

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

Bradwell Church

Annual Reports

2019-2020



“Following Jesus, Sharing His Love”

Ministry Report

It's been a long time since I wrote my last Ministry Report and much has happened. Some of it could have been predicted when we were together at the Annual Meeting in 2019, but an awful lot has brought us into uncharted territory.

I would like to begin by saying 'thank you'. Thank you to for your patience and understanding as we travel these strange times, thank you to the many people who have spent so much time and effort over the last 18 months, both in 'normal' times and more recently, in supporting the mission and ministry of the church and in the support of each other as part of Christ's body in this place. I would especially like to thank the Church Officers, Rod and Carol, Diana as Council Chair and Carol also for her wisdom as our Treasurer; for the Assistant Church Officers, Church Council members, House Group leaders and the leaders of the other groups and activities which go on, those who lead worship in word and music, and for those who take on all the practical tasks which are often unnoticed, but are essential nonetheless. I would also like to thank those who stepped down from roles at the Annual Meeting in 2019 for the way in which they helped the transition to new people.

There is a lot I could write in this report, and it is hard to know where to start! Other reports will mention Fabric and Finance and I am immensely grateful to the Fund n Furb team for their amazing work in raising so much for the replacement of the Church roof and looking towards further refurbishment of lighting and decoration, for the huge generosity of people who responded to the appeal and for Peter and Rod's work in navigating the process of permissions to allow us to replace the roof in the way that seemed best. I am looking forward to admiring the fruits of all their labour. I am particularly grateful to the House Groups, to Cameo and to the new Tuesday Morning Prayer Group for their promotion of prayer, fellowship and a desire to learn more. They have been a key driver in keeping people in contact during this time when we have not been able to have services in the church building and maintaining our prayer life together. I hope that more of us would be able to join the groups, and that we would have to create even more. The Lent course this year, on the Beatitudes, started off in church and migrated online in lockdown. It has been a place of deep discussion and learning and I have been greatly encouraged that it has continued and that people want to continue it further. Sophia has taken over planning and leading this and has brought a way of exploration together which is both challenging and rewarding, and opened up new ways of engaging with scripture and hearing the different voices within it. I am grateful to her for leading this in a way I could not.

I am also grateful to those from the groups who have been responsible for the service on the website on occasions. It has not been an easy task to try to continue the worshipping life of the church during the coronavirus restrictions, to try to ensure all can access at least something of what we do, but also that we might be able to look outwards and enable new people to connect with us as well. Alan has worked extremely hard every single week to make sure the bulletin has gone out with the service material, and also posted it on the website, navigating the changes of format and the unpredictabilities of various web platforms. Paul Brookman and June Holden have also spent many, many hours creating and supporting material for the Zoom services at 11am on Sundays, and it has also been a real joy to share ministry there with Tracey in the Creative Space, as well as other ministers from the Partnership. We have all learnt a lot in a very short time and I have been so impressed with how well things have gone. There have been the odd technical hiccup, yet you only have to look at recent comedy programmes to realise that these are shared with virtually every other user of these platforms. It has also been wonderful to meet new people, and get to know others better, as we have shared the Zoom services with those from other churches in the Partnership. We have also been reminded that, although some of us who can be a part of church in the building haven't been able to join in so effectively when

that isn't possible, there are those who can't join in with church in the building, but have been able to be a part of things online. We will be continuing in the online world, even when services return in the building. During this time of transition, things may well change. Service patterns may alter, in the building as well as online. I know that the myriad of options sometimes given by the Partnership has been confusing at times, and I hope that there will be better co-ordination going forward. During lockdown we have seen some of the benefits of working more closely together, yet I feel that there are opportunities to improve this further in the future.

The Partnership Review process has continued during the year, and we are also in the process of updating the Partnership constitution to make it fit for purpose and allow us to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which will be required from the beginning of the next tax year. As you may have picked up from the document I sent round in the bulletin over the summer, I have been somewhat disappointed by the lack of response I have received when I have asked for feedback or responses. So I was very pleased with the morning session in Bradwell, led by Gill Lovell, using the new Parish Planning Tool from Oxford Diocese. It's a shame we didn't get to finish writing our responses and next steps on the big pieces of paper in church before lockdown, but we will be going back to them and assessing what has changed and what hasn't during this time of coronavirus. I remember seeing one idea written there about more online presence and thinking to myself 'I'd love that to happen, but it will be hard and long, I know I don't have the first clue' – how different the world was just one month later! There will be another Partnership Council Meeting in mid-September when I am expecting to get responses from the document I presented at the meeting in June, so I hope there will be more news at the Annual Meeting itself. There will continue to be discussions and decisions that will be necessary by the Partnership Council, the Church Council and by the church membership as a whole and I would encourage you all to get involved at all these levels. I pray we will all be guided to know how best to do that.

