

ST MARY'S CHURCH, HADLOW
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
FOR THE YEAR 2014

20 April 2015

Booklet

Agenda for APCM on Monday 20 April 2015	: Page 2
Minutes of Previous APCM Meeting	: Page 3
Reports	: Page 8

ST MARY'S CHURCH, HADLOW
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
Monday 20th April 2015 at 8pm in Church

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church meeting held on 7th April 2014
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 2014; 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 Cleaning and Brass Polishing
 - Church Watch
 - Coffee Pots and Tiny Tots
 - Delhi Brotherhood Society
 - 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 and consideration of a resolution to increase the number of PCC members to 12 (to accord with Church Representation Rule 14(1)(g)). This increase would take effect from the APCM of 2016.
13. Appointment of sidesmen & sideswomen

UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, HADLOW, 2014

Held in Church on Monday 7 April 2014, with 57 members of the congregation present.

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

1 Apologies for absence

Barbara Fermor
Bill Hughes
Janice Massy
Linda Moore
Jan Morley
Gill Norman
Alan and Malva Ridge
Angela Widecombe
Linda Yabsley

2 Minutes of APCM held on 15 April 2013

These had been circulated to members of the congregation.
Their acceptance was agreed by all present and signed by the Rev'd Paul.

3 Appointment of Churchwardens

There were two nominations for churchwardens.
MARTIN MASSY was proposed by David Gater and seconded by Alan Knowles
ANNIE YOUNG was proposed by Joan Mitchell and seconded by Judy Gater.

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

4 Report on the Electoral Roll

A new Electoral Roll is prepared every six years; this had happened in 2013. In 2014 it was simply revised, to take account of any changes.

Seven people were removed from the roll, of whom four had died and two moved away. Ten people filled in forms to join the roll, so there was a net increase of three, giving the number on the new Roll of 186, of whom 121 were resident in the parish and 65 non-resident.

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

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.

5 The Annual Report on the proceedings of the PCC, the activities of the Parish generally, the Financial Statements for the year 2013 and the appointment of an independent examiner

The full report had been circulated to the congregation. Freddie discussed it in detail, beginning with the note on the financial deficit, at the end of 2013, of £1984. A deficit was a possibility for 2014, due to a deterioration in the free (unrestricted) reserves. Looking to the future, half the deficit could be eliminated by all church members giving an extra 50p per week, and further help could be given by a successful year of fund raising.

The independent examiner, David Stephens, had again approved the accounts and commented on the clear way they were presented. His report was on p5 with formal notes of accounting policies.

Details were also provided of individual accounts, such as the total of £9507 for away giving; this was followed by totals for debtors and creditors and total sums in trust funds.

The church holds some money in restricted funds and these were detailed on p11.

The last three pages had a further breakdown of income and expenditure for the year. Unfortunately, the copy of the report on the church website was lacking these pages, so Freddie summarised them for those present.

(The full report was subsequently put on the website and had also been on the church notice board).

Some questions followed. Freddie confirmed that the budget set for 2014 was able to cover a full year's payment of stipend. He agreed that several very generous members of the congregation were no longer with us and this had had an impact on the total of voluntary giving. He repeated his thoughts that an extra 50p a week would be very helpful and this would best be done by an increase in standing orders.

Gift Aid changes had taken place and claims on small cash donations were being made as a result of new regulations which started in April 2013. Of our total income from voluntary giving, about 22% was from gift aid refunds. This was probably near to the maximum possible in current circumstances.

Fund raising in the current year had already reached about £4000 and the aim was to double that.

Freddie thanked the finance team, Alan, John and David, who worked hard throughout the year. He then proposed that the accounts be accepted and this was seconded by Richard Morley and agreed *nem con*.

Freddie also proposed that David Stephens, BA, FCCA, should be asked to act as independent examiner for the coming year. David Gater seconded this and all agreed *nem con*.

6. The Churchwardens' Report

Martin Massy spoke on behalf of both wardens and discussed the fabric of the church and recent developments, as referred to in the wardens' report in the APCM booklet.

