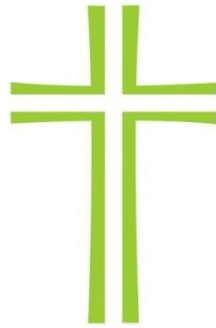


Annual Report 2021



ST MATTHEW'S
H A R W E L L



Registered Charity No 1158861

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Front cover photo: Allan Macarthur

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 2021.

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 1 March 2021 and is signed on their behalf by Rev Dr Jonathan Mobey, Rector and Chair of the PCC.

Signature



Date 1 March 2022

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 or St Matthew's attend and support church services, events and groups in Chilton or in All Saints' 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.

Much of 2021 was once again 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.

The effects of the pandemic on church life in 2021 were less severe than in 2020. From April/May we were able to introduce some in-person Sunday services again (whilst continuing our online provision), and singing was allowed in church from July. In September we reintroduced a full pattern of services. However, in December the omicron variant of Covid-19 caused some national restrictions to be reinstated. Although most church services were unaffected by this, we made some changes to reduce the risk of transmission. For example, in the run up to Christmas we moved some popular services into the churchyard and we did not serve refreshments indoors.

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 had 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.

As in 2020, we published a pre-recorded worship service online every Sunday morning hosted via YouTube.

In the early part of 2021 we held telephone services. From April/May we held face-to-face intergenerational 'interactive' Sunday services at St Matthew's for families in the benefice, and evening service alternating between the two churches, before a fuller in-person service pattern resumed for all in September. See section 2.5 for more details. These 'interactive' services provided us with the experience and inspiration to include them in a trial of a revised face-to-face service pattern from the start of September. Tables 1 and 2 below display the previous and trial revised service patterns across the benefice.

The rationale for implementing a revised service pattern was:

The interruption to the usual service pattern created by the pandemic provided a good opportunity to try something new

Holding a weekly intergenerational 'interactive' service with children's groups in one location and at a consistent time would better serve existing and new church families. Attracting families is a key part of our growth strategy.

The original proposal was for the intergenerational 'interactive' service to replace the more traditional Sunday morning service at St Matthew's. Traditional services would be available at 6pm in Harwell or at 9.30am at All Saints'. However the PCCs decided that this would be a step too far because it risked alienating those who favour a more traditional style of service. So the compromise enacted was to hold two Sunday morning services at St Matthew's – an intergenerational 'interactive' service at 10am followed by a more traditional service at 11.30am.

Feedback from the congregations during the trial was sought both formally via a questionnaire and informally via conversations with members of the PCC and Senior Leadership Team. This feedback was reviewed at a benefice PCC Away Day in January 2022. The intergenerational 'interactive' service was generally well received and attendance was high. However, key issues of concern identified with the revised service pattern were:

- The separation of families and children from the rest of the All Saints' congregation
- The challenge of staffing two Sunday morning services at St Matthew's

A further revision to the service pattern to try to address these issues was agreed by the Joint PCC and will be applied from 20 February 2022.

Pre-pandemic usual pattern of worship services		
Worship services	All Saints', Chilton	St Matthew's, Harwell
Sundays 8am	Holy Communion (BCP) on 2nd and 4th Sundays	Holy Communion (BCP) on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays
Sundays 9.30am	All Age Worship on 1st Sundays; Morning Worship on 2nd and 4th Sundays (BCP on second Sunday on alternate months); Holy Communion on 3rd and 5th Sundays	-
Sundays 10.30am (monthly)	Pebbles Family Service in Chilton Village Hall on 2nd Sundays	-
Sundays 11am		All Age Worship on 1st Sundays; Morning Worship on 3rd and 4th Sundays; Holy Communion on 2nd and 5th Sundays
Sundays 6.15pm	Evening Prayer on 5th Sundays	Evening Prayer on 1st and 3rd Sundays (BCP on 3rd); Holy Communion on 4th Sundays
Midweek	Alternately with Harwell on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Ascension Day; also Good Friday, Easter Eve Vigil, Carol Services, Midnight Christmas Communion	Alternately with Chilton on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Ascension Day; also Good Friday, Carol Services, Midnight Christmas Communion

