



**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
OF THE PARISH OF ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, DESFORD
FOR THE YEAR TO 31st DECEMBER 2019**

Due to the current climate we are unable to hold our AGM as usual

Attached are the reports which hopefully you will find of interest

Minutes of ACM held 9th April 2019

Annual Church Meeting (ACM) to receive a new Electoral Roll

ACM to receive the Annual Report & Accounts – Examined on the 18th January and presented to the PCC on **12th February**

ACM to receive the Churchwardens Report

PCC Secretary's report

ACM other reports as read

In due course we will have elections as undernoted:

ACM Election of **9** PCC members / Ex Officio members (75 members)

Some PCC members will stay on by rotation

Vacancies for 5 people

To elect 2 Deanery Representatives – ex officio

To elect a Health & Safety Officer

To elect a Representative to the Ivanhoe Group Council **for a 12 month term**

ACM PCC co-options

ACM Review of sidespersons list

Nomination and appreciation of Honorary Examiner –

Any other business

Election of PCC Officers / Standing Committee

Under the Data Protection Act – some names have been deleted from the Reports for this wider circulation

Annual General Meeting of St Martin's Church Desford, held on 9th April 2019 in the Church of St Martin, Desford from 7.30 pm.

Under the Data Protection Act - Some names have been deleted from the Reports for this wider circulation

Attendance: 28 Church Members –

Welcome : Revd. Tom Ringland – Read Hebrews Chapter 12 and conducted prayers.

1. Apologies: 7 people.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15th April Proposed and Seconded– Minutes accepted.

3. Minutes of an Extraordinary meeting 27th May 2018 at 12.15pm – Election of Church wardens Nev Hammonds & Mary Collins duly elected. Minutes approved.

4. Matter Arising: None

5. Meeting of Parishioners – Election of 2 churchwardens – 1 Nomination of Mary Collins Proposed Nev Hammonds and Seconded, accepted. Nev Hammonds has agreed to stand for one final year in the absence of any other nominations. In accordance with Church Rules he is required to stand down at the end of the year. Nev Hammonds Proposed and, Seconded and accepted as Churchwarden for a final year.

6. Receive a new Electoral Roll – New electoral roll of officer reported that membership has dropped by 30% to 75 members. The number not resident within the Parish included in the electoral roll are 12. Noted that it was typical that on year one of a new Roll numbers dropped.

7. Receive the Annual Report and Accounts. Grateful thanks to our Treasurer for preparing the accounts and the Annual Report. The independent examiner has signed off on the financial statements. A Capital project to the roof at the East End received a grant of £2,747 and VAT of £1,099 has successfully been recovered and has been applied to the Restoration fund. Noted that a large project to update the toilets in the Church Centre has been very successfully completed during the year.

Overview on page 4 tells us that financially, we came in within budget.

Charitable giving was £3,184.14 which has enabled 19 charities to benefit.

Definition of Special Projects fund and Restoration fund was discussed to the satisfaction of the meeting.

8. Receive the Churchwardens Report – Report found on page 17. Planned activities to go to a chairs only church and new doors, moving the existing door to the outside and installing an oak framed glass door to the inside entrance of the church, thus enhancing the flexibility and welcome to the church

The Secretary confirmed that Church yard has been inspected for safety during the year including a safety check on the church headstones.

9. Receive PCC Secretary's Report

Ray commented on diversity and the way we work together as a church. He thanked all those who contribute to the work of the church and to the PCC.

10. Other Reports Significant work by Tony & Mick and other members of the Church Centre Committee on managing projects at the Church Centre.

Thanks to the choir, it is recognised that music is a key part of our spirituality.

Thanks to Sue for holding the sidespersons list together.

Beaufort Entertainers - Thanks to Peter Folks and our choir leaders for running this choir and for the contribution it makes to church funds through the concerts.

Coffee & Chat – Continues its success. Latest news is that 30 people attending for the monthly lunch.

Pastoral Group – Grateful thanks to all those involved in caring, the holiday at home has been an enormous success.

Bell ringing – Some works needed to the bells and bell stays – financial pressures will mean that the PCC will try and support grant applications lodged by the bell ringers to achieve these repairs.

Clock repairs undertaken and the chiming has been restored so agreed this was money well spent - £172 Vat recovered.

Thursday craft group – Grateful thanks to Jane for putting together the group which has so much fun and for guiding the group towards making a wonderful contribution to our funds with the production of hand made goods.

