

**THE CHURCH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL
STEEPLE ASTON**



**ANNUAL REPORT
and
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS of the PCC
2017 -2018**

St Peter and St Paul's

The church of St Peter and St Paul is situated in rural Oxfordshire and is part of the United Benefice of Steeple Aston with North Aston and Tackley. The Benefice includes Middle Aston which for church administrative purposes is linked with Steeple Aston.

Our Rector is Revd Marcus Green, M.A. (Oxon).

Correspondence: The Rector, the Rectory, Fir Lane, Steeple Aston OX25 4SF

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL 2017-2018

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the AGM of the PCC. During the last year the following have served as members:-

Churchwardens: Graham Clifton
Rebecca Hoare

Deanery Synod Representative: Martin Dale

Elected Members :

Edwina Kinch	Lawrence White	David Stewart
Shirley Palmer	Caroline Compston	Mary Williams
Jeanna Atkins	May Woods	Martin Dale

In addition, the following people were elected to serve as **Sidespeople** at the 2017 APCM:

Jeana Atkins	Ted Atkins
Susi Barber	Paul Beadman
Roger Bradley	Ruth Dale
Rebecca Hoare	Ian Jackson
Edwina Kinch	Royston Kinch
Caroline Parsons	Sid Sterling
Lawrence White	Mary Williams
Gil Woods	May Woods

Introduction

This report is offered by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) as a record of its activities in the Year of our Lord, 2017-18. It serves as a review of church life within the church over the past year.

The life of the congregation is mainly seen through the lens of its worship of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, week by week, throughout the year. Our services of worship are open to every member of the village and indeed to anyone who wishes to join us. We welcome to communion all who have been baptised, including children who have participated in our preparation courses, and seek to offer a variety of styles and forms within our common worship. It is our hope that the love of God works upon our hearts and helps us to love all we encounter in our wider community, sharing God's love in words of witness and acts of kindness and care.

The PCC is elected on a three-year rolling basis by the church electoral roll and operates chiefly through five plenary meetings a year with recourse to various sub-committees whose duty it is to report back to the PCC. The PCC has overall responsibility for the maintenance of the church, the churchyard, graveyard, fabric and content.

The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law, comprising the incumbent, churchwardens, secretary and treasurer. It has the power to transact business of the PCC subject to any directions given by the PCC without recourse to plenary meetings.

Rector's Report

This is how I ended last year's report:

"A church is not about a building, it is about building a people who love God and each other. This is the heart of our journey together. This is what we aim to build as we grow in Christ together."

Let me be totally honest. At times over the last twelve months, as the rector of a United Benefice with each of its three parishes engaging in building projects, it has felt hard to keep that essential focus! But it is an essential focus.

Our year began last Easter with a terrific Holy Week guided by Canon Bruce Gillingham. His 'Way of the Cross' evenings were worshipful, thought-provoking and inspiring. My personal highlight was Maundy Thursday, but each event was terrific, and I am grateful to Bruce for the time he gave us - and for visiting again subsequently.

The year has been full of wider church family events; baptisms, of course, and weddings with Ross and Jenny, Harriet and Darren, and Sam and Samantha. We have also said farewell to some much loved church family members: Ari Turcan, Dorothy Steels, Nancy Stirling, Neville Jones and Malcolm Elder in their number.

I hope I can be forgiven for saying a few words about Malcolm Elder. As his illness took hold, and speech became harder and harder, sometimes he would try to tell me how the love of God was becoming more and more important to him. As he did so, his eyes would fill with tears, which fell unashamed down his face. In these moments, I did not see weakness, or illness, or loss in a man who had known strength and speed and humour and a fighting spirit all his life - I saw a deep inner strength that I wished we all could show so clearly.

And then we would pray together, or share a joke, or be silent.

Our Fete team put on a magnificent event in June, and were rewarded by great crowds and super weather. We raised a fantastic total which is vital for our finances every year - but more, the community spirit of the day is a wonderful thing. I look forward to this year's fete!

And in the same spirit, the Harvest Supper was a great success - many thanks to all who made it so. We had a great turn out, and I hope we can continue to build on this: it is so important to come together and enjoy being a community. I'm only sorry that a severe cold kept me from the Church Charity Quiz (- though I'm delighted my team won anyway...) and I know the evening was both enjoyable and raised a good sum for Katherine House Hospice.

Speaking of that community spirit, we owe a great debt of thanks to the Village Archive for their display toward the end of the year all about the history of our church building. The display, and the accompanying book, were excellent.

We did some things together as a Benefice that should be mentioned: of all the United Benefice Services, perhaps the one at the end of October to mark Reformation 500 Day deserves special notice. Dr Steven Gunn, head of history at Merton College, spoke wonderfully clearly about Martin Luther, about the Reformation in England, and about its legacy for us today. The text of his sermon is on our website. Thanks to Kildare Bourke-Borrowes from North Aston for suggesting we do this.

