

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF WINCHCOMBE

WITH GRETTON, SUDELEY MANOR AND STANLEY PONTLARGE



ANNUAL REPORT

for the year 2016

**presented at the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Sunday 30 April 2017

WINCHCOMBE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

1) LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Meets to share with the Priest-in-charge in deciding, and in implementing, parish policy. It is legally responsible for the church buildings & furnishings and for parish property. The PCC is a charity, and registered with the Charity Commission during 2009.

The members of the PCC (*with dates when terms of office expire*) are:

Ex-Officio Members

Clergy

John Paul Hoskins (*Priest-in-charge*)
Julia Hook
James Pickersgill

Churchwardens

Tim Hall
Stewart Aylward

Deputy Wardens:

Christ Church, Gretton	Graham Taylor 2017
St Michael's,	
Stanley Pontlarge	Rosemary Hancock 2017
St Mary's, Sudeley Manor	Tom Hancock 2017

Deanery Synod Members

Nigel Bearne 2017
Tom Hancock 2017
Margaret Jarvis 2017
Alan Thomas 2017 (*Lay Chairman*)

Elected Members

St Peter's Geof Adlington (*Treasurer*) 2017
Steve Carter 2019
Clifford Cocks 2017
Rob Davies 2018
Lynne Horton *resigned 12/2016*
Jane Houston *resigned 09/2016*
Sue Pestell 2018
Arthur Ruddock 2018
Martin Soltau 2017
Kate Stebbings 2017
Sue Teggert 2019
Jane Wain 2019

Officer in Attendance

Margaret Bearne (*Secretary*)

THE LOCAL MINISTRY TEAM

Put into abeyance in October 2013.

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CHARITY NUMBER: 1138071

FINANCIAL ADDRESSES

PCC's Bankers

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Independent Examiner

Mrs Susan Williams A.I.A.
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Organisation and Aims

The Parish of Winchcombe includes four churches: St. Peter's in Winchcombe, Christ Church in Gretton, St. Michael's in Stanley Pontlarge, and St. Mary's on the Sudeley estate. We are part of the Diocese of Gloucester, of the Tewkesbury and Winchcombe Deanery, and of the large Winchcombe Team which is currently suspended. Our priest-in-charge, John Paul Hoskins, began his ministry here in January 2016, and is ably supported by Julia Hook (team vicar) and James Pickersgill (assistant curate) as well as a number of other licensed and retired ministers.

The main purpose of the PCC, as defined in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956, is 'to cooperate with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical'. The PCC meets six times a year.

During the process in 2015 to appoint a new parish priest, we agreed that we are called:

- to be at the heart of our community, open and accessible to all;
- to participate in the rhythm of local life, reflecting in our relationships the love of God that we see in Jesus;
- to encourage others to join us in a personal connection with God through Jesus Christ.

Building on this work, in September 2016 the PCC adopted a new vision: *Growing in God, growing the family of God*. It sets out a number of areas for development:

- to understand better the needs of our community;
- to review the pattern of some of our regular services;
- to make better use of baptisms, weddings and funerals as opportunities for mission;
- to work with other churches in Winchcombe to continue and strengthen our children's work;
- to employ a full-time family worker.

John Paul Hoskins, Priest-in-Charge

Church Membership and Attendance

The last Annual Parochial Church Meeting was held on Sunday 17th April 2016, the electoral roll then stood at 280.

Combined attendance at our three churches (St. Peter's, Christ Church and St. Michael's) was:

On a 'normal Sunday'	156
Easter Day	412 (including 295 communicants)
Christmas Eve & Christmas Day	594 (including 500 communicants)

There were 22 Baptisms (12 infants, 10 children), 16 weddings and 46 funerals (in church, at the Crematorium or the Cemetery).

Review of Progress and Achievements

It is very good to have completed my first year here as priest in charge of Winchcombe, Gretton, Sudeley and Stanley Pontlarge. We have done a great

deal together in the past twelve months.

Last autumn we launched our new parish vision, *Growing in God, growing the family of God*. This new vision built on the excellent work done during the vacancy to develop a parish profile and also followed wide consultation last summer.

Our vision for the whole parish is to grow the Church and to grow the kingdom. We want to grow in numbers – to reach more people and to make more disciples of Jesus. We also want to grow spiritually – to deepen our discipleship and to become more fully the people God is calling us to be. This is why our vision has two aspects to it – growing in God, and growing God’s family.

We have recognised that, for all the good things we are already doing, there are some parts of our communities with whom our churches are not yet connecting as much as we would like. We have already undertaken some work to make sure we fully understand the rapidly changing demographics and needs of our community.

In addition, we have identified a number of important priorities which will help our churches to grow. We are going to review the pattern of some of our services to make our worship more attractive to families and young people. We will continue to develop our ministry among children and families, and a key component of our plans for the future will be the employment of a pioneer family worker.