Messy Church – Grateful thanks Kay and all those involved in volunteering to keep this group running it has just completed its 6th year and attracts a significant congregation each month

Awesome Youff – Grateful thanks to Jane & Ian for taking up the responsibility with notable success.

Web site - 250 views per month – Grateful thanks to Paul and to Margaret for diligently updating the Church on line calendar.

Fun Raising – Grateful thanks to Maggie & Pat for holding this group together. There has been an addition of Ray's "Estates" team to manage the heavy duties associated with Christmas Tree Festival and other outdoor events. This has been a great success and Ray Harwood confirmed that 4 of the team do not attend St Martin's but see the need and support us.

11. Election of PCC Members. Officially the election of 9 PCC Members for an electoral Roll of 75.

Names deleted under Data Protection

3 vacant places on the body of the PCC carried forward. Allowing for the Ex officio places, the PCC comprises 13 people.

12. Elect a Health and Safety Officer

Martyn has been a diligent Health & Safety officer and has expressed his desire to continue for a further year. He was Proposed and Seconded and it was agreed that Martyn would continue as Health and Safety Officer.

13. Ivanhoe Group Representative – Ray agreed that he would continue for a further year. It was Proposed and Seconded and it was agreed that Ray would continue.

14. ACM PCC Co-options – None Required

15. Review of Sidespersons List – Grateful thanks to all playing this welcoming role and to Sue for managing the rotas.

16. Appointment of Independent Examiner It was Proposed and Seconded for the appointment of Peter for a further year.

AOB

REPORTS

Ministry Team

2019 has been a year of many changes for the ministry of the Church. Tom chose to move to parishes new and we wished both him and Bev well in this new challenge. At Desford primary school, Martin Turner the headteacher, chose to retire, meaning that we have had to start building a new relationship with the new head, Colin Wilson. As Colin settles into his new role, the opportunities for assemblies have been limited, but we look forward to working together in the future. It was good to welcome the primary school into St. Martin's for their Christmas services.

During 2019, both Tom and I continued to teach on similar themes as in 2018. We have sought to raise an awareness that the Church exists outside of the bricks and mortar and more recently, the teaching has focussed on the "Everyday Faith" theme that Archbishop Justin is encouraging us to look at how each of us can meet and share with those around us. During the year, both Tom and I continued to meet with the ministers from Groby and Ratby for morning prayer on a Wednesday.

Through this year, we have had nine baptisms, nine funerals and two weddings. Each of these is an opportunity for the Church to engage with the community around us, sharing the Christian message and showing care for them. We need to continue this important ministry. It is pleasing to report that as a joint parish, we currently have more weddings booked for 2020 than either Glenfield & Newtown Linford or Groby & Ratby.

As a Church, we have started to use an online system, created for the Church of England, and offered to us free of charge, to record all the information relating to our occasional offices. From this information, we should be able to hopefully keep in touch with the families better.

During the year, I have managed to take advantage of the Bishops retreat at Launde for a day, and have also expanded my skill base, having been trained as a Youth Mental Health First Aider.

During the time in vacancy, I have been very grateful for the support of the wardens and all who assist in leading worship, working with myself as we organise the service rotas, endeavouring to continue to provide all of our regular services and as they continue to hold the Church together as the people with the legal responsibilities. It has also been good to have the ongoing spiritual support from the Groby team as we met for morning prayer.

Please continue to pray for all of the ministry team

Revd Rob Marsh

Electoral Roll - as of 2nd April we have 74 on the Roll

4 have been removed (deceased). We remember in our prayers the families of Rose Jackson, Gwen Looker, Norman Williams and Maggie Burton. We also remember Margaret Newton and Lorna Newton – long time supporters of St. Martins.

We welcome to our Roll 3 new people (details will be on display in church)

Churchwardens Report

Our plans to modernise the porch by moving the oak doors to the outside, replacing the existing wire gate, and installing an oak framed glass door on the inside which will feature a pattern of St. Martin's crosses have been approved and we are awaiting a revised date for the work to be carried out.

The remaining pews have been removed and the replacement chairs are in church. We now have far more flexibility in the ordering of the church and I am sure this will enhance our services and make the church more accessible for other events.

The churchyard continues to be looked after by the Parish Council and the PCC fully appreciate their commitment. Over the past year work has been carried out with the removal and cutting back of trees and bushes.

We were sorry to see our rector, Tom, leave in October and wish him and his family well in their new parish. Due to the number of people at St Martins willing to take part in services we have not had to bring in clergy from outside the parish and with the exception of the 8am Holy Communion on Christmas Day all services have been held as planned. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this happen. We have been fortunate in not having too long a vacancy and look forward to welcoming Gareth and his family to the benefice in the near future.