Table 1: Pre-pandemic pattern of worship services

Trial revised service pattern September 2021 – February 2022		
Worship services	All Saints', Chilton	St Matthew's, Harwell
Sundays 8am	-	-
Sundays 9.30am	Morning Worship on 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays (BCP Morning Prayer on 2nd Sundays alternate months); Holy Communion on 1st and 3rd Sundays	-
Sundays 10am	-	'Interactive' service every week
Sundays 10.30am (monthly)	Pebbles Family Service in Chilton Village Hall on 2nd Sundays	-
Sundays 11.30am		Morning Worship on 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays; Holy Communion on 2nd and 5th Sundays
Sundays 6pm	-	Evening Prayer on 1st and 3rd Sundays; BCP on 2nd and 5th Sundays; Holy Communion on 4th Sundays
Thursdays 11am	Holy Communion 2nd Thursdays	Holy Communion 4th Thursdays
Other midweek	Alternately with Harwell on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Ascension Day; also Good Friday, Easter Eve Vigil, Carol Services, Midnight Christmas Communion	Alternately with Harwell on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Ascension Day; also Good Friday, Carol Services, Midnight Christmas Communion

Table 2: Trial revised pattern of worship services

We held online services on Maundy Thursday (an Agape meal) and Good Friday. We held in-person services in both All Saints' and St Matthew's on Easter Sunday morning and an Easter Vigil service in All Saints' churchyard.

We held services at both All Saints' and St Matthew's on Remembrance Sunday in November, and shorter Acts of Remembrance in All Saints' Churchyard and at Harwell War Memorial.

In mid-December we held afternoon and evening carol services in All Saints' Church. By the following week concerns arising from the omicron wave of the pandemic had intensified and so the equivalent carol services at St Matthew's were held in the churchyard. We also held a Christmas Eve Crib Service in St Matthew's Churchyard.



Photo: All Saints' in Advent; John Berry

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 2021 being very significantly impacted by the pandemic. Figures for the last three years are shown in Table 3.

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.

	St Matthew' Harwell			All Saints' Chilton		
	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019
Baptisms	7	1	5	0	0	4
Thanksgivings for a child	2	0	2	0	0	0
Weddings	4	0	4	2	0	2
Funerals in church	10	8	7	2	4	7
Thanksgiving services in church	0	0	2	0	0	1
Funerals at crematoria	3	4	3	3	0	5
Interments of ashes	1	2	2	3	1	3

Table 3: 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. In April 2021 we started a Benefice online weekly prayer meeting on Saturday mornings instead.

There is also a group of 50+ 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. Regular bell ringing recommenced in July 2021

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 from January 2021 with the existing two jobsharers, Melanie Shields and Sarah Barrett, continuing in the role. In October 2021, Melanie Shields resigned, and the vacancy was advertised. Brendan Bailey was appointed to replace Melanie and started in the role on 1 January 2022.

In January 2022, the employment of the C&FWs transferred to the Greater Didcot Christian Children & Youthwork Trust in which the Benefice is a partner (see section 3). This has no impact on the C&FW's funding, line management or duties.

Children and Young People's Sunday groups

2021 started with a third national lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The C&FWs continued to provide online sessions on Sundays via Zoom aimed at families which they had started during the first lockdown in 2020. This enabled us to reach core church families on a regular basis. Content included a series on Jesus's "I am" statements.

Once restrictions were eased again in the summer, we switched from online back to face-to-face Sunday services aimed at families at 10.30am. These were held at St Matthew's where the large space makes social distancing relatively easy. At some of these services everyone remained altogether. At others we split into groups for adults, primary school (Kids Church) and secondary school (Pathfinders) aged young people.

We also experimented with different ways to make these family services more intergenerational and more interactive than usual, including more discussion and question time. The services attracted both families with children and other members of our congregation who wanted to attend a more informal service style. This pattern continued until September, when it was feasible to start running other face-to-face services in the Benefice again.

From September, we trialed a new pattern of Sunday morning services in the Benefice as detailed in section 2.1.

A key learning point from the pandemic has been the strength of bringing our families from across the Benefice to worship together. It has been helpful for the parents to have a wider group of fellow Christian parents. By concentrating children's Sunday groups at St Matthew's, we have also been able to run fewer but better attended groups which are easier to staff. This has though left a concern about the separation of families and children from the rest of the All Saints' congregation, as mentioned in section 2.1.

