

# Great Missenden Parish Church

## Annual Meeting



Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Oldham Hall 8pm



St Peter & St Paul  
Great Missenden with Ballinger and Little Hampden

<b>Reports from</b>	<b>Page</b>
Vicar	3
Associate Priest	5
Bellringers	7
Cream Teas	8
Deanery Synod	8
Fabric	10
Friends of Great Missenden Church	11
Great Missenden School	13
Healing and Wholeness	15
Little Hampden	17
MAP	18
Mission	19
Music	20
Oldham Hall	22
Parish Office	22
Pastoral Care	23
PCC Secretary	26
REACH / IGNITE	24 / 15
St Mary's, Ballinger	28
Servers	27
Wardens	30

## Vicar's report

The Church has not been immune to the upheavals we have all been through this year. Things we thought were certain and safe have proved to be unsafe and uncertain. In America and in the UK we have to face that fact that there is a profound disillusionment with how society has been organized and governed and an undercurrent of alienation and indeed anger has found its voice in Trump and in Brexit. The way we all relate to institutions is unrecognizable from even ten years ago. Membership of political parties, Trade Unions, and, gulp, even the National Trust are falling. People pick and choose their places of belonging and identity.

Somewhere in the middle of this sense of shifting sands there is the Church of England. We are trying to hold on to an extraordinary and rich heritage and at the same time keep up with the rapid changes in society and remain relevant and engaged. Truth be told we are not very good at this. We fight yesterday's battles whilst the rest of the country looks on bemused.

My sense of hope lies in the local church. Here I find a love and generosity of heart that is very beautiful. I see an involvement in the local community and personal compassion and sheer kindness that embodies what the Christian message is about. I'll let you into a secret. Christianity isn't actually about all that theology at all. That's just the window dressing. Christianity is about how we relate to each other and specially in our time of need.

So reviewing the last year, which is the point of this report, the headline is that people are quite extraordinary. This means those at the very core of the church and also those at the fringes. I wouldn't know how to begin to name all those whose lives touch the lives of their neighbours and share their faith in action.

If there is to be a tomorrow for the church then that is in the hands of our young people. Again the news is good. There are three groups which thrive. The older teenagers, led by Katie and Carolyn have done a lot of deep thinking and explored various traditions and styles of Christianity. They are a vibrant group who help us all explore the edges of our comfort

zones. Philippa runs the mid-teens group and again their Christian thinking and social action bring richness to the whole church. It is hard not to be moved by the lovely and creative group that Chloe and her helpers runs with the youngest children. We have launched project Yurt which is looking to put up a Yurt in the Church grounds as a funky and welcoming space for young people to enjoy along with the school.

Our Church School has now become an Academy and has very deeply rooted values which inform all they do. There is a high level of mutuality, and as an Ex-officio Governor I spend a considerable amount of time in the school. Apart from weekly assemblies and regular Governors' meetings, I am on various committees, help with recruitment, do the Head Teacher's performance review, and sit as a Member on the Academy Trust. At a Diocesan level I'm also a Trustee of the Diocesan Multi Academy Trust for Bucks.

One of the shifts that we have seen is that 'specials' have great success, and we have had plenty of them. One of the stand out events of the whole year was the 'Son et Lumiere'. This was done to celebrate the restoration of the organ. The church was beautifully lit, and then the history of the church, the community, and the organ was explored through words and music. I have to mention the outstanding work of Wendy and Sue at this point. Thank you so much if you contributed to help finance this major piece of work, and special thanks to the Friends of the church without whose very generous support we would not have been able to do this important restoration.

Then there was the Christmas Tree Festival, the Bob Chilcott Day, the Pancake Party, and more recently the Science Festival. The church was full for all the major Festivals and special events such as Remembrance Sunday, and the Roald Dahl centenary. There have been lots of baptisms, weddings and funerals each of which is carefully shaped to make them personal and meaningful.

As part of my work for the larger community and church I am chair of the High Sheriff Nomination Committee, work as part of the Bishop of Buckingham's team as his chaplain, and speak on philosophy and religion and preach at various events, such as the Hay-on-Wye Festival and the South Bank Festival as well as various Oxford and Cambridge college

services. I also serve on General Synod and articulate a Christian case for equal marriage and also Assisted Dying in the media.

So, times they are a-changing. Rev'd Carolyn Bailey is moving to her own parish and we will miss her hugely - but of course are delighted for her new opportunity. Tricia Neale, whilst in no way disappearing, is reducing her involvement and I have to admit that both of these changes feel massive. However, at the end of June we will welcome Elizabeth Lowson as our new curate and there will be new blessings ahead.

Modern life limits all of us in terms of commitment. A Parish like this with three churches cannot run on an heroic leader model. The future of this Parish and indeed the future of the Church of England lies not in the hands of the 1% who are clergy, but in the ministry of the 99% who are lay and have extraordinary gifts to offer. I am looking to encourage you all to contribute your own special gift that will help us build a confident and life-giving future in this place.

**Rosie**

### **Associate Priest's Report**

This year has been an interesting one, but I think I probably say that every year. Last summer I accompanied the Reach group to Yellow Braces, a youth weekend where there were games, activities, food... possibly not enough, and worship. Although it was a mixed experience, what I really enjoyed was having time with the group away from the church and doing something entirely different.

I have also enjoyed the creativity that my role allows me, from the Coffee and craft evenings, to the fun of preparing for the Christmas tree festival. Alongside those are the sessions that Tricia, Lucy and I hold fortnightly with the early years and reception classes at the Great Missenden School. These are great fun, not necessarily because of the sessions we have prepared but for the way with a couple of questions from the children, the session goes off on totally unexpected tangents!