The Church Repair Fund stood at about £16000, but the Quinquennial Inspection report (Dec 2013) had found that a lot of work to the church tower was needed. Paul Sharrock (quinquennial inspecting architect) had suggested getting funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), and the fabric committee was preparing an application for a grant. An HLF grant, if given, could cover up to 95% of the cost of the work, which was currently estimated at £150,000. Martin was hopeful that a grant would be given as we represented a vibrant community with a noteworthy listed church building.

Further help would be sought with plans to help the church to serve the community better; this included improving kitchen facilities and the layout of the North aisle.

On a happier note, and looking to the future, a new Time For God volunteer was expected to join St Mary's, starting in September. Martin also mentioned the Thank You garden party which had taken place last year; 200 people, who were involved in many aspects of church life, were invited. He and Annie were grateful for the ongoing support of many people, and he mentioned particularly the ex-churchwardens, Janice, the Rev'd Christopher and of course the Rev'd Paul, who led, guided and challenged them.

7. Report on the Deanery Synod

David Gater had written the DS report for the APCM booklet, and said that the synod gave a good opportunity to representatives of St Mary's to meet members of other churches. Younger members of our congregation had been nominated to join the DS this coming year, which was an exciting development.

8 Reports on the PCC sub-committees

These all appeared in the APCM booklet. There were some additional remarks:

EDUCATION

Kelly Parsons said how pleasing it was to see the development of the new family service, and the Rev'd Paul said how complimentary Bishop Brian's remarks had been after he had visited a family service recently.

FUND RAISING

Iris Shaw thanked everyone for their support and asked for it to continue. The next event would be the Boot Fair on 5th May. Picnic in the Park would be a new event in the summer.

The committee reports were all 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 Vicar's Reflections

The Rev'd Paul began by saying that this was his second APCM but the first occasion when he could reflect fully on a whole year at the church and look forward to the coming year armed, with something more than hope and good will.

He talked about Saint Paul's frequently used metaphor of the church as a body, the body of Christ on earth. St Mary's did feel like a thriving and active body, with a supportive diocese and many people willing and able to fulfil their calling to be the body of Christ in this place.

So, we could count our blessings, as he did as our vicar, thanking all the individuals and groups who did so much to keep the church in such a healthy state.

One could use the metaphor of a theatre, saying that there would be no performance if everyone was in the audience; each one needed to play their part, and he asked us all to continue to be involved in church activities and to pray about how God might be calling us.

On the theme of change, there had been a complete change in the leadership team, the churchwardens, the parish administrator and the director of music. It was a testament to the strength of the church community that it had held together so well throughout this period.

People might be surprised that there was no file of handover notes at the vicarage, so he had had to 'fly blind' for much of the time, trying to find out what happened on each week of the year. Often he got many different answers to a question, such as what in the church building itself is physically shrouded during Lent and when. He finished by saying that we had gone through the hardest part of the learning curve and could now continue from strength to

strength. As he had said recently, when asked for his plans for the coming year, he would like a period of consolidation and growth; but also there were plans for redeveloping and redecorating the whole interior of the church!
We should give thanks for all that is good here, but strive to keep it good and to go forward together in faith.

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

There were four vacancies for PCC membership.

Penny Brandling-Harris was proposed by Mary Steadman and seconded by Rachel Lewis.

David Nibloe was proposed by Judy Gater and seconded by Julia Miles.

Barry Wheeler was proposed by Gill Norman and seconded by Julia Miles.

There being no other nominations, Penny, David and Barry were duly elected to serve as PCC members for the three year period ending at the APCM in 2017.

13 Election of Three Parochial Representatives of the Laity to the Deanery Synod

There were three vacancies on the Deanery Synod.

Francis Griffiths was proposed by Kelly Parsons and seconded by Judy Gater.

Val Newell was proposed by Doreen Etheridge and seconded by David Gater.

Kelly Parsons was proposed by Gill Norman and seconded by Liz Derrick.

