

ST MARY'S CHURCH, HADLOW

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
FOR THE YEAR 2015**

24 April 2016

Booklet

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ST MARY'S CHURCH, HADLOW
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
Sunday 24th April at 11.45am in Church

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church meeting held on 20 April 2015
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 2015; 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; Outreach and Fundraising; World Mission
9. Reports on other areas of the life of the Parish:
Bells; Brass Cleaning; Church Cleaning; Church Watch; Coffee Pots and Tiny Tots; Delhi Brotherhood Society; Freewill Offering and Gift Aid; Friends Together; Golden Green Mission Church; Home Communion; Lighthouse; Mothers' Union; Music; Parish Visiting; Road Representatives; St. Mary's Flowers; St. Mary's Hospital Car Service; Servers; Sidespersons; Tonbridge Area Churches Together; Wednesday Study Group; Who Let the Dads Out?
10. The Vicar's reflections
11. Election of up to 5 parochial representatives of the laity to the PCC
12. Appointment of sidespersons.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, HADLOW, 2015

Held in Church on Monday 20 April 2015, with 61 members of the congregation present.

In the chair, the Rev'd Paul White.

Minutes taken by Judy Gater (PCC Secretary)

1 Apologies for absence

Eve and Francis Griffiths; Alan Knowles; Julia and Christopher Miles; Jan and Richard Morley; Val and Steve Newell.

The meeting opened with a short prayer and a gospel reading.

2 Minutes of APCM held on 07 April 2014

These had been circulated to members of the congregation. Their acceptance was agreed by all present, and the minutes were 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 Barry Wheeler

BARBARA SMITH was proposed by Martin Massy and seconded by Linda Moore.

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

4 Report on the Electoral Roll

The report was read out by Judy Gater.

Every 6 years the Electoral Roll is entirely rewritten; this last happened in 2013. Accordingly, this year it was simply revised, to take account of any changes.

Eight people were removed from the Roll, of whom two have died and six moved away. Twelve people filled in forms to join the Roll, making a net increase of 4.

The new figures are 190 on the Roll, of whom 129 are resident in the parish and 61 non-resident. So the proportion on the Roll of those who live outside the parish is 32%. It has been around this figure for many years.

A copy of the Roll is always displayed on the church notice board.

David Lear has acted as Electoral Roll officer for many years and our thanks are due to him and to his wife Gabrielle for all their hard work in compiling the Roll.

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

Freddie Shaw reported on the year ending 31 December 2014. The first 3 pages of the report were prepared by the PCC secretary and page 4 onwards gave an overview of the financial state of St Mary's Church.

There was a downward movement in funds of £7,290. This is the deficit for the year 2014 and so the criteria of the reserves policy had once again not been met.

The report has been independently examined and signed by the examiner as showing a clear picture of the year's activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities is known as the SOFA, so Freddie was able to make his annual joke, stating that the sofa had not been too comfortable in the past year.

The reason why the deficit had arisen was that there had been a fall in voluntary income. This had been offset partly by magnificent fund raising and by a generous legacy of £4000. Our expenditure had hardly risen.

Freddie then talked through the report, explaining the terms debtors and creditors and referring to details of income and expenditure over the year.

There was a question about the location of the legacy within the accounts, but, there then being no further questions, Freddie proposed that the report be accepted, and this was seconded by Audrey Ferguson.

Freddie then proposed that David Stephens be retained as independent examiner and this proposal was seconded by Geoff Marsh.

Both proposals were accepted nem con.

Freddie concluded by thanking all the Finance Team for their hard work.

6. The Churchwardens' Report

Martin Massy reported that it was necessary to deal with repairs to the stonework of the church tower. Plans were at the development stage, but already a conservation architect and a quantity surveyor had been appointed. It was hoped that work would start on the gas and water pipes in the coming year.

Martin appealed for continued support for fund raising events; these were particularly important this year.

He finished by thanking outgoing members of the PCC, particularly his fellow warden, Annie Young. She would be acting as deputy warden when required in the coming year. Annie was

presented with an orchid and responded with thanks; she said that being churchwarden had been an enjoyable experience.

7. Report on the Deanery Synod

Val Newell, Francis Griffiths, and Kelly Parsons had represented St Mary's at the Deanery Synod meetings in the past year. Val had written a report on its activities; this report had been circulated to the congregation in the APCM booklet.

8 Reports on the PCC sub-committees

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

EDUCATION

Report by Kelly Parsons.

FABRIC

Report by Martin Massy.

FUND RAISING

Report by Iris Shaw.

OUTREACH

Report by Janice Massy.

WORLD MISSION

Report by Barbara Smith.

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

These appeared in the APCM booklet and were all approved.

10. The Vicar's Reflections

The Rev'd Paul began his reflections by saying that it was, almost unbelievably, his third APCM at St Mary's. He hoped he could now stop being 'the new vicar' but simply be 'the vicar', a fellow disciple on the road, travelling with us in the same direction and focusing on the Lord we all sought to follow.

