



**St Mary's – Apsley End**

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH  
MEETING**

**17th MARCH 2019**

**Agendas and Reports**

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# Agendas

## **1. Annual Meeting of Parishioners to elect Churchwardens Agenda**

*17th March 2019 at 11.30am*

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the 2018 meeting to Elect Churchwardens.
3. Election of two Churchwardens.

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## **2. Annual Parochial Church Meeting Agenda**

*17th March 2019 at 11.35am*

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the last meeting held on the 22nd April 2018.
3. Matters Arising.
4. To receive the new Electoral Roll.
5. To receive and approve the following reports:-
  - a. The Annual Accounts of the Parochial Church Council.
  - b. The report of the Deanery Synod Representatives.
  - c. The report of the Secretary of the Parochial Church Council.
  - d. The report by the Churchwardens.
  - e. Reports from the Groups and Organisations.
  - f. The Vicars report.
6. To appoint an Independent Examiner for the accounts for the coming year.
7. The Election to the P.C.C.
  - a. To elect up to **three** people to serve as Assistant Churchwardens.
  - b. To elect **three** people to the Parochial Church Council for a term of three years.
  - c. To elect **one** person to the Parochial Church Council for a term of two years
  - d. To elect those to serve as Sidespeople for the coming year.
8. Any other business.

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# Reports

## 3. Financial Report

Peter Bladon

Treasurer

The balance sheet shows that the General Fund (used for the day to day running of the church) ended the year with a small balance.

So how did we end up with this result, and what are the main areas of concern?

Pledged giving, general collections and general donations (blue envelopes) were £4,164 down on budget. We lost two of our big pledged giving members during the year, and although we did get some new members, the downward trend, in this, our main source of income continued.

The tax refunds we received through the gift aid scheme came in just over budget. The Fees account came in £821 below budget mainly due to less weddings. On the positive side the Christmas Bazaar /Bike Ride came in £153 above budget. Donations for the use of the Refectory were down against budget, by £112, and continues to be a good source of income, with some other one off users. We continue to market this source of income, however we do have to give priority to church use and our current outside users during the week, which means that at present we only have one evening that is still available. The '200' Club was able to raise £868 which was up on budget by £118. We also received 80% from Fund Raising of £273 and £270 from sponsorship of the organist, neither of which had been budgeted for.

However it is important to point out that the bequest donation of £12,710 covered the loss for the year, and was £3,684 more than had been budgeted for.

The total expenditure was £158 down on budget which was a good result, and was mainly due to a very tight control being maintained on all the accounts. With only the Utilities and Administration coming in above budget.

Looking at our total expenditure, we had to pay 83% (£50,020) in respect of our Diocesan Parish Share, clergy expenses, organist and Benefice administrator. As you can see from the balance sheet we have a very small reserve amount in the general fund. Hopefully this gives you all a clear idea of our current financial situation, but if not please speak to me.

It is important to note that the following accounts are all restricted accounts i.e. the money in them cannot be used for the day to day running costs of the church.

The Fabric Fund reserves at the end of 2018 now stands at £822. The only income during the year being £308 from CBF investment.

The Education Fund has benefited from income from Messy Church of £185. While £85 has been paid out towards expenses for Mothering Sunday and Easter children books.

The Churchyard Fund has benefited from general donations during the year of £25 plus the £30 from the War Graves, and the expenditure has been for a new mower, a churchyard tree survey, oil and petrol for the mowers/strimmers and general maintenance of machines.

The Donation Fund This shows a net loss over the year of £794 due to the payment for the hand rails at the main door and vestry which were covered by two bequests in 2017, and a donation from the Rotary Club. The Fabric Fund (Bequest) this was used to cover the main part of the costs of the redecoration of the main part of the church. The Solo Lunch was cleared during the year. As already mentioned, the '200' Club generated £868 to support the general fund as well as paying out £725 to lucky winners. My thanks go to Tim Ward who runs the club, and to all who support this important fund raising scheme.

The Buzzy Bees have continued to support the church from their income this year, with a donation towards the use of the refectory of £500, My thanks go to them for their continuing support.

The Fund Raising Group raised £170 during the year, and along with the balance brought forward from 2017 of £171 this was split between a congregation chosen charity Alzheimer's Society £68 (20%) and the General Account £273 (80%).

It is important to note that the following Bequest for accounting reasons is clarified as a Designated Account i.e. can be used by the P.C.C. to support any Church Account. This was due to the fact that no instructions were left in the bequest as to how it should be used.

Wootton Bequest the income on this account is made up of a VAT refund of £1,400 in respect of the flint work plus interest of £435. The expenditure was a grant in respect of covering the shortfall on the General Account of £12,710 for 2018, work on the flints on the East and West end of the Church £8,399 and the balance on the redecoration of £5,489.

At the present time this account has the only reserves that the P.C.C. control to cover any loss on other accounts.

The budget for the 2019 General Fund is attached to these reports. This shows we are faced with a deficit on the general account of £15,599.

My thanks go to Colin Gage, our Independent Examiner, and to the Finance Group of Ann Wiggins, Jim Aylott and Tim Ward for their support. Also to the Sunday counters for their time and work.

However, my last thanks once again go to you for your continuing financial support of God's work at St Mary's, and within the local community of Apsley and Nash Mills.

#### 4. Financial Statement as at 31 December 2018

Peter Bladon

##### ST MARY'S CHURCH - APSLEY END

##### Financial Statement as at 31st December 2018

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	Actuals	Budget for 12 months	Actual December 2017
	£	£	£
<b><u>INCOME :</u></b>			
<b><u>General Fund</u></b>			
General Collections	3,252.75	3,500.00	3,719.14
Pledged Giving	23,690.46	27,000.00	25,611.14
Tax Refunds	6,523.04	6,500.00	6,921.33
Fees	2,179.00	3,000.00	4,297.00
Christmas Bazaar/Bike Ride	4,153.55	4,000.00	4,300.27
Special Collections	1,734.18	1,000.00	1,069.09
Donation 200 Club	868.00	750.00	750.00
Donations -General	2,991.51	3,600.00	3,671.96
Donations - Use of Church Facilities	1,888.00	2,000.00	1,988.00
Organist Sponsorship	270.00	0.00	0.00
Raising - 80%	273.74	0.00	0.00
Wootton Bequest -Grant	12,710.00	9,026.00	2,254.00
<b><u>General Fund Total</u></b>	<b><u>60,534.23</u></b>	<b><u>60,376.00</u></b>	<b><u>54,581.93</u></b>
<b><u>Fabric Fund(Restricted)</u></b>			
Interest on CBF Funds	308.71		
<b><u>Fabric Fund General Total</u></b>	<b><u>308.71</u></b>		
<b><u>Restricted &amp; Designated Accounts</u></b>			
Wootton Bequest Interest/Grants	1,835.75		
Education Fund	185.82		
Churchyard Fund	55.00		
Donation fund	750.00		
Benefice Newsletter	0.00		
Choir Fund	0.00		
200 Club	1,498.00		
Solo Lunch	42.30		
Buzzy Bees	584.59		
Fund Raising	170.50		
<b><u>Restricted &amp; Designated Totals</u></b>	<b><u>5,121.96</u></b>		
<b><u>TOTAL INCOME</u></b>	<b><u>65,964.90</u></b>		

##### EXPENDITURE :

	£	£	£
<b><u>General Fund</u></b>			
Clergy Expenses	1,651.82	1,800.00	1,383.40
Organist	3,310.00	3,500.00	3,320.00
Repairs and Maintenance	634.47	750.00	705.29
Utilities	4,498.36	4,200.00	3,985.06
Insurance	2,252.42	2,300.00	2,158.48
Sacristy	561.75	650.00	639.76
Administration	832.79	750.00	751.88
Diocesan Parish Share	41,626.00	41,626.00	41,604.00
Parish Administrator	3,433.00	3,800.00	2,836.00
Special Collections & Charities	1,734.18	1,000.00	1,069.09
<b><u>General Fund Total</u></b>	<b><u>60,534.79</u></b>	<b><u>60,376.00</u></b>	<b><u>58,452.96</u></b>
<b><u>Restricted &amp; Designated Accounts</u></b>			
Fabric Fund General	81.78		
Education Fund	85.00		
Churchyard Fund	896.39		
Benefice Newsletter	0.00		
Donation Fund	1,544.84		
Choir Fund	0.00		
Solo Lunch	79.41		
Fund Raising	342.17		
200 Club	1,583.00		
Bequest (Fabric Fund)	15,651.65		
Buzzy Bees	500.00		
Wootton Bequest	26,598.42		
<b><u>Restricted &amp; Designated Totals</u></b>	<b><u>47,362.66</u></b>		
<b><u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b><u>107,897.45</u></b>		