We are extremely fortunate at St. Martins to have a group of people who assist the churchwardens in their duties and make sure the day to day running of the church runs smoothly. There are too many of you to name but your work is greatly appreciated.

Nev Hammonds and Mary Collins

PCC Secretary Report 2019

The PCC met regularly throughout 2019 in the Church, on the second Wednesday of each month except for the December meeting which was cancelled due to the exceptional number of meetings associated with the interregnum, following Tom's departure on the 13th October to take up new duties in Yorkshire. Meetings have been well attended by most people. The PCC is grateful for the support of all those who volunteered to record the minutes of PCC meetings during the first half of the year.

Our PCC meetings are important and generally lively events which cover all aspects of our activities. Regular topics for discussion included: mission and ministry; messy church and its development; the church fetes and other fun-raising activities; finance for our normal activities and for special projects, charity open days; Health & Safety, safeguarding, pastoral activities; church building maintenance; church centre activities, income and maintenance; the bell tower and bell ringing; our services and the choir. Information on most of these is included in more detail in other sections of this Annual Report. Much of the work of the PCC is delegated to our committees – Fun-Raising, Pastoral, Church Centre, Messy Church, etc.; the PCC is greatly indebted to the committees, particularly those which submit regular reports of their work. We are also indebted to every one of you, our church members, for contributing so much to the work of St. Martin's here in Desford.

We were sorry to hear that our Rector, Tom was departing. Tom served the two parishes in our joint "Desford and Kirby Muxloe" benefice during the early years following the restructuring of our Deanery. While we all wish Tom well, he will be sadly missed; the final months of 2019 have been dominated by preparations for

our current Interregnum status; we are thankful for everyone who has, and is, working so hard to maintain our normal activities, and indeed move us forward, since October.

Finance and income continued to be areas of concern but with excellent support from our Treasurer and sensible budgeting we met all our commitments throughout the year. The pressure from the diocese for parishes to increase their Parish Gift have been considered but our regular income prohibited any changes. For 2020 we have agreed to hold our Parish Gift at £22,000; for more details see the Treasurer's Report.

We continued our discussions, planning and negotiations for upgrading the main entrance to the church and removal of pews; thanks to Nev's endeavours, we expect to see new doors and the pews replaced by chairs early in 2020.

Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults became a serious issue, for all churches to address, early in the year following criticisms of the Church of England's approach to child protection. Our work was coordinated by Tom in the early months, the PCC is grateful to Kay Smith for accepting the role of Safeguarding Officer when Tom left, an important position which has demanded much time to prepare and guide the PCC towards becoming fully compliant with the requirements of the Diocese which we will, hopefully, achieve during 2020.

Our new "Growth Committee" report led to improvements to our dissemination of news and advertising of events; it has been encouraging that the improved information dissemination has led to increases in attendance at important services. A "SMILE" letter was distributed to all homes in the parish during November which aimed to inform parishioners about Tom's departure and the interregnum. It is encouraging to see that interactions with the Desford schools have shown further increases. The use of the churchyard for a range of community events has continued. Communications with Desford in Bloom, the Parish Council, Bosworth Academy and other Desford groups has improved over the year. It is good to see the wide spectrum of people who continue to attend concerts and other events in our church.

Our church is a healthy and living community because of the contributions made by everyone to our services of worship, messy church, pastoral activities, fund-raising etc. The PCC wishes to express its thanks to everyone who helps to sustain the work of the church.

This year has again seen handsome sums raised for charities, through our "Saturday Lunches", raffles, Children Society collection boxes and special appeals. Thanks go to everyone who supports our charity work.

Ray Harwood, PCC Secretary

SERVICE ROTA 2020

SIDESPERSION

During the past year a number of people have left the sidesperson rota. This has meant we only have 13 people on the rota and two people are required each week. Whilst this may seem adequate there are some weeks when not everyone is available.

It would be much appreciated if people could give some thought to joining the rota to prevent others being overloaded.

READERS

Similarly with the readers we could definitely do with more help.

If anyone would like to join the list of readers, they would be very welcome. This would mean that the existing readers are not overloaded.

I would like to thank Sidespeople, Readers, Communion Assistants, Servers and Intercessors who have carried out duties during the year, even when they have been overworked sometimes.

Continued thanks go to Tony, Sheila and Peter for providing the information which enables me to produce the service rota.

