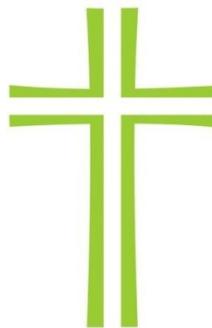


# Annual Report 2020



ST MATTHEW'S  
H A R W E L L



**Registered Charity No 1158861**

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## 1. Introduction

This is the annual report of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the Church of St Matthew's in Harwell, Oxfordshire. It covers the last financial accounting year, which was the calendar year ending 31 December 2020.

The primary aim of our church and its PCC is the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England.

Specifically, our church vision, which was adopted during 2015, is:

**“Growing God’s church, wider, deeper and closer”**

The PCC works with the Rector, the Rev Dr Jonathan Mobey, to fulfil this vision.

The details of what our church has been doing over the last year to further its vision are given in section 2.

This report was approved by the PCC at its meeting on 2 March 2021 and is signed on their behalf by Rev Dr Jonathan Mobey, Rector and Chair of the PCC.

Signature

Date 2 March 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Mobey', written in a cursive style.

## **2. Review of the year – Benefice activities**

Our church forms part of the Benefice of St Matthew's, Harwell with All Saints', Chilton. These two churches, in neighbouring villages, share a ministry team of one full time stipendiary member of clergy, two part time non-stipendiary ministers, two retired clergy and one Licensed Lay Minister with Permission to Officiate, and two authorised preachers. The churches also share three paid lay members of staff covering one full time and one part time post.

Some people from Harwell attend and support church services, events and groups in Chilton and vice versa – either regularly or occasionally. There are many other areas of sharing and co-operation between the two churches, such as safeguarding, engagement with world mission, and publicity and communications. For these reasons, the lives of our two church communities are somewhat intertwined and it is not always possible to delineate strictly between them in practice. This report therefore covers activities in both churches.

The last 9 months of 2020 were overshadowed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions on face to face contact. This had a major impact on many aspects of church life and we had to adapt our activities accordingly. But what has not changed is our determination to reflect the light and love of the Lord Jesus Christ into our communities.

### **2.1 Worship services**

Every Sunday in normal times we meet together to worship God, hear from His Word, pray together, and encourage one another. Our services range from the quiet, traditional ones from the Book of Common Prayer, to contemporary, family-friendly ones.

The majority of services in normal times are organ- or piano-led. In addition, St Matthew's has an all-age orchestra, which accompanies on average two services a month and at festivals such as Christmas and Easter. St Matthew's also has contributions from a harp-led string group, a brass group, and a guitar-led band. All Saints' has a small regular choir with additional members at festivals.

During the Covid-19 pandemic our main services moved online, with a pre-recorded service every Sunday hosted on YouTube, and a range of other services throughout the year, adapting to the current social restrictions. These included:

- Live, Zoom-based services on Sunday mornings for families and on occasion for the whole church,
- Family services in person, initially in St Matthew's churchyard, but then moving inside the church building, with some time all together, plus separate groups for children, teenagers and adults.
- Small Sunday evening services in person alternating between All Saints' (Night Prayer) and St Matthew's (Evening Prayer), then moving to telephone-based services during the third national lockdown

We held services in the churchyard on Remembrance Day in Chilton, and churchyard Carol Services in both Chilton (once) and Harwell (twice) during December. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day morning we had small communion services in both churches in addition to online services.



Photo: A socially distanced Remembrance Day service in All Saints' churchyard; Bob Girling



Photo: A socially distanced Act of Remembrance at the war graves in Harwell cemetery; screenshot from livestreamed video

## 2.2 Baptisms, weddings and funerals

Baptisms, weddings and funerals are important occasions both in their own right, and as pastoral opportunities. The number of these services can vary enormously from year to year, with the number of weddings and baptisms in 2020 being very significantly impacted by the pandemic. Figures for the last three years are shown in Table 1.

Each baptism involves at least one pastoral visit before the service and follow-up as appropriate. Most baptisms are for children of families who are not regular attenders at church.

Each wedding involves several meetings with the couples and a rehearsal, and much liaison and administration, including with the Church Administrator, organists and vergers/sides people. Most wedding couples live locally, but some have a connection through family or having previously lived in the parishes.

Each funeral involves at least one meeting with the next of kin, liaison with the family, the Funeral Director, organists and vergers/sides people. Pastoral follow up is carried out by the officiating minister as appropriate.