Looking back, there are other things to mention, which might not take up so many words, but which are important nonetheless. I wanted to say how much I enjoyed the Christmas services and celebrations last year, and the great community feel there, and for those who made things so special, including the 'Cracked' team who brought Christmas Cracked to so many youngsters from the schools again, after such a successful Easter Cracked as well. It was good also to begin to do assemblies at some of the local schools. It was a great sadness that both Chatterbox and JAM Club have, for differing reasons, had to stop since the last Annual Meeting. I understand the reasons, and am so grateful for the hard work of so many down the years, especially for Chatterbox which was into its second generation of youngsters. It was great to host Chatterbox specials in Summer 2019 in church, and I know folk are continuing to look for ways to support and encourage a connection with those with small children in our community. The Art exhibition in church was a lovely community day, and Ros put a lot of work into ensuring it ran smoothly. I also enjoyed the Country Gospel evening which Paul Rushton put on, which was enjoyed by many people from church and more widely. Our good wishes go with Paul and his family as they move north. There have also been hard times which many of us have had to face, illness both personally and in the family, bereavements and other family pressures. And recently of course the passing of Ruby Trippett. Ruby has been such a presence at Bradwell Church for many years, and Ruby and John have made a difference to the lives of many people, not least those who have been supported by the Soup Run. We will miss her, and it was all the more difficult that we could not say a proper goodbye together because of the restricted numbers at the Crematorium. We must make an opportunity in the future to remember Ruby, and others, in the way we would have liked to.

Hopefully, the coronavirus situation will ease further and restrictions will be lifted and we will be able to use the church building again. I am really looking forward to being able to gather together, sing, share

communion, have a cup of tea and biscuits after the service, hear all the bells, and many other things besides. I hope that will be soon. But it will not just be turning the clock back to what was, it will be starting a new chapter of what will be, and we need to look forward and see 'normal' in a new way. We have been given the opportunity to recognise structural faults in what we thought was 'normal', asking ourselves who and what is 'key', and what we 'need' to buy, hearing the pain of the Black Lives Matter protests, recognising the effects of our actions on the poorest and most vulnerable. Perhaps some of us needed reminding that we are not in control. As we turn to the God who is, perhaps we have also seen that when we work together, letting go of our own freedoms and privileges for the sake of others, our individual contributions to fighting injustice and climate change can make a difference. Can we shape a new normal, one modelled on the Thy Kingdom come? It will be a challenge, but with God's help, we can.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to say thank you to Sophia for all the support she has given during these months, for the children who have had rooms and lives disrupted in the new online world, and to you all for your understanding as we have been, and will continue to be, a shielding household as Sophia's parents have been living with us since lockdown. Also, because of the coronavirus situation, the Partnership have asked whether my licence could be extended here, and Bishop Alan has said that he will be happy to extend it for up to a further year. We will still be expecting to move on sometime in that year, but I am so glad to have the opportunity to spend some further time with you.

God bless
love, Neil

Treasurer's Report

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2019

These are the financial reports for the period January to December 2019.

General Fund

The General Fund is the fund used for the regular running of the church. A look at the yearly breakdown (below) shows that during 2019 we spent £10,581.00 more than our income for the year. Obviously this is not what we want and is even more serious because in 2018 we also spent in excess of our income (that year by £9,385). So in the past two years combined our General Fund balance has shrunk from £26,056 (at 01/01/2018) to £6,090 (at 31/12/19).

Of course there are other funds, not least the Roof and Repair Fund, which has been well supported, so our balance sheet (see Report A) does not show us overall in a deficit situation. **This must not distract us from the very challenging situation of our ongoing regular costs.**

For 2020, the SEP has agreed that our church will pay £40,000 as its Parish Share which is a reduction of £10,400 from 2019. This follows a previous reduction of £6,600 in 2018. The impact is wider than just on ourselves.

The breakdown of the General Fund at the end of 2018 and 2019 below provides additional detail to that usually provided for the ACM report. It has been added in for information purposes so that the full picture with regards to the General Fund is fully understood.

It is worth noting that in 2018, the church benefited from 2 additional payments of Tax Refund due to the timing of receipts under a new system introduced by the Government. In 2019 this has stabilised so the reduction due to this will not be experienced in future years.

	2019	2018
INCOME		
Gift Aid Giving	£26,821.79	£27,349.26
Non Gift Aid Giving	£13,491.03	£17,512.60
Tax Refund (Gift Aid)	£8,652.18	£12,185.48
Sundry Income	£576.59	£525.82
Donations	£565.90	£268.50
Donations Gift Aided	£1,189.00	£500.00
General Fundraising	£0.00	£80.00
Utilities and Other Refunds	£0.00	£25.00
Bank Interest	£4.20	£4.20
Chapel Hire	£0.00	£585.00
Refreshments	£142.59	£123.27
Church Fees	£1,288.00	£2,333.00
Sunday School	£515.00	£524.00
Trust Income Wylie	£52.39	£51.10
Trust Income - Farmborough	£639.66	£623.93
Collections for external causes	£357.60	£72.
TOTAL	£54,295.93	£62,763.36