Church Centre & Refurbishment

The Church Centre continues to support the local community by the provision of a venue for social and other activities targeted at local residents and groups. The Centre is particularly interested in promoting activities which provide support for young people and groups which contribute a pastoral or society benefit, particularly within the Desford community. As a result, the largest use of the Centre is by groups and organisations whose hire fees are often at discounted rates.

The church centre committee met regularly throughout the year. Meetings were generally very well attended and we welcomed Pam, representing the Coffee & Chat group. The work of the committee has covered all the usual items of bookings, catering for lunches and other events, maintenance work, finance, renovations and other major work.

The only source of regular income is from users who pay room hire fees and our Tuesday lunches. Almost all of this was consumed by normal running expenses – full details are in the accounts. The 2019 surplus of income over expenditure was £1,953 after transferring £700 towards our refurbishment fund.

Income for renovations and special project had to be raised from other sources. We are grateful for the continuing efforts of the Coffee & Chat group and those who help with the monthly lunches. Other renovation & projects income comes from fundraising activities organised by committee members - again full details are in the accounts but many thanks to our hard working Bar-B-Q people at the Church Fete, Open Gardens, Scarecrow Festival and Christmas Tree Festival. Thanks also to the Beaufort Entertainers who donated the proceeds of their Summer Concert and our expert log cutters!

In 2019, the main renovations and improvement work involved three projects. 1. Replacement of 4 back windows plus Rainbows cupboard window with safety glass (£2,364). 2. Replacement of the lights in the main room with dimmable LED lighting (£2,222.08) and 3. Installing a new multi-socket ring main in the main room (£1,479.86).

Thanks are due to the many people who help in the background to keep the work of the Church Centre ticking over with maintenance, purchases of all sorts and especially to those who provide the catering and other duties which make the monthly lunches and Coffee & Chat run so smoothly.

Deanery Synod summarised reports

May 14 2019 meeting, Kirby Muxloe PC - The meeting was chaired by Rev Tom Ringland and the theme was an introduction to the new initiative for a centre for potential members of the clergy to have an intensive residential course at a purpose-adapted centre opposite to Leicester Cathedral. Three of the young course members were able to attend the meeting and were encouraged to explain their motivations in deciding to take the course. Apart from their varying life experiences and reasoning, there was rather little to report, apart from their worthy wishes to involve in discipleship. The meeting closed with some short points on the planned changes to procedure.

September 2019 meeting - unfortunately we were both unable to attend this Synod meeting as we were abroad at that time. We understand that Tom or Rob were present at that meeting.

November 11 2019 meeting, Ratby PC - The first part of the evening was taken up by the swearing in of the new Area Dean, Rev Richard Tretheway, the procedure being conducted by the Archdeacon and the Attorney of the Diocese. This was followed by a short introductory speech by Richard and an acclamation by all present. The rest of the first half of the meeting was taken up by an address on the progress being

made on the Diocesan programme 'Resourcing Churches'. This was delivered by the Vicar and staff of Holy Trinity, Leicester. This initiative is based on a joint Anglican/Roman Catholic plan which started in Brompton, London, in 2015. The idea being to stem the decline in church attendance by young adults (mostly in inner city areas).

The basic plan is of concentrating on a small number of (mainly) city churches (usually close to tertiary education centres, universities etc), training up staff to go out as missionaries, to go into those churches needing help, and to become part of the congregation of those churches. Almost a rebirth of those churches, but, in our opinion, not one that would work in all circumstances, particularly in rural areas. A small amount of Deanery business then closed the meeting.

Wednesday 11 March meeting, Glenfield PC - This meeting was chaired by the Area Dean and the topic was 'Growing a Generous Church'. This very topical and appropriate theme was about the furthering of an atmosphere of expanding our faith, encouraging discipleship and encouraging a generosity in giving of time, money and our abilities through these challenging times. Two excellent speakers used a combination of good business practice, practical church experiences and the parable of the vineyard workers in St Matthew's Gospel, to give us some very practical and encouraging ideas on how to encourage church members (and others) on how to best employ those talents and assets that are available to us in a better way, without imposing too hard a burden on those church members who often bear a disproportionately heavy load in their parishes.

The sound wisdom and lesson of the evening is that all giving, of whatever type, is firmly rooted in discipleship. A pamphlet is available on this from the meeting, if required. The rest of the evening was devoted to the Coronavirus emergency and various initiatives by the Diocese, already circulated to PCCs.

