

ST JAMES THE GREAT, HANSLOPE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013

Background

The Parochial Church Council of St James the Great has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, Father Gary Ecclestone, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibility for running and maintaining the church building and for the upkeep of the churchyard. The church is located in Church End, Hanslope. The address for correspondence is The Vicarage, Park Road, Hanslope, Milton Keynes, MK19 7LT.

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. During the year the following served as members of the PCC:-

Incumbent	Revd Gary Ecclestone	Chairman
Wardens:	Glyn Hollinshead	
	Janet Shipton	Vice Chairman
Deanery Synod)	Stuart Grout	Electoral Roll Officer
Representatives)	Janet Shipton	
	Glyn Hollinshead	
Elected Members:	Diane Gordon	Treasurer
	Maria Madeley	Secretary
	Alex Adams	
	Andrea Kingston	
	Graham Robinson	
	Michael Sandison	until April 2013
	Helen Hunter-Jones	until April 2013
	Rachael Edwards	
	Cassie Parson	from April 2013

Committees

The affairs of the parish are about average for its size, and most of the business of the Council is carried out at full PCC meetings.

Standing Committee: This committee, which is required by law, has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any direction given by the full Council.

Sub-Committees and Working Parties: The PCC sets up such groups in order to move forward with some more specific development work, the group's report back to the PCC meetings

Church Attendance

There are 140 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 117 of who are resident within the parish. The average Sunday attendance averaged over the year was 49 adults and 19 children.

Explanation of Funds

The PCC operates four different funds within the accounts:

Fund	Purpose	Income
General	Running costs of church and churchyard	Direct Giving, Fees & Fundraising
Fabric	Repairs, maintenance and development	Interest on the balance of the fund
Bell Appeal	Designated for funds raised for the re-hanging of the bells	Fundraising, Grants and Donations
Sunday School	Funding Sunday School	Interest

In addition, there are three funds held by the Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Ltd:

Fund	Type of Fund	Value 31/12/13	Interest Used For
Harkness Bequest	Perpetual	£26,762.84	Paid into the Fabric Fund
Sunday School Endowment	Perpetual	£1,888.99	Paid into the Sunday School Fund
Chancel Repair	Perpetual	£659.25	Paid into Fabric Fund for chancel repairs

The Running Costs of the Church

£35,785.59 was spent to provide the Christian ministry within the parish; to run the church building and provide services every Sunday; and to care for the churchyard.

Parish Share

The largest single expense is the Parish Share, this is a payment made to the diocese which goes towards providing for the stipends and housing of the clergy. It became apparent in September that, despite our best efforts of running the Christian Giving programme in June, if we had paid the full amount of the Parish Share requested for 2013 we would have ended the year more than £8,000 in deficit. In consultation with the Diocese we paid £16,310 in parish share. At the same time, in November, Fr Gary wrote to everyone on the Family Roll, explaining the severity of the financial position and urging people to consider reviewing their contributions to the church through the planned giving scheme. The response to this was good, and it is hoped that we will be able to pay the Parish Share in full in 2014.

Funding for the Running of the Church

Direct Giving - £18,376 was given to the church through the planned giving scheme, which was almost as much as in the previous year. £5,364 was reclaimed from the tax office as a result of the 46 gift aid declaration forms that individuals have signed, this was 12% more than last year owing to the introduction of the Gift Aid Small Donations scheme introduced by the government in April 2013. £6,089 was received through cash collections and donations which almost doubled the amount for the previous year.

Fund-Raising – We held a number of events to raise funds for the general fund including our annual open weekend, Easter Egger Hunt, BHCT sponsored bike ride and Advent Extravaganza which raised collectively £2,802. This was £5,000 less than in 2012 when there had been additional fund raising events.

Fees - £4,067 was received for fees for weddings and funerals. This was about a third more than in the previous year. £480 was also received for grave space faculties.

We started the year with a deficit of £4,959.32 on the general fund and show a surplus this year of £3,937.32 and therefore end the year with deficit of £1,022 on the General Fund.

