

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



**ANNUAL REPORT
and
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS of the PCC
2018 -2019**

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 2018-20189

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 Representatives:

Martin Dale

Eileen Baglin-Jones

Elected Members :

Edwina Kinch

Jeanette Cotterill

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 2018 APCM:

Mrs. Jeana Atkins

Mr. Ted Atkins

Mrs. Susi Barber

Mr. Roger Bradley

Mrs Dorothy Clifton

Mrs Caroline Compston

Mr Christopher Compston

Mrs Ruth Dale

Ms. Rebecca Hoare

Mrs. Edwina Kinch

Mr. Royston Kinch

Mrs Caroline Parsons

Mr. Sid Sterling

Mr. Lawrence White

Ms Mary Williams

Mr Gil Woods

Mrs. May Woods

Introduction

This report is offered by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) as a record of its activities in the year 2018-19. 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 members of 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:

"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."

Through baptisms, weddings and funerals, through ordinary and extraordinary moments in our common life, through tears and laughter, becoming more Christ-like is always our goal. It's such a simple thing and such a life-long journey.

We learn to be more kind and generous and faithful and forgiving. We learn to be Church.

For example: our Creative Lent last year was a terrific time of community and sharing; that we raised around £4,000 from the £200 initially given out was mind-blowing. That we reached out as a church and blessed each other in the process was beyond words. The new furniture in our coffee area is the tangible result - the growth in our life together will hopefully last even longer.

Then our Fete team, headed up by Martin Dale, put on a truly magnificent event in June, and were rewarded by great crowds and super weather. We raised a mind-boggling total which is vital for our finances every year - but (again) more, the community spirit of the day is a wonderful thing. I look forward to seeing what can be done this year!

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 Ian Macdonald was a welcome addition with his humour.

I was deeply touched by all who came to my book launch in September. There were two events - in the Cathedral in Oxford, and in Hill House here in Steeple. Both were wonderful, and I do want to record my gratitude to all who made these days possible. Thank you. 'The Possibility of Difference' is still available from Kevin Mayhew publishers!

We did some things together as a Benefice that should be mentioned: a summer Songs of Praise at North Aston must surely be revisited, and the visit of Rev'd Karen Young, who grew up in Steeple but is now Vicar of Heckmondwike in Yorkshire was also a terrific highlight. Our Remembrance Day service saw record attendance, and all our major festivals this year were extraordinarily well-attended. Worship at

Christmas was particularly special, and thanks to the Choral Society for helping produce such beautiful singing at the Carol Service.

Dr Radcliffe's, our church school, was awarded 'Outstanding' by Ofsted inspection, and it has been a delight to strengthen our links with the school. I take regular collective worship in the school, in addition to which a whole group of volunteers from the Benefice (headed up by Rachel Marsden) oversaw Prayer Space for the second year running - a three day event in which every child in the school spent time thinking about what prayer might mean for them.

Our own children have been very active this year, both in Family Services, in Children's Church and at our summer Holiday Club, which had around thirty 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.

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 to be more Christ-like together. If we are to build our common life, this is the foundation.

And I want to thank everyone who makes each 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, and Jeanette as PCC secretary. 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 thank Graham. He has served as treasurer for more years than anyone can remember, along with Dorothy's constant help, and for the past six years he has also been a terrifically reliable and constant presence as church warden. Recently, the PCC had a day away to look at the church building project and to think about what it might mean. Graham organised this - finding places that had undergone similar work and seen similar issues, and I was astounded at the way he isolated just the right issues and just the right people to help us think things through really clearly. He got, as ever, right to the heart of things.

I must add that as treasurer he has also been a delight to me - he has a can-do attitude which never panics, and always finds the positive. He has been a gift beyond

words in my first six years here. 'Thank you' hardly begins to cover it, but these words will have to do for now!

And finally, our building project ambles on. These things take so much time. We gain a good report from the DAC, from the SPAB, from all sorts of people - and then find we have to do more work before we can actually do anything. In the midst of everything, the PCC have been the best PCC I have ever had the pleasure to work with: asking hard questions with a desire to do the best by everyone. And as we engaged in all kinds of consultations, the good will and enthusiasm that came with that process was extraordinary.

And yet... and yet we need to move forward. Our six principles remain in place, with really good designs in place to meet them: 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.

