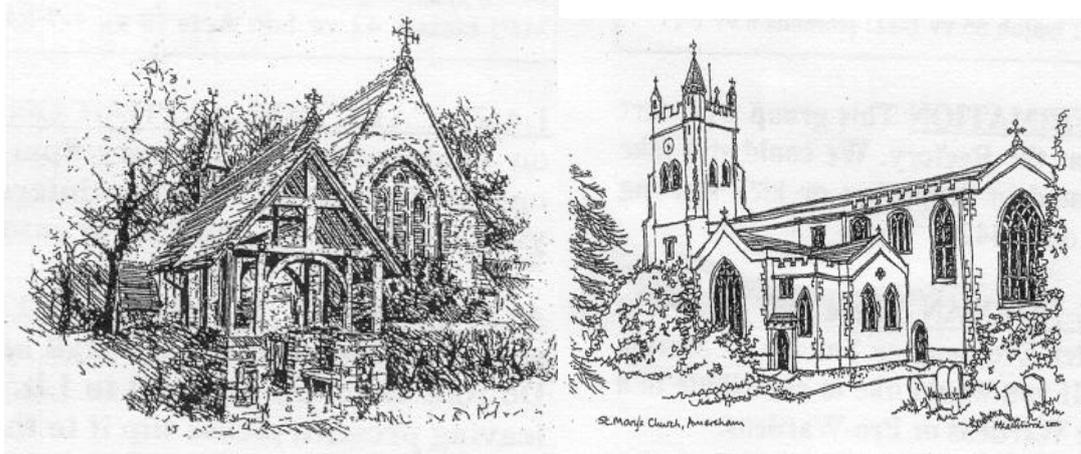


# **THE PARISH OF AMERSHAM WITH COLESHILL**



## **Annual Report 2020**

**Come to the Annual Parish Meeting  
on Sunday 11th July 2021 at  
11.50am in St Mary's Church**

**To discuss the past year and elect  
Churchwardens and PCC members**

**All welcome**

## RECTOR'S REPORT AMERSHAM WITH COLESHILL 2020-21

After 23 years here and 41 in front line service I had planned to retire last September, but as the pandemic hit in March 2020, we went into lockdown and we were asked to identify fields for mass burials by the local authority and stand by with the prayer book and bulldozer, it seemed churlish to for the captain to leave the bridge as the hurricane hit. Fortunately, while we have all suffered, in practice the death rate has been nothing like as bad.

During lockdown, with the St Mary's church closed for public worship, the PCC took the opportunity to do a complete rewire of the building, a complete re-light, and complete redecoration, each a massive project in its own right. The cost was met out of the Parker Trust and other reserves tied to the maintenance of the building. There could never be a better or more opportune moment to get the long overdue work done. The result is magnificent. St Mary's Church has never looked better. I leave my successor a clean slate to get on with ministry in their own way, rather than immediately having to head up building work.

All Saints speedily organised opening and cleaning the church once we were permitted to reopen for private prayer. Services resumed on Sundays, and if anything numbers attending at All Saints were up on pre lockdown. Spacing and social distancing in both churches was worked out by the wardens and services resumed over the late summer and autumn.

And during the lockdown and tiers system, we learned how to stream services effectively, so that those who would like to attend worship but are shielding in some way may join us from home. This has proved very popular and doubtless will need to continue for some time. The lockdown since January which precipitated closure once again showed this wisdom of this provision.

Of course all our work with children in church has had to go on hold again, and as I write the Bishops are preparing a plan and timetable for churches gradually to reopen shadowing the government timeline. Meanwhile, both our schools have coped magnificently with the initial provision of classes for children of key workers, the resumption of full-time classes in the summer and autumn followed by the recent lockdown. During the times of closure, online learning provision has been exemplary.

Pastorally, in the early weeks of the pandemic the clergy team phoned round the vast contact lists of our parish enquiring particularly of the elderly and housebound if they had any needs we could meet. In almost all cases they had everything they needed, with friends and neighbours rallying round well. This has continued, and made our pastoral task so much easier, giving us time to focus on the families of those bereaved or who have lost their jobs.

In all this I have been magnificently supported by our wardens and church officers and parish administrator. I could not have asked for more proactive and reactive help from any of them.

After some ten years of sterling service as MD at St Mary's Olwen Morris left us, and we welcomed Edward McCall M.Mus ARCO as our new organist. Edward is head of Music and Creative Arts at Dr Challoner's High School; he has exciting plans for the inclusion of young people in our music making.

