

*St MARY the VIRGIN*

*BLETCHINGLEY*

*ANNUAL REPORTS*

*2020*



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The 2020 report is shorter this year as sadly most church groups and committees have been unable to meet because of Covid-19.

### **Parochial Church Council Members 2020**

<b>Rector</b>	The Rev'd Phaedra Pamphilon Green
<b>Assistant Priest</b>	The Rev'd Penny Sherrington (retired during 2020)
<b>Reader</b>	John Buck (retired during 2020)
<b>Churchwardens</b>	April Alexander (ex officio) Richard Fowler (ex officio)
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Bill Alexander
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	Valerie Muller
<b>Elected members</b>	Bill Alexander Pamela Cock Kate Doody Vickie Gillespie Lynn Hargreaves McCullum Robin Idle Jennifer Hyde Sandie Roper Clemmie Sellick Owen Thurston (resigned)
<b>Deanery Synod</b>	Richard Fowler(ex officio) Alison Horlock (ex officio) Clare Wilson (ex officio)
<b>Verger</b>	Cyril Mighall
<b>General Synod</b>	April Alexander (ex officio)
<b>Independent Examiner</b>	Anthony Cock

### **RECTOR'S REPORT**

Dear Friends,

2020 will go down in history, for all the wrong reasons, I guess! We kicked off in April, already in a lockdown that none of us had ever experienced before. We tried keeping relationships going by phoning round as we were unable to visit people, and I struggled to keep church services going. But with the help of some fancy software, a camera phone, two great organists, great choirs, Revd. Kerry, Revd. Penny and John Buck, along with a band of willing readers - our services have continued, enabling us to worship God whatever we were experiencing and with sometimes awful news hitting us daily. I wish to thank all those who have contributed to our services throughout the year, helping us to stay focused on God, connected to each other and to our churches. We did have a short reprieve from the isolation and were able to go back to worshipping in church, but that brought its own problems - we had to stay distant and we were not allowed to sing! So, our recorded music in Bletchingley really did come in handy as we were able to enjoy listening to our choir, even if we were not able to sing ourselves. I sincerely thank Ian Skipper and the choir for their contributions in helping us continue to worship together.

I think being separated for a second and then third time has felt harder, maybe because our hopes had been built up and we really didn't think we would be separated again. Both PCCs felt it was too much of a risk to have live worship and I for one felt awkward about having people in a church service when I was unable to make visits to people in person. Even though we have been separated, and distant from church, with people watching our services online and then coming to church when we were open, we have increased the numbers on the electoral roll. Which leads me to thank Clare Sturgeon for keeping our electoral roll up to date.

We have been able to have an online Alpha with 6 people attending (which is amazing), and the Breakfast club has continued to meet regularly over Zoom, with a variety of weighty discussion topics, guest hosts, all expertly organised by Rob Tucker. Thank you Rob for keeping this going.

The weddings that were booked for 2020 were cancelled and some were rebooked a couple of times. One wedding took place in each church, albeit restricted by numbers, and each couple were happy they went ahead. Some of the weddings are rebooked for 2021, but not all. As for funerals, I have

averaged one a month, so not horrendous like some places, but mostly Crematorium only services. We sadly said goodbye Katharine Trotman, loved by so many in the village and beyond. I know many were grateful for the service being live streamed from church so they could remotely join in. We also had the news that Father Peter Moseling died at the end of December. A loved and respected man in the village, I know this came as a shock to many of you. As I write I continue to hold Joan Millar in my prayers. A faithful, dedicated and cheerful servant who for many years led the church cleaning team, the coffee team, washed the church linen and helped quietly in so many other unseen ways. She has been unwell for 9 months and suffered the death of her husband in January. We hold Father Peter's family, Robert Trotman and Joan Millar in our prayers.

There is no denying that 2020 was a hard year for us all - separated from loved ones, bereavements, fear of catching Covid-19, the lack of services in church as well as a lack of church completely at one stage. We all tried to adapt to the changing situations the best we could in challenging circumstances. The submission of a Data Subject Access Request, which Val has spoken at length about, added extra pressure to an already difficult year. I wish to thank the PCC, the Church Wardens, and the PCC Secretary for all their hard work and support with this request. I also thank God for sending us Howard Freeman, an expert in GDPR, to help us with the request. It was such a blessing to have an independent, impartial eye on the whole situation, Howard was able to steer us through the complexities of the request and respond to the request appropriately. He gave his time and his advice free of charge, which will probably have saved us around £15,000 in legal bills, so a huge 'Thank you' to Howard.