Now we need to find around £30,000 so we can afford the next design phase before we achieve faculty. We are working with a couple of bodies on this, and we are trying hard not to ask locally for this at this time as the need for people here to help again will come later... So what I'm asking is: please pray. We want to keep things moving. We want to get going, but we have costs if we do, and we won't move till we know we can meet the bills that will come. Just meeting our ordinary church responsibilities depends on your generosity week by week, and I won't allow anything to put that in jeopardy!

So let's all pray. Like we believe it makes a difference! And in the faith of Jesus, let's pray to move on with the building project - because being a Christ-like Church means loving God and loving our neighbour, not being a club that does the same as it's always done, but being a family that reaches out to care for everyone. And let's pray that we all grow to be more Christ-like - more kind, more generous, more faithful, more forgiving - in the process.

Because we're not simply about a church building. We're all about building a Church.

Rev'd Marcus Green

PCC Secretary's Report

This is my first report as secretary on what has been a busy year for the PCC.

The PCC held of its 5 regular meetings this year and all were well attended. In addition, an extra less formal meeting was held specifically to discuss the building project and find ways forward.

As part of the building project consultation process, PCC members took part in consultation meetings with various groups. There was one meeting involving the entire PCC in order to listen to some of those who object to the plans.

PCC members completed Diocesan safeguarding training online and steps have been taken to ensure we are GDPR compliant.

In addition to the building project, the following topics were discussed:

- The garden of remembrance - ensuring that this continues to have space for ashes.
- Health and Safety is regularly reviewed.
- At each PCC, time is given to look at ways in which we can communicate effectively with other members of the congregation and with the village at large. There is now a photograph of the PCC in the church porch so that members can more easily be identified.
- Events during the year included United Benefice Services, Christmas and Easter services as well as the following:
 - The Annual Church Fete – The fete committee led by Martin Dale worked together to ensure this was a great success.
 - Ride and Stride - Nobody from the parish took part this year. There were only 9 visitors to the church but a team was in place to ensure they were welcomed.
 - Harvest Supper - This year, a comedian came to entertain those who attended and the event was generally enjoyed, despite a few sound system problems.
 - Remembrance – being the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, this was particularly well attended.
 - No charity quiz took place as the date was so close to that of the Cleobury Advent concert, but the quiz will take place this coming year
 - The Advent Concert was very successful and much appreciated.
 - Snowdrop Sunday – This was well attended and enjoyed by those who came.
 - Lent course
 - Christian Aid week

Health and safety is regularly reviewed.

Church finances and churchyard matters (covered elsewhere) were also discussed.

In addition to all this, the PCC had a day away, organised by Graham Clifton, in January to look at other churches where reordering has taken place. The choice of churches proved to be good, and it was an inspirational and thought-provoking day.

Jeanette Cotterill

Churchwardens' report

It has been another busy year for our church. We have enjoyed much fellowship and friendship and have welcomed new members to our church family. We continue to enjoy a range of different styles of worship with traditional as well as more informal services. Families and children are of course welcome at all our services and particularly so at the 2 family focussed services each month: Family Service on the 2nd Sunday and Children's Church on the 4th Sunday of the month.

We have enjoyed singing familiar hymns as well as more modern worship songs, accompanied on the organ, viola, flute and electric piano by Martin, Jo and Marcus. It is wonderful to have this variety of music to enhance our worship.

We continue to discuss the plans for our church and look forward to growing the church family and expanding its work and outreach within our community in the year that lies ahead.

The annual report is a wonderful opportunity to give thanks to all those who contribute in so many ways to the smooth running of our church. We are very blessed in Steeple Aston to have a large number of people who contribute to the life of the church in many ways, seen and unseen. Thank you to everyone!

This "team" includes those who clean the church faithfully week by week; those who provide the beautiful flowers; those who provide the music that so enhances our worship particularly Martin, Jo and of course Marcus! Thank you to those who provide coffee each Sunday after the services, and the invaluable opportunity to meet with fellow members of the congregation; thank you to those in the churchyard working group who keep the area around the church looking orderly and beautiful, and thank you to the bellringers for the wonderful ringing and call to worship, and marking the other important dates and occasions in the calendar and life of our community, weddings and anniversaries.

And thank you of course to those who spend time drawing up the rotas to ensure everyone knows what they are doing and when!