EXPENDITURE

Parish Share	£50,400.00	£57,000.00
Expenses	£175.99	£100.00
Insurance - Church	£1,936.74	£1,897.12
Insurance - Chapel	£250.07	£252.95
Electricity - Church	£3,346.08	£3,332.10
Electricity - Chapel	£550.36	£717.47
Water Rates - Church	£71.09	£117.92
Water Rates - Chapel	£231.27	£443.48
Repairs and Maintenance	£0.00	£449.41
Refreshment Items	£0.00	£ 77.96
Churchyard	£960.00	£967.30
Sunday School	£291.38	£481.81
Stationery, Postage & Office	£514.15	£241.37
Worship	£207.91	£290.65
Printing	£181.51	£300.01
Equipment, Fittings and Furniture	£843.45	£ 62.00
Training	£0.00	£ 40.00
Donations to external organisations	£328.93	£ 74.39
Donations from Giving	£4,259.99	£5,113.60
Sundry	£ 328.01	£188.82
TOTAL	£64,876.93	£72,148.36
IN YEAR SHORTFALL	-£10,581.00	-£9,385.00

Roof Fund

2019 saw a very positive situation for this fund with an exceptional figure for personal donations. This has been enhanced via insurance claims. Due to a number of donations being eligible for Gift Aid, the overall total is even higher. The balance at the end of 2019 was £44,248.

Income

Gift aid giving	£3,892.02
Donations	£27,941.00
Insurance claims	£10,750.00
TOTAL	£42,583.02

Expenditure

Repairs and maintenance	£4,165.67
IN YEAR CHANGE	£38,417.35

Building and Decorating Funds

The building fund expenditure was mainly for 2 items – the Quinquennial Review and lighting project fees.

	Building	Decoration
Income		
Donations	£ 234.00	£ -
General fundraising	£ 60.01	£ -
TOTAL	£ 294.01	£ -
Expenditure		
Repairs and Maintenance	£ 1,848.60	£1,382.24
Equipment, Fittings and furniture	£ 2,538.00	£ -
TOTAL	£ 4,386.60	£ 1,382.24
IN YEAR CHANGE	-£ 4,092.59	
CLOSING BALANCE	£ 1,761.00	£ 3,736.00

The reports as audited each year are as follows –

Report A : Income and Expenditure (Combined funds)

The church account is made up of a number of funds. This report shows the totality of all funds within the account. Please see Report C for further details of individual funds.

Report B: Balance Sheet

This report shows the year-end position in our assets and liabilities compared to the previous year. The Fixed Assets are our trust funds from which we derive a quarterly income.

The Current Assets are bank accounts and cash, plus any monies owed to us at year end. The Liabilities show any monies owed by us at year end.

Report C : Fund Totals

This is the breakdown of various funds making up the account. The designated and restricted funds are for monies collected, put aside or donated for particular purposes as shown in the table.

Report D: Tithed Payments

These payments are made by setting aside a proportion of weekly and regular giving and paid out annually to charities and church organisations that we support.

Report E : Agency Payments

These are collections made throughout the year in response to specific appeals.

Carol Wood, Treasurer

REPORT A : Income and Expenditure (combined funds)

INCOME		2019	2018
1101	Gift Aid Giving	26,683.54	27,349.26
1102	Non Gift Aid Giving	13,866.55	17,512.60
1111	Tax Refund (Gift Aid)	12,555.93	13,786.48
1121	Sundry Income	576.59	525.82
1122	Quinquennial and Other Appeals	-	-
1123	Donations	16,503.49	1,299.79
1124	Donations Gift Aided	13,348.16	7,090.00
1125	Donations - Flowers	-	-
1131	General Fundraising	60.01	284.48
1201	Insurance Claims	10,750.78	-
1301	Utilities and Other Refunds	-	84.99
1501	Bank Interest	4.20	4.20
1601	Photocopying	-	-
1602	Chapel Hire	-	585.00
1603	Refreshments	142.59	123.27
1651	Church Fees	1,288.00	2,333.00
1701	Sunday School	515.00	524.00
1804	Church Magazine Sales	-	-
1901	Trust Income Wylie	52.39	51.10
1902	Trust Income - Farmborough	639.66	623.93
1950	Collections for external causes	544.59	74.39
		97,531.48	72,252.31
2001	Parish Share	50,400.00	57,000.00
2101	Expenses	175.99	100.00
2201	Insurance - Church	1,936.74	1,897.12
2205	Insurance - Chapel	250.07	252.95
2301	Electricity - Church	3,346.08	3,332.10
2302	Electricity - Chapel	550.36	717.47
2303	Water Rates - Church	71.09	117.92
2304	Water Rates - Chapel	231.27	443.48
2401	Repairs and Maintenance	5,940.36	3,950.57
2502	Bank Charges	-	-
2603	Refreshment Items	-	77.96
2604	Cleaning Items	-	-
2653	Churchyard	1,080.00	3,007.12
2701	Sunday School	291.38	481.81
2800	Postage	-	-
2801	Stationery, Postage & Office	514.15	241.37
2802	Flowers	-	-
2803	Worship	207.91	290.65
2804	Printing	181.51	300.01
2805	Equipment, Fittings and Furniture	3,381.45	1,735.05
2806	Training	-	40.00
2900	Donations to external organisations	544.59	74.39
2910	Donations from Giving	4,533.59	5,113.60
2915	Cost of Fundraising	73.91	-
2999	Sundry	351.39	188.82
		74,061.84	79,362.39
	SURPLUS/DEFICIT	23,469.64	- 7,110.08

