

# Great Missenden Parish Church

## Annual Meeting



Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019  
Oldham Hall 8pm

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## 1. Vicar's report

No Parish is an Island. In some ways we have huge autonomy, but we are also related to the National church in various ways. Locally we are part of the Wendover Deanery, the Archdeaconry of Buckingham and the Diocese of Oxford. A small amount of the money we pay into central funds goes to support these structures and means that we still have an established church with a presence in every part of the country. It is very interesting that even though the number of people who consider themselves regular church goers is falling, most people still want their local Parish Church to be there and be open and praying.

Within the Diocese there has been a lot of work setting new priorities under the guidance of Bishop Steven. The focus is on becoming: 'A more Christ-like Church' and this will mean being more Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous. There have now been two years of consultations and seven focus areas have emerged. Some of these don't easily apply here in Great Missenden, but others are very aligned to our own vision. In particular the emphasis on engaging in new ways with young people, families and children, working with our local schools and making a bigger difference in the world.

In response to our PCC away day last year we have started Family Praise. Ken Harratt has provided wonderful music with his friend the saxophonist Kenton. Katie and Elizabeth and I have shaped informal services with activities including the lovely art work which Jane Coulson created with the young people which went on to become a Christmas Card.

We recognize that most families struggle to come along on a very regular basis, and so these services are stand alone and take place every few weeks.,

In parallel the new commissioned Lay Ministry Team has been a huge blessing. This is surely going to be the way forward in future years. The richest resource of the church is obviously its people. Classically we have de-skilled people as they walk through the door and imagined that the clergy could do everything. As the day of single church parishes is almost over, there is a real need for ministry

to be shared if it is to continue. Our team of four - Sally, Brenda, Mary and Karen - have put spirituality and creativity into beautifully crafted services and greatly enriched the worship in our Parish. Another new venture has bedded down. We now have a team running the finance -using a very effective package. It's still a big job for which we are very grateful, but it is so encouraging to see that it can be done in this alternative way.

The Autumn term was defined by a lot of remembering. It was the 100 year anniversary of the end of WW1 and this caught the imagination of young and old alike. We had various special services with such a good turn out and a real sense that young people were able to understand their own history.

Talking of history, Mary Morgan was 90 this year. She went to our school all those years ago, and talked to the children about what it was like in those days. They were fascinated!

The Cream Tea season was fabulous. Folk come for far and near, they enjoy the home-made cakes and also the music. It is very interesting that many would never come along to a service but really love being in the church, enjoy chatting and are very interested in the history.

The same applies to the Christmas Tree Festival. It reaches out into the community. The luxury hamper is a winner, and this year we had a wine tasting as well!

For me one of the highlights was the Ordination Service held at St Peter and St Paul where Elizabeth and some of her colleagues were ordained priest.

We held another Science Festival. Interestingly this is growing and sparking all sorts of thinking about science and faith. We have also hosted Chiltern Arts Festival events, had a Murder Mystery, and held a very successful Bob Chilcott 'come and sing' day.

The Lent series was very well received. The subject was faith and the Law and all the superb speakers were members of our own congregation.

It might well have been the best year I have known in terms of the quality of the music. Wendy is an outstanding musician and often at the end of the service people are transfixed by her playing. The choir

is singing with confidence and musicality and Ken brings colour and prayerful creative musicianship in so many ways.

The relationship with the school is very strong. I am a governor and sit on various committees. I am also a member of the Great Learner's Trust (the Academy Trust of which Great Missenden is part).

Elizabeth and I take assembly every week. She, with support for Tricia and Lucy, also works with Early years. I am always impressed at the depth of the values that are taught and lived at our school.

The coffee before school is one of the reasons for this good relationship and it is a real gift to the community. The outstanding running of the Oldham Hall, steered by Sally, also means that our Hall is an important part of local life.

Beyond the Parish my work as Bishop Alan's chaplain continues, and a major piece of work has been the book which we have written together. It's called 'To Heal and not to Harm' and deals with safeguarding and the church response to survivors. General Synod continues until 2020. I was also a guest of the Diocese of New York at the American Episcopal Church General Convention last July.

There was so much to learn about how they work. For example this only happens once every two years, unlike General Synod over here which meets three times a year, so they do far more work at the committee level.

I've done various bits of training. The most challenging was a two-day course to become a Mental Health First Aider. I've done a fair bit of writing, contributing a couple of chapters to books, magazine and journal articles, and as a guest blogger in quite a provocative way for Via Media News. I have also preached and spoken around the country. I am a patron for Dignity in Dying and also of MDMD (My death, my decision)

I happen to be the vicar here at the moment but the Parish is built on the love, faith and generosity of the people. Folk are unfailingly generous with their money, their time and their talents. It has been an extraordinary joy to share this work with Elizabeth -I'm sure you can all see, as I do, that she is an exceptional priest. There are far too many people to thank by name, but I must underline my debt to the Wardens and to Tricia.

