



Parish of St Mary the Virgin Annual Report 2019

Introduction by Christoph Lindner, Rector

Dear Church Member,



Unusually, this report is published at the end of September, rather than in April. So much has changed since we had to close our buildings for a while and postpone the Annual Church Meeting! During lockdown Edda and I were blessed to have a garden and many of us are cherishing God's creation in a new and deeper way. All through these last months, trees and plants have kept growing and reminded us that all healthy organisms grow.

Our title image (from one of our family services) reminds us that *the Christian life can be compared with a tree*. Healthy trees need rich soil, deep roots, a solid trunk and branches to produce leaves and fruit.

The soil represents community - as Christians we cannot thrive on our own and this has been brought home to us over the last months.

The roots represent our healthy disciplines and habits. They are often invisible, below the surface, but essential in giving us stability when the autumn winds try to dislodge us. They are what connects us deeply with God in prayer, contemplation of Scripture and committed community. We have begun to explore these healthy habits in detail since June.

The trunk and branches are the part of the tree that makes itself known in the world - it is our vision and mission as a church, which grows out of our community and our disciplines. This year we are in the process of renewing our Mission Action Plan, still based on "Pray, Welcome, Share like Jesus."

All this is essential for the tree to flourish and produce fruit - through our loving, service, witness, learning and giving. And on our cover image each leaf bears a name - God is faithful and he knows your name. "*Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.*" (Isaiah 43.1)

This booklet will help us to look back on 2019. Photos and articles encourage us to thank God for what has been and to renew our trust in him for the future.

Please join us on Sunday 11th October for our Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 10.30am, either at St Mary's or on Zoom. The APCM will be an opportunity to look ahead and share our new Mission Action Plan with you. We will also elect churchwardens, PCC members and Deanery Synod representatives. **Please register on our website (www.denhamparish.church/events) or via our church office.**

Yours in Christ,

PTO for the agenda of our Annual Meeting

**Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Denham
Annual Meeting of Parishioners and
Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 11th October 2020, 10.30am
St Mary's Church, Denham and Online via Zoom**

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

2. Vote of thanks to the Churchwardens for the previous year
3. Election of Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

4. Number of parishioners present and apologies for absence
5. Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 7th April, 2019
6. Matters arising

Reports

7. Presentation of the copy of the church Electoral Roll
8. Annual Report for 2019
9. Financial Report
10. Churchwardens' Report
11. Deanery Synod Report

Elections

12. Election of Deanery Synod Members
13. Election of members for the PCC
14. Appointment of sidesmen/women
15. Appointment of Independent Examiner
16. A.O.B.
17. 2020 and beyond: A new Mission Action Plan
18. Closing Prayer

APCM (provisional date): Sunday 25th April 2021, 11.45am, St Mary's

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Denham
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners & Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 7th April 2019

The Rector, Christoph Lindner, was in the chair.

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

The Rector gave thanks to all for being present at the meeting and opened the meeting with a prayer.

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

2. Vote of thanks to the Churchwardens for the previous year

The Rector thanked Carlene Litchmore and Samantha Carter for all their hard work as Churchwardens last year.

3. Election of Churchwardens

Carlene Litchmore and Samantha Carter have agreed to stand for election as Churchwardens for another year. Both were duly elected.

The PCC recommended a change in rules to revoke a previous suspension of 6 year term limit for Churchwardens. Therefore the Churchwardens now must stand down after a six year service.

The change was proposed by Joan Bell and seconded by Clive Ashcroft. It was duly adopted.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

4. Number of Parishioners present and any apologies

54 parishioners signed in as being present. Apologies for absence were received from Cynthia Sterry, Anne Thomas, John Breese, Brian O'Regan, Heather O'Regan, Sylvia Gammond, Lindy Piper, Philip Thompson, Monique Lyle, Michael Carmody and Natalie Sargent.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 15th April 2018

No corrections to be made. Robin Doran proposed the minutes, Doreen Dane seconded. A show of hands was given to adopt the minutes.

6. Matters arising

The Rector expressed his thanks to all who submitted reports and also to all who helped with the various aspects of the church during the year. He also gave thanks to Anne Thomas and Robin Doran who proof-read the annual report and also to Victoria Lucas for helping collate the annual report.

The Rector pointed out that on the Denham Fayre report, it should state that the Fayre raised just under £16,000 and not just over.

On the Safeguarding report, it should state that two of those volunteers were able to work with vulnerable adults only.

REPORTS

7. Presentation of the copy of the church electoral roll

The Rector expressed his thanks to Maurice Litchmore for his diligence as electoral roll officer. The electoral roll has grown from 126 to 141 members, which is remarkable in a year when the roll is renewed. This year there were 35 new first-time applicants, while others have not renewed their membership. Some have passed away or moved away and we thank God for the contribution which they made over the years.

The Rector encouraged those who are not on the electoral roll yet to consider signing up next year.

8. Annual Report for 2018 (available in advance).

The Rector commended the printed annual report to the church. Good feedback has been received on the report, as it has been made more reader-friendly with photos and a visual timeline showing the highlights in the life of the church during the last year.

There are many unsung heroes of our church and a special mention of thanks was given to Eve Harrison who has been co-ordinating the adverts for the church magazine for more than 30 years and has recently stepped down from this role.

9. Financial report.

Mike Stewart, the Treasurer, was pleased to advise that 2018 has been a good year financially for the church.

There is a small surplus in the General and Fabric Fund and an overall growth of £11,900 in the funds in total.

Balance sheet shows £300,116 in total funds, matched with cash resources of £320,571.

Income in general fund was approximately £135,000, of which just over £80,000 came through Planned Christians Giving. Mike Stewart thanked all for their generous donations and reminded us that gift-aidable donations allow us to claim 25% from the government. Approximately £24,000 will be received back this year in gift aid.

We donated £18,609 to various charities this year. Vestry Teas were held in support of 14 charities (apart from our own church funds).

We also received very generous donations towards the Fabric Fund.

Parish Giving Scheme (PCG): everyone present had our vision brochure and the Parish Giving Scheme leaflet in front of them. The new scheme was introduced and its advantages outlined: it gives us better control together with a reduction in administrative burden. Gift aid will be received on a monthly basis instead of an annual basis and this will help with our cash flow.

Mike Stewart also advised that if you feel that you cannot make the switch to the new scheme, the old system will remain in place. However, he would prefer people to move to the new scheme to improve cash flow and get gift aid more quickly. The blue and green envelope scheme can continue but it was

encouraged to switch to the new scheme. Offerings during services will continue. For some this is part of their spiritual giving and they will want to give through PGS and at services.

Mike Stewart underlined how important regular giving is, as it represents 75% of our income. It was noted that the PCC have already started to review their giving. The Rector gave thanks to Mike Stewart and Gerald Miller for the smooth transition from one treasurer to the next. Christoph also expressed his thanks to Mike Stewart for the time and the extra work he has given to the PGS.

No questions were asked about the financial report. The report was proposed by Clive Ashcroft and seconded by Pam Montgomery. It was unanimously adopted by a show of hands.

10. Churchwardens' report

The Rector commended the report in the annual report to the attendees. No questions arose.

11. Deanery Synod Report

The Rector thanked Michael Carmody and Janet Allen who represented Denham Parish at Deanery Synod over the last year. He commended the Deanery Synod report in the annual report.

ELECTIONS

12. Election of Deanery Synod Members.

No new candidates have been received for Deanery Synod this year. There is one post available on the Deanery Synod.

13. Election of Members for the PCC

The Rector thanked all PCC members who are trustees of the life and the vision of the church and who help the church move forward.

Carole Wadlow, Clive Ashcroft, Pam Montgomery, Tony Drane and Joan Bell's term of office on the PCC has come to an end. Joan and Tony will not be standing for election for another term.

The Rector thanked Tony Drane for his diligence, expertise and servant-heart. He was presented with a gift. Joan Bell has been an active member of the team over the last 3 years, especially at St Mark's. She was thanked for her diligent and prayerful contributions, seasoned with a dry sense of humour. She was presented with a gift.

Carole Wadlow, Clive Ashcroft and Pam Montgomery have agreed to stand again for another term. Brian O'Regan and Charles McClelland have been nominated as new members of the PCC.

All five candidates were duly elected with a show of hands.

