

**ST MARY'S CHURCH, HADLOW**  
**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**  
**2014**

**Booklet**

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**ST MARY'S CHURCH, HADLOW**  
**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**  
Monday 7th April 2014 at 8pm in Church

**A G E N D A**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013
3. Appointment of Churchwardens  
*Two churchwardens to be chosen in accordance with the Churchwardens' Measure 2001*
4. Report on the Electoral Roll *(A copy of the Roll is available for inspection)*
5. The Annual Report on the proceedings of the PCC, the activities of the Parish generally and the Financial Statements of the PCC for the year ending 31 December 2013; and the appointment of an Independent Examiner
6. The Churchwardens' Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the Church in accordance with section 5 of the Care of Churches & Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991
7. Report on the proceedings of the Paddock Wood Deanery Synod
8. Reports of the activities of the sub-committees of the PCC
  - Education
  - Fabric
  - Fund-raising
  - Outreach
  - World Mission
9. Reports on other areas of the life of the Parish :
  - Bells
  - Choir
  - Church Brass
  - Church Kneeler Group
  - Church Watch
  - Coffee pots and Tiny Tots
  - St Mary's Flowers
  - Friends Together
  - Golden Green Mission Church

- Mothers' Union
- Road Representatives
- Servers
- Wednesday Study Group
- 10. The Vicar's reflections
- 12. Election of three parochial representatives of the laity to the PCC
- 13. Election of three parochial representatives of the laity to the Deanery Synod.
- 14. Appointment of sidesmen & sideswomen

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING OF ST MARY'S  
CHURCH, HADLOW.**

The APCM was held in Church on Monday 15 April 2013 with 59 members of the congregation present.

In the chair, the Rev'd Paul White.  
Minutes taken by Judy Gater (PCC Secretary)

1 Apologies for absence

Liz and Rodney Derrick  
Janet Greenwood  
Janet and Allison Jackson  
Alan Knowles  
Jim May  
Val and Steve Newell  
Malva and Alan Ridge  
Jane Wilson  
Annie and George Young

2 Minutes of APCM held on 26 March 2012

These had been circulated to members of the congregation.  
Their acceptance was proposed by Gill Norman, seconded by David Gater and agreed by all present.

### 3 Appointment of Churchwardens

Both churchwardens, Gill Norman and Barry Wheeler, were retiring.

There were two nominations for churchwardens.

MARTIN MASSY was proposed by Gill Norman and seconded by Barry Wheeler.

ANNIE YOUNG was proposed by Barry Wheeler and seconded by Gill Norman.

There being no other nominations, Martin and Annie were elected unopposed.

David Gater thanked Gill and Barry for all they had done to add to life at St Mary's.

With the value of hindsight it had been a tricky few years, dealing with the Rev'd Gwen's sabbatical and then the interregnum; the work had been unremitting and difficult and all would agree that Gill and Barry had done a grand job.

Gill Norman was only the second female warden since 1900 (the first was Miss Keen in 1957); Gill had worked with energy and thoroughness and never flagged.

Barry Wheeler had done two terms as warden and worked with expertise, wisdom, calmness and serenity.

The Rev'd Clifford Stocking was also thanked for his unstinting and devoted service.

Now a new and exciting chapter was beginning with our new vicar, the Rev'd Paul White.

David proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring wardens, wishing them joy and refreshment.

### 4 Report on the Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll was completely rewritten every six years and accordingly it had been rewritten in 2013, with everyone filling in new forms.

The number on the new Roll was 183, of whom 119 were resident in the parish and 64 non-resident.

The numbers in 2012 were 203, 121 and 82 respectively.

The proportion of non-residents on the roll had remained at about 35% for many years.

Since the previous Roll had been written several parishioners had died, some had moved away and there were 28 new additions.

A copy of the Roll was always displayed on the church noticeboard. David Lear had acted as Electoral Roll Officer for many years and he and his wife Gabrielle were thanked for their work in compiling the Roll. A round of applause followed.

#### 5 The Annual Report on the proceedings of the PCC, the activities of the Parish generally and the appointment of an independent examiner

The Financial Statements were presented by the Hon Treasurer, Freddie Shaw.

He confirmed that the Financial Statements, as circulated, had been approved by the PCC and examined by David Stephens, the chartered certified accountant appointed by the APCM as the Independent Examiner. Mr Stephens had confirmed that the PCC had kept satisfactory accounting records and that they complied with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006.

Attention was drawn to the figure of £10616 which was the healthy surplus at 31 December 2012, compared with a slight deficit at the beginning of the year.

Some of our funds were restricted and could only be used for the purpose for which they were donated. We were able to continue to support various charities, including the Delhi Brotherhood Society, The Children's Society, Hospice in the Weald and the British Legion.

Freddie explained the terms Debtors and Creditors which were used so that all the income and expenditure due in the year 2012 was included in the accounts. All creditors had now been paid.

