

ST MARTINS CHURCH SHUTFORD - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015.

ST MARTINS CHURCH is one of six churches in the Wykeham Benefice in North Oxfordshire, which is part of the Deddington Deanery of the Oxford Diocese. The six parishes are Broughton with North Newington, Epwell, Shutford, Sibford, Swalcliffe and Tadmarton. The benefice is under the care of the Reverend Ronald Hawkes the rector assisted by his Associate Ministers Reverend John Tattersall and Reverend Elisabeth Hawkes and various other clergy, who with the Parochial Church Council had the responsibility of promoting the mission of the Church of England in the parish and across the benefice.

MEMBERS OF THE PCC are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with Church of England rules and the following served during 2015. Rector - Reverend Ronald Hawkes and Associate Ministers Reverend Elisabeth Hawkes & John Tattersall. Wardens – John Hodgkins: also Deanery Synod Representative and Vice-Chairman and Ken Jeffs: also Treasurer. Elected Members – Dominic Cadbury, Alasdair Gibbs (from March 2015) Julie Hodgkins: also Secretary, Jacky Hone, Sue Roe-French: also Village Hall Representative and Iris Simons. (The rector and his associate ministers are ex-officio members of the PCC)

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

There were 11 members on the church electoral roll with a further 14 on the family roll. The average church attendance on a normal Sunday was about 10, ranging from 5 to 16, with good increases for festivals, special and benefice services. A Benefice Service is usually held on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10.00am, attendance could always be better but worshippers do cross village boundaries. On other Sundays BCP, Common Worship or Family/Morning Praise services have been held, with an evening service on the 5th Sunday in the month. The normal time of worship was 9.30 am. Morning Prayer on Saturday Mornings has an average attendance of 3 or 4. During the year there were 2 weddings and 2 children baptised. There were no funerals but two interment of ashes. Attendance on Easter Sunday was 36, Christmas Eve 52 and Christmas Day 20. Attendance at some other special services held during the year was Pets Service 8, Harvest Thanksgiving 27, Service of Remembrance 50, Advent Carols 22 and Christingle 43. The number of communicants fell by more than 20% compared to 2014 but overall attendance was up 35% due to school children attendance, weddings and baptisms: there were lots of visitors for these and our special services with visitors very often out numbering residents. Highest attendance during the year was Helen Gibbs Wedding with 107 in church. BCP Communion continues to attract the highest congregation for a normal Sunday Service. Church attendance may be affected by secular activities on Sundays and the involvement of families and younger people in church life is disappointing. Messy church is being used as an informal introduction to church and all children are aware of Christianity and other faiths through school. The quality of worship is being maintained with a core congregation of 15/20 attending once a month with about 40 or so others coming to church occasionally.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full PCC met 4 times during the year (including APCM) with 66% attendance. The Benefice Council met twice during the year. The pattern of services has been varied and published well in advance through the Wykeham News with reminders via the weekly pewsheets. Information about Fairtrade is held in church. The PCC promoted the Water Aid Jar of Change Appeal during Lent and held a Lent Lunch in Holy Week with proceeds given to Banbury Young Homeless Project. The annual Summer Fete (renamed Festival in 2014) was held in June with proceeds shared with the village hall and community association. 11 Riders and Striders visited the church raising funds for OHCT and were received by several welcomers. The Harvest Thanksgiving and Harvest Supper & Sale (44 diners) were well attended with funds raised shared between the church and Katharine House Hospice. Two Beetle Drive`s, Two Coffee Mornings and an Autumn Lunch were also held to raise funds and as social events. The Community Association organised village carol singing with refreshments in church. The churchwardens have kept the PCC up to date with finance and fabric issues. Worship and Mission and the need to grow the church are our top priorities and our outreach plans are constantly under review. Wykeham News and Shutford News help to raise the profile of the church and are delivered to every household. The Benefice website, Pewsheets and leaflet drops are used as is personal contact.

BENEFACTORY COUNCIL was set up to act in an advisory capacity and is made up of each village's PCC members. The council met twice during the year with discussions about worship and mission, church growth (LYCIG) finance and fund raising and reflections on life in the benefice. Nicky McGinty, a consultant funded by the Oxford Diocese, led discussions at two meetings when we discussed church growth in a multi-parish benefice. There were austerity lunches held during Lent with donations given to charity. There were various discussion groups meeting during the year including Lent, Prayer and Pilgrim Groups. There were `Messy Church` Children`s Events in Sibford, Shutford, Swalcliffe and Tadmarton and a Youth Group led by James Taylor met regularly. There are proposals to employ a Youth Worship to help with our outreach to this section of our community. A successful Summer Soccer School was held at Bishop Carpenter School. There have also been various social and fund raising events, a Quiz Night and concerts held across the benefice during the year including Alyth Chamber Choir and Orlando Jopling. All major festivals were celebrated either in individual churches or as a benefice occasion. The Archdeacon of Dorchester led worship at a Benefice Service in Sibford in March. The Bishop of Dorchester came to Broughton in December for a confirmation service.

