

**Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership**

**Bradwell Church  
Annual Reports  
2020-2021**



*“Following Jesus, Sharing His Love”*

## Ministry Report

Hello Everyone!

After having a mammoth Ministry Report to write for the last Annual Report, which spanned 18 months, it seems natural that this one will be shorter as it only covers 6 or 7 months. When I look back to what I wrote at the beginning of September, it feels ever more like nothing has changed in a lot of ways. This was the penultimate paragraph...

*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.*

Sadly, most of that paragraph describes exactly where we still are now as I write this towards the end of March. In September case numbers began to rise, and although we managed a lovely Harvest Service in the churchyard, and even a brief foray back into the church building in December just before cases really started to spike, we are still waiting. We have been through the most difficult time locally with very high case numbers, and sadly deaths, compared with the first wave in the Spring. Christmas was a particularly difficult time, when the hoped-for opportunities for meeting up with others had to be cancelled. Now though, with the great progress made in vaccinating so many people, we can look forward to the easing of restrictions and to the time when it is possible to pick up some of the threads of our lives together that we have had to lay down for so long. The truth in the middle of that paragraph from still stands though, *'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'*. I thank you for your patience, your prayers and for the ways that you have supported one another in so many different ways.

Although we are still at the point of looking forward to restrictions easing, there has still been a lot going on, a lot of people working very hard and many thanks due. I'd like to begin by thanking Karen for her work in creating this report, and for all the people who have written the different parts you'll find in it. They have thanked many people between them, yet it is they themselves who have been the driving forces in each of the different areas of our church life. I am so grateful for all that they have done, as well as echoing their thanks to each and every person who has contributed to our life together. I would particularly like to say how much I appreciate the work of all those who have helped to keep us all in touch – through the housegroups and prayer groups, through the website and weekly mailings, the services, discussion groups and spaces to meet up on Zoom, through the work of the Listening and Pastoral group and for all those people who have just been in contact with others and sought to bring a little comfort. Each piece, however small, has made a difference.

It's been fantastic to see the work completed on the new roof, it's been quite a marathon, but the results look brilliant and is a testament to the hard work of the whole Fund n Furb Team and the generosity of many people. The work is not over and the updating of the lighting, followed by

decoration is still in the pipeline. Thank you too for everyone who has helped to keep the area around the church in such good order, the enthusiastic gardeners and Rod for checking things out regularly and keeping things up together. I am very grateful for the support and hard work of Ray and Carol as Church Officers and for the way in which Carol has kept track of our finances through this difficult time too. Church Council has continued to be busy, particularly our new Lay Chair Andrew, thank you to them, as have our SEC reps Paul and Rob.

Although it hasn't always been easy, I am so grateful to everyone who has engaged with the Partnership Review and read the documents, listened at meetings and shared your thoughts and insights into the process and proposals. Progress is continuing to be made, with Rob and Paul making sure their voices are heard. I very much hope that after our next meeting, scheduled to be before the Annual Meeting, we will be able to move on to the next phase of implementation.

Moving on to our services, as well as Harvest outside and the week in church in mid-December, it was lovely to be able to offer communion at Christmas and on Ash Wednesday by delivering consecrated wafers (and ashes) for people to share using a printed service or as they met on Zoom later on. There will be an opportunity to share communion at Easter too. I'd like to say a big thank you to Ros for the wonderful Advent Calendar that adorned the church gate and so many visitors and caused quite a few people I met to change their daily walking route to take it in and also to Kara for the online version too. The service each week on the website has continued to attract a very good number of views, with the weekly total of different visitors being between 150 and 250 between November and February, with a couple of weeks being into the 400s, most notably for the Nine Lessons and Carols service organised so well by the Tuesday housegroup. I have been very grateful to the housegroups who have led the services, each in their own way, and also for contributions from others, including our friend Kara Gander, especially during Lent when she has been on a placement here as she explores her vocation. Alan has done a huge amount of work on the website – uploading all the content and changing the architecture to fit new ideas – as well as checking all the enquiries and making sure all the documents and notices are circulated, as well as putting together the weekly bulletin.

In December Sophia was licensed as a CMS Lay Pioneer and was also licensed by Bishop Alan to work here with the online church. It's been a privilege to share in the fruits of the learning she has done and to see her begin to share it with people here, and it's also been inspiring to see how so many of you have taken the opportunities to engage with those ideas too and in turn to shape the learning as well and to be part of the reflections that Sophia has been able to give that have benefited others on her course as well. It's been wonderful to see learning being shared and new people taking opportunities to minister to others, or to do that in new ways. There's a lot more to report in this area, but I shall leave that for Sophia in her section later.

I realise that this time has felt very different for each of us. For some it has been very frustrating. Things we would like to have been doing have been stopped, or favourite things have been replaced by something else. Maybe you've felt out of the loop or at a loose end. For others it's been a very busy time, with lots to do to keep things going and not much time to stop or think, and you're just feeling worn out, physically, mentally or emotionally. And for all of us it has involved loss, for some of us, massive loss. Loss of friends or family members, loss of a job, missing out on getting to know a new family member after a birth or wedding, not being able to celebrate an important birthday or anniversary, or having to give up on a long-held ambition. I am sorry if you have felt left out with what we have been doing. I am sorry if you have felt that we have over-burdened you and you haven't been able to get the space or help you needed. There have been some great things happening, there have been some mistakes made and I am sorry for my part in what's gone wrong. We have an opportunity now to listen to the stories of the past year and to listen to God and discern his path for this new chapter – and that will happen best if we hear everybody's voice, everybody's experience, everybody's insights from God. As we look to starting this new post-COVID chapter over the next few weeks, there will be a variety of ways for that to happen. I realise that some of us might feel as though we don't

have anything to contribute or that anything we do say would just be overlooked. This is not that time. We will be listening out especially for voices that we have missed or ignored in the past, as well as the people who are used to being listened to. Please do take the opportunity to allow us to hear you. It really matters.

