

St Matthew's Church Harwell - Annual Report 2001 - 2002

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 7 years ago is "*A church filled with people, longing to know more of God's love, reaching out with the 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 2001, the following served as members of the PCC. Rector: Rev Chris Stott, (Chair) Ass Minister: Rev Mary Carney (until July). *Wardens*: Wendy Sinclair, Allan Macarthur. *Deanery Synod Reps*: Clive Silver, Norman Ponting and Jean Twigger. *Elected Members*: Elizabeth Gill, Clive House, Tony Hughes, Jim Sinclair (vice chair), Ruth Slatter, Frances Taylor, Marilyn Thomas, Rob Thomas, Steve Tunstall, Tony Ullmer and Alan Walker. Tracey Linnard was co-opted onto PCC later in the year to represent the young people in the parish.

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 (Elizabeth Gill), Rob Thomas and Clive Silver, *Standing Committee* - The Rector, Churchwardens, the Treasurer and the PCC Secretary. *Finance and Budget* - Chair: Clive House *Missions* - Chair: Tony Ullmer *Social* - Chair: Wendy Sinclair *Buildings* - Chair: Tony Hughes

4. Other Representatives

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

The average attendance at services during 2001 was 102 adults and 43 children. (100 adults and 25 children in 2000).

There are 181 parishioners on the Electoral Roll. 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 is a brief summary of items discussed.

Rev Mary Carney - last July saw the departure of Mary Carney to her new benefice at Ray Valley in Oxford, where she was instituted on September 13th. We record with great gratitude the contribution that Mary Carney has made to the life and work of our two churches and communities over the past 8 years. In view of this the Bishop agreed that Jean Barton could continue to lead and preach for the time being. He also agreed that Bruce Keeble, a retired Baptist Minister, could assist with leading worship and helping with the cup at Holy Communion.

Common Worship - The new services have been used throughout this year and have been reviewed at the PCC meeting in March.

Remarriage of Divorcees in Church - This was a difficult topic to discuss and no unanimous conclusions were reached. The following points were raised after much discussion.

- Places big pressure on the incumbent should they have to make the decision
- There is an enormous amount of hurt through divorce
- Could bring opportunity for hope, forgiveness and a new start
- Would not Jesus be forgiving to people with failed marriages
- Emphasis should be put on marriage preparation

Child Protection - The Child Protection policy is in operation and Marilyn Thomas is the co-ordinator for this.

Youth - A successful Youth Alpha Course has been running during this year. Several of the young people have expressed a wish to be confirmed. The "Soundnation" Youth Service for Didcot and District was held in St Matthew's Church.

Children - Martin Speed gave an excellent presentation to the PCC of a conference he attended at Swanwick. He emphasised the importance of valuing the part our children play in the life of our Church.

Peace Garden - PCC have given approval for the cub scouts to make a garden, for reflection and quiet times, in the unused area outside the emergency doors of St Matthew's Hall.

Alpha - Two evening Alpha courses have been completed during the year, which have brought encouragement to our church life. As a result a new evening home group was started.

The Combined PCC's - have met once during the year.

Sharing Life - this is an ongoing strategy for Evangelization during 2001 - 2010 and has been recommended to parishes by the Diocese of Oxford. Six working groups have been focusing on Prayer, Worship, Training, Church Web-site and Communications, Pastoral Care and Community Links. The groups met to discuss the way forward in these areas. Since last June a small group of people from both Churches have met with the Rector to discuss the way forward in the light of the departure of the Rev Mary Carney. This has resulted in the group recommending to the PCC's priorities for the next 5 years.

Financial Matters

The predicted deficit for this year fortunately did not materialise; planned giving, donations and tax recovered were all up on expectations and expenses were less than we had budgeted for. We have put aside the small surplus into special funds: money for a new photocopier (the existing one is still with us but on borrowed time), for urgent repairs to one of the bells (now done) and for buying six new chairs with arms for the nave seating. This last is an early result of the Disability Audit; we expect to spend quite a bit in the next year or two on this, for example, in alterations to the downstairs church extension for a disabled toilet. Next year too we have to meet a greatly increased Parish Share; the Diocese has brought forward the date by which all parishes should pay their full share, and the 8% increase originally expected has been changed to 20%. The budget for next year, assuming current planned income levels, foresees a deficit of £8,000. About a third of regular donors, have increased their giving in the last two years; if another third could do that this year, and if everyone who is eligible could sign Gift-Aid declarations to enable us to claim the tax back, we would be well on the way to meeting this.

Ruth Slatter (Secretary) March 2002
On behalf of the Harwell PCC