Finally, Freddie thanked the finance team of David Gater, Alan Knowles and Geoff Morgan. Judy Gater, the previous bookkeeper, had also helped when needed.

Some questions followed.

Ray Norbury asked about the fall in voluntary giving; Freddie explained that although the Graciously Giving to God campaign had increased our income, some of our regular donors had died.

David Gater asked about the deficit in the Church Improvements Fund. Income in 2012 was £6006 but expenditure was £16404. Freddie said that this was because the Fund had been used to pay for the recent

essential work on the central heating boiler. Donations were coming in and this deficit would reduce in the coming weeks. Already £11400 had been received.

Linda Moore pointed out that the figure on p8, section 3.2, for spending on education and books, had been wrongly given as £76. This was the 2011 figure. The correct 2012 figure was shown on p12 and was £187.

David Gater asked about payment of Parish Share – were we always able to pay it on time? Freddie said there had been problems in the past but this was no longer the case.

Approval of the accounts within the Financial Statements was proposed by Audrey Ferguson, seconded by Albert Longford and carried *nem con*.

With regard to the appointment of an Independent Examiner for the next set of Financial Statements, ie, the year ending 31 Dec 2013, the re-appointment of David Stephens was proposed by Freddie Shaw, seconded by Ray Norbury and carried *nem con*.

#### 6. The Churchwardens' Report

Gill Norman spoke on behalf of both wardens in reporting that the fabric of the building was very good. After the quinquennial inspection, due in May 2013, the fabric committee hoped to proceed with work on the kitchen.

During the interregnum, when the Rev'd Gwen had moved to Devon, the wardens' spouses, Sue and Tom, had been a wonderful support. St Mary's was now very fortunate to have the Rev'd Paul with us and he was a joy to work with.

Gill also thanked Cathy, as parish administrator, Clifford, for his pastoral leadership and Judy as PCC secretary for their support and help.

She wished Martin and Annie all the best and said that they and the new PCC were in for an exciting time.

#### 7. Report on the Deanery Synod

This was in the APCM booklet.

#### 8 Reports on the PCC sub-committees

These all appeared in the APCM booklet.

There were some additions to the education committee report, when Kelly Parsons and Cathy Brill asked for more volunteers to help with children's work on Sundays; they said that plenty of material was available.

All the committee reports were approved.

#### 9. Reports on other areas of the life of the Parish

These all appeared in the APCM booklet and were all approved.

#### 10. The Curate's Reflections

The Rev'd Clifford Stocking reflected on his ministry.

He felt privileged to be one of a long line of people who had worshipped in Hadlow and served God in the wider community. He was looking towards finding a new community in which to serve as he was coming to the end of his three years with us.

The Church continued to move forward and, as the heart of the community, was especially being involved with families at special times such as baptisms, marriages and funerals.

He thanked the previous incumbent, The Rev'd Gwen Smith, for the teaching, training and leadership she had given him. Her departure to a rural parish in Devon left Clifford with the cure of souls and the lead of worship in Hadlow, and he thanked the wardens and the PCC and all others who supported him in the day to day practical running of the church.

He had enjoyed his increasing work in the parish, including involvement at the college and school, and had appreciated the Music Jam group for the contribution to contemporary worship. He had seen seeds of hope in the youth work and was optimistic about the future. Thanks were due to Liz, Sue and Jan for their involvement with parish work.

He also thanked The Rev'd Christopher Miles and visiting priests, in particular Barbara Smith and Heather Hughes as well as Bishop James and Archdeacon Clive.

The Kibakwe visit, which Clifford and Cathy had shared with Liz, Mary and Jackie from the school, had been of great value and encouraged us as a community to reach out.

Clifford was coming to the end of five years of constant education and thanked his family, Cathy, Becki and Daniel, without whom he would not have been able to achieve so much. He had tried to give his all in

the service of God and looked forward to his new calling in the current year or the next.

### 11. The Vicar's Reflections

The Rev'd Paul White began by thanking the people of Hadlow for their loving welcome to the parish. Clifford, Gill and Barry had been particularly supportive.

He talked about change, which could be worrying; people like things to stay the same. But we, as people, keep changing. This is inevitable, but can be stressful.

For Paul and his family, their whole life had changed, and for the parish of Hadlow, the ten years of stability had changed as Gwen had moved on. This had impact on all involved in the church.

We might be wondering what would happen. It would certainly be different, but we need to remember that God is at work in us. He does not change, but he might ask us to change. Jesus called his followers to move on, and St Peter changed from being a fisherman to being the founder of the Christian Church and the first Bishop of Rome.

Paul noted that the opposite of change is stagnation; we want to be a dynamic body of Christ, to follow God's voice.

In the recent Collation, the Bishop asked 'Is God calling you to this place?'

Paul **had** been called by God to minister in Hadlow, and the question 'In your own strength?' was answered by 'No, with the help of God and the congregation.'