## 5. Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2018

Peter Bladon

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### Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2018

£

<b>ASSETS :</b>	Central Board of Finance Deposit Account	66,181.96
	Nat West Bank Account	13,849.46

**TOTAL** **80,031.42**

<u>Represented by</u>	31-Dec-17	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Profit/(Loss)</u>	31-Dec-18
<b>General Fund</b>	0.66	60,534.23	60,534.79	(0.56)	0.10
<b><u>Restricted Accounts</u></b>					
<b>Fabric Fund</b>	595.85	308.71	81.78	226.93	822.78
<b>Education Fund</b>	543.45	185.82	85.00	100.82	644.27
<b>Churchyard Fund</b>	979.33	55.00	896.39	(841.39)	137.94
<b>Benefice Newsletter</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	0.00
<b>Donation Fund</b>	1,893.34	750.00	1,544.84	(794.84)	1,098.50
<b>Bequest(Fabric Fund)</b>	15,651.65	0.00	15,651.65	(15,651.65)	0.00
<b>Solo Lunch</b>	37.11	42.30	79.41	-	0.00
<b>Choir Fund</b>	453.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	453.59
<b>200 Club Account</b>	1,307.48	1,498.00	1,583.00	(85.00)	1,222.48
<b>Buzzy Bees Fund</b>	315.14	584.59	500.00	84.59	399.73
<b>Fund Raising</b>	171.67	170.50	342.17	(171.67)	0.00
<b><u>Designated Account</u></b>					
<b>Wootton Bequest</b>	100,014.70	1,835.75	26,598.42	(24,762.67)	75,252.03
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>121,963.97</u></b>	<b><u>65,964.90</u></b>	<b><u>107,897.45</u></b>	<b><u>(41,895.44)</u></b>	<b><u>80,031.42</u></b>

Signed P.J.Bladon ..... 15th January 2018

### Notes to the accounts

#### Charities supported in 2018 through church or community collections

	Church £	Community £	Total
Bishop Harvest Appeal	303.08		303.08
St Francis Hospice (Carol Singing)	112.41		112.41
Willow Foundation -Lent L Lunches	156.25		156.25
Christian Aid		379.87	379.87
DENS Nash Mills School		171.90	171.90
The Children's Society	477.48		477.48
DENS Carol Singing		133.19	133.19
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>1,049.22</u></b>	<b><u>684.96</u></b>	<b><u>1,734.18</u></b>

ST MARY'S APSLEY END, PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

6. **Budget for 2019**

Peter Bladon

INCOME.....£	
Collections in Church .....	3,500
Pledged Giving (Stewardship) .....	25,000
Donations – Gift Aid .....	3,000
Donations - Use of Church Facilities.....	2,000
Tax recovered through Gift Aid .....	6,500
Fees .....	2,500
Christmas Bazaar & Bike Ride.....	3,500
200 Club.....	750
Special Collections.....	1,700
Income deficit.....	15,599
..... Total Income	£64,049
EXPENDITURE	
Clergy Expenses.....	1,800
Repairs & Renewals .....	650
Utilities .....	4,500
Insurance .....	2,300
Sacristy .....	650
Administration .....	800
Parish Administrator.....	3,867
Diocesan Common Fund (Parish Share) .....	44,782
Organist .....	3,000
Special Collections.....	1,700
..... Total Expenditure	£64,049

Notes ((1) There is no expenditure shown in respect of Charities  
except for special collections. Financial Group February 2019.

7. **Independent Examiner's Report**

Colin Gage

to the members of St Mary's Church, Apsley End, Parochial Church Council.

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2018 which are set out on pages 1 to 3.

Respective responsibilities of members and examiner.

The Parochial Church Council consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act),

- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the Act) and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report.

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

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act, and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act;

have not been met;

or

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

Signed: Colin Gage

Independent Examiner

Dated : February 2019

## **8. Team Vicar's Report**

Revd Richard Howlett

Team Vicar with responsibility for St Mary's and St Benedict's churches

In addition to our normally busy church life there has been a lot going on due to the clergy vacancy that arose when Canon David Lawson retired in January 2018. As most of you know, we tried unsuccessfully to advertise and fill the Team Rector vacancy, and thanks to Revd Lizzie Hood taking over the Rector post, we were, happily, then able to advertise and appoint another Team Vicar. By the time this is published, Revd James McDonald will have been licensed and will be working with Lizzie and myself as a colleague. During the vacancy of the past 14 months, I have assisted the Team by chairing monthly Saturday meetings of baptism visitors from All Saints and St Mary's, and held baptism enquiry sessions the same morning. I have also helped on the rota with weddings and funerals at All Saints and taken a regular share in the 8am Communion services. It has been a pleasure to work with the lay people from All Saints as well as St Mary's, as we kept things going during the vacancy.

I have also sought to respond to priorities arising through our deanery and our diocese, as well as National church initiatives. One such is 'Thy Kingdom Come', where a group of us were able to hold a night of prayer at St Mary's for the second year. I know people who supported this found it a very special time. My thanks, too, to the group from St Mary's and St Benedict's who gave out Thy Kingdom Come Scripture and prayer materials, and sought requests for prayer, both at Bennett's Gate shops and Apsley Station. Our efforts in the latter resulted in a professional photographer taking the group's photo, because he was intrigued by the joy he observed in those taking part. It was encouraging that this merited inclusion in the Diocesan 'Seeround' magazine.

On the deanery front, every church signed up to the 'Wildly Important Goal' (WIG) which meant that our churches committed to prioritise developments to bring Christ to more children and young people. On 14<sup>th</sup> July Peter Bladon and I attended an energetic and informative training event run by Diocesan Childrens Mission Enabler Margaret Pritchard Houston at Christchurch

Watford. We followed this up by inviting Margaret to a lunchtime meeting in the refectory with some members of our Buzzy Bees Team and members of St Benedict's. Margaret was very encouraging about what we were already doing. She also suggested we might develop a regular worship time with adults and children at Buzzy Bees (as opposed to an occasional event at times such as Christmas and Harvest and Easter). I have been experimenting with doing that since October.

I also secured a small grant via Margaret to purchase 'Beulah Land' materials, which seek to facilitate godly play through Fuzzy Felt resources. I hope to start using that after Easter, when time allows me to prepare the materials! On the subject of children and young people, I continue to enjoy opportunities to go into schools to lead assemblies, and other events. We again ran the 'Easter Trail' in St Benedict's for nearly 200 children in the spring term and I was glad that some members of St Mary's helped to supply the volunteers needed. It was very well received by local schools. It is good that this will continue this month for a third year, and two new schools have come on board: Lime Walk and Belswains. In addition, I continue to be fully involved with Nash Mills C of E school where I am a governor, and it is truly a pleasure and a privilege to be a part of that school's life.

On the diocesan front, the imperative has been on church growth. St Mary's, in common with many churches, has seen fewer people attending worship regularly than even five years ago. I attended a day course on church growth run by the diocese on 10<sup>th</sup> October at the Focolare Centre, Welwyn Garden City. The day was excellent, and was led by Ven Bob Jackson, a retired archdeacon and church growth specialist. Bob explained some of the statistics about church growth in England. He outlined two things which churches had done which had resulted in spiritual and numerical growth:

Firstly, to write their own prayer (Collect) for Growth. Once done, if this was fervently prayed by the whole church, and widely used, experience showed that such prayer bore fruit: more people were drawn to church events. Since attending that course, I have worked with PCCs at St Benedict's and St Mary's to put together Collects for Growth, and I hope people will get to know the one for St Mary's, and use it regularly in their private prayers, too.

The second aspect to growing churches was that they needed to look seriously at every aspect of their welcome to visitors. Bob Jackson has jointly authored a course 'Everybody Welcome' which distils many of the principles he has uncovered over the years. I made the decision to purchase the course for use as a Lent course for St Benedict's and St Mary's, and I am grateful to the Leverstock Green Religious Education Fund in enabling this. 'Everybody Welcome' falls neatly into four sections, and the results and the fifth section will be looked at after Easter. The course asks searching questions, but I believe our churches are concerned to grow, and will want to take seriously what emerges from following 'Everybody Welcome'.