Of course, this will be my last Ministry report for an Annual Meeting here. Exactly when and where the next step for us as a family will be, we still don't know, but we would value your prayers as we begin to look at what that step might be. I know it is unsettling for you not knowing what is next in terms of paid ministry here. Through all our time with you here in Bradwell, I have seen a great variety of gifts and talents amongst you all. I have seen and experienced a depth and persistence in prayer. And these are the keys for the future - continuing to nurture our gifts together and being attentive to God in prayer and in our daily walk with him – as we discern the next steps out in mission.

God bless,

Neil

## Treasurer's Report

### ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT 2020

These are the financial reports for the period January to December 2020.

#### General Fund

##### *Overall Trend*

The General Fund is the fund used for the regular running of the church.

Bradwell Church's financial position continues to deteriorate as can be seen in the table below. This shows that although the SEP Parish Share (the church's largest expenditure item) has been reduced since 2018, the General Fund position has continued to reduce since 2017. If the church had continued to pay an SEP share of £57,000, in both 2019 and 2020, the real year end General Fund on 31 December 2020 would have been a deficit of £18,855.

The SEP Parish Share pays for ministry costs as well as other church shared costs, so every year that Bradwell Church pays less towards this, there is less for these key items.

Year	Year-end General Fund	SEP Parish Share payment
2017	£26,056	£57,000
2018	£16,671	£57,000
2019	£6,090	£50,400
2020	£4,745	£40,000

For 2021, the church council has agreed that our church will pay £34,000 as its Parish Share which is a reduction of £6,000 from 2020. Forecasts for 2021 predict a continuing financial deterioration and the aim is not to go into deficit by year end.

##### *Income and Expenditure Detail*

The breakdown of the General Fund Income & Expenditure for 2019 and 2020 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.

<b>GENERAL FUND FIGURES</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Gift Aid Giving	£26,010.19	£26,821.79
Non-Gift Aid Giving	£10,697.67	£13,491.03
Tax Refund (Gift Aid)	£8,708.01	£8,652.18
Sundry Income	£473.49	£576.59
Donations	£937.50	£565.90
Donations Gift Aided		£1,189.00
General Fundraising		£0.00
Utilities and Other Refunds	£823.12	£0.00
Bank Interest		£4.20
Chapel Hire	£75.50	£0.00
Refreshments	£21.84	£142.59
Church Fees	£1,545.00	£1,288.00
Sunday School	£514.00	£515.00
Trust Income Wylie	£53.96	£52.39
Trust Income - Farmborough	£658.84	£639.66
Collections for external causes		£357.60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£50,519.12</b>	<b>£54,295.93</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Parish Share	£40,000	£50,400.00
Expenses	£213.46	£175.99
Insurance - Church	£1,952.18	£1,936.74
Insurance - Chapel	£257.36	£250.07
Electricity - Church	£3,510.52	£3,346.08
Electricity - Chapel	£99.08	£550.36
Water Rates - Church	£51.11	£71.09
Water Rates - Chapel		£231.27
Repairs and Maintenance	£590.48	£0.00
Refreshment Items		£0.00
Churchyard	£1,020.00	£1,080.00
Sunday School	£7.99	£291.38
Stationery, Postage & Office	£367.04	£514.15
Worship	£197.10	£207.91
Printing	£75.52	£181.51
Equipment, Fittings and Furniture		£843.45
Training		£0.00
Donations to external organisations	(£158.20)	£328.93
Donations from Giving	£2,848.79	£4,259.99
Sundry	£37.15	£351.39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£51,069.58</b>	<b>£65,020.31</b>
<b>IN YEAR SHORTFALL</b>	<b>-£550.46</b>	<b>-£10,724.38</b>

NOTE Please note that the financial shortfall of £556 in 2020 does not reconcile to the figure in the first table of this Treasury Report of £1,345 (£4745 -£6090) due to technical post year adjustments required.

### Roof and Refurbishment Fund

2020 saw the roof contract being successfully committed and the repair work being carried out. There have been successful applications to charities for contributions towards this fund as can be seen below.

<b>Income</b>	
Charity donations	£3,310
Tax refunds	£150
Personal donations	£650
Insurance claim	£5,640
	<b>£9,750</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Repair contract	£26,220
Architect fees	£4,600
	<b>£30,820</b>

**NET EXPENDITURE POSITION** **-£21,070**

The balance in this fund at the end of 2020 is £23,958 which is to cover the balance of the roof repair contract and the major lighting project works which is currently being designed and tendered for.

### ***Building and Decorating Funds***

The only expenditure in 2020 against these funds has been for Quinquennial work. The current balance is £1,544.

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.