## 2. Wardens

The Church continues to be busy and we'd like to thank all those who have either started or continued in their roles as readers, coffee-makers, cleaners, sidespersons, bell-ringers, singers, polishers, washers, washers up, servers, leaders, communicators, supporters, rota-makers, lawn mowers, vergers, deputy wardens, retired wardens, associate wardens, instrumentalists, car parkers, tree trimmers, snow shovellers, fund-raisers, and cake bakers – all of you. We try to ease the burden, and very much appreciate that you do the same for us.

A highlight of the last year for us all was Elizabeth's Ordination in July. It was an exceptionally busy day – the service was preceded by a wedding and a whole host of people supported both services and all the participants, masterminded by Sue O'Farrell. We were able to offer hospitality to over 250 guests after the service, and the whole weekend had a wonderful feel-good factor.

As we end the year, our biggest task is to start to make inroads into the Quinquennial Report. We are grateful for the support of the volunteers on the Fabric team, and to the Friends for their help with financing the work. Our beautiful building is old and weathered, and we are trying to preserve it while we can. Over the coming months this will mean faculties and scaffolding, but we will try to minimise the disruption.

Finance continues to occupy our thoughts. We have stabilised our Parish Share at a level with which we are comfortable, although we are not paying what is requested. We have broken even this year, partly thanks to the fundraising at the end of November and December of the Come and Sing day and the Christmas Tree Festival and raffle as well as Cream Teas. We have been asked to explore direct debits this year for a new Parish Giving scheme which we have so far felt unable to implement, and we are carefully

watching other Churches trialling this and other ways of taking donations, including card readers. Our thanks to the finance group.

The website has come into its own this year with a huge amount of work behind the scenes, and social media has expanded our window on the world. These forms of communication are vital for where we need to be in the community, so do continue to like, re-tweet, and just visit!

Our biggest challenge is in trying to find help with the job of keeping the Church running, and as we write we are searching for a new Church Warden, PCC Secretary, and for some help handling the day-to-day finances. We really appreciate all the help we get, and would love to talk to people about using skills most effectively. If there is anything that you feel you could help us with, or offer, we always love to hear from you – and you can decide how long you do it for!

**Val and Ken**

### **3. Servers**

Sundays are an important appointment for our team of servers. Preparation for the Holy Communion Services is vital so the congregations arrive to find a peaceful and welcoming setting. At 8am the server is the clergy's right hand in the vestry and around the altar.

At 10am there are three servers with a variety of roles from carrying the cross, to providing the elements (bread, wine and water) for the consecration in preparation for the congregation to receive their Communion.

The tasks we are required to carry out are an enormous privilege for the team who enjoy their offering to the Church services.

**Graham and Tricia**

#### 4. Fabric

Quinquennial Reports for all three Churches were conducted this year by our architect, Stephen Crawley. At Ballinger and Little Hampden there are small jobs which the associate wardens are working on there. At St P&P there is a considerable amount of work to do to slow down the erosion of the stonework on our external walls. A fabric group, formed this year, has asked Stephen to create a list of priorities, which he has done, and we will start a rolling programme of repairs and renewals.

The memorial glass screen to Jill Thomson has been cleaned and repaired this year, following some accidental damage to both sides. Daedalian Glass visited on a number of occasions and made the repairs without any need to remove the artwork to another site.

The other important memorial, to those who fell in the two world wars, was cleaned by JS Stonemasons ahead of the centenary of the Armistice, thanks to Jill Pateman with financial support from the Friends. Jill also discovered old photographs which showed the cobbles to be a recent addition. The shingle which now covers them looks very much better, and is a deterrent for the weeds as well as being less slippery for those who lay wreaths to walk on.

We have a report on the uneven floor tiles which indicates that there is no deep underlying problem, and we are hoping to find someone who will work with lime mortar to re-stick the tiles and fill the gaps. We have looked at the continued need for a children's space, and discarded temporary or 'garden' buildings outside the Church in favour of using the inside space more effectively. The PCC is exploring the options as we write.

John Jones and Chris Nickless did sterling work, mowing the lawns for over two seasons, but this year we have brought back the company used previously. It is expensive, but we do have a lot of land to maintain. The grass was regularly mowed from Easter to October. Prestwood Nature visited to look at the lawn area and the old graveyard, and have promised a report on how we might maintain the outside spaces a little more effectively. In the meantime, the Friends have funded the path maintenance through the old graveyard for walkers.

There is still an anticipation that we will be able to improve the top gates by making them electric, thus allowing us to control them from the vestry rather than sending the servers up in the cold of winter to unlock. Quotes are being obtained.

We have cleaned the gutters (thanks to the Friends), had the fire extinguishers serviced, and have had the electrics checked - all jobs that need doing regularly. In August the boiler received a long overdue service, and we agreed that we would ensure that this was done each Summer.

One hugely successful project this year is the replacement of some of the pews at Ballinger with some more comfortable, stable, and versatile seating. Maggi and Anne are pushing ahead with a faculty request to make this permanent.