In January Katherine and I marked two years since I was licensed as a team vicar in the benefice of Langelei. The allocation of clergy resources within the Team provides that my time is shared equally between St Benedict's and St Mary's. While this has meant plenty of variety, which is interesting and stimulating, it also presented me with challenges in terms of getting to know the two congregations and them getting to know me.

Katherine my wife has involved herself in rotas at both churches as fully as she can. The 'week on, week off' Sunday pattern does mean for St Mary's that there are regularly 'visiting' clergy. While we are able to see some of the congregation more often than alternate Sundays, thanks to activities such as Buzzy Bees, Thursday Morning Prayer, Communion and Study Group and Saturday café, it inevitably takes longer to build relationships with those who mainly come on Sundays, or indeed some Sundays- thereby possibly missing me by several weeks. I do not have a 'magic wand' to solve that, but it is something we have been very aware of in our two years among you. Katherine and I have really enjoyed taking up the kind invitations of some church members to have some refreshment at their homes and would welcome the opportunity to get to know more of you better.

Reading through the various reports of St Mary's, I am proud of the many ways in which people contribute to our life and work, week in week out, serving people both within St Mary's and beyond. So much is contributed by worshippers who balance family, work and other commitments, and those who find that serving Christ and His church who demonstrate that they have found another fulfilling 'new job' in retirement. I know many people find satisfaction and fellowship from serving at our lovely church in various ways. The church of course is a living entity; it is not just a building. It is composed of people. They are the 'Living Stones' of

the Church (as we are reminded in 2 Peter Chapter 1 v.5) During the year to come, I hope all of us 'living stones' of St Mary's shall experience spiritual growth in our walk with Jesus Christ.

It is invidious to single out people and name names, so may I conclude by saying heartfelt thanks to so many people both 'high profile' and those who work faithfully 'behind the scenes', and give faithfully of their time, their expertise and their resources to enable St Mary's to be a place and a community that is valued by many many people. May we all show our love for God and one another, and within that love grow the mission of our church to reach out to those who have not yet found their fulfilment in worship of God and fellowship with His people.

## **9. Deanery Synod**

Dan Shirley and Peter Bladon

The first meeting took us, in June last year, to St Stephen's, Chaulden. The Revd. Mike Macey gave a brief summary of the work that goes on at St Stephen's which has 10-16 regular worshippers, and is led by a priest once a month with lay leaders leading the other services on a weekly basis.

At this meeting we also received reports from the Deanery Standing and Pastoral Committee, Deanery Lay Chapter and Treasurer as well as hearing about a planned Deanery Outing to Peterborough Cathedral on July 28th. We had an update concerning Children's ministry across the Deanery, and had reports on what the parishes were doing in this area. We held the elections of representatives from our Deanery to Diocesan Synod. We had the "Swop Shop", an opportunity to share good ideas and experiences across the parishes of the Deanery. Finally a presentation was made to Jean Garner who had been Deanery Secretary since the Deanery had been formed, and was now stepping down from the role.

The second meeting took us to Holy Trinity where the main item of the evening was a talk about "Reaching New People" and was led by Dave Jones who is the Interim Project Coordinator for RNP in the St Albans archdeaconry. He shared several examples of events that had been held across the Diocese, and encouraged us to use the church buildings in a creative way. He also recommended a book "A Generous Community" by Andrew Doyle which gives P.C.C.s plenty of examples. We also had an update on "Life at Holy Trinity" and a report from the July sessions of General Synod, as well as the other normal reports.

Finally we had the 'Swop Shop' and heard that some churches in the Deanery were now remaining open during daylight hours.

The Deanery Chapter continues to work well together, and the Deanery Lay Chapter (formed in 2016), has had several meetings over the last year, and has continued to develop into an important source of contact between all the lay members of the parishes of the Deanery, and the sharing of ideas.

Deanery Meetings minutes can be found in the folder at the back of Church.

## **10. Churchwarden's Report**

Dan Shirley, Sue Jakeman

Many thanks are expressed to the many members of the congregation who volunteer to do the many jobs, that pull together to ensure that St Mary's is a place where many find and develop a growing relationship with God. Dan and Sue would particularly like to thank the Assistant Churchwardens, Rosemary, Sylvia and Harry for their work and support over the last year. Unfortunately, Alex Bell had to step down as an Assistant at the beginning of his term of office and we are very grateful to Harry for stepping into the position.

The year has been a busy one with St Mary's, Benefice, and world events. Messy Church is still greatly enjoyed by children and larger "children". Members of the congregation enjoyed a peaceful canal trip from Apsley to Langleybury. It was a sunning day, warm and very sunny.

Other events enjoyed this year include a strawberry tea on 7th July. One particularly wonderful event was held the following weekend with The Significant Celebrations Lunch. Many of the congregation who were celebrating a special birthday or anniversary, were invited to celebrate with the rest of St Mary's including Canon David Lawson and Rev Karen Turner. The ages ranged from a year old to 100 years old.

September saw the interior of the church re-decorated and the replacement of flints, that had fallen out over time. The exterior and interior look really good. Thanks to the Fabric committee and the Working Party for their dedication and efforts in keeping St Mary's looking good and safe for all.

Remembrance this year was a big commemoration coinciding with the 100 year's anniversary of the end of the First World War. St Mary's Service of Commemoration was lay led this year, by Dan, Sue and Peter, including a reading of the names of those of Apsley and Nash Mills, who appear on the War memorial, at 11 o'clock. In the evening the Service of Commemorating the Departed was led by Rev Richard with the reading of loved one's names and the tradition of placing of leaves in a basket with each name. Sadly, the service was not as well attended as in previous years, possibly because of the various services held in the morning. November saw the ever popular Christmas Bazaar taking place on 17th and was the most successful to date, taking over £3,000.

We were delighted to welcome Lizzie Hood as the new Rector of the Benefice on 22nd and look forward to working with her in the years to come.

December was as usual busy preparing for and celebrating the birth of Our Lord. This included singing carols at Sainsbury's, The Watermill care home and the Paper Mill pub. Evening Prayer was also said when possible.

The New Year was rung in as usual by our excellent Bell ringing team

St Mary's looks forward to welcoming Rev James McDonald and his wife Rachel as they take up the Team Vicar position at Kings Langley. James will spend approximately 25% of his time at St Mary's. Shrove Tuesday was celebrated with the regular Pancake evening. This year because of the very busy week, Ash Wednesday will be held in the individual parish churches.

## **11. Baptism Visitors Group**

Revd Richard Howlett

During the vacancy period from January 2018, meetings were held approximately monthly at St Mary's to coordinate responses to baptism requests and provide support to the baptism visiting team from All Saints (Alan Noyes, Sheila Peevers, Jean Osborne and Alison Faulkner) alongside St Mary's Visitors (Peter and Rosemary Bladon, Sue Jakeman and Gemma Townsend, Susan and Colin Rivett. Baptism requests for All Saints were processed by Norma in the benefice office in conjunction with Revd Lizzie Hood, and Team or visiting clergy assigned to cover baptisms.

All Saints Team were pleased to adopt the baptism resources I have introduced at St Mary's: an information booklet for parents by Revd Ally Barrett, and a new DVD that features an introduction to baptism by media vicar Revd Kate Botley.

A chart of upcoming baptisms was prepared regularly by myself and Norma, to ensure we were aware of all baptism requests. After the 10am meeting of baptism teams, there is an explanatory session for families seeking baptism, currently held in St Mary's. Families enjoyed the dvd and being able to experience the welcome at Saturday café.

My thanks to all the visiting teams, who give unstintingly of their time, and who provide a friendly face to assist families seeking baptism.

## **12. Bellringers Report**

Brian Watson

Tower Captain and Steeplekeeper

Service ringing for the 10.00 am and the monthly 6.30 pm Sunday services has generally been maintained. We also rang for the Christingle service/crib service on Christmas Eve and the Christmas services. This year we not able to ring the old year out on New Year's Eve.

Our three recruits from last year are now ringing regularly on Sundays. We would welcome anybody who would be interested in learning to ring.

During the year six quarter peals were rung:

February 25th, Norwich Surprise Minor was rung for the 60th anniversary of St Benedict's

June 17th, Cambridge Surprise Minor was rung for the Bladon's golden wedding

June 24th, Cambridge Surprise Minor was rung

September 22nd, Cambridge Surprise Minor was rung by a visiting band.