### 12 Election of Four Parochial Representatives of the Laity to the PCC

There were four vacancies for PCC membership.

Francis Griffiths was nominated by Kelly Parsons, and this was seconded by Philippa Hayden.

Linda Moore was nominated by Richard Morley, seconded by Julia Miles.

Barbara Smith was nominated by Judy Gater, seconded by Linda Moore. John Speed was nominated by Jan Morley, seconded by Vanessa Hubble.

There being no other nominations, Francis, Linda, Barbara and John were duly elected to serve as PCC members for the three year period ending at the APCM in 2016.



### 13 Appointment of sidesmen and sideswomen

There were at least 20 people acting as sidespersons. They were the frontline at St Mary's, welcoming regular members of the congregation and visitors.

One or two vacancies would be coming up shortly, so any volunteers should get in touch with the churchwardens.

The meeting ended with prayer at 9.05pm and was followed by a short meeting of the new PCC.

## **REPORTS FOR THE YEAR 2013**

### **6. CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT ON THE FABRIC, GOODS & ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH**

Generally speaking, the fabric of the church is in good condition. However, the Quinquennial Inspection, which was carried out in May (although we did not receive the report until August), revealed problems with the exterior stonework of the tower that require repair (mainly re-pointing) within the next couple of years. This, plus some other items – redecoration and heating repairs (see paragraph below) – is expected to cost over £150,000. Although we do have a certain amount of money set aside in a dedicated (restricted) repair fund, we will need to raise the bulk of the money elsewhere.

The Fabric Committee has set up a working party to oversee the project, including obtaining the necessary funding. We are preparing an application for so-called “Development Stage” funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) under the Grants for Places of Worship scheme, which will enable us to identify and specify the work that needs to be done and determine its cost; we hope to submit before the end of May. A second application will then be required to obtain funding for the actual repairs, known as the Delivery Stage. The HLF may fund up to 95% of the total repair cost. However, although we are hopeful, there is no guarantee that we will be successful in getting funding from the HLF, and even if we get funds for the Development Stage we may not necessarily secure funding from them for the Delivery Stage. We are also investigating other avenues.

The possible availability of grant funding from the HLF has also brought forward plans to enhance our facilities to enable us to minister better to the community as a whole. These will include refurbishing the kitchen, which has been on the agenda for some time, but will be more ambitious in scope. Planning, involving the PCC as a whole, is in its early stages and will address the question of how best to meet the long-term needs of the parish.

A plaque has been installed by the Hop Picker's Memorial in the churchyard to commemorate the 30 men, women and children who died in the 1853 Hartlake Bridge tragedy; it was blessed at a service on 19 October to mark the 160th anniversary. Many thanks to Richard Morley for his hard work in getting the plaque made and fitted.

Heating: The boiler problems of last winter seem a distant memory, and our church is now warm and welcoming again, but there are still some additional works required, viz. location and repair of a small water leak on the heating pipework in church and replacement of the gas supply pipe with a larger size, which we hope can be included in the funding from HLF. We have also recently had problems with the Upper Room boiler, which is showing its age.

With respect to the building contents, thanks to Michael Paine we now have a detailed inventory and description of the silverware.

Finance will be addressed in detail by the Treasurer. We emphasise, however, that our financial position is becoming a little precarious, with voluntary giving declining and costs, as always, rising. Can you help? We thank the Fund-Raising Committee for arranging a programme of fund-raising events throughout the year to make up the shortfall, and look to your support to make these events successful. We very much enjoyed the Harp Recital with Carys Hughes in March and look forward to the Brass Band concert on 4 April.

A new family service inaugurated last October is a very welcome addition to our outreach to our community, and successfully attracts families with young children. It takes place on the second Sunday of every month and is led by members of the congregation. If you haven't yet been, come and try it – it is quite informal, and you can even bring a cup of coffee downstairs from the Upper Room. The support of our 10 o'clock 'regulars' at the family service is much appreciated. Many thanks to Paul, the Education Committee and others for making this a reality.

For the first time, we have a Lent course for children, proposed and led by Kelly Parsons, which is a wonderful initiative to bring more children into church and nurture their spirituality.

On 27<sup>th</sup> October we said goodbye to our curate, Clifford Stocking, and his wife Cathy at a reception in the school hall. And then, on 29<sup>th</sup> November, a large party from St. Mary's saw him installed as Priest-in-Charge at St. John's and St. Wendreda's in March, Cambridgeshire. We wish them well.

Ray Norbury stood down as verger in September after many years service, for which we proffer our greatest thanks. We are grateful to Ann Hughes for taking on the role.

As churchwardens, we give heartfelt thanks all those who enable worship at St. Mary's in its widest sense to continue – there isn't space here to list all the ways that people help – and those who support God's mission within our church, our community and outside. 200 people were invited to the "Thank You" Tea Party in September (see the Outreach Committee report). However, we can't help but note that as the number of helpers declines for whatever reasons the workload on the rest goes up. For example, we desperately need more servers. So, if you can spare some time and would like to help, please talk to Paul, one of the churchwardens or anyone on the PCC.