Summer Holiday Club

As in previous years we ran a week-long Holiday Club for primary school aged children. This was held in the last week of July and repeated in the second week of August. We had approximately 45 primary school aged children attend each week. We held it in St Matthew's church and the Church Hall. The content was based on Mark's gospel. The theme was 'Heroes Academy' and we talked about Jesus being the ultimate and only true superhero.

The feedback we received was very positive. Parents were again grateful that we were able to run something albeit on a smaller scale during the pandemic than prior to it. The smaller scale was necessary because of locating it in church premises rather than at Harwell or Chilton primary school.

Feedback from leaders and parents shows that some prefer the smaller-scale holiday clubs on church premises and some prefer it when we use one of the primary schools and can make it a larger-scale event.



Photo: Holiday Club – week 1 – Cup Challenge; 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 the third national lockdown in January to March, Fledgelings met weekly online to enable the adults to chat together. This was attended by fewer people than in 2020.

In April we were able to return to face-to-face Fledgelings in St Matthew's church with its large spaces. We ran two sessions of two hours each on both Mondays and Wednesdays. We limited attendance at each session to 12 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.

In June we were able to meet together more freely and so ran a more 'normal' Fledgelings at St Matthew's where children and adults could move around and not be limited to their blanket anymore. We rotated toys so none were used again within 72 hours and we did not serve refreshments. We were still unable to use the Community Room in Chilton at this point.

In September Fledgelings returned to normal at both St Matthew's and the Community Room in Chilton.

The C&FWs also undertook significant pastoral care work among Fledgelings parents outside of Fledgelings sessions to provide practical, emotional and spiritual support.



Schools



One of the C&FWs has continued to lead assemblies in Harwell Primary School in 2021 including at Harvest and Advent. They also continued to volunteer for the 'Wellbeing group' at the school when this has been allowed to run. In addition, they contributed to a week-long 'Reflective Spaces' event at Harwell school. The C&FW visited each class for a 40-minute session covering thankfulness and 'I am special.'

The C&FWs are looking forward to further developing schools work in 2022.

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

For **Mothering Sunday** we delivered posies to Fledgelings mums and carers as well as to women in our regular congregations and wider community. This was extremely well received and a really lovely opportunity to say hello to people during the lockdown.



Photo: Mothering Sunday posies ready for delivery; Jonathan Mobey

We were able to run an **Easter trail** around both our villages putting posters up in windows. Each trail finished in church where we had several 'Prayer Space' activities relating to each day of Holy Week.

At the end of October we held a '**Light Party**' in St Matthew's church which was attended by most of our regular church families.

In All Saints' we were able to meet in church in November for an act of **Remembrance**. The children, including from Cubs and Beavers, then went to the Village Hall for a short service together including a game, songs, brief talk, craft and prayer. At St Matthew's, due to Covid the Scouts group were unable to be inside together and so after the act of Remembrance children from church, Cubs, Scouts and Beavers met on the Rectory lawn for a short talk and activity.

In December we ran '**Advent Doors**' in our usual way of hearing part of the story each day from a home in each village.



Image: Advert for 'Advent Doors'

We also held **Christmas tree decorating** sessions in each church. This was well attended and some families said it had become part of their Christmas tradition. It was particularly popular in St Matthew's where we had over 60 visit us, many of whom were Fledgelings families. It would be great to find more opportunities of this type to keep reaching people through the year.



Photo: Indoor Christmas tree at St Matthew's; Deborah Evans

We had planned to hold two **Crib service and two carol services** across the Benefice but plans had to change due to the emergence of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 in December. Our Chilton Carol service was held inside All Saints' Church as planned. St Matthew's carol services in the afternoon and evening, though, were both held in the churchyard. This worked well and both were very well attended. The church orchestra, with 16 players, accompanied the afternoon service and a keyboard accompanied the evening service. A single Crib service was held outside at St Matthew's.