He went on to offer words to encourage us to stand up for Christianity in the face of the atheism or indifference which surrounded us. For each of us was part of something truly amazing, as the adopted children of God and part of the universal body of Christ, who shared Christ's body when we broke bread together. We were all blessed to be part of St Mary's. The church had a strong identity, centred on the Eucharist and active on many fronts in many activities which acted as outreach within the village.

Though the electoral roll was slowly growing, levels of regular giving of money had been decreasing for some years. Church finances did need to be put on a sound footing for the future, but money could not be seen as the driving force of the church, but rather the means of serving the mission that God had for us here.

St Mary's was a healthy, vibrant, growing, worshipping community with the potential to be a beacon of light.

Rev'd Paul went on to thank Janice, the parish administrator who dealt with a huge volume of parish work, Judy, the PCC secretary, Martin and Annie the Churchwardens and Freddie the treasurer. Both Annie and Freddie were stepping down and were especially thanked, as were Cathy and Iris who were stepping down from the PCC having served their term of office.

Further thanks were given to Antony, our new music director whose work was already bearing dividends, and Anne Hughes who had acted as vergers, together with the sidespersons, the flower ladies, those who ran children's work, the servers, the readers, the intercessors, the choir, those who did church watch, who sat on committees, who made teas and coffees after church. All were thanked with a round of applause.

As for what was to come next, Rev'd Paul said he constantly prayed that, as a church and a community, we should face three ways, towards God in worship, towards one another in love and towards our community in service.

People cannot fully love God unless they love one another, and cannot fully love God and one another without being compelled to turn that love into practical action in the world. Paul emphasised that of these three strands the one which most needed work in the coming year was service towards our community. Already there were discussions beginning about a youth club being started by a member of the congregation and we were regular givers to the Bridge Trust and were thinking of being involved in running a credit union. We needed to serve our community, not in order to bring more people into church but because Christ compelled us to serve those around us.

Our mission to Hadlow would be on the agenda of every PCC meeting, but we were all disciples and part of the body of Christ and should be constantly asking ourselves if we were worshipping God, loving our fellow worshippers and serving those around us.

When Rev'd Paul had finished speaking, Joan Mitchell rose to thank him for his leadership.

12 Election of Four 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 the Church Representation Rule 14(1)(g))

There were four vacancies for PCC membership.

Rebecca Campbell was proposed by Judy Gater and the nomination was seconded by Anne Hughes.

Geoff Marsh was proposed by Annie Young and the nomination was seconded by Cathy Brill.

Sharon Vanns was proposed by Elizabeth Derrick and the nomination was seconded by Penelope Brandling–Harris.

Annemarie Woodward was proposed by Sylvia Bush and the nomination was seconded by Maurice Bush.

There being no other nominations, Rebecca, Geoff, Sharon and Annemarie were duly elected to serve as PCC members for the three year period ending at the APCM in 2018.

The current number of PCC members was 10, but Judy proposed a resolution that the number be increased to 12 to accord with the recommended number in the Church Representation Rules. This proposal was accepted and would take effect from the date of the next APCM.

13 Appointment of sidesmen and sideswomen

Annie Young read out the list of current sidespersons and thanked them for their commitment. All were willing to continue to stand.

There being no other business, the meeting ended with prayer at 8.55pm and was followed by a short meeting of the new PCC.

REPORTS FOR THE YEAR 2015

PCC COMMITTEES

A lot of the PCC's work is done through committees, and their reports are given below. The committee structure is continually evolving; recently the Outreach and Fundraising Committees have been amalgamated. The only committee required by church law is the Standing Committee, which in recent years had met occasionally when circumstances demanded. The basic requirement under church law is for the PCC to meet a minimum of four times during the year, and recent practice has been for it to meet about nine or ten times a year, omitting August and December, and sometimes, Lent.

Last year the PCC met seven times and there were three Standing Committee meetings in between full PCC meetings. This was begun as a trial run, in order to slightly reduce the number of evening meetings for the majority of our members. The Standing Committee discusses items which are going to appear in the full PCC meetings and helps to set the agenda for them. The Standing Committee has emergency powers when required but its current regular use is as given above.

The Standing Committee minutes are always ratified at the next full PCC meeting and then appear on the notice board and online, as do the minutes of all PCC meetings.

Judy Gater (PCC Secretary)

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

The Churchwardens are required to report annually on the fabric and all articles appertaining to the church. There have been no significant changes during the year, and the documents we are required to keep – terrier, inventory and log book – are up to date. The Rural Dean carried out his triennial inspection of church records in April.

As you know, the condition of the stonework in certain areas, particularly around the tower, is poor, which has resulted in St.Mary's being placed on the Heritage At Risk Register. We have made progress in getting the repairs done, mainly by securing funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). We appointed Rena Pitsilli-Graham last year as Conservation Architect, who specified the work to be done and who will oversee the stonework repairs, which are due to start in April. There is more information about the stonework repairs and the funding we have obtained from the HLF in the Fabric Committee report.

