and for 9 new team members of VA groups. (* many for Holiday Club)

3) Renewal of DBS checks for existing team members: (DBS check have to be renewed every 5 years).

C&YP teams - 15 renewals after 5 years, 6 after 10 years.

(total number of people with a currently valid DBS check = 223)

VA teams - 24 renewals after 5 years; 0 renewals after 10 years

(total number of people with a currently valid DBS check = 46)

4) Training in safeguarding (training provided by Val Challis and/or Anne Taylor, who are both authorised trainers for the Diocese)

May 2016 (Children & YP) 76 (of whom 11 were from Peachcroft Christian Centre)

Nov 2016 (C & YP) 25 (of whom 2 from PCC and 3 from Drayton)

Jan 2017 (VA) 24 (all from Christ Church)

Jan 2017 (C & YP) 15 (of whom 3 were from Peachcroft Christian Centre)

5) The Parish Safeguarding Officer has been involved in consultations with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer concerning several live issues relating to safeguarding. These remain confidential, but none are considered to be a danger to any member of the congregation or the public.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (Steven Barber) retired in December after leading the Diocese through a significant period of development work. He will be replaced in February by John Nixon.

Roland Knight, Parish Safeguarding Officer

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The focus this year has been general improvements at Northcourt Road based on a Fire Risk Assessment we had done at the end of last year. This has included upgrading of the fire doors, as well as changing the direction a number of doors open, changes to the boiler room and electrical cupboard. The layout and seating capacity of the main Church has been re-assessed and some minor adjustments made. Fire awareness training has been held for service leaders and the welcome teams, and more is planned for the coming year. We have appointed Health and Safety Co-ordinator (Peter Butler) who among his tasks does regular walk throughs of the buildings to ensure that health and safety is maintained and liaises with the facilities administrator for necessary changes to be done. Peter also looks at any reported accidents, near misses or other health and safety issues that are raised. This has included this year the falling of tables from where they are stored in the hall, the storage of equipment in the transept for which changes are ongoing. The Health and Safety group is aware of the issue that now the new fire doors are up to standard they don't remain open which causes problems with the flow of people along the corridor and are currently looking into possible solutions.

P Brombley, Chair – Health & Safety subgroup

IT REPORT

The ICT group is a relatively new addition to the church community. Its purpose is to oversee and maintain the church's ICT provision and policy, and to research new ways of using ICT to resource the mission and ministry of the gospel. The heart of what we do is to make the most of the resources that God has given us, and to use the knowledge and skills we have to enable the church to pursue its vision of being disciples and making disciples. The group's remit covers the congregations and facilities of both sites and the community-facing facilities of The Barns and The Barns Cafe. Among the areas it covers are the website and social media, the church's IT infrastructure and providing IT support to the staff team (and others). Though we are new, we have already been identifying issues that we would like to tackle over the coming months and years.

A long standing desire of the church leadership, and indeed church members, has been to overhaul the church website. In September 2016 the issue became more urgent when the church website broke beyond repair. Since then a 'temporary' website has been in place to plug the gap. You can find the weekly news sheet and the latest sermon downloads there, as well as a brief overview of the ministries of the church, but that's about it for the time being. A major focus of the ICT group going forward is to review whether the church can use the web and social media more effectively to communicate with its members and the wider community.

The ICT group is also investigating ways of improving access to Sunday services. It is looking into the feasibility of having a permanent camera installed in the tithe barn at Northcourt Road so that the services can be shown in another room (for example: the overflow at the Christmas service or a room for parents with children).

We are also planning a full audit of the IT systems we have within the church with a view towards putting in a maintenance and support schedule. Our goal with this is to properly equip our staff with the tools they need to do their jobs effectively.

The group is fortunate to have people who know the technical aspects of the church inside out alongside their own expert knowledge of IT, audio and visual systems. We are, however, aware that this knowledge and experience can only take us so far. While there is an obvious focus on the technological, we would encourage anyone with a heart for community and experience in project management, writing, design, photography or any other creative skills to get in touch.