We also want to make more effective use of the contacts we already have with the community. Lots of people come to our churches for baptisms, weddings and funerals, and we want to make more of these important moments in their lives as opportunities for outreach. Some of our pastoral visitors have now undertaken specialist training in working with people who have been bereaved, and we have also recently established a bereavement support group.

In everything that we are doing, we want to work more closely with the other local churches. I am delighted that there is some new energy around Churches Together in Winchcombe and a strong desire among all four churches to cooperate more effectively. I want us to develop a deeper sense of being part of a larger family – the deanery, the diocese and the worldwide Church. We are beginning to explore the possibility of a partnership with the parish of St. Stephen’s, San Luis Obispo in California.

Many people contribute to the mission and ministry of God in this parish. We each bring our many different gifts to our membership of the body of Christ. But delivering on our priorities will only be possible if everyone joins in, contributing their time, talents, energy and enthusiasm to our journey together.

The busy life of our churches is being supported extremely capably by our excellent and energetic new office manager, Rachel Merritt. We are fortunate in having some excellent Readers in the parish, with Nigel Sharp having been licensed in January to join in ministry alongside Steve Carter and Cliff Cocks. We are looking forward to Fliss Hall and Chris Haslam being licensed later in the year, and we are delighted that Sue Pestell has begun her training for ordination. I have been immensely grateful for the hard work and support of our churchwardens, Tim Hall and Stewart Aylward. I am in the process of forming a new leadership team to work with me in leading the mission and ministry of the

parish, which will also allow the PCC to concentrate on governance and on holding the overall vision.

We recently said goodbye to James Pickersgill. James and Catherine have had a tremendous impact on the life of this parish in their nearly four years here. Their departure is a significant moment for us as well as for them. But curates do eventually need to move on, and so we send James, Catherine, Annabelle, Martha and Zebedee off to their new life in Market Harborough with all our prayers and very best wishes.

John Paul Hoskins, Priest in Charge

Deanery Synod

As usual the Deanery Synod held 3 meetings during 2016 – in January, June and October. Apart from Deanery business each meeting received and discussed one or more major items as follows.

The January meeting received a presentation on the Diocese of Gloucester Development Fund which was led by visiting speaker the Revd Duncan Munro. He explained that the funding priorities were:

1. Spirituality:
 - a. Initiatives which enable people who rarely come to church to engage and grow in Christian prayer;
 - b. Support for individuals and churches to go deeper in Christian prayer;
 - c. Support for individuals and churches exploring healing and wholeness.
2. Growing the Church:
 - a. Initiatives which enable Christians to engage in culturally appropriate evangelism;
 - b. Support for churches to grow their work with children, young people and families;
 - c. Training and support for church leaders in creating an environment for growth.
3. Serving the Common Good:
 - a. Initiatives in which the church works in partnership with other bodies;
 - b. Initiatives which enable church buildings to be used by other community groups.

It was followed by a question and answer session and then a discussion of the three questions:

- What are the needs and opportunities in our parish [benefice]?
- What holds us back from starting a new project?
- What help do we need to get our project off the ground?

The June meeting received a presentation on "Journeying On – Next Steps 'from Deanery Action Plan → Conversations'" which was led by the Lay Chairman, Dr Julie Fay. She quoted Bishop Rachel as saying vision conversations are an opportunity to look outwards and to engage with wider society. To engage with the people, groups, places, organisations around us; those with whom we already have relationships and those where we need to take some of the first steps. And in all of this we are praying that we will hear what God is saying to us through the work of the Holy Spirit as we continue our 'Journey Together' as followers of Jesus Christ seeking to join in with what God is doing.

The October meeting received a report back on our Deanery Vision Meeting: LIFE 'Our New Vision' which was led by the Lay Chairman, Dr Julie Fay. She explained that LIFE stood for:

- **L**eadership 'committed to transformation',
- **I**magination 'opening new paths to faith',
- **F**aith 'growing adventurous followers of Jesus Christ',
- **E**ngagement 'living out Christ's love and hope'.

Also at the October meeting we received a presentation on the Mothers' Union given by Mothers' Union Deanery Leader, Anna Venables. She shared with synod some of the amazing work undertaken by the Mothers' Union – at both local and global level.

Your Deanery Synod representatives are Nigel Bearne, Tom Hancock, Margaret Jarvis and Alan Thomas.

Nigel Bearne, Deanery Synod Representative

Diocesan Synod

As is usual the Diocesan Synod met three times during the year. All the meetings were chaired by Bishop Rachel with either a Eucharist in the church or with opening prayers before the business meeting commenced.

The first meeting was on 6th February. A discussion took place on Safeguarding in the Diocese of Gloucester and a little pocket-sized folder was distributed to all members. It contained useful contact telephone numbers.