Safeguarding

We continue to have strong guidance from the Diocese Safeguarding Team with regard to safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

Following Tom Ringland's departure, Kay Smith was appointed as our Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Kay is the person to whom all safeguarding matters should be referred. Kay has undertaken appropriate training with the Diocese and is qualified to fulfil this role. We have retained our Independent Person to whom children or adults can also confide, Cally. Their contact details are displayed in the church, church centre and prominently on the website and given here.

Contact Kay Smith: kaysmith29@aol.com Tel: 07928 657736, 25 Peckleton View, Desford, Leicester LE99QF.

Our current safeguarding Policy is also prominently displayed and the PCC review this in line with professional guidance.

Our principal activity with children is Messy Church, with Awesome Youff, which generally meets monthly. Some of our congregation continue to participate with vulnerable adults in the Forget me Not group and pastorally with vulnerable adults in the congregation and beyond. Our holiday at Home did not run in 2019.

All PCC members are now required to undertake basic Safeguarding training and we are working towards this with our current PCC body. Additionally, our Churchwarden's who are now carrying substantially more responsibility during our interregnum, are now required to train to the same level as our Safeguarding Co-Ordinator. We hope that these measures will ensure that there is confidence in our Safeguarding approach being robust.

Health & Safety

H & E Inspection / Report Form

This form is based on the HSE form F2533 & F2534

Date	07/01/2020	Time	Reference No.	0206012020
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Church Premises Inspected

St Martins Church Centre		
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Name and signature of safety representative taking part in the inspection

Name	Signature
Safety officer	

Particulars of matter(s) notified to PCC (include location where appropriate)

None

Remedial action taken by PCC (with date) or explanation if not taken.

N/A

Signature of safety Officer	<input type="text" value="xxxx"/>	Date	<input type="text" value="07/01/2020"/>
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Record of receipt of form by PCC

Signature	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/>
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(This record does not imply that the conditions are safe and healthy or that the arrangements for welfare at work are satisfactory.)

H & E Inspection / Report Form

This form is based on the HSE form F2533 & F2534

Date	06/01/2020	Time	Reference No.	0106012020
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Church Premises Inspected

St Martins Church Desford		
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Name and signature of safety representative taking part in the inspection

Name

Signature

Safety officer	xx
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Particulars of matter(s) notified to PCC (include location where appropriate)

No emergency lighting system installed
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Remedial action taken by PCC (with date) or explanation if not taken.

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Signature of safety Officer

xxxx

Date

06/01/2020

Record of receipt of form by PCC

Signature

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Date

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(This record does not imply that the conditions are safe and healthy or that the arrangements for welfare at work are satisfactory.)

Choir

At the time of writing, we are entering the 2nd week of the national lockdown due to the Covid 19 virus and everything has come to a stop. In my lifetime, never have church services been cancelled, and at this time it is unlikely that the Easter services will even take place this year. It's a surreal situation we are all having to come to terms with.

As we are also unlikely to have an AGM, we as a church only have the annual report to look back on all the activities of the church, the choir included. Throughout the year the choir has not only led the congregation musically in the services, but many of the choir have again been involved in the planning and delivery of services, particularly the all age worship and Encounter services. This of course depletes the choir in these services.

As well as the weekly services the choir have sung at the parish confirmation service and supported Kay and her team from the Academy in the World Day of Prayer service earlier in March. The music sung by the choir ranges from traditional to modern and the choral pieces include composers such as Rutter, Stopford and Jenkins.

The choir spend many hours practicing the wide range of music in our existing repertoire or new pieces and it is sometimes surprising which pieces cause us the most problems during rehearsals. As the choir leader I have to make a judgement as to how many weeks are required to learn a new piece of music or to revise a previously rehearsed piece of music, and ultimately whether it is good enough to use in a Sunday service or at a major festival. It doesn't matter how many times over the years we may have sung a piece of music or how well we know the piece, it is still important to practice, not just for your own benefit but for the benefit of the choir as a whole.

As a choir we were saddened at the loss of Norman Williams who sang Tenor with us. Norman was a true Crooner and at times would drop into singing the tune for a good sing rather than sing tenor, he was a character that will be missed. This brings me to my annual plea for new members, if you like singing and fancy giving the choir a go, please contact me.

Finally, I would like to thank the choir for their support over the past year and to Mary and Peter for their assistance, skill and support.

Beaufort Entertainers

Our summer concert was, as usual, well received with a mixture of old favourites and new pieces. The first had a nautical theme with pieces such as Over the Sea and the Drunken Sailor. We also included a medley of sea songs arranged by Dad which combined some well-known hymns, songs and tunes.

