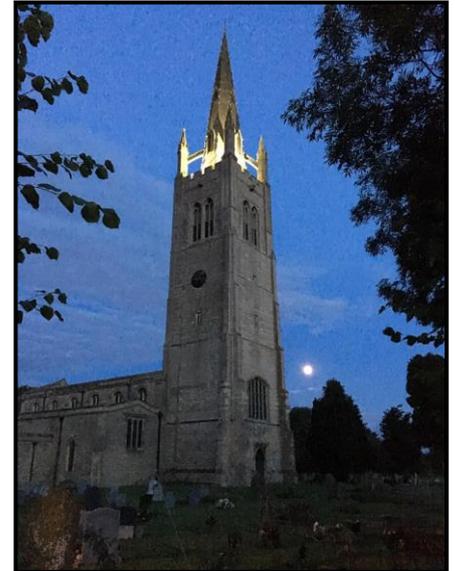


ST JAMES THE GREAT, HANSLOPE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021

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:-

Priests:	Revd Canon Gary Ecclestone Father Adam Burnham	
Wardens:	Glyn Hollinshead Janet Shipton	Vice Chairman
Deanery Synod) Representatives)	Alex Adams Janet Shipton Glyn Hollinshead	
Elected Members:	Daniela Armstrong Diane Gordon Mark Edwards Anne Adams Katharine Crowsley Helen Hunter-Jones Maria Ecclestone Sue Collett	PCC Secretary Treasurer until May 2021 Treasurer from May 2021 until May 2021

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 areas of work, the group's report back to the PCC meetings. We have a Wellbeing Sub-committee, a Ho working Group, a Bell Restoration Appeal Sub-committee, a Healing Group, an Open Weekend Working Group and a Welcoming Sub-group.

Church Attendance

There are 155 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll, 119 of who are resident within the parish. The average Sunday attendance during October 2021 was 41 adults and 4.5 children.

Explanation of Funds

The PCC operates five 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
Wellbeing Courses	To deliver Wellbeing courses on subjects such as parenting & mindfulness	Grant income from various sources
Sunday School	Funding Sunday School	Interest

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

Fund	Type of Fund	Value 31/12/21	Interest Used For
Harkness Bequest	Perpetual	£49,435.61	Paid into the Fabric Fund
Sunday School Endowment	Perpetual	£3,489.30	Paid into the Sunday School Fund
Chancel Repair	Perpetual	£1,217.74	Paid into Fabric Fund for chancel repairs

The Running Costs of the Church

£33,981 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, this is only about £500 more than in the previous year.

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. We paid £17,298 which was half of the requested amount, this was only £173 more than last year. The amount paid was reduced to prevent the General Fund from slipping further into deficit.

Funding for the Running of the Church

Direct Giving - £21,150 was given to the church through planned giving, which was almost £2,000 less than in 2020. The drop is due to a drop in membership of the planned giving schemes due to some significant givers sadly passing away or moving away. About half of the amount was given by direct debit through the PGS scheme and the remainder by standing orders and envelopes. Cash contributions increased by about £200 as more people returned to worshipping in person. We remain very grateful for the 26 households who give in a planned way, enabling gift aid to be reclaimed and financial planning to take place. A planned giving program was run in the Autumn to raise awareness of the financial need and encourage more giving, The benefits of this will not be fully realised until 2022.

Fund-Raising – Our fundraising activity increased and including a very successful Open Weekend held in September and Advent Fayre. We were able to participate the BHCT sponsored bike ride too and our income from fund-raising was £3,775 an increase of £3,624 from 2020.

Fees - £3,471 was received for fees for funerals. This was £250 more than in 2020.

We started the year with a deficit of £6,812.14 on the general fund and show a significant increase of £4311.26 this year and therefore end the year with a deficit of £2,500.88 on the General Fund.

Bell Appeal Our appeal to rehang and refurbish the bells has been concluded this year, with a final fund-raising push of £19,504, which included a £9,000 VAT reclaim. The balance of this fund is £2,849.31 in credit.

The bells were returned in September 2020, but had to remain silent due to the pandemic and Covid-19 restrictions preventing the ringers from using the ringing room safely.