**REPORT A - ALL FUNDS**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
1100 - Envelopes	95.00	—
1101 - Gift Aid Giving	25,915.19	26821.79
1101 - Gift Aid Giving	—	10
1102 - Non-Gift Aid Giving	10,697.67	13491.47
1102 - Non-Gift Aid Giving	50.00	148.27
1111 - Tax Refund (Gift Aid)	8,708.01	8652.19
1111 - Tax Refund (Gift Aid)	152.00	3733.59
1111 - Tax Refund (Gift Aid)	—	170
1121 - Sundry Income	1,000.00	—
1121 - Sundry Income	473.49	576.59
1121 - Sundry Income	1,000.00	—
1122 - Quinquennial and Other	314.40	—
1123 - Donations	194.13	234
1123 - Donations	937.50	565.9
1123 - Donations	3,060.00	15782.59
1124 - Donations Gift Aided	—	1189
1124 - Donations Gift Aided	610.00	12159.16
1131 - General Fundraising	—	60.01
1201 - Insurance Claims	5,640.87	10750.78
1301 - Utilities and Other Refunds	823.12	—
1501 - Bank Interest	—	4.2
1602 - Chapel Hire	75.50	—
1603 - Refreshments	21.84	142.59
1651 - Church Fees	1,545.00	1288
1701 - Sunday School	514.00	515
1901 - Trust Income Wylie	53.96	52.39
1902 - Trust Income - Farmborough	658.84	639.66
1950 - Collections for external causes	—	186.99
1950 - Collections for external causes	—	357.6
	<b>62,540.52</b>	<b>97,531.77</b>



<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
2001 - Parish Share	40,000.00	50400
2101 - Expenses	213.46	175.99
2201 - Insurance - Church	1,952.18	1936.74
2205 - Insurance - Chapel	257.36	250.07
2301 - Electricity - Church	3,510.52	3346.08
2302 - Electricity - Chapel	99.08	550.36
2303 - Water Rates - Church	51.11	71.09
2304 - Water Rates - Chapel	—	231.27
2401 - Repairs and Maintenance	411.60	1848.36
2401 - Repairs and Maintenance	590.48	—
2401 - Repairs and Maintenance	30,912.18	4091.76
2653 - Churchyard	1,020.00	1080
2701 - Sunday School	7.99	291.38
2801 - Stationery, Postage & Office	367.04	514.15
2803 - Worship	197.10	207.91
2804 - Printing	75.52	181.51
2805 - Equipment, Fittings and	—	2538
2805 - Equipment, Fittings and	—	843.35
2900 - Donations to external	—	215.66
2900 - Donations to external	(158.20)	328.93
2910 - Donations from Giving	2,848.79	4259.66
2910 - Donations from Giving	273.60	273.36
2915 - Cost of Fundraising	—	73.91
2999 - Sundry	37.15	351.39
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>82,666.96</b>	<b>74,060.93</b>

## REPORT B BALANCE SHEET

	31/12/2020	31/12/2019
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
INV1: Investment Assets	25,445.23	23,808.13
<b>Total Fixed assets</b>	<b>25,445.23</b>	<b>23,808.13</b>
<b>Current assets</b>		
6500: Unbanked Receipts	—	—
6501: Bank Current Account	34,811.90	54,941.67
6504: Bank Deposit Account	2,112.42	2,112.42
6505: Cash Box	15.40	12.07
6506: Flower Donations Box	—	—
CA002: Debtors	—	—
<b>Total Current assets</b>	<b>36,939.72</b>	<b>57,066.16</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
6699: Agency collections	—	—
Z04: Accounts Payable	—	—
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>
<b>Net Asset surplus (deficit)</b>	<b>62,384.95</b>	<b>80,874.29</b>
<b>Reserves</b>		
Excess / (deficit) to date	(20,126.44)	—
Z01: Starting balances	80,874.29	77,221.13
Z02: Gains/(losses) on investment assets	1,637.10	3,751.69
Z03: Gains and losses own use	—	(98.53)
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>62,384.95</b>	<b>80,874.29</b>
<b>Represented by Funds</b>		
Unrestricted	4,745.19	6,090.90
Designated	28,638.91	47,419.64
Restricted	3,555.62	3,555.62
Endowment	25,445.23	23,808.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,384.95</b>	<b>80,874.29</b>

**REPORT C FUND TOTALS**

<b>Unrestricted</b>	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	TOTAL
Unrestricted - General fund	£ 4,745.00	—	—	£ 4,745.00
<b>Designated</b>				
Decoration	—	£ 2,399.00	£ 2,337.00	£ 4,736.00
Church Lighting and AV Equipment	—	£ 1,864.00	—	£ 1,864.00
Tithed Income from Giving	—	£ 288.00	—	£ 288.00
Churchyard Work	—	—	-£ 198.00	-£ 198.00
Building Fund	—	£ 127.00	£ 1,416.00	£ 1,543.00
Roof Repair	—	£ 23,958.00	—	£ 23,958.00
	£ 4,745.00	£ 28,636.00	£ 3,555.00	£ 36,936.00

**REPORT D Tithed Payments**

Arocha	£364.08
Christian Aid	£303.40
Christian Solidarity Worldwide	£364.08
Church Mission Society	£485.44
Church Pastoral Aid Society	£364.08
MK Bridgebuilder Trust	£485.44
MK Foodbank	£303.40
Scripture Union	£364.08
World Vision	£273.60
TOTAL	£3,307.59

**Report E Emergency Funding Payments**

MK Foodbank	£200.00
Toybox	£170.44
	£370.44

## Fabric Report

### St Lawrence's Church

#### **Quinquennial:**

Two QI reported problems were addressed this year:

The slipped tile on the tower roof was replaced during our annual roof maintenance.

I had a quote for fixing the roof access ladder in the belfry, but since the work can wait until next year, I have put this QI item on hold.

#### **Maintenance:**

##### ***Roof***

By April the temporary repair of the roof was beginning to wear and was in danger of being stripped off by the wind.

G J Kinns carried out the annual roof maintenance work in July, having been held up by the lockdown. I asked if a cheap fix of the temporary roof covering could be carried out to see us through to September, but the material was so holed and shredded that it wouldn't be possible without completely replacing the felt, which would have been too costly.

#### **Stolen Lead**

##### ***Roof Replacement Faculty***

The Faculty to replace the whole of the nave roof with tern coated stainless steel was granted on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

We selected JTC Roofing based on their bid for the contract and the glowing references we received from previous clients.