Photo: Jonathan Mobey preaching at St Matthew's afternoon carol service; Deborah Evans

2.6 Evangelism & Discipleship

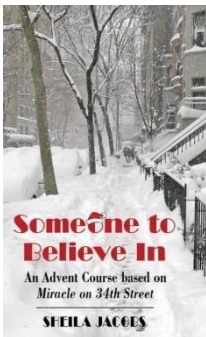
Our churches seek to fulfil the Great Commission to make disciples through loving service, evangelism and discipleship – sharing the good news of Jesus in word and deed and helping individuals to grow in faith. This is done through our worship services but also through other groups and activities.

Following the previous Alpha and Christianity Explored courses, the same group of people went on to The Prayer Course on Zoom with a couple of other people attending. In addition to the three leaders 11 other people attended.

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.

During the pandemic groups have adapted to the social restrictions and the shielding requirements of members by meeting outdoors and online where necessary, and maintaining contact with members by phone. The groups are always happy for new members to join.

During 2021 there were around 50 people meeting either via Zoom or face-to-face across six home groups.



For the four weeks of Advent we ran 'Advent Central' in St Matthew's on Wednesday evenings. This used material and themes from the Christmas film, 'A miracle on 39th Street'.

Image: Advent Central course book

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 four new clients each month, supported by an employed administrator and by church members who befriend and support the client families.

Once again 2021 was not a typical year due to the pandemic, but the Centre was able to get back up to a consistent 2-3 referrals per month, totalling 26 new referrals across the year. Five clients became debt free during the year. At the end of 2021 there were 39 families on the books – in set-up, on Debt plans or going through insolvency.

The Debt Centre is very blessed to have 30 volunteers helping and supporting the clients in so many ways including FareShare deliveries as well as prayer. Clients are also blessed with items of furniture, white goods and bikes.

The social events held for clients were more limited than usual due to the pandemic. When restrictions allowed, an afternoon tea was held in July where one person made a faith response. A Fish and Chip Supper was held in November with a local testimony. Gifts were delivered on Valentine's Day and at Easter. At Christmas, the usual deliveries of hampers to the clients and their families are always well received and a chance to show God's love for them.

A highly committed team of trained Money Coaches in our churches continue to offer **CAP Money Courses** online. Eight courses were offered through the year including a student course. Six people attended. Online courses attract people from all over the country rather than just locally so introduction to our local churches is not possible but hopefully encourages them to attend their local church if they don't already. One in-person course was offered as a weekday daytime course at Didcot Baptist Church. This was at the request of the Debt Centre Manager. Five delegates attended.

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. It is hoped that a candidate will be appointed soon and that other team members will be recruited.

Because of Covid the possibility of visiting parishioners in hospitals and care homes was severely curtailed so contact has been carried out by phone. When visiting restrictions have been lighter we have been able to visit some homes including the new Alma Barn Lodge care home on the Didcot Road near Harwell.

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. Under Covid restrictions funerals have had to be undertaken in a different format with fewer attendees who are seated in a socially distanced way. Some services have been conducted in the cemetery at Harwell and in the churchyard at Chilton.

Home Communions are taken four times a year to parishioners who are not very mobile – Easter, summer, Harvest and Christmas. During 2021 this ministry was limited as potential recipients shielded from the pandemic 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 2021. Our theme for the year was 'Lessons from the Land'. In the first half of the year we were unable to hold services in-person but instead delivered to our members an Easter gift in spring and a bowl of strawberries in summer. These gifts were accompanied by letters containing Bible passages and messages of encouragement. We were very grateful to a willing band of helpers who assisted with the deliveries which were much appreciated by the recipients.

In October we were able to meet in person again at last. We celebrated Harvest with a service and simple jacket potato lunch in Chilton Village Hall. We welcomed 60 people to this event. We were also delighted to be able to meet together again in December in St Matthew's Church to focus on Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. The 'Lesson from the Land' here was 'spices'. Plans are now in hand for Generational Gold for 2022.



Photo: Generation Gold Easter boxes; Carol Pigott



Photo: Generation Gold Harvest Lunch; Kate Evans



Photo: Generation Gold service in December; Deborah Evans

Both our Churches have continued to collect non-perishable food for **Didcot Emergency Foodbank** throughout the Harvest time. The Foodbank issued food to 4,330 adults and children in 2021 (includes repeat visits). That compares with 3,044 in 2020, and 1,546 five years ago.

Photo: Harvest at All Saints'; Alex Reich



year,
at

2.8 Social and Community

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

Harwell Evergreens was a daytime social group for older residents but sadly the group closed in December. 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.