	<b>St Matthew's, Harwell</b>			<b>All Saints', Chilton</b>		
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Baptisms	1	5	7	0	4	2
Thanksgivings for a child	0	2	2	0	0	0
Weddings	0	4	2	0	2	2
Funerals in church	8	7	15	4	7	2
Thanksgiving services in church	0	2	2	0	1	0
Funerals at crematoria	4	3	4	0	5	0
Interments of ashes	2	2	2	1	3	1

Table 1: Numbers of baptisms, weddings and funerals

## **2.3 Prayer**

Prayer continues to be an essential part of the life of our churches. Until the beginning of the pandemic we had a weekly prayer meeting held at 8.30am on Saturday mornings at both churches, and a once a month night prayer led by the choir and held at All Saints' on a Wednesday evening at 8.30pm. There is also a group of people who are part of a Benefice Prayer Chain. This enables emergency and continuing prayer for anyone within the church or for issues known to church members. In addition, both churches maintain a list of individuals to pray for during the times of intercession in Sunday services.

## **2.4 Bell-ringing**

St Matthew's Church tower has eight bells, and All Saints' tower has six. Both churches have enthusiastic bell ringing teams. The bells were rung on most Sundays until the beginning of the pandemic and for weddings, some funerals, and on other occasions such as quarter peals. Some limited bell ringing took place on special occasions during the pandemic.

## **2.5 Youth and Families**

Provision for youth and families is an aspect of the Benefice's work into which significant resource is invested. This reflects the acknowledged importance of reaching the young, not least in growing our churches.

### **Children & Families Worker (C&FW)**

During 2020 donations and pledges from church members were requested to support the C&FW post for a further 5 years. The two jobsharers who currently occupy the role were willing to continue. In the first instance their contracts were extended to 31 March 2021 whilst we wait for news of the implementation of the Christian Youthwork Trust for the 'Greater Didcot' area (see section 3). The C&FWs would be formally employed by the Trust if it gets going. Donations/fundraising will be required to cover the cost of extending the C&FWs' contracts for the full 5 years irrespective of whether they are employed via the Trust or by us directly.

## **Children and Young People's Sunday groups**

Between our two churches we provide facilities for children of all ages on a Sunday.

**Prior to the first lockdown** in late March 2020, the in-person church arrangements on a Sunday were:

For babies/toddlers:

A **family area** at All Saints' church and a **crèche** area at St Matthew's. Crèche activities are led by helpers on some weeks.

For pre-school and primary school aged children:

At All Saints', the weekly **Pebbles** group runs during the 9.30am service for children "graduating" from the family area. Once a month, Pebbles is replaced by the **Pebbles Family Service** in the village hall next door to the church. This runs concurrently with the 9.30am service in the church building.

In St Matthew's, **Kids' Church** provides a weekly group for all those in primary school, running concurrently with the adult service. Crèche children join Kids' Church for the first prayer and worship session.

For secondary school aged children:

For those of secondary school age, two weeks out of every four, **Pathfinders** at St Matthew's provides a Bible study during the service. This age group also benefits from **YF**, a weekly Sunday evening youth fellowship program.

**For the remaining nine months of the year**, the restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic meant that we had to create alternative Sunday worship opportunities.

During the 'lockdown' periods (approximately end March to end June, plus November) the C&FWs adapted quickly to provide Sunday sessions suitable for a family audience **online**. These continued for December and remain in place as we start 2021 with a third lockdown.

During the summer and early autumn, when restrictions were lifted, **socially-distanced in-person Sunday provision** aimed at families resumed at St Matthew's. The large indoor and outdoor spaces of this church made social distancing achievable.

The provision of Sunday groups in 2020 during the pandemic is described in more detail below.

During the 'lockdown' periods, the C&FWs ran a weekly live **combined Kids' Church and Pebbles group** via Zoom. Our core families all attended regularly and we averaged 10-12 families a week throughout the whole period. We used Energize material as a basis for the curriculum. We also set up a Google classroom which we added content to weekly for those families who did not want to attend the live Zoom sessions. We also continued the **monthly Pebbles Family Service** via Zoom and completed our series on the Fruit of the Spirit. Our core families attended this regularly too, plus a few other families, especially during the first couple of months of lockdown. Rev Jean Barton continued to contribute an accompanying recorded adult talk which was available on our Google classroom.

**Pathfinders** likewise continued on Zoom with an average of 6 young people attending.

From late August to the end of October we provided in-person Sunday worship aimed at families at St Matthew's. The number of families attending increased compared to their online equivalents although a couple of families were unable to attend due to shielding.

To start with these in-person Sunday sessions were held on the church lawn outside, using picnic blankets to aid social distancing between family groups. Once the weather turned colder, we moved inside the church building and wore face masks as well as maintaining social distancing.

We took the opportunity to add more depth for the adults at these in-person Sunday sessions. We achieved this on alternate weeks via a format which we called '**Family Sunday**'. On these weeks, we gathered together for worship and prayer at the start then split into groups for primary aged children (i.e. the equivalent of Pebbles and Kids Church), Pathfinders and three adult groups initially.