Work started on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September to replace the stolen lead from the north slope and the remaining lead on the south slope of the roof with tern coated stainless steel. The new roof was designed and specified by our QI architect JBKS Architects Ltd.

As well as replacing the roof cladding we have installed thermal insulation under the steel.

Hopefully this will help to reduce our heating bills.

When the old lead was stripped from the south slope of the roof some of the roof boards were found to be rotten and had to be replaced.

On completion the steel was painted with Smartwater, which is a deterrent and is necessary to satisfy conditions of our insurance policy. The roof was completed on 13<sup>th</sup> October. Our architect came to inspect the finished roof and is most satisfied with the work. There were a few jobs that needed to be carried out before sign-off. Also, there was some mortar repair needed on the east gable and we also asked JTC to repair some unrelated mortar repairs on the tower. The architect issued the

'Practical Completion Certificate' on November 5<sup>th</sup> and authorised the contractor to bill us for the full Final Account less 2.5% retention, in case of any snags in the next 12 months.

### **Breakages:**

**Glass:** Sometime around the weekend of 13/14<sup>th</sup> June one of the windows beside the main door was shattered. Fortunately, the window is a double-glazed unit of toughened glass and the broken glass held together. It is felt that the likely cause of the break was a stone pinged up by a strimmer or lawnmower.

Our insurers, Ecclesiastical were informed and City Glass of, Stony Stratford, came out on 23<sup>rd</sup> June to give us a quote. Fortunately, the quote was for much less than the policy excess and no claim was necessary.

City Glass came to replace with a new Toughened Glass Double Glazed Unit on 10<sup>th</sup> July.

**Rainwater Goods:** On the 23<sup>rd</sup> July the drainpipe at the north-east corner of the chancel was ripped from the wall. Also, the rainwater hopper was nearly pulled off the wall and was hanging on only one fixing. A temporary fix was made to prevent too much water pouring down the wall by using some polythene tubing to carry the water from the gutter to the gully. The hopper and drainpipe were repaired by the JTC contractors while they were on site.

### **Redecoration Project:**

Still on hold pending roof repair and new lighting.

### **Electrics:**

#### ***New Church Lighting:***

We have had a follow-up meeting with a specialist church lighting company (Anthony J Smith (Glos.) Ltd.) to hear more about their proposal and to tell them the upper limit to the costs that had been agreed with the church council.

Following the meeting with Anthony J Smith we called in another supplier (Clarity in Sound, Light & Vision LTD, Sabre House, Dunmow Road, Felsted, Dunmow, Essex CM6 3LF) and discussed what they might be able to provide to meet our requirements. They prepared a quote which was a bit above our expectations and so more consideration shall be given before the proposal is put to the church council.

### **Kneelers:**

The Communion kneelers that were found with holes in last year still need to be repaired. They are being monitored to make sure the pests aren't causing more damage.

### **Fire Extinguishers:**

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

### **Church Cleaning:**

After the 'lockdown' and the total closure of the church, there was a small working party of about 7 people who tried to keep social distancing while giving the church a rapid spring-clean.

### **Work days:**

#### ***Spring***

Because of the 'covid19 restrictions there were no formal workdays. Instead, several volunteer workers arranged to make covid safe visits to work on the nature border on the north boundary and the south-west boundary hedge.

### **Churchyard:**

#### ***Maintenance***

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

#### ***Trees***

We received an email from the resident of the neighbouring property complaining that the new growth on the stumps of the Holm Oaks had exceeded 2 metres in height. We would normally monitor this growth and prevent it reaching too high; however, this was not possible during the lockdown.

As the church is in a conservation area MK Council were asked for permission to cut back the boundary hedge. Permission was given and so work can continue, perhaps after the nesting season.

#### ***Signage***

New signs asking people to keep their dogs on leads and not to allow them to foul in the churchyard were put up on the lampposts at each end of the footpath through the churchyard.

A new sign was fixed to the bottom of the drainpipe on the south aisle informing people that there is no lead on the roof.

### **Bradwell Chapel**

An Electrical Installation Condition Inspection was carried out 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. Nothing was found that would require immediate attention.

The Chapel Quinquennial was carried out on 17<sup>th</sup> June. No urgent problems were found, but there are a number of issues to be dealt with in the next year and over the next two to five years.

### **Works of repairs in order of priority:**

#### **Of utmost urgency**

1.1 There are no Priority items.

**Essential within the next 12 months**

- 2.1 Remove plant growth
- 2.2 Re-point cracks in rear elevation window sills back loose render surface
- 2.4 Monitor visually any render cracking externally
- 2.5 Check for loose slates
- 2.6 Fit new fascia capping to north boundary gutter
- 2.7 Check rainwater gutter and drainpipe in a downpour
- 2.9 Clean windows and frames 5
- 2.10 Repaint and redecorate rear windows
- 2.11 Redecorate fascia soffit
- 2.12 Fix WC door lock

**Essential within the next 5 years**

- 3.1 Redecorate front entrance door and screen and remove broken door closer
- 3.2 Redecorate water damaged Lobby walls/ceiling
- 3.3 Consider reviewing detail between lead boundary gutter and low pitch slate roof at eaves level

**Advisable within the next 5 years**

- 4.1 Overhaul ridge roof vent
- 4.2 Replace toilet heater and fit new panel to Lobby heater
- 4.3 Fit mechanical PIR fan in Toilet
- 4.4 Upgrade Kitchen/Servery units

Over the five years this work could cost £15000.

*Peter Lazard*  
*Fabric Office, March 2021*

## Bradwell Church Council

I took over the position of Lay Chair from Diana after the delayed Annual Church Meeting, I wish to thank Diana for her work during her time as Lay Chair, and thank you to the Church Council in their support for me.

