

St Matthew's Church Harwell Annual Report 2005-06

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 liaises 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 "Sharing life at the heart of the community making followers of Jesus" and based its strategy for fulfilling the vision around a number of key areas. 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. 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 2005 to March 2006, the membership of Harwell PCC has been:

Clergy

Rev. Christopher Stott chairman
Rev. Jean Barton NSM

Churchwardens

Tim Roberts vice-chairman
Ruth Slatter

Deanery Synod reps.

Clive Silver
Steve Tunstall
Georgina Greer

Elected members

Cath Convery
Kate Evans
Sid Gale
Georgina Greer
Madeleine Gibson
Clive House treasurer
Wendy Sinclair
Martin Speed secretary
Frances Taylor
Marilyn Thomas
Tony Ulmer

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 are published at the draft stage (immediately after the meetings) on the notice board in the porch at the main entrance to the church (and are available by e-mail if requested from the secretary).

3 Committees and Representatives

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

Standing Committee	required by law. Has power to transact the business of the PCC between 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	Clive Silver, Kate Evans, and the 'standing members' (the rector, the Churchwardens, the secretary and the treasurer).

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

Bookkeeper	Elizabeth Gill
Treasurer	Clive House
Stewardship Secretary	Norman Ponting
Christian Aid representative	The Wednesday Morning group
Village Hall committee representative	Liz Roberts
Winterbrook Youth Club representative	Tony Hughes
Churches Together in Didcot representative	Cath Convery

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 2005 were 128 adults and 33 children.

The Electoral Roll is maintained by Wendy Sinclair. The number on the roll in April 2005 stood at 168.

5 Review of the Year

The PCC has met six times since the last annual report. The joint PCC did not meet.

The following summarises some of the main areas of PCC business during the year.

Worship

A review of services identified the time taken to administer communion as an issue especially at 'special' services, such as Easter day, when the congregations were larger. Suggestions for arrangements with separate 'stations' were considered and will be trialled in the future, but no specific decisions were taken.

The PCC considered the issue of how requests for baptism of people outside the parish should be viewed, and decided that all requests should be considered sympathetically, as any opportunity to 'light a flame' should be welcomed.

The project initiated in the previous year to replace hymn books with a song sheet was progressed with the purchase of a folding machine to enable the secretary to produce folded sheets.

The PCC recorded favourable responses to the special services and those which involved the village school: the harvest celebration, the toy service, and Education Sunday.

A new lectionary was agreed for the 8:00am services, supported by a donation towards the cost of the books required.

Outreach

The PCC supported the successful Soul in Didcot (SID) project in the summer, contributing financially and with publicity. An evening alpha course was run by Nancy Preston and Steve Ward in the autumn with six participants.

The Visiting team continues to make a very valuable contribution to both the church and the wider community, but often this work is done out of sight of most people. Two people visit the Crown Nursing Home on a weekly basis. The care of older people is important and during the year a wheelchair ramp has been kindly donated anonymously which actually benefits both older people and younger families with pushchairs or prams making access to the church easier.

Children's and Youth work

The PCC received generally positive reports on the regular Sunday groups for young people. The Youth Fellowship was particularly encouraging with as many as 25 young people attending each session

A number of successful events were run over the course of the year. A sleepover was held in the Church on the 18th June for the 11 to 15 age group. A holiday scheme took place in the school during August. It ran for six days, taking place after the summer playscheme, and based on the Scripture Union 'Landlubbers' materials. This attracted 30 children, many of whom were not normally involved with the Church. This was followed up by another 'Landlubbers' activity morning in the winter term. There were also a Christmas Craft event and a summer activity morning based at Chilton and making use of the recreation ground.

Other topics

Among the other topics considered were the co-ordination of Church Cleaning (and the PCC expressed particular thanks to Debbie Davis for continuing in this role) and the enthusiastic endorsement of applications for authorisation to preach by Marilyn Thomas and Kate Evans. The PCC also welcomed the Interactive Christian Extension Studies Course that was run in the autumn, and the creation of a new Missions display board for which particular thanks are due to Alan Macarthur.

The PCC sanctioned the disposal of the piano and other items in the Annex, and monitored progress towards the disposal of the pews that were taken out of the Church (and which are threatening to incur considerable storage charges.) It endorsed the appeal for funding for an E-mail link for the Sharlands and received enthusiastic feedback from those who attended the Willow Creek conference.

6 Buildings

The Buildings Committee has continued to oversee the general maintenance of the Church and the Church Hall, and to undertake improvements to the fabric of both buildings. During 2005/2006 the main items of activity have been:

- ❑ General repairs/renovation to the fabric of the church, the church hall and their surrounds as and when necessary;
- ❑ Implementing the provision of a disabled toilet and improved kitchen area in the church extension;
- ❑ Organising the working days on 3rd and 4th June 2005, to which many people contributed;
- ❑ Completing actions from the 2000 Quinquennial Inspection;
- ❑ Progressing actions from the Safety Audit, including the re-organization of storage space;
- ❑ Re-decorating the committee room in the extension.

The 2005 Quinquennial Inspection took place in July and the report from Philip Waddy of West Waddy ADP (the Church Architects) was received in the autumn. The report concludes that the church is well cared for by its PCC and congregation. The recommendations for remedial work will be addressed over the coming years.

Specific work planned for 2006 includes attending to missing and broken tiles on various sections of the church roof, making a start on redecorating the interior of the church, repainting the exterior

woodwork of the church hall, and replacing the screens in the church hall. We have some concerns over the cost of replacing failing light bulbs in the church and the church hall, since some of them are expensive types and inaccessible. An extra item has therefore been included in the maintenance budget for 2006.

7 Financial Position

Thanks to a great effort made by many of the congregation, our Planned Giving was 15% up on last year to £41,000. Donations were also up by £4,500, but loose alms down by £1,100.

The Parish Share rose by £3,600 to £37,988, but other expenditure was held down so that the total only rose by £700 compared to 2004.

Despite all these efforts, we still had a deficit for the second year in a row of over £2,500.

The Kitchen and Disabled Toilet project was substantially completed this year, with a total of £12,500 donated by the congregation and £3,500 in grants. The fund is still in deficit by £2,800, but £1,940 is expected to be reclaimed in Gift Aid next April.

The bank reserves fell by £8,500 to £31,000; this is less than half of our yearly turnover and is below the sum recommended for charitable organisations. An appeal has been started to increase the regular income to match our expenditure.

Next year the Parish Share is only to be increased by 1 ³/₄%, but there are maintenance and repair projects for both Church and Church Hall to be funded, which may drain the resources still further.

C J Stott, Chairman, Harwell PCC