14. Appointment of sidesmen/women

An updated list of sidesmen and sidewomen (all on the electoral roll as per Church Representation Rules) was tabled at the meeting and they were duly appointed.

The following names were removed: Chris Macqueen, David Babb, Janet Drane, Jenny Browne, Joan Bell and Rosemary Doran. The Rector thanked them.

Mike Stewart and Jane Brown have been added to the sidesteam. The list was proposed by Carlene Litchmore, seconded by Caroline Ashcroft and duly approved.

15. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The Rector gave thanks to David Steel who audited our accounts. He has offered to audit our accounts for another year. Doreen Dane nominated David Steel as Independent Examiner and Jane Brown seconded. He was duly appointed.

16. A.O.B.

Doreen Dane asked if the images on the front of the magazine could be improved. Pam Montgomery expressed her thanks to Louise Hardy (organist), the choir and also to Victoria Lucas (Parish and PCC secretary).

17. 2019 and beyond.

The Rector gave thanks to God for a successful year. God makes us capable of doing wonderful things, he is present now and will be in the future so that we can continue to serve him in his strength.

He reminded everyone of the three dimensions, UP, IN and OUT.

First dimension is 'UP'- to be rooted in prayer and worship. In the run-up to Pentecost we will take part in the 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer initiative and we are looking to offer individual prayer for people during our 10.30am services soon. Our services will continue to be reviewed and refreshed this coming year.

The second dimension 'IN' – building a strong community. The Rector encouraged all to join a ministry team and/or a lifegroup where you will be known, and can care for others. A fourth lifegroup will start after Easter and there will be a confirmation service at the end of June.

The third dimension 'OUT' – how we share the love of Christ in word and deed. Last year we hosted a number of events during Rethink week. The PCC regularly review our welcome and have recently reflected on understanding everyone's needs such as parents with babies, people with limited mobility, partial hearing and sight. At the heart of the OUT dimension is the sharing of the good news and some ideas are: connecting with seniors, young people and parents (a parenting course will start in May), maximising opportunities around the Christmas season, improving our follow-up on baptisms, weddings and funerals and starting to connect more with those living in New Denham.

This year we will begin to renew our Mission Action Plan, starting with the PCC day in May and later with an event for the whole church.

We all have a role in God's good plans. He has given us all gifts, talents and natural connections. The Rector encouraged us to use them in serving God's kingdom. It is a great timing to review our giving and switch to the Parish Giving Scheme at this time of great uncertainty, trusting in God's provision and faithfulness.

The meeting ended with the 'Leading Your Church into Growth' prayer.

APCM (provisional date) Sunday 26th April 2020, 11:45am St Mary's

**Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Denham
Annual Report and Financial Statements
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31 December 2019**

Incumbent:

Rev'd Christoph Lindner, The Rectory, Ashmead Lane, Denham, UB9 5BB

Bank:

Barclays Bank, 142 High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1JX

Independent Examiner:

David Steel, Danescroft, 37 Kingsway, Chalfont St. Peter, SL9 8NX

Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Denham – Annual Report for 2019

Background

The PCC of St Mary's Church, Denham has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, Christoph Lindner, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church through regular public worship, pastoral work, teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses, events, small groups and religious assemblies in schools; children's and youth work; working for the common good of the parish in co-operation with other agencies; supporting other charitable work in the UK and overseas; ecumenical co-operation with other churches.

Membership

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and in 2011 was registered with the Charity Commission as THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, DENHAM with Charity Registration Number 1144358.

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the annual parochial church meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Up to the APCM 2018:

Incumbent: Christoph Lindner, the chairman

The churchwardens: Carlene Litchmore (vice-chair), Samantha Carter.

Elected members of the PCC were Robert Ash, Clive Ashcroft, Joan Bell, Dexter Brown, Tony Drane, Pam Montgomery, Kathy Paine, Tim Sole, Mike Stewart, Anne Thomas, Carole Wadlow, Sharon Williams.

The representatives on the Deanery Synod were Michael Carmody and Janet Allen. Judith Babb was in attendance. The treasurer was Mike Stewart. The secretary was Victoria Lucas.

From the APCM 2019:

The churchwardens: Carlene Litchmore (vice-chair), Samantha Carter.

Elected members of the PCC were Robert Ash, Clive Ashcroft, Dexter Brown, Charles McClelland, Pam Montgomery, Brian O'Regan, Kathy Paine, Tim Sole, Mike Stewart, Anne Thomas, Carole Wadlow, Sharon Williams.

The representatives on the Deanery Synod were Michael Carmody and Janet Allen. The treasurer was Mike Stewart. The secretary was Victoria Lucas.

Committees

The *Cockpit Crew* is the *Standing Committee* of our PCC. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council. Apart from its statutory members (Rector and Churchwardens) the members are Clive Ashcroft, Kathy Paine and Mike Stewart.

Our *Fabric Committee* looks after the fabric of St Mary's Church and the churchyard. The members are Robert Ash (chair), Clive Ashcroft, Dexter Brown, Tony Drane, Philip Hardy, Roy Lyle, Gerald Miller and Mike Stewart.

St Mark's Committee is a sub-committee of the PCC within the ministry of Denham Parish Church, responsible for the maintenance and running of St Mark's Church Hall. The Committee members are Michael Carmody (chair), Brian O'Regan (treasurer), John Breese, Edda Lindner, Anne Thomas. The Rector and churchwardens are ex officio members.

St Mark's Development Group continued to meet as a sub-committee of the PCC with the brief to explore how St Mark's Hall can be developed. Its members were the Rector (chair), Michael Carmody, Roy Lyle, Brian O'Regan, Kathy Paine, Mike Stewart.

Church Attendance

Please refer to the Electoral Roll Report below for details on the Electoral Roll.

The usual Sunday attendance, counted during October, was 110 adults and 15 children. Around 950 adults and 150 children came to our Carol and Christmas services in December. In addition we hosted two Carol services for the local schools at St Mary's, as well as "Carols and Readings for Christmas" at Denham Garden Village.

Electoral Roll Report

St Mary's Denham Church Electoral Roll has been reviewed and amended as required by the Diocesan Synod and is available for viewing at this meeting. The roll will also be displayed on St Mary's, St Francis and St Mark's Notice Boards.

The review for this year has resulted in an increase of three on the 2019 roll. There are eight new members whilst five members were removed. The number of names entered upon the Church Electoral Roll for the parish is one hundred and forty four (144).

Parishioners who are listed on the roll are entitled to vote at this meeting. However in order to qualify for nomination to the PCC they must have been registered on the Electoral Roll for at least six months.

Addresses have been checked and verified by the Churchwardens and are held on the Electoral Roll Database. In accordance with the Data Protection guidelines, addresses of members are not published on copies of the roll that are on display in the churches of the parish.

New applications may be submitted after the closure of this meeting for inclusion on the next roll. Application Forms are available from the Electoral Roll Officer or at St Mary's from the display area near the church entrance or from our website: www.denhamparish.church/apcm.

Copies of the Church Electoral Roll Certificate will be displayed for a minimum of fourteen days alongside the roll already on display in the parish churches after this meeting. A further copy will be sent to the Secretary of the Deanery.

Maurice Litchmore, Electoral Roll Officer

PCC REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2018

Aims, Objectives & Activities

Our aims and objectives are summarised by our vision statement, which the PCC adopted in 2018:

We pray like Jesus. Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God as 'Father' and was in constant communication with him. As his followers we want all our life to be grounded in our relationship with him.

We welcome like Jesus. We have experienced God's welcome in Jesus and want to be a welcoming community for everyone.

We share like Jesus. We are called to share life, faith and ministry and to develop a culture of generosity that speaks of our generous God.

From this broad vision statement flows our *Mission Action Plan* for 2018-19, which forms the basis of the review of achievements and performance below.

The PCC met ten times in 2019, as well as for a PCC Away Day in June. Some of the areas of ministry we focused on over the year were: the Alpha Courses, Safeguarding, recruitment and data protection (GDPR), the welcoming and housing of our new associate ministers, implementing the Parish Giving Scheme, planning the major events of our church's life, the ongoing plans for developing St Mark's, preparing a new Mission Action Plan, finance and sub-committee updates, as well as a number of important management, fabric and churchyard matters.

In January we welcomed Ian Jennings and Nnamdi Maduka as Associate Ministers. In June we said thank-you and good-bye to Francis and Annabel Moloney. Francis was our Parish Assistant for three years while training as a minister.

