

St Matthew's Church Harwell Annual Report 2002-03

1 Background

St Matthew's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector in promoting the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The council works together with the clergy and the Churchwardens to ensure continuity of ministry for regular services, to ensure that Sunday Schools are run and properly staffed, to organise home groups, social events, lay training courses, etc. It has responsibility to manage the finances of the church, and to care for the church building and for St Matthew's Church Hall, which it wholly owns. The PCC liases with the higher councils of the Church of England through its representation on the Deanery Synod, and participates in diocesan funding through the Parish Share.

In order to provide a framework for this work, the PCC has adopted a vision statement, and based its strategy for fulfilling the vision around a number of key areas, for each of which a co-ordinator has been appointed. Continual review of these areas provides a way to evaluate the extent to which our vision is being carried forward.

St Matthew's Church Harwell and All Saints' Church Chilton form a Joint Benefice. As part of this arrangement, there is provision for a Joint PCC, separate from the PCCs of the two churches. The two separate PCCs can agree to place in the hands of the Joint PCC any matters involving both parishes.

2 PCC Membership

The membership of the PCC includes the clergy, the churchwardens, representatives on Deanery Synod (all of these *ex officio*), plus members elected for one year at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. From April 2002 to March 2003, the membership of Harwell PCC has been:

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|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Clergy | Rev. Christopher Stott | chairman |
| | Rev. Jean Barton NSM | |
| Churchwardens | Allan Macarthur | vice-chairman |
| | Ruth Slatter | |
| Deanery Synod reps. | Clive Silver | |
| | Steve Tunstall | |
| | Jean Twigger | |
| Elected members | Elizabeth Gill | treasurer |
| | Clive House | |
| | Tony Hughes | |
| | Nancy Preston | |
| | Tim Roberts | |
| | Jim Sinclair | secretary |
| | Wendy Sinclair | |
| | Martin Speed | |
| | Frances Taylor | |
| | Marilyn Thomas | |
| | Tony Ullmer | |
| Coopted | Rob Thomas | |

The majority of PCC members are elected by Church members, and seek to serve the interests of the Church members in their common life in Christ. All PCC members therefore very much welcome hearing from Church members their views on matters that the council are considering, or suggestions for topics of discussion.

The minutes of PCC meetings, once approved, are published on the notice board in the porch at the main entrance to the church.

3 Committees and Representatives

The PCC has formed sub-committees for the following purposes:

Standing Committee required by law. Has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings if necessary. Consists of the Rector, the Churchwardens, the Treasurer and the PCC Secretary.

Finance and Budget Convenor Clive House.

Missions Gives special attention to encouraging interest in overseas mission work, and recommends allocation of funds to overseas and home missions. Convenor Tony Ullmer.

Buildings Convenor Tony Hughes.

Social Convenor Wendy Sinclair.

Joint PCC reps the Churchwardens, the Treasurer, Rob Thomas, Clive Silver.

The PCC has also given special duties to the following, not all of whom are PCC members:

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|---|-------------------------|
| Covenant Secretary | Geoff Jenkinson |
| Stewardship Secretary | Norman Ponting |
| Church Hall caretakers | Betty and Peter McNiven |
| Christian Aid representative | Chris Stott |
| Village Hall committee representative | Liz Roberts |
| Winterbrook Youth Club representative | Tony Hughes |
| Churches Together in Didcot representative | Joan Impey |

4 Church Membership and Attendance

Attendance at church services is measured on the Sundays in October throughout the Church of England. The average figures (per Sunday) for 2002 were: ____ adults + ____ children.

The Electoral Roll is maintained by Wendy Sinclair. After the most recent revision, the number on the roll stood at 162.

5 Review of the Year

The PCC met 6 times during the year. The joint PCC did not meet.