With Pathfinders, the numbers attending in person increased and so we split into two groups – one for sixth formers and one for younger secondary school aged children.

In the adult group a Bible reading was provided along with some questions to discuss. The adults were then encouraged to pray together. When adults were no longer able to meet in mixed-household groups of six indoors, they gathered in the chancel to be led from the front with a talk and reflection session. All groups then rejoined for a final song and prayer. We felt this service style worked well and seemed to be well received. We hope to return to something similar when we are able to meet together again.

### **Summer Holiday Club**

Holiday Club is now an established annual event in the Benefice. With lockdown restrictions easing during summer 2020 we decided to run a slimmed down version of Holiday Club in order to keep within Government regulations on gatherings of primary school aged children and to enable a Covid-secure environment.

Holiday Club ran over 3 weeks in July and August and was attended by a total of 45 children (15 per week). It took place in the Church Hall in Harwell. We used Scripture Union Wonderzone material which worked well. We were pleased to have been able to offer something, even though it was very different from usual. Parents were very grateful we had been able to run something in such a difficult year.



Photo: Holiday Club week 1; Jane Woolley

## **Fledgelings**

Fledgelings is a term time group for pre-school aged children and their parents/carers. The group provides play and activities for the children and company and conversation for the adults. The sessions incorporate a 'See & Know' singing and story-time with an explicitly Christian curriculum.

During January-March 2020 we ran the usual two morning sessions per week – one in Harwell church and one in Chilton Community Hall.

During the first lockdown and summer term Fledglings met weekly online instead to enable the adults to chat together. The C&FW recorded 17 sessions of 'See and Know' through lockdown which was available to access from our website at any time. The C&FW also set up a Fledgelings WhatsApp group for each parish to help people stay in touch.

In September and October we were able to return to face to face Fledgelings in St Matthew's church with its large spaces. We ran two sessions of an hour each on both Mondays and Wednesdays. We limited attendance at each session to 8 families. Families had to try as far as possible to remain socially distanced on blankets they brought with them. Each child was provided with their own tray of toys. We continued with our 'See and Know' session led from the front which also included a pack with instrument, bible and craft per child.

During the November lockdown we continued to meet but with just one session on a Monday and a Wednesday. This enabled us to have enough sets of items for each to be used just once a week so that there was no cross-contamination. This still provided enough spaces to meet demand except on a couple of weeks where we were oversubscribed. We then gave priority the next week to those who had been unable to attend the previous week.

At Christmas we allowed slightly more families to attend sessions and we found that these were still manageable. We had a socially distanced meeting with Father Christmas which was lovely and worked well.

Fledgelings has continued to be well received during 2020, especially when we were able to resume face to face between September and December. We are pleased we were able to run the sessions.

Fledgelings has continued to grow during 2020 and has attracted new members. This has been of great encouragement both to those families and to us.



## Schools



St Matthew's and All Saints' have continued opportunities to collaborate with both Harwell and Chilton **Primary Schools**. The Primary Schools were closed to most pupils and outside visitors from the end of March until the end of June due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before the first lockdown, one of the C&FWs, along with the Associate Minister, took assemblies about Lent in both schools.

During the first lockdown, the same C&FW also contributed to two online assemblies for Harwell School, and has continued to volunteer for the 'Wellbeing group' at the school when this has been allowed to run.

Until the first lockdown, a team of volunteers joined with the Associate Minister to lead the well-established, well-attended weekly after-school club, **Y-Club**, in Chilton School. Since then, in common with other after-school mixed year group provision, Y-Club has been unable to run.

## Community & Special Events for children and families

Looking for further opportunities to share the Gospel and to have a positive impact on the community, we provided a number of special events this year. Many of our normal such activities were adapted in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At Easter we put on an online **Easter trail**. Each day we released part of the Easter story, a song and a craft on our website.

Every Wednesday afternoon during the first lockdown we held a '**Praise Party**' where families came together to dance and sing to some worship songs, and to pray together.

At the end of October we held a '**Light Party**' in St Matthew's church which was attended by 14 families. It was a fun and encouraging event which we were pleased to be able to hold in person.

In December we ran '**Advent Windows**' (instead of the usual Advent Doors) in both villages. Each day, part of the Christmas story was displayed visually in the window of a different house, with accompanying text provided on the church website. Over 80 families signed up to take part. The windows looked beautiful and we had good feedback from participants.



Photo: An Advent window: Alison Gale

In December we also provided 60 packs for families to make Christmas Tree decorations – either for their own tree or for the tree at one of our churches.

Normally we hold just one Crib Service in the run up to Christmas and this is at St Matthew's. In 2020 we ran three Crib services - two at St Matthew's and one at All Saints' to meet the anticipated demand in the face of reduced capacity due to social distancing requirements. These services were well attended.