This year elected Council members have been Jenny Brookman, Kathy Coles, Wendy Hanson, Karen Ho as Minute Secretary, Jan Newman-Bracey, Andrew Vincent as Lay Chair, Diana Stammers. Ex officio members are Neil Popham as our minister, Ray Scoins and Carol Wood as Treasurer and Church Officer. Peter Lazard is co-opted as Fabric Officer.

We all will know, this has been a changeling time for everyone, and Bradwell Church have been quick to adapt to very different ways of doing all the things that we used to do, now under new circumstances. The usual meetings have been moved onto Zoom, which have worked well. A lot of time has been spent on the SEP Review, the SEP evolving into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and planning for when Neil leaves us.

We have been able to move our services on-line, pre-recorded and live via Zoom, the Wednesday morning coffee pop-in are now on Wednesday afternoons, with a recent development by adding Mondays and Thursdays. During the Christmas period, we had pop-ins every day between Christmas and New Year, which were gratefully received by all, this has required a lot of work in the background developing safeguarding processes which are pioneering in the wider Church, a special thank you to those involved.

We have met three times after the delayed ACM, our first meeting in September 2020, appointments of postholders were confirmed and we reviewed the SEP Safeguarding policy, with Dawn Ansbro providing the annual report on safeguarding. At every meeting, the Council receives updates from groups that contribute to the life of the church. We also review recent special events and ensures plans are in place for those coming up, and receive reports from Stantonbury Ecumenical Council and Mission Partnership.

We have vacancies waiting to be filled at the next ACM, please get nominated so that you can join us.

***Andrew Vincent (Lay Chair)***



## Church Council Sub-Committees

### **Greening The Church**

When allowed by Covid restrictions, up to six of us have worked in the churchyard, usually on Wednesdays. When restrictions have been tighter, a few of us have worked individually at various times.

We have cut back the boundary hedge, cleared weeds, (what's the difference between a weed and a wild flower?) and cut back growth from the Holm Oak tree stumps.

Additional fruit trees have been planted, so we now have seven, and crocus, daffodil and other bulbs have been planted around the base of some of the fruit trees. The bat boxes do not appear to have been used but have only been checked 3 times.

We have plans to plant more wildlife friendly plants this year.

Thank you to all our volunteers.

*Paul Lund*

### **Bradwell Church Safeguarding Officer Report**

There were no changes to the last review of the Methodist Safeguarding Policy. The current version is on the church website, which gives the Safeguarding team's contact details.

There have been no concerns or disclosures made to me in the past year from Bradwell Church.

With the Covid restrictions requiring closure of church buildings it has resulted in more Zoom meetings. Guidelines for such meetings have been written and shared with the meeting hosts. The Safeguarding principles are the same whether in the church building or any Bradwell Church activity. Coffee meeting drop ins as with on-line church presented us with new risk areas to assess. It is important to be aware, we may be ministering to people on line who are not used to this technology and therefore we have a duty to help people keep safe, especially children and vulnerable adults. It has been an exciting but challenging journey and we continue to monitor and adapt as we continue to improve on this style of ministry.

#### ***Safeguarding Training***

Methodist Safeguarding refresher training is required every 4 years. This training was suspended last year during the lockdown and the course was reviewed and re-launched on-line on 6th March 2021. Prior to the re-launch, a one-hour Bradwell Zoom Safeguarding briefing was delivered to 14 hosts of the Zoom drop-in meetings. They will all go on to receive the full Methodist Safeguarding Foundation training as places become available.

Bradwell Church currently has 19 people trained to the Methodist Safeguarding Foundation level with a further 4 booked on next course.

**Disclosure and Barring Service**

DBS renewal is required every 5 years and we have 23 Bradwell Church members with current certificates.

All the hosts of the Zoom drop-in meetings have DBS certificates.

The request for DBS is now initiated by the Minister under the safer recruitment process. Applying for new and renewing Disclosure and Barring Certificates has been a challenge due to changes in nominated personnel dealing with opening applications on-line and document verification but this is now operating more smoothly.

The pandemic with its lockdowns has resulted in increased numbers of abuse and these will likely continue to rise particularly in child and domestic abuse. I would urge everyone here at Bradwell Church to be ready to keep channels open for God's protection and healing by being ready to listen when people want to talk and report concerns or disclosures according to the Methodist Safeguarding policy, so that swift and appropriate help, protection and support can be directed.

Yours in His service

***Dawn Ansbro***  
***Bradwell Church Safeguarding Officer***

## **Bradwell, Partnership online and more**

Well, who would have thought a year ago that online would have been catapulted into importance like never before? The start of lockdown meant that ministers and others in the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership realised that the SEP website, the SEP Facebook Page and the Bradwell FB Page would be vital communication tools during the pandemic and beyond.

In the weeks leading up to Easter and Pentecost last year saw the SEP website and SEP Facebook page busier than ever before as our ministerial team were able to use the medium to continue to reach all our congregations with news and specially prepared services.

Here at Bradwell we went into lockdown with a pre-recorded service, led by Neil, which was uploaded to YouTube. The following week the SEP ventured into the then unknown world of Zoom with our first Sunday morning service and there we have remained, now more confident after a shaky start. Early during lockdown ministers from across the Partnership took turns in leading services on Zoom before they became a largely Bradwell led affair as other churches developed their own online services.

In recent months the SEP Zoom service – usually led by Sophia Popham - has developed an identity of its own – it is now definitely not a church service transferred online with plenty of congregation involvement.

The SEP website – plus the Facebook pages – have become a great vehicle for publicising the various services throughout the Partnership. And as we look forward to returning to some kind of ‘normality’ – one thing is certain, there’s no going back to the way we did things until a year ago. Our churches are and will continue to be streaming their services.