Our standing committee (Cockpit Crew) met ten times.

Achievements and Performance

Our Mission Action Plan for 2018-2019 had the following objectives:

We will offer an introduction to the Christian faith at least once a year.

Starting in January we ran **Alpha** for the first time. It was hosted by our three lifegroups. Francis Moloney ran a special **Youth Alpha**. In total, we had about 50 attendees across these groups.

We will start further lifegroups to help us grow in faith and friendship

Lifegroups are designed to help us grow in faith and friendship. At the end of 2019 we have four lifegroups, which use different materials, but follow a similar structure of catching-up, worshipping together, learning from the Bible and praying for each other. All three lifegroups ran Alpha in the spring term and welcomed guests to their groups.

The Monday morning women's lifegroup and Monday evening lifegroup continue to meet in the Rectory.

During the first half of the year Nnamdi Maduka came alongside Francis Moloney to take on his lifegroup. They now meet on Wednesday evenings, co-led by Tim and Kath Sole.

In June and July several lifegroups ran the *Prayer Course*.

In September, Ian Jennings started our fourth lifegroup, especially (but not exclusively) for seniors.

Fifteen church members, most of whom were already members of lifegroups attended Spring Harvest (a national Christian conference / holiday) in April.

(See photo on the next page)



We will appoint a second ordained minister to sustain and develop our ministry

In January we welcomed Ian Jennings and Nnamdi Maduka as Associate Ministers. After a thorough process we had a clear sense that they were “God’s candidates” for Denham Parish Church. Both have settled in well. Our Rector very much appreciates working with them as a team. Together our three ministers represent ‘unity in diversity’ which is one of our central values.

We will refresh our communications and publicity (e.g. website, church magazine)

Under the capable editorship of Cathy Macqueen, 2019 was the first full year of our new-format Denham Parish News. The magazine is full-colour and published five times a year. The annual subscription fee remains £5 and together with income from advertisements we break even. The vision is to provide a medium that engages both the church family and the wider community in Denham. To that end we continue encouraging regular church members to take out a subscription (this can be done informally by paying £5 once a year and picking up your copy from church) to cover our printing costs and provide extra copies to give away for free.

In 2019 we began to use Facebook more intentionally, with some paid adverts for special events. It is not clear yet whether they make any impact. It is critical that church members who are regular users of Facebook ‘network’ our events and messages with their own friends. We have much to learn about the use of social media.

We are also taking out occasional full-page adverts in “In and Around Denham”.

We will draw up plans to improve St Mark’s Hall and implement them.

Our St Mark’s Development working group, set up in 2018 to develop a comprehensive proposal, continued to meet. They produced an excellent briefing document laying out the various options for improving St Mark’s. In November the Diocese of Oxford awarded us a grant of £3,000 to conduct a Feasibility Study (available for two years).

We will develop relationships with selected mission partners, working both in the UK and abroad.

In 2019 we welcomed guest speakers from Tearfund and Bible Reading Fellowship. A regular feature in Denham Parish News introduces our Mission Partners and gives updates on their activities. We continue to be committed to giving 5 percent of our income to our mission partners. Of course we will also continue to support other charities throughout the year, on special occasions and through Vestry Teas.

Conclusion: Growing a Healthy Tree

During 2019 we began to renew our mission plan with special PCC meetings and a Vision Day for the whole church family in September, under the heading "We are family". Jesus' parables speak about a kingdom that *grows* - our call is to grow in depth of worship and service and by inviting more people to follow Jesus.

Our title image (from one of our family services) reminds us that the *Christian life can be compared with a tree*. Healthy trees grow and they need rich soil, deep roots, a solid trunk and branches to produce leaves and fruit (see page 1).

Each of the leaves on the tree has a name of a church member on it - it is a joy and privilege to be part of this community with so many 'leaves' - people from all ages and walks of life.

Sometimes following Jesus can be challenging – that's why we need deep roots. As we look back on 2019 we have so much cause to thank God for his faithfulness to us and for the church family who pray, serve and celebrate with us.

Thank you for being part of this church family and for sharing in the mission of Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

A special thank you to the *ministry team*, which consisted of Samantha Carter, Louise Hardy, Ian Jennings, Edda Lindner, Carlene Litchmore, Victoria Lucas, Nnamdi Maduka and Francis Moloney. They were leading the day-to-day work of our church in its various aspects and were a vital support for the Rector and our whole church family, as was the whole PCC.

Please take the time to read the individual reports in this booklet – they are a wonderful expression of how we pray, welcome and share like Jesus!

On behalf of the PCC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Lindner', written in a cursive style.

Rev'd Christoph Lindner, Rector

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT 2019

This year has been a fairly busy period covering a wide spectrum of activities, although not all included, the ones that are here serve to provide an insight of the role of the churchwardens.

The Churchwardens are pleased to report that the church buildings and contents are in good order. More detailed maintenance activities are highlighted within the Fabric Report.

Kicking off 2019 with a bang. In January we formally welcomed Reverends Ian Jennings and Nnamdi Maduka in a Licensing Service at St Mary's. Needless to say there was a lot of organising to do, although exciting! All the main players apart from the Bishop of Oxford duly turned up 24 hours previously, completed the rehearsals and no doubt went off to bed looking forward to the following day. Ah "blanket day"; the snow came, the Bishop, the Area Dean and some of the other dignitaries got snowbound, but thanks be to God, Guy Elsmore - Archdeacon of Buckingham substituted magnificently for the Bishop; the weather could not curtail the church from being packed and we had a successful Licensing Service. Our thanks to all in providing their flexible support on the night.



Our Palm Sunday Service, with the procession in fine voice from the Memorial Hall through the village with Joey the donkey to St Mary's was well attended. At this year's Maundy Thursday Supper we shared a "bring and share meal" which was then followed by the usual practice of all diners receiving Holy Communion. This was then followed by a team of us stripping the Communion table.

In May the Churchwardens and Rector attended the Archdeacon of Buckingham Visitation for 2019 at St Mary's Church in Slough. The purpose of the visitation which is conducted as a service of worship is to formally install Churchwardens (where Carlene

and Samantha made our Churchwardens' Declaration with the welcome support of Christoph) within the Deanery as trustees and empowering them to undertake their responsibilities of the role. Hence the Churchwardens occasionally lead a service as directed by the Rector.

In June, St Mary's bid a warm farewell to **Francis and Annabel Maloney**; Francis who served as our Parish Assistant over the past 3 years, having duly completed his training and is now an ordained minister at St Leonard's, Redditch, in the Diocese of Worcester. We thank them for their contributions during the time with us and our prayers go with them on their path in their ministry.

Later on in the month, the Churchwardens were once again in ceremonial mode with our first **Confirmation Service** at St Mary's for some time, conducted by the Bishop of Buckingham. We were represented by thirteen members from our regular congregation; our congratulations to them.

There was a concentrated effort in securing the parish's historical records. With the help of volunteers, volumes of registers, logs and correspondence from the parish were reviewed, indexed and taken to the Archive in Aylesbury.

This year's **Patronal Festival** was celebrated in a "Hymns and Pimm's" service at St Mary's. All those who attended the celebration were treated to a feast of music and songs led by our Choir and the Choir of the Church of the Most Holy Name (RC) whilst enjoying a glass of Pimm's.

We received many gifts from members of the congregation for Harvest and with a few volunteers separated, packaged and distributed the gifts amongst the community, which were well received.

December was a very busy month; preparation of the Church for the numerous Christmas Services and gatherings whilst making time for the everyday happenings. We distributed floral gifts to members of families who have lost loved ones or became housebound during the year. (Midnight) Holy Communion was well attended; on Christmas day we had a family service which included Holy Communion - then rested!

During the year we welcomed guest speakers Bobbie Ennals (Tearfund) and Canon Richard Fisher (Chief Executive, Bible Reading Fellowship).

We remember with thankfulness members of our church family who passed away in 2019. We thank all the sides-persons, readers, intercessors and servers for their continued diligent service. We thank the cleaners of St Mary's and St Mark's, flower arrangers and the refreshments team whose dedication we could not do without. We thank the choir and bell ringers for their talents in making our services enjoyable.