## 2.6 Evangelism & Discipleship

Our churches seek to fulfil the Great Commission to make disciples through loving service, evangelism and discipleship – sharing the good news of Jesus in word and deed and helping individuals to grow in faith. This is done through our worship services but also through other groups and activities.

In 2020 we ran an online (Zoom) **Alpha Course** and a **Christianity Explored Course**. Towards the end of the year we also set up a number of '**Zoom Connect**' groups, which met online weekly for 40 minutes to read the Bible, discuss and pray together.



**Home groups** play an important part in nurturing the spiritual development and pastoral care of church members. These groups meet regularly (usually weekly) to read the Bible together, to pray, and to support one another in the Christian life. Most groups have members from both parishes. There are groups meeting in the mornings, afternoons and evenings, covering all ages, from parents with toddlers to those who are retired. The groups are always happy for new members to join. During the pandemic groups adapted to the social restrictions by meeting outdoors and online where necessary, and maintaining contact with members by phone.



A Home Group Zoom Christmas Party; Sarah Barrett

For the first half of Lent 2020 we ran 'The Grace Course', but were unable to complete the course due to the pandemic. Some attendees were Home group members who switched temporarily to the 'central' group. Other attendees were people who do not currently attend a Home group.

Our churches part-fund the Didcot and Wallingford Area **CAP (Christians Against Poverty) Debt Centre** which was set up in January 2015 to cover just Wallingford and expanded in January 2017. The Centre's formal aims are:

- The relief of poverty by providing a debt counselling and debt management service
- The advancement of Christianity in Didcot, Wallingford and the surrounding area.



The Centre employs a Centre Manager and a Debt Coach who between them are currently able to take on three new clients each month, supported by church members who befriend and support the client families.

In 2020 we saw 8 local individuals and families go completely debt free and no longer needing to deal with the stress of creditors chasing them, feelings of guilt, shame and inadequacy, or trying to hide their situation from loved ones. Others were on management plans working towards that day. In 2020 one client that we know of has prayed a salvation prayer to Jesus. Many more clients are being loved, blessed and supported - and many are exploring further on the Money Course, Alpha Courses or coming along to church. Clients benefitted from practical help, gifts, food parcels, Christmas hampers, and attended a Chilli Supper and Quiz at St Matthew's just before the first national lockdown.

A highly committed team of trained Money Coaches (complemented by those with welcoming/hospitality talents) in our churches continue to offer **CAP Money Courses**. Due to the pandemic take-up has been understandably low, but running the course online has opened up new opportunities.

## 2.7 Pastoral Care

The **Pastoral Care teams** (and many individual members of our churches) take on quiet practical support for those in need of help, whether short or long-term, at home or, for example, in hospital. Oversight of pastoral care in the Benefice is the responsibility of Rev Pam Rolls.

There is a pastoral care team in each parish. In Chilton, the team operates under the leadership of Mrs Audrey Slater. In Harwell, the team has become very small and we are still prayerfully and carefully seeking a new leader for it.

Pastoral Care to our parishioners is much enhanced by the involvement of Rev Jan Radford through her chaplaincy role in the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

**Funerals** provide special opportunities for ministering to our parishioners. Funeral ministry is usually carried out by our clergy or by licensed or approved lay leaders, with follow-up visits to bereaved families taking place wherever possible. In recent years we have held an annual All Souls' service at which we remember loved ones who have died but, because of the Covid-19 crisis, we were not able to meet together in church for this in 2020. Instead, our online service at the beginning of November reflected an All Souls' theme.

**Home Communions** are taken four times a year to parishioners who are not very mobile – Easter, summer, Harvest and Christmas. During 2020 this ministry was severely curtailed but a few home communions were administered to housebound parishioners.

**Generation Gold** services, initiated by Rev Jan Radford and Rev Pam Rolls in 2015, were continued in 2020 but largely in a different format. At our March service our theme was rainbows and God's promises. Unfortunately we were unable to meet together for the other three quarterly services because of the Covid-19 restrictions. Instead we delivered gift packs to members of the Generation Gold congregation.

In June we sent out tea bags and invited members to remember each other as they drank their tea. The accompanying letter included the text of Psalm 23 and gave a reflection on the Psalm, encouraging members to remember that God walks with us.



In September cream teas were dispatched with a letter giving some thoughts on Jesus feeding the 5,000 and inviting members to place themselves in the story in an Ignatian-style reflection.

In December we issued Advent Boxes which contained a variety of goodies with a letter that reminded members about the account of the angels telling the shepherds of Jesus' birth and assuring them 'do not be afraid'.

