



St John
the Baptist
Burford

The Parish Church of
St John the Baptist, Burford

Annual Report

*Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church
Council for the year ended 31st December 2018*

APCM to be held on Monday 29th April 2019 from 7.30pm
in the Warwick Hall

This Church exists to delight in God's love and to share it with others.

Background

Burford Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Burford.

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

Vicar

The Revd Richard Murray Coombs, resigned 21/10/18

Associate Vicar

The Revd Cedric Reavley

Curates

The Revd Robert Wainwright (until 30/6/18)

The Rev'd Christopher Ashton (from 30/6/18)

The Rev'd Oliver Strange (from 30/6/18)

Licensed Lay Ministers [co-opted]

Mr John Leach

Mr Roy Tarbox

Churchwardens

Mr Andrew Butcher

Mrs Jane Poulson

Representatives on Witney Deanery Synod

Mr Kevin Rillie (Lay Chair)

Mrs Gaynor Taylor

Mrs Susan McCrossan

Officers of the Parochial Church Council

Chair (from 21/10/18)

Mr Andrew Butcher

Vice Chairman:

(prior to 21/10/18)

Mr Andrew Butcher

(from 21/10/18)

Mr Ian Johnson

Treasurer

(co-opted, then elected 23/4/18) Mr Tom Douglas

Council

Mr David Berkeley (resigned 23/4/18)

Mrs Jenny Cridge Raven (retired 23/4/18)

Mr Tom Douglas (from 23/4/18)

Mr Trevor Hames

Mr Ian Johnson

Mrs Penelope Kettle

Mr Robert Lind

Mr Kyle McFarlane [resigned 24/09/18]

Secretary to PCC

Mrs Sally Ormiston

Mrs Janey Petterson

Mr Paul Petterson

Mr Roy Tarbox (LLM)

Mrs Lindsey Worvill

Electoral Roll

Mrs Jane Marshall until 23/4/18

Officer

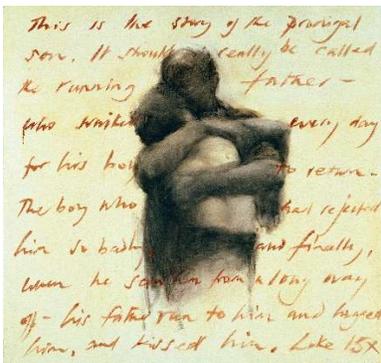
Mrs Wendy Moate from 23/4/18

Review of the Year - Rev Canon Andrew Wingfield Digby

Early in 2018 the Vicar, Richard Coombs, intimated to me that he was applying for an incumbency in Cheltenham and asked me to help out in the vacancy should he get the job. I was very happy to do so and have been involved with the staff team and planning of services etc since Richard left in October. My knowledge of what preceded his departure is limited but I imagine that other parts of this report will cover those gaps.

The first thing to say is that the year has been dominated by preparation for Richard's departure which became public knowledge in the early summer. The Coombs left behind them the heritage and blessings of twenty years of faithful, prayerful gospel ministry. The Benefice has been transformed during his time as Vicar and the principal responsibility of those of us involved in the vacancy has been to keep the show on the road and make as few changes as possible. We have thus not changed in any way the vision and values which had been embedded into the life of the Benefice in 2017. We continue to 'delight in God's love and share it with others'. The four values have been widely adopted across the Benefice and are integral to the way in which we have searched for a new Vicar since Richard's departure.

1) The Bible – Hearing God's love in Jesus.



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We have continued to place a high priority on teaching the Bible. Almost all the sermons are expository in style – that is to say we ask the question first 'what is the writer trying to say to his readers' and only when we have answered that do we go on to ask 'what is God saying to us today'. By approaching the Word of God in this way we try to avoid 'preaching ourselves' and emphasise Christ crucified and Risen. The responsibility of teaching the Word in season and out of season lies with the clergy and licensed lay ministers and one or two others who are preparing to be preachers. The small group leaders play a vital role too, ensuring that these groups, which are for many the most appreciated part of church life, do not become places where ignorance or wrong ideas flourish.

2) Prayer and Worship – Responding to God's love in Jesus

The imminent departure of our much loved Vicar and his family galvanised the church into prayer! Several new initiatives took place and crucial meetings of parish reps and PCCs were covered in prayer. The Central Payer Meeting has been better attended though like all Parish prayer meetings we would love to see more coming. Attendance at Sunday services across the Benefice has been maintained and at Swinbrook@11 there has been rapid growth so that now as many as 80 are there week by week. The children's and youth work has expanded under Jo Vickers' excellent leadership. Particularly encouraging has been the contact with teenagers in the Burford School Boarding house.

3) Outreach – sharing God's love in Jesus

Christianity Explored and Alpha courses continue to be held across the Benefice although attendance can be mixed. Courses in the Swan at Swinbrook and in Asthall Leigh's Memorial Hall have been well received. Many events have been held in the now fully functioning Warwick Hall and these can be read about in the Warwick Hall report. In particular the Cafe has proved to be the hub of the Hall and a great place for people to meet and chat. Reaching the people of Burford itself remains a great challenge and great efforts have been made during the year to improve and cement relations with the town. The principal component of outreach is each and every church member having the confidence in the Gospel to share the great news of Jesus with friends, family and colleagues. This remains a great challenge to us as in most churches.

4) Community – Experiencing God’s love in Jesus

The Warwick Hall enables us to ‘do community’ much better than before. The activities that go on there and the excellent team that work and volunteer in the Hall should be commended for the way in which Burford residents and the numerous tourists are welcomed. The vergers and cafe staff play a crucial role in this and I am constantly amazed at how well they do. Community also exists across the Benefice. You cannot attend a service at Asthall, Taynton or Fulbrook without being warmly welcomed and impressed by the care for one another being expressed. What has happened at Swinbrook is truly remarkable. After the church service each week everyone enjoys coffee and biscuits and the chat often goes on for quite a while. For both seasoned church goers and the many ‘new folk’ who are coming along it is high point of the week. We long to see this kind of growth across the Benefice without destroying each church’s individual character.