November 11th, Cambridge Surprise Minor was rung half-muffled for Commemoration of the Departed service in memory of the 57 parishioners who lost their lives in WW1, including ringers Private Albert Cutler and Rifleman Christopher Godman.

December 12th, Plain Bob Minor was rung by a visiting band.

In addition to ringing a quarter peal on November 11th we also rang at 12.30 pm. With the bells open as part of the national celebration of 100 years since peace was declared in WW1.

In May we were placed second in the Western District Striking competition behind Redbourn. We, together with Redbourn, represented the Western District in the Kimpton Cup in September. Redbourn won and Apsley was third, half a point behind Tewin, who were placed second.

On the social side we enjoyed ringing at seven churches in Essex for our outing, our thanks to Brian Watson for organising it. We entered a team for the District quiz night held at Northchurch in September, in which we came second.

### **13. Buzzy Bees**

Delia, Yvie, Ann, Sheila, Iris and Lilian

It's been a happy year at Buzzy Bees for children, carers and helpers. Our attendance is usually 14/16 children, and with the accompanying adults, it is just comfortable in the space we have. The aim of all the helpers is to provide a relaxing environment for both the adults and children. For carers, looking after children is joyous, but it can be very lonely for some. It is good they can sit peacefully and socialise, whilst watching the children play in a safe environment. Over the years we have been able to welcome families from a variety of countries and cultures. We strive to be friendly and supportive to all.

We had a very successful outing to Jungle Mania and fine summer weather for our outdoor activities day. The Christmas Party was very enjoyable with Peter and Rosemary doing an excellent job as Mr and Mrs Father Christmas. Our members enjoyed going into the church whilst our vicar, Richard, used the Nativity figures to teach them the true meaning of Christmas. Richard has also often been able to join our meetings, chatting to the children and adults. Recently he has started to have monthly sessions in church to share bible stories and songs with them.

We are still fortunate to have a team of six hard working helpers who all contribute different talents to making it a success.

### **14. Christian Aid**

Rosemary Bladon

Once again this year we will be holding a Christian Aid Week café – during the “normal” Café time – i.e. 10am to 12noon. We found, a couple of years ago, that fewer and fewer people opened the door if we went house to house collecting, or even gave when they did come. So we decided to try a different method, and so will be asking for donations of cakes and support on the day to try to raise our annual collection. This year's focus is Communities in Sierra Leone.

Last year we were able to send almost £380 so let's hope we can do as well – or better! The date will be Saturday 18th May – please support it! Thank you.

## **15. Communications Team**

Janet Wright

**Members:** Laura Graham Brown, Katharine Harper, Rachel Woods, Janet Wright

**Meetings:** Roughly every 4 to 6 weeks on Saturday mornings

Work covered:

1. Designing and creating the changing displays on the boards in the refectory and church.....feedback is always appreciated. Following feedback we have recently created a board about the Church's Year. This will progress to give information about the season we are currently in.
2. Creating the weekly bulletin. The editorial team consists of Janet Wright, Melanie Henley, Wendy Frampton-Salter and Laura Graham Brown. You can tell who has done it each week by the initials in the bottom right hand corner! Items for inclusion are most welcome, including requests to be added to the 'pray-for' list. They should be emailed to [stmarysapsleyend@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysapsleyend@gmail.com) by Tuesday midday please.
3. Posting the planned hymns for each Sunday morning service in the 'Rotas' section of the St Mary's page on the Benefice website.
4. Created new links from the St Mary's page of the Benefice website (<http://beneficeoflangelei.org.uk/stmarys/> ) for:
  - a. The online calendar of events at St Mary's
  - b. A sign-up form to receive the monthly e-mailshot about events at St Mary's.
5. A sub-group is working on publicising and demystifying the defibrillator.
6. Assisted with material for the special safeguarding service on 27 1 19.
7. Created an information/welcome document for new organists.

## **16. Out in the Community**

Rosemary Bladon

May of last year found a few of us greeting commuters returning from London as we went out into the community to mark 'Thy Kingdom Come'. It was quite rewarding just how many people did respond and we were able to give them a small booklet and tell them where we came from - in fact one person returned to find out more! We started our Christmas season with a stint on the Rotary Club Santa's Sleigh, with a familiar face in the red outfit and eight of us collecting. Then we sang at The Paper Mill Pub as they put on their Christmas Tree lights and collected for St Francis' Hospice, had our usual "concert" at Florence Longman House and enjoyed mince pies and coffee afterwards. Singing outside Sainsbury's in aid of D.E.N.S. and then carols at Water Mill House Care Home - after which we thought we'd better save our voices for the actual Christmas services. I think we all enjoyed ourselves – only hope those who heard us did too!

## **17. The Community comes to us**

Rosemary Bladon

As well as going out singing carols etc. members of the community do come into church for certain things and the Christmas Bazaar is one of those.

In 2018 over 450 people came in during the time of the bazaar and we raised over £3,600 which goes towards the general upkeep of the church.

This year the bazaar will be on Saturday 16th November from 10am to 1pm. We shall, as always, need everyone's support before, on the day and afterwards, So please make a note of the date now!

We do have quite a number of our local community who come into church on a Monday and Friday mornings when the church is open, just to have a look around, and some even venture to return for the Thursday or Sunday services! We do also have an AA group who have been

meeting in the Refectory each week for two or three years now and have achieved some wonderful support and results.

## **18. Community and Outreach**

Jean Crisp

Our Vision in the Mission Action Plan is to see ourselves as 'a vibrant Christian community with a raised profile in Apsley and Nash Mills.'

During 2018 we have continued to go into the local community with regular services at Florence Longman House and Water Mill House Care Home. See elsewhere for separate reports for both these organisations. There is also a separate report for the carol singing performed in various locations before Christmas.

Also in these reports you will find further information about Oxygen Recovery Service at Nascent House, Saturday Community Café, Buzzy Bees, Messy Church and Working Parties. All these are helping to raise our profile in the community and in some cases help to bring the community into the church and churchyard.

Events like the very successful Christmas Bazaar and special services held at church, for example; the Christingle and Crib Service and the Commemoration of the Departed Service, encourage the local community to join us to see the varied use of the church.

We continue to support DENS food bank on a regular basis. We also continue with our links with uniformed organisations. Local school children and their teachers are welcomed into church on a regular basis.

At 10.40am on Friday morning 9 November a service was led by Richard Howlett at the Apsley war memorial. Wreaths were laid at the foot of the memorial and the two minute silence was observed at 11.00am.

Our involvement in all these various activities is an expression of our Christian Community 'Living God's Love' and hopefully, by adding value, make a difference to the life of our local community.

The plan next year is to bring this report together with the other two community reports for the AGM. This report aims to bring everything together.

## **19. Electoral Roll**

Susan Rivett

Every six years each Parish is required by the Diocese to compile a new electoral roll. In accordance with this St Mary's roll has been completely revised. The roll shows the Diocese the size of the congregation and is used to calculate the Diocesan quota which is paid annually. Members are entitled to stand for election, act as sides persons and vote for the church representatives at the annual meeting of our Parochial Church Council. Membership of the roll demonstrates a commitment to be an active member of the Church at St Mary's.

In April 2018 there were 89 members registered. As a result of the complete revision the number has fallen dramatically to 52 members; there are a range of reasons. Some may have missed the deadline for the closure of the roll, some may have made a conscious decision not to renew their membership due to moving away from the area, worshipping at other churches or not feeling that they are able to contribute to the wider aspect of church life.

This new roll will be presented for approval at the Annual Meeting on 17th March 2019.

## **20. Florence Longman House**

Rosemary Bladon

We still have a Holy Communion Service at Florence Longman House- but it is now at 9am. This is because they now have a minibus for Age /UK which comes at about 9.30am with people who join some of the residents to play card games etc. Two of the ladies who run this

like to join us for the service, so asked if we could slightly alter the time. This was easily done, and then we go to Water Mill House Care Home for their service at 11am.

The bulletins are delivered every week and the Newsletter each quarter so that the residents can stay in touch with things at church.

Anyone is welcome to join us at either of these services – both are on the third Tuesday of the month except on rare occasions – when it will be announced in the bulletin.

We do also start our Palm Sunday service at Florence Longman with some of the residents joining us as our palms are blessed before processing along Weymouth Street, which those who come always say how much they enjoy it.

## **21. St Mary's Fabric Committee**

Grant Seymour

Grant Seymour, Michael Wright, Peter Bladon, Harry Graham-Brown

St Mary's Fabric Committee has had a very productive year this year, as hopefully you would have noticed by the improvements around the Church.