Rosie and I will finish work in the parish on Easter Monday, take the rest of the month as annual leave to move house on April 13<sup>th</sup>. The Bishop has kindly offered us 3 months garden leave in lieu of sabbatical time not taken, so I will legally be in office until the end of July. However, he has

also kindly agreed that in practice, the vacancy will be considered to start from April 13th, which gives the PCC a head start in the hunt of a successor. I believe I leave the parish in good shape and in good heart.

As my time ends, I would like to thank all those who have supported me over 24 years: wardens, parish administrators, ringers, MDs, choirs, treasurers, sacristans, flower teams, sides persons, PCC and committee members, children and youth leaders, pastoral visitors, head teachers and school governors, and so many others for their sterling efforts on our behalf. I am very grateful to them all.

Tim Harper  
Rector and Area Dean  
Easter 2021

### **Parochial Church Council: Secretary's Report, November 2020 to July 2021**

Not counting the very brief meeting to elect officers immediately after the October 2020 annual church meeting, PCC met formally in November 2020, in February, April and June 2021. The names of the 19 members of the PCC for most of this period appear at the end of this report. Average attendance at meetings this year was 17, all bar one meeting having had a full complement, a testament to the commitment of the group. The minutes of all PCC meetings are available on request from the Parish Office or from me. All Saints Committee usually schedules a meeting in the week prior to PCC; St Mary's Committee has not had to meet since November 2015, its agenda overlapping almost totally that of the PCC.

The Standing Committee of core PCC members is empowered to take decisions, within guidelines agreed by the full PCC, on specific issues when no full PCC meeting is imminent; this it usually accomplishes by email consultation and informal discussion. Standing Committee decisions are always reported, and occasionally reviewed, at the next PCC meeting. During lockdowns, when meeting formally was impossible, electronic means became essential.

The Wardens of both churches give a report at every PCC meeting, as does the Treasurer; updates on Safeguarding and Data Protection are also mandatory agenda items. The PCC receives regular reports on Youth Work, Charitable Giving, Mission, the two schools and the Almshouses. There is a report from the Deanery Synod, if a meeting has taken place.

#### **Main matters discussed by the PCC 2020-21**

1. The Covid closure of the churches posed a major threat to our financial position but measures were – and remain - in place to encourage financial support, though the drastically reduced number of special services (weddings etc) did hit parish income. However, the introduction of Good Box, electronic giving for people attending services, has been a great success. On the

downside, unfortunately the appointment of a Family and Youth Worker has had to be deferred indefinitely, though it remains an important aim in the longer term.

2. On the subject of new appointments, PCC has been very concerned to advance the process of finding our new rector, Tim Harper having bowed out of his final meeting (on Zoom) in February with typically minimal fuss. PCC members are anxious that the interregnum be no longer than absolutely necessary and were dismayed that the diocese initially put forward a less immediate schedule. However, the diocese seems to have responded to the strong feelings expressed by members of PCC by suddenly issuing the Vacancy Notice - the key document which triggers the whole process - having said, the week before, that it would be unlikely to do so before September.

3. Another permanent agenda item is Fabric and Property in both churches, the main aspects of which are covered in the Church Wardens' reports, and which are the constant concern of our two church Treasurers.

4. The live streaming of services has proved a great success, evolving from the warm-hearted short communion services from the Rectory Study via Facebook during lockdown, to our present CCTV style presentation of the revived full family Sunday service from St Mary's, though still with only the choir permitted to sing. This technology has been a successful and innovative investment.

5. Charitable giving is another potential casualty of continuing straightened circumstances which have prevented our church fete and other fund-raising activities over the past couple of years. Not all though: for example, what has become known as The Saturday Team has raised an amazing amount so far for our four charities by selling plants and books every Saturday at their stall adjacent to the Memorial Gardens. There are bargains to be had while supporting good causes!

Steve Johnson,  
PCC Secretary.  
July 2021

**Amersham with Coleshill PCC**  
**Annual Treasurer's Report**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2020**

I am pleased to provide you with our annual accounts and this Executive Summary:

Key objectives for 2020 were to:

1. To continue to implement strategies and controls to following strong 2019 financial results in order to build financial sustainability that will future proof the finances of the parish.

2. Provide finance and strategic guidance to support both Mission and major fabric proposals at St Marys in 2020 and beyond.
3. Consider and deliver initiatives to support both fundraising and church giving.

As reported at our quarterly PCC meetings, the finance of the parish changed significantly with COVID (C19) Pandemic and whilst the key objectives above remained, the world in which we derived income changed substantially given church closure & social distancing.