All Saints' Women's Group held its monthly meetings for the first two-thirds of the year via Zoom. In these sessions members learned a little more about each other through the topics discussed. For example, in January the topic was a favourite poem or short reading. These included 'Beatitudes for the learning disabled', Psalm 23 and 'Heaps of stuff' by Pam Ayres. At the March meeting, Rev Pam Rolls led the group through Holy Week. Another month members shared a favourite or unusual recipe.

From September onwards, Women's Group was able to meet face-to-face again in All Saints' church. Meetings included a talk about women working on the waterways during WW2 and a talk about the work and support provided by the Be Free Young Carers charity. The December meeting had Christmas readings and carols.

The Women's Group continued to raise money for charity. During the third lockdown it organized 'Bake-ins' where villagers could pre-order baking and come and collect it in a safe way. These raised £2,263. The Group re-started its charity markets in April. The plant sale held in aid of Christian Aid in May alone raised £1,600 despite limiting advertising to Chilton village only. The markets raised a total of £7,418. The Group also devised five 'cryptic quizzes' which raised a further £975. Charities supported included Be Free Young Carers, Ovarian Cancer Research, the Oxfordshire branch of Crohn's and Colitis UK, Brain Tumour Research and the Children's Air Ambulance.



Photo: Members of the Women's Group being presented with a certificate by the Rotary Club of Abingdon Vesper in thanks for the money they have raised; Richard Benton

Harwell Evergreens decided to finish during December 2021 due to committee members' other commitments. Most of the remaining funds were used for a celebration meal for members in the Church Hall on 16 December. Mr Peter Selby gave up his afternoon to entertain the group with his flute. The Evergreens leader, Gill Gay, said that she thoroughly enjoyed her time working with the members and hoped that the group had made a valuable contribution towards church life.

A new monthly community event called 'Church Community Cafe' was trialed in St Matthew's in early December. It was held 10am-12 noon on a Thursday. The intention is for this event to resume on the first Thursday in March 2022 once the omicron wave of the pandemic is behind us.

2.9 World Mission

The World Mission Group seeks to promote the engagement of our churches with world mission and proposes to each PCC how each church could spend its World Mission budget.

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 children and young people in particular.
- 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 2021 we continued to support financially a number of organisations in line with the 5 marks of mission; MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship), Scripture Union, The Leprosy Mission and Arocha.

We also continued to support financially a number of individual mission partners: Heather and David Sharland have now finished their time with Church Mission Society in Uganda and have returned to the UK. We are now supporting Chris and Suzy Wilson and their children who are with Church Mission Society in Ethiopia; Endri and Dyshi Tabacu of The Light of the World church in Albania, and John Abu Bakker with Fellowship For Neighbours, India.

The four members of the World Mission group met together during 2021 over Zoom. The group would love more people to join it and they continue to pray for this increased membership.

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; maintains the calendar, rotas and news items on the church website; posts to social media; 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.



Images: the 2021 church Easter card and Christmas card delivered to every home in the Benefice

RIDGEWAY BROADSHEET
August 2021

Interactive
Worship

Nables
Family
Service

Morning and Evening
Bible Study
Weekly Communion

You are Warmly invited

Sunday 5 September 2021
to come along and join in with

a celebration of the re-opening of

All Saints' 9.30am Morning Worship
Interactive Service 10.00am St Matthew's
 St Matthew's 11.30am Morning Worship
Evening Worship 6.00pm St Matthew's

No RSVP required - just come along ALL WELCOME

generationscloud

St Andrew's

Rector of Harwell and Chilton Revd Dr Jonathan Mobey
 The Rectory | Church Lane | Harwell | OX11 0EZ
 01235 799376 | J.M.HCChurches@gmail.com

Associate Minister David Pam Rolfe
 01235 834475 | pamrolfs@tiscali.co.uk

Children & Families Mrs Sarah Barrett | SB.HCChurches@gmail.com
 Mrs Melanie Steeds | MS.HCChurches@gmail.com

Church Administrator & PA to the Rector Mrs Deborah Evans
 Harwell Church Office | usual hours Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 2.00pm
 01235 834256 | DE.HCChurches@gmail.com
 Staff day off usually on Fridays

Image: front page of the Broadsheet August 2021

During 2021, as 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, though support for in-person services increased again as the year went on.