Some of the major projects we have seen completed are;

### **Interior plaster repair and re-decoration**

After much discussion, research and obtaining quotes, in May 2018 it was decided that Bakers of Danbury would be appointed to carry out the plaster and re-decoration works to the main body of the church. They are a company with lots of church experience and are often working at the Abbey. The work commenced in September 2018 and following 24m<sup>2</sup> of lime plaster repair and a full re-paint of the main body of the church using Classidur Tradition which is a specialist paint for historic buildings, the works were completed by the beginning of October. Leaving us with a much brighter and cleaner looking church and considering the amount of work completed the disruption was minimal. Many thanks to those members of the congregation who helped keep the church clean while the high-level dust continued to settle after the work. The total cost for this work was £20,131.

### **Flint work repair to gable wall ends**

Work was carried out on the gable wall ends due to certain areas of the flint panels becoming loose, leaving us at risk of loose flints falling from height. Scaffolding was used on the Refectory end gable wall as this was where most of the work was carried out. To save on costs the smaller areas on the Altar end gable wall were skilfully done from a cherry picker. The flint work repairs on the gable walls at both ends of the church were completed in September 2018 and have been done to a very high standard by Mathias Restoration. The repairs are barely noticeable and will be indistinguishable from the 150-year old original flint work once the mortar used has weathered to a slightly greyer colour. We can now be confident that there should be no need for further repairs to the flint facings on these walls for many more years. Extra unanticipated work – such as rainwater downpipe painting, window cleaning and minor roof repairs – were done by Mathias from the scaffold and cherry picker. The opportunity was also taken to use the cherry picker for cleaning out all the high-level gutters of the church building. Paul Clark scraped out several bucketful's of leaves and other debris. The total cost for this work was £8,434.

### **Entrance handrails**

Drastically improving health & safety for entering and exiting the church, handrails were fabricated and fitted this year to the vestry steps and each side of the steps to the main entrance. These were designed by Michael Wright and fabricated by AC Welding Ltd, an Apsley firm with a workshop only 100 metres from the church. They were then installed by the working party and ourselves. The railings have been designed to look appropriate for a building that is now nearly 150 years old. Although relatively cheap modern steel has been used in the fabrication, the sections and details have been chosen to make the end result look as much like Victorian wrought iron as possible. I'm sure you will all agree they fit in very well and look like they have always been there. Most importantly they address a potentially dangerous health and safety hazard and hopefully make access in and out of the Church a little easier.

Along with these major works; many niggles and issues are worked through by the fabric committee on a monthly basis as well as inspecting the building for any maintenance issues that may need addressing.

While dealing with various contractors and architects, it has been mentioned on several occasions how great the general condition of St Mary's is and how well it is looked after. For this we cannot thank the working party enough for covering the majority of the maintenance required and saving the church a lot of money by completing any of the work required that they can manage.

As we progress into the new Church year, we will be working towards refurbishing the refectory and re-painting all of the guttering and downpipes around the church. We are also due a quinquennial inspection this year, which will be carried out by our new architect.

**The work we do relies on the generous donations and bequests that have been left to St Mary's over the recent years and had it not been for those, the majority of the work you see throughout the church would have not been possible.**

## **22. Fund Raising Group**

Vivian Hagel

We began 2018 by holding our annual Epiphany Games afternoon on 6th January. This event was attended by over 20 people who all had an enjoyable time. All donations made were put towards the refreshment fund provided by the church.

The Shrove Tuesday pancake evening held in February was well supported including quite a few clients from Nascent House. All who came enjoyed the wonderful pancakes cooked by Sue Jakeman and Gemma Townsend. Many thanks to both of them and all who helped make this evening a great success and raising a total of £62.60.

On the 2nd June we held a Planes Trains and Automobile afternoon. Although this did not have many people come along it was a fun afternoon.

The next event held was the Strawberry and Cream tea afternoon held on Saturday 7th July. As well as the cream teas there were outside games enjoyed by everyone. The total amount raised at this event was £107.90.

The last event of the year was the Santa Sleigh evening organised by the Rotary Club of Hemel Hempstead. This took place on Tuesday 4th December and was supported by 8 people from St Mary's Church and 1 from St Benedict's Church. The money raised went towards many local charities including both our church and St Benedict's Church. It was a superb evening and great fun especially seeing all the delight on the many children and adults faces throughout the route. Many thanks go to Janet Wright, Santa and all the helpers who took part.

Peter Bladon and I representing St Mary's and St Benedict's Churches, went to a presentation evening in January organised by the Rotary Club. All the charities that took part in the Santa Sleigh were given a cheque of £400.

For our supported charity the Alzheimer's Society, we have donated £68.43 which is 20% of funds raised during the year. The remaining balance has been paid into the churches general fund.

We are now in the process of organising some exciting fundraising events for the coming year.

## **23. Hike & Bike**

Rosemary Bladon

The sponsored Hike & Bike held in September each year is also an event that helps support our general funds, and in 2018 I did again manage to walk over 18 miles, and to visit 22 places of worship within our Deanery in about 5.5 hours. It was also good that once again St Mary's was "manned" all day to welcome those who were taking part. Although the total raised is split between our church and the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust it always makes an enjoyable day even though this year I did it on my own. There are often people at the churches, and others about so I don't have to go all day without talking! So many thanks for all the support you gave me through your sponsorship and encouragement.

The total amount I managed to raise in 2018 was £1,079 with half of this coming back to St Mary's. Please also bear in mind that the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust has on two occasions in the past supported us with grants for work on the roof, so it is good that we can support their work for other places of worship. Hopefully I will be taking part in the event in 2019 - although I have to allow for the fact that I am getting older!!

## **24. Marriage Preparation**

Grant & Joanne Seymour

Revd Richard Howlett, Katherine Howlett, Grant Seymour and Joanne Seymour

Couples who are getting married in the Benefice are invited to attend marriage preparation sessions. This year we met with three couples getting married at St Mary's and one couple getting married at St Benedict's. We held a one-day session on Saturday 9th February 2019 at St Benedict's Church and used the Marriage By Design course that we first used last year.

Marriage By Design is a course created by the Christian charity "Care for the family" and is based around working through five sessions on a DVD while working through guidance and activities in the couples handbook alongside it.

The five sessions feature a great mix of video clips, helpful guidance and down-to-earth stories. The course gives couples the opportunity to explore what they want their marriage to look like.

Topics covered:

- Values and expectations
- Friendship and quality time together
- Communicating well
- Resolving conflict
- Choosing to commit
- Plus in-depth case studies on in-laws, sex, children and finances

The couples appreciated us giving our time to help them prepare for married life and for supplying a light lunch plus hot and cold drinks. The feedback we received from all the couples was very positive and encouraging to hear that it was great for them to take the time to think about their relationships and discuss important topics that may be brushed aside in day to day life.

Also, we want to give a huge thanks to Roger & Angela Witts who have run the marriage preparation at St Mary's for many years and have helped many couples prepare to tie the knot, including ourselves!

## **25. Messy Church**

Laura Graham-Brown

Messy church continues and now has a congregation that partly overlaps with other services within the church family and includes a families where this is their only congregation. In 2018 we held 10 services including topics from Creation, Listening and Remembering and the church seasons. Numbers range from 10 to 30 and ages range from 2 to 84.

Our services start with just over an hour of activities followed by short celebration including songs, story and prayers and then a joint meal. The prayers are written by everyone including the oldest and youngest, in simple 2 words or a drawing to longer prayers, can't get too long though when you have to write your prayer on a carrot shape! The newspaper challenge continues and has varied in complexity over the year and always seems to be popular with the gents of our congregation.

As the leader I would like to express my gratitude to the team who support me and come up with all the great ideas and then run the activities, I also would like to thank the kitchen team lead by Harry and Jade who produce baked potatoes, beans and cheese every month and

then a team who clear up. Last but by no means least I would like to thank the working party who fetch down boxes and often Hoover on a Monday for us.

In January we celebrated our 6th birthday and we still have lots of ideas on new topics and new ideas to try out this year. As always everyone is very welcome.

## **26. Monday & Friday Working Parties**

Peter Bladon

As I reported last year these groups have continued to change and grow with people coming either on a Monday or Friday morning or in some cases both days working throughout the year to do all those jobs which everybody else takes for granted, such as vacuuming, cleaning the pews, polishing, flowers, brass cleaning, cutting the grass, gardening, washing the towels/tea cloths, cleaning the kitchen and toilets, clearing rubbish from the churchyard, and clearing the recycling and rubbish bins in church - the list is indeed endless! Our local non-church members continue to play a very active part in the team, and without their support the other members would find it hard to cover all the outside jobs required. This year we have had a survey done on all the churchyard trees, and I am pleased to say that only one (which we were aware of) requires attention.