The rehung and refurbished bells were rung for the first time in July of this year.

Report on the Proceedings of the Church Council

General Matters

The PCC met 5 times during this unusual year with all of the meetings taking place via zoom with an average attendance of 87%.

We continue to be blessed by the ministry of Fr Robin Carter and were deeply saddened by the sudden loss of our, much loved, retired Priest, Fr Robert Nokes, at the end of November.



We were able to welcome Fr Adam properly at a Benefice picnic held at the end of July. The first chance for a benefice gathering allowed by the pandemic restrictions

At this time we were also joined by Josh Cleaver who was with us from July to September, on placement whilst progressing his training for the Priesthood

Fr Gary continued as the Area Dean for the Newport Deanery and progressed his work as the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's Healthy Churches Mentor whilst Fr Adam took on the lead for the day to day running of the parishes. We participated in the Healthy Churches programme ourselves and Fr Gary shared the results with us at our Celebration Supper at the end of October.

Sadly, our plans were stopped in their tracks, when Fr Gary was hospitalised with Covid 19 in November, and remained off sick for the rest of the year (due to return to work gradually from July 2022). Fr Adam quite unexpectedly found himself in sole charge and has worked very hard, supported by the four churchwardens, the two Church Council's officers and many others besides.

The church has been open for worship for all of 2021 with careful risk assessments being undertaken as we worked to operate safely as the restrictions were gradually lifted. We started the year with limited numbers, mandatory mask wearing, social distancing and booking in and were glad to be able to resume refreshments in July and achieve normality by the end of the year. Weekday Masses were also offered online until November for those unable to return to in person.

We benefitted greatly from the care of Bishop Jonathan Goodall, the Bishop of Ebbsfleet until he retired. He last visited the benefice for our Confirmation Service in January 2021. We are grateful, now to receive episcopal oversight from Bishop Tony of Wakefield and the Council of Bishops.



Safeguarding

We reviewed our Safeguarding policy in March and continue to adopt the Diocesan Safer Recruitment Policy.

Communication

Our Parish Website continues to attract a large number of 'hits, but is now ready for an upgrade. The Parish Facebook Page is very popular and a useful tool for promoting our activities and linking to the website. These means of communication remain invaluable as well as our monthly newsletter: The Link.

Churchyard

We continue to be grateful for all the hard work that Richard Tompkins and his helpers have done in the churchyard over the last year.

Church Flowers

The ten regular team members, with occasional help from other members of the congregation have continued to provide flowers to decorate the church for festivals and special occasions, usually bringing in "readymade" arrangements. However, we were able to work together for Christmas which was a great joy.



Cleaning

A few dedicated people do cleaning tasks quietly, behind the scenes. More help in this area would be most welcome

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 to whom we are very grateful.

Walsingham

We have strong links with the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, and were pleased to be able to take a coach to this year's Pilgrimage of Healing and Renewal at the end of August and to attend the Bible Weekend in November. We continue to join shrine daily for Shrine prayers and offer the link for their 9.00am Sunday Celebration of the Eucharist.

Choir and Music

We continue our search to appoint a new Director of Music for the parishes, which continues to be advertised. We are grateful to a team of organists who played at our services on a rota basis.

Altar Servers: Young people are encouraged to join our team of altar servers..

Rosary Group continued to meet via zoom.

Our Adult Learning and Teaching programme continued to meeting via zoom, and we have had very good attendance particularly with our art and film based courses.

Welcoming Sub Group

The Welcome Group produced a newly designed leaflet, and welcome packs, including copies of our Link magazine, were delivered to 200 new homes at the beginning of Lent.

Children and Young People

Summer Club Sadly we were not able to offer Holiday Club in 2021 due to the pandemic restrictions. However, we were able to offer 4 weekly sessions of Summer Club which were well received.

Sunday School, Was offered virtually until we could safely return to church. The material we use follows the church year and is usually based upon the readings that are set for the day.