Our Sunday Club has been kept going with Kate Doody's wonderful work on our Facebook and YouTube channels - she also helped us have a 'sort of' Light Party. Of course, we could not have the numbers or the activities we usually have, but we did have families and we had lights, balloons, and music! All enjoyed themselves, just prior to being locked down again. Thank you, Kate, for all your hard work and creativity, keeping our young people focused on God.

I am grateful to the Church Wardens for all their hard work over the year, keeping us ticking over and ensuring the Church stays warm and safe. I particularly want to thank April as she comes to the end of her term as Church warden. She has kept a close eye on the council's connection with

the Jaqmara family which has not always been easy. She ensured we had organists every week when we didn't have a resident one, and she was part of the interviewing process for both Tristan and Ian. April has organised the Welcomer's rota and ensured that we have been clean and safe during the Pandemic. April put all her energy into the stewardship campaign, which was incredibly successful and which we can all be thankful for during the pandemic, as most giving is now planned. I shall miss our meetings at her home, which were always well planned, and where she supplied us with lemon cake, biscuits and plenty of coffee! Thank you, April.

I give thanks to Jeff for his constant help and care in keeping our church up to date with DBS checks, training, and safeguarding protocols. Safeguarding is of the utmost importance in Bletchingley, ensuring all can worship God in freedom and safety. Thankfully, we have had no breaches of safeguarding protocols, but that does not make us complacent, it makes us even more determined to ensure that everyone in a role knows what the rules are and follows them.

Even though we haven't always been in church to worship, I give thanks to our Verger Cyril for his dedication in keeping our church 'liturgically' correct. If you haven't noticed, the colours and décor have all been kept correctly regardless of whether we are physically worshipping in church or not. It means that when people walk into church, they can still feel the spiritual season we are in which aids our sense of the spiritual journey. This has been enhanced by the dedicated group of flower arrangers who have continued to brighten our church with beautiful colours and smells. Of course, we can't forget the magnificent tree that brought focus to our Advent and Christmas journey. A big 'thank you' goes to Dame Sarah Goad for donating it, I know it brightened up many dark days for people.

When we did come back to church, we were able to celebrate the ministry of Revd. Penny and our Reader John Buck. Both retired from the role they had with us, Penny has Permission To Officiate, so we will still see her in our services, but John has retired from PTO. We have all benefited from their ministry amongst us and it was good to be able to give thanks for that whilst we could.

I know people in the village missed being able to come into church when it completely closed, so it was great for everyone when we could open for individual prayer. But there is one group among us that have reminded

people that the church is still there, and that we are still praying for them. Our bellringers have rung when they have been able to and it has always been appreciated by folk throughout Bletchingley. So, thank you Bellringers for this. I also need to thank Ed Muller, our Tower Captain, for not only keeping an eye on the ropes, but also for making sure the tower clock is wound every week!

People in the village also enjoy the church yard, with many walking or jogging through it every day. Thank you to all those who have made sure the grounds around the church have been kept beautiful and neat for everyone to enjoy.

So much of the work we do as a church would not happen without one person - Val Muller, our PCC Secretary. She has produced the newsletter each week, which I know so many of you enjoy, with lovely photos, stories, bible readings and the organising of a zoom coffee meeting after the service on a Sunday. Val has kept the PCC going throughout the pandemic, which was hard enough, without other pressures. And if you look at our website you will notice that it is new and up to date. This has all been down to Val as well. I'd like to thank Val for her dedication, hard work, support and care.

We have been separated, but we have managed to stay together, grow in numbers, and give generously to our community, with an amazing collective effort to raise over £4000 to those who needed it most at Christmas.

So I want to close with this quote from Colossians 3:14-16

'And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.'

We really do have much to be thankful for, let us be ready to come back to church services, with love and peace in our hearts for each other. Let us allow the word of Christ to live in, and through us, so that we can act wisely, helping each other, building each other up. And let us be thankful to God for all that we have received and will receive. Amen.

Revd. Phaedra Pamphilon-Green

## PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

I think it would be true to say that 2020 was a year like no other!

### Church Life

St Mary's can be grateful to a large number of people who have worked hard to maintain our church and the life of our congregation during the long months of 'Lockdown'. Life has been very different but we have all become very adept at using Zoom, using face masks, remembering social distancing, using hand sanitiser, all expressions that were not part of our vocabulary a year ago. Church services have been maintained throughout, the church choir sings 'virtually', the church building is kept clean, it was decorated at Christmas and most people have been keeping in touch with each other.

Zoom has been used extensively for

- 'coffee' after church,
- the bellringers weekly visit to the 'pub' after ringing on Ringing Room,
- PCC meetings,
- Sunday Club who are doing amazing things,
- the Men's breakfast (they do miss their full English though!).

### **Thank you to everyone.**

However, there are two people to whom we need to say a very special thank you.