**Ken Harratt**

## **5. Music**

**Highlights of the year** included Elizabeth's **Ordination Service** on June 23rd (well, not solely Elizabeth's) We were delighted to be given the opportunity to provide the choir and music for seven Oxford Diocese Ordinands and their friends and families. The curates had chosen the music themselves, which included some Taize chants, a couple of worship songs (thankyou to Ken Harratt for leading these expertly on the piano) and John Ireland's 'Greater Love hath no man'. (Hitherto not in our repertoire but the choir rose to the challenge and thoroughly enjoyed learning the piece) Thankyou also to Ruth Murphy from St Mary's, Coleshill, conductor and the extra singers from other Parishes.

This really was a collaborative day, as we had a wedding to sing at beforehand – Sue O'Farrell, Carola Clark and Jeanette Green very much kept us going by providing packed lunches for all the choir – this was greatly appreciated, as was the most welcome hot supper Elizabeth invited us to in the Oldham Hall at the end of the day.

Our **Choral Evensong** for **Armistice Day** attracted an outstanding number of people and I'd also like to thank the **Lay Team**

Mary, Karen, Brenda and Sally for the Evensongs and Holy Week services they put together with much care, often using inspiring prose and poetry.

Following on from our monthly services, we were asked to lead a special **Taize Service with Br Jean-Patrick**. The RC Church were hosting one of the brothers from the Taize Community. This really was an Ecumenical service, as we were joined by excellent musicians flautist Phillipa Wallin and on accordion and mandolin, Gerard from the King's Church, Prestwood.

**The Chiltern Arts Festival** promoted two more concerts at St Peter & St Paul, following on from the success of Tasmin Little and Martin Roscoe in Jan 2018. As part of their Autumn Festival: the Baroque ensemble Alastair Ross and Friends – and in Feb 2019 the outstanding Romantic classical pianist, Steven Osborne. All these concerts were well attended and the church is proving a popular venue to host world-class musicians.

**Our bi-annual Bob Chilcott 'Come and Sing'** marked the beginning of Advent – we were delighted to spend time working on 'Jesus, Springing', which beautiful text and music we were able to use in our Ash Wednesday Service. Thankyou to Val Withams who arranges this popular singing workshop with Bob.

**The Lighthouse Christmas Concert** is now an annual (fundraising) event and is always a full church, collaborating with the Heatherton House Singers and the King's Church, Prestwood.

**Great Missenden Choral Society** continue to host their Easter and Christmas concerts, likewise the annual **Little Missenden Festival Schools Project**

Finally, last Autumn Graeme Petrie-Brown and myself invited members of **the Bucks Organ Association** to a talk about the history and subsequent re-furbishment of the organ (including a demo of the stripped out pneumatic mechanism) and who then went on to play the organ and have tea afterwards. Graeme's passion for the organ and his extensive knowledge of choral repertoire is unparalleled.

## 6. **Bellringers**

Like many local Churches we continue to be very short of ringers and rarely have sufficient ringers on a Sunday to ring all of the eight bells. By working more closely with our neighbours at Little Missenden we have managed to ring more bells on practice evenings and have been able to extend the range of methods (bell ringing sequences) that our ringers are able to manage.

We came close to having insufficient ringers for several services over Christmas; but due to some intensive training of a new recruit and a fortuitous shift pattern for one of our infrequent members actually managed to ring at least 5 bells for each of the services. Weather conditions over the Christmas period (low cloud and suitable wind directions) also led to comments from surrounding villages about how they had enjoyed hearing the bells.

We rang 3 times on Remembrance Sunday to mark 100 years since the end of the first world war, muffled for the morning service and then open as requested by various national campaigns at 12.30 and 7.00pm. Unfortunately we do not have sufficient strength within our own band to have managed a special peal (over 3 hours of continuous ringing) or even a quarter peal for this event, however, I assisted the Amersham band, who are also short of ringers, to ring a peal on 8 of their 12 bells during the afternoon.

All of the Towers within the Oxford Diocese are part of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers (ODG) which provides a framework of support and assistance to towers and also offers grants for work on bells. Great Missenden benefited greatly from such grants and assistance when the bells were rehung in 1990. The Guild is split into 15 branches which take it in turns to hold events such as the Guild AGM which is due to take place at Great Missenden on 18th May 2019. This will hopefully result in significant numbers of visiting ringers descending on the Church from lunchtime onwards for a buffet

lunch in the Oldham Hall, ringing, a service and meeting. As you can appreciate this will place a significant burden on the small number of local ringers so hopefully some of the Church experts on matters such as catering and car parking will be available to help us on the day.

If you have ever wondered about taking up this ancient art then please don't feel shy. Please 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 happy to help you with "Learning the Ropes" a phrase which will lead you to an excellent website about what is involved. Like our new recruit who has recently been elected into the ODG you will also find a great welcome at other local towers and as your skills advance you may become one of those ticking off the 50 ringing challenges (see the learning the ropes website) or recording your visits to some of the over 5,000 towers where you will be welcomed.