You will also be aware that there are areas of the interior where the paintwork ought to be redone, the vestry needs redecorating, and the Upper Room too, which will be tackled when finance is available and we have the correct specification for paint and method.

The May monument in the SW corner of the churchyard is in a dangerous condition, and has been fenced off as a result. However, the churchyard is a Parish Council responsibility and we will not be under any financial or other obligations. As an aside, the Parish Council tested all the headstones to make sure they are secure and cannot harm anyone by falling.

We keep up a dialogue with our insurers to try to ensure that we comply with various safety and security requirements. For example, all the fire extinguishers were tested and replaced where necessary; we were fortunate to find a qualified local firm to do the work.

Also following discussion with our insurer, we have now instituted a requirement to carry out a risk assessment for any activities that are not part of our usual routine. It is not intended to be an onerous task, but to protect organisers and participants mainly by applying common sense to think about and identify risks and how to manage them.

The organ tuner reports that the instrument is in good condition and should not require a major overhaul for some time to come provided we continue to maintain it and the humidifier.

We look forward to the year ahead and pray for God's guidance

Martin Massy (Churchwarden)

7. PADDOCK WOOD DEANERY SYNOD

In addition to Rev'd Paul White as a clergy member, St. Mary's has three lay members representing the parish on the Deanery Synod: Francis Griffiths, Val Newell and Kelly Parsons.

There are usually four meetings a year taking place in churches around the deanery and all include a report of church life and activities in the host parish.

Members can share information about new church ventures or upcoming events which may be of interest to neighbouring parishes; also we have the opportunity to request prayer for new endeavours or church concerns.

We sometimes have reports from the Rochester Diocesan Synod. In addition to the regular business, meetings include a short presentation relating to worship, mission or church life. During 2016 we have learned about communication and publicity of church activities, working and supporting volunteers, Kent Workplace Mission, and heard an address by Canon Jean Kerr.

We look forward to visiting further topics and parishes in 2016, and to hosting the Deanery Synod at St. Mary's in November.

Val Newell

8. PCC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education Committee

Highs

The young people that are part of our congregation at St Mary's are beginning to play a more prominent role within our worship. This year Suzie Nibloe and I had the privilege of working with many of them to organise a 10 o'clock youth service that exceeded the expectations of many of the congregation; the planning and maturity of these young people was inspiring as was their obvious commitment to their faith. The service itself was engaging and thought provoking including a dramatic reading from Jack Good and Annabelle White, followed by a sermon from Rebecca. The youth service as a whole was well received by the congregation and something we hope to repeat this year.

The Christingle service was again largely youth led and enjoyed by all who came and I know that the young people are already talking through plans for the Christingle Service later this year.

The groups which meet regularly here on a Sunday continue to increase. We currently have two groups running. 7up meets every week upstairs and has a core group of 7-10 young people each week. The teachings of the group generally run alongside the lectionary and create amazing pieces of artwork that have been complimented by the congregation when they come up to have coffee and tea. The second group is Ys up that meets once a fortnight in the vestry (although they are looking for new digs as the group continues to grow).

The Family Service continues to be well attended and has been host to two baptisms with another to be held in June. The service allows a space for our young people to grow and worship alongside many members of the congregation in a more relaxed environment.

Adult education is also a part of St Mary's with a group that meets each fortnight to discuss readings from the bible. The Lent course which was well attended last year is also running this year and is following the Pilgrims course on the Eucharist.

Lows

Gill Norman who was a long standing member of the education committee and largely devoted to the youth work at St Mary's departed for pastures new. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gill for all she gave to the youth work here. This low really has turned into a high with the addition of Annemarie to the ranks of the education committee - bringing forth new ideas and inspiration.

The year ahead...

The youth at St Mary's is growing in numbers as well as in faith - we plan to have another youth service this year and put on a half

term club for primary school children in the Autumn. The Family service will continue to evolve and develop as it meets the needs of the families who come to worship at this service. Nothing ever stays still when working with young people; the energy in the room is almost tangible and the spirit as great.

Kelly Parsons – Convenor.

Fabric Committee

From the point of view of the church fabric, 2015 was notable mainly for the award of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the actual repairs to the tower stonework and elsewhere.

Our application to the HLF in September was successful, and we have been awarded a grant of up to £97,700 for the next and final stage – the Delivery Stage – which is the actual work. You may recall that the work was identified in the 2013 Quinquennial Inspection, and we received an initial grant from HLF in September 2014 to hire a Conservation Architect and other specialists to prepare the specifications, etc. A year to prepare everything sounds like plenty of time, but there were many steps: hiring specialists, preparing specifications and getting them approved by Heritage England and the Diocesan Advisory Committee, going out to tender for the main contractor, evaluating and clarifying bids, preparing activity and maintenance plans and budget, getting permission from the Diocese to carry out the planned works (called a “Faculty”), and finally making the application. Also, the stonework repairs cannot be carried out in winter; we have to wait until the weather is warmer to prevent damage to mortar. However, we are nearly

there at last; we have the grant and the stonework repairs should start in April. They are expected to continue until early July.