Carlene and Samantha thank Christoph, Ian and Nnamdi, Philip Constable (who faithfully sets up for our 8am Holy Communion), Victoria (Parish Secretary) the PCC and the congregation for their support and prayers during the year.

(Carlene Litchmore and Samantha Carter)

2019 FINANCIAL REVIEW AND RESULTS

The accounts, which have been reviewed by David Steel FCA, acting as an Independent Examiner, show an increase of £4,369 in the General Fund and reductions of £20,341 in the Fabric Fund and £4,163 in the Church Growth Fund. At 31 December 2019, the General Fund stands at £47,069, the Fabric Fund at £209,502 and the Church Growth Fund at £23,410. Cash balances totalled £302,409.

Whilst these results demonstrate that the financial position of the Parish remains satisfactory, 2019 has been a year of change and the outlook for the medium-term future is challenging and will need to be addressed over the next two years. The main causes for concern are:

A significant reduction in Planned Christian Giving (PCG) which totalled £47,831 in 2019 compared to £80,053 in 2018. This reduction was primarily due to the loss of two of our most generous donors both of whom have moved away from this area. This was partially offset by the change to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) that was introduced in June 2019, more detail of which is given below.

2019 saw a one-time increase in the amount of Gift Aid Tax recovered which reflected the high PCG from last year and the change to the PGS that enables gift aid to be recovered every month rather than annually after the end of the tax year. This saw an increase in Gift Aid to £35,093 in 2019 – a significant increase on £21,710 received in 2018. In 2020 we are budgeting for this to reduce to £22,800.

For a variety of reasons our Parish Share will begin to increase over the next few years with a 4% increase in 2020 and probably a similar increase in 2021.

For some time, we have been aware that there would need to be some fairly major structural repairs to the church buildings. This year we have received a detailed professional evaluation of the issues to be dealt with. The good news is that our worst fears were probably unfounded, but the bad news is that there is still a lot of work to be done probably amounting to a total expenditure significantly more than would be available from the existing Fabric Fund. The Fabric Group on the PCC will be evaluating this in more detail in the next few months and it is likely that the outcome of this will be a major fundraising campaign, seeking grants from relevant organisations and donations from local residents and other supporters who cherish our historic church building and churchyard.

In considering these accounts it is worth noting two accounting presentational issues. The first is that the Church Growth Fund's policy is only to support staffing costs for the first year of a new staff member (in this case the Associate Ministers). These costs were therefore charged to the Growth Fund in 2019. However, to ensure that the Church Growth Fund (CGF) is not unhelpfully

depleted, the PCC agreed to a regular monthly transfer to the CGF from the General Fund which in the year amounted to £10,000. In 2020 and future years all these costs will be charged to the General Fund, which will also benefit from the rental income from St Mark's House, which in fact more than covers the cost of the Associate Ministers.

Secondly, the PCC agreed that the costs of maintaining the Church and the Churchyard should be transferred to the Fabric Fund from the General Fund. These costs are covered by the income from the May Fayre and St Mary's Festival, all of which is always credited to the Fabric Fund.

The notes to the Accounts provide analysis of some of individual cost heads which are broadly similar to previous years. Note 7 sets out the detail of the expenditure this year from the Fabric Fund which indicates the type of works necessary on a regular and recurring basis.

These accounts do not give specific details but we have this year benefited from a number of generous legacies and one time gifts. The PCC would like to thank all such donors and their families for these gifts and would like to take this opportunity to highlight the enormous value of legacies of this nature to the mission and ministry of our Church, and would ask all members of the Church family to consider this in their wills.

As noted above, in June this year we introduced the Parish Giving Scheme in Denham. This has been very successful with the total number of regular monthly donors increasing from 57 to 69, an increase of over 21% and with most of the existing donors increasing their monthly gift and agreeing to a regular inflationary increase.

It is self-evident that without the faithful commitment of all givers, the work of Denham Parish Church could not continue. Thank you very much for your support in 2019 and through the coming year.

(Mike Stewart, PCC Treasurer)

NB. The financial statements on the following pages will be available in a larger format at our APCM.

Correspondence Address for the PCC:

St Mary's Church Office
Village Road, Denham, UB9 5BH

Extracted from the Annual Report of the PCC for the Year Ended 31st December 2019

The Parish of St Mary the Virgin Denham

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 December 2019

	Note	General Fund (Unrestricted)		Fabric Fund (Designated)		Church Growth Fund (Designated)		Total Funds	
		2019 £	2018 £	2019 £	2018 £	2019 £	2018 £	2019 £	2018 £
INCOMING RESOURCES									
Weekly collections		8,992	7,015					8,992	7,015
Planned Christian Giving (PCG)		47,831	80,053					47,831	80,053
Gift Aid Tax recovered		35,093	21,710					35,093	21,710
Donations & Legacies		8,136	3,358					8,136	3,358
Incoming resources from donors		100,052	112,136	-	-	-	-	100,052	112,136
Vestry Teas & Sunday coffees		2,094	3,030					2,094	3,030
Miscellaneous		2,404	4,056					2,404	4,056
Other voluntary income resources		4,498	7,086	-	-	-	-	4,498	7,086
Wedding & Funeral Fees		10,518	12,648					10,518	12,648
Transfer from General Fund						10,000		10,000	0
Denham & Patronal Festival Fairs				17,987	15,827			17,987	15,827
Miscellaneous					980		1,950		980
Donations & Legacies					21,970	5,219	1,241	5,219	21,970
Church Houses Rent Received		8,236			8,310			8,236	8,310
Income from Charitable & Ancillary Trading	1	18,754	12,648	17,987	47,087	15,219	3,191	51,960	59,735
Income from Investments - interest		3,958	3,433					3,958	3,433
Total Incoming Resources		127,262	135,303	17,987	47,087	15,219	3,191	160,468	182,390
RESOURCES EXPENDED									
Gas & Electricity		3,865	3,116					3,865	3,116
Church Insurance		0	4,113					0	4,113
Churchyard	2	0	4,287					0	4,287
St Francis House	3	1,719	942					1,719	942
St Francis Church		600	127					600	127
St Marks House	4	963	95					963	95
St Marks Church	5	0	1,657					0	1,657
Cleaning		2,555	2,980					2,555	2,980
Secretarial Expenses		11,970	11,762					11,970	11,762
Printing, Post, Books & Stationery	6	1,653	1,829					1,653	1,829
Clergy Administration & Training		3,000	3,606					3,000	3,606
Telephone		1,342	1,315					1,342	1,315
Organist		3,990	3,995					3,990	3,995
Parish Share		65,104	67,345					65,104	67,345
Childrens Ministry		675	641					675	641
Parish Hospitality		1,677	987					1,677	987
Fabric Expenditure	7			38,328	30,209			38,328	30,209
Church Growth Expenditure	8					19,382	9,478	19,382	9,478
Miscellaneous		4,938	6,587					4,938	6,587
Transfer to Growth Fund		10,000							
Donations to Charities	9	8,842	18,609					8,842	18,609
Total Resources Expended		122,893	133,993	38,328	30,209	19,382	9,478	170,603	173,680
NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES		4,369	1,310	(20,341)	16,878	(4,163)	(6,287)	(20,135)	11,901
Balances brought forward at 1st January		42,700	41,390	229,843	212,965	27,573	33,860	300,116	288,215
BALANCES C/FWD AT 31st DECEMBER 2019		47,069	42,700	209,502	229,843	23,410	27,573	279,981	300,116

Independent Examiners Statement

In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention :-

1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

a) to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 41 of the Act and

b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the requirement of the Act, as also contained in the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 have not been met.

2) to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

David Steel FCA

Date :


19/2/2020

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin Denham

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2019

	2019 £	2018 £
Current Assets		
Short term deposits	274,500	284,500
Bank current account	27,909	36,071
	<u>302,409</u>	<u>320,571</u>
Current Liabilities		
Creditors and accruals	(22,428)	(20,455)
Net Assets	£ 279,981	£ 300,116
 Funds		
General Fund (unrestricted)	45,569	42,700
Fabric Fund (designated)	211,002	229,843
Church Growth Fund (restricted)	23,410	27,573
	<u>£ 279,981</u>	<u>£ 300,116</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 28 January 2020 and signed on their behalf by
Rev. Christoph Lindner (Rector) and Samantha Carter & Carlene Litchmore (Church Wardens)


Rev C Lindner


Mrs S Carter


Mrs C Litchmore

The Notes below form part of these Accounts

Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 together with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP

Funds

The General Fund represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use & are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC. The Fabric Fund

The Fabric Fund is designated for improvements, major repairs, insurance and maintenance of the Church and the Churchyard.