Summary of Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2020:

- Operational Surplus: Unrestricted Funds has a surplus of £37,926. Given the extraordinary year, important to add much needed context to this figure.
  - Due to generosity of the congregation to support the parish, unrestricted gifts & cash offerings increased by £36,850 on previous year, therefore by deducting this amount we are produced an operational surplus of £1,076.
  - Tax Efficient Giving down £11,757 (11.5%) however due to good management of Planned Giving we have increased our recovery of Gift Aid by £6,182 (23%)
  - Cash Collections down £14,553 (73%) – largely down to church closure.
  - Income from Church Activities down £26,776 (43%)
  - Special Services – significantly down due to C19 – as a parish we were down £8,075 from 2019 due to significant reduction in weddings.
  - Church Rooms – significantly impacted due to C19 – however due to changes in volunteers we took decision to move finances of the Church Rooms within our main trading accounts. In summary & despite everything CR made a small surplus of £114. Good news that we now have a new team looking at how best we can use and market the Parish rooms as a valuable community asset.
  - PE continues to generate positive cashflow (not without it's dramas) of £12k – due to significant capex in 2019 we did not spend much in 2020. However, we will need to work closely with Hadlands (property agents) to minimise any potential voids.
- Operational Expenditure decreased by £2,382. Key area that supported this was small (but very important) reduction in Parish Share – down 3.6k. Despite everything and unlike many parishes across the country we paid our parish share in full (£91k).
- We are very strong on controlling costs but would be fair to say given C19, it was bordering on obsessive in order to ensure we maintained strong cashflow during extraordinary times to cover fixed costs.
- Balance Sheet: down £94,177 (13.3%) to £613,434 from £707,611 – again, important context on balance sheet reduction is the significant fabric spend on St Mary's Church & the Parish rooms.
  - Note – On the accounts there is a note stating “ An adjustment has been made to the brought forward restricted & unrestricted funds for an amendment to an item of expenditure in the prior year”. The adjustment to the brought forward balances (net nil movement) is to do with the special services fees and costs on page 6. This was incorrectly shown as unrestricted expenditure last year so I asked for an adjustment to the brought forward balances to be made and corrected it's posting this year. Last year's figure was £13,174 which is adjustment to the brought forward figures.
- It is important to understand when analysing Parish Finances that there are 3 types of Funds:

- Unrestricted Funds – general funds for general objectives of the church – Day to day operational cash flow but does include unrestricted assets of which £89,000 is the Curates House – decreased by £51,604 to £243,857. The PCC is well endowed and has c£154k (not incl PE fixed Asset value) on unrestricted funds as at 31 December 2020. Funds also exist for the maintenance of both churches.
- Restricted Funds – can only be used for the specific purpose for which they have been given eg Fabric – decreased by £53,327 to £198,137.
- Endowment Funds – represent endowments where capital must be maintained and the dividend income used only for the restricted purposes specified in the establishment of the endowments – increased by £10,754 to £171,440.

2020 was an exceptional year due to C19 impact. As a parish we used the St Marys Church & Church Rooms closure to complete important fabric works on both buildings:

- St Mary's Church – 2 key projects were completed utilising Parker Trust monies – as previously reported to the PCC I had transferred £60k from PT in readiness of the start of the works and then transferred the remaining £79k in July 2020.
  - Electricity & Lighting – Lowe & Oliver £57,330 (incl VAT)
  - Decoration Project – Clarks Construction £75,182 (incl VAT)
  - Other additional costs including the comper lighting units and Evan & Crawley project management costs
  - Due to the hard work from many but Susan Pounce in particular the projects were completed within timescale and budget.
- Church Rooms – significant works in in H1 / 2020 that cost £33,146 – this addresses a number of outstanding fabric issues from earlier quinquennial inspections in order to future proof the property.
- Listed Places of Worship Scheme – we successfully claimed back & received £23,238 VAT paid for Church fabric works – this is timely as we are due a quinquennial inspection albeit with the major works completed at St Mary's & Church Rooms and with Peter Clackett working closely on All Saints then we should be able to manage any associated costs albeit with the ages of our buildings you never know.

The importance of the completed works in 2020 is that as we now move into post C19 recovery world, that all our buildings are in good condition to support our mission, community & income generation.