Here at Bradwell we hope, in the near future, to have Wi-Fi installed which will enable us to go online from the church and perhaps attract newcomers from the 25 per cent of the UK population who have sought out online church services during the pandemic.

If we get it right, we have much cause to be optimistic for the future.

***Paul Brookman***

## Other Church Activities

### Admin & Communications

During our recent meetings the over-riding topic of discussions is the impact that communication via IT is having on Church life during the pandemic. All the well-known social media platforms including Facebook, the Church website, Whats App, Zoom meetings, email as well as the telephone have been the mainstay of communication for the whole of lockdown.

On behalf of Bradwell Church we would like to take this opportunity to give thanks to those who have enabled worship and communication to continue during lockdown. Paul Brookman and Alan Potter have worked tirelessly to keep the church family informed via email and maintenance of the Bradwell Church Website, Bradwell Church Facebook pages and Stantonbury Ecumenical Website with current news and information. We would also like to thank Paul for his continuing work to better the Church's IT systems to enable easier more efficient communication that will also improve the quality of our online worship. We would also like to thank Paul and June Holden for their work in hosting the Zoom services that have enabled us to continue to worship on a Sunday throughout lockdown.

As it appears that even after the lockdown restrictions end these forms of communication will still be an important part of the way in which the Church family communicates, and the current members of the Communications Group does not have any great expertise or knowledge of IT we would recommend that our primary task is to build up an IT Comms Group.

Ideally this group would include the IT manager, the position currently held by Paul Brookman, administrator of the Church website, currently held by Alan Potter and the new role of manager of the Church's public and private Facebook pages.

If you feel you would be interested in using your IT skills and expertise to support Paul and Alan in their work please do not hesitate to contact Karen Ho at [hokaren@outlook.com](mailto:hokaren@outlook.com) or Jan Newman Bracey at [janet.newmanbracey@btinternet.com](mailto:janet.newmanbracey@btinternet.com).

The IT Comms Group would be part of the Communications Group as it is felt important that analogue and IT communications should work closely together to enable co-ordinated and effective communication across the whole church community offline as well as online.

*Jan Newman Bracey and Karen Ho*

## **Bellringing**

Captain: Ian Green,  
Vice-Captain: Jill Joyce

Weekly practice (post-lockdown): 7.30-9.00pm Wednesday evenings

This year, because of Covid restrictions, we have sadly not been able to ring the full peal of 6 bells for Sunday morning service, nor have our usual Wednesday evening practices.

In the summer, when restrictions eased, we restarted in mid-July and rang 3 bells most Sundays (maintaining social distancing) until the end of October, when the second lockdown struck.

We're very much looking forward to a time when it will be possible to ring the full peal again on Sundays, and to restart our Wednesday evening practices.

***Janet Maybin,  
St Lawrence's Bellringing Secretary***

## **Church Flowers**

I have really missed creating glorious displays in our Church last year and I'm sure lots of you have been disappointed not to have had your dedicated flowers over the last year. I did do a pedestal and some candles on the Tryptych at Christmas. These served as a backdrop to the Nine Lessons and Carols which we put on You Tube and Neil used them for his online services. Whilst this was in fact an arrangement using artificial flowers it still offered some cheer. I also did the Advent ring as usual and this was again used for the online services.

Looking forward to being able to decorate our Church again soon.

***Jenny Brookman***

## House Groups

### **Monday Afternoon Housegroup (*now, at least temporarily, Monday morning*)**

At the beginning of the first lockdown in March 2019, we stopped meeting together until recently, when Beryl felt adept enough with Zoom to be able to host. Until then, we kept in touch with a monthly news and prayer update, which helped us to continue being aware of each other's circumstances and prayer needs. We now meet up on the first Monday morning of each month which is free for all ten of us, and during which time the church Zoom is also free to be used. We are following the Live Lent course, doing one chapter each month, so should be finishing this sometime in September! This promises to start some good conversations on a topic in which we are all keen to grow. We are a close-knit group and include three ladies from other churches, with Paul Rushton joining in with us from a distance when he can.

*Beryl Spikings*

### **Sunday Evening Housegroup**

The group hasn't met for much of this period but most of us have been meeting again on Zoom during Lent. It's been good to get together again and using Zoom has allowed a new member to join. We have been enjoying the Lent studies linked to the Church of England's Lent course and book #LiveLent: God's Story, Our Story.

*Diana Stammers*

### **Sunday Evening/Tuesday Evening Housegroup**

We are pleased to report that we have continued to meet as a Housegroup via zoom throughout the pandemic. We have even been fortunate enough to have met together for a meal in Rob and Kathy's garden when restrictions were relaxed. Our meetings have not only encouraged each other in our walk with God but we have also been able to support each other in the complexities and frustrations of life in lockdown.

Our meetings always include some bible study which always provokes interesting discussion. The subjects we have covered, amongst others, have included the Psalms and the creation story as well as the current Live Lent course on evangelism. Our group has also had the privilege of putting together a couple of online services for the Church website. It was great to prepare together these services for posting on the website that would give people outside Bradwell Church the opportunity to learn something of God's message. I can't speak for the whole group, but it's probably one of the most direct acts of 'evangelism' I've ever been involved with. However, I'm sure the whole group would agree that it was a very rewarding experience.

Meeting on zoom has felt like a necessary evil at times, but it has enabled us to continue to support each other during these challenging times. We have also learnt a great deal about how to interact online, which could be an important asset for us as a church community in the future, even once we have begun to meet in St Lawrence Church again.