Ministry Team

You cannot lose your leader without there being a big impact on the rest of the team. We also lost Jon Bright who decided after much deliberation that full-time paid ministry was not for him and he left us in the Autumn. We were joined by two new Curates in June. Oliver Strange arrived with his wife Lucie to replace Rob Wainwright who left to be Chaplain of Oriel College in Oxford. Oliver is of course a general purpose Curate but takes particular responsibility for the 11am service, Fulbrook and contacts with the schools. Chris Ashton (with Jessie and their three children) was part of our lives already but his ordination and attachment to the Burford Benefice has meant we have him for Mondays and Tuesdays and of course Sundays. He continues his role at Kingham Hill School where he is on the staff. Jo Vickers took on some extra hours to cover Jon Bright’s departure. From October I gave some leadership to the staff team though in truth much of the day to day running of the church remained with Ben Turner, who continues to be a vital asset to our ministry. Cedric Reavley’s impending retirement from the Pharmacy was eagerly awaited although in truth it is impossible to exaggerate the significance of Cedric’s ministry long before he had some more post retirement time. Cedric takes a particular interest in Taynton. The contribution of our two LLMs, John Leach and Roy Tarbox, is very important and our ministry team has been strengthened with the arrival of two retired clergymen, Gerard Moate (and Wendy), who help mostly at Burford, and Gerald March (and Barbara) who give great help to Alex Ross who now takes responsibility almost exclusively for Swinbrook.

Conclusion

To say that it had been a seamless transition from Richard’s leadership to the vacancy would be an exaggeration. There have been inevitable challenges to face some of which you can read about in this report and some of which for pastoral reasons must remain confidential. But we have entered 2019, full of faith in the power of the Gospel to change lives as people open their hearts to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is an exciting place for our new Vicar to come to and no doubt we will all give him our full support

Interregnum 2018/19 – Andrew Butcher, Warden

The twenty year ministry in the Burford Benefice of Rev Richard Coombs came to a conclusion on Sunday 21 October 2018. He had been offered the post of Rector in Cheltenham Town in May 2018 and worked a longer than usual period of notice in order to settle in our two new Curates, Rev Oliver Strange and Rev Chris Ashton who were ordained at the end of June 2018.

We marked the 20th anniversary at the annual outdoor morning service at Gigley Farm in July, reflecting on the wonderful growth that emerged from the small congregation in 1998 of about 30 with no children and young people. Clearly God had been at work in and through Richard’s clear and well applied preaching from God’s word.

At the farewell in October, we were able to thank Richard and Nicola for their faithfulness and commitment to the churches and to the people of the Benefice, and to wish them well with the blessing of the Lord as they moved to Cheltenham to commence their new ministry there.

By then, the four parishes had begun to work on the profile which is required to accompany the advert. There was close working with the Diocese, partly with Bishop Colin Fletcher, partly with Rev Toby Wright, Area Dean, and partly with Rev Charles Chadwick, the Parish Development Adviser.

The agreed timetable envisaged an advertisement in January 2019, shortlisting in February and interviews in March. Prior to this a joint meeting of the four PCCs was necessary and then of the four PCCs with the Bishop. The first of these, held under Section 11 of The Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986, took place on 30 November, and the second under Section 12 was held on 10 December.

The advertisement led to eight applications, five were shortlisted and four interviewed as one candidate was appointed elsewhere. The interview panel comprised 11 individuals: Bishop, Patron of Swinbrook – William Mackinnon, Area Dean and two Representatives from each of the four parishes. Andrew Butcher and Jane Poulson were elected as Representatives by the Burford PCC.

The candidates interviewed each displayed many strong qualities but the final decision to appoint Rev Tom Putt, Associate Minister at St John the Baptist, Yeovil, was reached unanimously. At the time of writing we look forward to the Institution and Induction of Rev Putt on Tuesday 9th July 2019 and look forward to seeing how the Lord continues to work out his purposes in this part of West Oxfordshire.

Sunday Service Statistics – St John the Baptist, Burford – Stephen Price, Verger

Average adult attendance	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
8am Communion	8	8	8	11	10	8	8	8	8
9.30am/9.15am	39	39	42	38	36	37	39	33	29
11am	120	129	139	142	141	140	153	148	137
Totals	167	176	189	191	187	185	200	189	174

There have been 12 weddings, 14 funerals and 15 baptisms.

Treasurer’s Report - Tom Douglas

Please see the separate Accounts for 2018, accompanying this 2018 Written Report, for details of income and expenditure during the year. In particular the Financial Review on page 2 summarises the financial activity.

Secretary’s Report – Sally Ormiston

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St John the Baptist, Burford, exists to represent the whole church in seeking to implement its four vision values (*the Bible, Prayer and Worship, Vision and Community*) and to bring God’s love into the community. The year began with a morning at College Farm in which the PCC looked in detail at the strategy of the church and examined how the above aims could be put into practice more effectively, matters which the PCC continued to work on at ensuing meetings.

The latter half of the year was dominated by plans for the vacancy and interregnum, which were to follow Richard’s departure in the autumn.

There were seven scheduled meetings of the PCC during the course of the year, plus extra meetings in November and December to discuss the Parish Profile and other matters to do with appointing a new incumbent. Membership of the PCC fluctuated between 19 and 22. Standing Committee (Chair of PCC, Curates, Wardens, Chair of finance and PCC secretary with non-voting Operations Team Leader attending) met approximately every other month, to conduct necessary business between PCC meetings.

The PCC’s Charity Commission registration number is 1130342.

Safeguarding Report

The Diocese of Oxford is working towards creating a Church which is safer for everyone. Active engagement with safeguarding training supports all those who have a role within the Church to effectively recognise and respond to all types of possible abuse and implement best safeguarding practice. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

The Diocese recommends that those who work with children and adults should receive training every three years. The Church of England has now developed new Core and Specialist Safeguarding Training modules and these are mandatory for all Church officer positions. A Church Officer is everyone appointed by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained or lay, paid or unpaid.

All those working with children and adults have to go through a screening process recommended by the Diocese which includes Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

The PCC is the responsible body for Safeguarding in the Church. The Safeguarding Policy has been approved and signed and is displayed in the Church porch and a copy is available at the foot of the Church website home page. This is a high priority area for the Church, the PCC, the staff and all leaders of each area of ministry.

There is a large amount of work which needs to take place within the staff team and amongst volunteers to bring the Church up to the standards which the PCC has adopted and which the Diocese require. This includes:

- Identify all those who work for the Church, paid or unpaid and create a database, to include necessary information in line with safer recruiting guidelines.
- Work through the Parish Safeguarding checklist.
- Get across the message that recruiting procedures and training in safeguarding are not optional.
- Job descriptions to be written for Safeguarding Officer, PCC Safeguarding Lead and DBS Checker, and recruitment process to begin.

The PCC has made it a priority to fulfil its safeguarding obligations, not only to be in compliance with Diocesan Safeguarding good practice, but primarily because of our responsibility towards everyone in the Church and particularly the most vulnerable among us.

Electoral Roll Report - as at 5 April 2019 – Wendy Moate

A FULL REVISION - This year was the six-yearly full revision of the Electoral Roll. This meant that a new application by way of a signed E2 form had to be made and that no names could be carried forward automatically from last year.