Aidan Melville

HR GROUP REPORT

1. Appointments:
 - i) Maternity Leave: Arrangements were implemented to make acting temporary appointments to cover a maternity leave at The Barns Café during 2016. Following interviews, Mrs Hannah Kitchener has been the Acting Café Manager from 1st April 2016. Her substantive role as Deputy Manager has also been covered with acting temporary appointments.
 - ii) Following the resignation of the Manager at The Barns Café as from January 2017, this full time permanent post was advertised and interviews were held in February. Hannah Kitchener has been appointed.
 - iii) Emma Bogue moved away to begin theological training in August and James Elward joined us in September on a placement as our parish assistant to support our work with children and young people.
2. Annual Staff Reviews: All employees at Christ Church now have an annual review with their line manager. This process was introduced in June 2016 after a period of consultation and training. This provides an opportunity to reflect on the previous year and to set appropriate agreed targets for the year ahead.
3. Pensions: The requirement by the Pensions Regulator for all employers to implement the automatic enrolment to provide pensions for all employees has been the most significant change for all employees at Christ Church this year.
4. During 2017, the HR Group will be carrying out a review of all the staffing policies to ensure that they are in line with current legislation and reflect good practice.

Chris Bryan, HR Group Coordinator

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT at 6th March 2017 for the Parish of North Abingdon

During the last year there were a total of 31 additions and 35 deletions to the 2016 roll of 559, giving a new roll of 558.

Worship Centre	Total Roll	Additions	Deletions	Change
Northcourt Road	396	23	33	-10
Long Furlong	136	6	2	+4
Peachcroft	26	2	0	+2
Totals	558	31	35	-4

Andrew Walker, Electoral Roll Officer for the Parish of North Abingdon

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON 24TH APRIL 2016

Introduction: Roland Knight (NCR am)/ Philip Bingham (LF & Eve)

The AGM was being held as part of the services during the day i.e. 9.30am, 11.15am and 6.30pm at the Northcourt Road site and the 10am service at Long Furlong School.

Roland/Philip explained that this is Vision Sunday, when we look back with praise for what God has done, and forward to catch a glimpse of what his plans are next. We have two formal meetings to complete here this morning (evening):

Officially, the first meeting (Annual Meeting of Parishioners) is open to anyone on the Church Electoral Roll **and** anyone resident in the Parish and entered on the local government electoral register. Anyone in those two groups is eligible to attend the AMP and to vote. The second meeting is the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), and those whose names are on the Church Electoral Roll may attend and vote. Anyone else may attend, but is not eligible to vote: no-one is excluded. The APCM is also referred to as the AGM and certain business must be completed.

An attendance log of parishioners and Electoral Roll Members was available at each service with people asked to sign in as a formal record of attendance. There was also a bring share lunch at 12.30 at Northcourt Road with a question and answer session with the clergy & church wardens. (Tim Davis was not in attendance due to being absent through ill health.)

AMP: Election of Church Wardens

There were 2 vacancies for Church Warden and 2 candidates: Roland Knight and Philip Bingham. They were both formally elected by acclaim. The AMP was closed with thanks to the wardens.

Letter from Colin Bishop of Dorchester

A letter from the Bishop read out to everyone; it is reproduced below:

I am sorry not to be able to be with you in person today and I am very grateful for the opportunity to send this message to your Annual Meeting as I wanted to say a number of things in what is, I am very much aware, a very difficult time for you all.

The first, of course, is to wish Tim well for his healing though I realise that that may be some time in coming since I understand that he has just been signed off for a further three months, with the possibility of more to come.

Second I wanted to express my thanks publicly to Keith Dunnett, the churchwardens, and the whole team as they have stepped up to the challenges of the past year quite magnificently and I cannot underestimate my admiration for them. I hope that Kath Cooke's arrival in just over a fortnight's time will bring much needed help to the team and I know that both she and Phil are greatly looking forward to joining you, having done great jobs in Eynsham and Cassington and Long Hanborough and Freeland respectively.