We took the chance (with the closing down of Homebase) to purchase (at half price) a new lawnmower, and have also purchased a rechargeable light for the shed.

As many of you are aware the old engineering works which backs onto the "new" churchyard is being redeveloped and at the time of writing this report there is the possible cutting down of three of our trees which are on our boundary (costs to be covered by the developer!)

We do work closely with the Fabric Group and in some cases are able to do the work which would normally require an outside contractor, as well as identifying other major jobs that need to be done both on the outside and inside of the building. The work done on the main steps and also the vestry steps with the fitting of handrails is a good example of these two groups working together.

We do have a list of work that we are aiming to do, which the group review each year and update, as well as discussions over a cup of coffee and biscuit (and sometimes even homemade cake!) and a chance for fellowship, and we would always welcome new members – just come along either on a Monday or Friday between 10am -12 noon and we will find you a job!! We again this year held our "Christmas Party" in January at the Toby Inn, which was enjoyed by the thirteen of us who were able to attend.

## **27. Monthly Home Group (including Health and Healing Prayers)** Sue Jakeman

The group meets once a month to pray for the Health and Healing of individuals and the world and to study the word of God.

The evening has followed a similar routine for the past few years, although the venue has changed. Many thanks are sent to Melanie for her hospitality and to Viv for her hospitality. Thanks to Lillian, who has provided excellent Bible study material, which has been very thought provoking.

After our Bible study, we use the words of the Healing service to guide our prayers for the world, the country, our local community, church community, friends and family. We always seek permission of the person or a relative before we pray for them. Only a person's Christian name is spoken out loud during prayer time. Any details are kept strictly confidential within the group.

Our prayer time finishes with 5 minutes of silent private prayer, ending with saying the Grace and an appropriate prayer which brings the evening to a close.

The evening finishes with coffee, biscuits and a chat.

Any prayer requests should be made to Sue Jakeman, Rev Richard Howlett or any member of the group. The group consists of Sue Jakeman, Viv Hagel, Lillian Hepwood, Brunhilda Davis and Shelia Mackie. The group would welcome anyone interested in joining us.

Our current value in worship is resilience – and the governors, staff and I have certainly had to exercise a lot of that in the past twelve months. The staff were marvellous and coped admirably when I was recuperating after an operation this time last year. By the time I returned our budget had come in and we were devastated to find our funding cut by over £40,000. This is a significant sum and the consequence has been a reduction in staff. Some have voluntarily moved on to other things, others accepted posts of a lower level and some were sadly made redundant. For such a close team, as our staff is, it was very hard indeed and the impact has been felt not just by the adults, but also by our children, who miss Angie Burger, our former Inclusion Co-ordinator (INCO) particularly.

However, onwards and upwards! Resilience is the order of the day – or rather, year! Teacher recruitment is a huge challenge in our area; teachers only have to travel a little way to attract London Weighting and the DfE has missed its teacher training targets for successive years now. We have welcomed two Australian supply teachers into our fold since September. One is leaving at Easter as the teacher whose maternity leave she has been covering is returning and the other will remain with us until the end of the year. They are both lovely young ladies and we will miss them. Our new INCO is here part-time, and she is proving to be very effective in the role.

Alison Bill, who has been tremendous in post as Acting and then the substantive Deputy Head, is leaving at the end of the year. I will miss her terribly, as will her colleagues. She was here just a year or two before me and has always been dependable and very efficient; she has been such a support and it will be hard for anyone to fill her shoes. There is a recruitment process in place and the Governors and I are very appreciative of the additional notice she gave us, allowing for a second early recruitment round if this one proves fruitless. However, three candidates have been invited out of the eight who applied and your prayers would be valued.

So all of a sudden, from having a very stable school, things are shifting considerably and we have lost some key governors too. Our two new ones are keen to share their skills and the important thing at present is to look for opportunities – we cannot prevent change so we need to look for these and embrace the possibilities that they bring.

Our SATs results at Key Stage 2 last year were good in grammar and punctuation and especially in reading. Our writing results improved and maths was good – all in all, we were very pleased after the disappointment of the 2017 results.

One of the highlights for KS2 children, when it comes to school trips, continue to be the annual visits to different places of worship. We are so grateful to the Trustees of the Leverstock Green RE Fund as the grant they award us allows for each class to visit somewhere different. We are indeed a Church school, but we want to provide RE of a high quality and this grant certainly supports our ability to do that. By the end of year 6, the children will have visited a synagogue, St Albans Abbey, a mosque, a mandir and a Gurdwara or the Holy Books exhibition at the British Library. The sense of awe and wonder the children gain from these experiences is lovely.

We have benefited from a grant from the Diocese just recently – although it was a modest sum, it allowed for the garden area at the back of the school to be completely overhauled. There are lovely new raised beds, ready for planting and repairs have been made to the potting shed. I will be putting out a request for some keen gardeners amongst our children's families to come and help with a club – that will be marvellous!

Some pupils from Y4 -Y6 who are in our Choir really enjoyed singing at the O2 last month as part of the Million Voices. About 8,000 children were present and it was an amazing day! Fiona Barrett, who leads our choir so well, is always so good at organising opportunities for our Choir to perform.

Richard and Sue Jakeman continue to provide me with a lot of personal, as well as professional support. Richard leads collective worship several times each term, always willing to help if I am out. He has observed every class learning RE and both of us were amazed at the quality discussion about the existence of God v the Big Bang that was going on in the classroom of our oldest pupils! We wish we had had a video camera!

Sue quietly does things in the background, such as replacing or trimming the candle in the hall; some may see this as a small gesture, but it means a lot to me and the children – we now refer to her sometimes as our ‘Candle Angel!’ She is always sensitive to our team and folk will sometimes find a bag of sweets or flowers when they need a boost. I know it is you, Sue!

This week we have had ‘Inspirations Week’ and the children have thoroughly enjoyed their focus on art. It is one of the subjects that has been squeezed by the National Curriculum due to the demands of the core subjects of English, maths and science but we are very keen to develop children’s skills and talents in this area too. When I popped up to Nursery and Reception earlier this week, the children were busily colouring over black and white photos of themselves, Andy Warhol style! There are tigers, dragons, puppets and tangrams in evidence, as well as Aborigine-inspired paintings.

In the next few weeks we have some great theme days to look forward to – it is World Book Day on 7th March and at the end of the following week we have Red Nose Day; the School Council has decided that everyone should come to school in pyjamas, so be warned! Richard joined in beautifully last year, donned in a very fetching dressing gown! Mother’s Day will be celebrated and provision will be made if this is a hard day for one or two children; we allow them to come in later on or to spend time with a member of staff away from the hall.

I hope this gives you some idea of what our school has been up to. You would be very welcome to visit if you ever have the time.

Thank you for all your support.

## **29. Oxygen Recovery Service at Nascent House**

Vivian Hagel

The programme at Nascent House known as Oxygen Recovery Service is supported by the church by providing welcome boxes for new clients on their arrival. The boxes contain assorted toiletries, various items of stationery, stamps, an alarm clock, sweets and a plant.

The boxes are put together from generous donations from various members of the congregation. These are currently coordinated by Susan Rivett and myself. I must thank Jean Chrisp who for many years helped in this role and has stepped down and now Susan helps with this.

During 2018 we have prepared and delivered thirty nine welcome boxes to new clients on their arrival. We have received many thank you cards expressing their gratitude and how much it means to them to receive these gifts. Often these clients arrive with very little so this can mean such a lot to them.

On Shrove Tuesday we were pleased to welcome a number of clients who came with a support worker and enjoyed the pancakes with us. Then at Easter we gave the clients an Easter Egg each and at Christmas an advent calendar. We also delivered a Christmas hamper with lots of goodies donated by members of the congregation. These were all well received and much appreciated.

Throughout the year we have occasionally seen clients attend the Sunday morning service. It is always a pleasure to welcome our neighbours into St Mary’s Church.

Susan and Viv would like to thank everyone that has supported the provision of these Welcome Boxes.

We are always looking for new contributors or anyone who wishes to make a financial donation. For further information please contact Vivian Hagel (01442 394657) or Susan Rivett (01442 266129).