### **The Rector**

Throughout the pandemic we have been enormously lucky to have enjoyed really inspiring, beautifully produced services, premiered on YouTube each week, by our Rector. When we went back to church in the summer these

services continued for all those who were unable to return to church. **We owe Phe, our Rector an enormous thank you**, it has required a great amount of hard work and inspiration, to say nothing of mastering new technology.

#### **Ian Skipper our organist**

We started 2020 on a very optimistic note as we welcomed Ian Skipper as our new organist and choir master. As the year progressed, we began to appreciate just how lucky we were to have him. He gives each member of the choir recordings of their musical part to record at home, he then blends these recordings together to create the church choir that is heard most Sundays.

**Thank you so much Ian for your hard work.**

#### **THE WORK OF THE PCC**

The PCC had three scheduled, two emergency meetings and one meeting was cancelled at beginning of the first lockdown period. Also due to the pandemic the APCM has been postponed twice. When necessary some of these meetings were on Zoom.

In January 35 people attended a Safeguarding Course run in church.

In January we adopted the Southwark Diocesan Health and Safety Policy.

A working party was formed to investigate the possibility of installing a refectory at the back of church. This committee has met once but unfortunately lockdown has prevented any further work.

There is a new website.

A collection at harvest raised £1000 for the work of Welcare

At Christmas, a special collection. to support the neediest families in our village school, raised over £5000

However much of our time this year has been dominated two issues.

**THE PANDEMIC.** The first lockdown meant that the church was completely shut. Eventually the church was opened for private prayer and then, towards the end of July, services were resumed, albeit with a few differences.

The number one priority has been to keep everyone as safe as possible, to encourage those who wanted to, to return to church whilst also remembering those who were self-isolating and unable to come. At all stages, a risk assessment was carried out.

- Government guidelines stated that no-one over 70 or in an at risk group should clean church buildings. This meant a sad farewell and a **really big thank you** to the team of cleaners who had looked after the church so diligently for many years.
- A new cleaning regime and team has been introduced. We thank the 'new' team very much for undertaking this vital work.
- At the meeting in July arrangements for holding services in church again were discussed. A ticketing system was introduced for both 'track and trace' purposes and also, due to social distancing, seating in church was reduced. A churchwarden's staff is just the right length to measure such distances!
- As the area went into tier 3 and then tier 4 just before Christmas, it was felt the only way to keep the congregation safe was to again close the church for services but keep it open for private prayer. Those who visited the church during this period loved the atmosphere created within the church by the traditional decorations which were already in place.
- Another priority has been to try to keep everyone feeling connected with each other and the church, even if they were not seeing each other face to face. The Rector attempted to phone everyone once a fortnight but this became too big a task for one person so several others were asked to help. A weekly newsletter has been circulated and there have been Zoom meetings after the Sunday Services.

**DATA SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST** (\*see notes below). At the very end of July, the Rector and PCC Secretary received a Data Subject Access Request from two members of our congregation (the subjects). A similar request was also made to the diocese. The subjects asked for copies of every document in which their names, initials, or any other form of identification had been used. Emails, minutes of PCC meetings, records etc. dating back to 2017 had to be searched.

This was quite a challenge, very time consuming and few of us have had any experience in producing such reports. An emergency meeting of the PCC was called.

- It was decided to employ solicitors specialising in this work. It was agreed to give them an initial budget of up to £5000 plus VAT, after that they would need to agree any further expenditure with the PCC.
- All members of the PCC were asked to search their files and send copies of any PCC information they held which included any reference to the subjects to the solicitors who had set up a dedicated access point.
- As a DSAR can only be made individually this took a huge amount of time and effort.
- Sadly this came at a time when there were other pressing issues in the village that needed attention.

A second emergency meeting was called because the PCC had been warned by the solicitors that preliminary work and telephone calls had already cost over £4000 with estimates that a further £14,500 of costs could be incurred. As a result of this

- The PCC were introduced to Howard Freeman, a GDPR specialist and he was asked to complete this work for us.
- He was appointed DPO (Data Protection Officer) for the period of time needed to complete this work.

The diocese, who also employed their own solicitors to produce their report, sent the report to the subjects. Howard Freeman looked at the material we had, and in consultation with the ICO (Information Commissioners Office), decided that we should not continue with this request.

A report stating this, and the reasons behind his decision, was sent to the subjects.

#### NOTES

\* The [\*General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)\*](#) grants data subjects the right to access any personal data an organisation holds on them. This is known as a [\*data subject access request \(DSAR\)\*](#). DSARs are not a new concept, but the GDPR introduced several changes that make requesting information easier for individuals and responding to the requests more challenging for organisations.

I would like to stress to everyone that, under GDPR, the PCC only holds the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses that parishioners have given the PCC permission to use. They hold **no** other sensitive information.

