ST MARY'S NORTHCHURCH

REGISTERED CHARITY 1130418



ANNUAL REPORTS 2017/2018

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years St Mary's has been thinking about its Mission Action Plan. At an All Age Service last October members of the congregation wrote down some ideas on how they would like St Mary's to develop and grow in the next stage of its life. I'm very pleased to say that progress is being made in some key areas. Plans are under way to enable the church to be open during the week and at present there is a chance on Wednesdays to come together for cake and jigsaws. This is a small step in opening the church to the community so that folk can come into pray and enjoy the stillness. Over the last year progress has been made with the roof fund and we have enjoyed a number of organ recitals and concerts that have opened up the church for community events. The range of reports provide an overview of the different things that are going on and I am very grateful to everyone for their enthusiasm and hard work. There are always many highlights in a year but the success of the fête and also Connie's wedding over the summer certainly stand out. There have been a few new developments with the Toddler Group on Tuesday and also a brand new website. Please do take a look if you haven't seen it as it is an excellent resource for the church. I hope that you enjoy reading the reports and that you will feel part of all that is going on in the church family. I think that we all recognise the centrality of prayer in the life of the church and please do pray that God will guide us as we move forward together.

Jonathan Gordon

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

The churchwardens would like to thank the clergy team for their hard work, love and dedication to our Northchurch community. We greatly appreciate their input to village, church and community life. We would also like to thank Rachel for her leadership of the music group and to the Gordon family as a whole for being so wonderfully welcoming to all comers in their garden for the church fête, as well as other church and village social events. The musical life of the church continues apace, with many thanks to our organist and choir leader, Jenny Hoare, and the choristers who make such a wonderful sound and propel our singing to greater heights.

We were sad to lose our lovely youth worker Connie Barrett, after two years with us, but were delighted to host her wedding to Geoffrey in the rectory garden in July. In her place, we are pleased to welcome Rob Pain, who has taken over Connie's Sunday Youth Work duties with great enthusiasm.

Mission Action Plan Progress

Open Church

Following on from the successful open church tea, cakes and puzzles during Lent last year, we decided to carry on through the summer until the clocks went back in October. We had a lively group most weeks and enjoyed each other's company as well as meeting a few visitors, some of whom came from far afield and were delighted to find this Grade 1 listed building open. A U3A group from Weston Turville paid to come on an organised guided tour followed by tea and cakes and they made some very positive comments (which we have framed...) about the church and the overall experience. Thank you very much to Richard North for doing the guiding, and to the lovely helpers in the tearooms.

Richard and Evelyn applied for and received a grant from the Allchurches Trust and Giles Batchelor duly organised a local firm to install various security devices which will be put into use when the church is open during daylight hours later in the year. A faculty has been applied for to install security cameras, and as soon as these are in place the church can be opened. We are always looking for ideas on how we can take the church life forward, so if you have any ideas that you would like to share with us, please let Evelyn or David know.

Progress with the roof.

Most people will be aware that our old lead roof has several leaks, for which we have been fund raising to replace for about three years. We have managed to acquire permission from Historic England to use a substitute roofing material, terne coated steel. This has a similar appearance to lead, but is less valuable and therefore less prone to theft. The architect has gained planning approval from the local council, with its associated terms and conditions, and he has now applied to the diocese for DAC approval. When this is granted we can get a faculty and invite tenders from three roofing companies. By the time we have the third tender we will know the extent of the funding shortfall and work will begin to apply for grants and raise more funds with social activities, Bike and Hike, church fete etc.

In the meantime, it was discovered in the Autumn that the slate roof above the vestries was leaking down through the light fitting and depositing water on the floor just inside the vestry door. This has been addressed as a matter of urgency due to the hazard of slipping and danger of the lighting circuit blowing fuses. There was also a section of cast iron rainwater goods that needed replacement, so our thanks go to Gary Gurney of Bovingdon who completed the work with his team just in time before the snowfall in February.

As usual there have been several working parties throughout the year to trim back overhanging hedges and branches to try to keep the grounds in good order to make our church a welcoming place for everyone. If you have never been a part of our working parties, please keep a look out. They are great fun and the work is very satisfying. You will always be welcome.

Fête and fundraising

The fête was a huge success this year, and the churchwardens would like to thank all those who worked so hard to put on this annual village event. The committee have all agreed to stand again this year and plans are already afoot. Please keep the date in your diary and come along on Saturday 7th July. If you would like to man a stall or rent a stall for your own charity please contact Jonathan or Rachel Gordon, or Margit Dobbie.

The social life at St Mary's is a vital part of our church family. The events are many and include a harvest quiz, Spanish evening and a Gingerbread House Evening in addition to the ones reported separately below. Suffice to say that we are all very grateful for the various inputs of many people for their contributions to the life of the parish and wider community. The film nights, with some really interesting and challenging films and organised by Jonathan, continue to be enjoyed by those that attend. In March we also welcomed the return of the wine bluffers paradise: Call my Quaff. Great fun was had by all present and much was learned about wine in the process. In addition, we enjoyed delicious food prepared by Jackie Jones.