NUMBERS ON ROLL (AND THOSE WHO ARE NOT) - There are currently **140** names on the Roll, of whom **52** are residents of the parish and **88** are non-resident. No application was received from **99** people who were on the Roll in 2018.

HOW MAY I APPLY TO BE INCLUDED? - The Roll is now sealed until after the Annual Parochial Church Meeting; when it will then once again be open to application for inclusion by those aged over 16, who are baptized, and who complete a signed E2 form indicating whether they are resident in this parish or habitually worship in this church.

The Prayer Life of St John the Baptist - Charles Hunter Smart

The year started with the usual pattern of weekday prayer times each having its own character but all with the main focus of intercession for the life of St John's and the wider Benefice. Prayer for the Persecuted Church is held on the 2nd Monday of the month and the Benefice Central Prayer Meeting on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

At the end of March a week of prayer was held during day time hours and prayer was based around the Lord's Prayer with the aim to seek God's voice as individuals and for the life of the church.

In May as a praying community we were rocked by the sudden and unexpected death of one of our great prayer warriors Nick Jones. Nick exemplified faithfulness in prayer and constantly encouraged us to undergird everything in prayer.

From the middle of the year onwards, after the announcement of Richard Coombs' move to a new post in Cheltenham, a key focus has been praying for the whole of the interregnum process at each step of the way, asking God for His appointment of our next Vicar to be obvious and unity amongst all involved in the process to remain throughout.

Praise God for answered prayers.

Children and Youth Ministry - Sunday JAM, Rock Solid, and Open The Book

The JAM team is well established and experienced and I am so grateful for the many years of service the team has dedicated to this ministry. It is amazing to see so many children in church each week and new families visiting and then deciding to join us on a weekly basis. We have a large group of core families that attend very regularly which makes a huge difference. We continue to teach age-appropriate Bible lessons within a small group setting, play games and craft activities to reinforce the teaching point and have fun! This year for the first time 6 of the older JAM children went away on a Venture Camp over the February half-term with Tim and Rachel Redding. They all loved it and I hope more will go next year.

Do pray that we can now build a stable Rock Solid youth ministry team, as the majority of the team are new. They have had to cope with numbers doubling, getting to grips with the challenges that our 11-18 year olds face and working on making the Bible teaching interesting and relevant. I have been so impressed with this new team- they have a vision for this ministry and a desire to make it the best they can. Due to the increase in numbers we have now moved the larger Y7-9 group into the Old Hall and we will decide whether we need to split this group, as we often have over 20 attending. Please do pray for this team and for our youth-that they build their lives on Jesus.

Two teenagers were baptised and six were confirmed last April. In July, four students went to Sparkford 1 Venture Camp (Y9-Y13), where Becky and Magnus Eyles are leaders. We have nine down to go this year-this is becoming part of our annual discipleship programme and is a huge encouragement to those that go to this 8-night camp set in a school near Yeovil.

Sometime soon we will need to appoint someone to lead or support this important ministry. As a church family we need to be prepared to walk alongside and help our youth from the church family, boarding house and across the Benefice. Additionally, it would be good to see the CU at the school re-started.

On the 4th Sunday we have our JAM Praise Party during the 11am service and at 6pm The Event for the Rock Solid youth in the evening. On reflection-both are going well and have further potential for outreach and to support our young people. I am very grateful to Charlie for leading the music for the JAM Praise and to the team of teachers that lead and teach at both events.

The Open The Book drama team continue to take the weekly Wednesday assembly at Burford Primary School. The Headteacher, school Governors and most of the parents are very supportive. The children seem to so enjoy the dramas and often a small group join the cast and have small roles to play. The school continues to be under pressure from a small number of secular parents to stop our community links and the OTB assemblies and end of term church services.

Finally, I would like to thank Christine Brown and Lyn Bibbings Burns for their on-going support in Safeguarding. Christine does an incredible job at keeping all the DBS and Volunteer Agreement checks up-to-date for our large team of 60 volunteers.

Music Report - Charlie Cannell

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” Col 3:16

We are greatly blessed to have a wonderful team of musicians who faithfully serve the Lord, leading the church family in sung worship and praise. Within each service, in every prayer meeting, there is a different flavour of music - always appropriate to those gathered.

But, two things remain the same: the musicians are worshipping first - giving their own praise and thanksgiving for Jesus; secondly, we are there to lead those gathered in their response to what He has done and is doing in their lives.

From a reflective morning service, to a Sunday JAM praise party, from a 24/7 prayer event to the Carol Service, we have loved playing an active role in all aspects of church life in the last year.

We love to hear of God using our times of praise and worship to speak to people of all ages and stages, all moving forward with Jesus. This year, we have been especially blessed with encouraging testimonies of people seeing more of the Lord during times of singing and praising; I thank God that He has blessed us with such richness of musical gifts and opportunities to praise His name together in this way.

Please join me in prayer, thanking God for the wonderful range of talents He has blessed us with, and the opportunities to use these gifts to give Him all our praise and thanksgiving.

Parish Choir Report - Ruth Reavley, Choir Director

Music at 9.30 services - The congregation for the 9.30 services is ably supported by a rota of organists, (notably Edwin Wilson), whose repertoires of music provide a time of reflection before services, and of joyful uplift afterwards. The choice of hymns, made by the Parish Choir Director, reflects liturgical season, Bible readings, and the liturgy of the day. Three out of four services use Common Worship, and the fourth the Book of Common Prayer. There are two communion services and two services of morning prayer each month.

Hymns are drawn from the vast inheritance of published material, and includes words written by ancient Greeks (translated of course), through to words crafted by people still alive and writing. Similarly, hymn tunes are drawn from medieval plain chant through to more hymn-like worship songs of the twentieth century.

The Parish Choir supports the Book of Common Prayer Matins (Morning Prayer) service on the second Sunday of each month, and has been invited to sing also for Easter, Advent and Christmas Services. In Matins, we sing a canticle and a psalm to Anglican chant. A small repertoire of chants is in use. We hope this helps members of the congregation, over time, to gain confidence in singing them, given a strong choir lead. We enjoy working together on making sense of the psalm and doing our best to convey its meaning.

The Choir also prepares an Introit (at the start of the service) or an Anthem (at a mid-point) for each Matins' service. As with hymns, so with Introits and Anthems, liturgy and Bible readings are the inspiration for the monthly selection. We try to include a wide range of music styles, so one month we may sing something Tudor, and the next something composed merely a decade ago. Choir members are mindful of their role as servants of the Lord, in using their gifts to his glory.

The Parish Choir Director is always interested to hear the views of clergy and members of the congregation on those matters for which she has responsibility.