Photo: Cream tea box; Pam Rolls

We were very grateful to the team of helpers who delivered the gifts and we were overwhelmed by the positive response we received from members in the form of phone calls, e-mails and cards. It was clear that our members appreciated that they were being remembered and supported.

Both our Churches have continued to collect non-perishable food for **Didcot Emergency Foodbank** throughout the year, with a special collection in both churches at Harvest time. In this exceptional year of Covid, food for 3,044 adults and children was issued (includes repeat visits).

Church members gave personal and corporate support to the community 'good neighbour' schemes which ran during the pandemic lockdowns - **Harwell Helpers** and **Chilton Mutual Aid**

## 2.8 Social and Community

Our churches host various social events for the benefit and care of the church and wider community.

**Harwell Evergreens** is an afternoon social group for older residents and the All Saints' **Women's Group** in Chilton offers evening fellowship. Both groups serve both parishes and invite speakers on a wide variety of subjects.

Evergreens was able to hold its first two meetings of the year. During the rest of the year, the leader kept in touch with members via:

- a letter to be delivered to each member in September to reassure them that they hadn't been forgotten and that the group would meet again as soon as it was able
- a Christmas card delivered to each member
- telephone calls to individuals where appropriate

The Women's Group was able to hold its first three meetings of the year in All Saints' church. It sold over 100 tickets for its Charity Quiz Night which then suddenly had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the spring and summer the Women's Group kept in touch with phone calls, puzzles and a few doorstep chats at a safe distance. In September, the Group were able to meet together again at All Saints' albeit in a socially-distanced way. From October onwards the Group met electronically via Zoom and celebrated Christmas with readings and carols.

The Women's Group has continued to raise money for charity via its charity market (which became a garden gate stall when it was not safe to run a public event). Items for sale included books, plants, face-masks, jam, chutney, and home baked items. In this way £7,013.65 was raised for different charities. This included £352.00 for Christian Aid via plant sales, and £250.00 for the Chilton Mutual Aid Group via book sales. In addition, to challenge the possible boredom of lockdown, six cryptic quiz sheets were compiled and sold raising £1,130.00 for six different charities including "End Polio Now" and "Seesaw".



Before the pandemic, St Matthew's Church hosted a **Repair Café** in February with logistical and hospitality support provided by the Explorer Scout Unit .

In October we held a **Harvest Festival Celebration Week** during which members of the community were invited to view the glorious floral displays which had been specially created in both of our churches. Attendees were given the opportunity to say a prayer of thanks to God in an interactive activity. They could also drop off packets and tins of non-perishable food for the Didcot Foodbank.



Photos: Some of the floral displays in Harvest Festival Celebration Week

Other social and community activities which normally pepper the year were unable to take place in 2020 due to the pandemic.

## 2.9 World Mission

The World Missions Group is a small group which proposes to each PCC how each church could spend its World Mission budget. There were additional appeals and collections during the year focused on Tear Fund and Didcot Emergency Foodbank at Harvest in October and Oxford Women's Refuge in December.

We focus our World Mission financial support and prayer around the Anglican Five Marks of Mission. The Marks and the corresponding organisations are:

- 1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom:** Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). The work of MAF enables mission workers to reach difficult and isolated places to share Christianity.
- 2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers:** Scripture Union (SU). Through Bible studies, resources and camps SU aims to share the Christian faith and disciple, in particular, children and young people.
- 3. To respond to human need by loving service:** The Leprosy Mission (TLM). TLM diagnoses, treats and offers specialist care such as reconstructive surgery, as well as rehabilitation programmes and health education in communities.
- 4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.** Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW). CSW is a Christian organisation working in over 20 countries across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, defending everyone's right to freedom of religion or belief.
- 5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.** A Rocha, a Christian Conservation organisation who work in the UK and internationally.

During 2020 we continued to support a number of mission personnel: Heather and David Sharland with Church Mission Society; Endri and Dyshi Tabacu of The Light of the World church in Albania and John Abu Bakker with Fellowship For Neighbours, India. We also give a small amount of support to Christine Perkins who worked for Pioneers until recently.

We hope to re-establish sharing news with the wider church family about the organisations and people we support in 2021, as we have done in previous years. We would love more people to join the World Mission Group and we are praying for this.

## **2.10 Staffing**

Over the last five years or so, the Benefice has increased its investment in paid staff. Currently it funds two paid roles:

- A Benefice Administrator and PA to the Rector – 20 hours per week (see section below for more on this)
- A Children & Families Worker – working 40 hours per week – currently a job share (see section 2.5 for activities).

This investment reflects the following factors:

- The increasing administrative and communications workload
- The strategic decision that young children and their families should be a key area of focus for us
- The gradual reduction in availability of volunteer time due to societal trends.

The employment of paid staff is a large responsibility – both financially and in managerial terms. In recognition of this, the Benefice established an Employment sub-committee of the Joint PCC in April 2017.