We also held our first Advent Course, using Bishop Steven's material on the Beatitudes. Bishop Steven is asking everyone in the Diocese to think of how we might be a more Christ-like church, how we might be more contemplative, compassionate and courageous as a church, and his course was very helpful.

Dr Radcliffe's, our church school, has been looking at how it might strengthen its position as a church school for the future, and to that end decided to become an Academy as part of the Diocese's own multi-academy trust (ODST). Just before Easter, the school was inspected independently as a church school (SIAMS) and I'm glad to say that was judged Outstanding in all areas. I love going in to meet with staff and children, to take collective worship and to be a governor. I very much hope we will build on our links with the school across the years to come.

Our own children have been very active this year, both in Family Services, in Children's Church and at our first Holiday Club, which had over twenty children attend. It's always brilliant to see what everyone has been doing in Children's Church as they show us at the end of services, and many thanks to Rachel, Rebecca, Jeanette and all who lead.

Children were at the forefront of our Christmas services, with our Crib Service packed to the walls, and I'm very grateful too to the members of the choral society and others who make such a difference to our carol service very year. The snow reduced practice time this year - and still we had a super carol service, and wonderful Christmas Eve and Christmas morning.

Week by week, Sunday by Sunday, it is the coming together and worshipping God that makes us who we are. Week by week, Sunday by Sunday, it is in our songs and our prayers, our study of the Bible and our fellowship that we grow in faith together. If we are to build our common life, this is the foundation.

And I want to thank everyone who makes Sunday morning so important, so vital, so key in our life. All we do comes from this point, and whether we then talk of service in the community or giving or anything else - it comes from this point of worship.

Thank you. Thank you to everyone for all you do and all you give and all you are in our life together. But perhaps you might allow me to mention one or two folk in particular in our church community? I could not begin to do my work as Rector without Graham and Rebecca as wardens. Their care and help and encouragement

are more valuable than they begin to realise. So too the presence and ministry and Richard, Geoff and Robin, on whom I depend enormously.

But this year I especially need to mention Mary, who is stepping down as PCC secretary. It's not a glamorous post, but it is essential. Mary conducts this work with great humour and efficiency. She has the measure of me perfectly and copes wonderfully both with my 'needing to know every detail' moments, and my 'gloriously vague' days. Her PCC minutes are pitched ideally, and even when she is away she manages to be on top of things and ready to answer questions for me, or to remind me that I need to ask questions...

More: Mary is just a pleasure to know. Every Rector should be so lucky as to have such a good PCC secretary. I am so grateful to have had Mary as PCC secretary in my time here. Mary: thank you!

Two more things and I am done.

First, I hope you have been part of the wonderful Lent we have been having as a church family. Christopher Compston came up with the idea that we base lent around the Parable of the Talents, and it was his Books for Charity that provided the £10 notes we gave away to the congregation at the end of Lent. I have seen cakes and marmalades and crosses and cards and toffee and egg covers and all sorts of things - as well as events from coffee mornings to afternoon teas to evening concerts organised as a result. Let's hope we have raised enough to begin to improve the furnishings in our coffee area so we can begin to do more there for more people more of the time, whether our building project happens or not.

And second, it seems to me that though I have felt through the year that at times my time has been taken up completely by buildings, this report shows that actually we are in fact all about building a people who love God and each other. And that gives me the confidence to say that we are in good shape to take the building project forward. I will be making a presentation on where we are on the building project at the APCM following last year's meeting's request that the PCC take things forward, and following a year's work on that request. These things sometimes take more time than we want - but I have always said that we want to do the very best we can for everyone, so it is only right that we take as much time as is needed.

And yet... and yet we want to move forward. One of the things the PCC did this year was to re-affirm its commitment to the six principles behind the project. What are those six principles? We want to improve access so that all people can get around the church yard and church easily; we want better heating so that the church is comfortable all year round; we want loos in church so that the very young and very old (and everyone in between) have the facilities they need here); we want to improve our hospitality facilities so we can more easily offer more opportunities to gather together - not just on Sundays, but at events and through the week; we want to create some flexible space in the building, so that our marvellous building can be used for more than an hour or two a week; and we dearly, dearly want to create a

children's church room within the church buildings because our children really do matter to us.

I am grateful to everyone who is part of the conversation that is taking us forward. I am delighted to be Rector of a church that engages with difficult issues - and then spends most of its time caring for its community, sharing faith and love in words and deeds, focussing its life Sunday by Sunday as we gather to worship God. Being contemplative, compassionate and courageous.

Becoming, I believe, and as Bishop Steven urges us, more Christ-like.

Rev'd Marcus Green

PCC Secretary's Report

This will be my tenth and, for now, my final PCC Secretary's report. I have found my time as PCC Secretary interesting, challenging and rewarding.

The PCC met five times during the year, as usual, with generally very good attendance.

The main topics discussed and/or acted on at the PCC Meetings included:

Church building project: there were regular updates and detailed debates on this topic, in particular about on-going discussions with the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC).

The introduction of the new Parish Giving Scheme the implementation of which was approved by the PCC.