I would just like to add that it has been an honour to serve again as churchwarden alongside Graham Clifton, who is stepping down from his role as churchwarden and of treasurer. Thank you Graham for your unstinting service to our church and for all the support and guidance you have given to me.

Rebecca Hoare

Church fabric report

The important annual safety and maintenance checks have been carried out this year, as always. These include the regular tuning of the organ, the servicing of the roof alarm and boiler, as well as PAT testing, as part of the essential and ongoing vigilance and attention that ensure that our church building is maintained as it should be. Thank you to Graham for overseeing this work and these visits, and to all those who help to facilitate them.

Rebecca Hoare

Treasurer's Report

1. General Account receipts and payments sheet
2. Building Account income and expenditure
3. Notes

Steeple Aston Church Accounts 20th Jan. 2018 To 19th Jan. 2019					
HSBC Community Account					
Receipts			2018		2017
Opening Balance				6,169.79	
Standing Orders			8,043.00		14,085.00
Collections			1,533.71		1,890.63
Special Collections			1,260.01		1,102.54
Pew Envelopes			2,874.10		3,670.09
Free Will Offering			270.41		472.00
Parish Giving Scheme			8,030.00		
Parish Giving Gift Aid			2,007.50		
Central Board of Finance Deposit Fund	(Building Fund)		6,725.10		15,929.10
Central Board of Finance Interest			152.18		148.96
Charities Trust Donation			1,200.00		1,200.00
Donations			1,989.17		1,517.07
Fees, (Weddings, Funerals etc.)			4,356.00		5,209.00
Building Fund			3,349.50		13,467.00
Fund raising (fete £4,903)			6,219.20		5,882.90
Lent Project			3,985.35		
Gift Aid reclaim on standing orders and collections			5,306.54		9,280.14
Wall safe			201.67		51.52
Grant, Parish Council for grass mowing			600.00		600.00
Misc.			25.00		78.40
Reclaimed Rector's exp. From Tackley & N Aston			1,330.01		1,348.71
		Total income	59,458.45	65,628.24	£75,933.06
Payments					
Parish Share			25,621.13		25,634.00
Insurance			3,467.91		3,218.48
Charitable Giving			2,050.50		1,715.02
Visiting Clergy			47.00		
Cost of Services			164.72		344.24
ODBF Fees			1,142.00		1,214.00
Children's Church			124.00		206.91
Rector's Expenses for Benefice			2,245.49		1,905.55
British Telecom			587.72		585.57
Church Yard			1,620.00		1,882.00
Hall hire			65.00		140.00
Miscellaneous			411.83		198.24
Electricity			632.00		495.00
Heating Oil			569.10		926.21
Boiler maintenance			132.00		132.00
Five Year Inspection			145.00		130.00
Fire security check			77.04		177.48
Envelope scheme			28.49		114.06
Organist			840.00		675.00
Organ tuning			108.00		106.00
Candles			0.00		95.49
Fete expenses			510.80		477.00
Lent Project			4,667.00		
S A Life adverts			33.00		36.00
Castle water			24.23		25.23
Building Architect Fees			3,798.36		9,977.17
Building Fund expenses			2,926.74		5,951.88
Roof alarm maintenance			443.84		428.40
Transfer to CBF Deposit Acc.	(Building Fund)		3,349.50		17,573.25
		Total Expenses	55,832.40	55,832.40	74,364.18
		Closing balance		9,795.84	
		Excess of Income over Expenditure		3,626.05	

Balance Sheet				
		2018		2017
HSBC Community Account				
Balance brought forward 20th Jan 2018		£6,169.79		4,600.91
Excess of income over expenditure		£3,626.05		1,568.55
	Balance at year end	9,795.84		6,169.79
HSBC Business Money Manager Account				
Income				
Opening balance		£9,370.70		£9,367.13
Standing Orders				
Transferred from Com. Acc.				
Bank Interest		10.24		3.57
	Total income	£9,380.94		£9,370.70
Expenses				
Transferred to HSBC Community Account		0.00		0.00
	Balance at year end	£9,380.94		9,370.70
Funds at year end				
Community Account		9,795.84		£6,169.79
Money Manger Account		9,380.94		£9,370.70
	Year End Total	19,176.78		£15,540.49
	Excess of income over expenditure	£3,636.29		
Steeple Aston & Duns Tew - Brookes Bequest				
Accounts for the period from 31/12/2017 to 31/12/2018				
Capital				
Opening Capital		448.20		
Previous years unrealised gains/losses		8,732.66		
			9,180.86	
Unrealised gain / loss in the year			- 137.79	
Represented by current values		9,043.16		
CBF Investment Fund			9,043.16	
Interest paid during the year to our HSBC Community Acc.			152.18	
Graham Clifton, Treasurer.				