Planned Giving is our largest income source and we must thank every one of our congregation for their contribution. As stated earlier our congregation has been unbelievable and supported the church during C19. Although Tax efficient Giving & Cash collections were down for obvious reasons in 2020, we did receive £38,595 in unrestricted gifts and £5k specifically for the new Organ fund. Without ongoing Planned Giving and these generous "one offs" we simply cannot function. We are now in a position due to the generosity of our congregation to be able to look to increase our mission reach (consideration for Family / Youth Worker), access to our services (our own congregation & beyond), work in the community and support to good causes. Thank you for what you donate now. If you are able to give more then I can assure you that we will put it to very good use and that every penny is accounted for and nothing is wasted.

C19 severely impacted Mission Giving in 2020 due to not being able to hold annual church fete, church closures that has led to significantly reduced special services (weddings, funerals & baptisms) and restricted cashflow. We did continue to support Stephen Poulson / CMS with his

important work in Honduras but our support to other good causes was significantly impacted. Already, we can see that our Mission Giving in 2021 is increasing (Book & Plant Stall deserves a particular mention) and I will be working with the Mission Giving committee to ensure that we strive to get back to our pre C19 levels in 2021.

Good Box Contactless Machines has become an important part of church finances. In 2020, we had 292 transactions totalling £1651.00 – All Saints had 64 transactions totalling £493 and St Mary's had 228 transactions totalling £1168.00. Therefore after 2.5% charge and the 10p per transaction charge we as a PCC received £1580.53. Good Box continues to increase in importance in terms of income generation and we now have machines not only at both St Mary's and All Saints but also at the Book & Plant Stall. So far in 2021 after 5 months, we have already overtaken 2020 totals with £2080 from 396 transactions. It is proving popular with congregation, visitors and is supporting our Mission Giving with Book & Plant Stall.

Key Finance actions undertaken to address our key challenges and support delivery of sustainable 2020 financial Performance:

- Successful Listed Places of Worship scheme completed at StM – specific scheme to allow VAT re-claim on eligible fabric works on a 12month basis.
- All Regulatory (incl Diocesan, HMRC & Charities Commission) returns up to date.
- Auditors have given us a clean report in the way that we are managing our finances and regulatory obligations.
- Comprehensive Treasurers Report prepared and discussed at every PCC meeting.

Looking back on last year, and having spoken to numerous church treasurers and Rectors, we have fared better than most. We should be proud that we have continued to pay our Parish Share thus supporting Deanery and wider Diocese. We have used the closure to utilise restricted funds for the very purpose they were given to future proof our buildings and now we can look forward as the whole country comes out of lockdown to the new economic norm.

Looking forward post C19 and beyond, both Peter Clackett & myself have been working on our Parish Finance Simplification Strategy to help us move forward as One Parish. Given all that has happened, we have taken the decision to simplify our financial structure, have all accounts held together whilst each church would retain control of restricted funds. The benefits are many:

- Supports cashflow across the parish
- Provides a “One Parish” approach for all general “day to day” operations and will be more transparent when audited.
- The investments for both churches will remain separated. Each church will continue to maintain their investments to fund any unexpected fabric or operational costs.
- The church wardens for each church will continue to be responsible for the daily operation and maintenance of their building
- Have discussed with our Auditors Mercer Lewin who approve of this strategy.

We have already made changes to support successful implementation of this strategy by 1/1/2022 including closure of Church Rooms accounts, moving all Planned Giving to Clare Atkinson & key strategic cashflow changes to support All Saints. We have a detailed transition

document that we are working through with milestones and regular reviews. I will be updating PCC on regular basis with progress.

Whilst we are working to deliver this important strategic objective, it is vital that we continue with focussed, disciplined management of our finances. Our 2020 cashflow showed that we needed £552 per day / £16,795 per month to run our parish, this is a significant amount of money that we need to raise just to stand still. The PCC is still well endowed with both unrestricted & restricted funds as at 31 December 2020 and as highlighted, funds also exist for the maintenance of both churches. As stated last year we do have ageing buildings that are expensive to maintain and keep to acceptable standards but we have gone some way in 2020 to future proof the buildings.

In summary, 2020 was an exceptional and difficult year. However, despite everything and with phenomenal support of our congregation we were able to show continued signs of financial stability & sustainability. Unfortunately, we had to postpone moving ahead with key strategic plans eg Family / Youth Worker but with our solid financial foundations we are in a good position to re-evaluate those decisions during 2021 / 2022.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the support from the Clergy, Church Wardens, PCC Members, Steve Johnson, Peter Clackett, Claire Atkinson. In particular, a special mention to Tim Harper for all his support during our time working together. Thank You.

Should you have any queries concerning the contents of this review or should you have any general questions about the parish finances, please do not hesitate to contact me via mobile 07703 963990 or email at [treasurer-pcc@outlook.com](mailto:treasurer-pcc@outlook.com).