Thirdly I have been reflecting on what Tim's continuing absence means in both the life of your churches and of your congregations. As you know I am something of an expert at running a large organisation through an unexpectedly long vacancy. Your experience, of course, is different since a succession of three months' doctor's notes have a very different feel to them. However, in one respect the experience is not dissimilar. Whilst for a year you can, and should, aim to keep things ticking over, after that you need to be looking hard at developing some new initiatives as any living organism needs to thrust out some fresh shoots. These should not signal a significant change in direction as Tim remains your vicar and, since he is off work, he cannot be consulted about them, but they can be natural outworkings of things that have been developing in any case. They also need to be things that do not place additional pressures on your clergy and leaders.

If you want to check anything out then please feel free to talk to the Area Dean, the Parish Development Adviser, the Archdeacon or myself but please do not feel constrained by the present circumstances just to try to stay where you are. The God whom we encounter in Jesus Christ always seeks to lead us into His and our future and we must be alert and responsive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

With every blessing on all your ministry.

The Rt Revd Colin Fletcher OBE

Bishop of Dorchester

APCM

Deanery Representative Election

There were no changes to the 7 Deanery Representatives who were elected two years ago. In addition Martin Steel has recently been nominated as Deanery Treasurer.

PCC Elections

The membership of the PCC is as follows:

Clergy – 3 +1 (Tim Davis, Keith Dunnett, Simon Steer + Kath Cooke when in post)

Church Wardens – 2

Deanery Synod Reps – 7

Lay members – 15

Licensed Lay Ministers representative – 1 (Anne Taylor)

Peachcroft Minister -1 (vacant)

Co-opted CiA Rep – 1 (Sandra Pike)

There were 5 PCC lay members standing down as they had served 3 years. They are: Rachel Buckingham, Mike Crosbie, Andrew Dubock, Sarah Fry and Lynn Ross. They were thanked for their service. Five people had stood for these positions: Aidan Melville, Paul Brombley, Andrew Dubock, Sandra Pike and Herman Matheson. They were formally elected by acclaim.

For NCR: 202 Electoral Roll members signed in and 67 non-roll members attended.

For LF: 76 Electoral Members signed in (in addition, 4 signed in but were doing children's work so did not attend the meeting) and 15 non-roll members.

The Church Wardens thanked everyone who had served and continued to serve on the PCC.

Electoral Roll Information

Summary of the numbers of church members on the electoral roll are as follows:

	NCR	LF	Peach-croft	Parish Total	CCA Total
Roll at 4/2015	384	123	24	531	507
Roll at 4/2016	403	134	21	558	537

Additions = 35

Deletions = -8

Net change = +27 (19 NCR; 11 LF; -3 PCC)

Thanks to Chris Fox for his service in administering the electoral roll.

Annual Report

Roland/Philip then highlighted the yellow Annual Report document which gave a much fuller account of the work of the Church and encouraged everyone to read it and pray for the work.

This was available from the church website and also in hard copy format. There were also copies in the Lobby of the report which had been already submitted to the Charity Commissioners. The church wardens thanked Keith especially for his leadership over the last year and all members of the congregation for their service to the church in all areas of ministry.

Financial Report

Presented by Mark Stavers, treasurer.