*Karen Ho*

## **Thursday Evening Housegroup**

We were blessed as we watched Oxford Professor John Lennox in conversation with fellow Professor John Wyatt as they explored the topic 'Life in the shadow of death' (search YouTube for 'Pillar and salt'). We also joined a Christmas Concert given by All Souls Church in Regent's Street, London, and were pleased that some of our neighbours also tuned in. On the other hand, we continue in Bible Study and prayer week by week, the Holy Spirit enriching and encouraging as we all contribute. God has enlarged the group to the point where two folk were able to move on and help re-establish what was the Sunday Evening group. Housegroup is both an oasis and fixed point in these uncertain times.

***Rod Ruston & Grayham Amos***

## **Lighthouse Prayer Team**

This year has been so difficult for everyone. As a group we have found not being able to meet together to pray really sad because those times of prayer were special. We have been contacting each other by phone or text, not being able to meet on zoom. Gill has been poorly on and off this year and now recovering from a broken wrist and so many of our church members have needed prayer as they fall ill or have other needs that need prayer.

It's been a lonely time for some with the restrictions we've had in this pandemic and families not being able to meet as usual especially at special times of the year but a telephone is a prayer point to reach out to others.

We have been praying for all our congregation and the NHS for strength, calmness, healing in mind, body and spirit and for our beautiful world that God gave us. Things will change but they may take a while and we have to be patient. To care about others and the children who've had to get used to learning a different way and not being able to mix with their friends.

God brought our group together to pray for St. Lawrence congregation with the laying on of hands when needed. That isn't possible at present but we pray as a group that God's healing hands rest upon each one of us and pours his spirit of love and healing through us all as a church family.

***Wendy Hanson***

## **Listening and Pastoral Group**

Due to our circumstances with lockdown over the past year, the group has morphed into people who are directly concerned with pastoral needs. There have been no further listening courses and people's circumstances and responsibilities have changed. This has further changed the group as it used to function. We are, of course, aware that many of us have been giving care and support throughout this last year to those around them.

So, during lockdown, Angela Vincent, Carol Wood, Rod and Beth Ruston, and Jill Scoins and I have met up on Zoom several times to go through the church list, and those whom we know to have attended church in the past. We have highlighted the names of those that we are not aware of having been contacted either through housegroups or friends. We have allocated ourselves those people to either visit (with all precautions in place) or to phone. We thank Rod for organising the Zoom sessions, and Jill for being in contact with a whole plethora of people. Generally, those contacted in this way are very appreciative of the concern shown by the church community. We are praying that our contacts will be encouraged and continue to feel part of our church and have not been forgotten.

***Beryl Spikings***



## **Music**

We've continued without live music since the last Annual Meeting. Paul Brookman has done a great job of providing us with tracks and lyrics to sing with during the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Zoom services and we have also enjoyed worshipping with music videos - including a small number from Michael Squire - in the Bradwell website services. Rod explored again whether it might be possible to get the organ repaired with the result that it is now useable again - thank you Rod. There are some small issues remaining and we may wish to consider in future years whether we should seek to replace either the internal system or the whole organ, should it prove possible to raise the funds.

*Diana Stammers*

## **Tuesday Morning Prayer Group**

The Tuesday Morning prayer group has continued to meet for prayer during the pandemic online via zoom. During our time together we have prayed for the infrastructure of Church life including topics such as: the SEC review; the SEC, The Ministry Team; housegroups; the church council; communications within the church family; the encouragement of people back to church after the pandemic and church fabric.

We have also prayed about concerns relating to life and church life during the pandemic including: roll out of the vaccine; families coping with the constraints of lockdown; children returning to school; governments actions throughout the pandemic. Our prayers have also included some intercession.

We have also had much to give thanks for during this time. Growth of some housegroups; reforming of housegroups; completion of church roof repairs; church's adaptation to worship online; continuing links with those unable to use IT; church members good response to cancer treatment; rollout of a successful vaccine to name but a few.

Our main aim for the coming year is to encourage a wider group of church members to feed information to the group, by phone, email or joining the Whats App group, in order that we can pray more intuitively for the infrastructure of our church. We would hope this will take the form of housegroup leaders, leaders of other church groups, and individuals letting us know what they have been led to pray for in their groups and prayer time on these matters to form consensus and ensure greater unity in our corporate prayer-life.

*Karen Ho*

## Online Church

### Bradwell Website & Noticesheet

Since March 2020 we have increased the online activity to compensate for not being able to gather together in the church. Neil has produced a set of videos every week which comprises a full-service including hymns, reflection, prayers and readings. This has meant increased time and effort by Neil and Web staff; we have put these videos on the Website called Service at Home, so it is accessible to anyone with internet access at any time. Housegroups have also contributed some wonderful complete services and Neil has lately been joined by Kara, all of which is especially welcome when we haven't seen each other for so long. When we started, we were getting about 30 visitors a week to the service, we now have an average of 250 a week, with a high of 450 at Christmas. This shows we have a wider appeal beyond Bradwell members.

The Website has continued to include any initiatives from Neil as in previous years, but it is mostly information, the Event Calendar which took up a lot of work is now empty. We have also had some welcome requests via the Website to be added to the circulation list. Carol with Sophia has recently started an initiative via the Website to garner more interest in the Drop-in Zoom sessions to the wider community, now extended to 3 days a week. It's only been a couple of weeks but we have had 3 people join and Carol is looking at ways to get more publicity. Each week we send out to all those with email access a copy of the service all put together by Neil and Kara for anyone to use in conjunction with the service on the Website or just to read privately at home. A zoom invitation is sent each week (excludes those who have requested not to receive them) about the SEP service, the weekly drop-ins, the planning meeting and ad-hoc meetings/services.

