

ST MARTINS CHURCH SHUTFORD - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018.

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 2018. Rector - Reverend Ronald Hawkes and Associate Ministers Reverend Elisabeth Hawkes & Reverend John Tattersall. Wardens – John Hodgkins also Village Hall Representative and Ken Jeffs also Treasurer. Elected Members – Dominic Cadbury, Alasdair Gibbs, Julie Hodgkins also Secretary, Jacky Hone, Sue Roe-French also Deanery Synod Representative and Iris Simons (until APCM 19th March) (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 12 on the family roll. The average church attendance on a normal Sunday was about 10, ranging from 4 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 with average of 40/50 worshippers from across the benefice. On other Sundays BCP, Common Worship or Morning Praise services have been held, with an occasional evening service. The normal time of worship was 9.30 am. Morning Prayer on Saturday Mornings has an average attendance of 4. During the year there was 1 funeral, 1 wedding, 2 cremations and 1 burial. Attendance on Easter Sunday was 26 and Christmas Day 25. Attendance at some other special services held during the year: Harvest Thanksgiving 16, Service of Remembrance 40 and Advent Carols 23. The number of communicants in 2018 was less than 300 compared to a 10-year average of 340, overall attendance was also down but is affected on the number of special services and occasions taking place. Highest attendance during the year was 153 for a wedding in February. BCP Communion continues to attract a good congregation with the highest attendance on a normal Sunday of 16. 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 several Shutford connected families are supporters: all children are aware of Christianity and other faiths through school. Our core congregation is about 25 of whom 15 people attend church once a month and about 20 or so others who come to church occasionally. There are other villagers who do not worship but support our outreach to the community through social events, help with flowers and other initiatives. Many use the church for some quiet time.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full PCC met 4 times during the year (including APCM) with 59% 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 and emails. 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. 9 Riders and Striders visited the church raising funds for OHCT and were received by 7 welcomers. The Harvest Supper & Sale raised funds for Katharine House Hospice. A Beetle Drive was held in November with Community Lunches bi-monthly. The churchwardens have kept the PCC up to date with finance and fabric issues. The woodwork around the font was replaced after its repair. A new delay switch was installed in the porch. Worship and Mission and the need to grow the church are our priorities and our outreach plans are constantly under review. The annual RBL village Poppy Appeal was organised by a churchwarden. The Wykeham News and Shutford News help to raise the profile of the church and are delivered to every household. The Benefice website, pewsheets, Shutford Facebook and leaflets 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. A series of talks took place in Lent entitled "Widen your Horizons" with representatives from the Sikh, Muslim, Jewish and Christian faiths speaking. The Beatitudes were studied by discussion groups meeting in The Rectory and Abingdon House. There were Messy Church Children's Events in Shutford, Sibford, Swalcliffe and Tadmarton and a Youth Group which met in Sibford Church. Christian Aid collections took place in May. A successful Summer Soccer School was held at Bishop Carpenter School. There have also been various social and fund-raising events such as coffee mornings, teas, suppers, a quiz and organ recitals across the benefice during the year with concerts and musical evenings. Various restoration and reordering projects have been discussed or completed. All festivals were celebrated either in individual churches or as a benefice occasion with special additional services held during Lent and Advent. The Centenary of The Armistice on 11th November was commemorated with services and the illumination of the Jesters Hill Beacon.

DEANERY SYNOD met three times during the year (March meeting cancelled): Sue Roe-French is our representative. Minutes of meetings are circulated, agenda items included Finance (including Annual Accounts) and allocation of Parish Share, Mission and Outreach Grants, Diocesan Synod Elections, Creative use of church buildings, Telling a new story of the rural church and Training. Presentations were given on The Parish Giving Scheme, Supporting Churches Serving Schools with a briefing on The Deanery Plan 2019. The Bishop of Dorchester addressed the synod in December: his talk entitled - Towards a Common Vision spoke of the challenges of a growing population, local health care problems, social issues, rural deprivation and the need to be contemplative, compassionate and courageous in our ministries. Various papers have been circulated by the Diocese. The Door Diocesan newspaper is circulated locally but will be replaced by a quarterly magazine (Pathways) in 2019.

FABRIC (incorporating churchwardens report)

St Martin 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, especially snowdrops and primroses, and summer. Andrew, the gardener at the manor has helped with the disposal of grass cuttings. 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. Church door lock repaired, although door handle does cause problems. 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. Cleaning rota has been drawn up by Julie Hodgkins who has a small team of volunteers: A Duke of Edinburgh Scheme participant assisted for six months. The font was repaired in 2017 with work on the surrounding pews and floor boards completed in 2018. A new switch was fitted in the church porch. John and Julie Hodgkins have open and closed the church for most of the year. Sue Roe French oversees church flowers and rota.

FINANCE

Planned Giving at £8097 has covered 95% of ministry and benefice costs share due to the generosity of our regular worshippers. Other giving of £1712 includes collections, church box and donations. Fees of £1980 came from funerals, a wedding and grave stone installation: a % is paid to the Diocese. Fund raising of £1984 included funds from Jars of Change, Lent Lunch, Beetle Drive, Community Lunches, Christian Aid Door to Door collection, Harvest Supper and Sale and £590 from the Illuminate and Celebrate initiative. Total General Income was £14403 with regular donations of flowers, cleaning materials and refreshments. With ministry costs at £8566, donations to good causes of £1880 and General Expenses of £2404 there is a surplus of £1553 on General account increasing assets to £16514. Grass Maintenance in the Sibford Road Churchyard extension was paid for by Shutford Parish Council. The Restoration Fund balance increased to £16021: there was income from the village festival of £3500, a VAT rebate of £353 and investment interest of £430: £1899 was paid out for building insurance. The financial situation at present is reasonably sound but we continue to rely heavily on a few regular worshippers and donors. We will encourage the wider community to support specific fund raising for church expenses and interested villagers are aware of our need of an income of about £250 per week, excluding charitable donations and restoration work, 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 2018 was 907, 5% lower than the average seen in recent years, including 292 communicants: there was a wedding and a funeral but no baptisms. Attendance at a normal service is an average of 10, ranging from 4/16, with special services and festivals substantially increasing numbers. Worship has been led by our rector Ronald Hawkes and his Associate Ministers John Tattersall and Elisabeth Hawkes assisted by Glyn Evans, David Pym and Keith Smalldon. Ronald and Elisabeth Hawkes have supported us musically live or by recording on our electronic organ, with the occasional help of Jenny Lake. 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. With an ageing congregation and PCC membership there is a need for younger members of our small congregation to support the commitment of a few and help secure the church's future. 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. With fewer people coming to organised worship, especially younger ones, our outreach is more important than ever.