3. Looking forward – key plans and challenges

Our strategy of focusing growth on families and youth remains, alongside providing a ministry to people of all ages.

Now that the Greater Didcot Christian Children & Youthwork Trust has come into being we hope to begin to see the fruits of this for the young people in our communities. Further fundraising is required for the Trust and a recently appointed trustee with fundraising experience has given a lead on this task.

We will continue to monitor how well the re-revised worship service pattern works to balance the needs of families (who generally prefer a more informal worship style) and those who prefer more traditional services.

We continue to be an outward-looking benefice and open to ecumenical collaboration with other churches. This will take on a particular focus as the building of the large 'Valley Park' housing development (which is almost entirely within Harwell parish, but on the 'Didcot side' of the A34) commences, and financial challenges in the wider Deanery are addressed.

Key expressions of our collaborative, ecumenical approach are our active partnership with churches through the Greater Didcot Christian Children & Youthwork Trust and our active participation in the debt counselling service, CAP. Use of this debt counselling service is growing and its capacity may be put to the test with the large rise in the cost of domestic heating and the 'cost of living crisis' predicted for 2022.

Our Rector, Jonathan Mobey, has decided to return to practise medicine full time from the end of March 2022. He has led and inspired us through some much-needed changes and will be sorely missed. The impending interregnum period will be demanding for the Churchwardens and other members of the Senior Leadership Team. Thankfully we are blessed with a preaching and leading team who are strong in number and in faith.

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. St Matthew's PCC met five times and All Saints' PCC met four times during 2021 – all remotely via Zoom because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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 five times during 2021.

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. During 2021 the Benefice's **Safeguarding Officer**, Mr Mel Gibson, sadly died. Mrs Judy Gold was **Deputy Safeguarding Officer** and held the reins for the rest of the year while a replacement Safeguarding Officer was sought. 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 assessment and development of staff employed by the PCCs is carried out, and recruitment procedures.

Data compliance

In 2021 further work was undertaken to ensure that the churches are compliant with 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 2021 was £7,621 better than budgeted. This is largely a result of lower than budgeted expenditure on church maintenance and outreach activities, accompanied by increased donations as a result of the Giving Appeal in December.

Loose alms were down because the coronavirus pandemic caused a reduction in people attending Sunday services, weddings and funerals. Planned giving showed a small increase for the first time in five years, increasing from £48.4k to £49.1k (excluding gift aid).

Income in 2021 was £109,719. **Expenditure** in 2021 was £110,080.

We are grateful to all who continue to support the C&FW post. The restricted fund for this shows a current balance of £40,491, more than sufficient to cover salaries for the coming year.

See Appendix 4 for a summary of income and expenditure for the years 2020 and 2021 and the budget for 2022.

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 2022.

At 1st January 2021 there was a negative opening balance in the General fund of -£37,515. On 31 December 2021 there was a negative closing balance of -£37,876 to take forward into 2022, and reserves in Designated Funds were £87,934.

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.

The PCC is also concerned with developing our buildings to accommodate our own activities more effectively, and to enable us to connect better with and serve the wider community. A key aim is to have a main church building that is flexible, comfortable, and accessible, whilst maintaining and even enhancing its beauty. Investigating plans to improve the entrance area have continued during 2021, but progress has been limited by technical questions and difficulties of getting information from contractors.

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. The Church Architect carried out the **Quinquennial Inspection** of the Church building (delayed from 2020) in June 2021. The recommendations have been incorporated in the Action List. The overall condition of the church building is good and the Architect in his report commented *'It is clear....that the PCC take a great deal of care and pride in looking after the fabric of this Church'*.

The detailed Fabric Report by the Churchwardens is provided in a separate document.

The following are examples of work carried out during the last year.

- Some stone tiles from near the ridge on the south side of the chancel roof became detached in early November. A specialist contractor inspected the area, made repairs, and also reported on the overall state of the chancel roof. In their estimation replacement might be necessary within 5 to 10 years. This situation will be discussed with the Church Architect before recommending how this work could be planned.
- The PCC has considered whether a roof alarm should be installed to discourage any further thefts of lead. The only vulnerable lead now remaining is on the roof of the south aisle. Having reviewed the pros and cons, including the economic case, the PCC concluded that there was not a good case for installing a roof alarm. The Buildings Committee will investigate different security options based on more lighting instead.
- A swarm of bees settled in the eaves near the porch in May and had to be removed to a new home.