Safeguarding issues are completely confidential and although there may be matters in process that are mentioned at PCC meetings, names are neither mentioned or recorded in the minutes.

**This may have been a challenging year but I believe St Mary's can be proud of all they achieved during 2020. We look forward to 2021, when we can all come together again.**

Valerie Muller (Hon) PCC Secretary

## CHURCHWARDENS FABRIC REPORT

Well, what a year!

Before Covid impacted on our lives initially there were a couple of months of relative normality. In January the annual gas safety inspection found that the heat exchanger in the gas fired warm air heater had split, so the system had to be turned off. The heating company concluded that a repair was possible, and the heat exchanger, with much struggling, was taken away and welded up. We had to wear a few extra layers for several weeks – as our predecessors had to do for hundreds of years! The heater was returned to full operation in mid-February, following replacement of the capacitor on the flue fan.

The residual life of the existing heater is limited, so consideration is currently being given to replacement. The existing system is inefficient and rather ineffective, with a large proportion of the heat rising straight up to the roof. The C of E, and the country, is looking towards achieving net zero carbon emissions, primarily by eliminating fossil fuel use. One of the systems which we believe might be more effective in delivering comfort is underfloor heating, which is ideal for running on a low grade “renewable” heat source such as a heat pump. This, in turn, would be driven by clean renewable electricity. This type of heating is slow to warm up and slow to cool, so would suit more frequent use of the building, which we hope will be the case. We will compare this with other options, such as a more efficient warm air system. Proposals are currently being sought.

In September the architect carried out the required Quinquennial (5-yearly) Inspection. The report did not identify any major or very urgent problems but there are problems with damp. A number of items relating to safety matters have been referred to our insurers for comment. The remedial work identified is being assessed, to be carried out during 2021 where necessary. Little other fabric work has taken place during 2020.

Development of proposals for the north aisle, and for church lighting as well as the heating, have been largely on hold as a result of Covid, but are about to be recommenced.

April Alexander & Richard Fowler

## WORSHIP and CHURCH ATTENDANCE at ST Mary's

In early March precautions were put in place to prevent Covid-19 cross-infection and, by the end of the month we were in full lockdown, unable to celebrate Easter together. The Rector became very skilled at producing online services, which we continue to enjoy, much as we would like to be together.

In June the church was able to re-open again for private prayer, and arrangements were made to allow socially distanced services to resume in late July. We thank all the ushers and cleaners who helped to keep everyone safe, so that no incidents of infection took place.

In mid-December we moved into Tier 3, so the planned outdoor carol singing was cancelled. Just before Christmas we entered the new Tier 4, and it was decided that, though permitted, holding services in church was too risky, particularly the planned Christmas services. A new variant was in circulation by then and we were not able to offer any extra precautions to make services safe. Great fun was had producing a YouTube Nativity, with adults and children taking part, which formed part of an online Christingle service. The Carol Service and Midnight Service were beautiful and available at home. Services currently continue to be held online only until restrictions are eased, though the church remains open for private prayer.

Thanks to Kate Doody, the Sunday Club has been able to continue to meet via Zoom each Sunday, prior to the online service.

There were **no baptisms** (4 in 2019), and **2 weddings** (8 in 2019). The Clergy conducted **3 funerals** in church during the year.

None of the major festivals were able to be held in church. Attendance at online services can only be guessed, since the viewing statistics cannot distinguish between single viewers, couples and families. However, the viewing statistics indicate very good online attendances:

All Saints and All Souls	74
Nine Lessons and Carols	195
Nativity and Christingle	154
Midnight	197

Socially distanced services were held in church during October, when an annual attendance census is taken for the diocese, with an average attendance of 66, compared to 74 in 2019, with, additionally, between 35 and 62 online viewings each week. The statistics show that “attendance” at St Mary’s has held up very well, despite Covid, and has brought in participants from far away. Thanks to those who give regularly by standing order, the income has been largely maintained, allowing us to make our full contribution to the diocese as pledged. This has provided support to parishes who have not been in such a fortunate position.

### SAFEGUARDING REPORT

As the church was closed for much of 2020, there were no reported cases of Safeguarding problems during 2020 which required escalating to the Diocese.

However, the Rector and myself have kept in close contact on all and any Safeguarding matters. There are two reports by the Rector of one vulnerable adult and incidents within the church which did not require to be reported to the Diocese and we are keeping this in mind and under review.

Jeff Marks

### FINANCE REPORT

The results for 2020 show a very creditable surplus of just over £7,000, albeit some £2,000 less than the figure for 2019. The base of our success in 2020 was stewardship, in which virtually all members have maintained their donations and some have even topped them up with one off payments. Collections and Fees are down from 2019 as might be expected due to Covid.