DEANERY SYNOD met four times during the year: John Hodgkins is our representative. Minutes of meetings are circulated and agenda items included Finance and allocation of Parish Share, Diocesan Elections, Interfaith Relations, Rural Issues, Women Bishops, Mission and Outreach, Pastoral Care, Credit Unions and Safeguarding. Our new Archdeacon of Dorchester, Judy French, came to Broughton in June for an Archdeacon's Visitation to enrol churchwardens. There was a Grand Day Out in Oxford in April. Various training sessions organised by Reverend Ronald were held during the year. The Door, a Diocesan monthly newspaper, is circulated locally.

FABRIC (incorporating churchwardens report)

St Martins is loved and well looked after by the PCC and many parishioners. All flowers, cleaning materials and refreshments are donated. The grass in the churchyard has been cut by the churchwarden but the Sibford Road cemetery grass has been cut by W C Lovesey and financed by Shutford Parish Council. The hedge has been cut back in the cemetery. Small areas of grass have been left uncut for conservation reasons with an abundance of wild flowers during spring and summer. Swallows have nested in the church porch: there were two broods this year with 5/6 young fledging. Butterflies have been seen all year round. Health and safety issues are considered, including grave stone checking. Church records and inventory are reviewed from time to time. Various high level light and screen bulbs have been changed. Church steps have been repointed and church door lock repaired, although door handle still needs attention. Paschal Candle Holder was rebuilt. Tiles on the north side slanting roof have been replaced and plaster replaced inside following a water leak: a grant from ODBF has been received. A heavy trap door in the belfry is to be replaced. A box to collect non perishable food items etc for the Banbury Young Homeless Project is at the back of the church. Fire Extinguishers and Electrical Appliances have been checked. A new cleaning rota has been drawn up with a small team of volunteers including some new ones. A Quinquennial inspection was done in early December 2014 with no major problems reported. John and Julie Hodgkins have open and closed the church for most of the year taking over from Jacky and Jo Hone. Sue Roe French has taken over from Jacky overseeing church flowers and rota.

FINANCE

Planned Giving at £8743 covered 95% of the parish share due to the generosity of our regular worshippers. Other giving of £1671 includes collections and small donations. Fees of £1380 came from two weddings and interment of ashes and memorial costs: a % is paid to the Diocese. Fund raising of £2723 came from Jars of Change, Lent Lunch, Beetle Drives, Coffee Mornings, Harvest Supper and Sale, Autumn Lunch and Illuminate and Celebrate. Total General Income was £14545 with regular donations of flowers, cleaning materials and refreshments. With ministry costs at £9144, donations to good causes of £1206 and General Expenses of £2242 there is a surplus of £1952 on General account increasing assets to £11817. Grass Maintenance in the Sibford Road Churchyard extension was paid for by Shutford Parish Council. The Restoration Fund balance has increased to £12219: there was income from the village fete of £1250, Christmas Draw £574, investment interest of £441 and grant of £1300 with payments for buildings insurance of £1772 and roof repairs of £1581. The financial situation at present is reasonably sound but we continue to rely heavily on a few regular worshippers and donors. We will continue to look more to the wider community using specific fund raising for church expenses and interested villagers are aware of our need of an income of about £250 per week to remain financially viable. See separate financial statement for full details: the accounts have been drawn up on an income and expenditure basis and have been examined by John Steele, treasurer of Tadmerton PCC with their accounts being examined by Ken Jeffs, our treasurer.

SUMMARY

Overall church attendance increased in 2015 with 1249 worshippers in church during the year, near the average seen in recent years, and due to two weddings and two baptisms. Attendance at a normal service has reduced to an average of 10 with communicant numbers also down. Styles and times of services mean there are a variety of forms of worship across the benefice. Worship has been led by our rector Ronald Hawkes and his Associate Ministers John Tattersall and Elisabeth Hawkes assisted by Glyn Evans, Christopher Hall, Tom Moffatt and Hazel Scarr. Ronald and Elisabeth Hawkes and Jenny Lake have supported us musically live or by recording music on our electronic organ. Deddington Brass played at the Remembrance Service. The church continues to be supported by a small number of loyal worshippers with others from the wider community involved in social and fund raising events: a recent village survey confirms most value the presence of St Martin's in the village. Parish Life continues to be challenging and we all have a responsibility to support Ronald Hawkes in his ministry. We have an ageing congregation and PCC membership and need to encourage younger villagers to become involved with church life reducing the financial and work commitment of a few. We all have a desire to see our congregations grow and so will continue to connect with everyone through relationships and social events, building on our strengths and valuing what we have and will achieve in the future.