REPORT B : Balance Sheet

		As at 31/12/2019	As at 31/12/2018
Fixed assets			
	INV1: Investment Assets	23,808.13	20,056.44
		23,808.13	20,056.44
Current assets			
	6500: Unbanked Receipts	—	—
	6501: Bank Current Account	54,941.67	31,681.48
	6504: Bank Deposit Account	2,112.42	2,108.22
	6505: Cash Box	12.07	9.35
	6506: Flower Donations Box	—	—
	CA002: Debtors	—	—
		57,066.16	33,799.05
Liabilities			
	6699: Agency collections	—	—
	Z04: Accounts Payable	—	104.00
		—	104.00
		80,874.29	53,751.49
Reserves			
	Excess / (deficit) to date	23,469.64	16,671.05
	Z01: Starting balances	53,751.49	54,047.89
	Z02: Gains/(losses) on investment assets	3,751.69	(305.40)
	Z03: Gains and losses own use	(98.53)	9.00
		80,874.29	53,751.49
Represented by Funds			
	Unrestricted	6,090.90	16,671.05
	Designated	47,419.64	13,468.38
	Restricted	3,555.62	3,555.62
	Endowment	23,808.13	20,056.44
	Total	80,874.29	53,751.49

REPORT C : Fund Totals

<i>Unrestricted</i>	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	TOTAL
Unrestricted - General fund	£ 6,090.00	—	—	£ 6,090.00
<i>Designated</i>				
Decoration	—	£ 1,399.00	£ 2,337.00	£ 3,736.00
Church Lighting and AV Equipment	—	£ 864.00	—	£ 864.00
Tithed Income from Giving	—	£ 561.00	—	£ 561.00
Churchyard Work			-£ 198.00	-£ 198.00
Building Fund	—	£ 345.00	£ 1,416.00	£ 1,761.00
Roof Repair	—	£ 44,248.00	—	£ 44,248.00
	£ 6,090.00	£ 47,417.00	£ 3,555.00	£ 57,062.00

REPORT D : Tithed Payments

[Closing]	Scripture Union 12%	£555.65
	MK Bridgebuilder Trust 16%	£740.87
	Open Door Project 12%	£555.65
	Church Pastoral Aid Society 12%	£555.65
	Christian Solidarity Worldwide 12%	£555.65
	Church Mission Society 16%	£740.87
	Arocha 12%	£555.65
	Fund for emergency mission giving 8%	£370.44
	TOTAL	£4,630.45

REPORT E : Agency Payments

Open Door	£86.99
Toybox	£128.67

Quinquennial

The Quinquennial was carried out in October by our QI Architect, **Jeremy Bell**, and we received the report in November. There are 26 recommendations, none of them serious and most suggest monitoring the situation rather than rushing to do any work.

The recommended actions will be costed and carried out in accordance with the architect's priorities and the availability of funds.

Maintenance

Roof

The 2019 maintenance inspection and annual clean was carried out in May by our maintenance contractors. This involves, inspecting roofs, including the saddleback roof of the tower; and clearing all roof gutters, gullies and drains. There is a slipped tile on the tower roof, but this isn't serious and can be dealt with when the roof has its next maintenance visit. The temporary roof repair was inspected and there were holes in the sheeting and signs of water getting into the building, probably due to squirrels or birds. As we were anticipating a lengthy delay in replacing the lead it was decided that we should replace the whole of the temporary covering and that was done in June.

- ***Stolen Lead - A Further Attack by Thieves***

On September the 8th 2019 the ridge of the nave roof and the porch roof flashings were again attacked by thieves resulting in more damage and loss of lead. G J Kinns were again asked to return as soon as possible to make another temporary repair and, in spite of the strong winds that made it difficult and dangerous to handle the felt sheeting, this was done on September the 12th. They

were also able to make good the flashing and mortar damage to the porch roof. The thieves were not able to remove the lead flashing; perhaps they were disturbed or they decided it wasn't worthwhile to strip the porch roof as it is clad with aluminium and not valuable lead.

- ***Roof Replacement Faculty***

We submitted a Faculty application for the replacement of the stolen lead roof, which included removing the remaining lead from the north slope and replacing the whole roof with tern coated stainless steel. The initial response to the request was mixed. The **DAC** expressed sympathy with our wish to replace the stolen lead with tern coated stainless steel, but Historic England would not sanction the pre-emptive removal of the remaining lead. This is their stated policy, but we were, of course, hoping to make a reasoned case for an exemption. Historic England's concern was echoed by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Building (SPAB).

We decided to appeal directly to Historic England and made our case for a review of their decision, unfortunately this plea was unsuccessful. After all our efforts to reverse the advice given by HE the DAC eventually agreed to recommend that the whole roof be replaced with stainless steel. A piece of good news that happened to coincide with the incident on the 8th of September, which itself strengthened our case for not making more lead available to future thieves and vandals.

As required by the Faculty process we posted a **public notice** both inside the church and on the external notice board. The notice went up on the 24th February and had to remain on public view for 28 days. I am hopeful that we shall be granted our Faculty soon after that time and then we can proceed with the works.

- **Insurance claims**

Ecclesiastical Insurance agreed our insurance claim and, based on the limit of their liability of £7,500 for lead replacement they have settled on that amount plus our architect's fees and the cost of two temporary repairs.