Website

We are extremely grateful to Kate Sears for producing and maintaining our wonderful new website in her own time. This can be found at: http://www.stmarysnorthchurch.org.uk. Thanks also to Richard North for acting as webmaster for many years.

Evelyn Hodgson and David Sayers

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

St Mary's continues as the focal point for the Northchurch community with the Sunday morning services continuing to be well attended. Rev. Jonathan Gordon is now taking one additional 10:00am Holy Communion service per month and Rev. Michael Eggleton has replaced him at the

equivalent service at Wigginton. Our Youth and Families Worker, Connie Barrett left St Marys during the summer following her marriage, and Rob Pain has now taken over as Youth Worker. Declining health has led to one of our Readers, Edgar Wille, no longer preaching on a regular basis, but he still writes regularly in the monthly Newsletter. All our other Readers have preached or led the services on one or more occasions during the year. Numbers at the 6:00pm service remains low, but the bi-monthly Taizé services continue to be popular.

The PCC met on four occasions during 2017 with the Rector chairing all the meetings. Additionally, the Standing Committee met on two occasions. The main subjects discussed included finances, the new website, changes to Data Protection legislation, which come into force in May 2018, fabric, particularly the proposed replacement of the church roof and the opening the church on a regular basis. On the subject of Safeguarding, all PCC members have now been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

At the Annual Church Meeting in April 2017, Evelyn Hodgson and David Sayers were re-elected as Churchwardens. Heidi Baker and Jackie Jones were elected to the PCC for the first time and Richard and Rosemary North, Brian Hodgson, Nick Laing and Marilyn Pryor were re-elected. Peggy Sear was appointed to the PCC in her capacity as Reader. At the 2018 Annual Church Meeting Margit Dobbie comes to the end of her current term on the PCC and is standing for re-election.

During the year, there were 11 baptisms, 7 weddings/blessings and 12 funeral/memorial services. As is normal practice, the church was also used by a number of local schools to hold Easter, Harvest and Carol services.

Richard North

ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER'S REPORT

At the time of writing, there are 130 members on the electoral roll, one fewer than last year.

Rosemary North

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

During term-time, the two Sunday School groups for children aged 3 to 11 continue to meet every Sunday, except for the week when we have the All Age Service. We use Scripture Union resources and have a great team of volunteers who run the sessions. We have recently welcomed 2 new volunteers into our team and we are always looking for new volunteers. The number of children attending each week ranges from 5 – 20. At the end of term, we often have a fun morning when all the groups meet together to sing, praise God and do crafts. During school holidays, there is a combined group most weeks – similar to term-time Sunday School, subject to volunteers being available to run these sessions. This year we put on a nativity service again which was a great success and which involved both the younger children and young people from Lighthouse.

Sunday School Team

YOUTH WORK

I took over Lighthouse from Connie in September, and I have tried to keep consistency in the format of the way things were run under Connie going forward. I have been very pleased with the way Lighthouse has gone; I have had a lot of support from Jonathan, the parents and the youth, who are very bright and who have always got stuck into whatever I have planned!

At the start of the first term in September we started our Bible study through a course called CY. It was a great course which covered a lot of the foundations of what Christians believe. We were also able to go to the Berkhamsted Festival of Lights as a group and continued our 'Coffee Shop Crawl' during the half term break.

After the Christmas break, we started the new term with meal at pizza express and a new course for Bible study. This course is looking at the topics spoken about by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and later at the different ways that Christians worship. After Easter I am hoping to continue with the current course and to have trips away for a meal, to a trampolining park and to Soul Survivor in Watford.

We have continued the format of social - meal - Bible study that Connie had implemented when starting the Youth Alpha course. I have found this a very good format and I think the youth have enjoyed it too. It also has allowed the parents to get involved and help with cooking and they have been able to join in discussion during Bible study.

We have had very consistent numbers of around 8-12 this year, with mostly the same people coming every week. There are a few swimmers who aren't able to come every week, but who do so when they are not swimming. Unfortunately, two young people who came regularly have been away for the last few months. This consistency has been great as it has formed a strong bond in the group, but we will need to make sure more of the current year 6, who are becoming old enough to join us, are introduced to keep the group growing!

Penny Coase has been a great help and has helped to organise a group from the youth to go to the Soul Survivor Festival in the Summer. They will be going with the other local youth which will be a great experience for them. I, unfortunately, won't be able to attend so I am very grateful that Penny has been able to organise it with the other parents!

Rob Pain

CHURCH MUSIC

The organ still sounds in good voice, but problems with the contacts are gradually worsening and the console overhaul is overdue. However, Andrew Stevens keeps it in playable condition and no work on the electrics will be considered until the roof is repaired.

Mark Cyphus, a professional church organist based in Mayfair (London) played a wonderful recital in June. Mark was keen to include the hymn 'Crown him with many crowns' to show off the instrument in its primary capacity - in leading the worship of a church community. The audience of around 50 sang this hymn with great vigour and obvious enjoyment. We were again treated to the magnificent Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor by Bach, performed with exceptional skill.