**Graeme Coles - PCC Treasurer**  
**June 2021**

**PLANNED GIVING 2020** was a challenging time for the church in terms of donations received. However, we have been absolutely overwhelmed by the generosity of the congregation during the last 12 months. Although church collections were obviously decimated by the closure and scaling back of services, the response from our church community has been outstanding with regular donations being increased and additional donations received all of which enable our clergy and building to continue with their mission.

The number of regular donors via standing order or the coloured envelope scheme stands at 145, a slight decrease over from the previous year. However, I remain fastidious in ensuring that the tax man plays his part in donating to the church through the Gift Aid scheme. In the last year, we were able to receive nearly £29,000 from this source which our Treasurer is immensely grateful for. The new Goodbox machine in the church also contributes to this total too, so rest assured that if you give through this source, we are also able to receive an additional £2.50 per £10 donated.

Finally, thank you all so much for your generosity; if you would like any further information about ways of donating, do please get in touch.

Clare Atkinson – Planned Giving Officer

## **Church Warden report for 2020/21 APCM**

It hardly seems possible that it is about 16 months since the lockdown started and we recognize the toll this has taken on a lot of people in terms of physical and mental health, but we are also thankful that God has sustained us as a church community during this time. We are so blessed to have Tim Barnard, Sue Gill and Sheila Shield and we thank them for effectively streaming services from their own homes as well as conducting regular services. Whilst the clergy have become expert at live streaming and Zoom meetings, huge thanks go to Anthony Brown and Martin Pounce for getting to grips with the new streaming technology recently installed, putting in hours and hours of work in a very short space of time.

Our Rector, Tim Harper went on Sabbatical leave from April-July this year and the Bishop of Buckingham has accepted Tim's resignation as of August 1<sup>st</sup>. The Parish said farewell to Tim on Easter Sunday during the morning service where a presentation was made on behalf of the parish. Thanks to Christine Pretty and her team, a special edition Parish Newsletter was available which included memories of Tim from the parish and beyond as well as what the children from both our church schools said about Tim and his creative assemblies. We thank God for Tim's ministry to us over the past twenty four years and wish him and his wife Rosie all our love and prayers as they settle into retirement in their new home.

Following the retirement of Olwen Morris in December 2020, our new Director of Music, Edward McCall started with us in January and we warmly welcome him to our church family. Covid restrictions prevented a formal farewell to Olwen before Christmas and we are looking forward to hearing a piano recital from Olwen on July 11<sup>th</sup> when we can publicly acknowledge our appreciation of the many years of service Olwen gave to the life of our church.

We are grateful to Simon Hollett who has taken over as children's worker in June this year. Simon is building on the excellent work of Ann Pearse who has moved to Abingdon. We thank her for the inspirational way she led the children's work in the parish over many years. We also said farewell to Charles Howlett our Licensed Lay Minister, who retired to Cornwall in January. As so many of you know, Charles led our worship for many years and played a key part in the running of church. We praise God that we were so greatly blessed by the many years of faithful service from Charles. We miss him and his ministry very much and we wish him enjoyment in his new life.

Although we haven't been able to hold our annual Fete for the second year running, a team led by Martin and Loraine Hollett and Val Simmonds have set up the book and plant stall throughout the summer which has brought in substantial additional income for our charitable giving.

We are again, both humbled and encouraged by the generosity shown towards St. Mary's over the past year. For example, very generous donations from individuals in our congregation have paid for our new streaming kit and CCTV camera and enabled us to order some new noticeboards and a purpose built Hymn book trolley. Without the financial support so generously offered by you, our church would simply not be able to function in the way it does. On behalf of the PCC, we would like to thank you all for your faithful on-going financial support of the work at St. Mary's.

Following the lighting and rewiring project, the repair and redecoration of the inside of the church was completed in the Autumn. We are pleased to report that we have received many

favourable comments on how splendid the church looks. Our grateful thanks go to Stephen Crawley our church surveyor who prepared and managed plans for all the major fabric projects effectively. We are happy to confirm that the buildings and fittings are in good order. All the regular checks are up to date (gas safety, electrical report, lightning conductor, fire extinguishers etc), and the organ has been serviced and tuned as per contract. We have drawn up a Lone working policy and a CCTV policy. The PCC have ratified both of the policies. Loraine Hollett our Health and Safety Representative has responded quickly to the issues raised in the fire risk assessment carried out in the Spring this year. We are extremely grateful that she and Martin Hollett carry out regular risk assessments in preparation for services including the Carol Service held in December outside the church. We are all learning to live with Covid using the government guidance for the safe use of places of worship. These are regularly updated by the Diocese and we ensure the appropriate risk assessments are carried out and measures implemented to make the buildings **COVID 19 secure**. We are grateful to members of the congregation who have regularly cleaned the church between the Sunday services.