Treasurer's Report (notes)

General fund

In 2018 we joined the Parish Giving Scheme. Seventeen donors have so far signed up to giving this way. Eleven of these have chosen to have their donation increase annually with inflation. The Gift Aid on all these donations is now claimed automatically each month. All but one of these donors used to give monthly by standing order.

Our total income in 2017 from: standing orders, collections, pew envelopes and free will offerings was £20,117. In 2018 the equivalent income plus Parish Giving was £20,750.

In addition to this we have received £2,007 in Gift Aid on Parish Giving. I normally reclaim Gift Aid annually at the end of the financial year. The figure this year was £5,306. The 2019 reclaim will be lower now we are claiming monthly via Parish Giving.

Fund raising was slightly up £6219 from £5,882 in 2017

The Lent Project this year we gave members of the congregation £10 each to run events to raise funds. This proved to be very successful and raised £3,585 plus a grant of £400 from the Deanery (total £3985). £4667 has been spent on new furniture for the Lady Chapel, the difference coming from general funds.

The only other significant increase in fund raising (300%) was the wall safe partly due to the book stall in church.

There was a slight reduction in the Parish Share due to a grant from the Woodstock Deanery Fund.

Our oil costs reduced due to a donation of quantity oil from a parishioner. All other expenses were similar to 2017 with only modest increases.

There was a excess of income over expenditure of £3,636.

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

HSBC Community Account £9,795.84

HSBC Business Money Manager Account £9,380.94

Building Project Fund

New money raised for the year totalled £3,396.34.

The expenses for Architect Fees, pew modifications and Quantity Surveyor fees totalled £6,725.10. This leaves a balance in the fund of £8,412.51 at the 31st December 2018.

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

After 13 years as church treasurer I have decided to stand down and wish my successor Gareth John every success.

Graham Clifton. Treasurer.

Bell Ringers Report

2018 has been a very busy year for Steeple Aston Bellringers.

Our young ringers have made great progress.

Hannah McLoone rang her first quarter peal in April. Since then she has rung one more on the treble at Steeple which was half muffled for Remembrance weekend. Her father Jon also rang in this quarter this being his first. At the end of the year she rang her first of triples.

Jack Knowles has also been busy advancing his ringing career. He rang his first quarter peal inside on a working bell at North Aston, his first of triples and quarter peals on the tenor at Steeple Aston and Mollington. Jack also completed the Diocesan Young Ringers Award, winning a silver award.

We are the envy of many towers in the area having teenage ringers. Two other young people have started learning, Rebecca McLoone and Lewis Knowles.

Jon & Hannah were elected to the Diocesan Guild.

Mark Stay from North Aston has been ringing with us all year and is making good progress.

We hosted the Branch Striking Contest at which we won the call change section. We also hosted the Branch Carol Service. The ringer's team won the village quiz.

This year's tower outing was to Aston Rowant, Tetsworth, Shabbington and the mini ring at Leigh End Wheatley, followed by a meal.

We marked the centenary of the end of the First World War along with many other towers by ringing half muffled and open during the weekend of 10th and 11th November.

Other social event included a dinner at the Red Lion and a BBQ hosted by the McLoone family.

Visitors are always welcome to come along on Tuesday evenings and see what goes on and perhaps have a go.

Graham Clifton.

Tower Keeper report

I checked the bells over during year and no work was required. The tower still would benefit from a spring clean.

Graham Clifton.

Churchyard Report

Lawrence and Graham have kindly explained to me how they manage the Churchyard and promised continuing involvement in all that has to be done. I'm grateful for that and am happy to act in a supporting role and to report to the PCC. Before I became involved much work had taken place. This included weed killing on the paths, pruning the Bay trees, cutting the cemetery hedge, keeping ivy in check, tidying the cremated remains area and trimming tree branches when necessary. These are jobs which have to be done throughout the year: caring for the churchyard is a demanding job! Alongside all that there are other tasks which occur from time to time. For example the need to clear gutters and downpipes.