In July Madalina Tudoran accompanied by Richard Grylls gave a glorious concert of operatic excerpts displaying a huge range of power and sensitivity in her singing. The audience were entranced throughout. The St Mary's strawberry cream tea which followed rounded off a beautiful summer afternoon.

The choir continues to lead the Sunday morning worship at the Eucharist service and a range of anthems new and old have been sung at special services throughout the year. We are delighted to welcome Moya Willis into the soprano section. We have all missed Gareth Pritchard, both as a chorister and organist and are looking forward to his return to singing and playing in the near future. Choral highlights included the full choir singing the Advent anthem 'Arise' with great control

and dynamic range, Gillian Vila's most sensitive solo in Gareth's delightful composition *Puer natus est* and the Christmas Eve performance of O holy night by Adolphe Adam, with Madalina as soloist. The choir has sung at a number of weddings both at St Mary's and St Bartholomew's and several members have also sung at Holy Trinity, Potten End and Ashridge chapel. There is still room for more singers and you are assured of a warm welcome in the choir; there is room for anyone with a love of hymnody and church music, whatever your age or ability. Please come and join us!

Jenny Hoare

MUSIC GROUP

The music group continues to evolve and enjoys good numbers. We have had new members join us and older members moving on. We play for most of the family services during the year and it is a good opportunity to play the more modern hymns and choruses from the hymnbook. I would like to thank members for their continued support. New members are always welcome!

Rachel Gordon

STEWARDSHIP SCHEME

Approaching Christmas 2016, I put a note in the pew leaflet regarding the ways we, as a congregation, can give our donations to church. Although the numbers using the 'Box' scheme continues to drop, a number of people have moved to a bank Standing Order as a preferred method of donation. It is now possible to claim a Gift Aid contribution from the UK Government on a certain value of simple cash donations made in the collection plate. However, a declared commitment to making your donations with Gift Aid is preferable to make sure we can reclaim the maximum Gift Aid on your donations. Whichever way you choose to donate, there are four donation methods available, as shown below.

STANDING ORDER

This is the ideal way as it allows the Stewardship Secretary and Treasurer to see exactly what amount they can guarantee will be paid. This can be used with or without having signed a Gift Aid declaration. To initiate this there is a form on the back of the last pew.

WEEKLY STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (Boxed brown numbered envelopes)

This envelope has a number assigned to you and dated for each Sunday throughout the year for you to put your cash/cheque in and which you can put into the collection plate during the service. The scheme includes committing to a financial value which you are able to afford. It can be used with or without having signed a Gift Aid declaration.

• WHITE ENVELOPE SCHEME

This envelope has been provided for those who wish to contribute cash of whatever value, on a regular basis (if not weekly) who don't want to fill in the Blue Gift Aid envelopes every time they attend. An individual scheme number is assigned upon starting this scheme.

• GIFT AID ENVELOPES (Blue un-numbered envelopes)

These are found at the end of the pews and are specifically there for income tax payers wishing to contribute cash to the collection. THERE IS NO POINT IN USING THEM WITHOUT SIGNING THE DECLARATION AND PROVIDING YOUR ADDRESS. To join any of the first three schemes, please contact me.

Nick Laing

WEDNESDAY EVENING FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

The House Groups meet fortnightly in the evening from about 8pm - 10pm. These groups are an opportunity to spend time in a small group, getting to know each other, and getting to know more about our great and loving God. We usually follow a series of studies, video or book based, which will either follow a theme - like Contentment - or part of a book in the Bible. They are not heavy studies and no advance knowledge of the Bible is required. As well as the study, the groups offer the chance to listen to each other, laugh with each other and pray with each other. I would strongly recommend giving a House Group a try if you would to get to know more people at St Marys or spend more time thinking and learning about what the Bible says and how that applies to life today. Contact Jonathan if you would like to know more.

Penny Coase

The second Wednesday house group meets on a Wednesday evening on alternate weeks. The meeting consists of a time of fellowship and study of the Bible or of a book based on a Christian theme. We are currently exploring characters from the Bible that we have known from our childhood and are now getting to know in greater depth. One of the aims of the housegroup is to be a place of support, Christian love and fellowship within the St Mary's community. For more details contact Rachel Gordon or Clare Price.

Peach Berry

BERKHAMSTED DEANERY SYNOD

Our deanery representatives are David Sayers, Karen Baldwin and Rosemary North. The April 2017 meeting was addressed by Mr Richard Stanforth who has been carrying out humanitarian work for Oxfam for 15 years, specifically Yemen in Crisis. He has spent many years working in Yemen with Imams to stop violence towards women and children. He has also been helping people from the Christian and Jewish minority communities. Oxfam helps to improve the basic infrastructure, such as water supplies, toilets etc. in refugee camps. Although Yemen discovered a valuable resource of oil in the 80s, the revenue did not aid the people. Due to corruption only about a dozen people benefited and the country is now bankrupt. Food imports are not permitted and drug addiction is uncontrolled. Oxfam continues to try to bring change to the people and stop the ongoing war. However, ammunition continues to be sold to the warlords and many of the people are starving.