The insurers were informed of the September 8th incident, along with the police and the DAC. The police provided a crime reference number, but as far as we know no investigation took place. The insurers were quick to pay for the temporary repair and we are currently gathering quotes for replacing the ridge lead so that we can make a claim for the theft itself.

Security light

Over the weekend of 23th-24th November vandals attacked the security light, presumably with the firm intention of smashing the bulb, which they succeeded in doing. This was promptly repaired by Ray Scoins, but one has to wonder what was the purpose: was it wanton vandalism or was it done specifically to prevent the security light from coming on for some felonious reason? Vandalism in and around churches is always very disturbing.

Annexe Toilet

The siphonic flush of the annexe toilet was failing to clear the bowl, leaving paper behind. It was difficult to track the problem: i.e. whether it was a plumbing or drain issue. Ray Scoins spent a while trying to resolve the problem and eventually cleared the apparent blockage with caustic soda. Ray also put a notice up by the flush to advise users on the correct usage of the flush handle: siphonic flushes do not react well to 'pumping' of the flush or of forcing the handle to return.

Redecoration Project

Still on hold pending roof repair and possible new lighting.

Electrics

- The lectern light bulb was replaced with a (GU10) LED bulb.
- All the candle bulbs in the church were replaced with LED versions. This should improve reliability and reduce running costs.
- The quinquennial 'Electrical Installation Condition Inspection' was carried out in early November by **AAES Electrical Services**. The installation was rated *unsatisfactory*, meaning there is a potentially dangerous condition that requires immediate attention. This concern arises from new regulations that requires all socket circuits to have RCD protection. To meet this requirement an additional RCD module will be installed to protect the annexe circuit.

New Church Lighting

A Faculty application for a completely new church lighting scheme was submitted to the Diocese for their consent. Unfortunately, the application was not approved because the DAC wanted more information and we were not in a position to provide that without taking on further expense.

We have since met with a specialist church lighting company and after visiting the church and discussing our needs they have given us several cost estimates for different lighting schemes. These look positive and the costs appear reasonable, but we have yet to look into the implications of each option and the amount of funding we have available.

Kneelers

All three of the Communion kneelers were found with holes in some of the tapestry suggesting moth or other insect attack. They were treated with 'Pest Expert Formula "C" Carpet Beetle Killer Spray'. This needs to be monitored and the kneelers will require some repair work.

Fire Extinguishers

Kestrel Fire Protection came in October to test all the fire extinguishers in the church and the chapel and they were found to be in good order. Certificate No: 539 was issued and this is displayed in the annexe.

The fire exit signs were replaced with new-regulation luminous signs.

Church Cleaning

Since the last cleaning rota was drawn up we have lost several volunteers. I did ask for more people to join the cleaning team and I put up a form for people to add their names, but regrettably not one name was added. Nevertheless, the church has been kept clean and presentable, thanks to the remaining members of the cleaning team and the many who help out behind the scenes.

Work days

There were two 'Work Party' days during the year:

Spring

The first workday was on Saturday May 11th.

We had a perfect day for working outside and there were around ten volunteers working hard inside and outside the church. We managed to complete most of the scheduled work:

- Old Holm oak area tidied, including pruning off new shoots on the remaining stumps.
- Strimming inside of Battams graves enclosure.
- Strimming around Baily tomb enclosure and lifting the fallen railings.
- The area around the Innes graves was cleared of weeds.
- South/west perimeter hedging trimmed and tidied.
- Overhanging branches from all trees cut back, including the cedars where the boughs were resting on the hedge below.
- Noticeboard treated using Sikken's Cetol Light Oak Wood stain and mastic filler to seal around glass and any open joints.
- Weeds growing through the footpaths were sprayed with patio weed killer.
- Toilet given a deep clean.
- Porch swept and cleaned, including high level and around electricity cabinets.
- All woodwork washed, including the south aisle lectern dais, and skirting boards.
- Brass cleaned and wax removed.

- High level cleaning, including chancel arch and bat droppings.
- Notice boards and information rack sorted and tidied.

Autumn

The second workday was on Saturday October 12th.

The weather was atrocious for our Autumn workday and we had fewer volunteers than we needed, but still quite a lot got done, even outside in the drizzly rain: -

- Weeding and clearing the old Holm Oak border under the supervision of the 'Greening the Church' group
- Clearing of weeds and pine needles from the gulley around the church
- Berberis by west window of aisle cut back to allow good air flow and prevent damp on the walls
- Yews trimmed and boundary trees and bushes cut back
- Lichen brushed off main gates
- Toilet deep cleaned
- High level cleaning of church interior and removal of cobwebs and debris from window mullions and shelves, the chancel arch, aisle roof beams, etc.
- Bat droppings cleaned up
- All chairs brushed and cleaned

Churchyard

• **Maintenance**

The grass continues to be maintained by *J V Hough Landscapes* with the valuable support of a number of volunteers.

• **Trees**

Special attention is given to the trees during our biannual workdays. No other tree work has been needed.

The large Horse Chestnut by the north church gate was surveyed by the Parish Council because it is so large, old and hollow. The tree surveyor reported that there is no danger at the present time, but we should beware if it grows very much taller. The tree is in the old Glebe field, but is no longer our responsibility, however it is close to our listed gates and many gravestones so we have an interest. We shall keep an eye on it and report any concerns to the Parish.