### **Administrative support**

The Benefice has a paid Administrator working 20 hours per week. A key focus of the role is communications activity. There are also various records, documents, bookings and practical arrangements to organise.

In a normal year, the Administrator creates and prints service and notice sheets each week and the Ridgeway Broadsheet magazine 8 times each year; produces an Easter card and a Christmas card to promote special services and events; updates the calendar, rotas and news items on the church website; posts Facebook messages; manages St Matthew's Church Hall bookings, prepares various reports for the Diocese, Christian Copyright Licensing International, and the County Council; manages the office; and provides PA support to the Rector.



The 2020 church Christmas card delivered to every home in the Benefice

In 2020 the focus of the Administrator's work shifted away from the production of materials to support in-person worship services and towards supporting the production of weekly online worship services. The Administrator also supported several online discipleship groups during the year – Alpha, Christianity Explored and the 'Connect' groups mentioned in section 2.6.

### **3. Looking forward – key plans and challenges**

As part of our vision-setting for 2020 and beyond, our churches continued to use the 'Parish Planning Tool' to discern 'where God is at work and join in' with the aim of carrying those things forward 'in new and transformed ways'.

The formal process stalled somewhat with the pandemic, but is re-starting afresh in 2021 by focusing on PCC, Senior Leadership Team and church-wide prayer meetings.

A key challenge – and opportunity – for 2021 will be to agree on a pattern of services as social distancing restrictions ease and building on our experience of online church. Online church has a number of positive aspects, including accessibility to enquirers, those who are housebound, and those whose work or family commitments mean they are unable to attend in-person church services. We continue to explore possibilities for collaborative work with other churches/ organisations in certain areas/ministries, such as we have been doing with CAP, which serves those in debt. Work on establishing a Christian Youthwork Trust to minister amongst the young people/ secondary schools of the 'Greater Didcot' area has continued.

Raising and stewarding both human and financial resources is an ongoing challenge, but we are mindful that where we are following God's lead, he will provide the means for His work to be done.

## **4. Governance and structure**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure.

St Matthew's, Harwell and All Saints', Chilton each has its own PCC. Both PCCs met four times during 2020 – once in person and three times remotely via Zoom.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The membership of the PCC consists of all clergy licensed to the Benefice, Churchwardens, Deanery Synod members and other lay members elected by those on the Electoral Roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

Given its wide responsibilities, the PCCs operate through a number of committees. Each committee deals with a particular aspect of parish life. The committees report back regularly at PCC meetings, with minutes of their meetings or their decisions and recommendations being received and discussed as necessary. The Rector is automatically a member of every committee.

### **Standing Committee**

This is the only committee required by Church law. It meets or liaises occasionally when there are urgent decisions to be made between PCC meetings. It consists of the clergy, Churchwardens and the Treasurer plus the Vice-chair and the Secretary.

### **Combined PCC**

For efficiency and convenience St Matthew's, Harwell PCC and All Saints', Chilton PCC regularly hold Combined PCC meetings, where members of the two PCCs come together to discuss matters that are common to both parishes. Meetings of the Joint PCC (see below) are held as part of Combined PCC meetings. As such, voting by Joint PCC members on any decisions required by the Joint PCC generally follows discussion by the Combined PCC.

The Combined PCC met twice during 2020. In addition to this, members of the Joint PCC (see below) met once in July.

## Joint PCC

The Pastoral Measure provides for a Joint PCC in addition to the separate PCCs of our two churches. It comprises the clergy, Churchwardens and the Treasurer plus the Vice-chair and the Secretary of each PCC.

The two PCCs can agree to place in the hands of the Joint PCC any matters involving both parishes. So far, the PCCs have delegated responsibility for the following matters to the Joint PCC:

- Safeguarding
- Staffing
- Data compliance.

### Safeguarding

The Benefice complies fully with national and Church of England law on safeguarding. In 2020 the Benefice's **Safeguarding Officer** was Mr Mel Gibson and Mrs Judy Gold was **Deputy Safeguarding Officer**. The Joint PCC reviews and approves the **Safeguarding Policy** annually.

### Staffing

The Benefice **Employment Committee** is concerned with meeting the statutory regulations around employment, ensuring the performance and development of staff employed by the PCCs is carried out, and recruitment procedures.

### Data compliance

In 2020 further work was undertaken to ensure that the churches are compliant with new data governance legislation (GDPR).

## 5. Finance

Setting a budget and monitoring the income and expenditure of the church are key responsibilities of the PCC.

The **Finance Committee** oversees the finances of the PCC by monitoring income and expenditure, budgeting and reviewing the planned giving.