With both of us being new in the role of churchwarden, we have benefited from the advice and support of past churchwardens. And, working in the background to make sure that the PCC and parish office run smoothly, we must also thank Judy Gater and Janice Massy for their hard work and effective organisation. We are also indebted to Christopher Miles for his continuing support.

Last, but certainly not least, we also say a huge thank you to Paul for leading us, bringing new challenges, and encouraging new ways of thinking, all with his trademark humour. We are so glad to have Paul, Vivienne, Annabelle and Henry with us.

We pray for God's grace as we look forward to the year ahead and our continuing mission in our parish community.

Annie Young and Martin Massy, Churchwardens

## 7. PADDOCK WOOD DEANERY SYNOD

In last year's report to the APCM on the Deanery Synod I gave my view as to why all of us should take an interest in deanery synods *per se*, ie. the fact that deanery synod members are the sole electorate for elections to the General Synod. It follows that the election of deanery synod members by the APCM meeting is a duty needing to be undertaken with great care and forethought (bearing in mind the 'rule making' powers of the General Synod in respect of how the Church of England is organised and how the Church impacts on our national society, eg. Women in the Episcopate (?))

I also listed – in my report last year – what seemed to me to be the problems facing deanery synods in semi-rural areas during a period of time where the Church (writ large) is in a process of numerical decline; the six reasons listed remain unchanged as far as I can see.

Conclusion – deanery synods are a bit of a curate's egg – they are 'important' – but largely unrecognised and largely unable to make a difference – even though those who together make up a deanery synod are genuine, 'worker bees' in many cases, people desirous of doing good, people who come together to consider issues in the national Church as well as issues in the deanery synod area – most of which are, by their nature, difficult to impact upon.

The issue of Women in the Episcopate is a classic example. After many years of discussion within the higher echelons of the C of E as to whether it was possible to grasp this nettle, the consultative processes in our national Church required the deanery synods up and down the land to make their views known to their diocesan synods, and similarly the latter to report back to the General Synod, which would make the ultimate decision. As a result of the overall consultation 41 of the 43 diocesan synods told the General Synod that in their view it was now time to approve a scheme for women to be appointed as bishops. This was stymied in the General Synod because an insufficient number of GS members (elected by the deanery synod members) wanted that to happen. That issue, of course, may soon have been resolved after all, at a delay of a couple of years.

Moral – the next elections to the General Synod need to receive more publicity and thought than the past 'norm' !

Turning to what the Paddock Wood Deanery has been discussing this past year – the subjects have included – (a) the relationship of the Cathedral to the diocese and the parishes;  
(b) food banks – their setting-up and how parishes can get involved (if they want to);  
(c) community advice services;  
(d) the World Mission Forum of the diocese.

The Deanery Synod was enlarged this last year by the addition of the benefice of Tudeley cum Capel with Five Oak Green (previously part of the Tonbridge deanery). This was most welcome, and brings to fruition the original proposed intention of the diocesan scheme in the 1990s when the deanery of Paddock Wood was created from the over-large Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells deaneries.

In addition, throughout the year, reports were made on the activities of the various parishes in the deanery; and on the proceedings of the Rochester Diocesan Synod and General Synod.

The four lay members during the past year have been, Janet Greenwood, Jan Morley, Richard Morley and David Gater, with the Rev'd Clifford Stocking (until his move in October 2013) and the Rev'd Paul White as clergy members.

David Gater (Deanery Synod representative)

## **8. PCC COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Education Committee**

Education and teaching is at the heart of St Mary's. Every Sunday the upper room continues to buzz with activity as the children get together in their Sunday school groups. During 2013 the groups were redefined to reflect the ages and groupings of our young people. As a consequence they were re-named and are now Start-Up, 7-Up and Ys-Up. Children and young people learn through crafts, bible study and discussion and are led by a band of enthusiastic leaders. Kids A.M., which had been going for the last 6 years, ended. This was because of falling numbers and the difficulty in being able to have the required number of adults. A lack of adult volunteers also meant that

the annual holiday club did not go ahead this year. It is hoped that 2014 will see a renewed enthusiasm for youth work.

Adult learning and spiritual growth continued to play an important role of the life of the church. The Lent course *My Grace is Sufficient* explored video conversations between Bishop James and Paula Gooder. Sessions were led by Rev'd Clifford Stocking and Sue Wheeler.

The Wednesday Study Group, facilitated by Christopher Miles, continued to thrive.

I should like to thank committee members and Sunday club leaders for their hard work.

Kelly Parsons – Convenor.

### **Fabric Committee**

This was the year of the Quinquennial Inspection. Every five years the diocese send an architect to inspect the fabric of the building and provide a report of what needs doing in various categories – prompt attention- within next 2 years – within next 5 years and some time never!