We agreed a clear-up churchyard working party for Saturday December 1st to put things in order for the winter. I'd phoned everyone on Lawrence's list receiving very positive responses BUT on December 1st it was just pouring with rain so there seemed little alternative but to cancel for that day and postpone until better weather. Even so a few hardy souls (some hadn't received the early morning cancellation phone message) appeared and some useful work was done in spite of the rain. This included Lawrence and Graham clambering up an immensely long ladder to fit new LED bulbs to some of the highest sockets in the church. Not strictly churchyard maintenance but I've realised that these two wonderful people do all sorts of important and vital tasks in a quiet and unheralded way! Some clearing was also achieved and the bonfire pile grew. Graham planted the new memorial tree and then he and Lawrence returned to clear the gutters and downpipes when the weather relented – on January 1st! What a way to begin the year. We should all be so grateful to them both and to the willing team who will come when called upon.

Since then there has been little activity for the working party but another session has been arranged for Saturday April 13th and I hope well publicised so we should have a good number of people to make sure that the churchyard is looking at its best as Spring moves towards Summer. Several people have already indicated their intention of coming. I hope the bonfire will be dry enough to burn and hope for only a gentle breeze!

At the date of writing (March 27th) Nigel Prickett has not yet made the first cut of the churchyard grass but he has assured me that within the next few days the grass will be mown. I understand he usually begins cutting at the beginning of April. In spite of the long grass both parts of the churchyard are looking quite good with lots of primroses following the snowdrops and bright Spring flowers on graves. It's a

pity that there are some rather less attractive artificial flowers although I understand why some people find them more convenient.

Remember all are welcome (with a rake and or secateurs if you have them) on April 13th. There will be refreshments for weary workers!

Eileen Baglin-Jones.

Church Flowers

Steeple Aston church endeavours to place fresh flower arrangements at the altar and in the memorial window for every Sunday throughout the year except during Advent and Lent. This is the custom in the C of E, although some churches no longer follow the tradition. Our team deserve a big thank you for observing the practise.

The PCC have decided to make a voluntary collection on one Sunday of each month to provide a 'Fund for Flowers'. This will be available to help defray the cost of florist flowers, gardens are not always a reliable source for cut flowers. We welcome your generosity.

The team are currently considering an invitation to take part in the Upper Heyford church flower festival which is happening over the first weekend in May. We are asked to provide Wedding and sometimes Funeral flowers in our own church which can be a challenge with a small team. Would you like to join us?

Edwina Kinch

Electoral Roll

Every 6 years the Church of England requires a revision of each church's electoral roll. This has been duly carried out and completed by the due date.

There are now 50 members on our new electoral roll.

Jeana Atkins

Children's Ministry

Over the past year we have continued to run Children's Church on the 4th Sunday of every month (usually a fortnight from the Family Service). We have continued to use the Samuel Radcliffe Building at Dr Radcliffe's school, which is a good space for activities, though requires a 5 minute walk each way. Attendance has been variable, with between 3 and 14 children coming along, aged 2-12 years old. Recently there have been more younger children attending regularly. We have had crafts, games and songs linked to readings mainly from the Gospels, or New Testament, often in line with the Lectionary reading for the week. These have included 'The first shall be last...', 'The armour of God' and Jesus calming the storm. Sadly the 'SundayMax' resource from the Diocese of Bath and Wells is no longer available, but I have

managed to find other materials from online sources, including the Messy Church website. Any suggestions or support in preparing activities for Children's church would always be welcome.

We had a children's church 'Crafts and carols celebration' in church after the Family service in December. In addition, our children's ministry team ran a two day Holiday club for local children in the Sport and Rec building last August, with help from many members of the church community. The theme was 'Space' and 'trust in God' and we had 25 children aged 4-12 on each day. They all thoroughly enjoyed it and we plan to run a similar club this Summer.

Safeguarding report

Safeguarding remains a priority for our church and it is the responsibility of all of us within the church family to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are safe and protected from harm within our church community.

The Diocese of Oxford has in the last year rolled out new training resources for the safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, for all involved in the church's ministry. All PCC members have undertaken the required basic training and other members of the ministry team are completing additional modules and training, as required.

Ted Atkins is standing down as the Parish Safeguarding Officer at this year's Annual Meeting, and we are seeking someone to take on this important role for our church. Please do let me know you are able to do this. In the meantime, I will remain the point of contact for any safeguarding matters or concerns.