The introduction of and online training for the new data protection rules under the General Data Protection Rules (GDPR) to take effect from May 2018.

Events, festivals and dates in the church calendar including United Benefice, Easter and Christmas services plus specific event planning and fundraising:

- Annual Church Fete June – the importance of everyone noting and keeping the date was discussed in order that there are enough people to help out on the day. The 2017 fete was ably organised and handled by the Fete Committee. New people have also joined the Fete organising committee during the year.
- Ride & Stride September – this year we didn't have any participants but were able to staff the church with Welcomers throughout the day.
- Harvest Festival Supper September – this was handled by a new team and enjoyed by all! Future organisation also discussed.
- Remembrance Sunday November – increased numbers attended this year's service
- Charity Quiz November – a successful evening with question master Malcolm Hensher and excellent catering by Chris and Sally Cooper that raised money for our local hospice Katharine House

- United Benefice Reformation 500 service with Dr Steven Gunn was enjoyable and also well attended.
- Snowdrop Sunday February – a very successful event this year attracting several people from outside the church community
- Advent and Lent courses
- Christian Aid Week

General items also discussed included:

the successful BeSpace prayer initiative in which volunteers participated at Dr Radcliffe's School; Christopher Compston's successful charitable fund raising project during Lent; the organisation of the Christmas card delivery around the village; Health & Safety was a regular agenda item.

Church finances and churchyard matters, which are both dealt with in detail elsewhere in this Annual Report, were also regularly discussed.

Mary Williams

Churchwarden's Report

It has been an honour to serve as Churchwarden over the past year, and to support Marcus in his ministry to us all here in Steeple Aston. I am very grateful to Malcolm Hensher, my predecessor, for passing on invaluable information about the role and offering his support as I have begun to learn what is entailed. It is a pleasure to serve alongside Graham Clifton, my fellow Churchwarden, and it is a huge reassurance for me to know that Graham appears to have a solution to any problem that might arise. I am sorry that I shall miss the Annual Meeting, due to a family holiday, and if re-elected, I would be very happy to continue to serve as Churchwarden for the coming year.

Our church continues to offer a variety of forms and styles of worship, with different services attracting different members of our community. There is a real and tangible sense of growth and life. There is always more that we would love to do, however, with outreach to the wider community being very much at the heart of our Christian life together.

As people will be aware, there are proposals for a re-ordering of the church, and plans have continued to be discussed over the past year, amongst the church members as well as with Diocesan and other organisations. We are some way off any final decision, and it remains the case that not everybody within the congregation or the wider community is in favour of all the plans. However at its meeting in September, the PCC had a useful discussion re-affirming the key principles and aims of the re-ordering and I hope it might be helpful to have these included, in brief, here.

The PCC is committed to improving the accessibility outside, into and within the church; providing a space for children and for Children's Church within the church building; improving the heating in church; providing toilet facilities (including facilities

for people with a disability); improving our ability to offer hospitality (refreshments after services and at other events); enhancing the flexibility of the space within the building.

The precise detail of each one of these remains under discussion but I hope it is helpful to have these key aims set out here. The goal of any change is to enhance the ways in which we can worship together and serve our community.

We are very fortunate at SS Peter and Paul to have a large number of very willing people who give their time in numerous ways: to keep the church clean, to prepare for services, ring the bells and make music, to provide beautiful flowers, offer coffee, refreshments and hospitality, read the lessons week by week and lead the prayers, as well as maintaining the churchyard so well. Each member of the congregation plays their part in making our church a vibrant and friendly part of village life.

This has been very much reflected in our Creative Lent project. Inspired by a fellow member of the congregation we have been encouraged to use our gifts and talents to raise funds to improve the comfort and hospitality we can offer in church. Coffee mornings, musical events and afternoon teas, as well as a range of handmade beautiful crosses, cards and sweets have revealed great creativity and generosity, no doubt raising welcome funds but also providing, as a sometimes unexpected by-product, opportunities for fellowship and simply allowing us to get to know one another better. With funds raised we plan to buy furnishings – table and chairs and other items – to improve the comfort of our existing hospitality area, so that ahead of any of the proposed changes to our church, we are better able to offer a warm welcome to members of our community. More details to follow!

I look forward to another exciting year, no doubt full of challenge and opportunity, as well as much spiritual growth!

Rebecca Hoare

Church Fabric Report

As mentioned above, plans for the re-ordering of the church remain under discussion. At the present time, apart from the regular maintenance and servicing of the boiler, fire extinguishers and roof alarm, no other work has been carried out over the past year, and so there is nothing else to report here.