There was quite a lot of discussion regarding the appointment of a new Bishop to the See of Tewkesbury. It was agreed that this position should be filled in order to provide appropriate Episcopal leadership within the Bishop of Gloucester's senior staff team of the mission and ministry of the Diocese.

A discussion took place on how we understand and misunderstand our communities. This took place in Deanery groups.

The second meeting was on the 29th June and Bishop Rachel welcomed members and told of her time in Tanzania celebrating the country's Golden Jubilee. Members were then put into groups and asked to write down one thing they hoped/dreamed would come from the Vision Process and how they suggest this hope could be realised. Members were told that the appointment process was in hand for the next Bishop of Tewkesbury. This has since taken place and Archdeacon Robert Springett has been appointed.

A discussion on the use of Diocesan funds then took place, namely:

- a) developing growth within existing ministries and
- b) alleviating deprivation.

There was a brief update on the Social Care Institute of Excellence Audit and the Safeguarding team.

The third meeting was on 5th November and it was reported that the process for the appointment of the next Archdeacon of Cheltenham had been completed and an appointment had been made.

Concerning "Life" Vision, a brief explanation of the vision themes and priorities stressing that the vision is about stories and telling stories. The Synod

envisages all church bodies and officers and members of worshipping communities to engage actively with the Vision as set out in the Diocesan Synod paper and thereby seeking to bring life in all its fullness to our communities. This was followed by Shared Conversations on Human Sexuality. The Bishop's Council had agreed the recommendations of the Finance Committee for the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance salaries for 2017 and also for the stipends and allowances within the Diocese for 2017/18.

Tom Hancock, Diocesan Synod Representative

Fabric Report

St. Peter's, Winchcombe

So many people have helped in the maintenance of St. Peter's during 2016 and what has been particularly pleasing is that those involved have included people who are not regular worshippers but who appreciate the wonderful building that remains a focal point of our town.

No major projects were completed this year, but attention has been given to several smaller matters. In November, we held our second Maintenance Day and, as in the previous year, we were blessed with a lovely sunny Saturday morning. We are particularly indebted to Simon Andrews for agreeing to organise the Day which he ran with extreme efficiency so that volunteers knew what jobs they were expected to do when they arrived. As a result, a vast amount was achieved in just 3 or 4 hours and I would like to say a huge thank-you to the 50+ people who turned out for what was a very enjoyable morning. Simon kindly agreed to run the next maintenance day and as he intends there to be two sessions each year in future, another one will have already taken place earlier this month.

Another person whose efforts are greatly appreciated is Geof Adlington who has taken over responsibility for dealing with minor maintenance issues which come to light during the course of the year in addition to his responsibilities as Treasurer. He has dealt with such things as:

- resolving the occasional leaks over the South Aisle which has been a problem for many years;
- removing the rust on the steel railings on the approach to the South Door and getting the outside light which borders Gloucester Street working again;
- sourcing and replacing various floor tiles around the church.

Several people have helped towards the creation of the new Steward's Desk which was mentioned in Tim Hall's report last year. About 6 of us spent several fairly chilly February mornings in the tithe barn at Postlip dismantling two pews in preparation for the building of this new piece of furniture. This was designed and built by John Bristol, an amateur cabinet maker who lives in Cheltenham and seems to be much appreciated by the band of Church Stewards who continue to give such a valued and knowledgeable welcome to visitors. They also appreciate having a dedicated heater housed within the desk to keep them warm.

The replacement of the pews at the West End of St. Peter's with new chairs has taken rather longer than we had hoped. Alan Thomas has taken the lead in finding suitable chairs and, thanks to the generous financial support of The Friends of St. Peter's, we took delivery of 40 chairs and 4 tables at the end of

February 2017.

We have continued our plans to resurface the driveway to the West and North of the church and, if all goes well, the work will be completed by the end of June 2017 in time for the annual church fête. More about this in next year's report...

Christ Church, Gretton

The main issue that has been addressed this year is the removal of a large Jackdaws' nest in the church spire. The work was undertaken by Chris Arnold who did an excellent job, and has fitted wire mesh in the louvers to prevent a recurrence of this infestation.

In last year's report, mention was made of the need to review the stability of the headstones in the churchyard as some are leaning over. We have examined all the headstones in the churchyard and are satisfied that all are firm in the ground and we do not believe that they are in danger of falling over and causing injury. We have therefore not at this stage thought it appropriate to take further professional advice on this matter.

In preparation for the occasion of the church's 150th anniversary in 2018, steps have been taken to raise funds for the repair and re-gilding of the corbels within the church.

We are grateful to Mark Davis who does an excellent job of looking after the churchyard and ensuring that it remains a good condition.

St. Michael's, Stanley Pontlarge

We continue to benefit from the funds which are raised by the Friends of St. Michael's as they pay for a substantial part of the maintenance costs. During the year, Gill Badger, who is a professional landscape gardener, kindly designed a plan for the planting of Wild Crab Apple, Guelder Rose, Holly and Box trees, and this was implemented in December with assistance from Anne and Mike Dean. This was one of the projects which was financed by The Friends.