Rosie and I start our Mondays with an assembly with the main school and that has been a great opportunity to bring the world of our church into the school, so they know when we are excited about something, when there are celebrations, but also when events have made us aware of the sadness in the world. This has also meant that when we plan an event with them in mind we can tell them what we are planning and make the invitation more personal which is why the Halloween and Pancake parties have gone so well.

Towards the end of the summer Mark Dearnley left St Mary's in Wendover for St Albans, and that opened up another experience entirely. Since September I have been helping Wendover out with weddings, funerals and some Sunday services. It has been a lovely and an eye opener, because the St Mary's in Wendover has changed hugely since I left there to come to Great Missenden. It has meant that I have become accustomed to managing different procedure and practices, keeping a few more balls in the air and having to think ahead, not least so I, the correct service and the correct robes turn up where I am supposed to be at the right time!

I think we sometimes miss the changes that occur when we are on top of them all the time, over the last six years I have seen people come and go, I have seen young people progress through groups we have created to keep up with them. I think that we also take things that go well for granted and forget that it is the people behind them that make things go so smoothly; I have been very aware of how secure I feel here in all that I do and that is because of the support of so many people.

Now there will be more change, and the change for me has only been possible because of the experience, encouragement and honest, constructive advice given to me over the years.

I cannot believe I am the same person who used to have a sleepless Saturday night because of the nerves about Sunday morning! The minister I have become is largely due to working alongside Rosie and Tricia, and of course all of you. It will be hard to leave, but I know I have made a huge number of friends.

Now you will have Elizabeth arriving in the summer and you will have someone else to encourage, support and perhaps help shape a little.

Thank you for everything.

**Carolyn**

## **Bell ringers**

Firstly a big thank you to Lucy for all of her work over the last few years as Tower Captain. Without her enthusiasm and recruitment activity I suspect the tower may well have fallen silent as so many Churches unfortunately have through lack of ringers. I have now returned to a role I held for many years from the mid '70's to mid '90's and will be endeavouring to follow Lucy's lead by trying to increase the number of ringers and hopefully managing to attract a new (younger) generation to take up an ancient skill.

We have generally managed to ring for all Sunday morning services, weddings and special services but have often had to rely on help from other towers to do so and regularly fail to manage ringing of all 8 bells for services. We did manage to host a successful special service and AGM of the Chiltern Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers in March and have been asked if we can follow this by hosting the Guild wide AGM in May 2019 to which hopefully ringers will come from across the entire Diocese.

It is now 27 years since the bells were rehung and augmented and whilst this is a very short period when one considers that our oldest bell dates from 1603 we will be undertaking some cleaning, painting and general maintenance during the year in the hope that this will help preserve the frame and fittings and enable them all to be rung for another 400 years.

If you have ever wondered about taking up this ancient art then please don't feel shy and approach one of us on a Sunday or at a Monday evening practice to discuss what is involved. We do have trained tutors within the band who will be only too happy to help you with "Learning the Ropes" a phrase which will lead you to an excellent website about what is involved.

**Chris Potter**

## **Cream Teas**

We had another good season with approximately £ 9000 raised, . Some wonderful cakes were baked and eaten. We had five teams of helpers who all worked very hard. We are lucky to have several helpers from outside the church who are enthusiastic supporters. Our thanks go to all who give their time to baking and coming to help on Sunday afternoons.

Jeanette Green kept the kitchen fully stocked with tea and coffee etc and Martyn Green looked after the finances

Lynsey Darby organised a marvellous selection of musical performers in 2016 which was a great attraction. They tell us that they enjoy coming to play for us. Lynsey is giving up organising the music for 2017 but fortunately Mary Sayward has volunteered to take this on.

Although serving tea and cakes is a very happy occupation, with many interesting conversations taking place over the teapot, we were severely short of helpers. It can be very hard work and, let's face it, none of us is getting any younger; we can only continue in 2017 if we have extra help. There is a very committed team of leaders who are willing to continue with this very significant fund raiser for the church and we look to the parish to support this activity by volunteering to help. We look forward to the 2017 season in the hope that we have sufficient help.

## **Wendover Deanery Synod 2016**

2016 has been a year of change, as Bishop Stephen has come to Oxford and as we've said farewell to Mark Dearnley and welcomed Deiniol Heywood as Area Dean. It's also been the final year with Allan Whittow as Treasurer, and as we move forward into 2017 we'll be exploring new ways of looking at finance.

We've had four Synod meetings during the year, and once again our overall parish share was paid in time in order to secure the rebates from the diocese. The effort and commitment throughout the church

- both clergy and lay - to collect and pay parish share is very much appreciated, and many thanks are due again to Allan Whittow and to our Parish Treasurers.

Paying parish share has been actively discussed during the year as a number of parishes continue to experience difficulties with their share contribution. Our clergy have raised the need to think creatively, and in these circumstances we are particularly grateful to those who work so hard to raise finance for the church.

### **Deanery Synod Gatherings**

1. Wednesday 24 February, St Mary's Wendover: a discussion on how we and our churches relate to our local schools and communities.
2. Tuesday 11 May, St Leonard's Church Room: an insight into how the Church works across the dioceses, supported also by its national church institutions.
3. Tuesday 20 September, Holy Trinity Church, Prestwood: an address by and discussion with + Alan, Bishop of Buckingham who presented a challenging status report for the Church of England.
4. Thursday 17 November, St. John the Baptist, Little Missenden: a discussion of deanery finances, and setting the budget for 2017.

