

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Celebrating the Life of our Church

APCM 7.00pm, 17th May 2022

REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PCC

Background: The Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent or during a vacancy, with the church wardens, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish of Marston Moreteyne with Lidlington the whole Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It has responsibility for the parish church and churchyard in Marston and the graveyard in Lidlington.

Membership: The members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representatives rules or co-opted through the course of the year. There are also two members of the PCC who have been elected as representatives of the Deanery Synod.

All the members of the PCC should be DBS checked and complete an online Safeguarding training course.

During the period June 2021 to March 2022 the PCC has met 5 times and the Standing Committee 5 times

Churchwardens

Juliet Taylor and Stephen Murphy

Representatives of Deanery Synod

Indira Broschat and Mike Green

Elected Members

Treasurer

Scott Hill

Secretary

Pamela Turner

Safeguarding Officer

Rebecca Eames

Electoral Roll Officer

Stephen Murphy

Linda Guess

Nicola Drinkwater

Neil Faulkner [until November 2021]

Val Baldock

Angela Parris

Kim Stevenson

Co-opted members

Revd Gill Webb

Jackie Collins

Marti Mann

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

REPORTS TO THE 2022 APCM

Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral Roll has been renewed this year in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

- In May 2021 there were 77 persons on the electoral roll.
- There are 73 persons on the new Electoral Roll.

Of these, 4 live outside the parish.

Stephen Murphy, Electoral Roll Officer

Annual Report from Juliet Taylor – Vice Chair of the PCC

Since our last APCM St Mary's has continued to operate within the restrictions required by the government in relation to the pandemic. However once again, we have seen what a strong and kind church community we have. People have responded enormously generously in terms of their time and their money, and many have shown great dedication in terms of their commitment to St Mary's. Spud deserves particular recognition for the vast amount of work he has had to undertake, in particular in relation to the Fabric Committee and the care of both churchyards and to our clergy, especially Gill. Many thanks too, to Helen Gardner, Peter Littleford & Andrew Goodman who have taken services of Parish Eucharist for us and to Indira, who with Juliet, has led Sunday morning Prayer.

I would also like to thank Neil for all his years of work on the PCC and for St. Mary's and all members of the PCC for their hard work and commitment. People have expressed real appreciation for the dedication of PCC members to their cluster groups, and to those who have shopped for needy families for over two years now. We can feel proud of our efforts to be a true Christian presence, seeking to serve not only our own congregation but our whole community.

It has been wonderful to welcome people back into church over recent weeks, especially seeing our young families return and we hope that those who have not yet returned will feel able to do so soon. We have proved ourselves to be more flexible, adaptable and resilient than we would have dreamed possible. I would like to offer a personal, heartfelt thank you to the many people who have supported me in my role. Thanks to Gill, Pam, Spud, Mike, Pat, John, Marion, Celia, Linda, Michael, Angela and Judy. Without your help and support I could not possibly have managed to continue as church warden & vice chair.

Worship:

Our Church Zoom account has enabled us to provide access to church services whilst people are at home. Initially we "Zoomed" Parish Eucharist from church and have

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

continued to offer Tuesday Morning Prayer via Zoom, Especial thanks to John and Jackie for choosing and singing such beautiful hymns and to Pat for organising the rota of leaders, which have included Pat, Sally, John, Bridget and me. The possibility Zoom gave for social interaction continues to be popular with many and our Tuesday morning Services have remained on Zoom with a regular attendance of between 12 and 17.

We are so pleased that our Family Services have continued to be held weekly and I wish to thank the team who help organise and deliver these services, to include Peter, Becky, Nicola, James, Gill and Helen. We have been able to offer Family Service Eucharist monthly.

At Christmas we were delighted to be able to have midnight mass, which Gill led for us. On Christmas Day and Boxing Day we had Morning Prayer in church, led by Indira and Juliet. The travelling crib was able to go ahead, with especial thanks to Becky, Nicola and Anita.