Rebecca Hoare

Treasurer's Report

Steeple Aston Church Accounts 20th Jan. 2017 To 19th Jan. 2018

HSBC Community Account

Receipts	2017		2016
Opening Balance		4,600.91	
Standing Orders	14,085.00		15,195.00
Collections	1,890.63		1,337.22
Special Collections	1,102.54		959.40
Pew Envelopes	3,670.09		3,614.33
Free Will Offering	472.00		503.00
Central Board of Finance Deposit Fund	15,929.10		761.50
Central Board of Finance Interest	148.96		122.64
Charities Trust Donation	1,200.00		1,200.00
Donations	1,517.07		2,527.24
Fees, (Weddings, Funerals etc.)	5,209.00		2,923.00
Oxon Ride & Stride			291.00
Building Fund	13,467.00		12,386.45
Fund raising	5,882.90		4,354.28
Donation feasibility survey			7.00
Income Tax reclaim	9,280.14		6,232.12
Wall safe	51.52		55.79
Votive Candles			20.00
Grant, Parish Council for grass mowing	600.00		600.00
Misc.	78.40		87.36
Money towards new Hymn books			New Hymn book 1,265.04
Money withdrawn from High Income Account.			
Reclaimed Rector's exp. From Tackley & N Aston	1,348.71		1,362.71
Total income	75,933.06	80,533.97	£55,805.08
Payments			
Parish Share	25,634.00		23,714.34
Insurance	3,218.48		3,162.22
Charitable Giving	1,715.02		1,687.64
Cost of Services	344.24		85.52
ODBF Fees	1,214.00		961.00
Children's Church	206.91		204.54
Child & family worker acc.			231.80
Rector's Expenses for Benefice	1,905.55		2,090.48
British Telecom	585.57		735.66
Church Yard	1,882.00		1,980.00
Hall hire	140.00		140.00
Miscellaneous	198.24		279.69
Electricity	495.00		504.00
Heating Oil	926.21		265.08
Boiler maintenance	132.00		120.00
Five Year Inspection	130.00		160.00
Fire security check	177.48		159.60
Envelope scheme	114.06		27.12
Organist	675.00		430.00
Organ tuning	106.00		106.00
Candles	95.49		
Fete expenses	477.00		346.00
S A Life adverts	36.00		111.00
New Hymn books			2,098.00
Castle water	25.23		21.62
Architects Fees & Surveys etc.			5,165.03
Building Architect Fees	9,977.17		4,493.86
Building Fund expenses	5,951.88		335.00
Transfer to Money manager account			2,000.00
Roof alarm maintenance	428.40		428.40
Transfer to CBF Deposit Acc.	17,573.25		8,133.09
Total Expenses	74,364.18	74,364.18	60,196.69
Closing balance		6,169.79	
Excess of income over Expenditure		1,568.88	

<u>Balance Sheet</u>	2017		2016
<u>HSBC Community Account</u>			
Balance brought forward 20th Jan 2017	£4,600.91		8,992.52
Excess of income over expenditure	£1,568.88	Excess of Exp.	4,391.61
Balance at year end	6,169.79		4,600.91
<u>HSBC Business Money Manager Account</u>			
Income			
Opening balance	£9,367.13		£6,961.89
Standing Orders			400.00
Transferred from Com. Acc.			2,000.00
Bank Interest	3.57		5.24
Total income	£9,370.70		£9,367.13
Expenses			
Transferred to HSBC Community Account	0.00		0.00
Balance at year end	£9,370.70		9,367.13
Funds at year end			
Community Account	6,169.79		£4,600.91
Money Manger Account	9,370.70		£9,367.13
Year End Total	<u>15,540.49</u>		£13,968.04
Excess of income over expenditure	£1,572.45		

Graham Clifton Hon. Treasurer.

Steeple Aston Church Building Fund CCLA Account
Year ending 31st December 2017

Income.

Opening Balance	£2,689.63
Pledge money	£16,675.00
Raddcliffe Trust Grant	£2,000.00
Ride & Stride (2016)	£291.00
Book Sale (2016)	£282.45
Jazz Concert (2016)	£744.00
Amici Concert	£832.00
Income Tax Reclaim	£3,991.25
ODBF Grant	£5,000.00
Interest	£37.90
	£32,543.23

Expenses

Adverts	£42.00
Jazz Concert (2016)	£335.00
Leap Design	£14,471.03
Heating Survey	£1,305.17
Nene Services (VAT Advice)	£288.00
Philip Price Chartered Qty Surveyor	£885.00
T W Jones. Tower floor survey	£516.00
Target Surveys	£1,188.00
Monson Tower floor engineer	£916.50
Douglas Griffin Pew alterations.	£853.26
	£20,799.96

Closing balance	£11,743.27
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Treasurer's Report (notes)

General fund

The 2017 accounts show a slight increase in unrestricted income of £56,012.71 (£55,805.00 in 2016). The planned giving through standing orders and envelopes, decreased 7.5%, but collections and gift aid envelopes increased by 4%

Although the total tax reclaim from Gift Aid for the year was £9,280.14 (£6,232.12 in 2016) this was a reduction of approximately £1,000 for general church funds as £3,991.25 was for the building fund from money pledged.

Fund raising was well up on 2016 mainly due to a very successful summer fete.

Fees from weddings and funerals were up by just over £2,200 from 2016.

A grant of £600 was received from the Parish Council towards the churchyard upkeep and £500 from the Radcliffe Trust Foundation towards Children's Church..