Our report concluded that the exterior of the Church Tower is in urgent need of attention to replace missing/incorrect pointing and repairing damaged stonework. The cost to do this was estimated at around £70k. Other work recommended to be carried out within two years was listed mainly to replace pointing at various places around the exterior that had previously used ordinary cement rather than a lime based mortar, and to replace where mortar is missing.

It was also recommended that within five years the May Mausoleum is repaired – a major task with a very high price – it may go into the last category!

The architect also recommended that we apply for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and that we include within our application costs for other work in the church that we would like to carry out – such as renovating the kitchen, providing tea and coffee making facilities downstairs and redecorating the Chancel and Nave. A preliminary application has been submitted for the sum of £160,000 to include work on replacing the gas main to the boiler and replacing rusted pipes. We were advised that we could be awarded up to 95% of this sum.

However there is a great deal of work to be done to prepare our application and it can take 18 months to get a grant awarded! Depending on how much we are given, we can then plan which of the projects we take on and which ones may have to wait – hopefully not until ‘some time never’.

Apart from this, there has been no major work to report. The boiler has worked well since it was installed but there is still a small leak requiring the system is topped up every few weeks.

The Plaque for the Hop Pickers Memorial was finally mounted on a Kentish Rag stone base and was blessed by Paul in October at the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service of the tragedy.

The yew tree by the public footpath that was overshadowing houses in Appletons was coppiced (It had been coppiced previously) and should produce more growth this coming year.

Regular costs include the servicing of the two boilers, the stair lift, tuning the organ, and inspection of fire extinguishers.

Thanks go to the many volunteers who clean the church, polish the brass, make kneelers, change light bulbs and many other unseen tasks. They are greatly appreciated and are of great value in keeping the church in good order.

Richard Morley (Convenor, Fabric Committee)

### **Fund-Raising Committee**

During 2013 our three main events were The Boot Fair, Midsummer Madness Street Fair, and The Big Market Stall near to Christmas. In 2013, Monthly Market Stalls also came under Fund Raising, and in past years The Patronal Festival and Harvest Supper were also Fund Raisers. Nett income generated in 2013 was £4417. Committee members for the year included Rev'd Paul, Heather Wills, Jan and Richard Morley, Freddie Shaw, with the Church Wardens in occasional attendance.

Iris Shaw (Convenor)

### **Outreach Committee**

Outreach activities are undertaken by many members of St Mary's and take a variety of forms. Whether it is Coffee Pots & Tiny Tots for parents and toddlers, the bereavement support group Friends

Together, the informal Thursday Men's Group which meets in the Two Brewers – and latterly the Ladies' Monday Group, or special services such as Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival and Christmas Eve in The Square; all help foster a closer relationship between the church and the wider community.

But in addition to all this there was still plenty for the Outreach Committee to do in 2013.

Our biggest event of the year was the Tea Party in September held in the church grounds. This was a 'Thank You' to all those who help in the work of St Mary's in so many different roles – both in church and in the community. Many of these unsung heroes – such as some of the flower ladies, road reps or newsletter deliverers – are not regular worshippers at St Mary's. Some 200 people were invited, an indication of the army of volunteers that helps the church function so smoothly. Around 112 attended on the day, plus a couple of passing gatecrashers who came for a cup of tea – an example of outreach at work! So many people contributed their time and effort to make this event a resounding success; our thanks go to Hadlow Scouts, the Shaws and the Morleys for supplying the marquees and to all who baked cakes and helped on the day.

Harvest Festival was celebrated a month later with an enjoyable 'bring and share' lunch in church. As the name suggests, everyone brought something along to eat with a little extra to share. This worked amazingly well. There were plenty of hot and cold dishes, salads and desserts for all.

In early November, we held a ladies' breakfast organised by Kirsty Finch, and a few weeks later, a men's breakfast organised by Martin Massy. These events are an opportunity to invite non-church members to join us for a "full English" and listen to a talk afterwards. Mary Noordally spoke to the ladies about World Vision, and the men heard Rev'd Paul talk about his life-changing career move from the legal world to becoming a parish priest.

The most regular Outreach activity is, of course, Market Stall. Held on the third Saturday of the month, it provides an opportunity to come and meet people over coffee and biscuits and buy home-made cakes and produce. However, for several months during the year we struggled to find enough people or groups to run it. After a re-think about its role and outreach potential, we secured agreement from the PCC that, in future, outside groups would be able to run Market Stall



and share the proceeds 50–50 with St Mary's. Hopefully, this will bring new people along every month and increase our contact with other groups in the community.

I should not forget the Hadlow Newsletter produced as part of St Mary's outreach. Thanks to all those volunteers who fold, distribute or deliver it to all households in Hadlow and Golden Green. This is a very useful contribution to village life.

I would like to thank all members of Outreach Committee for their hard work over the past year – I hope it has been fun too! But we would not be able to function without the support of so many members of St Mary's, so thank you all.