Jenny and Russ have continued to provide beautiful floral displays to enhance our worship, particularly marking Remembrance Day service.

A particular "Thankyou" to Gill for leading a minimum of two parish Eucharist services a month, in addition to all the baptisms and funerals.

Discipleship:

Due to the combined impact of being in a vacancy and the Covid pandemic restrictions we have not been able to run either confirmation or Lent courses but hope to do so in the forthcoming year.

We are delighted that Indira has been accepted as an ordinand and is now studying & working to become a priest. In addition, congratulations are also due to Scott for successfully completing the Enablers course. We look forward to being able to restart our Home Group.

Pastoral Care:

The Cluster Groups have been the backbone of our care for our church family with people receiving regular phone contact for those not yet back in church and for those who have been isolating at home due to Covid.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Schools Work:

We have continued to respond to requests for help for needy families and wish to thank those volunteers who have continued shopping for so many months now. The congregation have been enormously generous in funding this work. We have also given every member, of the need families we support, a Christmas gift, thanks to the huge generosity of the congregation. Neil & Juliet have rung the Birthday Bells at the end of each month, a joyful sign of church and school collaboration. Gill, Becky and Mike continue to serve as School Governors.

Communication:

We have provided a newsletter by email or paper delivery, many thanks to Pam and Scott for working on this and Nicola continues to improve our on-line presence.

Juliet Taylor – Church Warden and Vice Chair of the PCC

Worship Committee Report

The Worship Committee has met monthly to plan music for services, both in person and on Zoom. This group collaboratively plans the music for forthcoming services and explores ways to enhance worship, navigating the ever-changing situation of the pandemic. Music has been provided on Zoom services, as well as back in church. The choir was able to begin meeting again in July 2021 with the Committee continuing to select appropriate hymns and other music.

In addition to planning and providing the music for services, John, Marion, Celia and Sue regularly play at Wednesday afternoon teas, their playing is really appreciated.

We are hugely grateful to Marion and Ally, Celia, John & Sue for having provided such varied, beautiful and prayerful music as we emerge from the restrictions needed for the pandemic.

Juliet Taylor – Church Warden & Vice Chair of the PCC

Risk Assessments Report

The risk level in the church remains low. Problems with the floor and the tower have been mitigated by the protection that has been put in place. These need regular visual inspection to ensure their integrity is maintained.

Further review and consolidation of the risk assessments will take place over the next year.

Many thanks to Anita Eames who has ensured that the contents of our First Aid Kit, located in the kitchen, are all within date.

Stephen Murphy - Church Warden

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Fabric Committee Report

Many complaints were received regarding the state of the churchyard at Lidlington, which had become overgrown after the contractor who cut the grass decided to retire. The appointment of a replacement contractor was delayed until funds were available. Much work has been done by the contractor and volunteers and the state of the churchyard is greatly improved. Much work remains to be done.

A safety survey of the trees in Lidlington churchyard was carried out. No major issues were found but some work needs to be done within the next 12 months.

Many work parties were held at Marston churchyard. Hedges have been cut and grass cut in the wildflower area. There was much flooding in the churchyard due to drains in the road overflowing. The water was pumped away and the issue of the faulty drains eventually resolved with the support of one of the Central Beds. Councillors.

Major issues were found with one of the windows on the tower. Quotes have been received for the work and attempts to raise the money for the repairs through grants are continuing.

Stephen Murphy – Church Warden

Wardens' Report

Since the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting [27th May 2021] PAT testing to include the inspection of the fire extinguishers and replacement of the fire extinguishers needing to be replaced took place on 1st November 21. More floodlights were fitted in church in December 2021 and power sockets and light fitted to the ground floor of the tower in May 2021.

ACE Alarms serviced the roof alarm on 23rd March 2021 and the siren box was replaced on the 29th March 2021.