Bell Appeal Our appeal to raise £80,000 to rehang and refurbish the bells received a welcome boost of a legacy of £25,000. Other grant applications are also underway and the balance of funds actually received by the end of 2013 was £27,105.42.

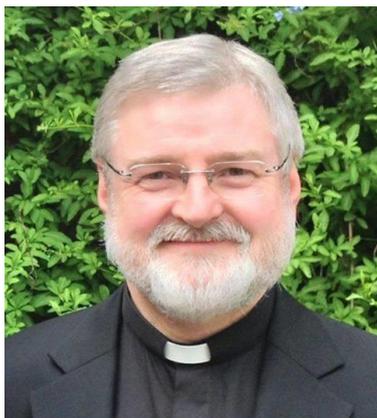
Annual Report on the Proceedings of the Church Council

General Matters

The PCC met 6 times during the year with an average attendance of 80%.

The year was not an easy one for Fr Gary on a personal level, as he supported his Mother in her fight against cancer which she lost at the end of July. The churchwardens, PCC and the congregation worked hard to keep the business of the parish in motion and to ensure that the work in the parish continued whilst supporting Fr Gary through his loss.

We were joined by Fr Robin Carter, a retired Priest in February and together with Fr Robert Nokes they assist with ministry in the parishes. We were saddened by the sudden death of Eric Dodworth in August who had been a Lay reader in the parish for many years



Bishop Jonathan Goodall was consecrated as the Bishop of Ebbsfleet in September and a group of more than two dozen people from the parish attended the service in Westminster Abbey. We were pleased to welcome Bishop Jonathan to our confirmation service in December.

The PCC organized the bi-annual Celebration Supper for the Parish and reviewed our Next Steps for Mission document this was influenced by two major pieces of work: the prayer survey which had been undertaken by John Sorrell during Lent and the “Leading your Church into Growth” conference organised by Fr Gary in January.

Communication: We launched our Parish Website on Ash Wednesday and we also set up a Parish Facebook Page. We continued to circulate news from the church to the Village on a quarterly basis through news sheets and the Clarion, in addition to our monthly Link magazine which is subscribed to by most church members.

Volunteer help: There are a large number of people involved in church life helping in many different ways, some of which are visible such as help before, during and after worship, but there are also a number of people doing unseen tasks that enhance the church and its surroundings.

Cleaning: Many people do cleaning tasks quietly, behind the scenes, and we had a very well supported cleaning day at the beginning of December

Church Flowers: Currently there are eleven people on the rota who decorate the church on a regular basis except during Lent and Advent. They greatly enjoy contributing to Christmas, Easter and Harvest festivities when they are joined by other volunteers, young and not so young! It would be great if a few more would like to join the rota or help with the special festivals – no experience is necessary!

Mary Nokes



Churchyard : Since the last Annual General Meeting the churchyard has been seen high winds and long periods of rain. The spring has thankfully brought a welcomed dry period. The spring has also seen the arrival of the primroses and the sight of Richard Tompkins sitting aboard his lawn mower. Last summer the yew trees bordering the main path were trimmed and shortly the work to pollard the lime trees will be carried out. There is only one further thing to add and that is to thank Richard and his helpers for all the hard work they have done to make the churchyard look

as it does today.

Our Next Steps for Mission document talks about our church life under three different sections: Worship and Prayer, Learning and Teaching and social Action, so we include a report here on each of those areas.

Glyn Hollinshead



Worship and Prayer

“Our worship brings us together as a body of people, to give praise and thanks to God, in an atmosphere of love, fellowship and friendship”

Sung Mass We have Sung Mass every Sunday and our worship is rooted in the centrality of the Eucharist and in sacramental faith.

Walsingham: Our strong links with the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham continued to develop and we participated in two day pilgrimages to Walsingham, the National in May and the Pilgrimage of Healing and Renewal in August. A large party of our young people attended the Youth Pilgrimage and the Families Pilgrimage was well supported. Also several people attended the Adoramus weekend for the under thirties.

The Choir has continued to grow under the leadership of our Director of Music, Alex Allcock-Rouse, and the musical contributions to our celebration of the mid-week major festivals have greatly enhanced our worship. We attract large numbers to these joint parish celebrations which are always followed by a social time.