The Church Growth Fund is designated for the growth of the christian message in the Parish and beyond as deemed appropriate by the PCC.

Accounting Records

The accounts, include all transactions, assets & liabilities for which the PCC are responsible in Law. They do not include the accounts of Church groups that owe their affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of church members.

Incoming Resources

Collections, planned giving & donations are recognised when received by or on behalf of the PCC
Income tax recoverable on covenants or gift aid donations is recognised when received. Funds raised by the Village Fair are accounted for net of associated costs.

Assets

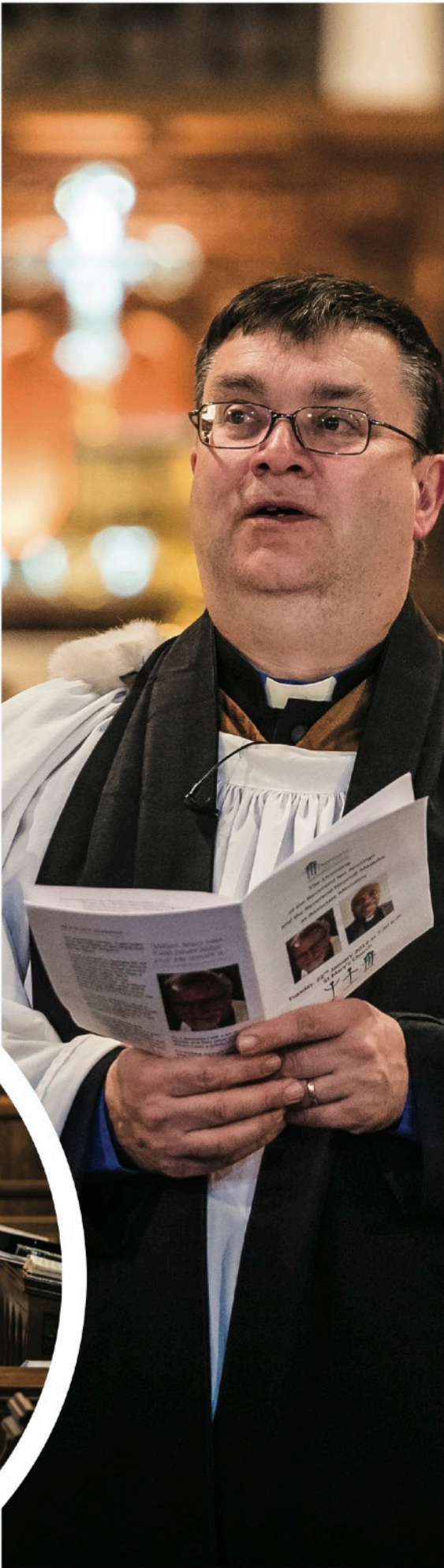
Consecrated & beneficial property is excluded from the accounts by s96(2)a of the Charities Act 1993, and no value is placed on movable church furnishings. All expenditure is written off as incurred.

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin - Denham

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2019

	2019	2018		2019	2018
	£	£		£	£
1 Donations Received (Fabric Fund)			7 Fabric Expenditure (Fabric Fund)		
Donations	1,500	21,970	Churchyard Paths & Drainage	2,857	10,601
May Fayre	17,987	15,827	Church Houses	1,589	6,208
Rent St Francis House (net of minor repairs)		8,310	New Mower		5,845
Miscellaneous		980	Professional Fees	4,358	3,333
	19,487	47,087	Roof Maintenance	784	
Donations Received (Growth Fund)			Tree Felling & Inspection	4,134	
Rethink		1,950	Organ Deep Clean	4,088	
Transfer from General Fund	10,000		Nave Cleaning & Painting	4,512	
Christmas Collections		800	Vestry Carpets	2,400	
Legacies & Donations	5,219	441	Miscellaneous	2,086	4,222
	15,219	3,191	<i>Costs transferred from General Fund</i>		
2 Church Yard			Insurance	4,193	
Parish Council Grant	(1,100)	(1,100)	Churchyard (See Note 2)	4,209	
Groundsman	4,800	5,050	Maintenance	3,118	
Minor repairs, tools & consumables	509	837		38,328	30,209
Release of 2017 Provision		(500)			
	4,209	4,287	8 Church Growth Fund		
3 St Francis House			Rethink -		3,644
Insurance	1,000	79	Associate Ministers Accommodation	18,033	2,195
Boiler service/ Alarm maintenance	590	533	St Mark's Hall Screen		1,946
Miscellaneous	129	330	Website Upgrade		1,308
	1,719	942	Miscellaneous	1,349	385
4 St Marks House				19,382	9,478
Insurance	565		9 Charitable Donations		
Boiler/alarm service	99	95	Mission Partners		
Maintenance	299		Trinity / SHOC	1,125	3,100
	963	95	Tearfund	1,125	3,100
5 St Marks Church			Church Army	1,125	3,100
Letting Income	(5,200)	(3,000)	Bible Reading Fellowship	1,125	3,100
Utilities	1,156	1,223	Wycliffe Bible Translations	1,125	3,100
Cleaning & Maintenance	2,776	2,438	Christmas Collections		
Insurance	996	996	Trinity / SHOC	1,000	800
Surplus carried forward	272		Tearfund	1,000	
	-	1,657	Other Donations		
6 Printing, Post, Books & Stationery			Royal British Legion	507	608
Photo copier - Rectory/Office	504	672	Vestry Teas & Other Donations	710	1,701
Books & training aids	359	283		8,842	18,609
Stationery & Postage etc	866	874			
	1,729	1,829			

Licensing of Ian Jennings and Nnamdi Maduka, January 2019



DENHAM VILLAGE FAYRE, MAY 2019



**CONFIRMATION SERVICE, 30 JUNE 2019,
ST MARY'S CHURCH**
CONDUCTED BY THE BISHOP OF BUCKINGHAM

'Confirmation is a special church service in which a person confirms the promises that were made when they were baptized.'



ST MARY'S PATRONAL FESTIVAL: ALL PART OF THE SHEPHERD'S FLOCK



REPORTS FROM OUR GROUPS AND MINISTRIES: FROM A TO Z



BAPTISMS

It is a privilege to welcome children (and adults!) as they begin their Christian faith journey. We had three baptism preparation evenings to give parents and godparents an opportunity to explore the meaning of baptism and then make an informed decision. The evenings were led by Christoph and Edda Lindner – often another member of the children's ministry team was present to talk about their own faith story, our groups for children and to build relationships. Adults were prepared separately for baptism.

Baptisms took place on the first, third and fifth Sundays of a month as part of the 10.30am

service or in a separate service where we could not accommodate the number of family and friends attending the baptism in a regular church service.

In 2019 we baptised 13 babies/children and two adults.

BELLRINGERS

We continue to call people to worship, remind those within earshot that the church is here, celebrate happy occasions and mark more solemn ones. This year we were pleased to ring for the licensing service for Ian and Nnamdi. We also reached the semi-finals of the Branch striking competition. I hope this has led to an audible improvement in the general standard of ringing, though we do still have occasional slightly ragged "village band" moments!

We are grateful to the volunteers who take turns to operate the chiming mechanism on alternate Sundays. More people would be welcome for this role, which can be picked up rather more easily than tower ringing and need only involve one Sunday every few months.

Bells and tower

The bells, ropes, frame and fittings remain in good order. We bought and fitted a new rope as one had worn through, and we have another in reserve. The repaint of the tower walls has made the ringing chamber somewhat brighter. We try to make sure that a suitable flag is flown on major occasions, though bad weather

can rip a flag to shreds in a matter of weeks (and make raising or lowering the flag dangerous), so for much of the year the flagpole is inevitably bare.

Death watch beetle in one of the main beams up in the tower still seems active, and we are working with the Fabric Group on the best way to deal with it long-term.

Ringers

Our numbers have stayed steady over the past year. A couple more ringers would still be welcome as other commitments, illness and advancing years means we do not always have the 6 we need on Sunday or for weddings. We would ask everyone to be on the lookout for likely candidates, a personal approach having proved to be the most successful form of recruitment.