Gordon Kinns has undertaken the annual inspection of the church roof, clearing of the guttering & drains during March 2021, next visit due in March 2022.

Our annual inspection of St. Mary's and the churchyards was undertaken by Area Dean Rev'd Dr. Sam Cappleman and Father Paul from Elstow.

The lease for the vicarage at Lidlington was renewed until December 2021. The vicarage is currently empty. I inspected the property with the tenants immediately prior to them returning their keys and the gas and electric meters were read and the readings submitted to the Diocese. I subsequently met with diocesan representatives at the vicarage and some remedial works were identified in relation to the safety rail at the top of the stairs, which is not high enough. I have recently contacted the Archdeacon, on behalf of St. Mary's, to ask about the possibility of the vicarage being used to house, possibly two, Ukrainian refugee families. This request is to be discussed at the diocesan property meeting.

Juliet Taylor – Church Warden

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Social Media Report

We have continued to develop the use of social media to advertise and communicate to our congregation and the local villages. The website is currently being refurbished to ensure it is accurate for the current services and activities provided within our church and community.

We have developed the use of Facebook and Instagram. Both sites have an ever-increasing audience. In the last year we have reached 47500 people through social media. We currently have over 500 people following the church through our Facebook and Instagram pages combined. Our posts continue to regularly reach 2000 people through the local village pages.

The engagement links from these posts averaged at 75 people engaging in the content in some way. We have posted prayers, events, service information and also shared important information from the Diocese of St Albans and the Church of England Facebook pages.

Our peak in interaction on social media was over the Christmas period. We have now begun to analyse the patterns within social media as to whether there are particular days and times that have a higher engagement.

Alongside our posts we have reached and communicated with a number of members within our community through comments and private messages. This has a higher number of messages in comparison to the communication email address.

There are still options to develop our social media use further and will continue to use it promote and advertise our church.

Nicola Drinkwater

Youth Group Report

The youth group made the decision to take a break while we are in a vacancy, with a view to reopen in the near future.

Indira Broschat.

Deanery Synod Report

Deanery Synods have taken place three times during 2021: 23rd March; 22nd June and 26th October. Due to ill health Mike Green was unable to attend the October meeting. All the meetings have been on Zoom. Were it not for Covid 19 the venues would have been at various churches within the Deanery. The synods are normally chaired by the Bedford Area Dean Rev'd Dr. Sam Cappleman.

The meetings are attended by elected Clergy and proposed laity. Each Synod is usually attended by about 12 members of the clergy and 31 laity members, e.g., elected churchwardens, PCC members, etc.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

In the past year the delegates from St. Mary's have been Mike Green, Indira Broschat and Rev'd Kate McFarlane, although Kate left us in the summer to take up a post in Wiltshire.

The first half of the meeting is usually a talk or presentation e.g.

Updates in safeguarding regulations

Bedford South Consultation update covers grouping of churches, within the deanery, to have ministerial representation: the process has now concluded.

Presentation of St. Paul's history, past, present and future.

Reaching Young People today.

The second part of the meeting covered typical following subjects:

General Synod Report

Diocesan Synod Report

Election to General Synod

Election Diocesan Synod

Bishop's Council

Deanery and Diocesan Board of Finance

Fair Trade

Pastoral reorganisation

Deanery website

Events within the Church

Deanery Mission Support Grants

Standing Committee membership

For simplicity, I have deliberately not included actual Financial Reports, Diocesan and General Synod Reports etc but these are available on request.

Mike Green – Deanery Synod Representative

Tots and Teas

Tots and Teas at St. Mary's are held twice a month on the second and fourth Friday morning and is very popular with mums and children. Attendees range from 16 up to 20 children, bringing mums together and the children learning about church. New friendships have been made by mums and children.

A varied selection of toys are available and a welcoming cuppa for the adults. During the play session the children also have a craft activity related to the season. Then there is snack time followed by music and songs led by Peter Gardner.