The HLF grant will also go towards replacement of the gas and water pipes under the path to the West door (a larger diameter gas pipe is needed).

We are seeking advice on the correct type of paint and method to use, to repaint interior areas in the nave and chancel that look particularly “distressed”.

During the year, the electrical connection to the external lights on the pathway was renewed. There have also been the usual minor problems. We are currently investigating ways of economising on energy by possibly installing advanced heating controls and/or LED lighting.

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. Richard has also now kindly agreed to take on the role of convenor.

Martin Massy (Convenor)

Outreach & Fundraising Committee

2015 was an unprecedentedly busy year for members of the hitherto “Outreach Committee” as in addition to outreach activities they assumed responsibility for fundraising. This had previously been undertaken by a separate Fundraising Committee, but after a number of years of hard work devising a rich variety of events to raise much-needed income for St Mary’s, Iris, Freddie, Richard and Jan were due a well-earned break.

The newly renamed Outreach and Fundraising Committee executed a full programme of fundraising and outreach events. Because of the lack of space in the programme we were unable to include our usual Community Supper. However, an upside to many of our fund raising activities is that they also involve the wider community of Hadlow which, of course, meets one of our Outreach goals. Notable examples of this last year were a couple of 'firsts' for St Mary's: our first Hadlow Open Gardens and our first Christmas Tree Festival. Neither could have been achieved without the enthusiasm and participation of individuals and organisations in the parish. Our grateful thanks go to Rev'd Christopher Miles for co-ordinating the Open Gardens, and to Mary Peterson for suggesting and coordinating the Christmas Tree Festival.

Other fundraising events held last year were concerts by the Vigo Singers, the Russian Choir Voskresenije and Hadlow Orchestra; a Quiz; the Boot Fair, held on a gloriously sunny May Bank Holiday; a Christmas Market and the phenomenally successful Harvest of the Talents' scheme. This latter was held over the summer with many people taking part and devising some imaginative – and social – ways of using their God-given talents to 'grow' the £5 that was handed to all participants at the start. Again, thank you, Mary, for all your work organising this one.

We continued to hold our usual Outreach activities where church and local community meet, namely the men's and ladies' breakfasts and, of course, the monthly Market Stall which provides a valued opportunity for a chat over a cup of coffee on a Saturday morning in the upper room – with an opportunity to buy delicious home-made cakes. In July a Family Fun Day was

held in the church grounds with a range of activities enjoyed by the young and not so young alike! Thank you Kirsty and team.

The Committee also organised the Harvest Festival meal in church. This was, once again, a Bring and Share lunch with a wonderful range of hot and cold dishes and puddings but sadly was not well attended due to so many of our congregation being unavailable on the day.

The monthly Hadlow Newsletter continues to be an important Outreach opportunity. It is delivered to nearly every household in the village, thanks to a band of loyal volunteers. In December I announced that after 20 years of editing the newsletter I felt it was time to step down. I would like to give a big thank you to Maria Fisk for taking on the editor's role.

Of course, outreach is not confined to the Committee; many members of St Mary's take part in a variety of outreach activities. Particular mention must be made of Coffee Pots and Tiny Tots and Friends Together. These were joined last year by a new and growing venture: Who Let the Dads Out?, headed by Cathy Brill.

My thanks go to all members of the Committee for their hard work and support over the past year: Angelique, Barbara, Bet, David, Heather, Katherine, Kirsty, Martin, Mary and Sharon. I hope you have enjoyed it too! Finally, a huge thank you also to so many members of St Mary's who have contributed your time and food to our events or have come along and supported them.

Janice Massy – Outreach & Fundraising Convenor

World Mission Committee

The World Mission Committee has met four times during this past year, with a membership comprising Barbara Smith (Convener); Liz Derrick; Kirsty Finch; Julia Miles; Linda Moore; Penny Brandling–Harris; Francis Griffiths and Becca Campbell. Marilyn Pierce is no longer a Committee member but kindly agreed to continue coordinating the Link to Hope Shoe Box Appeal for 2015.

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 2015 was well in excess of £1,000. The Christingle Service numbers were slightly down this year but it was again proof of her work for them, in collaboration with St. Mary's Education team and Sunday Club helpers, it must be said.

Liz Derrick, together with Jim May and Sharon and Matthew Vanns visited Kibakwe at the end of October and brought us back wonderful photographs of life there, together with ideas of specific things we could help the villagers to achieve.

During 2015 very specific appeals have been made to the congregation to raise awareness about the charities we aim to support and also to give directly for that cause. As a result, this Parish raised almost £5,000 for different charities during the year. This included a Curry Evening to support the work of the Delhi Brotherhood; for which a big thank you must go to Freddie and Iris Shaw and their family who did all the cooking. It is hoped to take this direct approach to fund raising for Away Giving again in 2016.