Small Groups and Discipleship – Trevor Hames

Richard Coombs headed up Small Groups until the end of September when he handed over to Oliver Strange. I have assisted and supported them both. Becky Eyles has continued to organise the Women's Groups.

We have continued in supporting, developing and encouraging small group leaders in their vital role, and very much appreciate the time and effort they give.

In March we laid on an excellent training morning on how to handle the Bible with Matt Searles.

Reports from small groups are generally positive. There are currently just over 196 registered members across 22 small groups which vary in size from 8 to 14 members. Some have met as Women's Groups during the day, some as evening groups and one new mixed group during the day.

We see small groups as a key place for us all to grow through understanding and responding to the Bible, praying for and worshipping with each other in a more intimate environment, encouraging each other in our witness to others and enjoying the friendship, support and community a small group can provide. Looking ahead we are keen to see leaders inspired and equipped, more groups forming and even more church members joining a small group.

Women's Ministry – Rachel Redding

The vision and purpose for Women's Ministry at Burford was summarised by Nicola Coombs as: "Women using opportunities to encourage other women to delight in God's love, and to encourage other women to share God's love with others". Of course, much of this goes on organically behind the scenes, with women meeting for coffee, walks, prayer and so on. However, over the last year there have been a number of more formal opportunities for women to meet and encourage each other, and to share something of their faith with wider friends.

In terms of events, in June 2018 Fiona Ashton led an evening on "Looking at Loss". This was a great time of teaching, encouragement and fellowship which many women found helpful. This was followed in late November by what has become the annual 'Advent Wreath Making', where women are encouraged to bring friends to make an advent wreath and hear a Christmas Gospel message. The event was popular as always, and we were delighted to have Juliette Mapimhidze (Curate's wife at Bledington) as our speaker. At the time of writing, we are approaching a Women's Fellowship Evening exploring depression and anxiety, which we hope will benefit women both personally and in supporting others.

A key part of Women's Ministry is the regular bible study and teaching that happens in groups that meet week-by-week during term time. Most groups are well established but we have also seen a new group form, meeting on Thursday mornings.

Alongside the regular bible study groups, we aim to offer occasional courses for women interested in exploring Christianity. With this in mind, in June 2018 a small group of women met at the Vicarage to study the 'Uncover' course, led by Nicola Coombs and Philippa Wallis.

There are of course women in the church who are unable to attend a regular daytime group, so we are delighted that a series of Women's Breakfasts have now been established. All women in the Church are welcome to attend; the aim is to provide a time of fellowship incorporating biblical focus, testimony and prayer. The first breakfast was held in November and it is hoped that these will continue to take place every six to eight weeks.

In September 2018 a new 'Women's Committee' was formed to oversee Women's Ministry in the church. The group plans to meet three or four times each year to discuss, plan and programme women's events and activities. The Committee members are: Rachel Redding (coordinator), Becky Eyles (oversight of Women's Bible Study Groups), Miriam Owen, Kirsty Streeter, Beth Johnson, Vivien Baxter, Lucie Strange and Clare Turner.

Men's Ministry – Peter Hopkins

The aim of the Men's Ministry across the Burford Benefice is to encourage men to become fully involved in the life of the church and to play their part in sharing the Gospel with their friends and neighbours. We have continued to run regular men's breakfasts at which speakers have encouraged us in various aspects of our Christian life. Small groups of men also meet to pray together and study the Bible.

We have plans for a curry and prayer night in the Autumn and also hope to hold a number of social and recreational activities. We look forward to a further year of the Lord's blessing

Revive – Trevor and Gill Hames

'Revive' is a group for young people aged 18-30 which meets every Wednesday at our home for a meal followed by Bible study or going to the monthly prayer meeting. Last year saw much change as we lost 12 regular members who all moved away from the Burford area for a variety of reasons, and so the number of core members has dropped to about 6. However, attendance has generally been regular and we have continued to be so encouraged by Revive's enthusiasm for God's word and prayer, commitment to the group and involvement in other church activities such as welcoming and music. We would like to see the group grow again, perhaps through reaching out to young people connected to the Benefice churches.

Pastoral Care - Ruth McCalman

The ministry team have conducted funerals in Burford during 2018 for a number of local residents, and each service has been unique, because each of us is uniquely loved by God and special to him. Some services have inevitably been attended by more than others, but every one has had its own characteristics and identifying elements, and every one has been an opportunity for the love of the Lord Jesus to be explained, and his concern for all is always on offer. The practical working out of this offer is one way of demonstrating Christian pastoral care for those around us, particularly when they are at their most vulnerable.

But every encounter which a Christian has with another person, whether Christian or not, is a possibility for pastoral care, and I am grateful to everyone who has shown this care in the last year, whether in church on a Sunday, in home groups, at organised events, or by casual encounters during the day. It is wonderful to see our church members supporting each other through everyday ups and downs, and offering care in quite sacrificial ways. I praise the Lord for the heart of love he has given to so many.

Yet many struggle with loss, grief, depression, insecurity and anxieties, and we want to be able to support each individual. Over two training periods early last summer, each of two sessions last year, 26 members of churches in the Benefice, took training on some of the basics of support for others in distress. Those being trained included both volunteers for the pastoral care team and small group leaders as the ideal situation for caring for each other is through the small groups.

The primary focus of the pastoral care work is within the church community; Cedric Reavley has continued to offer care to locals in Burford who do not attend church, as well as bringing home communion to some who are housebound. Each of the village parishes also extend pastoral care to their local members although the boundary between church-goer and non-attender is very fluid in our communities. We are blessed to live in an area where the churches are part of the life of the communities and many have at least a casual involvement with church life. Through our demonstrated love and care for each other, we are trusting that the Lord will draw others to himself, warmed by his love.

Our Benefice value statement for *Community – Experiencing God's Love*, is that "Everyone feels part of a loving Christian family". So, as well as direct care offered to individuals, in pastoral care we want to work towards fostering a loving, caring spirit within the church community, resulting in each person feeling themselves to be known and valued.

Thank you for all your support, encouragement and prayers in this work.

Rock-a-Tots – Beth Johnson

New families seem to arrive at Rock-a-Tots every week. We now operate two thriving groups simultaneously - with a toddler group in the New Hall and a baby group in the Old Hall every Tuesday morning during school term time. Many families use the Warwick Hall Café for a drink before or after Rock-a-Tots, and several have used the Warwick Hall for children's birthday parties. The baby group is very popular with strong core of mums and carers who enjoy the slightly gentler sessions. The toddler group continues to attract new families and some who return with second, third and on occasion the fourth child! We are regularly welcoming in excess of 100 babies, toddlers and adults on Tuesday mornings to the Warwick Hall. We continue to be amazed at God's generous provision to provide for this group each week.