We then welcomed Bishop Gladwin to our first meeting of 2017 on 9<sup>th</sup> February at St. Michael and All Angels , Halton, to discuss the Bishops' report on same sex relationships prepared for the following week's General Synod.

Please remember that our 'Chiltern Churches Open Meetings' are indeed open to all: it's a great way to keep in touch with others across our local churches, and to find out more about some of the key issues which concern us all. At our recent 'Area Deans and Lay Chairs' gathering in Gerrards Cross, Bishop Stephen set out his

findings and priorities thus far, and we look forward to welcome him to the Deanery on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April.

Thanks to all those who have taken part in these evenings throughout the year. Following our February meeting, our remaining meetings in 2017 are on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 17<sup>th</sup> September and 21<sup>st</sup> November.

With best wishes from the Deanery Standing Committee: that is, Deiniol Heywood, Gareth Beynon, Allan Whittow (now resigned), Elizabeth Moxley, Rosie Harper, James Adam and myself.

Gavin Oldham  
Lay Chair

### **Fabric Report 2017**

The year's main project has been the organ, which was out of action between Easter and September, but is now restored to its former glory in time to celebrate its centenary. We are very grateful to Wendy and Graeme for their dedication and attention to detail in handling the entire renovation project, and to the Village Workshop. The Church's fundraising was combined with generous giving from the Friends of Great Missenden Parish Church, without whom we could not have done this essential work. The final payments are being finalised, and VAT reclaimed, which will see a small fund established for tuning and other running costs.

The Friends have also funded the gutter cleaning, which has recently taken place, and they are keen to explore the other jobs that need doing. There is quite a list of these and we are looking to prioritise them and tackle them one by one. As we write, Sally Clark has been helping to push forward on CCTV cameras on the car park, and lighting in the chancel. Using floodlights at the Son et Lumiere and over Christmas has emphasised how much of our beautiful architecture remains hidden in the gloom, and the choir in particular is keen to have a little more light.

We would still like to have a few people on board to form a new fabric team since we do still need to look at areas of plaster and loose floor tiles.

Plans for a new building for the use of the children's work were put aside until 2018, and they will be reviewed a year from now, but a temporary measure has been proposed in the form of a yurt. Recognising that many of us are already overstretched in caring for the buildings that we do have, we have asked the school and the parents of our children whether a small group could be gathered to install and run it, and we hope that this exciting space might be up and running for the Spring and Summer.

As always, huge thanks to those who do so many unseen jobs to maintain the Church, its fabric, and the grounds. Your contribution is highly valued.

**Val and Mike**

**Friends of Great Missenden Parish Church  
Registered Charity No: 1067435**

It is very good that last year this small charity was able to make grants totalling £46,570 (just over three quarters of the cost) towards the £61,663 church's Organ Restoration. Two grants of £300 each were also made for the usual cleaning and maintenance of the church gutters and downpipes. We know our grants are much appreciated.

We held four fundraising events: a fascinating talk on "Tudor Easter Customs" in March with Martin Sirot-Smith; three illustrated and informative talks on charities working in India in July by Rosie Harper, Andrew Edwards and Jill Robertson; our third Talents & Hobbies Exhibition in October; and "The Home Front in Buckinghamshire 1914-1918" film in November, with Presiley Fitzgerald and Jill Robertson giving talks on Great Missenden in

World War1. The year ended with our usual participation in the Christmas Tree Festival and Market: our tree's theme was "A Right Royal Christmas". At several events we held a raffle and sold gifts, preserves and scones and our newly-commissioned tea towels of St Peter & St Paul Church. Thanks to Jamie Gairdner and Yvonne Pinion for providing songs and piano music and David Harris, Graeme Petrie-Brown and Ken Harratt for sorting out the projector and sound system.

Afternoon events with delicious teas seem to be very popular and these are real community gatherings which raise funds to keep our historic church in good repair. A big "thank you" to our speakers and also to Jen King, Carola Clark and their team for help with serving teas and helping us to clear up afterwards.

The sales of preserves and home produce raised £3,119 in 2016 including £1,199 at Cream Teas, £920 at our various events and £515 at Farmers' Markets at our Church School. Other sales were made at the Oldham Hall school coffee mornings, after church services, at Samways, the Macmillan Coffee Morning and privately. We are grateful to have been able to attend these events and also thank those who gave us raffle prizes and publicity. The supply of fruit and jam jars has been magnificent!

Looking ahead, repairs are now needed to flooring, including the floor tiles, as well as to the plaster in the Tower ringing chamber which has been cracked and loosened by the vibration of the eight heavy bells above. We expect requests for grants this year.

We need to increase our membership to boost our income as people have moved away or sadly died. Please invite your friends and neighbours to join. The Church is for the whole community, not just the congregation. There is a Joining Form on a link from the Friends' page on the Church website and there are also forms in the church.

Especial thanks are due, of course, to the wonderful Friends' Committee. The eight members contribute so many ideas with great enthusiasm and energy. Such a grand team - THANK YOU ALL!!

### Committee Members

Hon Chairman: Vivienne Davis; Hon Secretary: Jennifer Moss;  
Hon Treasurer: Nicola Savage; Hon Treasurer designate (April 2017): Nevil Coulson

Canon Rosie Harper; Rev Carolyn Bailey; Ann Biscoe-Taylor; Di Denney; Norma Gardner; Jill Robertson

## **Great Missenden CE Combined School**

Princes Risborough becomes our new partner in the Great Missenden Trust

Great Missenden CE Combined School has become the academy sponsor for Princes Risborough Primary School. This has led to a restructure of the Senior Leadership Team at Great Missenden. Caroline Taylor took up post as Head Teacher in January and Roz Thomson became Executive Head Teacher of the Great Missenden Trust.