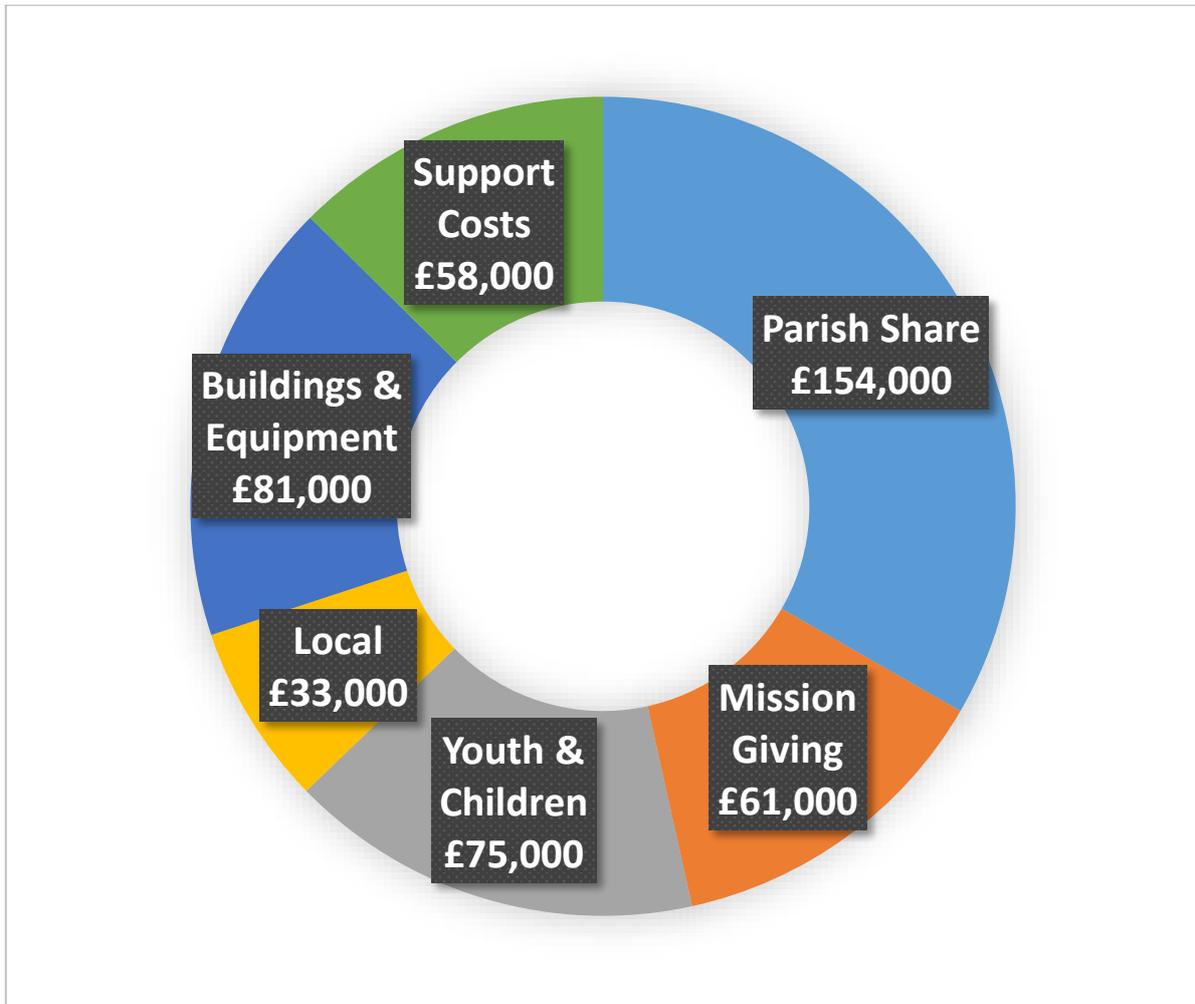
Mark started by speaking from Psalm 24:1 “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it”, and that it was good to be reminded of this when speaking of money. He has produced the accounts in a simplified leaflet and a summary is given below:

2015: What actually happened

2016: What we plan and pray will happen.

Income £449,000 in 2015





Last year the PCC approved spending £35,000 from our reserves in order to start to catch up on some of the church maintenance which was now urgently required.

For 2016 the PCC approved a General Income of £451,000 and General Spend of £464,000. The increase from last year is mainly due to:

- 2% pay increase & all staff on 'the living wage'
- 1% contribution to pensions
- £23,000 for major building repairs
- Small increase in our parish share

This gives a predicted shortfall of £13,000, but since the Focus on Giving Weekend in February a number of pledges have now come in which should cover this amount.

Mark also pointed out that the Barns Cafe is run as a separate business, owned by the church and is run on a non-profit basis to serve the community. It did however return a one-off payment of £13,000 to the PCC and made a further £4,000 surplus from its operations in 2015. The PCC will consider what to use the £13,000 for in a future meeting.