**Chris Potter**

## **7. Friends of Great Missenden Church**

The Friends had a successful year in 2018, both in terms of the events we held, and in terms of the funds raised.

We have established a pattern of having Saturday afternoon talks on a wide variety of subjects, followed by an excellent afternoon tea, in the Oldham Hall. Our three such events featured talks on local natural history, the life of a film and TV extra and then two together on World War I, as it affected Buckinghamshire as a whole, and as affecting Great Missenden.

The last was given by Jill Pateman, a member of the Friends' Committee, and 2018 saw the publication of her very well researched and extensively illustrated book on Great Missenden in

WWI – the profits from which she is kindly giving to the Friends. Some of this money has been used to finance a cleaning of the war memorial at the church, in time for the Remembrance commemoration.

We also held a presentation in church on the Saturday of the Remembrance weekend, entitled “Armistice”, by the professional concert trio *In voice and Verse*. Taken together our events raised over £3,100.

As in previous years the Friends decorated a tree for the Christmas Tree festival and we took the opportunity, once again, to sell our preserves and other items over that weekend

For a year the Friends were one of the local good causes supported by the local branch of the Co-op, which contributed just over £3,000 to our funds. Meanwhile our Chairman continued to make jams, marmalades and other preserves in large quantities, which raised over £3,700.

Our membership has remained stable around the 100 mark, but we are always keen to recruit new members, both from within the church congregation, and in the village more generally. In 2018 our income from subscriptions was just under £2,800. We prefer it if members can support us by bank standing orders, rather than payments by cheque.

We did not make any major grants to the church in 2018, but continued to pay for the cleaning of the gutters, and keeping paths open in the old graveyard, while some essential one-off tree work was also funded. We are aware that as a result of the Quinquennial inspection we can expect to be asked to contribute to the costs of major work to the roof and stonework. So the Friends organisation continues to carry out the function for which it was set up – to support the maintenance of our historic church building.

Our AGM will be held in church on Saturday, May 4th, at 10.30 for 11am and we will hope to see many Friends there.

We are devoting half of our forthcoming Newsletter and Annual Report to Val Eaton Griffith – founder of the Friends – and her very interesting life.

**Vivienne Davis  
and Jennifer Moss**

## 8. Online Presence

Our online presence has continued to develop during the last year. The parish website, launched in December 2017, continues to receive considerable traffic, and positive feedback. Under Katie Shuster's management, the web team of five has developed a system of editing and updating with source material from a variety of contributors. Changes have been made to include new initiatives such as Family Praise, Youth Alpha and the Meetup group, and we are in the process of providing more information online for those enquiring about marriage or baptism, including online form submission. As major events approach, we change the front page of the website to feature this – so people can click straight through to Family Praise, Remembrance, Christmas services or whatever the current thing is. Katie has produced a style guide for the website and is working on a shorter guide to the website's approach and 'voice' for contributors, and also a technical guide. Church Insight who host the website can also provide rota management in connection with the church calendar feature, and we are investigating whether to use this.

The church Facebook page for St Peter & St Paul continues to be active, with regular posts about current church activities and connections with the world, with up to two or three per day at peak times. Every post has a photo, and the most popular are usually those of church flowers, weddings, children's activities and the church building. We have engaged more online with organisations holding events in church (especially concerts and cream teas), co-hosting Facebook events, tagging and sharing across pages, including to the 'Your Prestwood & Great Missenden' group with over 3000 members, and occasionally paying to boost posts so people locally with no other connection with us see our posts. We have gained sixty followers in the last year, so now have a total over 200 seeing our posts and what we are trying to convey about our church community and the love of God.

In January 2019, we got Instagram for the church as an experiment for three months. This was prompted by some of our younger members' suggestions: this may be the only church channel some

younger people use, and whether a church has Instagram can be an important barometer. Instagram focuses on photos with minimal text, and plenty of topical hashtags linking ideas together. Eye-catching photos are therefore even more important than on Facebook, and photos of church in the #snow and in the amazing late February light, and also Rosie with Sue O'Farrell our #weddingscoordinator have been the most popular so far. Within a few weeks we had more than 90 followers.

In December 2017, we launched a church page for social events on Meetup, with the aim of encouraging those on the periphery of our church and building community. Events posted include existing social or fundraising events, and also several specially organised walks in the local area. The group has 15 members from a variety of ages and backgrounds, and several successful events have been enjoyed by diverse groupings.

We have also gained more positive reviews on Google (average 4.6/5 from 7 reviews overall) and on TripAdvisor (average 4.5 from 15 reviews overall). Five people have also recommended us on Facebook this year with some lovely positive comments about the beauty of the church, how well it is cared for, and the quality of welcome.

## **9. Cream Teas**

This major fund raiser ran again from Easter, the first weekend in April, then from early May to late September. The gross Income was £6,857, a reduction from 2017 but a healthy result nonetheless. This reduction could in part be caused by the temporary closure of the Dahl museum following flooding.