There was an increase of 6.5% in Parish Share to £25,634.00.

All other expenses were similar to 2016 with only modest increases.

This was a excess of income over expenses of £1,572.45.

At the year end the total assets in the general accounts were:-

HSBC Community Account £6,169.79

HSBC Business Money Manager Account £9,370.70

Building Fund

For the first time the accounts include the restricted building fund. This fund was only started in September 2016 so the accounts are for 16 months.

This money has been invested into a small dormant fund we had with CCLA through the Diocesan Board of Finance.

The new money included:-

Pledge money £16,675.

Grants – Radcliffe Trust Foundation £2,000, Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance £5,000.

Tax reclaim on pledge money £3991.25

Fund raising £1,814

So far £20,422 has been paid out in Architects fees, surveys and trial alteration to a pew.

This leaves a balance at the yearend in the CCLA Account of £11,743.27

Another £1,706 is committed towards pew alterations which leaves a balance of £10,036 available.

I would like to record my thanks Gil Woods for examining the accounts and to Dorothy Clifton for banking the collections and recording the Gift Aid donations.

Graham Clifton.

Treasurer.

Bell Ringers Report

There is certainly a more youthful look to the bell ringers this year – mainly due to two teenagers learning to ring. Jack Knowles & Hannah McCloone are now regular church workers turning up almost every Sunday to help ring for service and they also bring a parent with them who also ring.

During the year Jack has been taking part in the Diocesan Young Ringers award scheme which has meant keeping records of all his ringing achievements. One was ringing his first quarter peal for his 13th birthday. He will be judged in May along with other young ringers throughout the Diocese.

We had a busy social calendar during year. An outing to Gloucestershire which was a good experience for all our ringers to ring different bells, it makes us realise how good and easy Steeple bells are to ring. We held a dinner at the Red Lion and a summer BBQ which attracted about 30 people.

We entered two teams in the Banbury Branch striking competition held at Adderbury, which are much heavier bells than ours. After all 10 teams had rung Steeple Aston were declared winners of the novice and the advanced sections.

We hosted the Branch half yearly meeting and also rang to celebrate the Queen and Prince Philip's 70th wedding anniversary. We continued the tradition of welcoming in the New Year at midnight.

The handbell ringers again went round the village at Christmas collecting for charity and raised £1,200 for Respite for Oxon Sick Youngsters.

If you would like to come and join us please come to the church tower on a Tuesday evening at 7.30pm and see what goes on.

Graham Clifton.

Tower Keeper Report

During the year the rope guide bosses changed to a different type to help reduce rope noise when ringing. The bells were also checked over and all is in good order.

Graham Clifton

Churchyard report

The tasks during our working parties in the season are broadly divided into two parts, firstly by keeping nature in check by trimming hedges, weedkilling paths, clearing gutters and gullies, and preventing the ivy from running riot over gravestones and

walls and secondly by tidying up and clearing away after some of her more violent visits of which we've had a few this past year. We had an extra unscheduled working party when heavy snow brought down several branches before Christmas. The regular work to the top of the cemetery hedge next to the school has now led to a consistent thickness throughout where the bottom has thickened out. The notice board and bier shed receive their annual coats of preservative which will help their longevity.

During the year, we had a request from SAVA, who were in the process of recording the presence of graves in the churchyard, to expose some which they suspected had been obliterated over the course of time. They were right; some 12 headstones, laid horizontally, were unearthed and duly mapped. Those close to the surface were left as cleared and those that were a few inches deeper were backfilled to avoid being a trip hazard, ever mindful of health and safety!

This year, our new grass cutting contractor, Nigel Prickett, starts his first full season and to help him with the vexed question of disposing of the grass cuttings we have purchased an additional brown wheelie bin for the purpose.

We usually have an additional project or two up our sleeve to concentrate on and this time it has been the restoration of the cremated remains area which was becoming a bit neglected. We also aim to bring the north-west gate back into working order and plans are well in hand to achieve this!

Lawrence White

Church Flowers

The team of flower arrangers has provided arrangements for every Sunday of the past year apart from during Advent and Lent when Steeple Aston has the tradition of no flowers, plus the five Church Festivals.

Very warm thanks are given to Sheila Side retired last year after many years on the rota. She always loved to do the flowers for the South Window for Festivals. Susi Barber, a more recent recruit, is no longer available to help due to the success of her new project and grandparent duties will curtail Pauline Beadman's time for flowers. We will miss their help and expertise. A very warm welcome to Joyce Atkins, Anne Bonwick and Harriet Higgins who joined the team last year.

2017 was a busy year. We were invited to do the church flowers for three weddings which we were delighted to do. The Rushworth family, in their 'thank you' note mentioned the time, hard work and creativity which we put into their flower displays 'the results were stunning'. Thank you team.

Edwina Kinch

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll stands at 55 members, two less in total than twelve months ago.

Jeanna Atkins.