With a break from the norm the Christmas concert had two very distinct halves. The first half was dedicated to Handel's Messiah with the pieces leading up to the birth of Jesus followed by the Hallelujah Chorus and Worthy is the Lamb complete with full Amen chorus. Thanks must go to our brilliant soloists, Stephanie, Philippa, Mike and Qyan. The second half contained a mixture of old and new Christmas carols. A longer than usual programme but still well received.

We were saddened during the year by the deaths of Gwen Looker, a stalwart member of our audience, and Norman Williams, a regular member of the tenor section until his recent ill health.

I would like to thank all the members for their hard work and patience, Carl for comparing our concerts, Maggie for the unenviable job of sorting Dad's music out, Dad for his advice and accompanying us and David for assisting with the conducting and his support.

Coffee and Chat

The past year has been a successful one for Coffee and Chat, with new members attending, bringing our membership to about 40 people. We are pleased to see that the Church Centre has benefited from the proceeds and we are very impressed with the renovations and decorating. We look forward to the new blinds and chairs. The most important aspect of the club is the enjoyment which members find when meeting their friends and neighbours. A number of people have stated how much they enjoy coming and one woman brought us a card thanking all the helpers. This is just what I wanted the club to be - a place where people can meet to chat and enjoy themselves.

May I take this opportunity to thank all the helpers who turn up each week. Without them we could not continue. Especial thanks go to Ewan and Liz who put out the equipment each week. Also to Pat who gives so much of her time to C&C. We have been lucky to have Zoe Adcock who comes every week to help. A big thank you to her.

We were very surprised and delighted to be recommended for a Community Award last June. We received a "Runners Up" medal presented by the Mayor of Hinckley. (This is displayed in the porch) Three of us went to a presentation lunch which we very much enjoyed.

It was with great sadness that at the time of writing, we have had to close (due to the Coronavirus). It was the only sensible thing to do under the circumstances and we hope that when this disaster ends we shall be able to meet again.

Parish News

The number of people buying the magazine has continued to fall, with less than 250 out of a growing number of households in the parish. The church continues to subsidise the production of the Parish News from General Funds as the PCC regard it as part of the mission of St Martin's. Hopefully, the way forward will be discussed when we have a new Rector.

We have lost another distributor during the year, but found a willing replacement and to our distributors who continue to do a small round in addition to distributing the magazines. Grateful thanks to all our distributors.

Thank you to those who continue to write occasional or regular articles. We would love to receive more contributions. We have kept a small number of advertisers, thanks to the efforts of Mary Collins.

Finally, thank you to Dean & Nicky at The Graphic for continuing to print and deliver the magazine to us.

Pastoral Group

The pastoral team met on several occasions throughout the year to discuss several pastoral situations. These have included care and support to several single or housebound people living in the parish. There have also been outings to tea shops and garden centres, enabling those who are house bound to enjoy a time out of their homes.

Our commitment to providing services at Honeysuckle Farm has continued on a regular basis, led by Peter to accommodate a regular service for them, but this has not been sustainable. It has hoped that once we are out of the vacancy, we can try and start again with Kirby House.

Rev. Rob Marsh & Nev. Hammonds

Bellringers

The Desford band of church bellringers is composed of 6 people, during the year, we have been joined by a learner and, on our Monday practice night, by 3 Ratby ringers. The handbell ringers have practiced in church on a Tuesday and performed on a couple of occasions over Christmastide 2019.

The band of church bellringers has continued to make good progress during the year, with everyone trying their best to improve their ringing as well as their striking of the bells. Particular mention should be made of Kay, who, having learnt to handle a bell, is now successfully ringing rounds with the rest of the band. Also, Dan is now able to ring the Tenor “behind” when we ring Doubles methods.

On our Monday practice nights, our method ringing repertoire has increased a little bit from last year, as we are confidently ringing both Kent Treble Bob Minor and Cambridge Surprise Minor, though not regularly. Because of the lack of ringers at times, we are ringing more Doubles as well as Minimus methods (when there are only 4 ringers). We have tried to ring the bells for every Sunday morning service and we have rung for all of the weddings at St. Martin’s when the bells have been requested.