The Deanery Lecture in June and attended by about 90 people, was a very interesting talk on Syria, given by Caroline Ellwood who gave an in-depth background to the country and religious tensions there.

In July Bishop Michael led a well-attended seminar in the Parish Rooms on Making New Disciples, encouraging us to look out for people we know or with whom we come into contact who may be seeking faith in Jesus.

In October Richard Allen, the Spiritual Care Manager, Hertfordshire Partnership NHS gave a very interesting talk about his work as a hospital chaplain and coming alongside patients, especially those who have mental health issues.

On March 7 2018 Laura Fraser spoke on the work of Hope for Justice which now works in Cambodia, Norway, the USA and Africa as well as the UK, where 350 victims have been rescued in the past three years. Across the world it is estimated that 25 million people are trapped in

forced labour, sex trafficking or domestic servitude, 13,000 of those in the UK. She encouraged individuals or churches to sign up as guardians to fund their work.

Rev Gordon reported that the Berkhamsted Deanery had an unusually high number of church schools and that Rev Huw Bellis from Tring had suggested holding a meeting to support foundation governors and to encourage parishioners to become foundation governors.

Rosemary North

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter continues to act as a source of local information, forthcoming events and outreach for St Mary's. Don't forget that local charitable events will be advertised for free. Let the Editor know what is going on by the 15th of the month before you want it to appear, and she will put it in the Newsletter.

The Newsletter continues to support itself by raising a substantial part of its costs through revenue from advertising. It is good to know that local businesses find it a good place in which to advertise.

The distribution of the Newsletter is possibly the largest enterprise associated with St Mary's. 'Bundlers' convert the contents of boxes into labelled heaps, which are collected from church by 'deliverers' who post Newsletters through letterboxes. 'Couriers' pick up multiple bundles to take to others who will make the individual deliveries. Over 70 people are involved, many of them are people not otherwise associated with the church, but who like to do something useful in the community. Any queries about distribution should be addressed to Valerie Clark. All contact details are on the back page of the Newsletter.

Jill Hipson

ANNUAL FÊTE

At our summer fête we reach out to community at large, well beyond the borders of our parish. This event is only made possible by the tireless and dedicated work and team spirit of a huge number of volunteers and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to every single one of them.

To open the fête, pupils from St. Mary's School performed a maypole dance. There was a host of activities for children in the rectory garden, including face painting, a craft tent, pet's corner, a toy tombola, a bouncy castle and ice creams. On the school field we had all the popular games for older children (and their dads!). Many people soaked the rector, tried their skill at putting a golf ball, competed at throwing a welly and the coconut shy ran out of coconuts halfway through the fair.

The playground looked splendid with all the gazeboes, which we bought with the help of the Woods vouchers collected throughout the year. Stalls included "Nearly New Items", books, cakes, the ever-popular bottles, plants, gifts and toiletries. The Brownies ran a mug tombola and there was also a tombola, raffle and plant raffle. We were delighted to have local artists Mary Casserley, Steph Lunn and Viki Ahearn with us, as well as the Way Inn bookshop and several charities. The BBQ, beer and drinks were extremely popular and teas, coffees and a tasty selection of cakes were served in the Parish Rooms.

In the church several organ players as well as a member of the choir provided entertainment for visitors who were looking for a calmer environment.

A big crowd of visitors enjoyed a great day out for the whole family and supported our church as well as local and international charities. A record amount of funds was raised which was split equally between: St. Mary's Church Roof Fund, People NOT Borders and Street Kids Direct

Organisation of this year's summer fête is well underway and the organisers would greatly appreciate any offers of help on the day. For donations of items needed please see the pew leaflet and special flyer.

Margit Pendl-Dobbie

RAISE THE ROOF CAMPAIGN

Fundraising for the repair of the leaking roof continued during the year. Contributions were made through the Bike 'n' Hike and a third of the funds raised at the fête went towards the roof fund.

The outside of the scale model of the church is more or less complete with details of tower, flagpole, flag, bell, weather vane and clock being added by skilled helpers. The model has internal illumination to highlight the windows which are photographic replicas of the original stained glass windows. As soon as Andrew can pick up his enthusiasm for model working, he will add internal details, such as font, altar and organ. The donations for the model raised £10,700 from April 2017 to now and there was also a single donation of £20,000 to the roof fund.

Another Call My Quaff Wine Tasting evening on March 24th raised over £500 for the roof fund.

When we started fundraising for the roof in October 2015 we never imagined that only two and half years later we would have achieved so much. We would like to thank everyone involved for their generous gifts of time and money that made it possible to achieve so much so swiftly.

Margit Pendl-Dobbie

THE ALMSHOUSES

The Almshouses have had another busy year and our new resident, Barrie Wheelan, has settled in well. We are sorry to see Alan Cooper leave us after 23 years – he has been a wonderful resident. He is moving to Chipperfield and we wish him all the best.

We have received our quinquennial report and will discuss setting up a working party to deal with the building work required. When we had major work done to the roof of flat 86, the builder had to set up scaffolding due to the inaccessibility of the part of the roof that had the damp problem. The gardens continue to be nicely maintained on one of our residents, Nick Johnson.