It has been a sad year where several members of our congregation have died or been seriously ill. Visiting and the funerals were restricted because of the pandemic rules, but we hold them in our hearts and prayers. We are delighted that we can now hold weddings and baptisms; the clergy team have been working extremely hard to fit them all in.

The "Curate's House" at Piggott's End is privately let as it is not currently required for a Curate and brings in a useful income for the PCC. The tenants found by Hadlands last August have asked to extend their tenancy for another year and the PCC have agreed to this. We are awaiting a surveyor's report on damp and possible work on the roof.

Our thanks must go to Amersham Town Council who have the responsibility to maintain the Churchyard. They carry out their duties so well.

We would like to thank all PCC members for their commitment throughout the year. The working teams, Standing Committee, Staff Meeting Team, our Sacristan Loraine, and Dorothy, our Parish administrator who all continue to maintain the working dynamic of the Parish. The smooth running of the parish is the result of the tremendous support and assistance received from the many helpers within our congregation and parish throughout the year. This is, as ever greatly appreciated and our thanks go to all who contribute to the Church services as well as the regular tasks of cleaning the brasses by Val Royal, flower arranging led by Jo Coldham, bell ringing led by Valerie Simmonds and Jan Galloway, the choir under the leadership of our Director of Music Edward Mc Call and the careful stewardship of our finances by our Treasurer Graeme Coles. We are grateful to Clare Atkinson who now manages the gift aid envelopes and stewardship details for both St Mary's and All Saints Churches. The Church as we know it would have difficulty functioning without all this, often unseen, work and we are truly grateful to everyone involved in its running. We would welcome more volunteers to be involved, if you are interested more details can be found on the website under the tab 'about us' or please come and talk to us.

Our new website was launched this Spring and we are very grateful to Lucy Brown and her team for driving this forward and to Michelle Caternach who designed and maintains it. Following extensive consultation across the parish and the community, we have drawn up the Parish Profile, this and the website are key documents in the appointment of a new Rector. We are well prepared as we move now into the interregnum. However, no one can predict the future, and our well-laid plans can sometimes be torn apart. We had hoped that we might have been able to advertise for a new Rector in early Autumn but the Diocese have advised that it should be

January 2022. So, it is with that in mind we put our trust in God, praying for our parish representatives as they seek a new Rector, for Tim and Sue in their roles as the Honorary Associate Rectors, for Sheila as our Licensed Lay Minister and Sarah, Mel and Edward our authorised preachers. We remain thankful for the great spirit and shared purpose shown in their ministry.

Susan Pounce and Howard Hughes  
July 2021

## **ALL SAINTS' CHURCH**

### **WARDENS' REPORT 2021**

The report this year, which relates to the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 is overshadowed by the impact of the corona virus, and the announced retirement of the Rector. After lockdown, the Church was opened for private prayer on Wednesdays and Sundays, and subsequently for communion services as soon as legally permitted, and in accordance with safety and risk assessments.

#### **WORSHIP:**

The pattern of services has remained generally as in previous years, with the addition of a number of themed services, and the introduction of zoom services for those unable to attend church.

Our house group, with members from both churches, averaging 11 and very ably led by Audrey Tridgell, continued to flourish, despite COVID restrictions and it is expected that the group will be able to meet later this year.

Coffee (and a chat) immediately after Sunday morning service had become a firm institution. We hope to reinstate in 2021, as soon as possible, when rules permit.

#### **SPECIAL SERVICES:**

We held themed services to encourage particular groups of people from the village and Winchmore Hill to join us, and especially welcomed the children.

The children from the village Church of England school and their families joined us formally twice in the year – for Harvest Festival, and Christingle services. They continue to prove a great success. In addition they visited the church at the end of each term. Bibles were presented again to school leavers at the end of the Summer term. Open school assemblies took place in the Church every month. In addition the Rector held assembly in the village school each Wednesday during term.

Baptism follow-up service continued for those children baptized during the previous year.

During Passiontide and Easter we held a special service on Palm Sunday, evening meditation for the Parish on the Tuesday of Holy Week, an Ash Wednesday service, and we had a special service

of hymns, prayers, and meditation, with the lighting of candles on Good Friday, together with our regular 9.00am morning service on Easter Day.