The rules concerning the size of charities that need their accounts audited have changed during the year. Our church no longer needs an auditor but we propose to continue to use Wenn Townsend as "Independent Examiners". This will save us money and time. This needed a formal vote: Proposer: Roland Knight; Seconded: Ros Steel; Vote passed unanimously.

Finally Mark thanked his co-workers on the finance team who were available to answer questions:

- Andy Lowe (Utilities and general matters)
- Gill Privett (Gift Aid and Payroll)
- Christine Talbot (Payments and Book-keeping)
- Mike Warner (Pensions and Legacies)
- Neil Weston (Banking and general matters)
- Mark Stavers (Treasurer)

Formal Acceptance of 2015 minutes

These were formally accepted at the start of the bring and share lunch.

Sermon & Thanks – Keith Dunnett

Theme: Devoted to the Lord (am 1 Cor 15:1-8, 58; pm Acts 2:42-47)

Keith thanked those who have served on the PCC over the past year, and those who offered themselves for election. He particularly thanked Mike Reading, Philip Bingham and Roland Knight as wardens for their steadfast and faithful service and support, and thanked their families who allowed them to spend so much time in this service.

In the morning Keith opened his sermon by talking about life's uncertainties - at the international, national, county and personal level. Christ Church also has uncertainties, especially with Tim being signed off at 3 month intervals. However Paul writes in 1 Cor 15:58 "stand firm, let nothing move you". Our response can be to panic or worry excessively, but Paul says to stand firm because of the gospel (v1-3). Keith reminded us of other certainties: God the Father raised Jesus from the dead and seated him on the heavenly throne; Jesus is Head of the Church; the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church. We have been stretched but God has provided (e.g. provision of Kath and Phil Cooke); Tim has been off, but our true head in Jesus has not changed; the Holy Spirit allows us to work with his power, not our own. In the evening Keith explored the devotion of the church in Acts 2, to the Lord in worship, one another in fellowship, and to others in mission. He noted some similarities between Christ Church and the church in Acts 2 – developments in leadership, and the unknown future.

Paul urges us to "always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord". In his letter the bishop acknowledged that for the last 12 months with our Vicar away we have rightly had to "keep things ticking over." But as we enter the second year without Tim the bishop encourages us to develop "fresh shoots". Keith reminded us of what he shared at last year's APCM of the PCC's time of listening to God – three strands which will shape our vision for the coming year: (1) engaging more with our community; (2) being more confident in evangelism; (3) encouraging people to grow as disciples. He gave some practical examples. Let us remember the final part of v 58, "your labour in the Lord is not in vain".

Question & Answer Session at bring and share lunch (Northcourt Road Hall).

Following questions were asked and the response from the clergy / church wardens as follows:

1. Barbara Gyde: Are there plans to plant a church in the area of new homes in Abingdon?
Keith replied that Christ Church had written to the District Council and been in contact with a school charity called Chapel St Trust. It was unclear at the moment, but we were ready to respond if the go ahead was given.
2. Sally Mears: What could Christ Church offer to Abingdon community now the Children's Care Centres were being closed?
Karen Brombley replied that the centres had had a reprieve with extra money for one year, and Keith then responded that we had no particular plans at present, but this was something we should keep an eye on.
3. Emil Jeevaratnam: What financial support did the Church need to offer to Kath and Phil Cooke?
Keith replied that the Diocese was paying their main salary with Christ Church just making a small contribution for their housing.
4. Emil Jeevaratnam: What was Christ Church's policy on reserves and how do we build them up?
Mark replied that by law a charity has to have a policy on how much reserve it keeps, and the Charities Commission recommends the equivalent of 3 months' outgoings. Christ Church adheres to this recommendation, and the reserves are built gradually over time. It was because we had more than 3 months' reserves that the PCC decided to spend more on buildings improvements last year.
5. Judy White: Why is it predicted that the Barns Café won't make a profit in 2016?
Philip Bingham replied that it was not set-up specifically to make a profit, but to serve the community. Its mission statement is, "To be a welcoming place that is a pleasure to come to which demonstrates the love of Jesus and which succeeds as a business." The café made a surplus in 2015 because of one-off circumstances including VAT not being levied until the end of the year.
6. Hilary Beale: In serving Foodbank people coming for food are often dishevelled due to living rough. Is there a possibility of including a shower in the new plans? (Other members also suggested a washing machine and dishwasher.)
Keith and the wardens noted the idea and noted that we will need to replace the Hall/ Lounge as it reaches the end of its life, and that future buildings should be designed to serve the community as we felt God was leading us.
7. Tom Stavers: What does PCC do?
Roland described that PCC was a council of people chosen from the Church community to seek God's direction for the church and work closely with the clergy to understand what Jesus is saying to the Church. It deals with practical issues, such as finance and the buildings and well as spiritual direction and guidance.
8. Maines Bwanali: As a carer for the elderly she felt that Christ Church should be reaching out to serve the elderly in our community and asked what was Christ Church doing to look after the elderly?
Ros Steel replied that there was a group of people in the Church who regularly helped elderly people, and there were groups such as 51 Fellowship, Prime Time and Archway which also served this community. It was true though