The Cotswold Wardens led by John Smith kindly provided all the labour and some of the stone needed to rebuild the church wall. They also cleared brambles and weeds. We are grateful for the financial contribution by Anne Dean towards the cost of the stone used in this project.

St. Mary's, Sudeley Manor

Tim Hall mentioned in his report last year that some significant work, identified in the 2015 Quinquennial Report, was required on the building of St. Mary's. The trustees of Sudeley Castle have dealt with the issues which posed any immediate danger to the visiting public and negotiations are continuing about longer term plans concerning the fabric of the church.

General

I would like to pass on thanks from both Tim and myself to the many people who have supported us in meeting our responsibilities in maintaining our four churches. We are particularly grateful to the Deputy Wardens, Graham Taylor for Christ Church and Tom and Rosemary Hancock for St. Mary's and St. Michael's respectively for all the help they have continued to give.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Tim who is now stepping down as churchwarden after spending six years in the role, two of which he carried without the support of a second churchwarden. What is even more amazing is

that he has held down a full time professional consultancy role involving a substantial amount of travel away from Winchcombe at the same time. Quite extraordinary!

Stewart Aylward, Churchwarden

Christ Church, Gretton

Services at Christ Church are held every Sunday at 10:00 am, alternating between Holy Communion and Morning Worship. The average attendance at regular Sunday services is between fifteen and twenty; fellowship time follows with refreshments served. A different priest, or on occasion a lay reader, takes the services each week, and we have a trio of dedicated organists who operate on a rota basis. Many thanks and our great appreciation goes to them! Members of the congregation also read the lessons on a rota basis, and lay people take intercessions. Our hope is to make our church a more prayerful place, looking outward to our community in a variety of ways.

In 2016 a lot happened in our little church. The first significant event was that on February 7th our new Priest-in-Charge, John Paul Hoskins, took his first service at Christ Church. We were very pleased to welcome him, and that he was able to stay for refreshments and a chat afterwards!

Easter saw our usual lovely Easter Day service; the congregation took part in decorating our large wooden cross with fresh flowers – a beautiful sight. Towards the end of April we held our usual Spring Clean; a number of parishioners turned out to deal with cobwebs and dust in the church, and to do any necessary jobs in the churchyard.

May saw the Gretton School Prayer Event in church on Friday the 13th, using the Prayer Trees. On two evenings towards the end of the month Julia Hook and several parishioners undertook to visit every house in the village to ask if there were any prayers which villagers would like to be offered up at the upcoming Prayer Service, which was held on 5th June. We were happy to use this as an opportunity to promote the presence of Christ Church in the village.

On June 26th we were very pleased to host a joint service with the congregation of St. Peter's – it was lovely to see parishioners from our 'mother church' there.

On the first Sunday in July Julia officiated at our outdoor Animal Blessing Service in the afternoon. In mid-July we took delivery of two beautiful oak tables, made specially and donated to Christ Church by a former parishioner in memory of her parents, Marjorie and Marwood Brown, who did so much for the church, and finally on Thursday 21st July Julia held a School Leavers' Service in church.

In early September, we held a Pimms Garden Party in the beautiful garden of Gwyneth Cocks (where it was good to see so many from St. Peter's), and in October held a Fashion Show courtesy of Just In Fashions; both events were fundraisers for the refurbishment of the stone angel corbels in the chancel, which sadly have broken wings and faded gilding. We hope to be able to complete this project in time for the 150th anniversary of the dedication of Christ Church in June next year.

At Christmas, we had our usual Crib Service and Christingle in the afternoon of Christmas Eve, which as usual was a full house of children and parents. Our

Carol Service in the evening was well attended as always, with our volunteer Christmas choir leading the singing.

Susan Fleck

St. Michael's, Stanley Pontlarge

Services continue to be held on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month and whenever a 5th Sunday occurs.

Services are at 9.15 a.m. and are taken by different members of the Clergy. We have a fine team of volunteer organists who enjoy playing the lovely little chamber organ, a gift to the Church from Sir John Smith in acknowledgement of the work of the late Sonia Rolt.

I am pleased to report that the fabric of the Church is in good repair since all the work was done a couple of years ago.

Under the direction of Jill Badger, the North-West corner of the churchyard has been tidied up and replanted with the approval of the Diocese.

We are also indebted to the Cotswold Wardens who have renewed and repaired the long section of the south drystone wall at little expense to The Friends of St. Michael.

Rosemary Hancock, Deputy Warden

St. Mary's, Sudeley Manor

During the year, the number of visitors to the Church has increased which is most satisfactory. Of particular interest is the tomb of Queen Katherine Parr as she is the only Queen to be buried in a non-Royal setting.