Our accounts have been audited again by Steve Mitchell.

Kathy Ridges (on behalf of the Trustees)

FLOWER GUILD

Floral and candle decorations have been organised by the Flower Guild this year for the major festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas, along with posies provided for Mothering Sunday. Weddings and other events have also been organised with floral arrangements where requested, and small "flower mugs" were made and sold both for Mothering Sunday gifts and for our stall at the Summer Fête. This did well, and the stall looked very attractive with the mugs set out to very good effect.

We participated in the Flower Festival at The Sacred Heart Church in Berkhamsted in the Summer, providing a piece celebrating their theme of Creation and Art. This year we have been invited to contribute to Great Gaddesden Church in the coming summer for their Gordon Beningfield Flower Festival.

Donations from parishioners are much appreciated as are contributions of greenery for our decorations for the major festivals through the year.

Just before Christmas, Jo Birch very sadly passed away. She was our Chairperson, and her knowledge and skills were our mainstay. It was to Jo we would look for guidance and her encouragement and support were always generously given. She is very greatly missed.

Denise Rouse

BELLRINGERS

2017 began and ended with St Mary's bells ringing either side of midnight. You have heard the bells on Sundays throughout the year – very much business as usual. Rarely have you heard fewer than 6 bells ringing for service, morning or evening. When you hear all 8 there could be as many as 10 ringers taking turns. 2 new ringers joined the band during the year having been taught to handle a bell, and they are now up a standard to take part in Sunday ringing.

We are pleased to welcome visitors to our Monday practice nights. Some come regularly, either wanting to develop their skills alongside our novice ringers or ringers of experience who come in support. Our best ringing is unlikely to be heard on a Monday evening, but practice is paying off as everyone works hard and gradually perfects a new skill. A measure of our overall improvement was in the District Striking Competition when one of the Northchurch bands was judged to be the best band ringing call changes – and we had been able to enter two bands.

At least once a month, the community has the chance to hear good ringing by experienced ringers. On the second Monday of the month, ringers drawn from the 'local bell club' attempt a quarter peal, often an opportunity for one of them to score a quarter peal in a particular method for the first time. The writer scored a 'first' ringing the Treble to Bob Major when the band marked the 85th birthdays of two members of the congregation. Visiting ringers were pleased to ring in thanksgiving for the life of Revd Jonathan's father; and it was local ringers who marked the death 100 years ago of Private 35581 John Randall, a Northchurch ringer who died in the First World War and, later in the year, the death of a Berkhamsted ringer who had been instrumental in advising on the decoration of our ringing room. Ringers do not need an excuse to ring(!), but they are always pleased to ring in dedication for a special purpose.

Weddings are special occasions! The ringing room was full one Saturday in July as the groom and some wedding guests augmented local ringers in calling the bride to church! Ringing in celebration as Connie and Geoffrey left the church was the ringers' way of wishing the couple well for their future life – and was also special for 2 ringers who had never previously rung for a wedding. The bells also made their joyous music in celebration of other weddings during the year.

The bellringers thank Revd Jonathan for his generosity in allowing the use of the bells. In October, our tower played its part in a county Open Day to raise funds for bell restoration. St Mary's was open for an hour and welcomed ringers from Merseyside, Yorkshire, Gloucester and Canterbury and other places in between. Our bells have benefitted from grants towards essential repairs, so this event was a small way of saying thank you. A parishioner, a retired bellringer, lives within earshot of the bells and has generously donated a new set of ropes for which we are very grateful. (The ropes take a lot of strain in ringing and need replacing every

10-12 years.) Having saved up our tower money to buy new ropes, this benefaction allows us to spend our funds on occasional maintenance by professionals (there's £100,000+ worth of investment up in the tower!) and improving our electrics.

I add my thanks to the loyal, committed and most amiable people I see in the tower every week; and to the listeners in the community who tell me that they enjoy hearing the bells.

Valerie Clark, Tower Captain

KNEELER PROJECT

No new kneelers were put into the pews during the year since the last report. But we do still have a few in the pipeline.

At Christmas, the kneelers were once again removed from the pews in order to protect them from any dripping candle wax. My thanks to all those who helped with this and also to those who returned the kneelers to the pews during my absence.

For anyone who has the urge to get stitching I still have plenty of wool in store. Please get in touch.

Marilyn Pryor

SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE

Another year gone by and once again our team of volunteers have done a sterling job in providing the congregation with tea, coffee and biscuits following the 10am service. It is a very worthwhile job and my grateful thanks go to all those involved. We have once again lost two more of our helpers, although they have kindly agreed to go on 'stand by' if anyone suddenly finds him/herself unable to do their session. We also have another kind gentleman who has also agreed to be a 'stand by'. If anyone else would like to give us a hand (it only involves three or four sessions a year), please contact me.

Sue Jukes

2ND NORTHCHURCH BROWNIES

We have had such a busy year it's hard to know where to begin, so I will get the sad news out of the way first. Sadly, our Snowy Owl, Jane Harvey, passed away in April. She had been our Snowy Owl for a good number of years and is very much missed by as all.