We can report that in the past year no matters of concern were raised.

Rebecca Hoare

Sidespeople

14 sidespeople 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:- Chris Clarke, Diana Gardner, Roger Bradley, Michelle Bowden Mander, Jeana and Ted Atkins, Mary Rushworth, Caroline Compston, Ruth and Martin Dale, Katerina Vernicos, Angie Allan, Caroline Parsons, Gloria Elder and the Shayler family.

Many thanks to Roy and Edwina Kinch for many years service.

There is always room on the rota for more helpers, so please speak to Jeana (347237) 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

There are now two regular chalice bearers on the rota who are available to assist the Priest at Holy Communion - Royston Kinch has now "retired" after many years dutiful service.

There are three on a rota to prepare for services. Many thanks to everyone for their help.

Jeana Atkins

Readers and intercessors

We have a wonderful team of people who share in the reading in church and in leading in prayers of intercession. Thank you to everyone! This is a lovely way to be part of the worship in our church and is invaluable. Please do let me know if you would like to join this team, as either a reader or an intercessor, to lead us in prayer. Support and guidance is readily available!

Rebecca Hoare

Organ and Music Report

This year has been a good year for the organ. It has been used twice very successfully by a professional organist to accompany Steeple Aston Choral Society Concerts: Vivaldi; Mozart and Hummel. It remains a lovely small organ with good stops which, because of the organ's location. the congregation/audience never hear to full potential.

Again, it was used very successfully to accompany major services such as the Christmas Carol Service when Paul Herrington was our organist. This year's Carol Service was splendid and, by general agreement better than ever musically which was lovely. Amongst other things we sang a new work by Marcus Green and Rutter arrangement of "Silent Night" which was quite difficult to sing. I was very grateful to Nicholas Cleobury once more for his great help at the Christmas Services

There is still a cypher type leak on the Great 2' Stop which we can live with and which does not show itself unless the 2'stop is prominent. The tuner has said there is nothing that can currently be done about that.

There is still a damp patch on the ceiling which can only be seen when the front pipes are removed from the organ during the annual tuning. Since this year it was no different to last year and had not grown in size it is possibly safe to assume that it is no longer important.

Your local "pulsator organum" is looking forward very much to the return of Nicholas Cleobury in the summer when we hope that on various occasions we shall once more hear the organ being played properly!

Martin Dale

Report to the 2019 Church AGM from the PCC Deanery Synod Representatives

From Martin:

It was with great joy that I found that I was to be joined by Eileen as a Deanery Synod Representative from our PCC. Whilst, despite efforts finding out, we were not sent agendas or minutes for the first meeting since I had been given the dates and locations of the meetings for the year, we set off for the meeting at Combe Church with great expectations, this being the location I had been last sent. On arriving, Eileen boldly went where no man had before – viz right up the winding track to the church gate only for us to find that the gate and church were locked. She therefore had to reverse back down said track – no mean feat! Backtracking was indeed to be the essence of our evening from then on. A kindly local lady tried to find out for us what might be happening by phoning their rector who was out. However, she then sent us off in a different direction. Off we went, filled with faith and hope, Alas still no luck, so after searching for about an hour and a half and enjoying a thoroughly nice evening driving round the forested environs of West Oxfordshire we retraced our steps home and enjoyed a nice cup of tea.

All of the above serves to show that during a changeover of personnel in the Deanery Synod organisation things got rather out of hand to say the least and it took both Eileen and me quite a lot of research and questioning to get our own emails correctly on the list. I found that they had suddenly started using an old email address of mine which I haven't used since 2009 and no longer works and this after the secretary had been contacting me correctly for two years. There, as they say, you go. Things could only get better.

However, the first proper meeting that Eileen and I attended was a washout with no minutes or agenda and apologies from the poor clergyman who had been given the job of heading it up whilst we wait for a new incumbent at Woodstock who will eventually lead it.

In fairness to everyone, things have settled down and meetings are now both relevant and interesting again as can be seen in the rest of this report which is written by Eileen.

Martin Dale

From Eileen:

After coffee and a bit of chat each Synod meeting begins with prayers followed by a presentation. These seem to be ideas for churches to explore, challenges to action and offers of help from the Diocese to which we may respond. Perhaps we are not as active as we could be to do that?