Expenses were also down due to various factors associated with Covid, for example the parish administrator was furloughed. so we received a grant from HMRC, we spent less on printing and paid much less rent to Church House. There were also two items we did not have in 2019, the Quinquennial Inspection and the solicitors fees for the work on the DSAR. The Diocesan pledge has been left unchanged since 2019 but the PCC may increase it mid year if the finances turn out favourably.

It should be noted that without the £9,600 donation from the Thomas Chapman Charity we would have sustained a deficit of some £2,500.

As a result of two successive years in surplus our unrestricted reserves have grown to almost £25,000 which can be seen on the Balance Sheet and which is very close to the objective identified in our Financial Policy. A sum of £20,00 was transferred to our CBF deposit account, bringing the total to over £40,000 leaving a sufficient sum in our current account for the day to day running of the parish. Cash can be transferred back to the current account at short notice if needed.

The only movement in the Fabric Fund – see Restricted Funds - was the boiler repair for £1802 which was donated by the Friends of Bletchingley Church – our grateful thanks to them. The Christmas Appeal and the Hungry Hermit are discussed below. The Gift Collection item was used to manage the collections for the two leaving presents and is self cancelling within the year.

The Hungry Hermit, which had to cease operations early in the year,



disbursed nearly all its reserves, making donations to Welcare, Redhill Food Bank, Surrey Air Ambulance and Bletchingley United Charities.

Cash donations from St Mary's amounted to £1,200 comprising £1,000 to Welcare following the collection at the Harvest Festival. £200 was donated to the British Legion reflecting the collection in 2019 which was regrettably missed at the time.

A further £5265 was donated in the form of Sainsbury's vouchers to needy families via the village school. This was as a result of a campaign mounted in November to compensate for the loss of Free School Meals over Christmas and which received a magnificent response from church members and members of the public. The value of the vouchers exceeded the sum collected due to the expected claim for Gift Aid which will be deducted from the accounts in 2021.

Our thanks are due to Anthony Cock for inspecting the accounts and to Lisa Swann for managing the payroll and ploughing through the bureaucracy to make the furlough claims.

Bill Alexander (Hon) Treasurer

### CHILDREN'S WORK

When I took over as Sunday Club co-ordinator last year, I distinctly remember Glynis telling me that all I would have to do was organise the rota and Sunday Club would run itself pretty much from there. Never in a million years did I think that 2020 would turn out the way it did and see us holding a virtual Sunday Club over Zoom! In fact, I'd have never thought it possible!

Although Sunday Club was paused for a while in the first lock down, the children who attend were never far from our minds and prayers and, as soon as Church services resumed in the Summer, we were determined to find a way to get Sunday Club up and running again. That was not easy: the new rules meant that Church House was no longer available to us (as it is

not part of the Church) and the bell tower was too small a space for leaders and children to meet safely. So, we ran the first Sunday Club back outside for Harvest. We had various different activity "stations" spread out around the Churchyard, all focused on gratitude and generosity, including a prayer tree, a scavenger hunt, bubble prayers and a game involving a frisbee (which was swiftly lost into a neighbouring garden!!). The wind caused a few challenges, but everyone enjoyed themselves and it was lovely to be able to see, teach and share the good news with all of the children again.

As the weather turned, we dug out the marquee and held another outdoor Sunday Club at the end of October (with a little more protection from the elements this time!), where we learnt how being a Christian is like being a pumpkin, carved our own pumpkins and made lanterns. The pumpkins and the lanterns were then used to decorate the Church for the Light Party. Obviously, this year we had to run a "Covid-safe" party, so the format was slightly different, involving a treasure hunt around the Churchyard and the children then walking through the Church to collect a "light of the world" party bag and admire the lights.

Unfortunately, with the next lockdown in November, Church services had to stop again, and this time, we took Sunday Club virtual. Since then, almost every week at 9am (before the main service on You Tube) we have had a half hour Sunday Club on Zoom. We have done so much together including making poppies for remembrance day, making our own stables during advent, making salt dough and making pancakes. We also play games and listen to stories and songs. Somehow, 30 minutes goes very fast! We also provide the children with colouring pages and wordsearches that they can do it their own time. It requires a bit of creative thinking but it is so lovely to see the children engaging with everything and enjoying it all. The children's resilience and ability to adapt amazes and humbles me every Sunday.

We have a Facebook group and the children share what they have made on the group for everyone to see. We also share what we've been up to with the wider congregation through our notice board at the back of the Church

and through the updates in the weekly newsletter. We have had up to 7 children at our virtual sessions, aged from 3 to 8.