There was a variety of 'Music Sundays' and also those days when the afternoon was a little quieter.

The Church is indeed indebted to all our volunteers, bakers and scone makers for their wonderful efforts throughout the year, and also to the singers and musicians. Thank you for all your help.

The 2019 season will start on Easter Sunday April 21st and will run through to late September.

Thank you again.

**The Cream Tea Team**

## 10. Safeguarding

The Parish Safeguarding team consists of David Harris, Safeguarding Officer, Elizabeth Lawson, Children's Advocate, and Vicky Preece. Mark Ladd is the record keeper for the team. The parish Policy covering Children and Vulnerable Adults was reviewed and agreed by the staff team in February 2019. There were no significant changes but the Policy has to be reviewed annually.

Safeguarding activities in the Parish are in good form: Parental Consent forms and Attendance Registers are in place for Junior Church activities and members of the Healing Group keep simple records of visits. There was a recent Diocese-wide check on Safeguarding, checking, amongst other things, that Policies etc are available on Church web sites. Bishop +Alan quoted our site as an excellent example but in spite of this we made a change to our site to reference the Safeguarding pages with a link at the bottom of the home page.

DBS checks for volunteers need to be reviewed and several need updating. This will be initiated when the new arrangements for managing the checks are in place in the Parish.

Changes will need to be made in the coming year: we can no longer use Lighthouse as the Registered Body for DBS checks and David Harris is passing his responsibility as Safeguarding Officer to Caroline Allen.

### **David Harris**

#### 1. Schools

The School Motto is: “**Believe and Achieve**”

Our Values are: “**Truth, Love, Faith, Courage, Respect, Community**”

## **Our Aims**

We want children to:

Be happy

Feel secure

Know that they belong

Appreciate and value the opinions of others

Listen

Persevere

Have a sense of awe and wonder

Appreciate the world around them, and take care of it

Be curious, ask questions

Take pride in their own achievements and the achievements of others

Take control of their own learning

Know that it is alright to make a mistake and then move on

Know that life is precious and that today is very special and it will not happen again

Know that there are many ways to be clever, and that everyone is good at something

Love learning.

Our school is a place where learning is rewarding, absorbing and fun.

Learning is for all, adults and children, and learning continues throughout life.

The adults who work here enjoy being here.

Every child is able to go out of the school gates at the end of the day and say,

“That was the best day ever!”

Every year we welcome prospective parents into school on our Open Mornings. The presentation always begins with the following - “Imagine your child in the future.....What do you ultimately want for them?” The answer is invariably the same for every group of parents that visit, to be happy.

This year a key focus of our School Development Plan has been Mental Health & Wellbeing. The World Health Organisation defines mental health as ‘a state of well-being in which every individual

realises his or her potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.’

As a Head Teacher, I continually grapple with the balance between working in an education system that is results-driven, where ‘high stakes’ test results are used for accountability and creating an environment that nurtures a state of well-being as defined above.

Managing stress used to be the preserve of Key Stage 4 & 5 but with mental health problems affecting around 1 in 10 children, it is now a key focus within primary schools. 70% of children and young people who experience a mental health problem have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age, and 50% of mental health problems are established by the age of 14.

In May, the children took part in Mental Health Awareness Week, participating in age-appropriate activities to teach them about recognising anxiety and stress (physiologically, behaviourally and emotionally) and how to foster well-being. Activities included:

- A ‘sun circle’ in Pre-School where the children learnt how to pay each other compliments
- Reception children talked about their worries and then blew them away in ‘worry bubbles’
- KS1 children went for a bluebell walk in Rook Wood
- Year 2 used ‘wishing machines’ to think about future ambitions
- Breathing exercises were used throughout the day
- Friendship groups explored worries that can occur on the playground
- Year 6 completed activities based on the book, ‘The Worry Monster’ by Caroline Uff reinforcing the message that a problem shared is a problem halved
- The School Council and our Agents for Change have made worry boxes for every classroom to give children a forum to share concerns or anxieties.

- ‘A Huge Bag of Worries’ by Virginia Ironside was read in assembly to encourage children not to carry their worries around but to talk to someone
- Year 4 thought of things to be thankful for, at the end of each day
- ‘The Invisible Boy’ by Trudie Ludwig encouraged children to accept people as they are, even if they may be different to you
- Empathy towards how others may be feeling was developed in an activity where children put themselves into ‘somebody else’s shoes’
- Invisible Painting – painting a worry with water and then watch it disappear Describing feelings as weather and then understanding that the weather changes just like feelings
- Reverend Canon Rosie Harper talked to the children about how faith can support well-being
- Admin staff joined teachers in a special Yoga session
- Staff attended INSET training on ways to engender a state of well-being in their classrooms including the use of Mindfulness strategies
- Year 6 explored feelings and anxieties around secondary school transition and SATs
- Visits to Abbeyfield raised awareness of well-being in elderly people within our community

As educators, we strive for all children to make exceptional academic progress, but it is equally important to ensure that our children are given the tools to be resilient to stress, to feel valued, to be motivated, to maintain self-esteem and to grow up with the ability to enjoy life and be happy.