At the meeting on November 14th we were introduced to 'Towards a Common Vision' by Rev Kevin Lovell, Vision Programme manager. It is an initiative of the Diocese with seven focus areas (led by seven working groups) each with a wide aim and purpose such as 'Make a Bigger Difference and Serve the Poor' or 'Share Our Faith and Grow the Local Church in Every Place'. There was nothing with which any of us would disagree but on the whole (and a bit surprised to be classified as 'untapped laity' - *(to say the least !(Martin))*) the fact that our Deanery is not apparently involved in any of the focus groups, we were we think receiving this presentation from the point of view of information rather than a strong call to involvement and action.

There was little business during the rest of the meeting except an item about the Parish Share. We pay ours in full, others it seems struggle to do so though a few pay more. From 2020 we learnt that there will be a new basis of allocation. No doubt we shall hear more about that from the Treasurer.

We have already reported to the PCC about the rather more stimulating meeting of the Synod on February 13th. Rev Charles Chadwick talked about the Diocese's Rural Strategy offering ideas and suggestions to enhance the place of the Rural Church in its community. If we ask for it he is available to help and support developments as we consider what impression and what messages people receive about our faith when they visit our church. Maybe this is something we need to think about seriously?

Again there was little else in the business meeting which seemed important to Steeple Aston although the news that we are due for a Diocesan Inspection in 2020 seems likely to be going to involve us in some important preparation before long. Any meeting can be inward looking or unsatisfactory if there is no clear need or will for participants to respond. So far (we acknowledge after very few meetings) the Deanery Synod does not seem to be a very lively gathering – but perhaps that's a challenge to us to do something about that? Even a deeper exchange of our particular concerns might be a start?

Eileen Baglin-Jones.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, held in church on 9 April 2018

The Rev. Marcus Green opened the meeting with prayers, a short address and the hymn *Jesus is Lord*

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

Election of Churchwardens

Two nominations had been received: Rebecca Hoare and Graham Clifton.

They were both unanimously re-elected with acclaim

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Present: Lawrence White, Jeana Atkins, Ted Atkins, Isabella Cleaver, Graham Clifton, Dorothy Clifton, Diana Gardner, David Stewart, Caroline Compston, Christopher Compston, Eileen Baglin-Jones, Shirley Palmer, May Woods, Gil Woods, Jeannette Cotterill, Martin Dale, Ruth Dale, Mary Williams and the Rev. Marcus Green.

Apologies for absence: Geoffrey Cotterill, Roy Kinch, Edwina Kinch, Val Bird, David Bird

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 3 April 2017

There were no matters arising.

The Minutes were approved unanimously and signed.

1. Annual Reports

a) **Rector's Report** was deferred to the end of the meeting (see below)

b) **PCC Secretary's Report** – MW has resigned as Secretary this year and thanked everyone for all their help and support over the last ten years. MG thanked MW for her 10 years as PCC Secretary and made a much appreciated presentation.

c) **Churchwardens' Report** – Rebecca Hoare particularly commented that 'SS Peter and Paul is very fortunate to have a large number of very willing people who give their time in numerous ways'. MG thanked both churchwardens Rebecca Hoare and Graham Clifton saying that much work is done behind the scenes. He mentioned particularly the sterling work in clearing the snow for services in such a hard winter.

d) **Treasurer's Report** – Graham Clifton made the following comments: there has been a 7.6% increase in our Parish Share this year (next year the increase will be 1%); for the first time he has included figures for the separate building fund project – this account has currently £10,000 left to spend; after a successful fete in 2017 we have a £1,500 surplus on the year (nothing has been spent on the church fabric this year); the fund for the Lent project spent £200 (from book sales) and currently the return is £1,852; there has been a good return on gift aid and he stressed that we should all continue to use the yellow envelopes.

Graham announced that this will be his last year as Treasurer. He thanked Gil Woods for examining the accounts. He also thanked Dorothy Clifton for all her work dealing with church funds.

Eileen Baglin-Jones asked how many people have signed up to parish giving scheme. GC said he had not heard from the Scheme yet. MG will chase this up.