Who knows what the next few months and years will hold, but my hope is that the children will look back on this time and remember the fun bits, the time we drank “wine” and had a party, the time they made salt dough fish and cooked and painted them afterwards with their grown-ups, the time we baptised our teddies! Amongst it all I also hope that they are learning something about the love of God and the strength that we can all draw from our wonderful community at St Mary’s.

Last, but by no means least, I, and all of the Sunday Club families, leaders and helpers, would like to thank Glynis for organising Sunday Club so brilliantly for so many years. You have been missed this year Glynis!!

Kate Doody Sunday Club Co-Ordinator.

#### TANDRIDGE DEANERY SYNOD

The Deanery Synod is the forum for representatives of all the 26 parishes in the Deanery to meet and discuss. It normally meets three times each year.

In 2020 there was just one “normal” meeting, on **13<sup>th</sup> February**, before the world changed. Revd Michelle Edmonds was acting Area Dean. The speaker was Gabby Parikh, head of Parish Giving for Southwark Diocese, on the subject of **Encouraging Generosity and Giving**. The following are the notes of that talk, for which I thank the Deanery Secretary, Janet Harman:

Gabby said we are thinking about encouraging generosity and giving, and also about resourcing mission and ministry in our parishes. There are new ideas this year. Her starting point is always God’s generosity to us. The result of a survey to find how many acts of kindness the average person in Britain does in a month was 12. This includes simple acts like making a cup of tea, so generosity is not manifested in our society.

Answers to the following multiple choice questions were assessed by a show of hands:

- **What do you prefer to watch on TV?** (soap operas / sport / documentaries / reality TV)
- **How long have you been part of your church?** (less than 5 years / 5-20 / 20-50 / 50+ years)
- **How should we measure generosity?** (Top 3 of: how much time people give / how welcoming and hospitable people are / Sunday attendance / menial tasks / regular financial giving / donations to fundraising eg cake sales / giving lifts to church)
- **When did you last have a thank you letter from the church for your giving?** (in the last 6 months / the last year / the last 3 years / can’t remember one)
- **When was the last time your church taught on giving or had a giving review?** (in the last year / the last 3 years / a regular part of our teaching at least every year / can’t remember one)
- **What does your church teach about financial giving?** (give what you want to give / giving should be proportional / giving and generosity are part of our discipleship / tithe your money and give 10% / giving enables mission / giving should be sacrificial / we don’t teach on giving)
- **What is the Church of England’s position on financial giving?** (10% - tithing / church 5% and charities 5% / give what you want / it doesn’t have one)
- **What is the average weekly gift in Tandridge Deanery?** (£10.09 / £12.40 / £13.01 / £17.50)
- **What are your current top two priorities as a church?** (maintaining the building / paying your Parish Support Fund pledge / mission / financial sustainability / weddings, funerals and baptisms / Bible teaching / prayer / growing disciples)
- **What would you like your top two priorities to be as a church?** (options as 9 above)
- One key reason that people give is that they like getting a thank you letter. Do try this: one letter, but about seven ‘thank yous’ in a year. For example if you have just bought something for the church, such as new heating, thank people, so the link is made with giving. This can be built into different areas. The majority of

the Deanery had not received a thank you letter in the last three years. In a national survey thanking was identified as a key area in encouraging giving; it makes people feel valued. Thank you letters and notices should be a priority.

- There are many opportunities to preach about generosity and giving, particularly in the New Testament. This should happen regularly, not just on a particular Sunday. An annual giving review is recommended with a more major review every three years. It is important to remember that giving enables mission.
- The Church of England's position on financial giving is 5% to the church and 5% to charities which help build God's kingdom. In 2009 the C of E reconfirmed its challenge for church members to assess their financial giving as a proportion annually and adopt this, based on their after tax income, as (5% + 5%) as an initial target. 5% equates roughly to £1 per week for every £1,000 of annual income, so an income of £10,000 means £10 per week. Southwark Diocese achieves just over 3% and no diocese achieves 5%. Start with a little and try to give a bit more each year.
- The average planned giving weekly donation for Tandridge was £12.40 (using 2017 and 2018 parish returns). The national average was £13.01 and the Southwark average £17.50. Tandridge has pockets of deprivation but is one of the wealthier areas of the Diocese. Gabby encouraged everyone to share good practice.

- **Encouraging Giving**

- In small groups, those present were asked to consider:
- What in your parish has worked to encourage financial giving? What can you celebrate?
- What are the barriers to financial giving? What are the challenges?
- We need to build the culture of a generous church. How do people feel when they come into your church? Do you communicate what happens with a legacy?