Our pet service turned out to be a great success again. Sue Gill took the service and was able to bless all creatures great and small – the animals behaved impeccably !! Non regular churchgoers attended in numbers.

Other themed services included bees, patronal celebration, baptism renewal, remembrance, and mothering Sunday. The aim was to hold a themed service each month.

#### **MISSION ACTION PLAN:**

We continued to hold regular monthly prayer meetings in church. From a small start, the growing number of attendees is encouraging.

A bee club based on the bees kept in the churchyard was organized together with the school on Sunday mornings after Church for children and their carers. A generous donation from the Oxford Diocese supported the purchase of protective bee suits for the children.

#### **PASTORAL CARE AND OUTREACH:**

Events and activities were organized to support people within the villages of Coleshill and Winchmore Hill.

The Magpie Club for pre school children was unfortunately forced to close under government restrictions. The Patch system which is designed to support those who are ill or need company, and to welcome newcomers to the village was maintained via zoom. Regular meetings which are totally confidential try to ensure that all are included. A newcomers' party is scheduled to be held in the cricket club later in 2021.

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

Other activities were restricted by COVID rules.

#### **FABRIC:**

Running repairs were made to the Church during the year. The Quinquennial, completed in June 2021, revealed no major issues.

#### **PARISHIONERS:**

All Saints' is a beautiful 1861 Victorian rural church, designed by GE Street, which plays an important part in the community life of the village and surrounding parish.

The Church Committee met on four occasions during the year. There are many people with specific roles and talents who keep our church in an attractive, open, and welcoming state by giving generously of their time.

We are fortunate that our worship is enhanced by having a fine organ, a consummate Director of Music, Ruth Murphy, and a loyal band of faithful singers.

One of the glories of All Saints' is the colourful and artistic floral decoration organized by Rosemary Valentine, but with the flair and hard work of the team of talented workers.

Chris Wege, as well as being the secretary to the Church Committee, devotes a great deal of time and care to the maintenance of the churchyard, including a redesigned flower bed, which is admired by local people and visitors alike

Peter Clackett, our All Saint's treasurer for ensuring financial controls were strengthened.

The village school continues to maintain a close relationship with the church – within current distancing rules.

Jane Stefanovic has continued her duties as cleaner, and works very hard to keep the building spotless, shining, safe, and sanitized - which is appreciated by worshippers and visitors. Paul Evans ensures that the church is unlocked and locked – and therefore remained open to all during the day. Under lockdown provision, it is currently open on Wednesdays and Sundays.

The list is not exhaustive, and we are fortunate to have such a faithful team of sidespersons, readers, chalice bearers, as well as those who prepare the church for, and those who provide coffee after services.

We must also thank those few who provide regular financial support to the church.

Finally we need to register our huge thanks to our retired rector, Tim Harper, who despite the small size of our Parish, spent time with us, and has been a great support to the school. He has been wonderfully supported by his team of Tim Barnard, Sue Gill, and Charles Howlett, (who has now left us for pastures new in Cornwall) to give positive guidance and support to the congregation and the church.

Petrina Clackett

Howard Pool

And special mention of Dumpy Swerling, who has been churchwarden at All Saints' for 17 years, and stood down at the 2020 AGM in October. A huge thank you from us all for the many years of selfless service you have given to the village Church and community.

#### Bellringers Report 2021

For the first time in over 75 years, the bells of St Mary's fell silent in March 2020. How strange it all was. When the first lockdown eased in June, we hoped to be able to start ringing again. With the help of Loraine Hollett as Safety Officer of St Mary's, we carried out a risk assessment of the tower. The bells and ropes were checked by two experienced ringers, Matthew and Olly, and Loraine and Valerie carefully measured the distance between the ropes, to see which we could safely ring. It was agreed that we could ring 5 bells or 6 if two members of the same family could ring the treble and the tenor, which are less than two metres apart. Ringing had to be limited to 15 minutes only.

Our first ring was on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July for evensong and we received a number of compliments from our neighbours who were very pleased to hear the bells again. Gradually we were able to build up to ringing twice on Sundays for the services held in church from August to the beginning

of November. Then we were locked down again in November, which meant that the bells were silent for Christmas, a sad time for us all.

However, once services resumed in church, in January, Valerie started ringing a single bell again, until the third lockdown was eased in May 21 and we were able to resume ringing on 5 or 6 bells after another risk assessment with Lorraine.