Weddings

As in many other churches, there has been a marked reduction in the number of weddings over the last couple of years. This obviously eases the pressure of finding ringers, but the balance of wedding fees once the ringers have been paid is our only source of income to cover routine maintenance costs. Barring any major incidents our reserves will take us through what seems likely to be another quiet year in 2020, but we may need to approach the wider church for financial help in a few years' time.

(Andrew Simpson, Tower Captain)

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Little Lions *(Kathy Paine writes)*

We continue to welcome up to 25 families each week and keep ourselves very busy! Some lovely relationships have formed as mums/carers share their experiences and support each other. It's a delight to see new babies grow into



inquisitive toddlers who then go on to preschool with confidence, especially when they have heard all the Bible stories we tell!

This year we are delighted to have received funding from the New Denham Community Association which helped us to purchase mobile fencing panels to keep the children safe (see picture).

We have an all age team of invaluable helpers who enable Little Lions to thrive. A big thank you to you all. We would be very grateful for more volunteers as inevitably people move on, so please contact Edda or me if you are able to offer any time to help.

Assemblies in both local schools moved from Wednesdays to Thursdays this year and we are now able to offer three assemblies a month in each school. The team of nine (*see photo*) have delivered 58 assemblies across the two schools. Since September we have been using the Bible Society's "Open the Book" material in both schools which makes preparation much more sustainable and most of us get to deliver the same assembly twice on the same day - a good use of resources all round.



Both schools held Christmas Concerts at St Mary's Church which proved to be wonderful highlights!

Youth Alpha (*Jane Brown writes*)

Francis Molony and I ran a youth Alpha course in 2019 which proved very rewarding and enriching for all of us. We had 5 regular youngsters every Tuesday night for 10 weeks which allowed us to explore the big 'faith' questions in more detail. All of the group gave very positive feedback and Charlotte and Sadie went on to be confirmed, which was very exciting. We continue to look at ways on how to keep this age group (9-15) engaged with church and ask for your prayer support.

Parenting course

Kathy Paine and I facilitated a *Care for the Family* six week early years course at St Mark's on Thursday evenings in the summer term. We had a very engaging group of 8 parents, some local and others from further afield.

Lantern Trail 31 October 2019 - we had a good time exploring the theme of being a light in the darkness, going on a walk in the dark and roasting marshmallows - this is good alternative concept to Halloween; we would like to further develop it and draw more families in.

Sunday Club

Throughout the year the Sunday Club leaders and team provided 42 weeks of age-appropriate worship for children aged 3 upwards as part of the 10.30am Sunday Service.

A big thank you to Kathy Paine, Sonja Clements and Jane Brown for sharing the leadership of Sunday Club and to each team member who helps reliably, with great love and skill.

We are so grateful to Francis and Annabel Moloney who have been part of Sunday Club / Destiny until their farewell in the summer- we miss them! On the bright side, it's been wonderful to welcome Kim and Carole to the team.

The average attendance is at 8 children. And we can account for an astonishing figure of 100 visiting children. A few of those have even joined us now on a more regular basis and are now part of the registered children.

For those Sundays when we have baptisms we have now introduced "The Baptism box" - all visiting children from a baptism party get an opportunity to make a card. We also offer them a variety of resources: picture books, baptism cube etc to explore the theme of baptism further.



This year's Christmas Family Carols was called "The Angels knew" and we had a very special "Face board" built and painted by Jon Clements and Kath Sole — this wonderful resource can be used in years to come! Without the commitment from the 13 children and their families we could not have had such a special service. A BIG THANK YOU. How could we "advertise" this unique service in future years more effectively? Your ideas and feedback is most welcome.

Destiny (*Jane Brown writes*)

Destiny continues to meet once a month at the Rectory on a Sunday morning. It allows the youth to explore Christianity and faith in more detail and get to build friendships with their peers. We start with breakfast followed by worship, and then a youth-targeted Christian topic. We always have some great thought-provoking discussions. The musical and drama talent within the group is fantastic and we are gradually getting the young people more involved in regular services.

Air Cadets (*Christoph writes*)

In February, I started a regular 'Padre's Hour' with the ATC Air Cadets, who under the leadership of Officer Commanding Michael Easter are growing substantially in numbers. It is a privilege to get to engage with this group of young people on a regular basis.

Messy Church

We ran four Messy Church celebrations in 2019: January, February, March and June. With fairly low attendance numbers and a small team, we've decided to pause Messy Church for a season and focus on the further development of the family service instead. Watch this space and join us in prayer for our mission amongst families in our community.

(*Edda Lindner*)

CHOIR

I would like to thank each and every member of our choir (18) for their support and encouragement in the musical, spiritual and social life of our community at St Mary's. Week by week our choristers are involved in the PCC, bell ringing, pastoral care, life groups, leading intercessions, reading the lessons, serving refreshments after the morning service, vestry teas and helping at the Annual Village Fayre. In addition to being a singing group we walk together in the love and strength of our Lord Jesus Christ through the highs and lows of everyday life.

We sung at a number of special events this year including the Licensing Service of Ian and Nnamdi in January and the Confirmation service conducted by Bishop Alan in June. We said farewell to Francis and Annabel and some of us attended his ordination service in Worcester Cathedral. A number of us went to Prom Praise at the Albert Hall and to Spring Harvest in April. At the morning service in June we awarded Harrison Cail with a long service medal (90) from the RSCM as he celebrated his 98th birthday with his family. Harrison was a much loved, dedicated member of our group and we miss his tenor voice since he has stood down from the choir. In November the choir was invited by Joyce Hobson to a lovely afternoon of singing at DGV led by Christoph especially arranged for Harrison.

Social events included invitations to summer tea at the Rectory, a Christmas party at Jane and Dexter's and celebrating a significant birthday with Janet Murphy and her family.

In April a great deal of maintenance work was carried out in the bell tower overseen by Robert Ash and the fabric committee. A deep clean of our wonderful Nigel Church organ was carried out by Neil (of Lammermuir Pipe Organs). Each pipe was painstakingly removed, cleaned and returned to the case along with attention to the mechanisms, re-voicing and then the final tuning. Cameron Johal and Ben Hunt, two young organists who have been playing at some of our Sunday morning services were awarded organ scholarships to Cambridge and Oxford respectively and we wish them every success.

At the Patronal Festival in September the choir of the Holy Name led by Richard Cottle joined us to lead the Songs of Praise Service ("Hymns and Pimm's") in the afternoon and afterwards we relaxed over afternoon tea. We were also boosted by contributions from pianist John Breese and by trumpeter Joe Atkins who played superbly before going off to perform with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Proms.

In December Beverley joined with Christoph to take part in Carols and Readings at Denham Garden Village. We sang carols with residents of White Plains Care Home, Denham Manor and joined with other local organisations and groups on the Village green for the Fun Night. We were delighted that we had a number of

young people from Sunday Club and Destiny who took leading parts in an All age Nine lessons and Carols at our morning service. They were joined by contributions from Cameron Johal (organ) and two young trumpeters. For Nine Lessons and Carols by candlelight we were joined by Sara Shipton (violin), Marjo (a previous chorister), Richard Cottle and singers from the Holy Name. At our choir social we looked back over the previous year and thanked Christoph and Edda for their friendship, unstinting support and leadership. We are all part of a team and thanks also go to Ian, Nnamdi, Victoria and our churchwardens Carlene and Samantha for all their support.

We have and are continuing to expand our musical styles and have been enriched by contributions from the Maduka family. We are always on the lookout for instrumentalists and singers who would like to be involved in leading our worship.

(Louise Hardy)

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

There were four meetings of the Synod during the year, the first in March 2019 was held at Chesham Bois and the principal item of business was a presentation about 'Equipping our local churches for outreach and mission', at which four local incumbents including our own Rector told how this was currently being carried out in their parishes illustrating various methods by which this could be achieved. The examples were useful and well received.

The June meeting was held at Chalfont St Peter and the main item was again a joint presentation by local and diocesan speakers to enable our churches to get more involved with our local schools at both primary and secondary level particularly those which were not church based. Other notable items were a report on a proposed Diocesan Pilgrimage and feedback from the Oxford Common Vision Conference.