I will be stepping down as leader in July after nearly seven years at Rock-a-Tots, two of those years as leader. I have been wonderfully supported by Jo Vickers on the Ministry Team and a group of volunteers. This wonderful team listed below has shrunk since last year despite the increased numbers of guests – each one of them playing their part, whether it is serving drinks, leading singing, doing the accounts, praying or sitting on the floor chatting. The current team met for tea with Jo, past team members, leaders and cake bakers on 17 March. It gave us an opportunity to celebrate where God has led this group so far and to pray for wisdom and the direction he might take us in the future.

Rock-a-Tots continues to create an important link between our church family and the local community. We have had many opportunities to pray for the families who attend. Invitations have been extended for worship services (especially at Easter and Christmas), Sunday JAM, Advent Wreath Making as well as outreach courses. We also have had families coming forward looking to have their children baptised.

Jo Vickers writes: *On behalf of all the church family and the Rock-a-Tots' team, we would like to thank Beth for her brilliant leadership and the time she has invested in this weekly group for so many years. We have been greatly blessed by having Beth lead Rock-a-Tots and grateful for the way she has cared for the team and parents that attend. And Beth is adored by the toddlers- she will be greatly missed by us all.*

Team: Sue Sheppard, Charlotte Lind, Jane Price, Alex Holdsworth, Lucy Warriner, Anne Anderson, Sally Ormiston, Hana Hendrychova, Avril Collis and Jiffa Street.

Friday Focus - Sue McCrossan

Friday Focus has now been in existence for 2 ½ years and continues to grow steadily. We now have 42 guests, with a regular turnout of 25 – 30 each first Friday of the month. Many come from Burford, but word has steadily spread and we now have people coming from outlying towns and villages, including Witney, Shilton, Signet, Upper Rissington, Great Barrington and Lechlade. Another development is that we now have some family members who attend with our guests and enjoy the day.

We have 16 regular helpers, 13 of whom are from the church and 3 from Burford and the surrounding area. This includes our two trusty transport providers, Tom Douglas and Clive Fieth, without whom 5 of our guests would not be able to come. We have also been very fortunate to have several of our congregation run workshops for us on making things with clay, watercolour, biscuit making, calligraphy and print making.

Lunch is a key part of the day – many of our guests comment how they appreciate a hot lunch which they have not needed to prepare or wash up after. This is preceded by a short Bible talk given by one of our church members.

A big change during the year is that Judy Branston has hung up her apron after two years of cooking for us every month. She was always going to be a hard act to follow, but we are delighted that Ruth Reavley has taken on the mantle and has now provided us with several months' worth of delicious lunches. Ruth is a great connection between town and church, having been at the heart of the community for so many years.

It is invaluable to have so much help from church members – first, because we simply could not operate without them and secondly, it gives the whole day a true family atmosphere, with guests getting to know members of the church and the church family reaching out to members of our community.

We have also had help from many local speakers and businesses, for example, Sandra Davies has given floral demonstrations, Careen from Burford Needlecraft has run a knitting workshop, Brian Kay has given music talks and Sue Ashton will be giving a talk on Burford gardens.

We are very grateful to God that the group has grown close and supportive of each other. Guests feel comfortable discussing any needs or problems they may have and are very receptive to the idea of helpers praying for them. Our meeting days have a bright, lively and happy feel, which reflects the fact that we still all feel about 35 inside! As we clear up at the end of our day's meeting, we very often sense that there has been real blessing. We pray that this will continue.

Time Out – John Harrington

TIME OUT started in April 2018 following the closure of the Age UK-run Day Care Centre in Burford. At that time Age UK closed 6 of 8 centres in Oxfordshire due to loss of funding. The format of TIME OUT is similar to that of the previous scheme but has been updated to meet the requirements of our members.

From small beginnings, TIME OUT has grown rapidly and now has just over 30 members, drawn from within a 10 mile radius of Burford, and a team of 10 volunteers to help run the weekly sessions and transport members to and from the Warwick Hall. Thanks to funding from the Burford Charity Trustees and being run under the auspices of the Burford Benefice along with our wonderful team of volunteers we are able to offer a day of comprehensive activities. These include sketching and painting, craft, crosswords, jigsaws, dominoes, cards, armchair exercises, readings, quizzes, musical bingo and more. We also have speakers, films, craft days, musical days and thoughts for the day on a regular basis as well as the odd day trip out.

At TIME OUT we offer an extremely relaxed, safe, happy and friendly environment with a wide and varied range of activities for all to enjoy and most importantly of all our members regularly tell us that this is the case and that they love to come to TIME OUT on Mondays at the beautiful Warwick Hall.

Outreach in the Benefice – Chris Ashton

We have an excellent outreach team of Steve and Linda Petra, Trevor and Gill Hames, Peter Hopkins, Ben Turner, Chris Ashton. Following the development of the team's mantra in the previous year ('to get outreach into the churches mindset and to encourage outreach in the church') the group has sought to enable this by providing events, both one off and on-going courses, alongside a greater desire to promote outreach in church services, through testimonies, interviews and increasing sermon application.

We continued with our "3S" strategy - Social, social plus Speaker, and Signup. This gives us a broad and varied approach in how we reach out into God's world. A world that God loves so much that he gave his Son to die for it. Can there be any greater motivation than this to encourage us to reach out with the good news.

It is of course this motivation that led to 29 people going to start a new congregation in Swinbrook. Which is now bursting at the seams and regularly has 70-80 in attendance.

Let's go back to our 3S strategy - here are some of the main pointers:

Social

- We had another wonderful Burns' Night meal and Ceilidh in January which was a sell-out. Very easy to invite non-churchgoers and we're going to do it again next year.
- In September, Cedric Reavley and family's Centenary Celebration, gathering many across the town and church to celebrate God's goodness.

- The Burford Festival is coming up this year in June and we are hopeful that a wide range of events will be attended and used by the church family.

Social plus speaker

- Christmas events included advent wreath making, with testimony.
- We are organising an evening with Major General Tim Cross in May. Hopefully an event with a wide appeal, however ultimately through Tim's testimony, an event designed to focus winsomely on Jesus' claims on his life.

Sign up

- In the summer we ran Alpha in the Warwick Hall.
- In the autumn we had Christianity Explored in Fulbrook run by the Fulbrook community.
- In the new year a smaller, but wonderfully fruitful Christianity Explored course has run and the group will continue into the summer, becoming a Discipleship Explored group.

We praise the Lord for the open doors that he has given us this last year to reach out with the amazing good news he has entrusted to us.