## **30. Sacristan Report for 2018**

Jim Aylott

I would like to thank all the members of the congregation who donated their unwanted candles to me this year. Yes I am using them! You may even recognize I was using them on the Midnight Mass and Christmas Day Services and then removed for another year. As long as they are a white candle I am sure I can make use of them and this does help me to save

money and reduce my budget cost like everything else the price of candles always goes up. They are not cheap to buy new. I will continue to use part burnt candles for our Sunday Eucharist where I can and that's the reason why we have some odd size pillar candles on the prayer stand although my part burnt stock has been reduced but not finished yet.

This year I did have problems with the Advent candles, I thought the Advent ring would only be lit on the four Sundays before Christmas and Christmas Day. But they were lit for other Services we had before Christmas. This somewhat burnt the candles down in length very quickly and it became a problem to replace them on the Advent Ring. I only just had enough part burns to use. Next year I will have to order two sets of Advent candles for us to use.

The two Chalices we use, the small one for Thursday Eucharist and the large Chalice for our Sunday Eucharist, are both sterilized each week on Monday mornings. I do this to help keep the Chalices in a clean and hygiene condition and ready for use.

I would like to point out that the ordering of stock or items for use in the Church has to be placed in advance by three to four weeks before delivery I can't order direct from the manufacturer and I must make sure I have enough stock in hand to cover that period of time. All orders for stock or items must go through Norma at the benefice office who collects all the orders from the benefice and waits until it's a big order so we don't pay a delivery charge. For information, the cost for the candles at the midnight mass service was £96.64p this year but we did finish them off on the first Sunday of Epiphany. As I said before candles are not cheap to buy.

This year we will be using a part burnt Paschal Candle it looks almost new but this will make a saving of around £45.00.

### **31. Safeguarding**

Susan Rivett & Katharine Harper

The parish conforms to the Church of England policy on child protection as detailed in the Diocese of St Albans child protection guidance document and in line with the Thirtyone:eight (formally known as Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)) guidance. This ensures that children, young people and vulnerable adults alike are safeguarded and their welfare is protected.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer is the key link between the diocese and the parish, concerning safeguarding matters. They have an overview of all church activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults and seek to ensure the implementation of safeguarding policy. The role, at St Mary's Apsley End, is currently held by Susan Rivett and Katharine Harper. We receive regular communication from the Diocese.

Over the year we have reviewed and updated our documents, held a Safeguarding service to raise the awareness that safeguarding is the responsibility of all and copies of our safeguarding leaflet have been distributed. A display has been arranged in the Refectory where the policies for Safeguarding Children and Adults are available. Safeguarding is on the agenda of all the PCC meetings and members of the PCC have completed on-line training and many have attended Diocesan training. There have been no safeguarding issues reported within the parish.

### **32. Servers Report for 2018**

Jim Aylott

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the server's team for their services to the Altar during this past year for our Sunday Eucharist and their attendances at the church special services we also have during the year. And again for the teams help with visiting Priest this has been most appreciated in the making them feel at ease and comfortable with our Sunday Eucharist. I do hope our movements at the Altar do not distract you the congregation from your main focus of attention during our Sunday Eucharist as the team are committed to observe silence and great reverence in the Sanctuary.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the few numbers of the congregation who help us light the candles for our midnight mass service and our Epiphany service this year. This is the

first time we have had Epiphany Sunday with candle light. We are only a small team and again it takes time to set up the Altar and to go and light 194 candles before the congregation fills the Church. And yes we then have to tidy up after the Service and extinguish 194 candles so we were so grateful for the hand full of people who stayed behind after both the services to help out with the extinguishing of the candles.

I would like to thank Peter Bladon for standing in as a server for the Christmas morning service it was important a server was present because the service was conducted by a visiting Priest and it helps if a server can go through the service with the Priest before its start and the same applies to the visiting Organist.

Have you noticed how different the Altar is laid out each Sunday it does seem each Priest has own way of liking their Altar prepared before the start of the service.

If anybody would like to join the server's team please come forward to any members of the team or speak to Farther Richard for more information the only golden rule is to be at the Church for 9.30 am on Sunday mornings.

### **33. Saturday Community Café**

Peter Bladon

This outreach to our local community has continued successfully over the last year on every Saturday of the year. One of the areas that has grown is its use for various Church groups to meet rather than during the week. Supported by not only our own congregation, but also by various visitors including walkers, visiting bell-ringers and people visiting the area. Also, for those bringing their children to be baptised as they have the chance to meet other members of the congregation, as well as the baptism visitors.

As I said in last year's report the aim of the "Saturday Community Café", (as the name suggests) is to get alongside our local community, and encourage them to come into church. I once again appeal that if you have a friend or neighbour please make them aware of the café, and encourage them to come –our home made cakes and other refreshments are better than the shop over the road and a great deal cheaper! The café is also a place where people can come and if they wish, spend a few moments of peace in church, which in today's world is something that many are seeking, and one of the main reasons for the café being started over 30 years ago. It may even encourage them to return to join us on a service on Sunday or during the week!

Finally, my thanks go once again to those who give up their Saturday mornings every couple of months to help run the café, and supply the high quality and quantity of refreshments, as well as talking to those who come in. The more people we have to help run it, really does spread the load. If you would be willing to help every couple of months, and would be available between 10am – 12 noon on a Saturday – just speak to me. Meanwhile if you are unable to do that why not just come along and bring a friend to enjoy the company!

### **34. Solo Lunch**

Jean Chrisp

A group of 'Soloists' continued to meet during 2018 to share a lunch time meal in the refectory. It is a good opportunity for people who live on their own to get together for conversation and fellowship. I am very grateful to members of St Mary's congregation for their help and support during the year.

In March we shared a Lent lunch of soup, bread and cheese joined by other members of the congregation. Donations were given to The Willow Foundation; a national charity working to fulfil uplifting and unforgettable Special Days for seriously ill young adults aged 16 to 40.

In May we welcomed a guest chef for a special lunch for the 'Soloists' and helpers. Our son-in-law cooked his speciality dish of paella with garlic bread and the helpers brought some lovely puddings. It made a very interesting and different Solo Lunch as it was In August when Ralph Henley cooked on a barbeque.

On 12 December 2018 nine 'Soloists' and ten helpers celebrated a pre-Christmas lunch. We enjoyed turkey or salmon as a main course with all the trimmings and

a choice of desserts including Christmas pudding made by Susan Rivett and apple cake made by Melanie Henley.

Confined to her home, Nesta Hancocks very kindly assembled the gifts of chocolates and Christmas baubles for everyone.

The Hagels prepared the sprouts, Sheila Mackie prepared the carrots, the Witts cooked the salmon and Mike Chrisp cooked and carved the turkey. We finished the meal with tea or coffee and sang the Twelve Days of Christmas!

As this was Jean's final time for organising solo lunches Richard and Katherine presented her with a colourful pot of plants and the 'Soloists' presented all the helpers with lovely bunches of flowers.

Plans are in progress to continue with monthly lunches at church, look out for the dates in the weekly bulletin.

## **35. Stewardship Secretary's Report**

Jim Aylott

I would like to thank the members of the Stewardship scheme for your continued support to St Mary's Church and again those who read last year's report and responded to it by increasing your Stewardship money to the Church but I regret to say that this simply was not sufficient to meet our expenditure.

The membership of the Stewardship now stands at 47 members of whom 8 of these no longer pay Income Tax which means I can't claim back the Tax, yet the Electoral Roll has 89 names on it. I know not everybody believes in the Stewardship scheme yet this is the main source of income that St Mary's has.

Have you stopped reading this? If you have and ignored IT, is it because you think that it might not apply to you? My friends it applies to us ALL both the congregation and stewardship members.

The Diocese Financial Board recommends we should all be giving at least 1/5 of our total income for the year to the Church, I do agree this is not possible for everybody to pay this high level of finance each week to the Church but that is what we are expected to pay if we want St Mary's to continue to do its work in Apsley.

And once again our Diocese quota has been increased for this year by £1,500. We have no say in this but are expected to pay it, and by our Electoral numbers this means we will all have to pay an extra 32p per week per person.

Stewardship is not just about money but giving St Mary's some of your spare time with helping out with some of the daily and weekly task that are carried out here at our Church both inside and outside there's always something needs doing and more help is always needed as some of us are getting older and a few of us don't like climbing up ladders any more. We few are all trying to make St Mary's a pleasant place to come to for our weekly Worship. This is all part of Stewardship. Can you help?