Children's Ministry

We have continued this year with children's church activities during the Holy Communion Service on the 4th Sunday of the month, taking place mainly in the Samuel Radcliffe building at the school. Attendance has been fairly similar to the previous year (2-12 children), with varying groups of children attending (age range 3-12), including some newcomers. We have explored subjects including the Transfiguration, presentation of Jesus to the Temple, temptation in the wilderness and parable of the workers in the vineyard, with readings, prayer, crafts and music.

The Family Service, on the second Sunday of the month has been well attended, with families enjoying the 'all age sermon', joining in with the music, and also leading some prayers and readings.

In August, a team from the church ran a two day church Holiday Club for local children, on the theme of superheroes in the Bible. It was a great success, with more than 20 children attending, and plans are under way to run a similar club this summer.

Rachel Marsden

Safeguarding Report

The safeguarding of children, as well as of vulnerable adults, has always been a priority for our church, to ensure that for children coming to church and attending any church activities, the experience is a safe and enjoyable one.

Last summer we ran a Church Holiday Club for the first time, in addition to our regular Children's Church and other children's ministry activities. This required liaison with the Diocesan Safeguarding Office to ensure that all safeguarding requirements were met and that all involved in leading and helping at the Holiday Club were recruited, supervised and supported in line with the Diocesan guidelines and policies.

We are pleased to advise that no safeguarding concerns were raised in the past year.

Ted Atkins and Rebecca Hoare

Sidespeople

There are 14 sidespeople who have contributed to the smooth running of our church services throughout the year. A big “thank you” to everyone on the rota, it is hoped you will continue for another year.

We have welcomed several newcomers to our church in the past year and, if any of you would like to offer your services as a sidesperson, please contact Jeana Atkins (347237). You must have your name entered on the Electoral Roll to take on these duties.

Jeana Atkins

Church Cleaning

Fourteen industrious people regularly clean and polish the church, which is much appreciated. So thanks go out to:- Rebecca Hoare, Chris Clarke, Diana Gardner, Roger Bradley, Edwina and Royston Kinch, Jeana and Ted Atkins, Caroline Compston, Ruth and Martin Dale, Katerina Vernicos, and Malcolm and Joan Hensher. Two new volunteers are joining the rota shortly – thank you Mary Rushworth and Michelle Bowden-Maunder for offering your help.

There is still room on the rota for more helpers, so please speak to Jeana if you are willing to give an hour or two of your time once every 8 weeks or so.

Jeana Atkins

Chalice Bearers and those Preparing the Holy Communion

Three chalice bearers are available to assist the Priest at Holy Communion and there are three on a rota to prepare for services. Many thanks to everyone for their help.

Jeana Atkins

Lesson Readers

Many thanks to the team of people who read the lesson for us week by week at our church services. This is a vital part of church worship and ministry and can be a rewarding way to take part in church life. Please do let me know if you would like to join the team of readers!

Rebecca Hoare

Intercession Leaders

Leading the prayers is another way in which members of the congregation contribute to our weekly worship, and again is a rewarding role to undertake. Once a month there is Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion service, at which the prayers are simply read from the service sheet. For the other services the prayers need to be

prepared in advance by the intercessor. This is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on what is going on in our church, in our community and in the wider world, in order to bring these before God, and to do this in one's own style. There are many different ways to do this, and there are so many things that need prayer!

Thank you very much to all who lead our prayers at the moment, and please do let me know if you are interested in finding out more about doing so in the future. Advice and guidance is readily available!

Rebecca Hoare

Organ and Music Report

The music in the church remains vibrant despite the fact that we do not have a regular choir. The systems of timetabling the music specifically for worship within the year has now been well established and once more we thoroughly enjoyed a wonderful Carol Service with Marcus both Directing and composing music for it; Paul Herrington kindly playing the organ. This was a lovely occasion and much appreciated by the village as a whole. Equally Easter remains important and last year Marcus set the Creed. A group of us really enjoyed singing it. It really was very much part of the service. We aim to do this again this year as our offertory to the worship and the congregation as a whole.

The organ remains bright and chirpy. For the first time since I've been here, I attended the tuning of it with Brian and his friend. I had not realised that it takes at least 4 hours and this time it was nearer 6! We have a super tuner in Brian who really cares for the organ and we are very lucky. For what he does he is also remarkably cheap. It takes 2 people to tune the organ because he has to bring a friend who plays the notes. It looks as if next year this may be me! He also alerted me to the fact that there is evidence of ingress of water above the organ in an area we cannot see. One must remove pipes and enter the main organ space to see it (which he did, looking a bit precarious). From what I could see it did not look too serious but it is worth checking. I now know how to climb into the organ - not something I relish but I would do it if I had to.

There is a cipher (continuous note) on the two foot stop on the great organ. It's very high and may not even be a pipe. Brian couldn't find it so it may be the wind blowing through a small crack. It is currently no problem when the organ playing quite loudly which is the normal mode for such a stop. Again I need to keep my eye on this. If it is a crack etc. it could be an expensive repair if we ignore it. I have no real idea about costs for organ repair except that they are never cheap.

I still feel very grateful that people accept me as "pulsator organum" - however, never let it be said that I hold the post jealously. If anyone ever wants to take over they are more than welcome!