- **Parish Giving Scheme (PGS)**

- The PGS will be launched after Easter with about ten churches and throughout the Diocese in September 2020. A direct debit scheme, now used by 27 dioceses which was developed by the Diocese of Gloucester in 2009, it provides an effective donation management place, with a drop in income<sup>21</sup> of just 4%. The Synod voted for a

deficit budget but there is more in the reserves. The central office has cut six posts to reduce the financial burden. Currently one third of parishes are self-sufficient in funding their clergy posts, the main diocesan expenditure. The Diocesan aim is for two thirds of parishes to be self-funding, with one third supported. To achsystem for parishes. There are monthly gift aid claims which help parishes' cash flow and an inflationary increase combats static giving. It offers a box to tick for an annual increase by the rate of inflation. It reduces the amount of gift aid administration and the workload of treasurers and parish giving just creeps up each year.

- Any parish interested in being one of the initial parishes should contact Gabby, who can also come to speak to PCCs if requested: [gabby.parikh@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:gabby.parikh@southwark.anglican.org).

- **Giving plate**

- Other methods and mechanisms can be effective such as a card reader and parishes need to embrace new technology. Debit cards have overtaken cash in giving today. Gabby had brought a giving plate to demonstrate and said she will be able to put together a fund to help parishes finance the equipment. She offered to run some training for a group of parishes and there is a Diocesan 'try before you buy' scheme. Please contact her if you are interested: [gabby.parikh@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:gabby.parikh@southwark.anglican.org).

During the lockdown the Deanery Lay Chair, Sue Mallinson, kept in touch on matters of concern. In May, Michelle Edmonds (All Saints, Warlingham) was commissioned as Area Dean, and James Ashton (St Mary's Oxted and St Peter's Tandridge) as Assistant Area Dean.

Finally, a virtual synod meeting was held by Zoom on **8<sup>th</sup> December 2020** (summary report thanks to the Deanery Synod secretary):

**The Pandemic and our Parishes - The Rt Revd Jonathan Clark, Bishop of Croydon**

Bishop Jonathan, who writes a blog on the pandemic (<https://clarkinholysorders.blog>) said we must first recognise how exhausting and demanding 2020 has been, with more to come. The Deanery Synod met on the day the first person in the UK beyond the trials received the vaccine. We live with anxiety but also with the Christian hope.

Does our faith enable us to look beyond the present reality? We are people of hope and this is our challenge to reassert it.

What will be the future of the Church? We discover what we valued when we miss it: the importance of place, to be in our church, holy communion, singing. Most Anglicans have realised the importance of holy communion and singing (surprisingly as most Anglican congregations don't sing!) Singing expresses a collective identity and unites people; we should sing loudly when we can again. You do have to go to church to be a Christian. Being there, as part of the community of faith, is an integral part. We must acknowledge the things we miss so these can grow in the future.

Unable to go to church, we have been accelerated forward and learnt what we can do online: filming and streaming services and meeting each other. We have discovered the digital world is also the real world. Some things can be done better there, some less well. It has been easier for newcomers to dip their toes in and more effective than many evangelism initiatives. Many people want to engage with their local church online, even if the worship is less polished. We need to continue this digital space, whilst remembering that this has made church less accessible for some. We should not prejudice either way, but find ways to continue to be one community when we are back in church. Despite the real challenge of how to sustain this with the same resources, there are also opportunities to continue to proclaim the good news. After the first lockdown churches just got on with something, showing great initiative and creativity.

These approaches should be developed in the future.

The Business Meeting included:

- Adoption of the accounts, and agreement not to ask parishes for financial contributions to the deanery for the forthcoming year.
- The 2020 revision of the Rules and Constitution of Deanery Synods was adopted.
- The Deanery Synod's Standing Committee and Deanery Mission and Pastoral Working Groups will combine to form a Deanery Leadership Team (DLT). Members of the DLT will be elected once all parishes have held their 2020 APCMs.
- **Diocesan Synod** - Catharina Stibe Hickson reported on the meeting on 5 December 2020 commending Bishop Christopher's inspirational address. The Diocese is in a good financial iev<sup>23</sup>e this, the Diocese intends to offer support to parishes, looking first at those with congregations of 50 or fewer.