The aim of the MAT is to strengthen learning and teaching for all the children in the Trust. We have so much to learn from each other and staff from both schools have been meeting up to share best practice. The children have all swapped decorated eggs as an act of friendship.

### **New Website unveiled**

We have a brand new website which is packed full of information about what is going on in school so take a look!

### **Science Quiz Team are National Champions**

The school quiz teams have enjoyed phenomenal success this term. The teams have travelled to Chiddingfold and The Natural History Museum. Mr Sperring was incredibly proud when the team travelled to Oxford for the national final and won. The children demonstrated excellent teamwork and incredible subject knowledge – growth mindset in action!

## **Royal Shakespeare Company**

Staff have attended the Associate Schools Open Day with the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in Stratford, following on from attending Teaching the Tempest at KS1 and KS2 course at the RSC earlier this year. The aim is to further explore and develop the use of Shakespearean texts within school. Year 6 and Year 4 have already completed studies on Henry V and The Tempest. The aim of the Associate Schools programme is to link schools together as RSC approved centres for teaching Shakespeare. We are exploring the potential for Great Missenden to lead the Associate Schools programme in our local area.

## **Playground Zones**

In order to ensure that all the children have a happy, safe and fun lunch break we have created 4 new zones on the KS2 playground. Each of these zones has a dedicated member of staff who monitors and facilitates play within each area. Specific activities are run in some zones such as diablo, skipping and badminton. For those children that prefer quieter activities during their breaks, we have organised art and craft activities including kite making as well as card games and puzzles.

Since February half term collective worship has been centred around respect and courage and how these two values are linked. Children have been encouraged to respect one another and have the courage to speak out if they do not receive the respect they deserve. Assemblies have included the golden rule of Christianity, “*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*” Matthew 7:12 Assemblies have been linked to the playground development and new zoning system at every opportunity to reinforce co-operative play and anti-bullying messages.

## **Church Links**

Close links with St Peter and St Paul Church continue to be strengthened with weekly visits by Rosie & Carolyn to lead assemblies. Pupils have also attended a Science & Engineering Festival at the church to explore how science & engineering impact on our faith. The children will look at engineering behind the church organ and architecture.

Shrove Tuesday fun was had by all when pupils took part in the Pyjamas and Pancake Party at the church.

## **HEALING AND WHOLENESS**

The Healing “team” meet on a monthly basis. It is a vital hour to spend in prayer and preparation for the coming Sundays and on any other occasion when we are requested to be with people for whatever reason.

It is a time to bring to mind the requests we receive for prayer both within the Church Services or in private prayer too. On many occasions friends or families give us a call to mention a situation that they feel could help them to be surrounded by prayer and therefore giving support at a difficult time.

Our “team” are available to anyone who would ask for prayer at anytime. We are willing to be on the end of a phone or to meet up with you.

**Rosie and Tricia**

## **IGNITE**

**IGNITE – In God New Ideas To Explore** – is the group for young people in school years 5 to 9 (ages 9 to 13). It meets during the Sunday service on the second and third Sundays of the month, as well as for occasional social activities.

We concluded our Creation theme in the spring, with a visit to Tiggywinkle’s, the wildlife rescue charity in Haddenham. We’d raised over £400 by our fundraising “Tapas for Tiggywinkles” lunch in March, and the young people were able to present a cheque to the Tiggywinkles managers. The centre gave us a special tour and we saw a lot of their furry, as well as prickly, inmates; a good time was had by all. Part of the money raised goes to Tiggywinkle’s general funds, and we are also sponsoring a hedgehog named Keano!

In the summer term we started a new theme, “Children of God”, with a view to raising money for “Save the Children”, again a cause chosen by the young people. Since then, we have been thinking about what the Bible says about children, what it means to be a child of God, as

well as reading stories about children in the Bible. We have learned about the work of Save the Children across the world, about children's rights, and about what it would be like to be a child refugee.

**IGNITE** members organised a very successful "Christmas Jumper Day" for Save the Children, which raised over £100, and took part in the ever-popular Crib Service. They enjoyed a film and pizza evening in December, and an "early Pancake Day" just before the start of Lent.

Future plans include a "bake off" in aid of Save the Children, where we will be seeking support and participation from members of the wider community. We also have a Lent "photo a day" project on the go.

I continue to be principally responsible for the group, but now with a good deal of (very welcome) assistance from Katie Shuster, as well as support from parents and other volunteers including Sue O'Farrell, David Harris and Chris Nickless. We regularly see ten or more young people at the Sunday sessions. We continue to have a significantly higher number of girls than boys.

We have three immediate challenges. The first is, as ever, a lack of volunteer help. We are aiming to get volunteer assistance in place on a less ad hoc basis than has been the case up to now. The second relates to the age range of the group. The "top end" – three or four young people now in school year 9 – should, strictly speaking, have moved on to REACH this year. For various reasons that has not been thought to be desirable. But the range of ages in the group – just 9 to going on 14 – is wider than I regard as ideal and makes planning activities difficult. I think that, next school year, some sort of re-think of the young people's group structure is going to be needed. The third concerns a meeting space for the group. At present, we meet either in the Vestry (cramped and noisy) or down the hill in the Oldham Hall (not ideal in terms of distance and timing in getting to/from the service). The new building project has not, of course, come to fruition.

he proposed “yurt” type structure, just outside the church, would make a big difference, both to IGNITE and to the children’s work in the church generally.

Lastly, I want to express heartfelt thanks to Carolyn, who has been a tremendous supporter of the young people’s work during her time with us. She will be very much missed.