Martin Dale

Annual Report of the Proceedings of Woodstock Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod met three times as usual. An effort is being made to make sure that the meetings tie in with the Diocesan Synod Meetings as best they can so that there is not a long overlap in business of mutual interest. This is a perennial problem with committees which meet rarely.

Although I did not go to as many meetings as I would have liked to I don't think I missed that much. I know that the meeting in February was taken up to a greater or lesser extent with elections - important but administrative. However, what is very heartening is that Canon Adrian Daffern who has now taken over the leadership of the Deanery Synod is trying to implant a new spirit within it such that it is both relevant and positive and encourages members to get away from the general idea that "the deanery Synod is an hour spent watching the clock to see when we can go home". Actually I have never felt that both in my last Diocese and here. It seems to me that all the time the leaders of the Deanery Synods have both tried very hard to make things interesting and relevant and also - this is important - they tried to give the deanery Synod members the reassurance that their ideas etc. were important. In my last diocese our deanery Synod actually succeeded over a three year period in changing the way in which the Diocese actually set the parish share. It was necessary. Deanery Synods are seen as toothless within the political structure of the church. They don't have to be and I have seen plenty of evidence in Woodstock Deanery Synod of people trying to make sure that they remain relevant.

Whilst the previous leaders of Woodstock deanery Synod worked hard to make the meetings enjoyable and relevant Canon Daffern has started by making changes. He has changed the format of the meeting. So, for example, the first half hour is given over to just easy conversation with other members. This proved useful and one really did meet people from the Deanery in a new way. Then business is kept to a minimum and finally the major part of the meeting is given over to an important topic - on this occasion the "Just Giving Scheme" which was highly informative - plus details of various initiatives taking place within the deanery e.g. The Holiday Club at Eynsham which I have reported on many times.

As always the Parish Share figures were published during the year and passed to members. As the PCC knows, Revd. Marcus has been in discussion with those who set this to re-negotiate our own share which is too large. At this point I would simply like to point out that

our Benefice Share percentage rise was the second largest in the deanery and amounted to 6.9% which when I saw it I thought was very high, being well above inflation. I would like to thank Revd. Marcus for taking this up - quite right!

Experience as a

Deanery Representative in my last Diocese teaches me that with regard to Parish Share although we can be as gentle as doves we certainly need to be "as wise as serpents"! We are the goose that lays the golden egg in this context.

I look forward to a very informative and positive year 2018 -19.

Martin Dale

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, 3 April 2017

held in church

The Rev. Marcus Green opened the meeting with the new benefice prayer cards and reflection

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Election of Churchwardens

Malcolm Hensher has resigned as Churchwarden on health grounds

There was one nomination: Rebecca Hoare, proposed by Martin Dale; Seconded by Jeana Atkins

Rebecca was duly elected unanimously with acclaim.

Re-election: Graham Clifton, proposed by Mary Williams; Seconded by Jeana Atkins
Graham was duly re-elected

Unfortunately, Malcolm Hensher was unable to attend the meeting. The Rev'd Marcus Green, with the Churchwardens Graham Clifton and Rebecca Hoare, will visit Malcolm to thank him for his service as Churchwarden and to make a small presentation.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Present: Lawrence White, Rebecca Hoare, The Rev'd Marcus Green, Caroline Compton, Christopher Compton, David Stewart, Shirley Palmer, Mary Williams, Graham Clifton, Dorothy Clifton, Jeana Atkins, Ted Atkins, Martin Dale, Ruth Dale

Apologies: Edwina Kinch, Malcolm Hensher, Eileen Baglin-Jones, May Woods

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 10 April 2016

There were no matters arising. The Minutes were approved unanimously and signed.

1. Annual Report

In his report the Rector mentioned some challenges and highlights during the year. At the Harvest Service we contributed the largest harvest collection that the church has given - to Mary's Meals – and this was at a time when we were collecting pledges for building the project. He also referred to the Friday prayer group. And particularly thanked Ted Atkins for all his hard work and commitment to Open the Book. His time and efforts are much appreciated. (Ted is standing down this year.) The Rector was very grateful for Graham Clifton's support as Churchwarden during the year.

b) Churchwarden's report and Church Fabric report – Malcolm Hensher had written both reports referring to the building project and on-going discussion, surveys and necessary permissions.

In subsequent discussion, it was reported that there is currently an interim Faculty for investigation of the tower floor. GC has requested permission for this work from Ecclesiastical Insurance.

We had aimed to raise £20,000 by September 2017 for the preliminary investigations and surveys. This fund has raised £29,500 at present.

The Quantity Surveyor has given an estimate for the total project of £688,000. MG reported that there is a Trust who is 'enthusiastic' about funding £500,000 of the required sum. Caroline Compston asked if we would need to raise over £100,000. MG said that he had other funding bodies possibly interested. He concluded that the project is progressing with the approval of a majority of the PCC. There may be changes and we have not reached the destination yet but we are moving forward.