Many of our Brownies have been doing badges at home, and not a week goes past when one of them says "Brown Owl - I have done a badge can I be tested please?" I'm forever ordering badges from our local Guide shop in Hemel Hempstead. As a pack have just finished our Road Safety badge. We learnt much about the Green Cross Code. For our Home Skills badge, we needed to hold an event where we collected money, so we held a cake sale during Brownies one evening. We raised £79, which we donated to the Tiggywinkles animal charity based in Haddenham near Aylesbury. We are also looking at adopting an owl with them too.

We filled 20 shoe boxes to send to Romania, with various items that will be of use to the families receiving them. Just before Christmas, we made cards to send to the residents of Shaftesbury Court and Kilfillan House in Berkhamsted. They were very much appreciated.

We had a very successful stall at the church fête, with many Brownies helping. We also had a stall at the Berkhamsted District Christmas Market, where we sold homemade reindeer food.

At the end of August, four Brownies joined 1st Chipperfield Brownies at Pack Holiday at Cherry Green Trees near London Colney. A great time was had by all and new friendships were made.

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so if you would like to help out, please get in touch via the email address northchurchbrownies@yahoo.co.uk. As for the coming year, we have lots planned already.

Brown Owl (Susan Anderson) and all at 2nd Northchurch Brownies

MONDAY CLUB

The club has enjoyed a good year, despite holding fewer meetings than in previous years - a decision which was taken in 2017 – and in general these have been well attended. Our current membership is 24 and now includes three male members. Hopefully they will provide encouragement for more men to join, who would be very welcome.

Lunches both at a Berkhamsted and at a village restaurant proved very popular, as did a lively performance by Uke Rythmics, the Dacorum U3A Ukulele band, soon to be repeated by popular request, and a performance by the Ashley Green Ladies' Ballet Group. Later in the year we hope to include a "Keep Fit" session under the supervision of a qualified local K.F.A. instructress and a film in the Parish Room Is also on the agenda. We celebrate Harvest, Easter and Christmas with an appropriate festive lunch or tea and, weather permitting, we will have a summer tea in Barbara's garden.

As always, we would be very happy to hear from anyone who could give a short talk or demonstration on a subject of their interest. We would also like to hear from a keyboard player, hopefully with keyboard, to encourage us to sing, which is good therapy, besides being good fun.

Very grateful thanks go to Northchurch United Charities for their welcome contribution towards any transport costs involved in our meetings, and to Joan and Jennie for all their work in the kitchen at tea time, as well as to Tony Lockhart who is ever willing to provide help, in any shape or form, when it is needed.

Joan Downhill and Barbara Lloyd

MOTHERS' UNION

The branch at St Peter's church is the only one now functioning. The Lady Day service was held here at St Mary's and we continue to meet every month for our prayer time with Jennie Budd in Shaftesbury Court. As usual the Happy Wanderers were welcomed to St Mary's for a harvest service and tea. Many thanks to those who make the tea for us.

Joan Cox

TIME OUT 2

Over the last year we have enjoyed walks to Ashridge and College Lake, Tring, and have met up for pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, and a meal with partners at the Red Lion in Dagnall in January. Unfortunately, a couple of our meetings, including our carol singing afternoon, had to be abandoned due to adverse weather conditions. However, our main event was the Crisis at Christmas lunch, held at the end of November, at which £650 was raised for the homeless.

We have trips to Waterperry Gardens and Ascott House planned for the next couple of months and will continue to meet in our homes for fellowship and prayer.

Karen Baldwin

CHRISTIAN AID

For Christian Aid Week 2017, 14 roads were collected from by the St Mary's team. Inevitably not everyone can be available every year, so I would love to see new members to the team! If you feel you'd like to help somehow, maybe your road isn't currently being 'worked', perhaps you could job share with a neighbour. As I said last year; it is a great responsibility but a greater joy to be able to contribute into the lives of people in desperate need.

Evelyn is also planning to run a soup lunch on May 20th, so look out for information on this.

Our total donated from collections was £1,336.02. Thank you to all those that joined me on the streets of Northchurch and those that made donations. The money we raise is so vital and I ask you to continue the St Mary's tradition of supporting Christian Aid this year. If you think that you could join the team for Christian Aid Week 2018, 13th to 19th May, please let me know.

Nick Laing

THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

The Children's Society box count was concluded by mid-February for 2017. It is always challenging to get the last few boxes accounted for! We have 40 box holders. We lost 3 but registered 3 new supporters this year. In total we have raised £709, have the collection from the Christingle service to add too, so a very good effort from all of our supporters with their heavy boxes of small change. Thank you all so much.

The Children's Society supports vulnerable children within the UK. Children who have been in care and children affected by divorce. Children with a parent in prison, those who care for a parent and those who run away from abuse. Specialist social workers and play leaders work to find and support these youngsters, providing places of safety, play group activities and support through their years of crucial education to give them a good chance in life.

To all of you who apologise that your box hasn't got much in or just contains copper coins, please don't worry and continue the good work. The pennies all add up. Thank you. Charlotte and Gareth Pritchard.