Six Sunday afternoon services took place, each on the 4th Sunday of the months between April and September. Two were led by St. Peter's Church Choir, one led by the Octavo Singers, one by the Sudeley Singers and one by the choir of St. Andrew's, Toddington. The Methodists led one service which was accompanied by the Isbourne Singers. The collections were very good.

The Services were well attended by visitors and local residents, although some people now find it rather difficult to walk the distance from the car park to the Church. It would be helpful if a different route could be found.

There is an excellent relationship with the authorities of the Castle and their help is most appreciated.

Tom Hancock, Deputy Warden

Children and Youth Work

There have been several highlights during our time in Winchcombe but none more so than being involved with all the young people in our churches, schools and clubs.

As always, a massive thank you to all those who have prayed for and facilitated the vast array of groups and services run for children and young people – none of which would happen without your serving in this way. God calls us all to nurture, care and help children to flourish with their God-given gifts and it is such a privilege.

Schools

The Diocese of Gloucester is continuing to place schools, education and faith for children and families right at the heart of the new vision: LIFE – “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). We have many opportunities, on top of the regular Collective Worship (new name for Assembly to recognise we are joining together to worship God) to develop and share our faith with all those in our community, most especially through the school.

The relationships that exists and have been formed between church and school in Winchcombe should be the bedrock of ministry with families and young people in the years ahead and for all to recognise and value the unique opportunity we have here for the future.

Toddler Service

The fortnightly service continues to grow and thrive with numbers recently of 12 children and 12 adults. It is a special time of worship and greatly valued by all those who attend with strong relationships and friendships developing. The Exploring Faith course which happened in the intervening weeks between Toddler Service was followed up with a ‘Prayer & Art Day’ based on Psalm 139.

Messy Church

Messy Church has been facilitated in Winchcombe since 2013. Well over 100 different parents and 145 children have attended (not to mention the team in the kitchen and those on registration... that is quite a lot of Pizza!), comprising 75 different families, over the course of 3.5 years! A large portion of these are not regular church attenders of any of the town’s churches.

A huge thank you is due to Sarah Clarkson, Catherine Pickersgill and Sara Collins who have been the absolute backbone of this happening and thriving like it has.

On average, each messy church has about 30-50 children attending with their parents, grandparents or carers. There is a great team of people who make it possible – at least 4 on Registration, 6-8 on craft, 3 in the Kitchen, 4 on welcoming / doing the talk / musical worship; all from the different churches, a great initiative of Churches Together in Winchcombe with all playing their part. We have also been running ‘Sweaty Church’ to run alongside Messy Church, as a way of engaging slightly older children – particularly energetic 8-year-old boys!

Children and adults seem to love the relaxed atmosphere, crafts, talk, learning about Jesus, worship and family tea which has the feeling of a party. A place where children are welcome – “let the children come unto me...”.

As well as the three main Messy Churches, in May 2016 we were invited to be a part of the Festival of Music and Arts on May Bank Holiday taking Messy to the streets! Leading people in action songs in the street with the view down the high street, over the houses to the fields and hills beyond was a fabulous experience – the best place anywhere in town to lead people in worship – the church without walls!

Sunday Mornings

We continue to run a full programme of groups for all ages which are appreciated by all those who attend. Recently, although some new congregation members have joined the team to facilitate which has enabled us to look towards people

being rotated once a month, it is pretty tight and on more than one occasion groups have been merged together. We are always looking for more volunteers so if you have a passion to help (and are open to learning stuff from the children as well!), do please let us know.

Youth

Sunday morning Youth Church has been challenged by limited contact time during the service and we need to explore ways of giving all ages tailored stimulation and ideas whilst involving them in the broader service. Chill-out on a Thursday evening after choir is a relaxed time for older Choir members to share experiences and seek advice and support with their concerns.

Encounter Church have been running a midweek group for the older teenagers helping to disciple and nurture those attending in the faith.

All-age Services

The 10.30 am All-age Worship Service on the 1st Sunday of each month gives us a unique opportunity to gather and worship in a contemporary and informal way with all-ages together. In today's society, there are probably no other places that all ages mix together and it should be embraced, cherished and nurtured. This is greatly appreciated by many families who find more traditional services inaccessible and restricting – there are of course 3 other more traditional services in the parish on the 1st Sunday.

Future

We all have our part to play in the body of Christ and ministry to families and young people. Even if a Family Worker is appointed in the future, as was the aspiration when the Parish Vision: 'Growing in God, Growing the Family of God' was launched last October, no one person can enact the change that many long to see. This new role would enable further and deeper ministry amongst families but they would not exclusively be able to do it all themselves.

If we are to succeed to build our Church for youth, families and children, we need a more structured and strategic approach to develop their faith and provide welcome that is genuine and unrestricted. All sections of the church community need to be involved and internal building changes to St. Peter's, to make it more flexible as a space, are definitely needed for the future.