As a result of this amazing amount of money already raised for our 'favourite' charities, the Committee agreed that we would

only ask for £2,000 from the PCC budget, just for this year – effectively donating £1,000 back to St. Mary’s.

‘Away Giving’ is still an important part of the 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 Work Aid; 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.

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 £1,405 was raised.

It has been a busy year for the Committee; we are hoping to be just as pro-active in 2016 and aim to raise more ‘Away Giving’ funds by holding various events during this year.

Barbara Smith (Convenor)

9. REPORTS FROM OTHER AREAS OF THE PARISH

Bells

Hadlow Bell Ringers rang for 10am Sunday morning services throughout 2015 as well as for special services and weddings. We meet for our weekly practice on Wednesday evenings.

The demanding role of Tower Captain and Ringing Master was shared last year between Howard Rogers and Phil Jarvis and the band is delighted that they have agreed to continue to share the responsibility in 2016.

We still have 12 regular ringers, but our numbers on practice nights are often boosted by visitors from other towers who are always very welcome. We would, however, like to attract some new blood and are very willing for newcomers to come along to one of our practice sessions and have a go.

Our band rang two peals of around three hours each in St Mary's in 2015 and are attempting to ring quarter peals on the second Sunday afternoon of every month. The tower also hosted groups of visiting ringers.

One of the lesser known duties of the ringers is to wind the clock on the front of the church tower. This stopped working in 2015 due to one of the clock's hands becoming bent out of shape. We hope that this can be repaired this current year when scaffolding is erected for the tower fabric repairs.

As well as the ringing, Hadlow Ringers also enjoy social occasions. These included an outing to Whitechapel Foundry and ringing at some London towers, and our "Christmas" Barbecue in June when we said farewell to Time for God volunteer Lea who had become a regular member of our band.

Our thanks go to the team for its continued support and in particular to Howard and Phil for leading our practices.

Janice Massy (Secretary, Hadlow Bellringers)

Brass Cleaning

There are a number of brass items at St Mary's, all of which commemorate previous members of the congregation. They range from an inconspicuous plate on the altar rail to the intricacy of the lectern, always a favourite of the exhausted brass cleaner. The team works to a rota to make sure all the brasses are kept in good condition and we thank them for their hard work.

The brassy team is Carole Bramham; Jean Cort; Judith Deckers; Liz Derrick; David and Judy Gater; Linda Moore; Pam O'Sullivan.

Judy Gater

Church Cleaning

Our church is cleaned by the following people – usually in pairs. Annie Young; Carole Waters; Janice & Martin Massy; Julia Miles; Gill Speed; Kelly & Michael Parsons; Barbara Smith; Kirsty Finch; Cathy Brill; Liz Derrick; Heather Wills; Sandra Rhodes; Stan & Ann Jenner; Bet Brett.

Grateful thanks to all the church cleaners, and if anyone would like to join us, please let me know.

Ann Jenner

Church Watch

Through our Church Watch arrangements, we endeavour to have the church open between 2pm and 4pm on Mondays to Fridays. On average we manage to do this for all but two or three days per month. The principal objective of these arrangements is to make the church accessible to bona fide visitors but many members of the congregation make use of them.

As indicated in my report for 2014, we arranged for a record to be kept of the number of visitors on each day. The total for the year was about 500. The reasons for the visits were very varied, the visitors coming from far and wide as well as places nearby. The number of visitors on Thursdays during the months that the Hadlow Tower was open to the public represented 75% of the total of Thursday visitors throughout the year. This is a link worth developing if the Tower is opened again

More volunteers would make the continuation of the Church Watch arrangements easier to maintain. It is disappointing that more new volunteers are not forthcoming in response to general appeals. Many of the current volunteers have been taking part for years and deserve our thanks.

Derek Oakley

Coffee Pots 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.

Although numbers attending fluctuate through the year, we are pleased to welcome an increasing number of families, especially those with young babies. Many of them are making firm friendships which benefit both adults and children. One Mum wrote in a card 'Thank you for providing such a wonderful service, it has made a huge difference to so many of us in so many ways.'

Regular volunteers include Cathy Brill, Jean Cort, Judith Deckers, Carole James, Jim and Pippa May, Jan Morley, Jean Turner and Albert Longford on the washing-up! Also, Father Christmas who distributed nearly 40 presents at our party.

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 did not have a visit this year, but continue to receive their Annual Report and regular bulletins (available from the St.Mary's website), which keep us up to date with their activities.

We collected £1,168 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

Freewill Offering & Gift Aid

We continue to have a significant number of regular supporters to our freewill offering. Without this we would struggle with the day to day running of the church. If you do not currently support the church on a regular basis and are now able to, then you can do so with either a standing order or using one of the packs of weekly gift aid envelopes. If you would like to give through either of these ways, then please speak with John Speed who can help arrange it.

If you are a UK Tax Payer and have not filled out a Gift Aid form OR if you have moved since completing a form, then please also speak with John Speed. We continue to encourage any members who are UK Tax Payers but who can't support the church

regularly to use the yellow envelopes in the pews or at the back of church so that we can claim an additional 25% from the Government.

