

St Matthew's Church Harwell Annual Report 2003-04

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, 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 2003 to March 2004, the membership of Harwell PCC has been:

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 (until November)
	Georgina Greer	
	Clive House	treasurer (from November)
	Tony Hughes	
	Nancy Preston	
	Tim Roberts	
	Jim Sinclair	secretary
	Wendy Sinclair	
	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 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 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:

Bookkeeper	Elizabeth Gill
Covenant Secretary	Geoff Jenkinson
Stewardship Secretary	Norman Ponting
Church Hall caretakers	Betty and Peter McNiven
Christian Aid representative	The Wednesday Morning group
Village Hall committee representative	Liz Roberts
Winterbrook Youth Club representative	Tony Hughes
Churches Together in Didcot representatives	Joan Impey, Allan Macarthur

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 2003 were: 128 adults + 41 children.

The Electoral Roll is maintained by Wendy Sinclair. After the most recent revision, the number on the roll stood at 163.

5 Review of the Year

The PCC met 6 times during the year. The joint PCC did not meet. The following summarises some of the main areas of PCC business during the year.

Every meeting includes a review of the key areas identified for fulfilling the vision statement referred to in Section 1 above – Worship, Prayer, Outreach, Children's and Youth work, Finance, and Management. This review is assisted by reports from the 'Vision Group', which meets separately to formulate and progress strategies in these areas.

This year we have renewed the service sheets for Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer. We also discussed each special service, such as those at Easter and Christmas, assessing any trends in attendance and evaluating the effectiveness of particular presentations, or special contributions such as young children showing what they have done in their groups.

Prayer has been encouraged through regular prayer meetings, telephone and email prayer-need alerts, specially marked items in the Sunday service sheets, and Home Group topics of study.

We have heard frequent reports of the flourishing Home Groups, and approved varying subjects for focus and special patterns of meeting, such as those in Lent, some of which are designed to attract those who do not regularly attend a group.

We have had reports from conferences attended by members. In particular, Chris reported on his attendance at a conference at Willow Creek in Chicago about their ideas for ministry and outreach,

and we discussed the report from those who had attended the NEAC Conference and found it very encouraging.

Alpha Courses have again been held, and we continually review their success, and the extent to which attendees are encouraged into greater active involvement in church life.

The much-valued work of the Visiting Team was discussed, and a small budget was approved for covering expenses entailed in this work.

Youth & children's work received special attention this year. We considered on more than one occasion the high pressure on volunteer leaders, and debated the merits of employing a youth worker. We decided to take specialist advice, and invited a consultant from CPAS. This resulted in a very useful review of Youth and Children's work, but did not lead to our pursuing the idea of an employed worker at this time.

We discussed the Harwell Parish Plan, noting the high value placed on the church in a questionnaire conducted to develop the Plan. We considered how we could contribute to the Action Plan.

The church buildings and equipment are, of course, a frequent topic of discussion, helped by the detailed work done by the Buildings Committee. This year, carpet was laid under the area where chairs have replaced pews at the rear of the Nave; a cleaning week was organised in June; a new display case for the bookstall was gratefully received from a donor; some of the electrical heaters developed a fault, and their replacement was organised. The Disability Audit conducted in previous years was reviewed, and we discussed providing a wheelchair for occasional use, and whether kneelers should be removed in some pews to assist those for whom these are an obstacle. We gave further attention to renewing the Sound System in church, and continued planning work on a project to improve the kitchen/toilets area in the downstairs Extension. This has now reached the approvals stage.

6 Financial Position

The General Fund had a deficit of £1,800 this year. Income from regular giving was slightly up on last year, and there were several generous larger donations. However, the sum we had to contribute to the wider work of the Church of England through the Parish Share increased by £3,000, which more than counteracted the increased income.

We also operate a number of designated and restricted funds. As suggested, monies paid into and out of these funds are for specific projects or purposes. For example, £1,263 was paid from the Kitchen/Toilet Refurbishment Fund for architect and planning fees. Another example is the Altar Frontal Fund: £1,200 donated two years ago have now been paid out for the new Frontals, which were completed and installed in the summer.

Next year we expect more work on the Kitchen/Disabled Toilet project, and a sum of £2,000 has been set aside to help with Chris' sabbatical leave. The Parish Share will rise by £1,500. We forecast a deficit in 2004 of over £9,000. This is based on reasonable assumptions about regular giving. Generous special donations and legacies could (as they did in 2003) considerably improve the position, but the budget cannot assume that this will happen. We are very grateful for the many people who increase their regular giving year by year.



C J Stott, Chairman, Harwell PCC