Summary

In summary, as always there is lots to give thanks to God for and plenty to pray into for the future of all our young people that we have the privilege to serve. We will greatly miss all the fabulous young people that we have learnt so much from over the years and all the terrific leaders and helpers who enable it all to happen. Thanks for the opportunity to minister – much appreciated!

James Pickersgill, Assistant Curate

Bell Ringers

We started 2016 with 10 ringers on the books, and we finished with 12! The 2 extra ringers make a lot of difference.

In January, we had a post-Christmas meal at the Wesley House and we also rang a Quarter Peal (1260 changes, lasting 45 mins) to welcome John Paul and his family to the Parish.

It was quite a busy year for weddings with 14 to ring for at Winchcombe and 2 at Toddington, for which we are also responsible.

A Quarter Peal was attempted in June to mark the Queen's 90 birthday.

To demonstrate our Art, we held 'have-a-go' sessions during the Church Fete in July, which proved quite popular with visitors.

We had an excellent outing in the North Gloucestershire/South Worcestershire area in October, which was organised by 2 of our ringers. This entailed ringing at four different towers, with the highlight of the day being a good pub lunch.

We also manned both Winchcombe and Toddington towers for the Gloucester & Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers AGM, as these 2 towers were on the Northern route towards the meeting at Charlton Kings.

We hosted the Cheltenham Branch AGM in November, where the ringing and the service took place in St. Peter's and the tea and meeting was held in Abbeyfields Community Centre.

From November, we started an initiative for people to 'have a go' after the All-Age Service on the first Sunday of each month. This proved to be very popular and the first time we did this in November we had a total of 16 people wanting to try. Unfortunately, none of them were local - in fact most of them were from the Netherlands!

We are very fortunate to have Edward Kain as Steeple Keeper as he ensures that the bells and their fittings are in good repair and safe for us to ring.

Clare Pritchard, Tower Captain

Church Stewards

2016 proved to be a most positive year.

St. Peter's played host to more than 9,000 visitors from over 58 countries. Almost a record! All visitors seemed to appreciate the friendly reception.

The new Stewards Desk was of course thoroughly approved of by all the Stewards and we must thank JP, the PCC and The Friends for their input into the creation of this superb piece of furniture.

Special thanks must be given to the creators of the desk and these were John Bristol who designed the unit, Stewart Aylward, Geof Adlington, John Gerrard, Simon Lainé, John Smith and Mac Yates who had been the particular driving forces in its construction.

The heating bar is now up and running thanks to Stewart Aylward's very impressive persistence. Those cold winter days will now be a thing of the past!

Visitors are also finding the Graveyard Book (which contains maps showing the location of graves) extremely useful.

The desk also contains the Incident and Emergency book plus First Aid Box. This means that stewards and other church officials no longer have to scramble around the kitchen looking for various items. There are also comprehensive emergency instructions attached.

The added advantage of the desk is that all relevant information for the visitor is instantly visible and accessible for them to use.

We are still urgently in need of more stewards, even an hour sometime on a Saturday would be really appreciated. (Who knows, your friendly face greeting a timid visitor may be the face that changes someone's life for the better!)

Tom Hancock

Home Groups

There are a number of groups in the parish which meet regularly in people's homes to study the Bible, and to share prayer and fellowship.

Every 2nd and 4th Monday evening a group, co-ordinated by Morag Adlington, meets at Beth Ferris' home to study St. Mark's Gospel. On alternate Tuesday mornings, a group, co-ordinated by Mary Brettell, is studying St. Luke's Gospel. On alternate Thursday mornings, a group, led by Sue Pestell and Martin Gorman, is studying The Acts of the Apostles and another group, co-ordinated by Margaret Jarvis, is currently studying the Gospel reading for the following Sunday morning. Finally, on Thursday evenings a group meets at Rachel Merritt's home for *Lectio Divina* *, led by Liz Hoskins.

There are also two book discussion groups, meeting every 2 months or so and co-ordinated by Ann Sutcliffe and Margaret Jarvis. The books are normally novels and are not specifically religious.

Margaret Jarvis

* ***Lectio Divina*** (Latin for "Divine Reading") is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's Word. It does not treat Scripture as texts to be studied, but as the Living Word.

Ladies' Breakfasts

Has been meeting at the Rectory monthly since January 2017. We have now set the date to the 4th Sunday in the month. We have buffet style continental breakfast from 8:30 - 10 am and ladies are welcome to drop in at any time for an informal time of fellowship. On Mothering Sunday we celebrated with smoked salmon and scrambled eggs.

This is a great opportunity to get to know one another better and a welcoming place to bring friends.