- Colin Powell, Director of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education since 2013 has now retired. In his time there have been many changes and he has turned round the education system for Church Schools in Southwark which are doing much better now. Southwark is a leading and inclusive Diocese, valuing everyone as an individual and celebrating difference. Colin has led these initiatives.
- **General Synod** - April Alexander reported on the General Synod meeting held on Zoom in November 2020 over three days, highlighting two safeguarding items both requiring hard work to change how churches work to ensure that such abuse can never happen again. The independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) found the church had been more concerned about its reputation than the people involved. A new report from Oxford Diocese concerns adult abuse and the murder of a gay elderly man. We must take great care of vulnerable adults, some of whom may become vulnerable for a limited time.
- The 'Living in Love and Faith' resources produced by the Church of England explore Christian teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage: [www.churchofengland.org/LLF](http://www.churchofengland.org/LLF). Here is a short introduction:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7A3wt0jqZM>. Much damage has been done by not talking about this for many years. Whatever your views, you should be able to express them and listen to others.
- **Area Dean's Remarks** - Michelle Edmonds welcomed new clergy Deanery Synod members Lotwina Farodoye, Oxted Team; Paul Perkin, St Andrew's Limpsfield Chart; Len Abrams, South Nutfield and Helen Cook, Limpsfield and Tatsfield Team. Revd Ian Whitley is coming to Lingfield & Dormansland in February. There is a vacancy in the Warlingham Team and their curate, Ruth Chapman, was ordained priest in October.
- In September Anna Eltringham, Oxted Team Rector, was installed as a Canon at Southwark Cathedral and she has recently become an Honorary Queen's Chaplain (HQC). We send her our congratulations.
- The meeting ended with a short version of Compline.

## JUSTICE, PEACE and INTEGRITY of CREATION,

The committee have not met since the last APCM however, things have still been going on.

I am now working as part of the Reigate Archdeaconry Social Justice Forum (RASJF). This group has been formed to look at a range of social justice issues affecting our area. Current topics they have been given a remit to look at are:

Serious Organised Crime

County Lines

Modern Slavery

Refugees

Domestic Violence

Teenage Mental Health

Over the summer I attended an online course run by the Clewer Foundation on Modern Day Slavery and from this I gave a talk on Sunday 18 October which was Antislavery Day. This talk looked at what modern slavery is, how we might, unwittingly encounter it in our lives and what we can do if we suspect that we have seen slavery in action.

Since then, on 3<sup>rd</sup> October the RASJF organised a webinar on County Lines, the use of children and vulnerable people to traffic drugs and money associated with the drugs trade. We have another webinar planned for Saturday 24 April on Modern Slavery.

Details can be found at <https://rasjfmodernslavery.eventbrite.co.uk>

Jennifer Hyde

## CHURCH CHOIR

As the Chinese might say, it has been an interesting year for the choir and for church music! I had hardly got my feet under the organ console when Covid-19 struck and, consequently, since I started in post in January 2020, I have spent many more weeks out of church than in it.

This didn't stop the choir singing as we formed the Virtual Choir pretty smartly thanks to April spotting a video of the Rotterdam Philharmonic or some such performing Ode To Joy from their living rooms and wondering if we might do something similar. Well we did and, since then, the choristers have provided recordings of themselves made on mobiles and laptops from their living rooms and even from far-flung hotel rooms and caravan sites (to which they can never go back). They have done this almost every week – mostly cheerfully – and I'm very grateful for their commitment to this as, I know, are the congregation who appreciate hearing the choir leading the singing online when it is not possible in church. The choir's efforts in the lead-up to Christmas were herculean in providing music for the broadcast Nine Lessons and Carols service.

We have lost a couple of choristers during the year which is a shame of course. To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, to lose one tenor may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. The one remaining tenor upon whom we must now rely can best be described as reluctant. On the positive side, an advantage of a virtual choir is that geography and time zones are of no matter and Sarah Muller has been able to sing with us while we are in virtual form and we continue to benefit from Ellie Muller's contributions when she is able. I am delighted that Ellie Stocks has joined the alto department although you would think that with such a small ensemble we would manage to have members with unique Christian names.

The instrumentalists of the Sunday Space worship group also dipped their toes into the virtual water at Pentecost last year with a delightful rendition

of 'She sits like a bird' recorded individually from the comfort of their own homes.

Despite the circumstances, we would love to hear from anyone who loves singing and would like to join us in leading our worship - albeit virtually. You don't need to be able to read music and you will be provided with tools to help you learn. No fancy recording equipment is required and we can edit out most background noise - although whenever I hear Tallis' *If Ye Love Me* on the radio now, I find myself waiting for Anthony's carriage clock to chime...

Ian Skipper - Organist and Choirmaster

Feb 2021

### BELLRINGERS

In February, before the period of lockdown, the clapper of the 7<sup>th</sup> bell broke and was not repairable. Fortunately we were able to obtain a new one within 10 days, from Matthew Higby Ltd, the bell engineers who had made our new Training Bells a few months earlier.

One of our Training Bells now has a silhouette of a bell attached so that it can be watched on CCTV by a new ringer the early stages of learning to handle a bell rope. It gives a very good idea of a bell's rotation, in relation to the movement of the rope.

After the lockdown, and following a detailed risk assessment, our large and well-ventilated ground floor ring-room enabled us to safely ring during August and September, adhering to the 'rule of six', when required. Otherwise only a single bell was chimed for services and various appropriate occasions.

Ed Muller – Tower Captain, February 2021.