The Noticesheet has changed to reflect the changes at the Church, with a weekly message from Neil, more prayers and suggested readings, along with any National broadcast information. The weekly activities have of course all but disappeared but we still try to include online activities such as MK Mission Partnership or MK Deanery along with help lines for food, help and bereavement. Beryl continues to give us heart breaking stories and prayers from Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Lesley gives us the weekly prayer list for us to include in our prayers and Mike tries to make us think or laugh with his Pause for Thought. Although the Noticesheet is not currently produced in quantity for printing each week it is sent out by email, for those without internet access Neil prints and delivers them himself, along with paper copies of the Websites Service at Home. <https://bradwellchurch.com/>

*Alan Potter*

### Coffee Zoom

After years of faithfully serving coffee in the church, Paul and many companions have gone online. We have met on Zoom every week on a Wednesday afternoon. We have enjoyed new contacts, and new friendships. In the first few months, we experimented a lot with Zoom, and some of the things we learnt fed into the online services.

Over Christmas, very aware that so many of us were very deeply disappointed at the sudden new restrictions which meant we had to change our plans to see family and friends, a group of volunteers provided a coffee zoom every day. When we reflected on this, we realised that we wanted to be able to share this more widely than just to our church email list. A group of 13 volunteers and our

safeguarding officer Dawn Ansbro, have worked hard to undertake the necessary training and worked out safeguarding rules to make this possible, and it now runs three afternoons a week during lockdown. We hope to launch a Saturday session soon.

After lockdown we can see that there will still be need for some people to meet and chat on zoom rather than in person, but for now we are just glad to have been able to provide a place for people to meet and chat in a difficult time.

Thank you and well done to all who have made it happen.

*Sophia Popham*

## **Zoom Service**

Being part of a partnership has meant we can access others' services (for example the Baptist communions offered by David Lewis or the streamed services from Great Linford and Cross and Stable) and Neil has played a key role in offering details of available services around the partnership. And I know that many of us have benefitted from online resources from churches well beyond the partnership.

There continues to be a lot of Bradwell input into the SEP service on Zoom. We don't attract the large numbers the website service has, nor have we been as accessible for people not on the church lists (although again here the work on the coffee zoom is pointing the way forward). It hasn't worked for everyone, but zoom church does offer participation and contact with others in a way a streamed church cannot.

We have tried to make the most of that participation. The Creative Space has given people who don't always think in words a chance to minister to the rest of us, and has been a huge blessing. I've included a couple of pictures, but people have also shared experiences, objects in their homes with a story attached, and key scriptures. We have often also invited contribution to the part of the service where we unpack the Scripture readings and apply them to our lives, either by inviting people to speak, or by breaking into smaller groups.





Examples of pictures and models shown in the zoom services Creative Space

We were interested to realise that the breakout groups were reaching a depth of conversation and contact that most people had not experienced in building church. Everyone joins a group not knowing who will be in it, and participants can leave at any point, so it seems to remove some of the social worry people feel about joining someone's conversation. It has been sad to hear that people had not always felt as welcomed after church in the building as we could have wished. Church officers report enjoying having time to chat rather than have jobs to do, and everyone is included in a conversation if they wish. It does mean that we cannot pick who we want to have a conversation with, but the effect has been to include people who were newer or on the margins in conversations, and to increase the links between people. It is also interesting that after about six weeks people reported that conversations were moving beyond a superficial level, and people felt able to share needs and sometimes pray with each other.

We have really valued singing along to hymns and songs, and praying with and for each other, and Paul Brookman in particular has worked really hard on the technical side to make it easy for us to join in.

As the online church has developed, many of us have learnt as we have experimented, and acquired skills we never imagined. I have been very grateful for my training at CMS, which has continued online through lockdown, much of which is geared towards doing new things in places where you find yourself which may not be your natural culture – which is me online! I had little online experience before this year, but my training encouraged me to experiment, to trust the Spirit and to expect God to provide what was needed in the people around me, often in unexpected places.

I didn't actually know Tracey Hanson before online church! Tracey has run with the creative challenge this year, and so much more, bringing out others' gifts and moving beyond her own comfort zone – as I think has everyone involved in online church in all its forms! Tracey's rootedness in prayer has been a key ingredient of our life on zoom. And I have been grateful for the encouragement of Tim Norwood the Area Dean who first suggested licensing me to the online church.

Zoom has also allowed me to participate in church meetings for the first time since the children were born. This is not my natural space, and I'm grateful to those who have accommodated and supported me as I have attended meetings to get support for licensing and online church, and to share what is happening.

I often hear from other pioneers how fortunate I am to work with Neil, and I can only agree. He has a willingness to listen to new ideas and supports learning from failure as well as success. He equally thinks he is fortunate in his parishioners, who are such a prayerful, gifted and creative bunch, ready to be Good News in so many different contexts. I hope that you have seen that in yourselves this year as we have struggled, shared and grown together.

I am also aware that many small groups have met online. The ones I have been involved in have been a joy and a privilege, as people have wrestled with questions around listening to God in Scripture and in our communities, developing a rhythm of life, and mission. I have been in awe of the depth of wisdom and experience of Christian faith, ability, and desire to serve others and share the Gospel. In gloomy times they have given me hope for the future of God's church and our communities.

Two key questions going forward: how do we continue to use the wisdom and learning of the whole people of God in our worship and learning?

How do we continue to offer the depth and inclusion of the breakout groups when we get to choose who we talk to?

And for those of us who stay online, I think we need to revisit the questions around accessibility. I'm sorry we gave up too soon trying to find subtitles, and making our online worship more accessible, and I feel we need to pursue what I have called the Open Door, making it easier to join in our online participative activities as well as access our website service. The safeguarding challenges are great, but not insuperable, and help and advice from others beyond the partnership is available.

***Sophia Popham***