## **Philippa Howells**

### Little Hampden

The pattern of Holy Communion on the second Sunday of the month and Matins on the fourth continues with coffee, fruitcake and biscuits half an hour before the services. This arrangement helps the clergy who are sometimes detained at Great Missenden after the service there.

NADFAS survey is now finished and we are waiting for a convenient time for them to present the final report to us.

Visitors still come to admire the wall paintings.

The bell and hanging frame, having been deemed unsafe for many years, have now finally been taken away on 27th February 2017 by Whites of Appleton in Abingdon to be repaired. Sadly Whitechapel, who installed the bell original in 1789, are closing down.

Evensong in the summer continues to be very popular and it is always a great pleasure to welcome friends and acquaintances from other parishes – especially Gt Missenden. The choir do a great service.

Our Harvest service was well attended followed by the traditional sale that raised about £250 towards the bell repair. Again, we also had a very large congregation for our carol service, standing room

only, with 55 adults and 15 children some of whom read the scriptures and poems.

We are always grateful to Rosie, Carolyn and Tricia who rush from Great Missenden to our services and to Wendy, Graeme and Tim who take it in turns to play the organ.

We would also like to thank David and Brenda Harris for their unceasing and tireless work in keeping the church at Little Hampden so healthy and alive for so many years. They will be a hard act to follow and as a parish we are extremely grateful. We wish them well in their move to Gt Missenden and hope that we shall see them soon in Lt Hampden, hopefully at the summer evensong.

**Christopher Figg**

## **MAP (Making and Praising)**

MAP continues to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month. We join in with the start of the service and after the first hymn MAP has a session at the back of church in the Bell Tower. Oldham Hall is not being used due to the preponderance of very young children wanting to join in, who naturally don't want to be too far away from Mums and Dads. The parents are proving willing volunteers to step in from time to time to assist and lead on occasion which thankfully is happening more often. They also assist with games outside to provide the right ratio of adults to children.

As far as outings are concerned, the children will hopefully be invited by Wendy Gray to visit Road Farm again in Great Missenden later this Spring. We are also planning a family day out in Wendover Woods later in the Spring/Summer.

Finding a sustainable balance between weekly work commitments, family life and church is as challenging as ever. MAP only has one volunteer now and therefore a wider volunteer base is essential to ensure the group continues to move forward successfully. Parents of regular children who attend have stood in to run sessions and hopefully this will lead to a wider volunteer base this year.

**Chloe Lewis**

## **MISSION**

As a result of the generosity you have shown throughout the Christmas season we were delighted to be able to send all your contributions to people who are so badly in need of support. Hence your monies went to The Hope School in Bethlehem where the young people are cared for and given new horizons of love, teaching and stability.

Secondly a generous contribution went to Embrace Middle East (based in Amersham) with the request that through their work we could enable our contribution to help with the Syrian refugees. Perchance their Director was about to go out to Lebanon and was taking our gift with him so we are assured the donation will be in the right hands.

Finally we gave a donation to the Homeless in High Wycombe which was much needed to enable the amazing work so many volunteers give to those people so desperately in need especially at this time of the year. Again we have a direct contact so we are assured your generosity will find its way into good hands for distribution.

Our grateful thanks to everyone one for their kindness which enables these charities in their work.

**Tricia**

## Music Report 2016 - Phew! What a year!

The **centenary** of our much loved Binns organ (b.October 1916), which fortuitously though somewhat hair-raisingly, coincided with its **conversion to electro-pneumatic** action. We were already hiring a digital organ during Holy Week, as the main organ had become very unreliable.

Work began immediately after Easter, when the organ was dismantled and taken offsite by the Village Workshop Organ Builders to their premises in Finchingfield. Several of us paid a visit at the end of June when we saw our keyboards being fitted out with electrical contacts; the pedal board being re-felted and repaired and all the leather motors and valves being checked. Pipes were cleaned, stops re-engraved, bellows chambers repaired and a new swell wind trunk made.

As a nod to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a state of the art piston and sequencer system has been fitted (only manufactured in the U.S. with a lead time of 3 months) – hence the delay waiting for parts when the rest of the organ was ‘ready to go’! This enables the organist to pre-set registration (choice of stops) and then toggle through these with a spare foot, or thumb (it doesn’t turn pages, however!) Total cost: £47,750 plus VAT

At the church, Missenden Electrical re-wired some of the organ, including the ON/OFF switch (the original red and green buttons at the console are still in use) and installed a 3 Phase relay, plus fuse to control the blower unit. Cost: £800 +VAT

This was a big project and certainly would not have been possible without all your support - I am very grateful to our church family and the community who sponsored pipes and especially to the Friends who held many Fund raising events throughout the year. The organ was **re-dedicated** by Archdeacon of Buckingham Canon Guy Elsmore on 25<sup>th</sup> September at the Harvest service.

Is there a difference to the sound? You should notice that the organ is significantly louder at its fullest, as the wind pressure is now not leaking . The basic characteristics of the organ remain unaltered. From the player’s point of view the pedals are lighter, all the notes on all the stops now work

and the organ is a delight to play – though it can take up to a year to settle back in (see below..)