Bradwell Chapel

The chapel Quinquennial was due during 2018, but has not been carried out because we cannot justify the cost and the Methodist Circuit had not been in touch with us about it. However, they have now realised that the QI is overdue and plan to have it done in June 2020. We can reasonably expect there to be many issues that will require our attention. As a result, we shall be looking for volunteers next year.

Thanks and Appreciation

2019/20 turned out to be another eventful year with further lead thefts and a real struggle to get the necessary permissions to repair the damaged roof. The generosity of our church members and our

non- church-going neighbours has been absolutely crucial and the 'Fund & Furb' team are grateful to everyone who contributed to our fund raising effort. We are also thankful for all the support that is given in dealing with the practical care of the fabric and estate and I am grateful to everyone who was involved in any way. Please continue to be observant and report any suspicious activity or problems with the building to me or any member of the 'Estate' team.

Peter Lazard, Fabric Officer, March 2020

Bradwell Church Council

This year elected Council members have been Kathy Coles, Karen Ho, June Holden, Jan Newman-Bracey, Sue Robertson, Chris Spikings, Diana Stammers, Ruby Trippett and Andrew Vincent. Neil Popham as our Minister, Carol Wood as Treasurer and Church Officer and Rod Ruston as Church Officers have been ex officio members. Peter Lazard is co-opted to the Council as Fabric Officer. Diana and Rod have jointly acted as lay chair, with Rod taking more of the lead in recent meetings as Diana has had to take a step back, and June has supported us as secretary.

We met five times this year. At our first meeting in May 2019, appointments of postholders in various areas of service were confirmed and we reviewed the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership (SEP) Safeguarding policy, with Dawn Ansbro providing the annual report on safeguarding. At every meeting, the Council receives updates on activities of many groups that contribute regularly to the life of the church and a report on fabric matters for both the church building and the chapel. It also reviews recent special events and ensures plans are in place for those coming up, and receives reports from Stantonbury Ecumenical Council and Mission Partnership activities.

Three particular areas of discussion have featured in a number of meetings this year: the fund and furb activities to replace the roof, redecorate the church and – we hope – install new lighting (see also separate Fabric Report from Peter Lazard); the plans for the Listening Days that we have used as a church to consider where God is leading us as a church; and our financial position, as income has significantly decreased. The Council and its smaller Standing Committee agreed a significant reduction in our 2020 contribution to the Stantonbury Ecumenical Parish Share (for ministry and other denominational costs). This has been discussed with the SEP Treasurer and we pray that we are able to return to contributing more in future.

According to our terms of reference, three members of the Council will reach the end of their term of office at this annual meeting: Chris Spikings, June Holden, Andrew Vincent. Thank you to all Council members for giving their service in this way.

Diana Stammers (Joint Lay chair)

Greening the Church

- Most of the fruit trees bore fruit last year despite the damsons suffering from leaf curl. Bulbs have been planted and crocuses are in flower, other bulbs will be soon.
- Managing the North boundary requires more work than anticipated but we had help on a church work day. Three bat boxes were installed and the design of the boxes allows them to be checked from ground level using a camera and flash. No bats have yet been found to be roosting in the boxes.
- We have twice surveyed for wild flowers and found a long list of species, including wild strawberry.
- Goldfinches feed on the thistle seeds and there was a Tree Bumblebees nest in the stone wall.

Peter Lund

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a standing item on the Church Council Agenda now.

As the Church Council was informed, there were two matters brought to my attention this year and both were passed on appropriately without further action necessitated by Bradwell Church.

Dawn Ansboro

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership website

The SEP website is the hub for news from all our six churches in the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership. But sounding like a broken record, as I've written in previous annual reports – it is a continual problem to keep the site up to date with news from across the SEP when churches fail to supply the necessary information.

Now that digital has to a large extent taken over from print as most people's source of information it is vitally important that we make the most of this valuable resource as we endeavour to take the Partnership forward.

Most churches do supply their weekly notices in pdf form – with one or two notable exceptions - so if you are unable to attend church at any time you can read them online. Visit the website at:

<http://stantonbury.net>

Paul Brookman, SEP website editor

Other Church Activities

Bell Ringing

[Captain: Ian Green ; Vice Captain: Jill Joyce; Weekly practice: Wednesdays, 7.30-9.00pm]

There are 14 bell-ringers in the St Lawrence's tower band and our main purpose is to ring the peal of six bells for service on Sunday mornings. We are also available to ring at weddings and funerals, as well as for special national events. This year we have welcomed some new younger members, who have been progressing well in the arcane art of campanology. It is more complicated than you might think, and involves learning 'called changes' and various mathematical patterns or 'methods', once the physical bell-handling has been mastered. We meet for practice on Wednesday evenings 7.30-9.00pm, and some St. Lawrence's ringers also visit practices at other local churches, and attend bell-ringing activities and events organised by the North Bucks Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers. You may occasionally hear the St Lawrence bells being rung on the odd day during the week, when a visiting band from elsewhere has asked to visit the tower.

We have been focussing this year on training the learner ringers, and consolidating other ringers' competence in a number of methods. Striking the bells evenly and rhythmically is always a challenge and in June we entered the Branch 6 bell striking competition at Maids Moreton and were delighted to come second out of five towers, with some help from Woughton. Jenny Brookman then joined the Woughton team in the Oxford Diocesan Guild 6-bell final in October. More recently, in February, we enjoyed our annual meal out at the Queen Vic.