In October 2019, we had another inspection of the bells and bell frame by Taylors of Loughborough, which highlighted that 3 major items of work are still outstanding. The entire bell frame needs cleaning, treating for rust and re-painting, at an estimated cost of £6,856 + VAT. The clappers need removing from the bells before being rebushed, annealed, have their balls built up and reground before being put back into the bells, at an estimated cost of £1,396 + VAT. Finally, the Tenor (heaviest bell) bellpad needs replacing at a cost of £419 + VAT. The PCC has agreed to prioritise these essential repairs and maintenance by early 2021 at the latest.

Although, on paper, the number of Desford bellringers may have increased by one over the past year, there’s still plenty of room for more people to join us. So, if anyone would like to learn to ring our church bells or handbells, for which you need no prior knowledge or experience, then please get in touch with Mark Banner, our Ringing Master, on 07897-001053.

St Martin's craft group

The sounds of laughter and chatter echo around the hallowed walls of St Martin's on a Thursday morning. Clustered into the café area of Church we knit, sew, eat the illustrious food prepared by Mick and Dennis, and talk a lot. Indeed our numbers might exceed the available space by the servery, removal of the pews may enable a move into the centre of Church.....but then we would miss the company of our men in the kitchen, serving us coffee and cakes. Think we'll continue to squash in!

We have welcomed new friends from Barlestone and Newbold this year. Our challenge for 2020 is to knit a Christmas Tree for the Christmas Tree Festival (thank you Joyce for your brilliant idea!).

In October we met for lunch at Rothley Court, and we were looking forward to a talk by Clive Rushby on the 'Home Guard' in March. However the Corona virus outbreak meant that this, and a Spring lunch, have had to be postponed.

Between us we produce items for St Martin's Church fairs, local charities, or our own personal projects. Please come and join us, you don't have to be a 'crafter' - you are welcome to come for the coffee and cake! We meet weekly on Thursday mornings in Church between 10 and 12.

(meetings are currently suspended due to the Corona virus, contact me for updates 01455 824014).

Messy Church

Our fourth Sunday Messy Church session continues to be well supported. Families experience the traditional Messy values of being Christ centred and for all ages based around sessions of creativity, celebration, and hospitality. Messy Church offers families an encounter with God in a fun and engaging way. It is also an opportunity for the church to place itself in the heart of the community and offer hospitality and teaching around bible stories to families who appreciate a more informal approach to worship.

The St Martin's volunteers have continued to generously support Messy Church and they encourage the children to engage with the activities and beautifully explain the connections to our bible themes. In 2019, we have continued to work hard to make our sessions engaging and memorable. Examples of our monthly themes have been the Easter story, (grateful thanks to Mike in his construction of a spectacular tomb of Jesus), using the materials of Thy Kingdom Come in teaching how to pray, Blind Bartimaeus and Harvest (including the giving to others). In this regard we set our families a challenge to prepare a faith bag at the session and go out and give it to a homeless person. Most recently we have also taught the meaning of, and the Christian traditions of, Lent.

Messy church continues to support a tree at the Christmas Tree Festival with a Nativity theme, a strong reminder to all that Christmas is all about the birth of Christ not just about Santa and presents.

I continue to receive reports from around the village of how the children who engage with Messy Church are heard to talk openly and in the most surprising ways about Jesus and the way he teaches us to lead our lives. Proof if ever were needed that in some small way, Messy Church is bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to young people in our community. Additionally, we were delighted to see three young people connected to Messy Church being confirmed by Bishop Guli.

Please pray for the volunteers that lead Messy Church and for the spirit of God to be present at these sessions.

With Many Messy Blessings

Awesome Youff

We have done many activities in our short time together this year, in addition to learning more about God and his purpose for us. We have made and tossed pancakes, taken part in the Christmas production, acted out a Bible story using puppets and made toffee apples (which parents thanked us for as it stopped all of the young people talking, as they stuck their teeth together).

We thank Kay again for all her support and for the whole team (especially those who provide the wonderful meal afterwards). Our numbers remain between 3 and 7 most months. We think that the whole future of our youth attending needs to be reconsidered and things such as the times of our All Age Service be looked at as family life has now changed and many more young people do sports activities on Sunday mornings.

Perhaps this is something for the P.C.C. to look at. Please continue to pray for the work of all our young people.

St. Martin's Website

www.stmartinsdesford.org.uk

Our website continues to be used on a regular basis, on average we get around 250 views a month. 47% of people are finding the site direct and 53% are using search engines, with half using mobile devices.

Big events like our Christmas Tree Festival attract lots of people to the church and to our website, so this shows how important it is to keep our website up to date with new information and events. This can be from anyone not just the usual 2 people passing info on. Our calendar page is regularly updated, please use this as your first port of call to see what's on.