Altar Servers: Our team of altar servers has grown and is now headed up by Mike Parsons and it is of great encouragement to us all to see so many of our young people keen to serve the church in this way, and to further enhance the quality of our worship

Our Services for Wholeness and Healing continued to be held bi-monthly and further developed and are increasing steadily in attendance, with many finding great value in the healing ministries on offer.

The monthly Rosary Group continued to meet with more people coming along, and opportunities are provided for Morning and Evening prayer to be said publically.

Many people contribute to the worship by being welcomers, reading lessons, leading prayers and serving tea and coffee afterwards.

Learning and Teaching

“Our faith grows as we hear or read the Scriptures, and have them explained to us through sermons, bible reading notes or simply through discussion. Our faith grows through prayer. Life-long learning enables us to grow in our Christian Faith.”

Our Adult Learning and Teaching program saw the completion of the Foundations of Faith Course which we have run over the past two years. We have also embarked upon the year-long Essential Jesus Challenge. We prepared another group of children and adults for Confirmation in the autumn, and ran Lent and Advent courses and a range of other course throughout the year which were well received. We offer a range of courses to meet the needs of people at different stages on their Christian Journey and aim to have three different courses on offer each term. We are indebted to those who open up their homes to host the groups proving the all-important essence of Christian

fellowship, providing a relaxed and safe environment for discussion.

Children and Young People

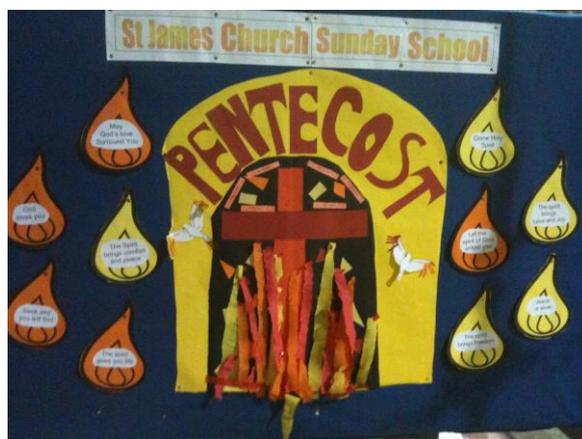
Little ones in church: We had a speaker installed into the tower room so that this room can now be used by parents and toddlers if they wish, providing them with a quiet space, but enabling them to still be able to hear and engage with the worship.



Little Angels: This is our group for children under school age including babies. After a bumpy start, we now have 12 children on role but normally expect between six and nine. Sessions begin at nine o'clock with play. At half past nine we have a messy activity, supported by parents, until about 10.00. At 10.00 refreshments are served to children and adults. After this we have music and songs followed by a story. Children are encouraged to tidy up and we finish with prayers and lighting votive candles. It is proving to be a friendly group and Elizabeth and myself are able to give support to mums when asked.

Janet Shipton

Sunday School, Our Sunday School continued to meet every week offering teaching for three different age groups: Pebbles, Rocks and Boulders. The material we use follows the church year and is usually based upon the readings that are set for the day, which makes the sharing time after communion more meaningful. We held five Family Masses where all of the children participate in a simplified service sharing things they have prepared in Sunday school during the preceding weeks.



Boulders Sundays: On the last Sunday of the month the members of the Boulders Sunday School group remain in church and fulfil all of the duties normally undertaken by lay people – welcoming, lesson reading, prayers and offertory procession. We also benefited from a grant of £330 from Feoffee and June to enable us to participate in the Children's Eucharistic Festival in at Brean Sands.

Diane Gordon

Inspire! Inspire continues to meet weekly in term time and regularly attracts around ten young people each week for a social time followed by teaching and discussion. We benefitted from a £400 grant from Feoffee for a new projector this year. Members of the group are especially keen on drama and are dab hands in poetry in prose too! The group is led by a core group of four adult leaders and a faithful band of stand-ins offer invaluable assistance too. Our motto is "what is said at Inspire stays at Inspire" so we cannot tell you any more

Fr Gary



Activity Afternoons These are held on Tuesday afternoons during the school holidays. During the summer the children had fun making sandwiches, decorating cakes, painting pictures and playing football matches amongst other things. Each afternoon now has an average of thirty children attending and it is great to welcome lots of new faces at St James. The picture shows the children (and

teddy bears) enjoying a story during a picnic.