During the pandemic, we kept in touch with the children by delivering cards to them and a small present at Christmas. Also, some of the families from Tots are now receiving the Travelling Crib.

We are pleased to see our numbers slowly increasing.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Many thanks to Russ & Jenny for serving the refreshments, Peter for his music and songs and Becky & Nicola for their organisation.

Anita Eames

Social Committee:

The social committee started up again with me, Elaine Murphy, taking on the role of Chair. Our first meeting was held on 16th November 2021. We have seven members helping out and attending meetings that take place on the third Tuesday of each month.

Events have taken place and are planned for the future. Our first event was a Baked Potato Lunch on January 22nd, 2022. This was a great success and will be repeated later in the year. The next event, at the time of writing the report, is the Treasure Hunt. This is a walk around Marston with clues, starting and finishing at the church. Tea and cakes to be served on return. Prize for the winning team.

Over the coming months we have Rev'd Andrew Goodman's Licencing, a lunch, St. George's Day games, a family picnic and a celebration of the Queen's Jubilee planned. We have made contact with the school and will send items to advertise events through them and will look at ways of gaining raffle prizes etc., without always asking those who attend the events.

We are always open to suggestions and welcome new committee members. We hope to continue with a varied timetable to entertain and raise those all-important funds.

Thank you for all your support, God bless.

Elaine Murphy Chair of the Social Committee

Church Finances:

As of the end of 2021, St. Mary's has continued to maintain a good financial position. The general PCC fund closed the period at £19,690.23. This is £3349.38 down on the previous year. The expenditure over income can be attributed to a lower income due to pandemic restrictions. The Fabric Fund closed the year at £14,881.61. The Social Committee fund ended the period with £9191.60.

The Parish Giving Scheme for planned giving continues to be the foundation of our regular income. The planned giving revenue stream provides the church with a foundation from which it can plan for the upcoming year while ensuring it can maintain its expenditure commitments. As such, the PCC will continue to look at opportunities to further encourage this form of giving. We also hope to begin social events again which should help to increase income.

The year ahead poses financial challenges in the form of an increased Parish Share and the impact of rising costs such as energy costs. We also need to ensure work is

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

carried out on the church tower, utilising money in the Fabric Fund. For this, grants will also be explored.

All funds together, St. Mary's started the year with £48,338.24 and closed with £45,035.02 – a deficit of £3303.22.

For detailed information regarding St. Mary's 2021 accounts, please see the full accounts report.

Scott Hill – Treasurer St. Mary's Marston Moreteyne with Lidlington

N.B. The Financial Report and Auditor's Report can be found in the accompanying document.

They were approved by the PCC on 24th March and signed on their behalf by Juliet Taylor, Vice Chair. A signed copy is displayed in the Church porch.

Safeguarding Report

The PCC, to the best of its knowledge, has taken all reasonable steps to comply with their duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults), and to comply with all relevant updates.

The Incumbent and PCC have a duty of care to ensure the well-being of the vulnerable in the church community. St. Mary's PCC have:

- Adopted and implemented the House of Bishops' Policies on safeguarding children and adults who may be vulnerable.
- Adopted a Parish Safeguarding Officer(s) (the 'Designated Person' with special responsibility for safeguarding children and adults), to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Ensured that the Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) and anyone having regular contact with children and vulnerable adults is appointed according to Diocesan Safer Recruitment Guidelines, is trained and supported, provided with (alongside the PCC) a copy of the parish safeguarding policy.
- Dealt promptly with allegations or suspicions of abuse in accordance with the Disclosures and Allegations policy in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
- Displayed the Diocesan and Parish Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, the contact details of the PSOs named person on church premises and wherever possible on the church website.
- Ensured that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children undertaken in the name of the parish.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

- Reviewed the implementation of safeguarding children and adults' policy, procedures and good practice, at least annually.

