

ST MARTINS CHURCH SHUTFORD - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016.

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 2016. Rector - Reverend Ronald Hawkes and Associate Ministers Reverend Elisabeth Hawkes & Reverend John Tattersall. Wardens – John Hodgkins also Deanery Representative and Ken Jeffs also Treasurer. Elected Members – Dominic Cadbury, Alasdair Gibbs, Julie Hodgkins also Secretary, Jacky Hone, Sue Roe-French also Village Hall Representative and Iris Simons. John Hodgkins and Sue Roe-French swapped their roles as Deanery and Village Hall Representatives in October.
(The rector and his associate ministers are ex-officio members of the PCC)

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

There were 10 members on the church electoral roll with a further 13 on the family roll. The average church attendance on a normal Sunday was about 10, ranging from 4 to 19, 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. During the year there were 2 weddings, 2 wedding blessings and 2 funerals. Attendance on Easter Sunday was 27 and Christmas Day 41. Attendance at some other special services held during the year was Harvest Thanksgiving 28, Service of Remembrance 40, Carols 18 and Christingle 30. The number of communicants is at an all-time low but overall attendance was higher than the average seen in recent years boosted by special services and occasions. Highest attendance during the year was 100 for a wedding in June. BCP Communion continues to attract a good congregation but the highest attendance on a normal Sunday was for a Morning Praise service which usually has families with children present. Church attendance may be affected by secular activities on Sundays and the involvement of families and younger people in church life could be better. Messy church is being used as an informal introduction to church and 4 Shutford connected families are keen supporters: 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 30 or so others coming to church occasionally. There are also villagers who do not worship but support our outreach to the community through social events, help with flowers and give to the Illuminate and Celebrate Initiative.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full PCC met 4 times during the year (including APCM) with 73% 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 Helen Hodgkins Trust Jar of Change Appeal during Lent and held a Lent Lunch in Holy Week with proceeds given to Katharine House Hospice. A door to door collection for Christian Aid took place in May. The annual Summer Festival, organised by a separate committee, was held in June with proceeds shared with the village hall and church. 18 Riders and Striders visited the church raising funds for OHCT and were received by 8 welcomers. The Harvest Thanksgiving and Harvest Coffee Evening & Sale were well attended with funds raised for Macmillan Cancer Support. Two Beetle Drive's and Two Coffee Mornings were also held to raise funds and as social events. 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.

BENEFICE COUNCIL was set up to act in an advisory capacity and is made up of each village's PCC members. The half yearly council meeting discussed worship and mission, finance and fund raising and reflected on life in the 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 North Newington (for Shutford), Sibford, Swalcliffe and Tadmarton and a Youth Group meets regularly with the appointment of two youth workers. 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. All festivals were celebrated either in individual churches or as a benefice occasion.

DEANERY SYNOD met four times during the year: John Hodgkins was our representative until October when Sue Roe-French took over. Minutes of meetings are circulated and agenda items included Finance and allocation of Parish Share, Mission and Outreach, Renewal and Reform, Tradecraft and Fairtrade and Celebrating the Deddington Deanery. Various training sessions organised by Reverend Ronald Hawkes were held during the year. Right Revd Steven Croft was appointed Bishop of Oxford in May with his inauguration in Christ Church Cathedral on 30th September. 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. 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. 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 door lock repaired, although door handle still needs attention. A heavy trap door in the belfry has been 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 have been checked but Electrical Appliances need attention. Cleaning rota has been drawn up by Julie Hodgkins who has a small team of volunteers including some new ones: a Duke of Edinburgh Scheme participant assisted for three months. A Quinquennial inspection was done in early December 2014 with no major problems reported, however repairs to the font are to undertaken at a cost of £2000: a faculty approved by the diocese is awaited. John and Julie Hodgkins have open and closed the church for most of the year. Sue Roe French has taken over from Jacky Hone overseeing church flowers and rota.

FINANCE

Planned Giving at £7781 covered 91% of the parish share due to the generosity of our regular worshippers. Other giving of £1735 includes collections, church box and donations. Fees of £1704 came from two weddings and two funerals: a % is paid to the Diocese. Fund raising of £1684 came from Jars of Change, Lent Lunch, Beetle Drives, Coffee Mornings, Harvest Evening and Sale and £795 from Illuminate and Celebrate. Total General Income was £13724 with regular donations of flowers, cleaning materials and refreshments. With ministry costs at £8525, donations to good causes of £1535 and General Expenses of £1864 there is a surplus of £1798 on General account increasing assets to £13616. Grass Maintenance in the Sibford Road Churchyard extension was paid for by Shutford Parish Council. The Restoration Fund balance has increased to £14147: there was income from the village festival of £3000, investment interest of £477 and VAT grant of £263 with payments for buildings insurance of £1813. 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 £240 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.

SUMMARY

Overall church attendance in 2016 was 1100 a little above the average seen in recent year: we had two weddings, two funeral and two wedding blessings. Attendance at a normal service is an average of 10, ranging from 4/19, but communicant numbers are at an all-time low. 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 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 and others from the wider community are involved with social and fund raising events and 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 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.