During 2020, we had managed to ring 4 quarter peals before lockdown in March, and we also rang for 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ day on 15<sup>th</sup> August. The ringing on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November was dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Steeple Keeper's mother-in-law. A single bell was tolled on Remembrance Sunday.

A single bell was tolled on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 21 to commemorate the National Day of Reflection after a year of Covid restrictions, and again in April for the death and funeral of Prince Phillip. We have also rung for several weddings already this year.

I would like to thank the band for their support and in particular my deputy, Valerie for stepping in to organise the ringing this year.

Jan Galloway  
Tower Captain.

#### Sacristan's Report

What a year to take over this role from Brenda Woodhead, who served the church in this role for many years. She is knowledgeable and it is good to know that I can always call on her to check that I am doing things correctly.

With the closure of the church and the Covid restrictions many of the usual services didn't happen during the year but now the 10:30 service is open to the congregation as well as being live streamed things are slowly returning to a new normal.

The candle stand continues to be well used by both the visitors to the church and members of the congregation. I would also like to thank Judith Allday for all the work that she did looking after the candles for many years until she 'retired' from this role in November.

There are many people who assist with the sacristy tasks associated with the smooth running of the services and the church in general and I would like to thank those who have continued to do this and said that they are happy to continue; but there is always room for more to join the team.

Lorraine Hollett, Sacristan

#### Flowers at St Mary's

Due to Covid there has been very little to report. We were unable to do Flowers for Easter 2020. This meant we were unable to have the lily board up. This will be displayed at a suitable time later when we can collect all the names in memory of loved ones. When the church was open we did one arrangement near the altar table which could be seen on the streamed services. In 2021 we were able to arrange flowers for Easter which was wonderful and are now doing several arrangements for the weddings which are now able to take place.

## SIDESTEAM REPORT

The sides team are a great group of efficient, happy and enthusiastic members. Being on the team is a nice way to get involved at St Mary's and to get to know people. We cover all services including special services and support the Verger role for weddings and funerals. The team has the important role of welcoming people to the Church and the feedback received shows how well this is received and appreciated.

Needless to say lockdown had impacted on the role of the sides team. In response we adopted new ways of working to keep people safe, to comply with the guidance but to retain the warm welcome for which we are known at St Mary's. Thank you to such a great team.

Everyone on the sides team work well together in a caring and supportive way with each typically on duty two or three times a quarter, please speak to Howard Hughes if you'd like to join us.

## Walking Group Report

The group was originally started some 25 years ago, the aim being to organise a walk each month using varying routes depending on time of year and terrain, some being more challenging than others. The walkers are invariably of retirement age and of late the walks have become shorter but exercise in pleasant company and enjoying our much valued countryside has proved very popular. The walk ends with a pub lunch which enriches the element of companionship. This is particularly relevant to those living alone who look forward to conversation and making new friends.

We have enjoyed an annual summertime invitation to the home and garden of former members who organise an evening walk and shared supper. Our annual Christmas lunch has always proved a popular winter event.

Co-ordinators have changed over the years and as one retires another usually volunteers to take over, however the present co-ordinators have been in post for the last ten years, organising most of the walks with some organised by various members of the group at intervals but at present no one has been willing to take over the task of co-ordinating.

We are willing to give guidance if a new leader(s) offer to take over.

George and Jo Worrall

## PARISH OF AMERSHAM-WITH-COLESHILL

### Members of the Parochial Church Council, 2020-21

Elected at the Annual Meetings 28th April 2021

#### Parochial Church Council:

Tim Harper	Rector
Tim Barnard	Honorary Associate Rector
Sue Gill	Honorary Associate Rector
Petrina Clackett	All Saints' Churchwarden
Howard Pool	All Saints' Churchwarden
Susan Pounce	St Mary's Churchwarden
Howard Hughes	St Mary's Churchwarden
Graeme Coles	PCC Treasurer
Peter Clackett	All Saints Treasurer
Lorraine Hollett	Sacristan
Steve Johnson	PCC Secretary and Joint Safeguarding Officer
Clare Atkinson	Lay representative
Nadia Daly	Lay representative
Louise Baneke	Lay representative
Sarah Ainsworth-Coles	Lay representative
Stephen Fitzjohn	Lay representative and Deanery Synod Representative
Clare Samuels	Lay representative and Joint Safeguarding Officer
Lucy Hann	Lay representative
Mark Paton	Lay representative

#### Representatives to the All Saints' Committee:

**Ruth Murphy**  
**Helen Spencer**  
**Audrey Tridgell**  
**Lindsey Eardley**  
**Chris Wege**  
**Pat Dawson**  
**Maddie Murray**