*“Educating the mind without educating the heart, is no education at all.” (Aristotle)*

**Caroline Taylor** - Head Teacher

## **12. Pastoral Care, Healing**

The year has been punctuated with great concern and care for our community, Slava Miles has continued to help us keep in touch, hence KIT by name, with people and organisations by updating our contact list. It is quite a task as we are such a mobile society.

Our thanks to Rosie and Elizabeth who through their ministeries doors are opened to people who need love and care. The teams who are involved with KIT can then follow up where needed.

Within the context of pastoral care many facets come to light...visits, coffee mornings where people who are often behind closed doors can meet and enjoy companionship, the luncheon club, occasional outings and above all care and concern.

There are requests for the Baptism of children and our clergy can then pass on to the teams where young children may enjoy the various groups who meet twice a month in the Church on a Sunday and on special occasions throughout the year.

We have a Prayer Chain( which can be accessed on line) It has been a solace to people who request prayer at any time knowing that the community will be holding their requests and enabling the strength of prayer to help them in their hour of need.

Our thanks go to our clergy, Rosie and Elizabeth in their ministeries inspiring our team to be watchful, helpful and encouraging to all our residents of many years as well as all the newcomers who come into our area.

Rosie Harper. Elizabeth Lowson

Slava Miles. Tricia Neale.

## **13. Mission**

The Mission Group was formed following a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Bishop John, then Bishop of Buckingham. It consists of 8 members of the congregation and whilst its members obviously meet informally, there is one formal meeting held each year. At this recommendations for the recipients of Christmas charitable giving are discussed.

Not surprisingly the group has continued to recommend support for Hope School, near Bethlehem, which offers education for Muslim

children who would have little chance for education without the provision of the school. One member of the Mission Group maintains a particular relationship with the school and from visits and correspondence is able to assure the church that our donations are well spent.

Other recipients in 2019 have been the local ventures of the Walled Garden in Great Missenden, which provides horticultural experience for young people and adults with learning disabilities, and Road Farm which provides opportunities to encourage confidence and self-worth, especially for those with special needs. The remaining gift has been to 'Embrace', previously called 'Bible Lands', which aims to support those in need in the middle east, particularly children in Gaza.

The group always hopes to suggest support for local as well as distant charities. Most especially it recommends that money is sent to situations where the majority of money is spent directly on need.

#### **14. 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. This works well for children wanting to drift backwards and forwards from their parents, although less so with some members of the congregation due to the inevitable noise. Hopefully a solution will be found for this and a new space dedicated to the children – noise-proofed, glass screened in area sounds like a good solution.

The parents are proving willing volunteers to step in from time to time to assist and lead on occasion and DBS forms have been completed by a few who are happy to be involved on a more regular basis. As the sessions take place in church we often have parents present who can lend a hand informally when required.

As far as outings are concerned, the children enjoyed a lovely visit at Tiggywinkles last summer and took a picnic.

Finding regular volunteers continues to be a challenge but we have more regular assistance from a number of parents so hopefully this will develop over the coming year.

**Chloe Lewis**

## **15. REACH / IGNITE**

IGNITE – In God New Ideas To Explore – is the group for young people originally aimed at those in school years 5 to 9 (ages 9 to 13), but in fact now encompassing those in years 10 and 11 also. It meets during the Sunday service on the second and third Sundays of the month during term-time, as well as for occasional social activities.

This year we have been continuing to think about life in the Holy Land, interspersed with other appropriate seasonal activities (e.g. designing our Christmas tree for the Festival). We have been continuing our support for Abraham’s Children in Crisis (ACIC), which helps children in need, of all faiths, in Palestine and Israel. Fundraising activities have included a bake sale and a Christmas jumper day, and we have received regular reports from Ian Mills of ACIC, who has come to speak directly to the group.

Our main activity this year has been the production of a book of recipes, which we hope to sell to raise further funds for ACIC. The young people invited those in the church and wider community to provide recipes, and they are currently putting artwork together. We expect to have the book available to sell at Easter or, at the latest, the start of the summer term.

I continue to be principally responsible for the group, and have received very welcome support from Katie Shuster, Elizabeth Lawson and other volunteers including Sue O’Farrell, David and Brenda Harris and Wendy Harris.