Changing forms of ministry

This was the first full year following the loss of our stipendiary assistant minister's position. During the year we also said farewell to Joy Hance, who had been a trainee non-stipendiary minister (NSM) and left to take up her first post, and welcomed Jean Barton, appointed to assist here following her ordination as a NSM. Joy had also been acting as the Rector's secretary. We were delighted when Naomi Gibson agreed to take on this post. Since all these changes had the potential to greatly increase the load on the Rector, steps were taken to spread responsibility by appointing people to take a lead in each of the Key Areas defined in the Vision presented by the Rector at last year's APCM. The PCC also discussed and approved Chris' plans to take sabbatical leave in 2004.

The Key Areas for implementation of the Vision are –

- Worship Framework
- Active Prayer Life
- Outreach
- Children and Youth
- Finance
- Management

To keep the Vision central, the co-ordinators for these areas meet between PCC meetings, and each PCC meeting hears a report from the co-ordinators about current initiatives.

The church buildings and equipment

Money has been given for two new frontals for the communion table. The PCC approved the design, obtained a faculty for the work, and commissioned their making (in progress). A new photocopier was bought for the church office. Working days were organised for maintenance work in the church and the hall.

A major concern was adaptation of the seating in the church, with the aim of making it more suitable for people of all needs. Congregational opinion was surveyed, alternative plans considered, and a faculty sought and obtained for replacement of two rows of pews on each side to be replaced by chairs. A small number of chairs with arms were purchased.

Improvements in the layout and appearance of the West End of the church were made (especially to the furniture for storing and giving out books for services, and storage in the Vestry). Further improvements have been considered, and a plan for carrying these out formulated.

Community involvement

The church organised a Songs of Praise for the Golden Jubilee celebration, and a small group made special banners for this event, and for use in church. The PCC discussed the needs of the Village Hall, and organised a special retiring collection to provide some financial support.

Outreach and development

A key part of our outreach activities has been the holding of Alpha Courses, which have been well attended, and had good results in terms of people becoming active in Christian belief, worship and service. The PCC encouraged people to attend the Diocesan Convention, and some attended a Church Planting conference. Training was held for those who lead intercessions and read the lesson in church. A 'Network' course, aimed at helping people identify their gifts for service, has recently been held.

An important means for development of church members' faith is provided by the groups that meet in homes or elsewhere during the week. The PCC has kept these groups under review. Joint meetings were organised, helping to provide cohesion. Special extra groups were formed for Lent 2003.

The PCC reviews the special services and activities associated with festivals (Christmas, Easter), paying particular attention to how they are received by regular and less frequent attenders alike.

The work of the children's and youth groups is kept under constant review. Maintaining suitable leaders, and giving them a chance to balance this work with their desire to join fully in church worship, is a constant challenge. Government legislation in the area of child protection is also providing new requirements for vetting youth workers, and controlling the numbers of leaders working with any group.

The Visiting Team continued its much-valued work. This year saw the beginning of a new venture: a group regularly visits The Crown nursing home.

6 Financial Position

This year the books just about balanced. The grand total in our bank account was £400 greater than last year. Income from regular giving was much the same as last year, but there were several generous larger donations. Money put aside last year for the photocopier and other items (and the winding-up of the Heating and Lighting fund) also appears as income, since it was transferred to the general fund before being spent. In preparation for work on the ground floor extension to provide a Disabled Toilet and refurbish the kitchen, a designated fund has been primed with £5000; design work and building will doubtless spread over several years. £1000 has been put into a fund for the West End refurbishment, which is expected also to attract donations for particular items, and to take place gradually over the next year or so. The ailing Sound System has £2000 assigned to it, to join funds already in place. In effect we now have the same amount of money designated to certain purposes as we did last year, but the purposes are all different.

For next year our budget foresees a deficit of nearly £9,000 – income is assumed to consist only of regular giving, so unless either this increases or more donations come our way, we shall start eating into capital which is held for major repairs. Many of our regular givers increase their payments year on year, and we are very grateful to them, but many, alas, have not done so for a considerable time – even £1.02 instead of £1.00 would help. The cashiers are happy to accept small change!

C J Stott, Chairman, Harwell PCC