The September meeting at Tylers Green again had an education theme: Rev Kerr (Oxford Diocese Chaplaincy Adviser) introduced a Contemplative Toolkit which is proving a good tool to deepen our chaplaincy role in schools and respond to rising levels of anxiety amongst teenagers. Another speaker from the Diocese introduced a training plan for Personal Discipleship which would be open to ordinary congregational members other than training for lay leadership. An updated Safeguarding policy was approved to be used by all churches in the Deanery.

The final meeting in November at Gerrards Cross had as a main item the Deanery Budget allocations for the forthcoming financial year, an update on the locally based Personal Discipleship scheme which we had heard about at the previous

meeting with an appeal for local coordinators and trainers, also an informative video of the work of our Deanery supported missionary Steve Poulson and his work with street kids in Honduras.

(Michael Carmody)

DENHAM PARISH NEWS

Denham Parish News (DPN) has now completed a full annual cycle in the new colour format. We are very grateful for our regular subscribers and advertisers who enable us to fully cover the production costs and allow us to print additional copies to gift to visitors and at special events.

In February, we were visually reminded of how many people it takes to make DPN a true community blessing, as 25 of the DPN team shared a special 'thank you' afternoon tea together. Three of those present had been distributing DPN to their neighbours and local area for over 15 years, with a further five for at least 10 years!

Content this year has included the series 'A week in the life of St Mark's' (by Brian O'Regan) highlighting the groups who regularly use St Marks; stories from local people about their Christian faith: 'God in the life of'; as well as articles of local interest such as Newstead Woods, the Misbourne River and memories of Denham Green in the 1950s and 1960s.

I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to or been part of DPN this year – your support has been invaluable. We are always open to suggestions for future content and ideas for magazine covers – please contact me on: magazine@denhamparish.church - I look forward to hearing from you!

(Cathy Macqueen, Editor)

DENHAM VILLAGE FAYRE

2019's Fayre was a good day, people turned up in the hundreds and there was a steady throng of people along the road and in the churchyard.

Christoph and Edda gave us wonderful renditions during the day, refreshments were rushed off their feet both in the vestry and the village hall, all the church stalls were busy and sold out.

We had classic cars, a fairground for smaller children, Morris dancers, Punch and Judy, brass band on the village green and a children's activity area in the churchyard, serenaded by a jazz band.

Together with the open gardens, generously organised by the Denham Garden Club, the Fayre raised almost £18,000 and has been credited to St Mary's Fabric Fund.

As a member of the Fayre committee I would like to thank all those involved in making the day happen.

BUT we do need volunteers to help make the day run smoothly, please if you can only give an hour of your time we would be most grateful.

(Sharon Williams)

DISCIPLESHIP

2019 saw our *lifegroups* grow from three to four – Monday mornings (women only), Monday evenings, Wednesday evenings and Friday afternoon. Even in a mid-sized church as ours it is difficult to form deep friendships on the basis of a few chats before and after the weekly service. It is also very difficult to apply the readings and sermons from a service without reflections and support in a smaller group. That's why lifegroups are such a helpful way to grow in friendship and faith. Much pastoral and prayer support also happens through the members of the group and *we are committed to providing a range of groups so that more people can join a group. If you are not sure whether a lifegroup is for you, why not talk to existing members and visit one or two groups?*

Our new lifegroup started in September, is led by Ian Jennings and usually hosted by Joan Bell.

All our existing groups ran Alpha from January until April. We also ran Youth Alpha (led by Francis Moloney and Jane Brown). Alpha is proving to be an excellent programme to help people at various stages of their faith journey to explore questions of life and faith in the context of a group. A total of about 50 people took part and the Alpha Day at St Mark's in March was a very special day of encounter with God and one another. As a follow-up, several of our lifegroups ran the *Prayer Course* in June and July, which helped us to deepen our prayer life.

In April a group of 15 church members went to *Spring Harvest* again. *Spring Harvest* is a Christian conference and festival. Under the motto "Unlimited" we explored the very relevant theme of prayer and benefited from bible teaching, seminars, worship and unhurried time together (including a walk to England's smallest parish church!).

In May and June we prepared our 13 Denham candidates (including two teenagers) for confirmation, which culminated in a wonderful Confirmation service at St Mary's at the end of June conducted by the Bishop of Buckingham.

There were other opportunities to grow in our faith, such as a *Lent course* on the the story of Lazarus (written by Bishop Steven Croft).

FABRIC REPORT

As reported in last year's annual report, at the start of the year 2019, the Fabric Group had identified eight targets to be addressed in respect of building preservation and maintenance projects for St Mary's Church. Progress has been made on five of those of projects together with an additional two projects in the churchyard.

1. Interior walls decoration

The decorating contractor completed the stripping of the organ arch and the redecoration of the ringing chamber by the end of March, in time for the cleaning and tuning of the organ to be undertaken as scheduled, in early April. The removal of the white emulsion paint from the stone arch was not completely achieved owing to the nature of historic remedial works but has significantly reduced the flaking paint that littered the balcony and the organ itself. Patches of cement repairs with oil-based paint applied in the past, retain some lighter appearance. Cracks and stone joints have been left unfilled for the time being.



2. Vestry and office refurbishment

The latest stage in the Vestry refurbishment saw the laying of a new carpet in April thanks to a generous grant from *St Francis, New Denham & Willowbank Community Association*. Before that, the office had been modernised into a more functional working space by upgrading the electrics, the lighting and replacing the desk with an ergonomic model.

3. Churchyard Roses

The first phase of replacing the dead/ailing standard roses in the churchyard was undertaken in the spring when fifteen new standards were purchased from David Austin in Shropshire. Fine weather enabled us to prepare the beds, replace the topsoil and plant the standards without delay. Further planting phases are programmed for 2020.



4. Churchyard Trees

The general concern over the condition of some of the trees in the churchyard prompted the commissioning of the earlier-than-scheduled survey of churchyard trees in April, undertaken by contractor, Heritage Trees. The report that followed identified specific management needs of all the major trees and in particular the recommended felling of the lime tree adjacent Bowyer House, as it was judged to be diseased and potentially unsafe. After submitting the appropriate applications, authorisation to fell the tree was obtained from South Bucks District Council and from the Archdeacon of Buckingham and actioned in October, on one of the few fine days of the autumn! In addition, the old yew tree on the south side of the church has been 're-propped', in response to another of the survey recommendations.

5. Churchyard path repairs

Renovation work on sections of the churchyard paths was completed in November before the onset of wintery weather. As a result, the paths between the church's West Door and the Vestry now pose fewer hazards to pedestrians, moving between those two points. Paving stones have been re-laid and pointed, and the edges of the asphalt path made good.



6. Nave roof guttering installation – status

An application was made in November to the Diocesan Advisory Council (DAC) Oxford, via the online system, for a faculty authorising the installation of new roof gutters and downpipes to the nave. The aim of new guttering is to reduce the amount of wind-blown rainwater onto the external walls of the upper nave and thereby help to eliminate rainwater penetration to the roof timbers and interior walls of the south aisle. Additional re-grouting and re-sealing works of lead flashing along the nave walls, in areas of the tower/nave roof interface and nave / chancel roof interface will be included within the scope of works.

The faculty application process takes a minimum of 2 months from start to finish and often takes longer.

7. Church Damp Survey

As reported in last year's annual report, DAC approval for dust samples from drill holes to be extracted as part of the survey of structural damp proposed by Hutton+Rostron was received in December 2018. The survey was undertaken in January and a detailed report produced that is now being used by the Fabric Group to help formulate more of a strategic approach that addresses:

- general maintenance matters that inevitably and routinely arise with any listed building
- the desire to improve the church and churchyard environments so that they are attractive, appealing and comfortable spaces in which to work, visit and worship
- more specific projects that have building preservation as the chief aim

8. Fabric matters to be addressed in 2020

Areas for attention (in no particular order):

- Nave roof guttering installation
- Lightning conductor installation
- Further development of a strategy for addressing the damp in the structural walls and floor
- West and South Doors restoration
- Damaged Tower beams (death watch) – structural survey and assessment of restoration works
- Chancel lighting

(Robert Ash on behalf of the St Mary's Fabric Group)

MARRIAGE PREPARATION AND ENRICHMENT

The downward trend in the number of weddings accelerated in 2019 and it now seems that we are catching up with a trend that many other churches have seen over the last years. Many people who were married at St Mary's in the past had a childhood connection. As congregations 'grow older' and fewer children are part of local churches, these natural connections are disappearing and cannot be recreated in the short term. In 2019 we had 3 weddings and one service of dedication after a civil marriage ('wedding blessing').