The rector asked for and received the meeting's assent that the PCC should continue forward with the project broadly in line with the 'Shaping a Community' feasibility study document.

c) Financial Statements – GC reported that the separate fund for the building has not been examined yet as it has not run a full year.

We have received thanks from the Bishop for paying our parish share in full. The share will increase for this parish by 7.8%.

GC said that giving has dropped a little and he would like to see more going into the general fund.

He thanked Gil Woods for examining the Accounts.

MG proposed a vote thanks to Graham Clifton Treasurer and Churchwarden and also to Dorothy Clifton particularly for her work organising the gift aid.

MG encouraged all to give by SO or DD which makes a significant difference to the life of church. If anyone is interested in the planned giving envelopes they can talk to GC about this system. Some people said that if they give by SO or DD they were embarrassed when the collection plate comes round. MG said that he will explain the system when he announces the offertory hymn.

d) Churchyard report – Lawrence White thanked everyone who gives their time to the regular churchyard working parties.

e) Electoral roll report – Jeana Atkins reported that there are two more people on the roll which now totals 59 people.

f) Children's church – Rebecca Hoare thanked Rachel Marsden for all her work with Children's Church. She reiterated that there are activity bags available for children at all services. Sidespeople should hand these out, if required.

g) Organ and music report – Martin Dale would like music in church to be discussed in more detail at a future PCC Meeting. MG thanked Martin for his invaluable contribution to music in church.

2. Election of three members of Parochial Church Council

There were three nominations: Martin Dale, Edwina Kinch and May Woods

All were elected unanimously

3. Nomination for Deanery Synod representative

Martin Dale was elected uncontested

4. Appointment of Sidespeople

David Armitage has stepped down. Caroline Parsons will join the team.

The meeting agreed the election of the following sidespeople:

Mrs. Jeana Atkins	Mr. Ted Atkins
Mrs. Susi Barber	Mr. Paul Beadman
Mr. Roger Bradley	Mrs Ruth Dale
Ms. Rebecca Hoare	Mr. Ian Jackson
Mrs. Edwina Kinch	Mr. Royston Kinch
Mrs Caroline Parsons	Mr. Sid Sterling
Mr. Lawrence White	Ms Mary Williams
Mr Gil Woods	Mrs. May Woods

6. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts

RH proposed and SP seconded the reappointment of Gil Woods

All in favour.

7. A.O.B.

MG said that the new Bishop of Oxford The Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft will be visiting the Deanery for an open evening on Wednesday 10 May.

St Peter and St Paul, Steeple Aston

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

9 April 2017

Agenda for Meeting of Parishioners

Election of Churchwardens

Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Apologies for absence

Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 3 April 2017

1. To consider:
 - a) An annual report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the activities of the parish generally (Churchwardens' and Secretary's reports)
 - b) The Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31 December 2017, independently examined
 - c) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the Church of the Parish
 - d) A report on the electoral roll since the last Annual Parochial Church meeting
 - e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
 - f) All other parochial reports
2. Election of three representatives to the Parochial Church Council
3. Election of two Deanery Synod representatives
4. Appointment of Sidespeople
5. Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Accounts
6. Any other business

Dates of next PCC Meetings 2018-19: Thursday 21 June; Thursday 20 September; Thursday 15 November; Thursday 10 January 2019; Thursday 7 March 2019

Election of Officers at Annual Meeting

a note of explanation...

With an electoral roll of 55 members, we have nine elected members on our PCC. These are elected on a rolling basis - a third of the PCC is re-elected each year.

This Easter, Shirley Palmer, David Stewart and Lawrence White have come to the end of their term of office. On behalf of all of us at St Peter & St Paul's, may I as Rector offer many thanks for all your service on the PCC. Lawrence has served on PCC for 27 years and indicated at the last PCC meeting that he may not stand again; if we can't twist his arm right now then this is a very good place publicly to thank him for terrific service - for his total commitment and unswerving care for all aspects of parish life. He is an example to everyone on PCC: thank you Lawrence - and please do stand again!

At the end of a term of office, any PCC member may stand for re-election or step down as they wish. Any other member of the church electoral roll (who satisfies all the necessary guidelines) may also stand for election, and if we have more candidates than places we will hold an election during the Annual Meeting. All candidates must have been nominated properly using the printed nomination forms available from the PCC secretary.

Usually, we find ourselves with three candidates, and we elect them all together.

If we have more than three candidates and need to conduct an election, the process is as follows: Those present who are on the church electoral roll have up to three votes each. They may not vote more than once for any one candidate. They do not have to vote three times if they do not wish to. We vote by show of hands, unless a paper ballot is called for. Then everyone must sign the back of their papers. The electoral roll officer ensures that only those on the electoral roll are voting. If there is a tied result at the end of all this, the Rector has no casting vote - the final decision is taken by lot.

I hope this makes everything clear!

There are also two three-year Deanery Synod Rep places on PCC; Martin Dale occupies one of these at present, and the other is vacant.

Marcus Green, Rector, St Peter and St Paul, Steeple Aston