Liz Hoskins

Men's Breakfasts

The Men's Breakfast club has now been running for about seven years. It currently meets monthly at the Corner Cupboard, where we generally enjoy a splendid full English breakfast. We meet at 8:30 am and the food is served about 20 minutes later. Support has been fairly consistent in the past twelve months, with about a dozen takers on a typical month. Once each year we hold a "Dads & Lads" breakfast, and also a "Dads & Daughters" one, and these are particularly popular. Breakfast is generally a social affair, but it is also an opportunity to share fellowship, and we do sometimes have short discussion topics or news of a member in need, when we offer an intercessional prayer along with giving thanks for the bountiful spread.

In December we thanked Chris Owen-Smith for acting as breakfast co-ordinator for the past three years or so, and an excellent job he did too. The task has now been taken up by Mike Ferris.

In March 2017 we had a final breakfast with James Pickersgill. James has been an enthusiastic supporter of the club and will be sorely missed. We'll raise a coffee cup to him and remember him in our prayers. We postponed our Lent menu to give him a good send off.

There is an electronic mailing list to be invited to "book in" for the next breakfast, and these invitations are sent out at the beginning of the week. It's important to let the Corner Cupboard know how many to expect and any dietary requirements. If you'd like to be added to the mailing list please drop a line to mike@mferris.co.uk. If you're not on email, call him on 01386 882608. The next few dates are, 7th May (Dads & Lads), 4th June and 2nd July (Dads & Daughters). Do come and join us.

Mike Ferris

Music

The Choir continued to lead the music at the main morning and evening services on all but the 1st Sunday morning (All-Age service, led by the Music Group + Associates + youngest choristers). Fiona Brown generally directs/plays for all Choir-led services except the 3rd Sunday Evensong, when our excellent assistant organist Andrew Horton is in charge of the music.

Thank you to Andrew Horton for his occasional able accompanying, which allowed me to conduct; and to David Banks (principally), Andrew Horton and Melvin Brown for taking Young Basses' practice on Thursdays.

Full Choir membership stands at 28 adults and 17 in the age range 8-18 (8 boys and 9 girls), total 45. Usually 25-30 are at the morning service, and about 15 in the evening. Associate membership is 2 adults and 3 boys aged under 10. This may seem healthy, but do still need to recruit – especially basses and trebles. Much enthusiasm was shown by the Winchcombe Abbey School children at our recruitment session in September 2016, 29 children showing particular interest, but only one of these has actually joined.

It is good to see members of the 20-50 age group beginning to join (3 at the moment). We were very pleased to welcome back Joanna Pursey, who was back in Winchcombe, in the Autumn.

During the year, two choristers (Nick Hall and Jamie Summersgill) gained the Royal School of Church Music's Bishop's Award, and two Dean's Award (Eddie and Mike Ferris). A number of others worked hard to achieve their next ribbon.

We are grateful to JP, Brian Pursey and Kenneth Roles, each of whom deputised for a member of the tenor/bass lines at some point(s) during the year.

Easter 2016 was wonderfully celebratory, once again helped by a rendition of the Hallelujah chorus in which everyone seemed to give their all, including Edward Brown on his trumpet; thanks also to Brian Pursey for his fine 'The trumpet shall sound'. The Choir Concert was also very happy and well-attended.

On October 9th, most of the adults of the Choir made their way along a number of winding lanes to former Rector John Partington's new parish – we sang

Evensong at Coln St. Aldwyn's and enjoyed the Partingtons' kind hospitality afterwards. It was good to see them, in their new and large abode with its marvellous view. Thank you to them for a very pleasant evening.

Seasonal coughs and colds seemed to hold off, by and large, until we had sung very joyful services at Christmas time, including at the Midnight service, where as usual it was lovely to welcome a number of returning choristers and several other guests.

By the end of 2016, we were looking forward to various treats to take place in 2017: Evensong in Gloucester Cathedral (18th Feb), adults' dinner and juniors' trampolining, and our seaside trip to St. David's, Pembrokeshire.

Thank you to all the Choir members for their energy, enthusiasm and commitment; also to the parents of the youngsters, all the clergy and indeed the congregation for their support for the music.

Fiona Brown, Director of Music

Pastoral Team

The Pastoral Team has had a busy year. In March and October, we held the Caring Professions Lunch. We are grateful to speakers from Winchcombe Medical Centre and Winchcombe Day Care Centre, who gave their time to come and speak to us. Both lunches were well attended, with about 20 at each. In December, we were delighted to be in a position, with help from food collections by the Winchcombe Rotary Club, to distribute ten Christmas hampers to local families in Winchcombe and Gretton.

Perhaps our most satisfying work this year has been working towards providing support to the bereaved in the parish. Our pastoral visitors all received training in bereavement support during October/November, and we have been working hard to put in place support from home visitors during the period following bereavement, where needed. Alongside this, a Bereavement Support Group has been set up; this is a self-help group which will meet once a month, also supported by St. Peter's and open to everyone in the Parish; it should become fully operational in March 2017.