Our marriage preparation helps couples to understand and embrace the vows they are going to make and to build strong foundations for a lifelong marriage. One of the helpful tools we use for this is a couple survey which bride and groom fill in independently. This is then followed up by an invitation to meet with a couple from our church for supper and for an informal conversation about the results (it is *not* a test and you cannot fail it!). Couples have found this a very helpful process and it has helped us to build stronger relationships with them. However, as many couples do not live in or near Denham, it is harder to maintain those relationships.

PASTORAL CARE

The pastoral team that we established in the autumn of 2016 met three times in 2019. We assign a main contact from the team to each individual who has particular or ongoing pastoral needs. We hold all members of the team to a rigorous standard of confidentiality. In 2019 our associate ministers joined the pastoral care, with Ian taking a leading role in some of our meetings.

Much pastoral care is of course done naturally amongst friends. We believe that one of the best places for it is the **lifegroup** and other ministry groups such as our choir, where people know each other, share their ups and downs and pray for each other. It continues to be encouraging to see how members of lifegroups have looked after one another and have become a great source of strength and support.

In April some members of our pastoral team attended an excellent event at Goldhill with guest speaker John Wyatt on the theme of 'Dying Well.'

PRAYER

Prayer is one of the three central areas of our church vision. It remains a central part of our services. We continue to meet for a short pre-service prayer at St Mary's on Sundays at 9.55am. Everyone is welcome to join us. During the services we pray in silence, through intercessions, through the words of the liturgy and through our sung worship.

Our goal is that prayer becomes a natural part of everything we do at Denham Parish Church. Every work of God is begun in prayer and we encourage all church groups to open and close your meetings with prayer! Of course, prayer is an integral part of our lifegroups. Let's continue to make prayer a natural activity when we come together!

There is an important place for special times of prayer and we continue to explore opportunities for this. In 2019 we joined again the Archbishop of Canterbury's prayer initiative *Thy Kingdom Come* in the days leading up to Pentecost. As in previous years, we held daily evening prayer for a week at St Mary's during that time. Everyone who came was engaged and appreciated this opportunity. There is a need for a more regular opportunity to pray together in this way, which we will explore in 2020.

In June and July several of our lifegroups ran the *Prayer Course*, on the back of Pete Greig's teaching on prayer at Spring Harvest. This is an excellent resource and we are planning to use it again to encourage church members in their prayer life.

Our busy lifestyles make it harder to take longer times for reflection and prayer. It is a time-honoured spiritual discipline to go on a retreat and as a minister I find I need to prioritise such times - they won't happen otherwise! In September I joined a small group of colleagues on a narrowboat retreat day. Earlier in the year, our ministers together group from churches in South Bucks met for two days for our annual retreat to pray for each other and to listen to God. Let's explore together how we can encourage and enable church members to experience such times of stillness and reflection.

(Christoph Lindner)

SAFEGUARDING

'Safeguarding is a key aspect of the church's ministry'

There were fifteen new Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record checks requested and two of these were renewals. This gave us a total of twenty nine volunteers able to work with children and vulnerable adults in the parish by the end of the year. All applications were made online, either by the candidate at home or with assistance in the office. The ministries involved were children's work, pastoral care, choir, bell ringing, lifegroups, PCC and safeguarding.

In March, the Parish Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and adopted by the PCC. The policy was duly displayed in all three church buildings and a copy was sent to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor to keep on record. The policy was put on our website with a link on the home page.

The PCC also adopted a new Recruitment and Disclosure Barring Services criminal record check Policy. We displayed new A3 posters entitled 'Promoting a Safer Church' in all church buildings and toilets. The posters highlighted our safeguarding commitments, the local contact details for those with any concerns and the national helpline phone numbers.

The PCC and Cockpit Crew were kept fully informed by regular updates at meetings and were provided with a copy of the new Parish Safeguarding Handbook from the Diocese that set out the key safeguarding responsibilities for parishes and guidance on how to support the day to day safeguarding work in the parish. After being actively encouraged to undertake an online basic safeguarding training course approximately 50% of the PCC members took this up.

The diocese rolled out more training during the year and four members of the lay leadership team took an online foundation course and also attended a leadership and recruitment course held in the deanery. The clergy also attended several training sessions during the year. I benefitted from attending the first Parish Safeguarding Officer's meeting, where I met many others carrying out the same role. We had the chance to speak about any concerns, share good practice and meet the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and his team.

The Access Personal Checking Services Ltd (APCS) continued as our DBS Umbrella Body and proved cost-effective, approachable and efficient with some checks coming back within a day.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all our volunteers for investing their time and effort working in the parish, whilst showing a duty of care in establishing a safe and caring community. I am very grateful to the Rector, the PCC and the Parish Secretary for their support in another busy year.

(Samantha Carter, Parish Safeguarding Officer)

ST FRANCIS HOUSE

Nnamdi Maduka and his family have continued to live in St Francis House throughout the year. There have been minor costs from routine maintenance and insurance that totalled £1,719 in the year. *(Mike Stewart)*

ST MARK'S HALL

The committee met four times during the year which was free of any major incident or the need for the PCC to take any executive action. We lost one major regularly hirer but this was soon replaced and the financial turnover was not greatly affected. However, there was a review of the charging structure and a revised level of fees agreed for commencement from 1st January 2020.

No significant repairs needed to be undertaken to the structure but some desirable improvements have been put on hold while possible major future works are being considered by the St Mark's Development Group. A new fire-risk assessment was undertaken but is not yet ready for submission.

I thank all members of the committee for their work especially Joan Bell who retired as secretary earlier in the year but would indicate that I would wish to stand down as Chair having served over six years in this position.

(Michael Carmody, Chair of St Mark's Committee)

ST MARK'S HOUSE

In the first half of the year Francis and Annabelle Moloney and from time to time Judith and David Babb lived in house. In August the house was let to third parties at a commercial rent. Prior to the new rental we took the opportunity to carry out some minor repairs and repaint areas where marks had been left on the walls.

The house remains in good condition and the rental income is taken to the General Fund to help cover regular parish expenditure. *(Mike Stewart)*

VESTRY TEAS

Once again we began vestry teas in the first Sunday in June. The weather was bright and sunny and we welcomed many visitors throughout the season until the end of September. I would like to thank the many bakers and servers who gave their time and talents to aid this outreach project. *(Hilary Richins)*

WORSHIP

Our 8am Sunday service (Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion) continued to have a small but committed core congregation. We have lost a few stalwarts due to health reasons, but regularly welcome visitors or church members who tend to come to 10.30 but find 8am a good alternative on days when they cannot make the later service. It provides a contemplative space at the beginning of the Lord's Day.

Our 10.30am Sunday service remains the focal point of our worship, community and discipleship. Regular attendance has been a little lower than in 2018, often boosted significantly by baptism parties and on feast days. We continue to alternate the regular lectionary readings with specific sermon series to help us develop aspects of our discipleship. In 2019 these were "Becoming a more Christ-like Church", "Unmasking the Idols", "Life in the Spirit" and "Wisdom to live by". Many of our sermons are still available at www.denhamparish.church/blog.

Our monthly Café Church service at St Mark's grew considerably as our regular feature "God in the life of..." has proved very popular. It is a chance to speak to a member of our community or a guest about their life and faith. In September we invited two speakers from "Embrace the Middle East" who led us in a very engaging manner. A dedicated team continues to set up, run and take down after the service and many people contribute cakes - thank you!

We continued to hold a monthly service with discussion group at St Francis with a small but committed and appreciative group. We tended to use the same themes there as at Café Church.

We have also established monthly services in our two nursing homes, greatly helped by the expansion of our clergy team and we value our excellent relationships with the staff of the homes.

Special services such as Easter, St Mary's Patronal Festival, Harvest, Remembrance and Advent / Christmas were highlights of the year and attracted many visitors.

In June we celebrated a Confirmation Service at St Mary's, led by the Bishop of Buckingham with 13 candidates from our own church.

In July we welcomed the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade for a special service to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the return of the 16th Battalion (Church Lads' Brigade) King's Royal Rifles Corps.

All our services are supported and enriched by our church members in many ways - thank you!



APCM 2019