### Financial position

The financial position of St Matthew's Church for 2020 was £29,377 worse than budgeted. This is largely a result of repairs to the north aisle roof due to the theft of lead in 2019, a simultaneous investment in a new roof to the extension to replace the original ageing felt roof, and lower planned giving and loose alms than had been budgeted.

Loose alms were down because the coronavirus pandemic caused a reduction in people attending Sunday services, weddings and funerals. Planned giving has reduced due to a combination of donors moving away and dying as well as the impact of coronavirus.

Planned giving has fallen for the last four years. In 2017 it was c. £63k; 2018 it was c. £61k; 2019 it was c. £55k; 2020 it was c. £48k (excluding gift aid).

**Income** in 2020 was £116,555. **Expenditure** in 2020 was £151,822.

We are grateful to all who continue to support the C&FW post. The restricted fund shows a current balance of £31,419, more than sufficient to cover salaries for the coming year.

See Appendix 4 for a summary of income and expenditure for the years 2019 and 2020 and the budget for 2021.

## Reserves policy

Reserves are held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on free reserves which equates to at least six months' unrestricted payments. In the case of St Matthew's Church this would be around £50,000 for 2021.

At 1st January 2020 there was a negative opening balance in the General fund of -£2,248. On 31 December 2020 there was a negative closing balance of -£37,515 to take forward into 2021, and reserves in Designated Funds were £77,921.

## 6. Buildings

The PCC is charged with the care, maintenance and insurance of the church buildings, including St Matthew's Church Hall. The property and movable goods of the church are vested in the Churchwardens, who are also responsible for inspecting the fabric of the church and making an annual report (the Fabric Report) first to the PCC and then to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

A key area of activity for the PCC is **developing our buildings** to accommodate our own activities more effectively, and to enable us to better connect with and serve the wider community. At St Matthew's in 2020 this has involved continuing to plan improvements to the entrance area. However, progress has been affected by the lockdowns. The aim is to have a building that is flexible, comfortable and accessible, whilst maintaining and even enhancing its beauty.

### St Matthew's church building

St Matthew's church is a Grade 1 listed building, parts of which date back to 1190. It is kept in a good state of repair by the **Buildings Committee** and other volunteers. Some of this work is maintenance and general repairs that continue in a very similar fashion year in year out. In addition, the church is cleaned regularly via a combination of a paid cleaner and a small faithful team of volunteers.

The Buildings Committee maintains an Action List of ongoing tasks and monitors progress in following the recommendations made by the Church Architect in the Quinquennial Inspection Report, the last of which was made in 2015. The detailed Fabric Report by the Churchwardens is provided in a separate document.

During the last year there have been several major projects or issues:

- The main project in 2020 has been to re-roof the north aisle and extension with terne coated stainless steel, to replace the lead stolen from the north aisle in July 2019 and to replace the aging felt roof of the extension. A Faculty and VWH Planning Permission were granted in June 2020. Before the work could start in September a hive of bees had to be removed from the eaves of the north aisle and taken to a new home. The roofing work was carried out by Q&M Limited, supervised by the church architect Philip Waddy, and completed in early November. Some work to make good minor damage to the internal walls of the north aisle will be done early in 2021. The work also required some adjustments to the lightning protection system, electrical repairs in the upstairs extension following accidental severing of a cable in the lighting circuit, and asbestos surveys to check and deal with suspect material.
- A rope handrail for the tower stairs up to the ringing chamber was installed in January 2020 after approval was obtained from the Archdeacon.
- A PCC Steering Group is also working with the Church Architect on options for replacing the inner porch doors with glass doors, under the terms of a legacy. This reached the stage early in 2020 of obtaining quotations, but progress has stalled since then due to the lockdowns.

Examples of other work are in the Fabric Report.

The next Quinquennial Inspection of the church by the Church Architect was due in 2020, but has had to be postponed to 2021.



Photo: Starting re-roofing work on the north aisle, September 2020; Tony Hughes



Photo: The north aisle and extension roofs, nearly finished with terne coated steel, October 2020; Tony Hughes

The **Friends of St Matthew's** scheme to stimulate interest in the church building, and ultimately help to provide for the costs of keeping it in good order, has continued in 2020 through a Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/ HarwellChurchFriends](https://www.facebook.com/HarwellChurchFriends). This is aimed particularly at descendants of the Harwell family lineage in the USA. The Facebook page has had a lot of visits and interest and consideration is now being given to how this interest can be used to increase donations to help with the cost of maintenance of the church.

## **St Matthew's Church Hall**

The Church Hall is located on the corner of The Park and Wellshead, approximately 100m south of the church. Its fabric is generally in good order, with the surrounding grass and boundary hedges cut regularly.