There being no other nominations, Francis, Val and Kelly were duly elected to serve as parochial representatives of the Laity to the Deanery Synod for the three year period ending at the APCM in 2017.

13 Appoinment of sidesmen and sideswomen

All the sidespersons were willing to continue to serve and this was gratefully welcomed.

The meeting ended with prayer at 9.10pm and was followed by a short meeting of the new PCC.

REPORTS FOR THE YEAR 2014

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

The Churchwardens are required to report on the fabric and ornaments of the church, which you won't be surprised to hear are generally in good condition. There are some exceptions – there are areas of the interior where the paintwork ought to be redone, the vestry needs redecorating, and the Upper Room too, and, as you know, we also need to repair the external fabric, particularly the tower stonework. We have appointed a Conservation Architect to define and manage the stonework repairs, and hope to get advice from her on appropriate materials to at least repaint the parts of the interior that are most in need of redecoration. The other areas will, for now, have to wait on plans to enhance our facilities to enable us to minister better to the community as a whole. There is more about the stonework repairs and the funding we have obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund in the Fabric Committee report.

Susan Honnor, our Organist/Choir Director, resigned at the end of last year, and we thank her for her contribution to our musical life. We also thank Michael Pound for his valuable assistance in the months that followed, and are now very pleased to welcome Antony Le Fleming to the position. Antony is an exceptionally well qualified and experienced musician and we look forward to a resurgence in our choir and music.

Our financial position will be explained in detail by our (outgoing) Treasurer. However, I note that we are having to rely increasingly on fund-raising events to meet the shortfall of income to run the church, with voluntary giving declining and costs, as always, rising. I appeal to you to support the ministry of our church however you can. This is not just about financial contributions, although they help enormously(!), but also includes things like publicising, organising, helping with and attending events. Fund-raising is now the responsibility of the Outreach & Fund-Raising Committee, which combines the two committees under its convenor, Janice Massy. Contact Paul, a churchwarden, PCC member or Janice if you would like to help in any way.

We miss various members of our congregation who for various reasons can no longer worship with us. But the size of the congregation has increased with many young families and the Family Service has gone from strength to strength. Christopher's support has been invaluable as has that of many members of the congregation at our various fund raising events and activities.

Thanks are due to everybody who helps to make the church a welcoming, friendly place, to enhance our worship and to advance our ministry – there are too many to list all by name. However, I would like to thank a number of people who are stepping down after many years of service, such as Freddie (Treasurer), Annie (Churchwarden), and other members of the Fund-Raising Committee and PCC. Thanks also to Paul for leading us with humour and intelligence, to Christopher for his generous help, and to all those unsung heroes who do so much.

We look forward to the year ahead and pray for God's guidance and support in all that we do.

Martin Massy (Churchwarden)

7. PADDOCK WOOD DEANERY SYNOD

Deanery Synod

The first Deanery Synod meeting of 2014 took place in St. Mary's, where Rev Paul gave a Parish Report outlining the make-up of the electoral roll, worship practices and involvement of the church in the community. He also outlined the challenges of ministry here in Hadlow. Then followed an address on the work of the Diocesan Board of Education.

Following the last APCM Francis Griffiths, Val Newell and Kelly Parsons took over as St. Mary's representatives at Deanery Synod. We met in Matfield in May where the focus was children and youth work. The speakers gave some insight into the dropping-off of enthusiasm of children and teenagers for church, and there followed discussion and strategies for involving, valuing and keeping young people engaged in church life and worship. We now have a prayer web link where young people can leave their prayer requests, to be prayed through by members of the congregation.

At East Peckham we were introduced to 'Open the Book' which is a way of presenting Bible stories to primary school children by acting them out. This was shown to be a fun and effective way of familiarizing young children with the Bible and promoting links between churches and local schools.

We look forward to visiting further topics and churches within the Deanery during 2015.

Val Newell

8. PCC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education Committee

Education and learning continues to be at the heart of St Mary's. Our Sunday groups flourished as children and young people developed their faiths through crafts, bible study and play. During Advent, they created a Nativity scene in the upper room, whilst learning about the Christmas story.