We are very grateful to our Captain, Ian Green, for his continuing leadership and to Jill Joyce for her support as Vice Captain. Our treasurer Jean Phillips has looked after the money and our steeple keeper David Joyce has looked after the ropes and stays and other physical aspects of ringing. We're also particularly grateful for Neil's support and interest in our activities.

Janet Maybin (Bell-ringing Secretary) April 2020

Bradwell Facebook Page

Following our first Listening Day in November one of the first points of action I took was to set up a Bradwell Church Facebook page. Using social media is an important part of our armour in reaching out into the wider community. It is gradually gaining new followers – if you have not done so please add your name to the list of followers. And if you've not signed up to Facebook yet – please do so. It may be that it seems to be used by older people rather than youngsters but all publicity is better than no publicity. So please search BradwellChurchMK on Facebook and feel free to add your comments to posts.

Paul Brookman

Bucks Historic Churches Ride and Stride 2019

On behalf of Bradwell Church, Jan Newman-Bracey walked and Simeon Jackson cycled to several local churches, including those in the Stantonbury Partnership. Thank you for all your support and sponsorship. A cheque of £194.13 was received for church funds.

Simeon Jackson

CAMEO (Come and Meet Each Other)

A monthly meeting is held on the third Wednesday of each month for women of St Lawrence's congregation to meet and socialise. A monthly discussion topic, with occasional speakers, quizzes and activities as well as a general talking shop is the format, which intentionally is very informal. A group attended an interesting "Free to be Me" Conference at New Life Church, Wolverton and a Retreat Day is being planned at Cuddington College near Oxford; (this was scheduled for March but sadly had to be postponed until later in the year).

Any ladies from our Church community are welcome to attend our meetings; our membership currently stands at 24.

June Bryant & June Holden

Chatterbox

From January until end of May 2019 the average attendance was 9 families but in total 28 different pre-schoolers attended at some point. A small group of the mums/carers did 'do the rounds' of other similar groups but we gained from them the lovely reputation of providing the best biscuits and refreshments!

The use of the Memorial Hall began to present some disappointments and on a few occasions during the coldest months of the year there was no heating or hot water. These conditions were less than satisfactory for babies and small toddlers and the adults needing to keep coats on. A greater disappointment, however, presented itself when we were told to remove our toys and equipment from the Hall and store outside in a shed to be shared with a Pre-School. For the Chatterbox Team this was an unwelcome physical challenge involving carrying some heavy boxes up a few steps before setting up each week and repeating this at the end of each session. We prepared to comply with the request only to find that the lock had been changed on the shed and the key we held did not fit. The correct key was denied us so very sadly it was decided that *Chatterbox* would not continue to function at the Memorial Hall after the end of May 2019. What had been stored at the Hall was transported to the Chapel. At Easter time the pre-schoolers received an Easter Egg containing the Easter Story and at the end of May, as a memento of *Chatterbox*, the mums who had been most regular received a mug inscribed with a Bible verse.

A once-a-month Summertime *Chatterbox* programme was planned to be held outside the church in June, July and August and we thank Derek Ansbro for his design of an eye-catching flyer to advertise these dates. June had a Duplo theme but adverse weather meant we had to meet in the church. This did indicate to us that this was not the most suitable of venues! At the July event we enjoyed a taste of Wimbledon with strawberries and cream. August saw us enjoying sand and water activities with one little toddler, in particular, most reluctant to come out of the paddling pool. On this date being school holiday, we were joined by some older siblings and it was lovely to catch up with school children who had previously been part of *Chatterbox*. Ice creams were the treat of the day. These 3 events went well and were a memorable though sad finale to *Chatterbox* as it had been running for 17 years.

A few of the most faithful attendees were moving on to school from September 2019 but it was a disappointment to the small group of mums with babies and toddlers that would remain that, for the foreseeable time, there would be a break. The number of items stored in the Chapel has been significantly

reduced but some of the more expensive and harder to replace toys have been retained. The remaining monies of £35 were passed to the Church General Fund. We have a prayerful hope that a similar work of Bradwell Church in the community will be reborn.

Report Co-ordinator: Beth Ruston. I wish to place on record my gratitude to the following who were part of the *Chatterbox* team and who worked so hard to set up, put away, befriend, and provide those enjoyable refreshments: Angela Vincent, Beryl Spikings + guitar, Jill Scoins, Kathy Coles and Rachel Kleinsmith.

Church Flowers

2019 seems to have been a bumper year for flowers, averaging one request a month for special flowers, most in memory of a loved one but some in celebration of an event. We have had our usual flower arranging days for Easter, Harvest and Christmas, this year for Christmas using white and gold with a touch of purple to reflect the Advent colour, for which we received favourable comments. Thanks to all those who came out to help on these days, I do appreciate it. Thanks again to bellringers Jill, Chris and Jean who step in for me when I need them, they have created some splendid displays.

Thanks to the generosity of the congregation's financial contributions for flowers, apart from licensing of our new Minister when my funds would not cope, we have not had to use Church funds for our floral arrangements. Easter is coming up so we'll be decorating the Church on Saturday April 11th, come along and help us create a glorious Spring display.