Once again the Inland Revenue are issuing your new Tax codes for 2019/20 your personal allowance now stands at £12,500 before you start paying income Tax please make sure you are paying enough income Tax for me to claim back the Gift Aid.

Finally, we are always looking to recruit new members to the Stewardship scheme so please come and speak to me or the treasurer if you would like to join. And thank you all for your financial support to St Mary's Church over the past year.

## **36. Sunday School**

Peter Bladon

Our Sunday School continues to be in a healthy state with the average weekly attendance between 8 – 10 children. Indeed this is more than other churches in our Deanery some of whom get a lot less! As I said in last year's report our actual membership is about 30 children however in today's modern world some only come once a month mainly due to family

demands. Our attendance on Easter Day Sunday School last year was again high, and last year again numbers over the school summer holidays were high when we have special events such as the Teddy Bears annual picnic. We continue to use the weekly teaching books 'Living Water' which follow the readings their families are listening to in church, while they are in the refectory. Our older class has continued to grow as some of our younger members have moved up to this second class.

The children continue to look forward to sharing with the congregation what they have been doing at Sunday School at the end of the service – hopefully linking in with what the congregation have also been hearing about during the service. Thank you to the congregation for giving them their support and always a round of applause for their work!!

We have over the last year had support from the Diocese in ways we can grow our ministry to children, but a great deal of this relies on the support of parents in bringing the children along to church at a time that is convenient to them.

Finally, my sincere thanks once again go to the teachers who continue to work on a rota basis, for their support and commitment throughout the year. We would of course always welcome any new ones to help spread the load, just speak to me!

### **37. Team Council**

Peter Bladon & Sue Jakeman

"Our Vision is of a community where Christ has been brought to the community and the community has been brought to Christ. Our Mission as churches in this benefice area is to maintain sacred spaces, and be flexible, interactive and collaborative with the use of resources".

The Team Council has had four meetings over the last year and continues to work with the four P.C.C.s of the Benefice towards the above vision. There are two groups who report back to the team council at their meetings.

The treasurers group (made up of the four church treasurers) continues to report back to the council at every meeting, as they monitor and discuss the health of the finances of the four churches. Once again during 2018 the group only needed to meet twice who talk to each other on a regular basis, and also have a good working relationship. They once again drew up the fees to be used in 2019 for Marriages and Funerals which were then approved by both the Team Council and local P.C.C.s. They also proposed to the Team Council the split between the four parishes (based on CMF supplied from the Diocese) of Clergy Expenses and Benefice office expenses. This was passed back to local P.C.C.s for approval.

The communications group has continued to support the production of the quarterly Newsletter. Its main aim is to communicate information across all four churches. The work continues to improve the information on the website, and all of the churches have got a member who can update their own church information on the site. Mark Gritten, our webmaster, has continued to work to improve the user friendliness of the system. The contract on the copier in the Benefice Office has been extended for one year until September 2019.

The Ash Wednesday service was held at St Benedict's last year, but there was a lower than hoped for turnout.

The Benefice 'Anniversary' service was held at Holy Trinity on the 14th October 2018, and was enjoyed by all those who went to it.

Rector Vacancy – After a second round of interviews in July which was not successful Revd.Lizzie Hood was offered, and accepted the role. Her installation as Team Rector was held on the 22nd November 2018.

This then led to the interviews for a Team Vicar in November, and the appointment of Revd. James McDonald who will be licensed to the Benefice on Monday 4th March.

At all meetings there are parish updates from the four churches which allow any concerns to be brought to the attention of the council.

### **38. Thursday Morning Group**

Revd Richard Howlett

The Thursday morning Bible study group has continued to meet most Thursdays after the 9.30 Communion. Very welcome hot drinks and biscuits, and sometimes cake! Adds to a friendly fellowship as we start up each week. The group generally concentrate on the Gospel for the coming Sunday but may also include other readings set for that day. Sometimes we have tried Lectio Divina as a different way of letting God's word speak to us by repeated and prayerful reading of a passage.

An average of 8 people attends, and it has been good to welcome some new faces. Group members support each other by reading the passages in the church Good News Bibles, (as opposed to merely printing out the readings in isolation) and this has helped us to study the context as well as the passage in question.

We recently obtained a 'Large Print' Good News Bible, to help easier reading where some members struggle with smaller print. After experimenting with this for a while, we may invest in some further copies, so that everyone who needs larger print may study with greater ease.

It has been exciting to work with this group, and I believe we have all benefitted by sharing insights and growing in our knowledge and understanding of God's Word. The Groups' next task is to study 'Everybody welcome' as one of St Mary's Lent Groups.

### **39. Thursday Evening House Group**

Harry Graham-Brown

We have met most Thursday evening throughout the year. Starting last lent with a course based on the film called "The Theory of Everything". More recently we have been looking at the readings from the previous week and discussing those.

The group currently has 7 members.

### **40. Watermill House Care Home**

Jean Chrisp

During 2018 Richard has led a monthly communion service at Water Mill House care home. The worship has been welcomed by the residents and is enhanced by singing hymns accompanied by Melanie's flute playing.

One of the large living rooms is normally filled with residents and members from St Mary's congregation. We are getting to know everyone and many of us stay for coffee and a chat after the service.

On 18 December carols with Melanie's flute accompaniment were led by members of St Mary's congregation. Passages from the bible were read between the carols. Most of the residents joined in the singing and we were given mince pies and coffee afterwards.

The 11am communion service led by Richard on Christmas Eve was very much appreciated by the residents. Three carols were sung; The First Nowell, Oh Come all ye Faithful and Hark the Herald Angels sing. Melanie played the flute and read the gospel of the Christmas story. It was very special to hold a service and sing carols with everyone on Christmas Eve.

It would be lovely if more members of the congregation could join us, normally at 11am on the third Tuesday in the month. Dates will be in the diary and the weekly bulletin.

### **41. Worship Planning Group**

Sue Jakeman

The group comprises of the following members:

Revd Richard Howlett, Dan Shirley, Sue Jakeman, Melanie Henley, David Heath, Peter Bladon and Alex Bell.

We have met three times over the year in order to plan and develop the worship at St Mary's, in particular for special services that occur over the liturgical year. The group planned the

Remembrance service and Harvest, Advent and Christmas services and carol singing at various venues in Apsley.

We have also started to develop the music within the service of Evensong. With the input of David Heath, we are developing a sung Evensong, with a choir practice at 5:30. In the next meeting the group will discuss the services for Lent and Easter.

## **42. Parochial Church Council**

Dan Shirley

For Dot Zasadzka, P.C.C. Secretary

The PCC has met six times in the year. Its role is to manage the Church's affairs, both spiritual and temporal. Occasional guest speakers are invited to give guidance and inspiration on various matters, like stewardship and managing meetings. Finance, safeguarding and fabric are discussed at all meetings and other committees and groups also provide regular reports. As these groups all provide their reports independently, they will not be duplicated here.

Members are the vicar and wardens, the secretary and treasurer. Other members are elected at the APCM. It is a worthwhile and important role, that helps to steer the church and plan for the future.

### **8<sup>th</sup> May**

As the first meeting of the year, there was a number of PCC posts to be filled.

The outstanding vacancy at Kings Langley (1/4 St Mary's) was discussed and a report of progress (or lack of) was given.

GDPR regulations were discussed.

2 vacancies on the Governors board at Nash Mills were recommended to the PCC.

### **10<sup>th</sup> July**

Discussions covered Thy Kingdom Come, the quiet day at Douai Abbey and purchasing a half step to assist the less able to get up the step to communion.

### **19<sup>th</sup> September**

We reviewed the Parish profile for the Post of team Vicar at All Saints.

### **20<sup>th</sup> November**

As a pastoral exercise, the PCC worked through the 'Parish Dashboard' produced by the diocese from our reports and public demographics.

Some useful information was gleaned but the dashboard was not all that clearly laid out and this was reported back to the diocese.

Richard reported back from a Church Growth Day that he attended, and several initiatives were considered and will be implemented at St Mary's.

### **22<sup>nd</sup> January**

A collect for Church growth was drafted and will be tweaked and brought into use at St Mary's.

The Electoral Roll revision was discussed. It will need to be completely revised this year as a six year cycle comes to an end.

A second Angel Festival is planned for this December.

### **20<sup>th</sup> February**

The Lent Course for all groups will be "Everybody Welcome" a look at ways of growing the Church.

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