Please keep praying for the Holy Spirit to be at work in all our lives to bring blessing to our broken world.

Mission Support Report – Jenny Tarbox

The committee continues to develop the Church Mission Strategy, encouraging a congregation that not only supports mission financially but is actively and prayerfully engaged in mission at home and abroad. Roger Owen is now our committee representative on the P.C.C.

We are working with the other churches within the Benefice, supporting and encouraging them by sharing information on our mutual mission partners.

In accordance with our strategy, we continue to make partners aware that our sponsorship is dependent upon good communication, appropriate financial and spiritual accountability and alignment of the partner's aims with the vision of the church. It is due to these requirements that during the first 6 months of 2018, reluctantly, we could no longer support Edward Walakira, vicar of the Sese Islands. Our requirements are in line with those of H.M.R.C. The committee keeps a monthly record of communications from mission partners but is sensitive to the fact that some can communicate regularly, much easier than others.

We continue to work within the framework of the "Five Marks of Mission" as stated by the Anglican Consultative Council. We are in a good position to continue support of our existing mission partners and in a healthy position to grow new areas of mission from within the church family. The partnership between mission partners and sponsors is changing globally. It has been uplifting, encouraging and mutually beneficial to host the Wanyekis and the Caudwells during the past six months. It has been good to learn from each other and pray together.

We are aware that during the coming year the status of some of our established partners will change and need reviewing. To ensure best practice in the future and in accordance with requirements of the finance committee, we are making changes as to how we sponsor our partners and make "one off gifts" from our contingency fund.

The current mission matrix is displayed on the mission board in the Lady Chapel. Information and prayer letters from partners are regularly updated and displayed on the mission board or table. During this year we are working towards a rolling display of mission partners on a monitor in the Warwick Hall after the 11am service. We also hope to add up to date news. Missions are regularly highlighted at the Central Prayer Meeting.

During 2018, from our contingency fund, we gave small gifts so that two students could attend Christian youth camps. We gave a financial contribution to a member of church family taking Christian material and medical supplies to an African Christian Orphanage. Support was also given to a gap year student member of church family who is spending a year supporting mission and outreach in universities. "One off" gifts were given to church family members in the first instance who are now established, permanent mission partners.

Returning students are asked to give interviews in church. This proves to be an advertisement that prayer and financial support are available and encourages others to apply for bursaries. Mission partners or their representatives continue to be booked and interviewed at both the 9.30 and 11am services. Feedback from the congregations continues to be positive. Intercessors at both services are encouraged to pray for a mission partner, extracts of whose letters, as far as possible, are coordinated to appear in the Friday E-news of the same weekend. Occasionally the extracts in the E-news may appear rather vague or brief. This is intentional to safeguard those reporting from dangerous areas.

Many members of our church family are involved in both leading and supporting camps. We continue to encourage others to take part in this vital and exciting form of Christian ministry. We are eager to give financial support to any who would like to take part but are prevented from doing so.

It continues to be an exciting privilege for us to be part of God's plan for mission at home and abroad at Burford Church.

Coffee and Company - Penelope Leaf

Coffee and Company on Wednesday mornings continues to thrive and has a good partnership with the 10.30 Communion Service. Numbers have grown this year. We held our usual pre-Christmas event, a Bring and Buy with a Christmas theme to support Crisis at Christmas. On February 9th we held the third Marmalade Fair in aid of CAP and raised £472. We did not have as much marmalade to sell as we hoped but people were generous with donations.

Wednesday mornings are a focal mid-week point and a real chance for church goers and non church goers to enjoy conversation with each other, clergy and church staff. It does involve some organisation and the need for cake making is relentless. Thanks go to those who take turns with this but we could do with some more helpers. We look forward to the summer months and welcoming visitors who are always appreciative. Our weekly contribution to the church is usually £25 which adds up to a useful amount annually.

Church Fabric Report - Paul Petterson

For His Church at Burford and for a lot of us personally we are clearly entering a new season, our exciting new venture with the Lord is so evident, it's palpable and very appropriate with the advent of spring.

'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven'. Ecclesiastes 3:1.

A busy year again for the Fabric team, a very big thank you to Geoff Taylor, Lindsey Worvill, Lynnette Derry, Quinton Jones, Simon Chandler, Stephen Price, Roy Lilley and Jane Poulson.

Main works - completed 2018

- Path works extension (east to the Priest door).
- Heating report and recommendation sent to the PCC.
- TV Monitor in south porch.
- Quinquennial report.

Main works – planned for 2019

- The Quinquennial report contains general maintenance issues. In light of the report, we are completing the more urgent tasks this year.

- The lighting inside the church is in need of upgrading as replacement lamps and transformers are increasingly difficult to obtain. A lighting report has been completed and our recommendation will be sent shortly to the PCC.
- Some deterioration is apparent on the stonework of St Peters Chapel. A Conservation report will be done which will include the Tanfield Monument.

Thank you all for completing the heating survey. Most people (80%), although themselves not perturbed by the cold are in favour of better heating because of the needs of the elderly.

The PCC has taken on board the views of the church, however as there are other factors to consider and agree on, for the time being the decision is deferred.

Friends of Burford Church – Penelope Leaf, Chairman

The Friends of Burford Church, founded in 1946, is committed to supporting the Parochial Church Council by the following objectives:

- To undertake improvements which do not come within the normal scope of funds for the maintenance of the fabric of the church building.
- To help with grants towards other essential work in the church, or churchyard, which in the opinion of the Friends, could not otherwise be undertaken.
- To unite those who love and value Burford Church in a Company of Friends.

Funds for the work of the Friends are raised through subscriptions and donations and from the sale of post cards and guides on the Friends' stand by the south door of the church. Membership of the Friends extends across the globe (132 members) and all receive an annual newsletter. Anyone interested in supporting our aims is welcome to join. Life membership is £40. Application forms are on the table in the south transept and on the Friends' section of the church website.

We have welcomed 7 new Friends this year, some local and some from farther afield.

In June we held a very successful Historical Evening to highlight the many interesting and unusual features of the Church. Members of the Friends, the wider church and the town enjoyed refreshments as they were enlightened by several guides.

Our main project this year was to ensure the future of the Proud Father Statue in the Lady Chapel which was sculpted by Ginny Coates, mother of Laura Davies, in 2010 shortly before she died. The family were willing to give the original fragile statue to the church if it could be cast in a long lasting material. The Friends were glad to fund the cast which is in bronze resin and beautifully finished. This cost £4,000 and means that church members and visitors can continue to enjoy this depiction of a father's love, and indeed our Father's love for his children.