Charlotte & Gareth Pritchard

FAIR TRADE CHURCH

We are a FairTrade Church, which means we should be using fairly traded teas, coffees and any other produce, as far as is possible and at any event we hold. If you need any information or supplies for your events, or for work places or organisations, then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Nick Laing

BEDS & HERTS HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST - SPONSORED BIKE 'N HIKE

Our bike and hike planning for 2017 began way back in July when the team was presented with a silver certificate for our magnificent efforts in the rain in 2016.

This year, as always, Jennie Budd and her sister Elizabeth Lachenal set up our welcome and refreshments table at 9:00am. We put up the signposts and set off. I would like to thank them and all the welcomers who cheerfully came along on the day to welcome the thirty or so thirsty visitors who came to St. Mary's.

Some of our regular bikers and hikers were unable to take part this year due to various family celebrations and late summer holidays, so we had only six people setting off. The sponsors were fantastic in that they sought out those of us who were able to take part on the day and I am very grateful to them for their support in helping us to raise £1,300 in face to face donations, plus a further £65.35 from Just Giving making a total of £1365.35 to be divided equally between the St Mary's repair fund and The Historic Churches Trust. A further £192.69 of gift aid was added to this total for the use of the HFCT, making £1558.04 in total. As many of you will know, this money is a vital part of St Mary's fund-raising efforts every year as it contributes towards the enormous costs of keeping a grade 1 listed building good order.

For our part Brian and I managed to visit 29 churches, five pubs sampling six varieties of ale, had two lovely lunches at New Mill Baptist church and Putnam and lots of encouragement in between. We managed to fit in 42.17 miles during four and a half hours in the saddle. For the weight watchers amongst you, I managed to lose 1lb in weight despite all the culinary delights. If you would like to hear details of our favourite route or put your name down to join in the fun this year please see me after church one Sunday morning. The event will take place on Saturday 8th September and you can choose your own route and go alone or with friends.

Evelyn Hodgson

NORTHCHURCH UNITED CHARITIES

The Trustees are comprised of representatives from Berkhamsted Town Council, Northchurch Parish Council, Sunnyside church and St Mary's Church, all of which organisations contribute to the funds dispersed, the reminder of the funds coming from income on the original investments. These organisations all contribute funds to the NUC. It is hoped that funds will be received from the proceeds of the church fête this year. Rev Jonathan Gordon was elected as Chair again this year. The Trustees met in November to make their annual distribution of funds to individuals and clubs, including The Monday Club, the Happy Wanderers Club, the Berkhamsted and Tring Stroke Support Club and the Berkhamsted Under -5s Group, helping the elderly and young children requiring extra support, in Berkhamsted and Northchurch.

Rosemary North

THE CHARITY OF DR SMOULT

For more than 300 years, this Charity has administered money left under the will of a former Rector of St Mary's. The Charity continues to support local young people with the costs of their education and during 2017 approximately £25,000 was disbursed to applicants in the area of benefit. This comprises the Parish of Northchurch St Mary, the Parish of Wigginton St Bartholomew, the Civil Parish of Northchurch plus the Chiltern Park Estate. Young people up to the age of 25 living in these areas, or others who are active members of St Mary's or St Bartholomew's churches, are eligible to apply for grants to further their education.

Dr Smoult's fund has been carefully husbanded over the years and its capital is spread over a range of investments. Every year, the Trustees receive independent advice on their investments, and monies may be moved in order to increase the Charity's income without risk. It is the income, not the capital, from which the Trustees make grants for educational purposes. Some grants are made to individual students to support educational courses or projects at home or abroad. Local schools and youth groups may also receive grants for resources or for training activities.

Anyone interested in more information, or who knows a qualifying youngster, should contact the Secretary via the church website.

Valerie Clark

ST MARY'S SCHOOL

The past year at St. Mary's has continued to flourish with a record number of 151 families choosing to send their children to school here.

We were delighted that 90% of children leaving the Reception class achieved a good level of development, compared to 74% last year. This was significantly higher than the National exit data of 71%. The Year 1 children again undertook the statutory phonics screening check in June. This assesses the children's ability to decode words using only their phonic knowledge and this year 83% of the children achieved the qualifying mark. The National rate was 81%. We are also pleased with our continuing high attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2). The children achieved 87% in Reading and Mathematics and 77% in writing. This compares very favourably with the National rates of 76%, 75% and 68% respectively.

2017 saw our second Year 6 cohort. This time 21 children sat the end of Key Stage 2 tests. Our overall combined reading, writing and mathematics result of 81% was significantly higher than National figure of 61%. We are extremely proud of the results and the tremendously hard work of staff and children.

Just one week into the new school year on 12th September 2017 we were visited for a one-day Inspection by Ofsted. The HMI judged us to be continuing to be good and acknowledged the good quality of teaching at St. Mary's, the fact that our results are well above National average and also that the children in the early years have a great start to their education. She wrote that a strong culture of care is evident and that pupils are happy and feel safe at school. The HMI acknowledged that we have risen admirably to the challenge of changing from a first to a primary school and we were all delighted with her extremely positive comments.