## **Centenary Celebrations**

We were delighted to welcome Dr Philip Moore, (ex Master of Music York Minster and composer) for the **Inaugural recital** on 17<sup>th</sup> September. Philip gave a hugely enjoyable programme of Bach, Franck, Howells, and Jackson plus an interview with Val Withams about the challenges of being a Cathedral organist and playing on newly-refurbished instruments. Typified that evening by a loud cipher and a glis-glis running amok (disturbed from the long dormant organ chamber)

**Son et Lumiere** November 19<sup>th</sup> – a huge thank you to Sue O’Farrell, my fellow researcher, co-writer and general organizer for the project from its inception. To Graeme Petrie-Brown for painstakingly assembling over a hundred photos and vision and sound-mixing on the night. To Michael Bacon, organist at King Charles, Tunbridge Wells; Great Missenden School; our narrators Bishop Alan, Mary Saywood and Brenda Harris and to DJC Theatre Services and Nick Wallin for the excellent lighting.

**A Bob Chilcott Come and Sing** marked the beginning of Advent – thank you to Val Withams who arranged this popular singing workshop with Bob. Fans travel from far afield (the Netherlands!) to take part and we aim to make this a regular bi-annual event.

The year ended with an **Organ Concerto** given by Rhidian Jones with the Great Missenden Choral Society who showcased the organ in Baroque mode at their Christmas concert with a charming performance of Handel’s Organ concerto in F op4, no4

Lastly but by no means least, thank you to the members of the church choir who sing at all our regular services, week on week, at funerals and weddings, as well as the ‘specials’ and who do so much to lift the worship.

Wendy

## **OLDHAM HALL REPORT**

The Hall is a busy place, with many regular bookings and remains a popular venue for parties. We have been able to pay back a further £3,000 of the loan from the Watson Cottages fund, which now leaves £12,000 outstanding. There have been the usual on-going expenditures, but nothing of major importance. We are still looking for helpers in the morning to serve tea and coffee to parents, and at least two regular people have given up since the last report. It may be that we have to reduce the number of times in the week we offer this facility.

Many thanks to all those who lend a hand at various times during the year, and a particular thanks to Laurence for his continued support.

**Sally Clark**  
**Hon Chair Oldham Hall**

### **Parish Office Report**

Tricky, trying to write one's report for the Parish Office, sitting opposite a tableful of Easter eggs during Lent but its that time of year again and donations are coming in nicely for the Old Tea Warehouse. Many thanks to the team who have been delivering our food and toiletry boxes to Wycombe on a monthly basis and of course, to all of you for getting your donations to the office in the first place.

If anyone would like to join the rota, please contact the Parish Office (01494 862352) - new donors are always welcome - and in practice the rota is such that you would only be committing to one box per year.

Talking of Rotas – we are in the process of designing a new church website (spear- headed by Katie Shuster) and should soon have a fresh, easier to use, modern interface between us and the outside world! (not that we're not fresh and modern ourselves, obviously)The idea is that all the rotas (of which we have at least 8) will eventually be accessible from the website and folk will be able to log on at home to see what they're

doing, make any changes etc. The rotas play a vital part in helping everything run smoothly and I am very grateful for this voluntary help, as I am for Edna Little who staffs the office on Fridays and to David Harris for compiling the weekly newsheet.

Meanwhile the Finance Team has set up shop in the study next to the office and we know its serious stuff when smoke emerges from behind the closed door...

Some 2016 stats: 7 Weddings, 22 Baptisms (a record, surely) and 44 Funerals.

The church itself is growing as a venue for new and returning bookings: Anne Guiver and Chris Nickless' guided talks have proved so popular, London schools are requesting them year on year. Likewise the Little Missenden Festival Schools Education project is now an annual event at our church, along with the Scouts Southern 50 Challenge – all testament to the warm welcome folk receive from the church family.

Here's to a positive and blessed year!

**Wendy**

## **Pastoral Letter**

The group known as 'Keeping in Touch' (KIT) have been doing sterling work in their efforts to listen, visit and generally be around the Parish and beyond where there are requests for visits or simply a friendly voice at the end of the phone.

We have become increasingly aware that nowadays we are required to carry out certain procedures and to be alert to different and sometimes difficult situations. Therefore there have been new guidelines brought in via the Diocese known as 'Safeguarding' both for the visitor and the visited. David Harris and his team have been instructing and offering advice and assistance if needed to the PCC and beyond. We are grateful to him, and he is available for us to contact him if there are any queries.

On a very happy note, there has been quite an increase in our numbers for the Coffee 'n Share both in the Oldham Hall and at Abbeyfield House. It is just one hour a week, but there are good conversations and as a result other plans take place for visits and a share of seeing new places in and around our countryside.

Our thanks go to the team who help create these mornings with cheerfulness and dedication. Abbeyfield are very generous having us in their warm surroundings whenever the hall is not available. We are grateful to the staff for their welcome and assistance.

Once a month the Clergy team take Communion to the residents of Abbeyfield and at other times, when requested, to people who may be unable to leave their homes.

Pastoral Care is in all our interests and never stops with one event! It continues through the early morning gathering with young people on their way to school in the Oldham Hall, Visits to Woodlands Lunch Club every Thursday in the Baptist Hall organised through Age Concern and much enjoyed and appreciated by those who live largely on their own.

We are indebted to so many people who give of their time and energy in so many ways throughout the community that brings relief from loneliness and a bright moment always remembered by those who find themselves in situations not of their own choosing.

**Rosie, Carolyn, Slava, Tricia.**

### **Annual report for “REACH”**

REACH – “Religious Education and Christian Help” – for children in school years 9 and over (they are aged 15/16) continued to meet on the second and third Sunday of the month in the afternoons following a successful move from Sunday mornings in the 2015.

During the Spring and Summer Term, Carolyn Bailey led the group and they started to look at the life of Jesus.