MG thanked GC for all his work on church finances. He commented that although the Parish Share has increased by 30% our giving has also gone up. He thanked everyone for their generosity and asked the meeting to pray for the officers.

e) **Churchyard Report** – Lawrence White thanked everyone who comes along to the churchyard working parties. The North West gate is now working for the first time in many years. In the coming summer LW hopes that the working parties will start clearing some of the graves in part of the churchyard. LW then said that he would like to step down and for someone else to take over organising the working parties. MG thanked LW for his care of the churchyard.

Many visitors comment that our churchyard is very well tended.

f) **Church Flowers Report** – May Woods said that Edwina Kinch and her team do a wonderful job in decorating the church.

g) **Electoral Roll Report** – Jeana Atkins said that next year 2019 there will be a complete revision of the roll.

h) **Children's Ministry** – children's activities are ably led by Rachel Marsden and Rebecca Hoare. Jeanette Cotterill ran a successful holiday club which was attended by 21 children and she plans to run another one in August 2018.

i) **Sidespeople/chalice bearers/lesson readers/intercession leaders** – new people have joined the various teams during the year. If anyone else would like to join any of the teams please speak to Jeana Atkins or Rebecca Hoare.

j) **Deanery Synod Report** – Martin Dale added that meetings organised by the new Area Dean the Rev Adrian Daffern were now well run and interesting.

The Rev. Marcus Green then thanked everyone who contributed to the life of the church.

k) Rector's Report

MG started by handing out new prayer cards with Bishop Stevens 'contemplative, compassionate, courageous' prayer.

MG made particular mention of Malcolm Elder who had died during the past year. MG then summarised the various meetings that have been taking place on the building project. Revised plans will be submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Council (DAC) on 10 April 2018 and these will be considered at the DAC May meeting. He also read out a supportive letter recently received from the Church Buildings Council generally approving the scheme. There were revised plans and photos displayed at the meeting.

If the DAC approve the plans we will then apply for a Faculty. At this point notices will go up and anyone in the village can comment/write to approve or disapprove the scheme.

Diana Gardner asked about the cost of the scheme. MG said that although we have estimates we do not know the full cost until we put it out to tender. Throughout the process MG has had a funder in mind and this funder has indicated that they are still interested in funding the project.

David Stewart pointed out that the value we have had so far from our architect is excellent.

There was general approval of the meeting to take the project forward.

2. Election of three members of the Parochial Church Council

Lawrence White is standing down after many years service. The Rev Marcus Green thanked Lawrence for all his years of service as a PCC member, for the care he brings to PCC Meetings and for all his work in caring for the church

There were three nominations: Shirley Palmer and David Stewart are standing again. Jeanette Cotterill is nominated for the first time. All three were elected unanimously.

3. Nominations for Deanery Synod representatives

Eileen Baglin-Jones was nominated and elected unanimously.

Deanery Synod representatives will stand for election again in 2020.

4. Appointment of Sidespeople

Paul Beadman and Ian Jackson have stepped down. Dorothy Clifton, Christopher Compston and Caroline Compston will join the team.

The meeting agreed the election of the following sidespeople:

Mrs. Jeana Atkins	Mr. Ted Atkins
Mrs. Susi Barber	Mr. Roger Bradley
Mrs Dorothy Clifton	Mrs Caroline Compston
Mr Christopher Compston	Mrs Ruth Dale
Ms. Rebecca Hoare	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

Gil Woods is happy to be reappointed.

Proposer: Lawrence White Seconder: Shirley Palmer

All in favour

The meeting closed with prayers.

St Peter and St Paul, Steeple Aston

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

8 April 2019

Agenda for Meeting of Parishioners

Election of Churchwardens

Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Apologies for absence

Minutes of Annual Meeting held on 9 April 2018

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 2019-20: Thursday 20 June; Thursday 26 September; Thursday 14 November; Thursday 9 January 2020; Thursday 5 March 2020

Election of Officers at Annual Meeting

a note of explanation...

With an electoral roll of 50 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, Jeanna Atkins, Mary Williams and Caroline Compston. 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. Edwina Kinch is also considering stepping down early due to ill health - though at time of writing I am doing my best to persuade her to stay a little longer! If I fail, this is a good place to thank her for very, very many years of faithful, considered and wise service on PCC. Royston Kinch is also stepping down from his duties as chalice assistant at communion - having pioneered lay ministry in this area in our parish in Michael Hayter's day. We owe both of them a deep, deep debt of gratitude, and can only hope to emulate their kindness and faith.

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 and Eileen Baglin Jones occupy these positions at present.

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