We are now struggling with the age range of this group, which is too large. The youngest children taking part are around 9, and the eldest, 16. Although we have a committed “core” group, we have “lost” a few children to sport and other extra-curricular activities recently. The fact that it is well nigh impossible to come up with

activities suitable for all in that range does not help. We still have a significantly higher number of girls than boys. The plan, however, is to “tread water” with the current arrangements until the end of this school year, and then to review. This timing makes sense because the majority of the REACH group will be moving on to university, which frees up our limited resources a little. I very much hope that, from September, we will be able to split the groups in two (by age), and it may well be that one or other group moves to meeting on a different day or at a different time. We plan in or around May to start a process of consultation with the young people about what they want and what suits them best. Two of the older IGNITE age teenagers (14/15) have been attending Katie Shuster’s Youth Alpha sessions, which is very positive. We also hope that this year might see a solution to the issue of a space, or lack of it, for the young people’ groups.

**Philippa Howells Katie Shuster**

## **16. Oldham Hall**

2018 has seen a lot of activity at the Hall and there has been quite a bit of expenditure. The new sound system was installed successfully in February by Ken and Graeme. It was agreed by the PCC that the chairs in the Hall needed replacing after 20 years of service, as they were past their best and needed work done on them. The purchase of the new and disposal of the old was scheduled for August as any disruption to the Hall would have to be done during school holidays. We were fortunate that the old chairs were passed on to a school in Chesham whose colours were the same shade of green, and they were able to get their old chairs recycled locally. Many thanks, Ken for this arrangement with Sue’s school.

The blinds in the main Hall were replaced, with thanks to Laurence as it turned out to be a tricky task. We also had the big window in the kitchen replaced, and one in the Hall. Many thanks to Elizabeth Lowson for working the wonders of eBay regarding the disposal of the redundant sports equipment in the corner of the Hall and the Bromley room. It has made a huge difference to the space available, particularly in the Bromley room, and she managed to make a tidy profit! The kitchen was re-decorated in December, and a trickle extractor-fan was installed to replace the existing one, in order to alleviate the moisture that builds up, especially when the dishwasher is in use. This runs all the time, and can be boosted by the switch on the wall when necessary.

Pat West, our cleaner since the refurbishment of the Hall, decided to retire and we were really sorry to see her step down. She had done a marvellous job and had kept the Hall in very good order. Fortunately, thanks to Jen King, we were able to find another cleaner/caretaker as Pete Tomes (brother of Bryan who does a lot of work for us), agreed to take on the role and I am pleased to say that he has settled to the job really well.

I am always hoping for a quiet year, but the Hall is very demanding and is really well used. Many thanks to those who help in this task, particularly Martin Webster who arranges and helps with the maintenance of the hedges, and the coffee mornings and other things. To Martyn Green in his role of Financial person and provider of supplies for the Hall. To Andrew Edwards for the thankless task of booking clerk, and to Laurence for being a great support at all times.

**Sally Clark (Hon Chair)**

## 17. Parish Office

Well – I can report that the Vicarage cat, aka Lambie has made herself quite at home and we all enjoy her company at various meetings. Though if the Vicarage was actually sited next to the church, Lambie might be able to help out with Pest Control – one of the regular tasks alongside managing the church diary, printing, rota dissemination, baptisms, weddings and funerals that goes on in the Parish office. More unusual enquiries include headstone engraving, bench repairs or tracing ancestors and more mystifyingly, ‘can you tell me why your pulpit has the Greek orthodox symbol carved on it?’

Our new website runs alongside FB and a hot-off-the press Instagram account– many thanks to Rev’d Elizabeth Lowson and Katie Shuster.

We are slightly down on support for the Old Tea Warehouse July and December. If you feel you can help by supplying a shoebox of food or toiletries for either of these months – please contact me at the Parish Office (01494 862352) Thankyou to the regulars on the rota who bring donations to the office and for all the ‘extras’ such as Easter eggs and Christmas gifts.

Many thanks also to Edna Little who covers the office on Fridays and to David Harris for keeping us up to date with the weekly newsheets and helping with the website.

Our 2018 stats: 1 Wedding, 20 Baptisms and 39 Funerals.

Up at church, Anne Guiver and Chris Nickless continue to give their excellent guided talks for visiting schools and our annual bookings include the Little Missenden Festival Schools Education project; the Scouts Southern 50 Challenge – and the Chiltern Arts Festival, whose chamber concerts give us the opportunity to hear some of the leading musicians in the country – all testament to the warm welcome folk receive from our church family.

Have a positive and blessed year!

**Wendy Harris**

## **18. PCC Secretary**

The Electoral Roll has been cleaned this year: thanks to all who helped encourage people to sign up. Hopefully it will help with future communications, activities and fund-raising.

My continuing thanks to all those who have helped me discharge the secretarial duties, especially Rosie, Elisabeth, Val and Wendy.

**Guy Priestley**

## **19. 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.

The restored bell has given a huge amount of pleasure to the congregation and our thanks must go to Mark Ladd who is now the official Little Hampden bell ringer.

Two interesting events have happened this year.

The first was the presentation on 25<sup>th</sup> November to the parish of the historical record of the church put together by The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies ('NADFAS'). The Amersham, Chiltern and Chalfont Church Recorders Group made this particular record. It is an extremely thorough record of all the church's fabric.