During the Autumn term, it was decided to move the REACH sessions to take place in the Vicarage as this was a much nicer space for the young people to meet in and I was able to accommodate this. The focus of the term was considering the different ways Christians worship. REACH attended a 'high Church' service at All Saints High Wycombe welcoming the new Archdeacon. They then attended an evangelical service at Soul Survivor Watford. The following sessions were used to review the services and unpick how they themselves like to Worship. REACH were planning on creating a service based on the different aspects from each service that they liked, however this was postponed as it was too close to Christmas. REACH decided not to be involved with the Crib Service but a number of the group did turn up to support the younger ones and help out.

The content of REACH sessions since January has been dictated by what is relevant in the world around them and events within the Church calendar. This led to the young people creating a powerful poster focusing on how we act as Christians following the US President Election. This was displayed at Church. REACH expressed an interest in hosting a whole Church quiz, however this was postponed due to exams and we hope to hold the quiz around Harvest time. I am very keen for this to happen as it would be a great opportunity for the different generations in Church to come together.

Socials continue to be a big part of REACH, with at least one social a term planned. Following the All Saints service, REACH had a meal together. At the end of the Winter term, REACH had a film and pizza evening, whilst making decorations for the Christmas Tree Festival. In February REACH attended RUSH a trampoline park followed by a meal.

Carolyn Bailey led the group from January to September/October 2016 and I took the role back on at that time with support from Sue O'Farrell and Carolyn. There was also additional support during the Autumn term from David and Brenda Harris.

The next few years are going to be challenging as REACH are thrown into a constant stream of revision and exams but I am confident that their bond as a group is strong enough that they will continue to attend. I hope that over the next year there may be an opportunity for new volunteers to come forward so that I can rely a bit less on certain individuals each week.

Space will also be a challenge when the new Curate moves into the Vicarage and this space is no longer readily available. I am very reluctant to move them back to the Vestry. REACH need a space that is reliable, comfortable and can be adapted to be 'theirs' during the sessions. Ideally it would be great if they could have a dedicated space that would not only be practically beneficial but it would also show them that they are valued members of the congregation. I believe that the Yurt could fulfil these criteria if it is to go ahead.

Finally, I would like to thank Carolyn for keeping the group going at the beginning of year and for her continued support, she will be greatly missed by the young people and myself. I'd also like to thank Sue O'Farrell for supporting me as the second adult for the majority of sessions since I have returned as leader.

**Katie Shuster**

### **Secretary's report**

The PCC have met five times this year and a variety of subjects have been discussed. Fundraising is always part of the agenda and has played a significant part in our activities this year. We are always looking for new ideas in this area, so please be in touch if anything comes to mind. This has been our first year with a Finance Group instead of an individual Treasurer. Maxine has been recruited as a paid member of the team to help with book-keeping and Martyn Green is taking responsibility for the day to day events. Everything is moving forward according to plan and we offer the team our very grateful thanks.

Our members this year have been Helen Biggerstaff a deanery synod member, Helen Clark, Sally Clark, Margaret Gordon, Martyn Green, Ken Harratt a deanery synod member, Brenda Harris a deanery synod member,

David Harris, Wendy Harris, Philippa Howells, Chris Nickless, Sue O'Farrell, Vicky Preece and Christopher Figg.

Maggie Cameron and Anne Ellis have taken on the mantle of St Mary's Ballinger as the associate wardens creating an evermore lively and enthusiastic church. Christopher Figg remains the associate warden for Little Hampden.

I am stepping down after a five year stint from the position of Secretary after this APCM - a position I have very much enjoyed the majority of the time! I have certainly learnt a lot about the workings of the Church of England some of which I applaud although others sometimes come across as slightly anachronistic – I expect that is just me!! At the time of writing there is no firm replacement for me although there is a possibility in the pipeline which should be able to be confirmed or otherwise by the time of the meeting.

There is still space for a few more members so please be in touch if you feel you would like to be part of the PCC team.

**Sue O'Farrell**

## **SERVERS REPORT**

Having lost the services of Lorna when she moved we were down to 7 but I am glad to report Stephen Tanno and Anna Withams have swelled our ranks. We also have Sally Clarke as a back up when the choir are not performing. In short, therefore we are like many aspects of St Peter and St Paul, short of people. It would be lovely to have a couple of extras to add to our rota.

My thanks to those who continue to perform their duties, always willing to swap and fill in when required. If you are interested in helping us, there is very little to learn and you will soon realize you just do what feels right at the time – particularly at baptisms! Please contact me if you are interested at [graham@kitty4.co.uk](mailto:graham@kitty4.co.uk) or telephone 01494 863492

## ST. MARY'S BALLINGER

During the course of our first year, Maggi and I acquired a greater understanding of the requirements of our roles as Associate Churchwardens and a more informed awareness of the ebb and flow of the church calendar. We are pleased to report that St Mary's continues to thrive, both inside and out; our services and fund raising activities are well supported by the local community.

The fabric of our little church has been diligently maintained throughout the year by Phil Green who has repaired and painted those windows worst affected by winter storms. We have hard pruned the large shrub border so that the extra light and sunshine will encourage fresh growth and are now going to tackle the smaller bed, with a view to replacing the plants with gravel and seasonal tubs. Once again we shared the maintenance of the lawns with Jess and Tammi and their help is hugely appreciated. There are still many other items which require our attention though and we are gradually working our way through them as the weather allows.

Internally, it is increasingly apparent just how much the church has benefitted from the newly installed heating system. We are able to efficiently maintain a base-line temperature throughout the colder months and easily raise it when necessary. Subsequently our bills have been reduced and the church is far more welcoming in the freezing depths of winter. Lizzie Benwell kindly gave us a carpet which Phil Green laid in the porch. The notice-boards have been refreshed and plans are now underway to create another inside the church detailing objects of interest for visitors.