Janice Massy Outreach Committee Convenor

## **World Mission Committee**

The World Mission Committee met four times in 2013, with a membership comprising Liz Derrick (Convenor), Kirsty Finch, Julia Miles, Francis Griffiths, Philippa Hayden, Martin Massy, Linda Moore, Marilyn Pierce and Barbara Smith. This year Mark Totty resigned from the committee and Linda Moore and Kirsty Finch joined.

Once again the WMC fulfilled its important role in deciding which charities should be the beneficiaries of the St. Mary's annual 'Away Giving' (again totalling £3000 per year). The charities were a mix of local, national and international. The committee recommended the following charities, which were subsequently ratified by the PCC: *St. Augustine's (Belvedere), The Barnabas Trust, Christian Blind Mission, CoE Clergy Pensions Fund, Crossroads, Kenward Trust, Livability, Mission Aviation Fellowship, Sovereign World Trust, Train a Priest, The Bridge Trust and Work Aid.*

In choosing the aforementioned to be the beneficiaries of our Away Giving, we were influenced by the difficult economic circumstances in our own country; many of the charities above are local to Hadlow. In addition we responded to an appeal from Fr. Clive Jones, Vicar of St. Augustine's, Belvedere and former member of our own congregation, whose church is facing closure unless they can raise money for essential repairs.

The committee also gave support to the Delhi Brotherhood; Philippa Hayden visited the Brotherhood, staying in Brotherhood house, and was able to see at first hand the incredible work undertaken there. A curry evening was held in April and helped raise money for this worthy cause. The WMC also continued to support Christian Aid and the Children's Society.

Link to Hope is the new name for Link Romania, as Moldova, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Albania are also in need. We continue to send shoeboxes for Christmas and pack special boxes for the elderly as well as family boxes. Hadlow Primary School and Hadlow College also add their boxes to our collection.

The link between St. Mary's and Mpapwa in Tanzania has continued to flourish. Liz Derrick has continued to co-ordinate the link and in the autumn once again paid a visit to Kibakwe. She visited the two Primary Schools and the Secondary School taking letters from Hadlow School and other gifts, including 15 scarves for the Scout Group. It is hoped that we will receive a reciprocal visit from Kibakwe, though there are logistical problems which we need to overcome in terms of visas. All in all it has been a busy year for the WMC; the infusion of new blood onto the committee will ensure that 2014 will be as busy and productive as last year, and we look forward to continuing our links and where possible establishing new ones.

Liz Derrick and Francis Griffiths

## **9. REPORTS FROM OTHER AREAS OF THE PARISH**

### **Bells**

Hadlow Bellringers rang for 10am Sunday morning services throughout 2013 as well as for other festivals, special services and weddings. We meet for our main weekly practice on Wednesday evenings.

In January 2013 we were pleased to welcome Ray Taylor in the role of tower captain, prior to which six members of the band had taken on the ringing master role on a rota basis for practices and Sunday ringing.

The beginning of the year saw six learners starting to ring. Three have since stopped but the remaining three have made excellent progress and now ring for Sunday services. St Mary's ringers now number 15

regular members. However, we always warmly welcome visitors from other towers.

Two peals were rung in St Mary's in 2013 and eight quarter peals – seven of them by our own band (a peal lasts for about 3 hours and a quarter peal around 45 minutes). Some of these were to mark two golden wedding anniversaries by band members Ann & Stan Jenner and Mark & Rachel Lewis. A peal and quarter peal were rung in May to celebrate Howard Roger's appointment as Mayor of Tonbridge and Malling; Howard is a long-standing member of our band.

A highlight of our year was the Mayor's Ringathon, taking in all 19 towers in Tonbridge and Malling, organised by Howard to raise money for his mayor's charities. Howard and learner James Menday were among only three people who managed to ring at all 19 towers.

My thanks go to the team for its continued support and in particular to Ray for making practice evenings interesting and challenging for us all – not an easy job as some of us now know! Special thanks also to Stan Jenner for keeping us all on the right ringing track.

Janice Massy (Secretary, Hadlow Bellringers)

## **Choir**

This has been a difficult year for the choir. We were very sorry to lose Martin Carling. He was not able to give the time he would have liked to the choir, and decided he had to resign his position. On a positive note, he got married in July and we wished him well.

Michael Pound stepped in to direct the choir and play the organ for Sunday services, weddings and funerals and we thank him for this.

We joined with Shipbourne and Plaxtol to sing an evensong, and hope that this will have been the first of many. They will be joining us when we sing the Fauré Requiem on Palm Sunday evening.

An advert was placed for a Choir Director in various papers and on the Web, and we received applications for the position from two candidates. They were both invited to take a choir practice and play for a service, and then were interviewed. The unanimous decision was to appoint Susan Honnor. It is joy to listen to Susan's playing – she is so sensitive to the mood and meaning of the hymns and music.