that these were mainly people within the Church rather than the wider elderly community. Emil also commented that the links to the elderly were very good in Christ Church, but there could be opportunities if the Council is cutting back on its work.

9. James Ross: He gave thanks to Keith for his leadership and care in this last difficult year and was also heartened by the Bishop’s message. What was Keith’s vision for the future?
Keith replied that he also was encouraged by the Bishop’s statement, but it was early days and it was clear Tim was still overall in charge and we would only do things he would approve of. However a year ago the PCC had considered 3 areas which were currently on hold: engaging more with our community, more confidence in evangelism and encouraging people to grow as disciples. PCC would develop these further, whilst also keeping an eye on the housing developments which could be a fourth area.
10. Howard Delafield: He thanked Keith for the 8 am service and how it had been “tweaked” and was growing with more attendees and a better sense of purpose through drama and a breakfast.

The Q&A session ended with a prayer from Philip Bingham to give thanks for the church leaders and for the vision for the future.

Andy Dent
PCC Secretary

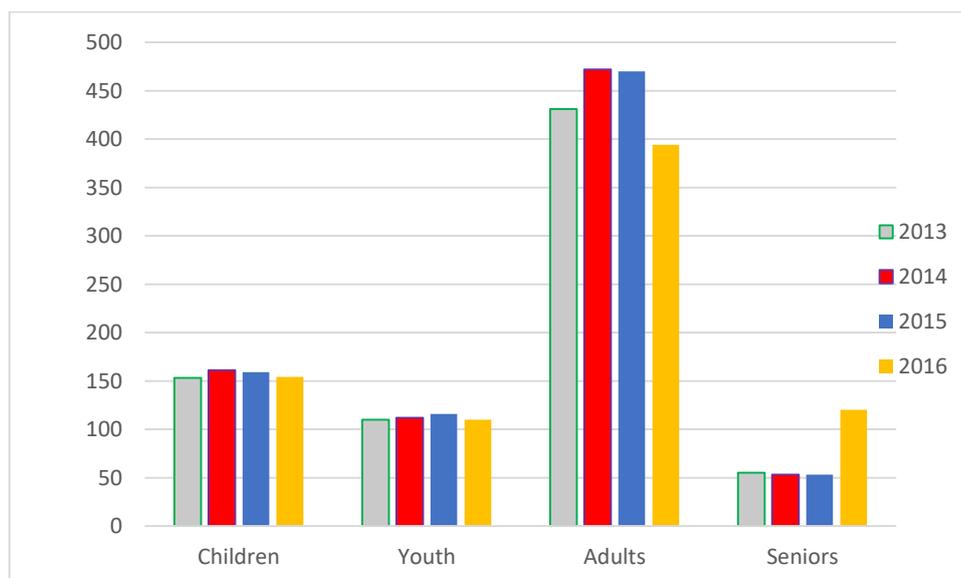
CHURCH STATISTICS

Each year, we are asked by the Diocesan authorities to provide statistics of the life of the church to help them build an overall picture of the health of the Church of England on a local and national basis.