Our Family Service offered an alternative way to worship, bringing together children, young people and adults. Themes depended on the talents of the leaders and included activities that adults and children enjoyed together. We are blessed with youngsters whose faiths inspire and are keen to learn more.

Three of our youngsters represent St Mary's on the Diocesan Youth Council. They, along with other young people, have enjoyed bowling together, spiritual residential courses and lunch with Bishop James at his home in Rochester.

Adults had the opportunity to develop spiritually by attending the Lent course, The Beatitudes, part of the Pilgrim Christian Journey experience. In September the Test of FAITH course looked at the complexities of science and theology. Both courses offered time to reflect, consider others views, grow spiritually and develop faith.

The Wednesday Study Group continues to flourish and last year looked at 'Women of the Old Testament'. Christopher Miles' report on this and other activities can be found elsewhere in the APCM report.

I should like to thank everyone who has been involved in education and learning this year.

Kelly Parsons – Convenor.

Fabric Committee

From the point of view of the church fabric, this year has been notable for two things, the award of initial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for repairs to the tower stonework and elsewhere, and the replacement of the boiler that supplies the Upper Room, etc.

Our application to the HLF in May was successful, and we have been awarded £19,100 of funding for the next stage – the Development Stage – which will define and cost more accurately the work needed to repair the stonework of the tower, etc. You will recall that the work was identified in the 2013 Quinquennial Inspection. We will also replace the gas and water pipes under the path (a larger diameter gas pipe is needed). We have hired a Conservation Architect, Rena Pitsilli-Graham, and other specialists to work with her. The work is being managed by the Fabric Committee.

HLF rules mean that we need to submit our application for the final tranche of funding for the repairs themselves by the end of September. That sounds like plenty of time, but there are many steps, involving HLF, English Heritage, the diocese, and tendering for contractors, which actually makes the deadline difficult to achieve. It also requires a lot of work from all Fabric Committee members! The upshot is that the stonework repairs, which can't be undertaken in winter, should be done next year (2016), although we hope to replace the gas and water pipes before then. This depends, however, on successfully securing funding from HLF. We will also consider whether to approach other organisations for additional or contingency funding.

Last year's report mentioned that we were having problems with the Upper Room boiler. Well, it failed in August and could not be repaired. After obtaining approval from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) it was replaced at the end of September by Intec – the same company that fitted the main boiler in 2013 – with a new, more efficient, condensing boiler.

In addition to those "big ticket" items, there have been the usual minor problems with electrics, external lighting, stairlift, etc.

The committee would like to make a general plea for tidiness – could all groups please make sure they leave the various spaces in church clean and tidy each day after their activities have finished, which will make the church feel more comfortable and welcoming for others. Thank you!

Thanks to all members of the Fabric Committee for their continued support, and particular thanks to Richard Morley for all his practical work in the background, fixing all sorts of electrical and other problems, and for overseeing the Upper Room boiler replacement.

Martin Massy (Convenor)

Fund-Raising Committee

Social and Fund Raising Report 2014

What a busy year we had!

Starting in February, we held a lively and enjoyable Auction of Promises, with liquid and solid refreshments to loosen the wallets and purses.

March saw the visit of a very talented Harpist demonstrating her fantastic ability to make the harp talk to us.

April brought us the East Peckham Silver Band- good music, with me showing off my conducting skills!

Our usual Boot Fair took place in May, with a good selection of stalls, and crowds of village people enjoying the sunshine and refreshments.

In July we had a Picnic in the Park, (actually at Hope Meadow) with four different musical styles represented- the final being a 13 year old youngster playing the Saxophone and Cello. He has passed his Grade 8 exams in both instruments.

We had a break in August, and then in September our superb Flower Festival – themed “The life of Christ”. Village organisations once again showed their talents, and we had lots of compliments on the displays. Truly, friendship through flowers.