Rachael Edwards.

Social Action

“The Church is a family of people who have different abilities and needs and we should be aware of each other’s needs and recognise each other’s gifts. We should seek to use our abilities both to support one another within the family of the Church, and also to reach out in service to the wider village community.”

Mission at Home

Monthly community Lunches (and weekly Lent Lunches) continued to thrive, meeting a social need for those who live alone, and offer a convivial time for everyone. These are run by another dedicated team of volunteers. Donations made at the community lunches are put towards enhancing the kitchen, and as a result of this we were able to purchase new white goods for the kitchen at a cost of £630.

We were able to run a series of Mental Health Awareness Sessions for the benefit of the whole community, with the generous support of funding of £800 from Feoffee and partnership working using Hanslope School as the venue. The evenings were well received and valued by attendees.

We now have a ‘Well-being’ sub-group which is actively working toward developing similar ventures to benefit the community as a whole.

Charities

The proceeds of our Lent Lunches and Harvest Weekend, £1,742, were given to Farm Africa. House-to-house collections and other activities were organised in aid of Christian Aid and The Children's Society and amounts of £415 and £423 were raised respectively. During the preparation seasons of Advent and Lent we invited contributions of small change in collection boxes and we raised £322 for the diocese of Ho in Ghana and £297 for the Additional Curates Society.

Inspire raised £250 for Macmillan Cancer Relief in September by holding a coffee afternoon and the Air Ambulance benefitted from donation of the collection at the Hanslope Park Carol Service - £75.13.

We also support the work of the **MK Foodbank** by having a collection point in church and have been collecting carrier bags for MK Play Association

Our Friends in the Diocese of Ho, Volta Region, Ghana

“In 2013 I returned for a second visit, this time with Chuff Adams. The diocese was formed only ten years ago when Bishop Matthias was consecrated as its first bishop. We joined happy celebrations that marked the 10th anniversary. These included a visit to the local prison with gifts for the prisoners.

St James' support is now focussed on St Paul's Church, Agbozume and I spent four valuable days meeting and talking with many church people. I gave them from St James a much needed travelling Communion set. One of their



main plans is to provide their vicar, Fr Prosper K W Deh, and his curate, Denis Obidiegu, with proper accommodation. The money raised last year has gone towards this project. More details can be found on the display board in church and on the church website.

Mary Nokes, Chair of Ho Sub-Group

Annual Report on the Fabric of the Church

Maintenance, Repairs and Renewals

This year saw the completion of the temporary repairs to the roof following the lead theft at the end of 2012. The balance of those repairs cost £1,480 which was covered by the insurance claim of £1,541.89.

The grave digger caused some damage to the main entrance gates by running into them with his digger. The cost of the repair of £936 was fully met by his insurance company.

Further enhancements were made to the roof alarm by Overton Electrical at a cost of £1,206.94

The tap mechanism was changed in the toilet to prevent the tap from being accidentally left on, and the cost of the parts was £127.85

Routinely, the fire extinguishers, clock and chiming mechanism, alarm system, heating system and the lightening conductor were serviced.

Future Work and Developments

There are a number of developments needed once the Bell appeal has completed, and the PCC plan to combine three aspects into one cohesive development plan.

- a. The long outstanding plans to further develop the north east area of the church to provide Sunday School/meeting rooms upstairs and storage space below. Once this area has been developed, we will then be able to restore the old vestry to its former use as a Lady Chapel.
- b. Roof repairs and other urgent fabric repairs that may be identified by the Quinquennial inspection in 2014
- c. The development of the south west corner of the church in order to make the building more fit for purpose as a community resource.

On behalf of the PCC

Father Gary Ecclestone (Chairman)

23rd March 2014