Worshipping community

Age range	2013	2014	2015	2016
Children (0-10)	153	161	159	154
Young people (11 – 17)	110	112	116	110
Adults (18-69)	431	472	470	394
Seniors (over 70)	55	53	53	120
TOTAL	749	798	798	778

Our worshipping community is estimated to be just under 780, which is a little down from last year. Typically, 33.1% are aged under 18.



There has been a growth in seniors as we have calculated the age of the congregation differently. As seen in the electoral roll section we have 532 “signed up” members over 16. Analysis of the comings and goings show a small number coming to faith and returning to Church (1.5% of total worshipping community), with more leaving Christ Church than joining (-8.4% + 4.9% = -3.5%). However, it is always sad to see some slipping away (0.5%).

Reason	Joiners		Reason	Leavers	
	Under 18	Over 18		Under 18	Over 18
First time	6	3	Death	1	3
Moved area	2	21	Moved away	10	15
Moved church within area	1	2	Moved to another local church	4	11
Returned to Church	0	3	Left Church	5	16
Total	9	29	Total	20	45

Festivals

Festival	Communicants	Worshippers
Easter Day	488	360
Christmas Eve/Day	172	1425

Special Christmas and Advent Events/services

Activity	TOTAL	Adults	Children
Civic and school	250	150	100
Christingles	801	480	321

Christmas can be seen to be an important time of the year when we are able to touch a significant fraction of the community with the Gospel.

October count

Date	Services	Adults	Children
2 nd	5	388	131
9 th	4	357	116
16 th	5	365	136
23 rd *	4	299	48
30 th *	5	413**	119

* Half-term

** Baptisms at two services

This is a snap-shot of the “normal” church attendance including visitors. On a typical Sunday at our various services at both sites 352 adults (including visitors) and 110 children come to worship.

School assemblies

As part of our ministry to young people, Matt, Heather and the assembly’s team have been able to visit schools on average once a month.

Offices

Age →	0-1	1-4	>13
Baptism	5	4	1
Thanksgiving	2	2	0

Office	Church	Crematorium
Marriages	3	
Funerals	4	4

Andrew Walker

Christ Church Abingdon

Parish Population 17000 ER 532 ASA 352 Adults + 110 children & youth

Discipleship Groups
About 300 adults
meeting in 28 small groups
with c 60 leaders