Music again in October, with the Russian Choir from St Petersburg re-visiting us with a marvellous repertoire and range of singing.

To round off the year we had “el gordo”, the big Christmas Market Fair with a Dickens theme. Once again with village organisations involved it was a busy affair, with mulled wine and refreshments enjoyed by villagers and visitors.

With a little over £8000 being raised it was quite a successful year.

Iris Shaw (Convenor)

Outreach Committee

A key purpose of Outreach Committee is to foster a close relationship between the church and the wider community of the parish. The Community Supper that we organised in June aimed to do just that. Despite the rain, nearly 100 representatives of village organizations, clubs, educational establishments and local traders came along to enjoy an al fresco supper in the church grounds.

Other Outreach activities, where church and local community meet, are the men’s and ladies’ breakfasts and, of course, the monthly Market Stall. Two Men’s Breakfasts were organised by Martin Massy and a band of helpers. Speakers were Justyn Rees Larcombe who spoke about his addiction to gambling and Paul Hannan, head of the Hadlow College Group. Kirsty Finch organised the Ladies’ Breakfast in November at which Vivienne Pattison gave a fascinating insight into the work of Mediawatch UK.

Market Stall continues to provide a valued opportunity for a chat over a cup of coffee on a Saturday morning in the upper room once a month – with an opportunity to buy delicious home-made cakes.

Outreach also organised the congregation’s Harvest Festival meal in church. Once again this was a Bring and Share lunch which worked

very well with contributions of a range of hot and cold dishes and puddings. It was a good social occasion.

The monthly Hadlow Newsletter is also an important Outreach opportunity. It is folded and delivered to nearly every household in the village, thanks to a band of loyal helpers and volunteers.

For the current year, 2015, the work of the Outreach team has been expanded to incorporate fund-raising activities as some members of the former Fundraising Committee wish to step down after many years of hard work organising a rich variety of events in this important aspect of the life of St Mary's.

The combined Outreach and Fundraising Committee has an ambitious programme of concerts and social events for the congregation of St Mary's and the wider community to enjoy. The 19 outreach and fund-raising events lined up include the Bank Holiday Boot Fair in May, Hadlow Open Gardens in June, an Ebay Auction in autumn and a Christmas Tree Festival in December. Committee members alone will not be able to deliver this number of events; we will rely on the active participation of many other members of our church community.

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 who have contributed time and food to our many social events, so thank you all.

Janice Massy Outreach Committee Convenor

World Mission Committee

The World Mission Committee has met five times during this past year, with a membership comprising Barbara Smith (Convenor); Liz Derrick; Kirsty Finch; Julia Miles; Linda Moore; Penny Brandling-Harris; Francis Griffiths and Martin Massy.

Philippa Hayden has left the committee but Martin Massy has continued the role of liaising with the Delhi Brotherhood – see his separate report on the DBS. Marilyn Pierce is no longer a committee member, but has kindly agreed to continue co-ordinating the Link to Hope Shoebox Appeal. Kirsty Finch is now responsible for the Children's Society collections and must be congratulated on the expansion of Parish and village support for this organisation. The amount collected in 2014 was well in excess of £1500. The excellent Christingle service is proof of her work for them, in collaboration with St Mary's Education team and Sunday Club helpers, it must be said.

Once again the WMC was given £3000, through the PCC budget, to distribute to various charities. 'Away Giving' is an important part of Christian life and St Mary's outreach to the wider world. The committee deliberated and decided upon a broad spread between local, national and international charities.

It recommended that the donations be made to The Sovereign World Trust; Water Aid; Work Aid; St Augustine's Church, Belvedere; The Barnabas Trust; Mission Aviation Fellowship; Crossroads; The Kenward Trust; The Bridge Trust and the C of E Pension Board. These donations were ratified by the full PCC and distributed at the end of the financial year.

Despite Liz Derrick's efforts and the involvement of Sir John Stanley MP, we were unable to obtain visa clearance for three people from Kibakwe to come to our parish. As a result of this and our desire to maintain this important link, a visit is now being organised from Hadlow to go there at the end of October or early November 2015. The costs are being met by the individuals involved, but there will be some events requiring sponsorship coming up soon.