The Hall is in normal times used by church groups and church-affiliated groups. Some further groups and individuals also rent the Hall, which helps to offset the cost of its upkeep. The use of the Hall by a range of organisations means that it has different day to day management requirements than the church building. The Hall is therefore managed by a Church Hall Manager, Brian Zimmerman, who liaises with the Rector and Church Administrator. The Hall has a paid cleaner.

The aim of allowing the Hall to be used by non-church groups is to

- Bring the broader community into contact with the church
- Defray the cost of running the Hall
- Provide an economic venue for church or church-affiliated groups.

All bookings are managed via the calendar on the church website. The biggest single user is the Scout Group, who make a significant contribution to the paid cleaning which helps to sustain the Hall as a venue for all groups. There are also a number of other regular users, e.g. dance classes, Evergreens, and YF.

From March to December 2020 most Hall bookings ceased due to the pandemic, but previous users have all maintained interest in resuming their bookings once social distancing restrictions permit resumption of normal activities.

The income for the Hall in 2020 (not including the Scout cleaning contribution) was £1,886; expenditure on maintenance, cleaning, utilities and insurance was £5,189.

## **Appendix 1: Administrative information**

St Matthew's church is situated on Church Lane, Harwell. It is part of the Wallingford Deanery in the Archdeaconry of Dorchester in the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The Bishop of Dorchester, The Rt Revd Colin Fletcher OBE, retired in September 2020. Our new Bishop, to be consecrated in 2021, is Gavin Collins.

The correspondence address is:

The Rectory  
Church Lane  
Harwell  
Didcot  
OX11 0EZ

The Rector is Rev Dr Jonathan Mobey.

The Independent Examiner of the PCC financial accounts is:

Mrs Jane Moreton  
Harrow House  
Burr Street  
Harwell  
Didcot  
OX11 0DT

## **Appendix 2: St Matthew's church membership**

The Electoral Roll is a list of those entitled to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. It is also a crude indicator of church membership.

The Electoral Roll is maintained by Mike Pepper. As of 9 September 2020 the roll stood at 68 as compared with 44 in March 2019 when the roll was completely renewed.

## **Appendix 3: St Matthew's PCC membership**

During 2020, the membership of St Matthew's PCC has been:

### **Clergy**

Rev Dr Jonathan Mobey (the Incumbent)  
Rev Pam Rolls (Associate Minister)  
Rev Janet Radford (Assistant Minister)

### **Churchwardens**

Rebecca Lewis  
Allan Macarthur

### **Elected Deanery Synod representatives**

Gordon Gill  
Sid Gale

### **Other elected representatives**

Tony Hughes (Vice-Chair)  
Jane Woolley (Secretary)  
Phill Johnston (Treasurer) from October 2020  
Eliza Wheaton  
Michelle Walker  
Andrew Keene until October 2020

### **Co-opted representatives**

Phill Johnston (Treasurer) until October 2020

## Appendix 4: Income and expenditure in 2019 and 2020 and budget for 2021

The full and independently examined Accounts for 2020 are published separately. They should be read in conjunction with this report.

	2019 (actual) £	2020 (actual) £	2021 (budget) £
<b>INCOME</b>			
Envelopes/planned giving	55,299	48,484	52,800
Gift Aid recovered	12,887	14,946	14,000
VAT reclaimed (LPW grant)	5,676	5,290	-
Loose Alms	4,066	826	2,000
Donations/legacies/other	2,889	5,969	3,500
Fees	2,498	880	2,500
Church Hall income	4,211	1,886	2,800
Holiday Club	669	29	500
Interest	622	325	320
<b>Transfers from Restricted/ Designated funds</b>			
Children & Families Worker	17,152	17,795	17,803
Administrator	10,973	12,128	13,697
Chilton Joint Account	(3,850)	(3,850)	-
Insurance Claim – roof repair	(4,142)	8,747	-
Major Repairs	11,005	-	-
Youth Fund	623	-	-
CAP Debt Centre	-	3,100	-
<b>Total income</b>	120,578	116,555	109,920
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Parish Share	49,994	49,854	48,400
Mission Giving	8,402	7,800	6,736
Joint PCC	41,114	38,959	40,736
Harwell PCC	42,880	55,209	22,030
<b>Total expenditure</b>	142,390	151,822	117,902
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	(21,814)	(35,267)	(7,982)

## **Fund Balances**

There was a negative balance on the General fund at 31 December 2020 of -£37,515.

Designated funds (designated by the PCC for particular purposes but which could be otherwise spent if the PCC so decided) total £77,921.

Restricted funds (which can only be used for the purpose for which they were given) total £52,056 including £31,419 for the C&FW post.

If you would like to see a copy of this Annual Report in large print, or to discuss any parts of particular interest, please contact the Church Administrator on 01235 834256 or via our website:

**[www.harwellandchiltonchurches.org.uk](http://www.harwellandchiltonchurches.org.uk)**