Parish Safeguarding Report

At St Mary's we recognise that the few who are determined to harm children or adults, deliberately seek out groups or organisations where they can meet children or other vulnerable people. The Church is particularly vulnerable to these people. Creating and maintaining a safeguarding culture will discourage them from becoming involved for the wrong reasons and make it difficult for them to harm or abuse children or adults if they do. In order to assist with the creation of a safeguarding culture we have as a PCC:

Appointed:

- At least two appropriately experienced designated Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO) to work with the incumbent and PCC. Both are lay persons and are also DBS administrators for church officers who work with children or vulnerable adults.
- The PSOs are supported, trained and given a copy of the parish safeguarding policy and procedures.

Safer Recruitment practice by:

- Appointing all church officers who work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are recruited in line with the principles outlined in House of Bishops' Safer Recruitment practice guidance including regular DBS applications.
- Offering individuals access to safeguarding training and support (in person and on-line)
- Providing appropriate insurance to cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the PCC which involve children and vulnerable adults.

Displayed:

- A formal statement of adoption of the House of Bishops 'Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy statement' is signed on behalf of the PCC and is displayed in church on the safeguarding board.
- Contact details of the Churchwarden and any other local leaders.
- Contact details of the PSOs the Diocesan Safeguarding Team – including phone, email and website details and Information about where to get help with child and adult safeguarding issues, domestic abuse and key helplines e.g. Child Line
- A hard copy of the Diocese Safeguarding Manual 'A Safer Church' which acts as our Parish Safeguarding Handbook.
- Copies of our Safeguarding policies for children, vulnerable adults and domestic violence

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Responded by:

- Promoting an environment, which is welcoming and respectful and enables safeguarding concerns to be raised and responded to openly, promptly and consistently.
- Agreeing policies and procedures to:
 - Deal promptly with safeguarding allegations or suspicions of abuse in accordance with the relevant policy and practice guidance and in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
 - Report all safeguarding concerns or allegations against church officers to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
 - Ensure that known offenders or others who may pose a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are effectively managed and monitored in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.
- Complying with all data protection legislation especially in regard to storing information about the 'church workforce'. Including volunteers and any safeguarding records.
- Providing an "activity risk assessment" tool for each those involved in activities associated with either children or vulnerable adults and run in the name of the Church.

Review and Report Progress by:

- Inviting the PSO to regularly report on safeguarding in the parish. Safeguarding has been added as a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting.
- Reporting to the APCM in an annual report in relation to safeguarding. In the PCC's annual report will be a statement which reports on progress and a statement as to whether or not the PCC has complied with the duty to have "due regard" to the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to safeguarding.
- Using the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard to identify next steps for the action plan.

Supported the Hiring of Church Premises by: (If this was to occur, it has not in this period)

- Developing and updating its agreement with any person/body wishing to hire church premises stating whereby the person/body hiring the premises agrees:
 - to comply with the relevant safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops and the diocese.
 - to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, relevant staff have had appropriate DBS checks and that all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.
- Ensuring that all those hiring church premises carry full public liability insurance for this or are covered through the church insurance (for example hire for a children's party).

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Support & Compliance:

The measures identified in the list above are checked during parish visitations and as to date no actions are outstanding.

Extra Safeguarding Measures during Covid-19

Poverty: Our Church has continued to support children and families identified through the community with food supplies at this time. All guidance and policies have been followed in order to do this.

Support Networks: The PPC has regularly contacted our church family to ensure they are well and if they are in need of any additional support. This has then been fed back to relevant persons and responded to appropriately.

Abuse and Harm: Any risks identified have been shared and followed up.

Children/adults with additional needs: Where this has been identified, all safeguarding procedures have been followed and social services, the police and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor have been involved with timely responses to safeguard an individual.

Additional risk assessments have been carried out for Coronavirus following clear guidance from the Government and Diocese.

Rebecca Eames, Parish Safeguarding Officer