We were pleased to have three new junior members join the choir but sorry to lose Nicola Buxton, one of our Head Choristers who needs to concentrate on her GCSE work this year.

At Christmas for the service of nine lessons and for midnight mass it was great to have some of our younger members join us on their return from university. We also thank those from the congregation who joined us in the choir for the carol service.

We are now ready to progress and continue with the training of the younger members in the RSCM Voices for Life programme. However we do need more adult (and junior) members – so if you are interested please come to a rehearsal or talk to a choir member.

Richard Morley (Choir Member)

### **Church Brass**

The Brassy team continues to work hard to maintain the condition of our interesting brasses. There are many untold stories locked in the inscriptions. Why did H Snowden Ward move from Hadlow to New York, where he died in 1911? The memorial was put up ‘by the ringers of this church in affectionate remembrance’. And Thomas Walker Mitchell must have been rather special; at his death his memorial bore the words ‘Beloved physician, wise counsellor, trusted friend’. The most common name on our brasses is that of Monypenny. This family had an amazing record, members serving as Vicar of Hadlow from 1797 to 1951. The last to serve in the parish was the Rev’d Sinclair Howard Monypenny, who died in 1951 at the age of 81. He was thought to be the oldest incumbent in the Deanery, and was a keen fruit grower and beekeeper.

Judy Gater

### **Church Kneeler Group**

Sadly, the time has come to close the kneeler project after 16 years. We now have well over 100 kneelers in place, and a few more at present being worked.

Age has caught up with us and that, together with rheumatically stiff fingers and lack of younger volunteers, is the reason. Also, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get the usual supplies.

We have to thank Margaret Barnard, whose brain child it was, and the many needlewomen, and a few men, who produced some stunning designs.

Hopefully it has enhanced the appearance of the church especially as Barbara keeps them in good repair.

Margaret Waring (Group Leader)

## **Church Watch**

The volunteers that keep St Mary's open during weekday afternoons have, once again, accepted periods of watch that filled over 90% of the planned opening dates. Eighteen volunteers provide that cover; two thirds of those make commitments at specific intervals on particular days of the week. The other days are taken by volunteers who, unable to do that, offer to fill whichever of the remaining unfilled dates they could attend. Managing the rota that way sometimes requires skills normally used only in the creation of Jigsaw Puzzles.

We do not have a lot of visitors but more have come on Thursdays, since Hadlow Tower was opened. Visitors include folk passing through the village, UK and international tourists. On many afternoons those on watch are not rewarded with any visitors. Nevertheless we recognise the importance of keeping St Mary's open and that the value visitors derive is known only to them.

I repeat the annual invitation for new volunteers to swell the existing team and to make it easier to fill all the dates. I call again "Is there anyone there?"

Derek Oakley

## **Coffee Pot and Tiny Tots (CPTTs)**

Coffee Pots and Tiny Tots meets in church on Wednesday mornings from 10.30 – 12.00 throughout the year. It provides an opportunity for parents and carers to meet informally while their babies and small children play. Tea, coffee, squash and biscuits are provided. Every week, there is a simple craft activity and we finish with a musical session of action songs and musical instruments. The group is run by a small team of helpers, supported by a further team of volunteers who set up in church on Tuesday evenings. We are grateful for a number of parents who now help move chairs and put out toys. We have also been fortunate this year to be given £200 by Sure Start's Children's Centre to spend on new equipment.

Although numbers attending fluctuate through the year, we are pleased to welcome an increasing number of families. The highlight is always the Christmas party, which was a great success in 2013. It was attended by nearly 40 excited children and, of course, the special guest bringing presents.

Cathy Brill

### **St Mary's Flowers**

The loyal band of ladies, who regularly arrange the flowers in the Church, continues to give pleasure to the congregation and visitors at special services. There is always space for more volunteers, who would be made most welcome and helped in arranging flowers for the pedestal or small spaces, whichever suits their available time and talent. We have arrangers who are not church members but who enjoy flowers, as well as regular church ladies.

If you would like to join us phone Barbara on 01732 351489

Barbara Fermor (Flowers Co-ordinator)

### **Friends Together**

Friends Together continues to thrive. The numbers vary from month to month but the important aspect is there is a core group, who contribute immensely to the welcome any new member experiences. The emphasis of the group is informal with no particular agenda but with the opportunity just to socialise. We meet the second Monday in every month at 12.45 in the Upper Room where lunch is provided.

The superb food is ably provided by Judith Deckers and is very much appreciated by the friends and by Abbey Funerals who continue to fund this as their charity (see [www.friendstogetherbs.org](http://www.friendstogetherbs.org)). When Judith is not available, Heather Wills steps in to provide the goodly feast. This group is open to anyone who is bereaved not only those whose funeral was held at St. Mary's. If you know of anyone trying to cope with a bereavement, do commend Friends Together to them. They will be warmly welcomed.