To quote from the opening of the book, "Although the smallest church in the Chilterns and even lacking dedication, Lt Hampden Church founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century....contains a wealth of heritage, much of it of importance well beyond the parish itself". As a church and parish, I always knew we punched above our weight!

We owe a huge thank you to the NADFAS team who put this fascinating book together – and have produced some fascinating details. For example, there can't be many altars that date from 12<sup>th</sup> Century supported by columns designed by Eric Gill in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This altar had been hidden in the graveyard since an Act of Parliament during the reign of Edward VI, which required that all altar stones be removed and destroyed. Thank you to whoever buried it in the churchyard in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and thank you to the gravedigger who found it in about 1900.

The second event was our quinquennial inspection, which was extremely thorough, and quite a relief that serious works are not required, given the age of some parts of the church. We have some maintenance to do over the next year and we'll be putting together a programme for this. Many of the jobs have already started.

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.

A

gain, we also had a very large congregation for our carol service, standing room only, with 43 attending.

We are always grateful to Tricia who has now adopted us and looks after us wonderfully: a big thank you to her. Thanks also to Graeme, Wendy and Tim who take it in turns to play the organ. And thank you Rosie and Elizabeth for taking the odd service.

**Christopher Figg**

## **20. St Mary's, Ballinger**

We've enjoyed a very busy and happy year at St. Mary's, due in no small measure to the help and support of the local community: The Lee Newsletter (published monthly) has kindly promoted our services, publicised our various fund-raising activities to its readership and supplemented our own St. Mary's one, whose circulation continues to increase. New friends and neighbours in Ballinger have generously given of their time, in addition to the growing band of helpers who come from further afield. Maggi and I are therefore able to pursue larger projects and ventures, as you will read.

Our monthly pattern of worship remains fairly unchanged; Morning Prayer, Informal Holy Communion and Evensong with special celebrations throughout the year as and when appropriate. November saw the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1 and many came to mark this moment in quiet contemplation and remembrance. We heard the birds singing as crosses were planted in the garden and names read out of all the local men who were killed in action. Christmas Eve marked the 200th anniversary of Silent Night and again St. Mary's came into its own, glowing in the candlelight both at Christingle and Midnight Mass.

We celebrated our 2nd Patronal Festival in late April and afterwards enjoyed wine and canapes in the warm sunshine. A steady increase in numbers has left us short of hymn books and to replenish our stocks some extra have been bought and generously paid for by fifteen kind sponsors.

Within the fabric and environs of the church we have been very industrious. Stephen Crawley arrived to complete a thorough Quinquennial inspection and has given us a blueprint of projects to be undertaken in light of his findings. These will be tackled in order of importance: we have already made several inroads, as leaving no stone unturned Maggi is currently applying to HS2 for a grant to cover many of the items listed.

The macerator in the toilet decided to stop working and was replaced by our wonderful plumber, Francois Smit, who gave up his Saturday to sort it out as it happened the weekend before the Art Exhibition mentioned below! Former soldier, Hadrian Kingston who lived in Ballinger Row, was so moved by the Remembrance Service that he offered to restore the old bell. It now hangs proudly outside the porch.

The garden has been transformed; the large shrub flowerbed completely over-hauled and in some parts re-planted, whilst the smaller one gravelled and given over to seasonal tubs. Plans are now well underway to knock down and replace the old shed at the back of the vestry with one that is damp- and rodent-proof. Replacing the worn-out piano is still on the 'to do' list, as is another deep clean.

Coffee mornings have been welcomed by the locals and our intention is to hold them regularly as they have proved extremely popular. With our new chairs (rather than the heavy, cumbersome pews) it is so much easier to re-configure the layout. Thank goodness the former arrived just before Jo Laurie's first weekend Art Exhibition in June. St Mary's was transformed and there was a steady stream of visitors who appreciated the paintings and the chance to chat over a cream tea in the gardens afterwards. It was so successful that another is planned for 1-2 June 2019.

Our Morning Prayer service in between was easily accommodated because of this new flexibility. We took a stall at the annual Lee Flower Show in July, at the November Christmas Fair in Ballinger Hall and played host to the U3A History group in August when a brief talk was given recounting the history of St. Mary's followed by refreshments.

However, none of the above would be possible without the love, care and enthusiastic support which Maggi and I receive in abundance, making us feel truly uplifted and inspired. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank all those who give so freely of their time; the clergy, lay team, and friends at St Peter & St. Paul, to our

musicians, our esteemed treasurer and to those who pitch tents, bake cakes, clean, polish and who complete all the other countless tasks behind the scenes. THANK YOU.

**Anne Ellis & Maggi Cameron**

## **ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING**

### **AGENDA**

Apologies for absence

Approval of the minutes of the 2018 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 Minutes of the 2018 Meeting

Matters arising

Electoral Roll report

Treasurers report

Annual reports (published)

Election of Deanery Synod representatives

Election of PCC members

Election of Sidespersons

Appointment of independent examiner

Rosie's spot

AOB

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS!