Little Angels: Little Angels returned to meeting in church once it was safe to do so – and with guidelines to keep everyone safe. A new carpet was purchased for the children's corner and a new wooden kitchen



Inspire! Inspire, our group for young people continue to meet weekly in term time The group were excited to have a sleepover in church to Link in with the virtual Walsingham youth pilgrimage

Activity Afternoons These are held on Tuesday afternoons during the school holidays, but during the pandemic this has not been possible

Social Action

Wellbeing Sub-Committee

The group continues to offer: a **support group for Carers'**, working in partnership with the Surgery's Patient Participation Group, which meets regularly on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Zoom continued to be used until July when the group returned to church for its meetings.

The **Hanslope and District Cancer Wellbeing and Support Group** meets regularly on the 3rd Monday of each month at 8pm. Zoom continued to be used until July returning to the usual venue of the church coffee area from August. The group aims to offer emotional support and information to those affected by cancer and their families.

Monthly **Community Lunches** returned in October, providing a convivial gathering for soup and a roll followed by dessert.

The monthly **Walk for Health** resumed on the second Sunday afternoon of each month – initially just for outdoor walking – but refreshments were able to be served afterwards from July onwards.

The **Craftivists Reflection Group** continued to meet in church on Friday mornings.

We also pulled together a small committee to enable the **Advent Windows to take place**.

Charities

Harvest Auction and Afternoon Tea, £1,166.40, were given to Farm Africa.

We support the work of the **MK Foodbank** by having a collection point at the door of the church. We are also a collection point for **Soroptimist International** for toiletry items for Women's refuge centres.

£323.69 was collected for the ACS in their collection boxes running from Easter to Pentecost

Our Friends in the Diocese of Ho, Ghana

Despite the problems caused by Covid, Hanslope and Castlethorpe churches have sent Bishop Matthias a total of £ 2,452.04. This was particularly welcome and literally a lifeline as for several months the diocese had been unable to pay their clergy. We agreed with Bishop Matthias that £1,000 should go to St Paul's Church, Agbozume (the parish we have been supporting as well as the Diocese and clergy). This has enabled them to re-start a housing project for their clergy.

A further £250 went as personal gifts from members of our two congregations to help with the funeral expenses for the Bishop's mother-in-law. (In Ghana it is traditional that friends and family help each other with such expenses).



As usual Andrea Kingston's plant sale, now online, was a great success, so was the introduction of six weeks of Summer Sunday afternoons of Tea and Cakes in church; In October a concert by Heart & Music (their first since Lockdown) was very popular.

We're aim to beat this figure in 2022 – the need is still there as the Diocese struggles to recover from the effects of the pandemic.

Ho Group

Hanslope World War One Committee

A long time ago, the WW1 committee members (including Fr Gary) and Glyn Hollinshead discussed what could be done about restoring the Soldiers Chapel altar. This is the last project of the Hanslope WW1 Commemoration Committee.

A start has now been made to replace the disintegrating altar frontal which June Paterson has kindly agreed to undertake. We are hoping that the gold embroidery on the current frontal can be salvaged although the background is totally beyond repair. This is likely to take at least a year so a temporary frontal is in place until then.



WW1 Committee (Mary Nokes, Fr Gary, Sheila Mobley; Gill Greaves).

Annual Report on the Fabric of the Church

Repairs and Maintenance

- May 2021
 - Three LED flood lights were replaced Cost £85.81
- September 2021
 - Large Ash on the south boundary was Pollard in accordance with the local Authority permission. Cost £1050
- October 2021
 - Large Ash Tree on the western boundary was made safe after a large branch was brought down by high winds blocking a public footpath. Cost £800
- November 2021
 - Small glass pane in an opening window in the tower bell ringing room replaced. Cost £294
- December 2021
 - The organ blower motor and impeller were serviced due to excessive play of the bearings and the impeller being loose
 - The 7th bell headstock had to be removed and returned to the supplier due to a defect. There was no cost and the headstock was returned mid January

We also have a number of items that need to be serviced on an annual basis, these include:

Fire Extinguishers
Tower clock
Gas heaters
Lighting conductor
Roof alarm
Organ (Retuning)

Churchyard

We continue to be grateful for all the hard work that Richard Tompkins and his helpers have done in the churchyard over the last year.

Glyn Hollinshead 16th March 2022

On behalf of the PCC

Father Adam Burnham (Chairman)
15th May 2022