Christian Aid is no longer supported by 'house to house' collections in the parish, but just under £400 was raised by in-house collections and a coffee morning.

The Unlock Walk has become a regular Parish event over the last few years thanks to the work of Julia Miles. This year a magnificent £1405 was raised.

It has been a busy year for the Committee but we are hoping to be more pro-active in 2015 and aim to raise more 'Away Giving' funds by holding various events during the year.

Barbara Smith (Convenor)

9. REPORTS FROM OTHER AREAS OF THE PARISH

Bells

Hadlow Bell Ringers rang for 10am Sunday morning services throughout 2014 as well as for other festivals, special services and weddings. We meet for our weekly practice on Wednesday evenings when we always warmly welcome visitors from other towers.

We now number 12 regular ringers having lost three members towards the end of the year. We held a recruitment drive during September's Heritage Weekend when we gave visitors the opportunity to have a go at ringing. As a result, our Time for God volunteer Lea is now learning to ring.

Our band rang one full peal in St Mary's in 2014 and three quarter peals – this is down from our usual numbers and we hope to do more in 2015. Our tower also hosted the occasional district training day and groups of visiting ringers.

As well as the serious stuff, Hadlow Ringers also enjoyed our own tower outing in August and a number of social events including our Christmas Dinner in May.

At our AGM in November, Ray Taylor announced his decision to step down as tower captain at the end of the year. As none of our band felt able to take on this demanding role at present, two of our members, Howard Rogers and Phil Jarvis, are now sharing ringing master duties.

My thanks go to the team for its continued support and in particular to Ray for his hard work as tower captain during 2014, and to Howard and Phil for picking up the mantle. Special thanks also to Stan Jenner for providing additional tuition for our learners and for putting us all back on track when we stray from the "blue line".

Janice Massy (Secretary, Hadlow Bellringers)

Choir

In the year to December 2014 the choir continued to lead the Sunday services with Susan Honnor as organist and choir director. Evensong was sung on one Sunday during the year.

In addition to singing at weddings (a highlight of which was Eve and Francis Griffiths's wedding blessing in August), the choir performed the Fauré Requiem on Palm Sunday evening with Susan playing the organ accompaniment. Francis Griffiths had kindly rehearsed the choir in this piece and ably conducted on the day.

During the year the choir also sang at Inheritance Tracks at St. Mary's, at a joint service with Tonbridge Methodist Church, and some members joined with the Parish Church choir at a special service in Tonbridge to commemorate the beginning of the First World War. An RSCM conducting course was held at St. Mary's in September, when several members provided a choir with which the participants could practise their skills.

Susan Honnor resigned at the end of 2014, her last service being Midnight Mass. The choir formally said 'goodbye and thank you' to her with a small presentation after the Carol Service. St. Mary's is very fortunate in having Michael Pound, who is usually available and willing to deputise if the Director of Music has time off.

Kelly Parsons together with some helpers (latterly including Lea) has kept the choir club running where possible; however, although during the year there has been an enthusiastic core of choir members, both adults and children, fluctuating numbers at practices and at corresponding Sunday services have posed some difficulties in terms of choosing suitable anthems. It is to be hoped that, when a new Director of Music is in post, more members will feel able to show commitment to attendance so that God may be worshipped with the best music that all at St. Mary's, led and inspired by the choir, can offer.

Linda Moore (Choir member)

Church Cleaning and Brass Polishing

As soon as you walk into a church you can tell if it is loved and looked after. There are teams of church cleaners and brass polishers who week by week vacuum and dust and polish and tidy so that the church is always welcoming. It is a big area to take care of and so is a time-consuming task and the congregation is very grateful to those who give their time in this way. It is heartening to think that they continue in the work of the generations of parishioners who have ensured that our lovely building is cared for and maintained

Church Watch

Through our church watch arrangements, we endeavour to have the church open to visitors between 2pm and 4pm on Mondays to Fridays. In the past year volunteers were found to open the church on all but two or three days (on average) in each month. Much more use is made of this facility by members of the congregation than by bona fide visitors. In 2015 we will keep a record of the number of visitors that come each day. The result will be interesting but we acknowledge that it is not the number of visitors that come that is important.