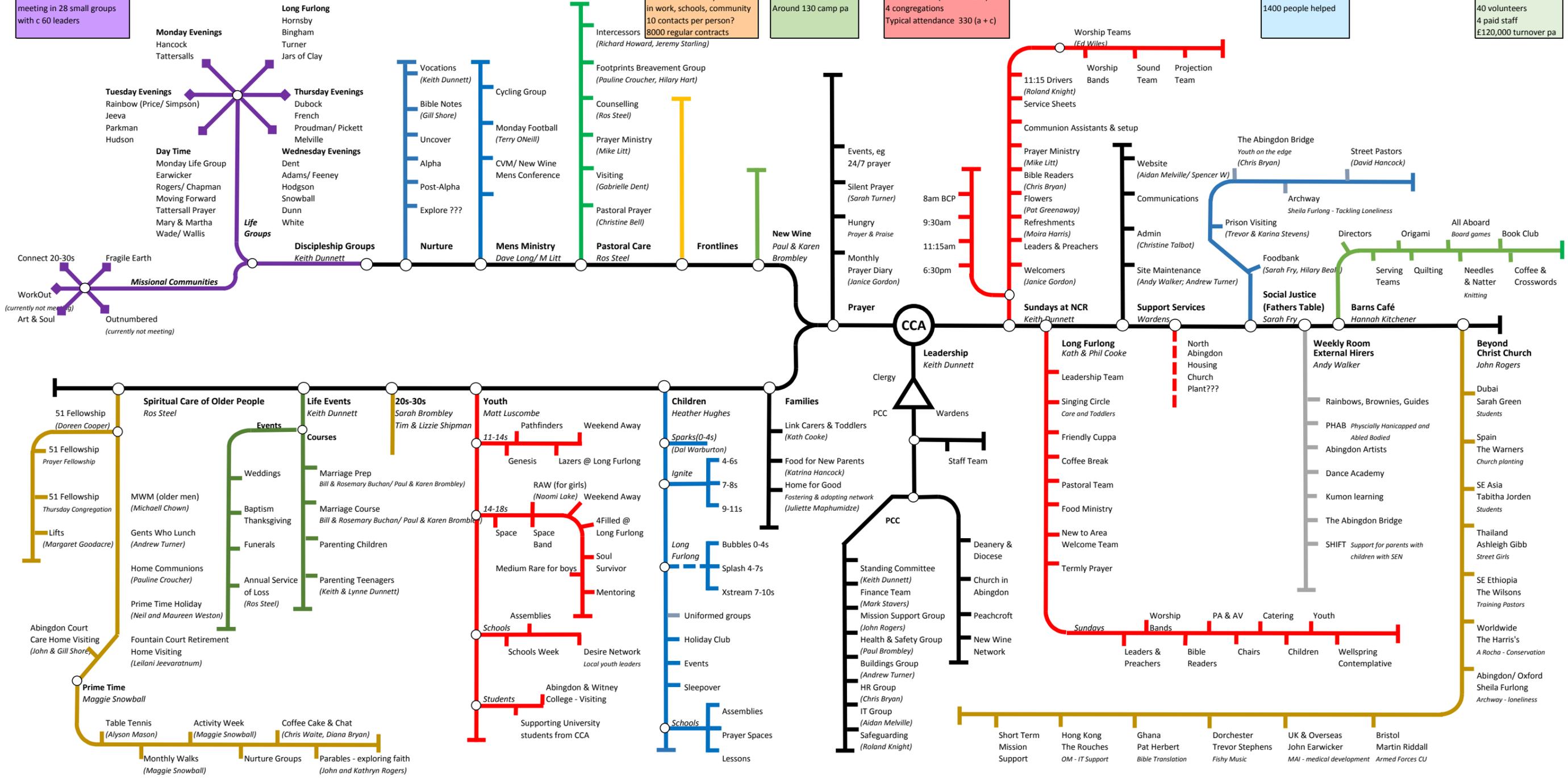
Frontlines
800 members daily
in work, schools, community
10 contacts per person?
8000 regular contracts

New Wine Camp
United Week 2
Around 130 camp pa

Northcourt Road
600 members (adult + u18s)
4 congregations
Typical attendance 330 (a + c)

Food Bank
700 referrals in 2016
1400 people helped

Barns Café
550 customers a week
40 volunteers
4 paid staff
£120,000 turnover pa



51 Fellowship
c 80 people
Typically 60 at mid week service

Prime Time
260 >50's at activity week
40 people on holiday

Youth Work
20 Leaders/ helpers
100 youth in 5 groups
5 schools 3000+ Pupils
40 students at university

Children's Work
110 leaders/ helpers/ teens
160 children in 7 groups
4 schools, 1500 pupils

PCC
28 members
Oversees church of 780
14 staff
Budget £0.51 million pa excl café

Long Furlong
200 members (adult + u18s)
Typical attendance 130 (a + c)
Meets in Long Furlong School & the Community Centre

New Housing
950 homes planned
Building starts 2018
CCA looking to plant a congregation with other churches

Site Users
1400 people use the site weekly
plus 550 in the Barns Café

Mission Support Group
8 on Mission Support Group
12 mission partners
15% of PCC Budget
c £74,000 pa

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Christ Church is, under God's grace and leadership, a fairly large church, with lots of ministry areas. This diagram is a first attempt to show those many areas and who oversees them. Things are constantly changing, and there will probably be mistakes or omissions on this diagram. If you spot something that needs changing, please let the church office know: office@cca.uk.net

Key:
Pastoral Care : Ministry Area
 Ros Steel : Ministry Area Overseer
 (Christine Bell) : Ministry team leader
 CCA Group
 External linked group