

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 goal of St Matthew's adopted 6 years ago is: "A church filled with people, longing to know more of God's love, reaching out with that love" In addition to the Church building, the PCC also has responsibility for the St Matthew's Church Hall, which it wholly owns.

2. Membership

PCC Members are either ex-officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Beginning April 2000, the following served as members of the PCC:

Rector: Rev Chris Stott(Chair) *Asst Minister:* Rev Mary Carney *Wardens:* Wendy Sinclair, Allan McArthur *Deanery Synod Reps:* Clive Silver, Norman Ponting, *Elected Members:* Ruth Gilson, Jean Twigger, Marilyn Thomas, Frances Taylor, Rob Thomas, Tony Ullmer, Allan Walker, Tony Hughes, Jim Sinclair (Vice-Chair), Ruth Slatter, Clive House, Elisabeth Gill

3. Committees

The PCC operates through a number of sub-committees. There is also a *Joint PCC* with Chilton: the members have been the Churchwardens, the Treasurer, Ruth Gilson and Rob Thomas.

Standing Committee – consists of Rector, Churchwardens, the Treasurer and the PCC Secretary

Finance and Budget – Chair: Clive House

Missions – Chair: Tony Ullmer

Social – Chair: Wendy Sinclair(combined with Chilton)

Buildings – Chair: Tony Hughes

4. Other Representatives – appointed by PCC

Covenant Secretary – Geoff Jenkinson

Christian Aid – Chris Stott

Village Hall Management Committee – Liz Roberts

Winterbrook Youth Club – Tony Hughes

Churches Together in Didcot – Vacant

5. Church Attendance

There are 177 parishioners on the Electoral Roll, of whom 35 are not resident in Harwell/Rowstock. The Broadsheet is mailed to non-resident members and other interested people.

6. Review of the Year

The PCC met 6 times during the year. Here in brief is a summary of items discussed:

Millennium: The PCC encouraged the Church to be involved in the Village celebrations. Since the last AGM a Songs of Praise was held in a marquee on the Recreation Ground with the Church Orchestra, the Harwell School Choir, and the Harwell Young Singers and was well received as was also the Flower Festival to which leaders of the community were invited to a reception. Church members took a full and active part in the Harwell Feast, the parade of floats, and the Street Party. The flood-lighting of the Church tower at Christmas was again well-received, and paid for by a private concert. A trip to Lambeth Palace and the Millennium wheel was well organised, well supported, and enjoyed.

Common Worship: The introduction of the new **Common Worship** services was discussed and various options were decided upon., as was the timing of the introduction of the new services and the format in which they would be produced locally. It was agreed that they would be first produced in paper form, and then it was hoped at a later stage to reproduce them on better quality card.

Quinquennial Survey: During the year a quinquennial survey was conducted by our architect, Philip Waddy. No major structural problems were unearthed, although it was noted that the Chancel roof may well need significant attention in the next few years. The possibility of woodworm infestation in some of the roof timbers was identified. Subsequently death watch beetle and woodworm were discovered in the vestry area and the tower - this has since been treated.

Disability Audit: We discussed at some length the Disability Audit report produced by a small working party, and the issues raised are gradually being addressed. More recently, our architect has been helping us to look at possibilities in relation to a disabled toilet, and the tidying up the West End of the church.

Child protection: The PCC has agreed a Child Protection policy and has appointed Marilyn Thomas as Church Co-ordinator for Child Protection

Youth: The PCC were very happy to agree to welcome Alice Carey, a Girls Brigade placement on a Time-Out Scheme. In addition to spending one day a week at Harwell School, Alice has been helping with the GB company, Pathfinders and the Youth Fellowship. This has been much appreciated. The PCC also discussed the Soundnation Youth Initiative in Didcot and District, and agreed to support this.

Combined PCC: The PCC met on twice jointly with the Chilton PCC to discuss two important Issues:

- *The Wallingford Deanery Pastoral Plan:* It became apparent during the year that the Deanery was being asked to cut three stipendiary clergy posts out of the present 11, and that the Deanery Standing Committee was proposing that one of these would be our own Assistant Curate's post. The Combined PCC discussed what our response to this should be and a small working group was appointed to make appropriate representation. Subsequently, the Archdeacon was invited to address the Combined PCC at a special meeting in November. He put the Deanery cuts in the wider context of the situation on the Church of England as a whole and the predicted shortage of stipendiary clergy in the next few years. Later in November the Deanery Synod approved the original Pastoral Plan, despite representations made to both the Deanery Standing committee and to the Archdeacon.
- *Strategy for Evangelization 2001- 2010.* The Diocesan initiative was discussed at a Combined PCC meeting in August. Six priorities were agreed upon: Prayer, Worship, Training, Church Website and Communications, Pastoral Care, Community Links. Six working groups, with membership including others not on the PCCs, have been set up to address these priorities and to think about the way forward in these areas. Rob Thomas was appointed as the Co-ordinator and monitor of these initiatives. The rather cumbersome title has been renamed by the Diocese as **Sharing Life**.

7. Financial Highlights

This year there were no major calls on the PCC funds; the final 2.5% retainer was paid on the Heating and Lighting project but otherwise there were only normal day-to-day expenses. However, while our income was similar to 1999 (not counting the large donation that year), our expenditure rose more, and as a result we had a deficit of just over £5,000. This has been met from reserves, but our budget for this year foresees an overspend of twice that amount.

Over the past 20 years the PCC annual accounts have alternated between surplus and deficit; in the good years there have been substantial donations or legacies which have both helped with major projects and built up reserves to see us through the lean years. Since 1980, our regular income has increased 3 1/2 fold, from about £15,000 to £54,000. Ministerial expenses have doubled from about £2,500 to £5,000; Church and Parish costs have risen from about £5,000 to about £20,000. The big change is in our Parish Share, which is 1980 was about £2,300, and in 2000 was over £22,000. This money is pooled within the Diocese to help fund all its ministers' salaries, pensions and training. In 1980 a good proportion of this money came from the Church Commissioners; in 2003 the Diocese has to balance its books without these contributions and the Parish Shares will continue to increase (by about 8% p.a.) to reflect this.

For next year we will probably have to use some more of our reserves to fill the gap, but this cannot be a long-term strategy. Our reserves are at present £45,000; these would run out within four years at the present rate. We need to keep sufficient money to meet large demands, such as the possible imposition of VAT on the Heating and Lighting project, major church fabric repairs (which has been equivalent to about £10,000 to £12,000 at to-day's prices, every 10 years or so) and the probable retiling of the chancel roof in the not-too-distant future. The interest on the reserves themselves contributes to our income. It is vital therefore that we get the finances back into balance in the next years or two. The new GiftAid rules will help to make the most of our income, but even there we haven't yet had the full takeup of this by eligible donors. A letter summarising all the above has been sent to members of the Electoral Roll, and we hope and pray that the resources will be found.

On behalf of the Harwell PCC

Rev Chris Stott(Chairman) March2001