



## **The Parish of St. Peter, Staple Fitzpaine**

**Annual Report and Financial Statements  
Year ended 31 December 2018**

# **St Peter's Church Staple Fitzpaine**





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## INTRODUCTION

The Annual Report of St. Peter's church presents the opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved over the last twelve months and to thank people who have been involved in the life and work of the church. All the help people give is greatly appreciated and help is given in so many different ways.

This year the Flower and Music Festival was a highlight and involved many people from the near and wider community who worked imaginatively, and also very hard, to creating a weekend full of flowers, music, refreshments, fun and spirituality. There have been several spins off from the festival including the establishment of the WI Café in St Peter's Church on Friday mornings – thank you to all involved in making this a success.

The financial statements included at the end of the report give details of the church receipts and expenditure for 2018. During 2018 Receipts exceeded Payments by £2,833.

## THE PARISH

The parish forms part of the Seven Sowers Benefice comprising Beercrocombe, with Curry Mallet, Hatch Beauchamp, Orchard Portman, Staple Fitzpaine, Stoke St. Mary (with Thurlbear) and West Hatch. The parish is part of the Ilminster Deanery, in the Diocese of Bath and Wells, within the Church of England. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity exempted from registration with the Charity Commissioners. The Benefice is part of a Local Ministry Group (LMG) with the adjoining Blackdown Benefice.

## THE MINISTRY TEAM

Rector	Revd Paul Reynolds – retired October 2018
Associate minister (house for duty)	Revd Stephen Jones – appt August 2018
Associate Minister	Revd Christabel Ager
One Reader with PTO*	Brian Crudge
Reader emeritus	Clive Hayward
Children's, schools and families worker	Holly Stevens
Reader in training	Sue McKen
Ordinand	Phil Albrow

\* Permission to officiate

In the light of the Diocesan strategy and our own Plan, the ministry team together with the church wardens have established the following priorities:

- To encourage authentic Christianity in our members' lives
- To encourage small groups within church
- To develop work amongst children
- To develop work amongst 13-40s

- To develop leaders within the church (every member ministry)
- To utilise ministerial gifts to the full
- To ensure the needs of older people are adequately addressed.

Through our teaching, worship and activities, the ministry team seeks to put mission and evangelism at the heart of everything. Over the last few years they have introduced Messy Church into Hatch Beauchamp and Curry Mallet as a way of reaching those families who will not be touched by our other activities. Twice a year a benefice wide all age worship event is held at St Peter's. Devised and planned by one of the lay leaders, the service draws in a number of families who otherwise have very little contact with the church; sadly the March service was cancelled due to heavy snow.

A thriving Mums and Tots group at Stoke St Mary, led by the associate minister, has helped to develop some excellent relationships with parents who attend, leading to some joining in with Messy Church or having their children baptised.

The team aims to run a yearly Alpha course for those interested in exploring further the relevance of Christian faith for today.

During Lent there was a series of talks on how we live out our Christian faith. The talks are followed by a simple lunch provided by the parishes in turn and there is always friendship and good conversation to share.

The Ministry Team is committed to providing forms of worship and events that engage those who currently have little contact with the church.

### **Ministry Team Changes**

In August 2018 Revd Stephen Jones took up the duties of Associate Priest, House for Duty. Stephen has already established himself as a well-read and experienced priest and we wish him and his wife Gillian well for their ministry in the Seven Sowers Benefice.

In October 2018 Revd Paul Reynolds retired from the Benefice. The farewell service, held at St Peter's, was a joyful service of mixed emotions. The service, attended by 226 people, led by Paul and Christabel, was followed by a Bring and Share lunch at Neroche Hall. We miss Paul and Kate but are so grateful they came and worked with us in our Benefice and gave us spiritual guidance, a sense of purpose and a great deal of fun and laughter. We ask for God's blessing upon them and wish them well for their future adventures.

Change is always tinged with sadness and a feeling of loss; but often it is followed by the sense of moving forward and hope.

### **PCC MEMBERSHIP**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation rules. Members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll. The PCC met on three occasions during 2018 and conducted other pressing business by email correspondence.

PCC members who served in 2018 were:

Chairman: Revd Paul Reynolds – retired October 2018  
Churchwardens: Alison Brown  
Mal Lee  
Elected Members:  
Secretary Sheila Green  
Chris Dunn  
Tami Boden Ellis  
Julie Pope  
Ex Officio Revd Christabel Ager  
Revd Stephen Jones  
Treasurer Mary Bell (not a member of the PCC)

Members of the PCC bring a wealth of different knowledge and experience and it is often the challenge from committee members that makes for clearer and more objective decision making. PCC members also support the ministry team across the benefice.