In 2016 we also remembered two people who held St. Mary's close to their hearts. Last April Roger Hudson planted a lilac in memory of his wife, Val. A short service was led by Rosie and attended by friends and family from far and near. At the party afterwards in the garden we celebrated her zest for life and recalled her warmth, humanity and sense of humour. In November, Cic Upcott, together with Hilary and Simon, unveiled the beautiful, royal blue notice-

board donated in memory of Derek who ministered tirelessly at St. Mary's for several decades. It has pride of place in the front hedge and can be clearly seen by passers-by. We keep it regularly updated and it has undoubtedly helped to raise the profile of our church in the villages for which we are enormously grateful.

Fund raising has taken many and varied forms; in 2016 we booked a table-top at Adey's sale in April, had a stall at The Lee Flower Show in July and hosted our first coffee morning in the middle of January 2017. All have been well supported, encouraging us to even greater efforts. In fact we have already set a date for our next activity; buoyed up by the success of the previous one and by public demand, we have decided upon Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> June for our next coffee morning.

Regular services are held on the first Sunday of the month. We also hosted another Parish Evensong in May at which we celebrated HM The Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. In December we enjoyed the magical Christingle and Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve with Harvest and Easter also having their special place in the calendar. The church is generally full, with the young and not so young and the ever increasing circulation of the newsletter has encouraged several new faces in the congregation. In addition to our links with St. Peter & St. Paul we have established a closer relationship with the other hilltop villages and our round robin news-sheets are now published in The Lee Newsletter. Out of the blue I received a phone call from Brian Wilson, for many years a Licensed Lay Reader at St. Peter & St. Paul. He now lives on the Isle of Wight and had heard of our recent exploits! He was very supportive of St. Mary's and asked to be kept informed, sending best wishes to HP16. News travels far it seems.

Looking forward, Maggi and I are currently thinking about our next ventures including our first Patronal Evensong on Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> April at 6pm to which all are warmly welcome. None of the above would be possible, however, without the ongoing commitment and steadfast support of Rosie, Carolyn and Tricia who regularly

commute up to Ballinger; our musicians, Bernice Fuggle, Gerard Hallows and Lizzie Benwell who grace our singing with their skilful accompaniment. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge Ed Whymark, our Treasurer who keeps an eye on our finances. Finally to all those who share in the life of St. Mary's, thank you for your love and support, it is immensely valued.

*(Anne Ellis & Maggi Cameron)*

## **Wardens' Report 2017**

We reported in 2016 some of the challenges that we have been faced with over the finances of the Church. A year ago we set up a new team to oversee all things financial, which consists of both wardens, Martyn Green, Laurence Clark, and Helen Clark. The team meets monthly to discuss financial projects and to look at the accounts. We would like to register our deep thanks to Martyn and to Brenda for their ongoing weekly work with the banking and other tasks, and to Lucy and Colin for their help in working through some of the projects in the early days. We are now paying a book keeper for a few hours a month to help keep the volunteer roles manageable, and this has proved to be a wonderful investment.

One major task has been the continuing discussions with the Deanery over the Parish Share. It has taken some 15 years or so for us to be able to finally tackle the underlying problem, which quite simply is that we have been paying a lot of money for many years which we can not afford to do. Mike and Rosie have both worked hard to enable their colleagues in the Deanery and Diocese to understand our situation, and we are now establishing a more manageable monthly outgoing.

We are both enjoying working alongside our wonderful team of clergy and would like to thank them all. However, we are about to experience some major changes in the day to day life of the Church. Mike has completed four years as Warden and will step down at the APCM. He will continue to help with the finances, but he deserves a well-earned rest from all the other duties as Warden - and from the duties perceived

to be the Wardens'! We will miss Carolyn hugely on her move to Lincolnshire both for her spiritual guidance and for her hands-on approach to every task. Tricia is reviewing her role and stepping back from many of the administrative tasks which she has so willingly undertaken for so many years, and Katie, who has been living at the Vicarage for ten months or so, is moving on to a full-time job and will not be available to us in quite the same way. Sue is moving on from her role as PCC Secretary. Rosie will continue her work inside and beyond the Parish, and will also undertake Elizabeth's training. She will also be looking to develop a group of volunteers who will help to run services across the three Churches. Val has another two years to serve as Warden (if elected...).

Last year we noted that the Church is increasingly busy, and it has become busier over the past 12 months. There are many people who undertake many tasks, including the Association and Deputy Wardens, and we are so grateful for their help. There is always room for more people to step in and pick up responsibilities, and there are many rewarding jobs that can be done from home. If you are looking to become more involved, we'd love to hear from you.

As a final note, I would like to say here that it has been an enormous pleasure working with Mike, and I wish Mike and Sue many happy extra hours of fun with their ever-growing brood of grandchildren. Mike has tirelessly worked inside and outside the Church buildings and with so many members of our congregations on a multitude of practical, financial, and administrative jobs. He needs to be allowed to step away for a period of time, but I will miss his irreverent and insightful asides and his boundless energy.

**Val and Mike**

## ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

### AGENDA

Apologies for absence

Approval of the minutes of the 2015 meeting

Matters arising Election of Churchwardens

Agreement to accept Honorary Associate Wardens for Ballinger and Little Hampden Deputy Wardens

## ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

### AGENDA

Apologies for absence

Approval of the minutes of the 2015 meeting Matters arising

Electoral Roll report

Treasurer's report

Annual Reports (published)

Election of Deanery Synod representatives. Election of PCC members

Election of Sidepersons

Appointment of Independent Examiner

Rosie's Spot

AOB - items to be notified to the secretary before the meeting