A book has also been produced through Abbey Funerals:-

Remembering Daniel by Monica Keeton, Olivine Press Ltd, Tonbridge, Kent - contact Audrey Ferguson if you are interested.

Contacts: Judith Deckers, or Jan Morley.

### **Golden Green Mission Church**

The PCC owns the freehold of the Mission Church building, and a monthly Service, alternating between Holy Communion and a Family Service, is held there in addition to special services at Easter and Christmas.

The main use of the building, however, continues to be as a secular Community Hall for activities in the village of Golden Green. Under a legal agreement of 2004 between the PCC, the Hadlow Parish Council and the Golden Green Association, the PCC leases the Church to the Parish Council for 45 years (full maintenance lease); the Parish Council in turn sub-lets the premises to the Golden Green Mission Hall Charity. The Association, in effect, provides the management of the building. The PCC retains a small link with the secular use of the building purely by virtue of providing one of the Trustees of the abovementioned charity, but has no management maintenance or repair responsibilities for the building in the period between now and 2048.

The combined efforts of the Charity's Management Committee and the keyholder/bookings agent ensure that community use of the building continues and is appreciated.

David Gater

### **Mothers' Union**

The Mothers' Union branch at St. Mary's enjoyed a full and diverse programme of events in 2013. In January we held our Annual Meeting and in February Rev'd Clifford Stocking looked back on his visit to our twinned village of Kibakwe. In March Clifford was with us again as he officiated at our Communion Service.

In April we welcomed Marilyn Baker who brought her faith alive with song. Julia Jameson spoke in May about Rochester Diocese's programme of Overseas Projects, and June's meeting entailed a visit to Merriments nursery and gardens and a delicious cream tea.

In July members took part in reading their favourite poetry and prose and in August we again enjoyed tea in the Branch Leader's garden. The Tonbridge Street Pastors gave us an informative and interesting talk in September.

In October we were delighted to welcome Rev'd Heather Hughes who gave a thought provoking talk on Mary Magdalene. In November two members of the Salvation Army gave an inspiring talk on their work, and finally, in December, our vicar led the annual Carol Service.

We continue to send knickers to Malawi and Liz Derrick again took gifts and theological books to Kibakwe. At Christmas we contributed

to the cost of hampers for families in the village. We continue to give plants/posies to mothers who bring their children for baptism.

Finally, as this will be our current Branch Leader's final year, we will be seeking a new leadership team to take up the reins in 2015.

Sue Morgan (Branch Leader)

### **Road Representatives**

The Road Representatives have willingly continued their support by delivering Easter and Christmas cards to all houses in the Parish, inviting people to the special Services at St Marys and thus maintaining a vital link between the Church and everyone living in the Parish.

I would like to thank all of the Road Representatives for this important work.

If anyone would like to help with this work please contact me

Doreen Etheridge 01732 850747

### **Servers**

What we do is assist the minister – at the 8 and 10 o'clock Sunday services as well as other ad hoc ones – and help focus everyone on the key parts of the service. We do this with reverence and respect; it is simple to do and we work together.

It's about praying in a different way.

The team remains a most reliable, friendly and supportive group, and we allow for our ills and other requests for help. Many thanks to all who stepped in to take on additional shifts in recent weeks. With most members also involved in other Church roles, everyone does an excellent job in working together to fit all these things in (well done to all!). So it is very many thanks to all of the lovely and caring team for their on-going contributions for yet another year.

Andrew Deckers



### **Wednesday Study Group**

Since the last APCM we have completed our studies in three Old Testament prophets, including the concluding chapters of the book of Amos, with the climax of the prophesy of the restoration of Israel. Last Summer we had a series of 5 studies on faith and work – local politics, medicine, art, education, trade and industry with local people, including Nicolas Heslop, Leader of TMBC, Dr Owen Legg, former Hadlow GP and Norman Nibloe of the Tonbridge Christian Book Centre, introducing the topic and then leading our discussion. Since then we have been engaged in studies in the Sermon on the Mount, using a study booklet with Studies led by many members of the Group. In May we will begin a new series of studies on ‘Women of the Old Testament’ in which we see how ordinary women through faith in God rose to the challenges of their situations.

Prayer is an important part of our meetings.

In January we had a dinner at 2 Spa Close for members and their spouses, 20 people in all, and have sent donations totalling £259 to the Marilyn Baker Ministries, to support Marilyn Baker, a member of our Group, and her companion Tracy in their planned trip to India in the Autumn, visiting churches to demonstrate that people with disabilities can serve God.

Our Group continues to grow with 17 on the books and a typical attendance of 11 or 12. You don't have to have a thorough knowledge of the Bible to join the Group. We can always fit one more in! We meet fortnightly, except during Lent and holiday periods, on Wednesday evenings, mainly at 2 Spa Close, Hadlow. We are grateful to Alan and Pat Critchley for their hospitality over many years in the past. For further information contact Alan Critchley (tel 354598) or Christopher Miles (tel 852323).

Revd Christopher Miles