## THE ELECTORAL ROLL

In 2018 twenty three people were registered on the church electoral roll. On average thirteen people attend church on the first Sunday of the month.

## WORSHIP

The current service rota is as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday 10.00 am Parish Communion  
3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday 6.30pm Reflective worship

In addition there was one Worship for All Benefice service on the third Sunday in September; the service planned for March was cancelled due to snow. Attendance at major services over the last ten years is as follows:

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Good Friday	-	14	14	14	21	15	-	18	18	-
Easter Sunday	56	61	46	64	58	39	51	43	50	39
Harvest Festival	31	37	40	38	70**	33	38	27	55	25
Remembrance Sunday	72	64	48	64	64	50	41	45	44	30
Carol Service	94	106	128	99	67	85	84	91	Snow	84
Christmas Day	66*	54	55	79*	60	66	78*	47	42	66*

\*Midnight

\*\* Baptism service

The sustained growth in Festival attendances is very encouraging. There is only one Sunday service a month and the low levels of attendance at this service are a cause for some concern. In 2018 there was one baptism service, no marriage services and one funeral service.



## **THE CAROL SERVICE**

The season of Advent is a very dark time of year as the nights are at their longest and for Christians it is a time of reflection and growing anticipation as we wait for the light of Jesus to end the darkness. The carol service took place on 19 December and the church was beautifully decorated with greenery, and candles. The bells rang out to welcome people to church; candles in jam jars lit the paths; and amongst the strong congregation there was a buzz of anticipation to hear the story of how the birth of Jesus came to pass. The service was led by Revd Stephen Jones and Phil Albrow who welcomed everyone and asked people to think about what Christmas means. The theme 'What is Christmas?' was echoed throughout the service with a talk and a non-bible reading.

The congregation remained standing as soloist, Lottie Michaels, sang the first verse of 'Once in Royal David's City' very movingly – then the lights went up and the congregation all joined in. The story of the birth of Jesus from the traditional bible readings was extremely well told by Henry Heath, Di Grabham, Kath Michaels, Mike Nicholls, Alison Brown, John Lee and Mal Lee.

Led by conductor and organist Julie Pope, St Peter's singers enchanted the congregation by singing 'This is the truth sent from above', 'A Maiden most gentle' and 'We three Kings'.

The Neroche Handbell Ringers played a medley of Christmas songs enhancing the feeling of anticipation and waiting whilst ringing out the handbells' crystal notes.

After the service there was a retiring collection for the local Women's Refuge and everyone was invited to enjoy seasonal refreshments. It was an evening blessed with Christmas goodwill to all.

## **CAROLS AROUND THE NEROCHE VILLAGES**

The Christmas story of the birth of Christ was celebrated in the traditional way by the annual Singing of Carols around the villages of Staple Fitzpaine, Curland and Bickenhall. The weather was kind and the event was well supported with singing ably led by Julie Pope on her accordion. St Peter's Singers formed the basis of the choir with some welcome additions from friends. This year transport was by car-share instead of the amusement of climbing in and out of the horsebox.

The singers were met by groups of spectators and participants at each venue and were liberally rewarded by food and drink. Our grateful thanks to all the various hosts who sustained us so well. It is most rewarding to look round in the torchlight and see happy faces all singing away about the coming of the baby Jesus.

The trip started at with a warm up at Ladyacre, Staple Fitzpaine, and finished with a visit to the Greyhound Inn, with several stops in between.

A collection of over £200 for Somerset Sight was made during the evening.

## **PEOPLE WHO HELP**

There are a great many people who support St Peter's church in a variety of different ways: the people who undertake duties in church, those who clean the church, those who maintain the churchyard, the clock winder, people who provide and serve refreshments after services and celebrations, people who maintain the building, the sidespeople, bellringers, Flower Guild, people who read, people who lead prayers and people who sing.

Looking after a Grade 1 listed building is a huge responsibility and whilst every effort is made to make sure the building and churchyard are safe to be used by members of the public, more help from members of the community would be greatly appreciated. Your comments are always welcomed but your help would be wonderful and would make a great deal of difference.

## **SIDESPEOPLE**

The sidespeople are a dedicated group who perform their duties of greeting members of the congregation, reading and taking collection with quiet dignity. The churchwardens appreciate the support the sidespeople provide; in particular thanks are given to Mary Bell, Di Grabham, Henry Heath, John Lee, Mike Nicholls and Mark Pope.