Jenny Brookman

Coffee Morning

Coffee Morning welcomes anyone to chat over a cup of tea or coffee in the Annex on Wednesday mornings from 10am to 12 noon. The Church is open for quiet prayer. We have about fourteen people most Wednesdays and ages range from under two up to – well I don't like to ask! Our numbers are swelled at times by Youth hostellers, walkers and bell ringers. Last year we went out for Christmas lunch, funded by our voluntary donations.

Do join us if you are free on Wednesdays, you will be made most welcome.

Paul Lund

Housegroups

Sundays

The Sunday Housegroup has continued to meet regularly - usually fortnightly, although sometimes our duties to our children and grandchildren have made organising a prolonged period of study difficult.

Two couples still have children living abroad so sometimes numbers attending have been reduced by absences due to visits to see them. Fortunately we have gained two extra members in the past 18 months or so which helps boost our numbers.

Last year, for the first time in possibly 15 years, we did not have an annual weekend away for one reason or another but, rest assured, the big event is back this year. We will be revisiting Lee Abbey Christian Centre in north Devon during May – except the weekend away has been expanded to be a Monday to Friday affair. The bonus of Lee Abbey is that study is organised for guests with the option to opt in or out of sessions as you wish – it's something we would highly recommend to other housegroups.

We are a friendly and very closely knit housegroup so when one of our members was in hospital recently there was no shortage of visitors – it was easy organising a sort of rota to ensure we were able to all visit on different days using our WhatsApp group. If your housegroup doesn't yet have a WhatsApp group we would highly recommend it because it makes group communication so much easier.

Paul Brookman

Mondays

We have continued to meet at Beryl and Chris Spikings' house. We have grown a little more in size, now with eight members. Our meetings continue to focus on prayer for each other and our relatives, friends and colleagues, and on Bible study, usually with the help of a study guide. This year our studies have included a series on Philippians 4:6-7, "Anxious for nothing", by Max Lucado and a video series, "Jesus the game changer", looking at how the life and teaching of Jesus changed our world. For Lent 2020, we have paused our Monday evening meetings (or most of them!) while we enjoy the church Lent course on Sunday afternoons.

Diana Stammers

Thursdays

Thursday evening housegroup continues well, focusing on direct bible study from both the old and new testament. Members take part in leading where they feel comfortable and lively debate is always encouraged.

New members are welcome and both a sporadic or regular commitment is fine.

Grayham Amos

Lighthouse Prayer Team

Prayer, such an important part of being a Christian and part of a church family.

As a group we keep in contact about the needs of the church family and pray daily for all those on the prayer lists. We haven't been able to meet together as we would like due to illness but regularly text and phone if someone has asked for prayers or if there is a need for urgent prayers. Prayer is a part of our daily life. It keeps us in contact with God and through that contact we will be given a need for prayer.

Long term prayer list

people on the long term prayer list are there because the names were given to us for prayer. We ask that we can be updated on the needs of these people. If you need to add a person to the list please speak to one of us.

Each one of us are there for you. We were brought together by God because of the prayer needs of others.

James ch. 5 v 14-15

Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.

Wendy Hanson

Listening/pastoral group

Six of us now remain available for pastoral visiting when the need arises. Several have opted out because of personal reasons and other commitments. We are exploring the possibility of another listening course being laid on within the parish for those interested in developing this skill.

Angela Vincent has kindly taken on the role of coordinating the team with those who might need pastoral care. If you know of anyone in that situation, please do not hesitate to contact her.

Beryl Spikings

Music

Music has continued to be led at services by Michael Squire, Beryl Spikings and Diana Stammers with help from Adrian Prisk, Huw Humphreys and John Stratford. Thank you all.

We have occasionally had a wider group of musicians, including some of the young members of church, and plan to do this some more over the coming year. At Christmas, Carol Wood led us once more in carols at Heelands shops, with members of St Augustine's joining us once more. The event raised about £100 for the Toybox charity. We also had a very enjoyable evening at Homeridings sheltered

housing for carols and readings, with the usual welcome from Les and the other residents.

The sad news this year has been the demise of the organ. The age of the electronics in the faulty system mean it is uneconomic to try to repair it. We will look into the potential for a replace system – using the existing, good quality console – or whether we would need to replace the entire organ in due course. The Fund and Furb group are kindly mentioning this additional need in grant applications, but the roof replacement and related works will need to take priority. In the meantime, the portable organ and keyboard are providing what we need. Those of you who have been members for a while will remember Don Skinner who used to be the regular organist. I'm sure he would have been delighted to know that the portable organ he left with me has come into its own!

Diana Stammers

Soup run

The soup run continues to provide soup, hot drinks, and food for homeless people. I am part of the Monday team. We prepare at Christchurch, Stantonbury, and have 3 stops in CMK.

There have been new members recruited through the website, as some volunteers have had to stop. We currently have 15 members who go out once or twice a month, on a rota basis. The number of clients varies. Those who come are generally grateful.

We are grateful to the shops who support us with donations of food, and to people who bring tins of chicken or tomato soup to the church to donate. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please have a word with me.

Angela Vincent