Regrettably, no new volunteer came forward in response to the invitation included in my report for the 2013 APCM or the request for volunteers included in the December Bulletin

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 in a safe and welcoming space. Tea, coffee, squash and biscuits are provided for everyone. 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 help move chairs and put out toys.

Although numbers attending fluctuate through the year, we are pleased to see an increasing number of families. Dads, grandparents, mums and other carers are all welcome. For some, it is their first and only contact with St Mary's. For those who have recently moved into the village, it can be the start of new friendships and a sense of belonging. The highlight is always the Christmas party, which was a great success in 2014. It was

attended by over 30 excited children and, of course, the special guest bringing presents.

Cathy Brill

Delhi Brotherhood Society

We continue our special link with the Delhi Brotherhood Society (DBS), who minister to the poor and disadvantaged in Delhi, targeting help for young people, women and the elderly. They provide education (Deenabhandu primary and secondary schools, Child Development Centre, women's groups, St.John's Vocational/ Technical Training Centre, Community Study Centre for children of sex workers), food and shelter (night shelter for street boys, Boys' Home, Home for Senior Citizens, Senior Citizens' Drop-In Centre), run Childline for East Delhi, and a helpline for women. The work of the DBS is directed by a small group of five people, the brothers of the Brotherhood of the Ascended Christ, whom we have now known personally for many, many years. They are ordained priests in their own right, and are responsible for several churches in Delhi under the Church of North India.

We were pleased to be able to host Fr. Jai Kumar for three days during his visit to UK last summer – it was his first visit. St. Mary's supported Jai financially from his first days at the Boys' Home, and it was a delight to meet him and see how he has grown into adulthood, achieved so much (degree, ordination) and entered God's ministry.

We collected £674.88 last year for DBS, but would like to do more. Please talk to Martin Massy or Alan Knowles if you would like to find out more about this wonderful organisation and how you can help to support their work and ministry.

Martin Massy

St Mary's Flowers

The ladies have continued to arrange flowers and foliage in many and lovely ways to enhance our beautiful old church. At Festival times the members of the church have contributed to the cost of the flowers in memory of relatives and friends. We would always be happy to welcome new members to our team. The rota means that your turn comes around about every four weeks. A love of flowers is the only criteria and arrangements are large or small according to the position in the church and help will always be available.

Please contact Barbara on 01732 35149 if you are interested.

Barbara Fermor (Flowers Co-ordinator)

Friends Together

Friends Together is a meeting held on the second Monday of the month that enables any bereaved members of our wider community to share company and lunch. This takes place in the Upper Room from 12.30 till 2.30 pm and is now sponsored by the registered

charity of the same name. Although this meeting is kindly allowed to use the Upper Room as its base, it is not a church run event. 'Friends' is the brain child of Chris Parker of Abbey Funeral Services Ltd, Tonbridge, whose company originally funded the cost of providing lunch and organised the community-based groups, eight in total, in the Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells area. Today as a registered charity, monies are sought by the trustees and through giving via the 'yellow collecting boxes' (which you can see at the back of the church) which enable this much appreciated support to continue. Recently The Age Concerned Centre, in Bradford Street Tonbridge, has been rented by Friends Together where groups meet on alternate Saturday and Sundays from 3 pm to 5 pm (dates can be obtained from Chris Parker on 01732 360328). For more information visit www.friendstogetherbs.org , or follow on [Twitter @friendstogbs](https://twitter.com/friendstogbs). Friends Together also run a number of fun activities/outings throughout the year which are offered to the groups in a self-funding capacity.

Judith Deckers

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 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.