We are looking forward to a visit by members of the John Meade Falkner Society in July. JMF was a great benefactor of the church during his life (1858-1932). We will be holding a reception for them and hearing about the society as they enjoy visiting the church.

The Friends had been keenly supported by Richard Coombs during his incumbency and he was our President at the time of leaving the Benefice. So at our AGM in November we thanked him and wished him well in his new job, before electing Cedric Reavley as our new President.

The Friends of Burford Church Charity Commission registration number is 280233.

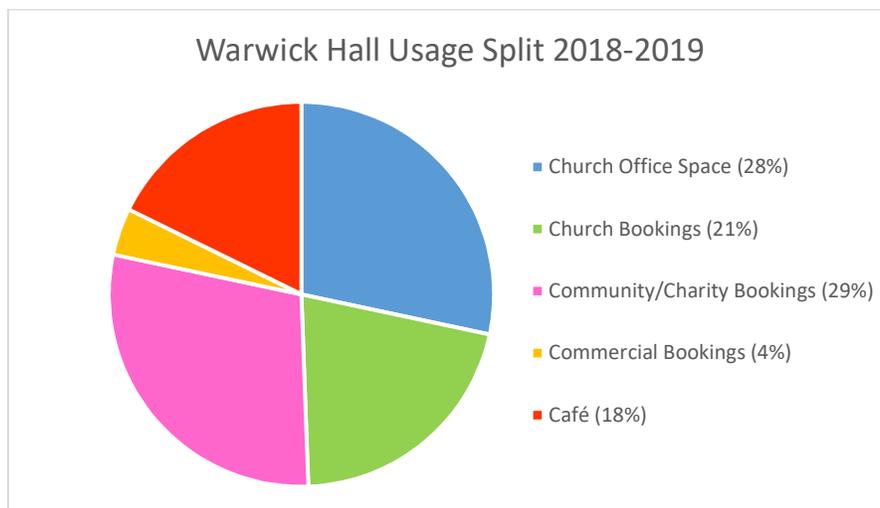
Warwick Hall Report – Rachel Redding

Bookings & Usage

Activities in the Warwick Hall continue apace. It is rare now to have a day without a meeting, event or class of some kind and it is a delight to see the building being used to this extent in the life of the Church and Community. In relation to Church use, over the last year the building has of course been used on Sundays for

JAM, coffee after the 11am service and monthly Praise Party and Event aimed at our church youth. At other times we have seen (and continue to see) bible studies, Rock-a-Tots, Friday Focus, Time Out, Central – and other – Prayer Meetings, Men’s and Women’s Breakfasts, evangelistic events such as Advent Wreath Making, outreach courses such as Christianity Explored, training courses such as that run recently on Bible Handling, marriage preparation courses and social events for all ages. The range of non-church events is similarly extensive; we aim to keep an up to date list of events, courses and classes open to the public on the Warwick Hall website, warwickhallburford.org. Aside from these, rooms are also used by local groups, charities and businesses for private meetings and events.

The pie-chart below shows the usage split for the Warwick Hall for the twelve months to the end of March 2019, based on ‘room-hours’ of use.:



Operations and Maintenance

As with any building there are ongoing maintenance needs to keep the fabric of the building up to scratch. The most major work over the last twelve months has been improvement of the ventilation to the upstairs rooms, carried out in September 2018. We hope that this will be of particular benefit in the summer months. The garden paths were also improved in 2018, with gravel areas replaced by hard surfacing.

Since the start of 2019 painting has taken place in the Café and Old Hall, and the garden has benefitted from new planting. Refurbishment of toilets is to be scheduled in the near future.

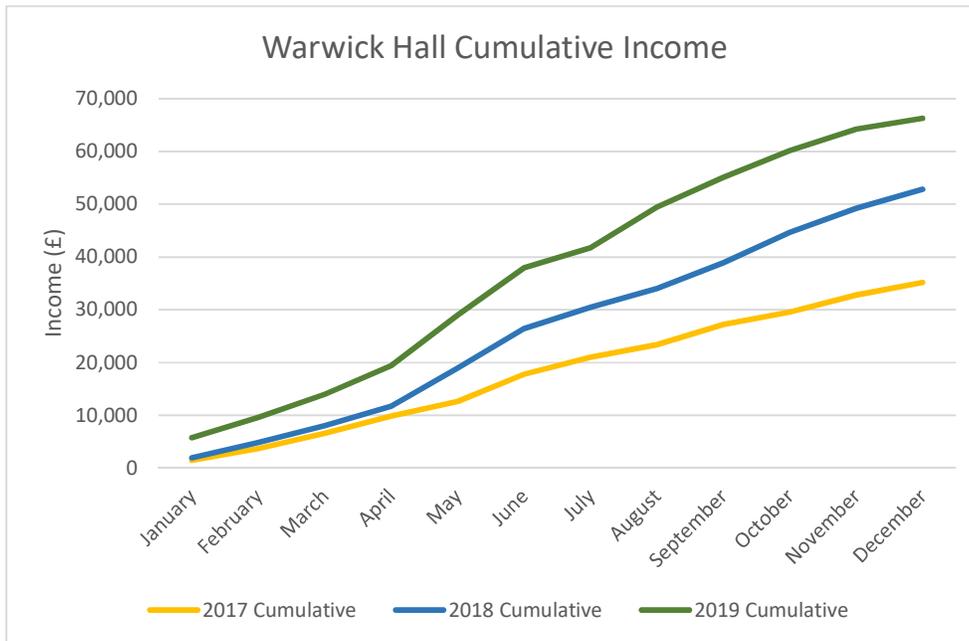
In terms of staffing, Ben Turner continues as Operations Team Leader, with Rachel Redding managing bookings and Allan Read overseeing the day-to-day running of the facilities. In July 2018 Barry West was appointed as Caretaker/Cleaner for the Warwick Hall, assisting with set-up for events and keeping the building clean and ordered. Tarnia Usher and the Café staff are also key in welcoming and assisting visitors, and we are also grateful to the volunteers who help in various ways.

In August 2018 a Warwick Hall Management Committee was formed with delegated responsibility from the PCC for making key decisions relating to the running of the Warwick Hall. Current members of the Committee are: Wendy Moate (Chair), Ben Turner, Rachel Redding, Allan Read, Oliver Strange, Paul Petterson and Sue Sheppard. Peter Martin representing the Burford community has also agreed to join the Committee.

In February 2019 an inspector from Environmental Health made an unannounced visit to inspect the Warwick Hall kitchen and Café servery. We are pleased to report that the Warwick Hall retains its five star rating for another year, scoring the maximum in all areas.

Income

Incoming from lettings has risen consistently year-on-year since the building opened in 2016. The graph below shows cumulative income for 2017-2019. The 2019 projected figures are derived from existing bookings (regular and one-off); the total for the year is expected to increase slightly as new bookings come in.