## **FLOWER GUILD**

The Flower Guild is currently comprised of five volunteers - Alison Brown, Jaqueline Kolkowski, Mal Lee and Kath Michaels. Aply led by Di Grabham the volunteers work on a rota basis to provide beautiful floral arrangements every month. The work for the Flower Guild includes lifting, carrying, daily watering and a lot of tidying up, it is a work of love and others who are interested are very welcome to come and join in. St Peter's is recognised locally for the quality of the floral tributes that are prepared for the Festival Services of Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Greenery and fruit and vegetable contributions for these services are provided from members of the local community who will often help with decorating the windows. The Guild also provides a flower arranging service for weddings. The Flower and Music Festival was greatly supported by the Flower Guild who took great pleasure in being involved.

It is always a delight to see the beauty of St Peter's Church enhanced with the wonders of God's world. Many thanks to the members of the Flower Guild for their dedication, hard work and artistry.

## **ST. PETER'S SINGERS**

St Peter's Singers has been meeting weekly now for over ten years, singing anthems at the festival services and taking part this year in the St. Peter's Flower and Musical Festival. Friendships have been cemented and our musical ability has grown, too. Even during the cold weather, a hearty sound can be heard coming from the church on a Thursday evening so, if you enjoy singing, come along and give us a try.



## **BELLRINGERS' REPORT**

The Belfry of St Peters continues to be in good working order. All the ropes are in good condition and the clock is working satisfactorily. On one occasion in 2018 a cable slipped off from a pulley connected to the clock mechanism but this was remedied with the help of a couple of bellringers. It must be stated that this was not a fault with the mechanism but more of a mistake by the clock winder!

The bell installation suffered during the hot summer of 2018. Two bell headstocks shrunk due to the excessive dry heat and this meant no ringing was possible until the temperature/humidity corrected itself and the fixings could be carefully tightened. This was evidently a common problem in numerous churches in 2018 with old wooden frames and headstocks.

There are at the moment eleven ringers at Staple Fitzpaine. They are at differing stages of expertise but all are experienced enough to be able to ring without supervision and are capable of good quality call change ringing. For the future a programme is being put in place to teach Method Ringing.

The ringers also help out other churches when ringers are required such as at West Hatch, Hatch Beauchamp and Thurlbear, who in turn help Staple for weddings and special occasions.

I must take this opportunity to thank all the people who keep Staple Belfry running in such an enthusiastic and good humoured way.

**Paul Hart**  
**Tower Captain (and Clock Winder)**

## **NEROCHE THURSDAY LUNCHES**

Neroche lunches continue to be successfully enjoyed by our regular guests, providing a social occasion for those in our community, who may be at home on their own, and giving them this opportunity to meet others. Regular guests together with helpers number around 40-45. The Christmas lunch in a beautifully decorated hall is particularly well attended.

Friends have been made and although some of our friends have sadly passed on, there is a lovely community atmosphere accompanied by delicious food. The helpers get much enjoyment in producing a successful meal, and in the camaraderie that accompanies our efforts. The Pavlovas are especially popular!

Thanks are given to the Friends of St. Peter's Church who are involved in this worthwhile project, particularly the co-ordinators for each lunch who take the responsibility of organisation. Generally a small profit is made by the lunches. This has been given to worthwhile causes during the year.

**Alison Brown**

## **UPDATE ON RE-ORDERING WORK**

### **Update as at February 2019**

To date a total of almost £60,000 has been raised for the re-ordering work. In November the PCC passed a resolution to remove the organ. This was sent to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) – the committee that gives or refuses permission for changes to church buildings. A further faculty application was sent and the DAC asked for further drawings to indicate the floor levels more clearly.

In December 2018, Mr Farley an organ builder from Devon visited the church with a view to remove the organ and send it for repair and refurbishing to a place in Holland. Mr Farley has subsequently agreed to remove the organ subject to the necessary permission from the Diocese. This was also communicated to the DAC. As at 1 February 2019 the DAC are waiting for comments from one of the organ advisers.

Mr Alan Smith, church architect is working on the drawings which should be completed by mid-February for submission to the DAC.

### **Update as at 2017**

To date with the help of grants and fundraising a total of £54,776 has been spent to complete the following work:

- Bringing a water supply from the main road to the church. This involved the architect, an archaeologist, TDBC and the contractors
- Removing the pews at the back of the church and laying down flagstones. This involved the architect and an archaeologist. Contractors included electricians, plumbers and stone masons
- Installation of servery with water boiler, induction hob and bespoke oak units. This involved the architect and contractors included electricians, plumbers and a carpenter
- Removing pews in the north east aisle and laying down flagstones. This was necessary for two reasons: first, the theft of lead caused a great deal of water damage to the pews in the north aisle especially those in the east corner, secondly the removal of pews allowed space accommodating the frontal storage box and Clavinova
- Removal of pews at the front of the church has provided more flexible space for the choir, All Age Worship and concert events
- New comfortable stacking chairs have been purchased.