Mothers' Union

St Mary's MU has enjoyed a varied programme of meetings and events throughout the year. The Annual General Meeting was held in February, and in March we gathered in the Lady Chapel for a service of Holy Communion, led by the Rev'd Paul White.

On Mothering Sunday, Reg Bailey was given a warm welcome to St Mary's as guest preacher. We were delighted to welcome several guests to our April meeting, along with an almost full-house membership, to hear Vivienne Pattison speak about Media Watch.

In May we were privileged to hear from a young outreach worker, Bethany Lewis, who brought the simplicity of life in a Tanzanian village to the Upper Room at St Mary's. In June we visited Burrswood, the Christian Hospice near Tunbridge Wells, where we heard from the Chaplain, toured the gardens and enjoyed afternoon tea. In July, Annemarie Woodward spoke about the pioneering work of clergy wives in London at the end of the 19th century and in August we enjoyed an afternoon garden party at the home of our Branch Leader in Horsmonden. In September we held a members' meeting dedicated to an exploration of prayer, and in October the Rev'd Paul White spoke of his journey into the priesthood. In November Mary Noordally, an Ambassador for World Vision, spoke movingly about World Vision projects in Africa, India and Pakistan, and in December the Rev'd Paul White led our Annual Carol Service. During the year we have, once again, supported the 'knicker project' for our twinned MU in Kibakwe, together with a further gift of books for their theological college. Closer to home we took part in the May Fair, Market Stall and Christmas Fair, and we continue to support the village school, together with posies/plants for new mothers when they bring their babies to St Mary's for baptism.

We were delighted to welcome two new members during the year, although our numbers remain the same as Marjorie Smith left us due to ill-health and, sadly, Joan Allen died on Christmas Eve.

As the year comes to a close we are delighted to announce that Iris Shaw will be our new Branch Leader from January 2015, ably assisted by Jenny Hopkins as Secretary.

Sue Morgan (Branch Leader)

Road Representatives

The Road Representatives are a loyal group of people in the village who provide a vital link between St Marys and the Community of Hadlow. The important role they play in contacting new residents to the village, maintaining contact with those people who are in need as well as delivering details of special services at the Church, mainly those about Christmas and Easter is much appreciated.

I would like to thank them all for their hard work and loyalty during the past 13 years that I have had the pleasure of co-ordinating the work

Doreen Etheridge

Servers

What we do is assist the minister - at the 8am 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 small with 8 servers for the 10 am service, which means that everyone is being asked to do a shift more frequently than before. There is still a need to recruit more servers.

John Speed has very kindly taken on the task of producing the rota.

Andrew Deckers

Wednesday Study Group

In May 2014 we began a new series of studies on 'Women of the Old Testament' in which we have seen how ordinary women through faith in God rose to the challenges of their situations. This has been an interesting and challenging series, appreciated by both women and men in the Group. We have had almost as many members leading a study as the number of studies albeit no one is under pressure to lead. In early 2015 we completed 'Women of the Old Testament' and then did two studies, of our own devising, on women of the New Testament. After Easter we plan to study the Book of Revelation in a series of 14 studies which will take us to the end of 2015. We usually finish with a short time of open prayer for the Church both locally and further afield, for the community and for the needs of members and their families.

In January 2014 we had a dinner at 2 Spa Close for members and their spouses resulting in us sending a donation of £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. This visit worked out well with a number of people coming to faith in Christ as well as demonstrating that people with disabilities are valued and can serve God. At our annual dinner on 24th January 2015 Marilyn and Tracy told us about their trip; showing us some pictures as well. At our supper donations totalling £221.30 were collected for the work of the Bridge Trust.

Our attendance in the Summer was quite high with often as many as 14 but in the Autumn, because of work related commitments, 2 members have had to opt out for the time being and others have been away. Our recent attendance has been around 8 to 10. We meet fortnightly, except during Lent and holiday periods, on Wednesday evenings, either at 2 Spa Close, Hadlow or now, Bailiff's House, Goblands Farm. For further information contact Alan Critchley (tel 354598) or Christopher Miles (tel 852323).

Revd Christopher Miles