John Speed

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 12.45 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. As a registered charity, monies are sought by the trustees of 'Friends' 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 UK 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 on 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.

Home Communion

In a 'normal' week, throughout the year, there are three services of Holy Communion (or The Eucharist) at St Mary's (ie. two on Sundays and one on Wednesday morning) – so for most people there is ample opportunity to get to such a service.

However, for those where infirmity or illness or age prevent them from attending Church, there is the option of having a shortened Communion service at home. Over time, this enables the person concerned to retain their link with St Mary's and its congregation via a formal pattern of visits and services, and to hear the latest

news of the parish. This provision is much valued by those who receive it

During the year 2015 there were 14 people receiving Communion in their homes on the basis outlined above, (ie. approx. every fortnight), either from the Rev'd Paul or from members of the congregation currently authorised by the Rev'd Paul to provide this option viz. Judith Deckers; Liz Derrick; Doreen Etheridge; David Gater; Jan Morley; Derek Oakley; Iris Shaw; Penny Brandling-Harris.

David Gater

Lighthouse

Lighthouse Youth Group started in September 2015 as a place for 13 to 18 year olds to hang out, try new things and be the best “me” they can be. We meet on Thursday evenings from 7 to 9pm during term time at the Hy-arts Centre, Williams Field. Our main focus is to provide young people with a safe place to meet up with each other, chat with one of the volunteers about things or just have a snack a drink and some chill-out time. It's about supporting young people in the village in the way they choose to be supported, helping them to transition from dependence to independence. There are snooker, table tennis, games and art supplies.

Lighthouse is staffed with a diverse group of five volunteers from the church, who are committed to establishing relationships with young people and providing them with a wider view of the world and their place in it. Attendance varies week on week but we have a core group of young people who regularly attend. After recent discussion and observation we have decided to pilot the

reduction of the age from 13 to 11 to fall in line with a majority of youth groups in the surrounding area.

Future plans for the Group include themed nights and special one-off events such as an evening of Magic, a visit to the church bell tower and Hadlow Pottery, Archery and Circus Skills to list a few.

We are grateful to the number of people who have supported us in various way over the past 7 months and look forward to continued support in the future.

Angelique Patnett – Lighthouse Youth Group Coordinator

Mothers' Union

We enjoyed another interesting and varied programme put together for us by Sue Morgan and Annemarie Woodward. We would like to thank them again for all their hard work in their time as Branch Leader and Secretary.

Doreen Etheridge came to speak to us about UNLOCK London churches which she and other church members are involved in every year.

Christopher Miles spoke to us on April Fools' Day on being a Fool for Christ. He also told us about the work of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) and a donation was sent to them.

In May we heard about the work of a Mothers Union trustee from Jocelyn Wright.

In July members shared their favourite Songs of Praise.

In September we heard about the Work of Hospice in the Weald from an Ambassador, Mr Glen Goodall, who spoke movingly about the support he and his family received when his wife was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer.

In October Sue had us searching the Scriptures and in November Iris showed us how to do some truly lovely floral Christmas decorations.

We are grateful to our Vicar Rev'd Paul White for leading our Annual Communion Service and Christmas Carol Service. We are also grateful to Michael Pound for playing for us at both services. We enjoyed 2 social occasions together– Afternoon tea at Hadlow College in June and a Garden Party at the kind invitation of Freddie and Iris Shaw in August. We were also spoilt when Iris cooked us a lovely Christmas lunch prior to our Carol Service. Thanks again Iris.

We have supported the work of Kibakwe through Liz Derrick by knitting baby clothes and blankets. We have supported various causes again this year. Members have given floral posies to the families at their child's baptism.

We have also supported the Saturday markets and the Christmas Tree Festival.

Unfortunately we have had to say goodbye to 2 members this year, Janet Greenwood who died earlier in the year and Gill Norman who moved to Sussex. We have welcomed one new member.

I would like to thank Annemarie for the Posters for our Notice board, and to Annemarie, Sue and Audrey for their personal support to me as Secretary. I would also like to thank Mary for running our Card stall each month and to Pam for our refreshments.

Jenny Hopkins (Secretary)

Music

Our choir deserves huge thanks for its devotion and the painstaking efforts it employs in maintaining St Mary's enviable music tradition. Numbers are bordering on thirty, and it is to be hoped that further new recruits will be drawn in.

Sue Mason's superb work with the growing numbers of children (along with her team of helpers) is a very special fixture – a recent visit to participate in evensong at Rochester Cathedral formed an apt climax to the year's activities. Becca Campbell has provided an excellent role-model as Head Chorister – a mantle which has since fallen aptly on Annabelle White's shoulders.

With Rev'd Paul's welcome encouragement, the choir has produced on most Sundays an introit as well as an anthem, with a repertoire which has broadened to embrace spirituals as well as eighteenth century music. Choral Evensong in July proved a highlight. There have also been a number of special occasions when extra singers have been welcomed on board – a concert in May featuring Schubert's Little Organ Mass, the Annual Carol Service and Faure's Requiem performed liturgically on Palm Sunday.