Café

At the end of 2017 we said farewell to Stephen and Sally Colter who had run the Café since shortly after the opening of Warwick Hall. We are thankful to Sally and Steve for the huge amount of time and energy that they put in over their time here.

Since the beginning of 2019 the Café has been managed and overseen by Allan Read, assisted by a capable team of Café staff. Management by Allan was initially on a three-month temporary basis but the PCC has now agreed a formal two-year Licence which began on April 6th 2019. It is being rebranded as *Café Fifteen* – ask any of the staff the reason why! On the ground the Café is thriving with a steady stream of visitors and many positive comments.

Conclusion

In summary, it has been a positive year for the Warwick Hall, despite a few challenges along the way! We praise God for his provision and guidance and continue to pray for His blessing as we minister to the Church and Community through the practical use of this building.

Warwick Hall Management Committee Report – Wendy Moate

The Warwick Hall Management Committee was formed in the last quarter of 2018 to oversee the running of the Hall. There are seven people who sit on the committee representing Warwick Hall staff, members of the church and the Fabric Committee. There have been some issues in the course of the last two years - and it was felt that it would be really beneficial to spread the load for consultation and decision making to this newly formed group. We met twice in the final months of 2018 and once at the beginning of 2019.

Completed 2018/9

- October 2018 – Risk Assessments for general use and hirers of the building
- March 2019 – New two year Licence for the Warwick Hall Café recommendation to the PCC.

Planned for 2019

- Non church member and resident of Burford to join the committee – now approved.
- Refitting of Ladies toilets
- Meet targets set for bookings and revenue

Deanery Synod Report – Gaynor Taylor and Sue McCrossan

It has been an encouraging year in the Deanery since last Kevin wrote. Firstly we would like to thank Kevin for his work as Lay Chair. He managed to move matters on considerably in the time of his tenure. The Deanery is still looking for a new lay chair so this is something that we can pray for.

The Deanery is very aware of the challenges created by the growth of housing numbers in the area. We have effectively become a big mission field and the Deanery is beginning to rise to the challenge of this situation. But still a great concern is the number of vacancies in the Deanery which highlights how blessed we are in having Tom Putt come to us within a year of Richard leaving. There are Benefices in the Deanery which have been vacant for some years. As a Benefice ourselves, we need to pray for people who will fill these vacancies and be mission hearted toward the growing population in the area.

A significant move has been the appointment of a Deanery Youth Worker, Olly Shaw, who is based at St Leonard's Eynsham. He will for the next year be spending 15 hours per week (funded by the Diocese) in the Woodstock and Witney Deaneries. At our last Deanery meeting, Olly shared with us his passion for youth work and he looks forward to working in our area.

Along with this, there is a new development fund being launched to fund mission projects - a very exciting development. The initial funding is for £1million. Churches will be able to ask for grants of up to £2,500 through a short application form and there is a possibility of even larger funding if necessary. We are urged as a church to think of developing projects which will be supported by this fund.

So there is much to praise God for in the planning being undertaken in the Deanery and also lots to pray for and especially for the growth of the church in this Diocese.

Bell Ringers Report – Nigel Harrison

1. Service ringing

We have generally been able to ring before 11am Services at Burford, often ringing all eight bells. The length of the 9.30 Service has sometimes been problematical; most of our bell ringers do not live in Burford, and if the 9.30 Service overruns, they may be reluctant to come to help the ringing on Sundays. We continue to ring the bells for weddings and other special occasions, for example ringing for the Burford Open Gardens weekend.

2. Practice night

Our weekly practices continue to be on Friday nights from 7.30 – 9.00pm, except that we normally practise at Fulbrook or Taynton on the second Friday of the month.

3. The bells and the ringing chamber

The bells are maintained annually by Whites of Appleton. We are most grateful to the Fabric Committee and the PCC for financing these works and others in the ringing chamber.

4. Cameras / Video displays

The plans for the installation of cameras in the belfry and ringing room, to provide video links in the church for viewing the bells and bell ringers in operation, are fully funded. There would appear to be no reason why these cannot proceed.

5. Recruitment of bell ringers

We plan to have a Bell Ringing Taster Session in the next month or so, at which anyone interested can come and see bell ringing in action and also try ringing a bell.

Flowers – Tricia Hales



The dedication of the Burford Flower Ladies adds colourful warmth to St John the Baptist Church which attracts thousands of tourists throughout the year. It's such a joy to see God's amazing creation in flowers.

The flower ladies willingly offer their time once a term enhancing the church each week but in particular for Christmas, Easter & Harvest Festival. The joy of creating arrangements to suit each season is rewarding no matter whether trained professionally or just as amateurs, which we are. These 10 willing ladies fetch greenery from the hedge rows and gardens then have the pleasure of adding flowers so we all can enjoy.

We would love to add to our list of ladies and would be delighted for anyone who loves flowers to join our happy team of workers.

The Burford Benefice Bartholomew Trust - Ivan Hall, Treasurer

Objectives & Responsibilities

The objectives of the Trust are the advancement of the Christian religion and of education, and such other charitable purposes that are beneficial to the community in the Burford Benefice with Fulbrook, Taynton, Asthall, Swinbrook and Widford.

The Trust's responsibilities include the provision of assistance to the clergy within the Benefice by various charitable means. In this respect, the Trust holds a part share (with the 4 PCCs in the Benefice) in 20 Oxford Road, Burford. The property currently provides accommodation for the Curate, Oliver Strange, and his wife Lucie.

2018 Financial Year

Total payments in the year were £3,407. Repairs and maintenance on 20 Oxford Road totalled £1,310 and included costs incurred during the 6-month vacancy, together with purchase of a replacement electric heater and of (nearly new) white goods from the previous tenant. Other costs were Council Tax, insurance and utilities.

Total receipts were £1,670 which included £1,520 from regular donations. Donations were £900 less than the previous year resulting from the full year effect of the termination of two donor agreements in 2017 plus one further termination in 2018. Investment interest totalled £150.

There was a deficit on the year of £1,737. Detailed accounts are available on request.

Future Commitments

The Trustees have now completed most of the planned schedule of repairs on 20 Oxford Road. Potential works in 2019 may include, however, the external painting of the property.

Available Funds

At 31st December 2018, the available funds of the Trust were £30,842. Whilst this is a healthy balance, the Trustees are mindful of the need to maintain sufficient reserves to cover potential future spending. Such spending could include any structural work at 20 Oxford Road and the support of future ministry needs.

The Burford Benefice Bartholomew Trust's Charity Commission registration number is 1079450.