After considerable correspondence with the Diocesan Advisory Committee a faculty has been granted for the removal of the organ. Unfortunately the original organ company does not have sufficient capacity to remove the organ due to staff changes. Mr Christopher Gaughan who is an organ builder has now promised to remove the organ (July 2017) and the faculty has been re-issued in his name. Mr Gaughan has subsequently written to say he is no longer able to undertake this project.



## **2018 Financial Review**

At 31 December 2018 PCC Funds Totalled £23,209

### **Receipts**

Receipts in 2018 totalled £24,070

Fund raising continued to be the major source of income in 2018.

The largest fundraising event was the Flower and Music Festival. The designated fund closed at the end of 2018, contributing £4,631 to the Reordering Fund. Other regular fundraising events, the Pop up Café and product sales raised £3,310.

Regular bank giving by parishioners, however, provides the only dependable income for the Church. Giving, even a small amount, on a regular basis makes a huge difference to managing church running costs. The number of regular bank receipts has sadly reduced slightly in 2018.

A Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme application successfully provided £337 of refunded VAT from building works carried out in 2017.

HMRC refunded a total of £2,313, income tax from Gift Aided donations and other parishioner donations eligible for the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme.

### **Payments**

Payments in 2018 totalled £21,237

The Largest expenditure was £10,330 for the Parish Share of DBF Bath & Wells, for enabling and supporting the local ministry. The second largest expenditure was £1,623 for Ecclesiastical Building Insurance.

During 2018 Staple PCC donated £963 of funds to charitable giving, including payments to The Royal British Legion, Somerset Sight, The Open Door and the Tearfund.

A contribution was also made to West Hatch PCC as reparation for Paul Reynolds' retirement benefice thanksgiving service which was held at St Peters instead of St Andrews.

The PCC continues to repay the Diocesan Board of Finance loan taken out in 2014. Interest payments of £63 plus £1,000 capital repaid annually. £6,000 remains outstanding.

No reordering or major building costs were incurred in 2018.

**During 2018 Receipts exceeded Payments by £2,833**

<b>Extracts from the Church Visitors' Book</b>	<b><i>For which many thanks go to</i></b>
Beautiful beautiful Impressive Lovely church, nice and bright too Very peaceful, sun out Sweet little country church Lovely tower thanks for being open	<i>All the people on the cleaning rota who turn out in all weathers to keep the church clean and polished.</i>  <i>All the people who maintain the church and churchyard</i>
Thank you for a beautiful service to commemorate the end of WW1 – may they RIP	<i>The people who take services</i>
Very impressive We also have a Norman Manor and church Thank you and thanks for the short history	<i>Members of the PCC</i>
Peaceful Very peaceful, lovely church thank you Jolie église Super atmosphere lovely to see it open So glad it was open A pleasure to find open	<i>All the people who open and close the church every day of the year.</i>
Lovely Flower displays Very impressive floral displays Beautiful church Charming Just lovely Lovely sounding bells Lovely country church so beautiful Peaceful, thank you for receiving my prayers What a beautiful church	<i>Everyone who gives their time to make the church welcoming.</i>  <i>Everyone who gives their time to decorate the church with flowers.</i> <i>Choir and Musicians</i>  <i>Bellringers</i>  <i>Everyone who gives their time to make sure the church is well loved.</i>  <i>..and to God who receives our prayers</i> .

## **FUNDRAISING**

The Fundraising Group is now well established and organises a variety of events to delight and engage the local community.

Events in 2018 included the Pancake Supper, Quiz Nights, the Scarecrow Festival, Harvest Festival lunch and the Flower and Music Festival.

## **THE FLOWER AND MUSIC FESTIVAL 2018**

The festival presented a wonderful opportunity to showcase the talents of local people in the beautiful and historic venue of St Peter's Church Staple Fitzpaine. The theme of the festival was 'Songs of Praise' and brought together as the main events, flower arrangements designed by twelve flower arrangers and music by King's College Taunton Choir and Big Band and the Amici Choir. The festival was a celebration of God's creation and community and a Songs of Praise service completed a weekend of fun and friendship. Thanks go to Kath Michaels and the many people involved in making the event so successful and enjoyable.

## THE OLD CHURCH PATH



*“And it’s from the old I travel to the new  
Keep me travelling along with you”*