St Mary's has also resounded to cello music – Naomi Butterworth in May followed by the radiant sound of her massed cellos later in the year. Our magnificent Alfred Monk organ has been kept in constant use, and we were delighted to welcome Matthew Morley among those who demonstrated its powers.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the way that so many people have pulled together in support of the music and, perhaps, to single out for special mention – Richard Morley (for whom no problem is insurmountable!), Linda Moore (looking after the music), Janice Massy (ever helpful with admin), Derek Oakley (those music slips), Francis Griffiths (help with the choir)

and especially Michael Pound, (who has tirelessly borne the brunt of any gaps left in playing and rehearsing the singers).

Antony le Fleming

Parish Visiting

At the moment there is a team of about ten visitors, some of whom are also involved in 'Home Communion's'. The visits are made in order to keep up connections with St Mary's when the people visited can no longer get there for the services.

It is for companionship, news of what is going on in St Mary's, and above all is just listening, to people's thoughts, stories and memories. And quite often having a cup of tea together too.

We work on a rota so that everyone has a change of faces, and a visit every two to three weeks.

It is all much enjoyed both by the team members and the people we visit.

The visiting team is Cathy Brill; Judith Deckers; Liz Derrick; Doreen Etheridge; Jenny Hopkins; Ann Jenner; Julia Miles; Iris Shaw; Mary Steadman; Carol Wickham; Angela Widdicombe.

Angela Widdicombe

Road Representatives

Following the retirement of Doreen Etheridge, it was decided to combine the role of road reps with the village newsletter deliverers, as far as possible. A few people chose to remain as road reps, but on the whole the person who delivers the

newsletter (also Christmas card, etc.) acts as road rep. There are a few areas where this is not possible, as where the newsletter deliverer does not live in the same road, but the major part of Hadlow is covered. Golden Green has a slightly different system, as some people there receive 'Hamlet' and the newsletter on line.

Many thanks to Doreen for her work with the road reps. Thanks also to Janice for her 21 years of compiling the newsletter, to Maria for taking it on and to all who regularly help with the folding, distribution and delivery of the newsletter. It provides a valuable service for the Church and for village organisations.

Anne Hughes

St Mary's Flowers

The church continues to reward the efforts of our Flower Ladies by enhancing the many and varied arrangements that we display in our lovely old building. Our ladies have very different talents that are a joy to all. The rota means that each person has a turn about once a month, so providing an arrangement for each of the following: the pedestal; the shelf by the lectern; around the candle in the Lady Chapel; on the Lady Chapel windowsill or in the niche. Unless it is a special festival there is a completely free choice of flowers and design. We would be pleased to welcome anyone happy to 'put flowers in water,' no training needed, to join our 'merry band.'

A big thank you to all our ladies.

Barbara Fermor (Flowers Co-ordinator)

St. Mary's Hospital Car Service

This service is run for the people of Hadlow and the congregation of St. Mary's to take them to hospital or medical appointments. (We normally ask for a contribution towards the driver's expenses and, to make things easy, suggest £10 for a trip to Tunbridge Wells or Maidstone hospitals and £5 for a more local journey).

In the calendar year 2015 we completed 94 journeys, representing 30 individual people conveyed. There is a pool of 11 drivers (but a couple more would be good, if anyone could help) who are engaged on an ad hoc basis and are quite at liberty to refuse any particular request if they are not available on that day. When we take people to hospital appointments it is not clear how long they will be there, so one normally has to set aside a morning or an afternoon. It may well be, however, that a driver does a 'run' only every couple of months – so it is not onerous!

Linda Moore

Car Service Drivers

John England; David Gater; Jacqui Goodes; Ann Jenner; Jim May; Linda Moore; Duncan Murray; Lesley Terry; Carole Waters; Alison Williams; Annie Young.

Servers

The serving team is comprised of 12 individuals and continue to support both the 8am and 10am Sunday services along with special services. We have a very strong and experienced team in place now with many members who have been serving for more than 1 decade and some more than 2. We are mindful of the fact

that many members continue to have other responsibilities on a Sunday and with that in mind we are looking for 2 new people to join the team in 2016. We are in need of one crucifer (carrying the cross) and one acolyte (carrying the candle). Joining a team with so many experienced members means that anyone new will be fully supported and should have no issues getting used to the role. We aim to each serve one service a month and it only requires takes 20 minutes before and after the service to set up and clean up. Anyone interested can speak to John Speed or Rev'd Paul for more information.