Contact details are on the website so it is fairly easy to get in touch with me. So please email anything you feel should be on our site and I will do my best to add it.

New photos of the church Centre have been taken and will be updated in the coming weeks. Once the pews are out and the new doors fitted I will also add new photos of these and update our virtual tour which should be finished in the next few months.

I am always looking at ways to improve the website so if anyone has any views or ideas please send an email and let me know.

Don't forget to keep checking our website and Facebook pages, for all the latest news and information.

Important Notice, all material on St. Martin's Website is Copyright © of St. Martin's Church Desford and may not be used on other sites without express permission. If you would like to use any images then please email me so I can give you a high resolution copy.

Email: webmaster@stmartinsdesford.org.uk

Fun(d) Raising

Where does the time go? It seems only yesterday that I was compiling the 2018 report and here we are one year later reviewing another 12 months past. Time does go fast when you are having 'fun' so the saying goes, but along with having fun, a great deal of planning, organisation, hard work, and dedication are required to ensure that planned events not only happen but are successful. And they have been, in raising more than £7,800 for our general fund, but more importantly in enabling us to welcome those outside our great oak doors to come and meet with us, as we go out into the community to meet with them.

And so our planned events for 2019 in true St. Martin's fashion of 'Food, Fun with Friends' comprised: Summer Fete in June which again was a happy and positive day utilising our church building and church green for stalls, games and a variety of hot and cold refreshments. Sunshine was in evidence and although not the hottest of summer days it was warm enough for us to welcome and have fun sharing fellowship with many visitors and old friends.

A few weeks later we were again involved in supplying refreshments to visitors attending the Desford Village Open Gardens weekend - another opportunity to show St. Martin's is at the centre of our village community and that friendship and fellowship is here for all to come and share.

Bank Holiday weekend in August saw us again surrounded by visitors, as the church, church centre and church green were again at the midst of the Desford Scarecrow Festival. And in true St. Martin's style a variety of food (hot and cold) and drink (alcoholic and non) were available to all. Our own scarecrow display was of Wurzel Gummidge, Aunt Sally and Saucy Nancy enjoying afternoon tea on the lawn - a display which won 2nd place in the community category, and which gave both Margaret and myself many laughs as the scarecrows and display were put together. Our thanks to Mike who made the body bases for our scarecrows and which with suitable additions of clothing and facial features and the odd bit of refurb have now been on display at 5 different events. He really made them strong and sturdy!

The 17th Christmas Tree Festival took place on the last weekend in November and our wonderful Estates & Electrical Team did an amazing job putting up the gazebos and Santa's grotto as well as taking on the decoration of both. This year we did not have the high winds to contend with, but almost continual rain, which caused some issues for both stall holders and Santa, and which sadly resulted in some stalls closing earlier than had been advertised due to the wet and damp. Our theme for decorating the trees was 'Your Favourite Story' and again the decorating of the trees was of a very high standard and did not disappoint. We are always amazed at how much time, hard work and imagination is engaged in interpreting the chosen theme for others to enjoy. Our trees amaze and inspire visitors but along with this our visitors often tell us that it is educational too: 'I never knew that', 'I always learn something new', 'I always feel inspired to find out more.' And from those putting together the displays: 'I have learnt so much researching how to decorate my tree.' These are some of the many positive comments we hear. And alongside the trees, the food, refreshments, stalls and Santa all help to provide an experience, and a space in which many come to enjoy, remember and savour the joy of Christmas, as they listen to carols sung by our choir, take part in our Advent Spiral Service, or just wander around a parish church which has served our community for over 850 years. On the Saturday evening the Beaufort Entertainers performed in concert and as in previous years the church filled to capacity as visitors old and new were entertained in music, song and verse - a much enjoyed highlight of our CTF.

The FR Committee has remained the same for some time now, and we would welcome some new members and new ideas but we also recognise how blessed we are to have such a wonderful and dedicated support team who willingly and with good humour come together to help put on and provide for all our events. To all of you, too numerous to mention by name - a huge THANK YOU.

When we met in January 2020 to review 2019 and decide on what, when and how we would organise the current year, none of us anticipated how 2020 would unfold. Our plans for the Summer Fete in June, the Scarecrow Festival in August and even our Christmas Tree Festival with its theme of 'Christmas Carols & Songs' at the end of November are currently on hold. None of us know when we can again welcome visitors and friends onto the church green and through our great oak doors but we hope and pray it will not be too long before we can share 'Fun, Food with Friends' again.