Examples of other work are in the Fabric Report.



Photo: Bees under the eaves, May 2021; Steve Light, Shire Pest Solutions



Photo: Missing stone tiles on the chancel roof, November 2021; 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 2021 through a Facebook page:

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 continues as 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.

In normal times, the Hall is 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, though the costs have always exceeded the income by around £2,000 annually in recent years. 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 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.

Bookings are managed via a 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.

Due to lockdowns and restrictions on meeting indoors the Hall has been used much less than usual during 2021. The Hall was used for Holiday Club in the Summer and some bookings resumed in the Autumn. Bookings during the course of the year have been managed by the church administrator.

Maintenance issues, lawns and hedges were managed by the Rector until the early Autumn when, in the absence of a Hall Manager, the maintenance was taken over by the Buildings Committee. The heating and ventilation systems have been checked and reset to fit with regular users. A new front door has been fitted, plumbing repairs carried out, and repairs to the rainwater goods are underway.

Following an approach from another organisation during 2021, the PCC has been considering the pros and cons of selling the Hall and using the proceeds to develop new facilities in the main church building instead. The PCC has instructed solicitors to liaise with the Charity Commission and the Diocese about the possibility. No decision has yet been reached.

The income for the Hall in 2021 (not including the Scout cleaning contribution) was £1,147. Expenditure on maintenance, cleaning, utilities and insurance was £4,905.

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 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 April 2021 the roll stood at 73 as compared with 68 in September 2020.

Appendix 3:

St Matthew's PCC membership

During 2021, 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 (until the Annual Meeting in May¹)
- Eliza Wheaton (from the Annual Meeting in May)
- Allan Macarthur

Elected Deanery Synod representatives

- Gordon Gill
- Sid Gale

Other elected representatives

- Tony Hughes (Vice-Chair)
- Jane Woolley (Secretary)
- Phill Johnston (Treasurer)
- Rebecca Lewis from May 2021
- Michelle Walker

Co-opted representatives

There were no co-opted members

¹ Strictly speaking, Rebecca Lewis remained a churchwarden until Eliza Wheaton was formally invested in September

Appendix 4: Income and expenditure in 2020 and 2021 and budget for 2022

The full and independently examined Accounts for 2021 are published separately. They should be read in conjunction with this report.

	2020 (actual)	2021 (actual)	2022 (budget)
INCOME			
Envelopes/planned giving	48,484	49,160	54,000
Gift Aid recovered	14,946	11,636	12,500
VAT reclaimed (LPW grant)	5,290	869	-
Loose Alms	826	973	1,500
Grants	-	5,982	-
Donations/legacies/other	5,969	12,698	3,000
Fees	880	2,128	2,500
Church Hall income	1,886	1,147	2,500
Holiday Club	29	327	500
Interest	325	33	50
Transfers from Restricted / Designated funds			
Children & Families Worker	17,795	16,284	18,100
Administrator	12,128	11,550	10,000
Chilton Joint Account	(3,850)	(3,850)	-
Insurance Claim – roof repair	8,747	62	-
Major Repairs	-	720	-
Youth Fund	-	-	-
CAP Debt Centre	3,100	-	-
Total income	116,555	109,719	104,150
EXPENDITURE			
Parish Share	49,854	48,204	47,959
Mission Giving	7,800	6,9440	7,100
Joint PCC	38,959	34,956	38,183
Harwell PCC	55,209	19,980	24,630
Total expenditure	151,822	110,080	117,872
Surplus/Deficit	(35,267)	(361)	(13,722)

Fund Balances

There was a negative balance on the **General** fund at 31 December 2021 of **-£37,876**.

Designated funds (designated by the PCC for particular purposes but which could be otherwise spent if the PCC so decided) total **£87,934**.

Restricted funds (which can only be used for the purpose for which they were given) total **£61,691** including £40,491 for the C&FW post.

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

www.harwellandchiltonchurches.org.uk