Our current team members are:

Annemarie Woodward (10am Acolyte); Maurice Bush (10am Acolyte); Judith Deckers (10am Acolyte); Michael Payne (8am Acolyte, 10am Crucifer); Iris Shaw (8am Acolyte, 10am Crucifer); Celia Sheridan (8am Acolyte); Mags Skelton (10am Acolyte); John Speed (10am Crucifer, Rota); Iam Thom (8am & 10am Acolyte); Mark Totty (10am Acolyte); Carol Wickham (8am Acolyte); Annie Young (10am Acolyte)

John Speed

Sidespersons

We currently have 29 people who have agreed to do Sidespersons duties, on a rota basis, through each month. Some people are regular 8 'o' clock attendees and so cover that service, whilst others come to the main 10 'o' clock service. Anne and Bill Hughes cover any evening and occasional services such as weddings and funerals.

The 29 hardy souls are:—Mary Steadman; Annemarie Woodward; Gillian Speed; Kelly Parsons; Claire Walter; Bet Brett; Richard

Sheridan; Sylvia & Maurice Bush; Annie Young; Kirsty Finch; Carol Bramham; Penny Brandling–Harris; Mary & Mark Peterson; Mags Skelton; Albert Longford; Richard Pierce; John Pierce; Janice & Paul Bowden; Sue Morgan; Jenny Nye; Pamela O’Sullivan; Carole Waters; Heather Wills; David Nibloe and Anne & Bill Hughes. The Churchwardens would like to thank them all for their commitment for without their efforts, the services would not run so smoothly.

A basic outline of Sidespersons’ duties are as follows:–
Elect between themselves someone to welcome worshippers at the main West door. Keep the reception area tidy and welcoming to worshippers.

To hand out Service books, including the Pew sheet for the week, at the beginning of worship and collect them at the end of the Service. Each time check the hymn books to ensure there are no extra sheets left inside. Put the hymn books back in the cupboard and the service sheets back in their respective box folders.

Identify new members of the congregation, ascertain their names and if they appear unsure or rather embarrassed, try and ease their concern and offer to show them to seats. Before the Service, someone to ensure the clergy have clean glasses of water by their seats in the chancel.

Take the collection and a pre–designated member to take this on the plate to the altar. To nominate two people to stand by the Chancel step to assist people going to and from the Altar at Communion.

Nominate someone to count the communicants among the congregation, remembering to include the choir, Servers and any

eligible children (using the 'clicker') and give the figure to the duty Churchwarden.

At the end of the service hand out copies of Rochester Link newspaper when the new edition arrives.

We would ask that these people be nominated to continue with these duties.

If anyone is interested in joining the rota, do please speak to one of the Churchwardens.

Barbara Smith

Tonbridge Area Churches Together (TACT)

We are delighted to report that, after a long absence, St Mary's has recently rejoined the Tonbridge Area Churches Together group. The churches in Tonbridge have welcomed us with open arms and we look forward to taking an active part in future events. Earlier this year TACT held a very successful youth service entitled 'Catch the Wave' and our young people are looking forward to taking part in the second 'Wave' later this year.

Annemarie Woodward (TACT Representative)

Wednesday Study Group

During much of 2015 we studied the book of Revelation using a booklet published by Scripture Union. This enabled quite a number of members of the Group to lead studies. With this visionary book to encourage the Church in a time of severe persecution, we endeavoured to focus on the broad themes running through the book rather than worry about the significance of the mark of the beast being 666! We have 16

active members with usually 10 – 12 attending the fortnightly meetings on Wednesday evenings, mostly at 2 Spa Close. We are grateful to the Roman Catholic Church for allowing us to park at St Peter's Church.

Some comments from members. Pam O'Sullivan struggled with the book but it encouraged her to follow up our studies with a book about 'Revelation'. Audrey Ferguson values the fellowship of the Group. Penny Brandling-Harris values the element of trust that enables members to share personal issues with the knowledge that they will be retained in the Group.

In early January this year we had a meeting at which we were able to ask Liz Derrick and Jim May about the Church's link parish of Kibakwe. One member said that this was particularly valuable and that she much enjoyed our supper party in late January, when donations totalling £303 (+gift aid on many) were made for the Kibakwe link.

We usually finish our meetings with a time of prayer.

We don't meet in Lent – one has to give up something! After Easter we will have a series of 11 studies in the Ten Commandments. Further information from Christopher Miles.

Revd Christopher Miles

Who Let the Dads Out?

On 12th September, we opened up the church on Saturday morning for the first session of 'Who Let the Dads Out?' Since then, we have welcomed Dads and their children once a month from 10.00 until 11.30. We offer them the opportunity to enjoy time and play together, mix with other families and make friends, have fun and engage with the church. There are plenty

of toys, craft activities and a music session in a safe space. As a further bonus, there are bacon rolls, tea and coffee!

This is open to all Dads, father figures and their children within our community regardless of whether or not they are churchgoers. We are part of a national, growing network of similar groups throughout the country.

On that first Saturday, there were more volunteers than Dads. However, the word has spread, and by February more than a dozen families have been coming regularly. The atmosphere is informal and relaxed, with plenty of laughter. We hope that this new venture will continue to flourish in the coming year.

Cathy Brill

Voluntary helpers include Cathy Brill, Pippa and Jim May, Jan Morley, Val Newell, Suzy Nibloe, Barbara Smith, Annie Young