Margaret Batterbury

St. Peter's Flower Guild

At present, we have 10 regular arrangers and one helping occasionally. At the end of 2015 Pam Pickering (a founder member of the Guild in 1986) retired. We all miss her wonderful arrangements. In the autumn, Kitty Gore retired and she was thanked for work over the last 8 years. However, in May we were pleased to welcome Sue Keighley, newly arrived in Winchcombe and in the autumn, we were pleased that Jacque Vercoe joined us too.

There were 10 weddings and a memorial service during the summer. As Chairman, I find that some brides are efficient but many have to be chased and are surprised when I contact them. We need to know their decision early because flowers have to be ordered at least 10 days in advance.

We are always grateful for donations for Easter Lilies in memory of loved ones as this allows us to do more artistic arrangements and donations towards the cost of flowers at Harvest & Christmas.

Helen Morgan, Chairman.

PCC Accounts

Once again our thanks go to Stewart Aylward for using his accounting expertise to produce the attached detailed accounts. In contrast to previous years, our PCC accounts are fully computerised and therefore easier to manage. Likewise we maximise the use of internet banking thus saving us time and the PCC money. In the course of 2016 we also introduced the Diocesan Parish Giving scheme which reduces the amount of work required of our Planned Giving Officer to reclaim Gift Aid on these contributions. But the fact that we can produce the Annual Financial Accounts more easily doesn't mean that they are more readily understood.

Most people don't look much beyond the bottom line to answer the question "Did our income exceed our expenditure in 2016?". Well, good news – it did and handsomely. In 2016 we had a surplus of income over expenditure of £15,501 and our capital investment funds (excluding our owned properties of St. Peter's Centre (SPC) and Teachers House) rose by £7,000 reflecting the strength of the UK property and financial markets. However this data is potentially misleading; there are reasons why this surplus arose and why we cannot expect it next year. Also the reasons that are boosting our investments will lead to higher costs in 2017 and beyond.

With regard to our income the biggest factor was the unusually large receipts listed as Parochial Fees, that is fees for weddings, funeral, and baptisms. Our net income from these events in 2016 was £5,500 higher than previously and giving at these events, augmented perhaps by increased visitor numbers, yielded another £4,500 towards our income. This unplanned income of £10,000 was largely responsible for the surplus in 2016. However wedding bookings for 2017 are substantially lower than this record year and Parochial Fees receipts will return to average levels in 2017 we believe. All other income sources and receipts remained similar to 2015 except for lower than expected sales income from the bookstalls (down £2,500) but this was offset by a small rise in Planned Giving (up £2,000).

On the expenditure side of the accounts I can report significantly lower net PCC administration (i.e. SPC office) costs – down £3,000 compared to 2015. I can report also lower utility costs resulting from work to renegotiate the terms of our supply contracts. Some of these new contracts have fixed prices for the next 3 years which will limit the impact of the 12% fall in the value of Sterling on our expenditure in 2017. I am pleased to report that all other costs in 2016 were similar to previous years with the exception of items included in Music costs (organist fees, choir expenses, music licences and hire). At £9,500, music costs were the 3rd biggest expenditure item after Parish Share (£6,4874) and Insurance (£10,059).

There were no major capital projects to fund in 2016; the bell tower work at Christ Church, Gretton being complete as are the organ repairs at St. Peter's, Winchcombe. Good news too that the capital investment in the solar panels at St. Peter's, Winchcombe has also been fully recouped by income receipts. However major works to resurface the driveway at St. Peter's, Winchcombe are planned in 2017 and the professional design fees and other preparatory works for this project resulted in an unplanned expenditure in 2016 of £5,498 which

was met from our income. Expenditure on major works was therefore similar to 2015.

At the behest of the Diocese we examined what we had included as Restricted Funds which didn't strictly qualify legally and moved relevant funds into the new (for us) category of Designated Funds to comply with accounting procedures of the Diocese. The Designated and Restricted funds are shown on page 3 of the attached detailed accounts.

The financial accounts only tell the story of what happened in 2016, even to the trained eye. The past is a poor guide to the future is a common warning when it comes to money matters. One thing that is not yet obvious in the 2016 accounts is the response to an appeal to increase giving by the Parish as part of the changeover to the Diocesan Parish Giving scheme. Initial indications are that the response is sufficient to more than offset the lower receipts expected in 2017 for Parochial Fees but not much more. The appointment of a part-time paid office manager in the fourth quarter of 2016 did not significantly increase the Salaries figure in the attached accounts – the full effect will not be seen until the 2017 accounts are published. Upward pressure on expenditure will also be noticeable in 2017. It will apply to the Parish Share we pay, to our office costs, our cost of trading and our clergy expenses to name but some items. In short, next year's Financial Report is likely to be less comfortable reading than this one for 2016.

Geof Adlington, Treasurer