Premises Projects carried out this year include: new playground markings, a new climbing area in the Foundation Stage garden, a new entrance to loft space next to the school hall, painting of the stairwell and walls outside the hall.

Our Christian values underpin our school culture and every half term we still focus on a different value. For the children this is mainly explored through Collective Worship, RE lessons and as part of the SEAL curriculum (Social and emotional aspects of learning). We inform the parents in the newsletter, encouraging the whole school community to focus on the value together. The staff think about how they can embody the value, when they discuss it at a staff meeting.

<u>l erm</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>l erm</u>	<u>Value</u>
Autumn 1	Justice	Spring 2	Humility
Autumn 2	Peace	Summer 1	Love
Spring 1	Trust	Summer 2	Compassion

St. Mary's, along with all schools in Hertfordshire have a new Herts Agreed Syllabus for the teaching of RE based on eight areas of learning:

Beliefs and practices
Sources of wisdom
Symbols and actions
Prayer, worship and reflection
Identity and belonging
Ultimate questions
Human responsibility and values

Justice and fairness

St. Mary's teachers have recently received training and implemented new Religious Education material to assist with the teaching of Christianity called 'Understanding Christianity' and we have used this to enrich the RE curriculum that covers each of the eight areas of learning, alongside the other five main world faiths: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism

Throughout its operation, the school promotes the fundamental British values including mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. To enrich the curriculum, Mrs Archbold organises many exciting trips and activities for the children.

We have continued to work with Living Streets, on the WOW (Walk to school Once a Week) campaign. Children are encouraged to walk to school and those who do are rewarded with collectable badges. St Mary's continues to have one of the highest proportions of children who walk to school in the area.

The Smoult Trust has been most supportive to the school during the past year and has kindly provided funding to enable two children go on residential visits with their classes.

Supported by the Sports Premium funding, we continue to invest in equipment, pay for specialist PE coaching and staffing, bought into staff training and teaching resources, with the aim of sustainable improvement in the quality of PE teaching and learning. We have enjoyed being able to take part in an increasing amount of sport and our football and netball teams continue to compete in local leagues with increasing success and also take part in friendly matches against other local schools. Various sporting activities during the past year include:

- Several Cross Country run events
- County Cross Country run at St. Albans where we once again qualified for the national championships
- Trips to Sportspace to take part in various inter school activities
- Tri- Golf at Ashlyns School for Year 3.
- Berkhamsted Inter Schools Swimming Galas for Years 4, 5 and 6
- Girls' football with Ross and Andy
- Mini Olympics, Cricket and Tennis for various year groups.
- Dacorum Skip2bfit Competition

We are very proud of what the children have achieved in sport and PE at St. Mary's and this will continue to be an area of focus and development for us.

Some of the many activities that have run this year have included (*free of charge);

Sports – Running Club*, Netball Club, Boogaloo Boogie, Cheerleading, Tennis Club, Cricket Club, Speed-stacking*, Homework Club*, Maths Club*, Forest School*, Green Team,* Gardening Club*, Collective Worship*, Christian Union*,

Violin, Piano, Guitar, Recorder* and ukulele* tuition and Choir*, Football Club, Netball Club, Girls' Football Club, Mini-Olympics, Rock Steady Music, Spanish Club and Growth Mindset*.

As ever, the School Association has worked very hard, raising money throughout the past year. Successful events included a Summer and Christmas Fair, Gatsby Evening and Auction, Parents' Quiz, Discos, Film Clubs, Smartie Challenge, Photos by Carrie, Charity Match and Christmas Trees for Schools Scheme. They are funding i-Pads, lap top trolley, more football kit, Mother's Day flowers for every child, a contribution towards two school trips for every class and are continuing to raise money to help the Governors with a building project to upgrade the toilets in the top end of the school.

We encourage the whole school community to support local and national charities and this year we have raised money for, Children in Need, Sport Relief, The Bishop of St Albans' Harvest Appeal, Homestart Dacorum, Hospice of St. Francis, Macmillan Cancer, Race for Life, Royal British Legion poppy appeal and Brain Tumour Research.

Ms Gore and Mrs O'Dell have continued to develop the use of the forest school area, which encourages children to become comfortable with an outdoor approach to education. The after-school Forest School Club has been rotated across the year groups, as we want all children to have the opportunity to enjoy these activities.

The wraparound child care continues to be very popular with our parents. This means that children can be looked after at Breakfast Club from 7.45 a.m. and remain in school at the afterschool club until collection at 6.00 p.m. Children who are not in full-time education are able to join our lunch club and then take part in Pre-School, before joining the older children after school for the club.

The annual music concert in July was once again a highlight of the year. Children learning music within and outside school were given the chance to perform in the concert, organised by Mrs Christie, with the kind help of Mr. and Mrs. Horton and Mrs. Osmond. In July, the KS2 production, "The Wizard of Oz" was another highlight and included singing and acting of an exceptionally high standard.

We see music as an area to continue to develop at St Mary's. We have renegotiated our contract with the Herts Music Service, to include providing training for our teachers, to develop the quality of music provision in the classroom. We continue to offer peripatetic music lessons in violin, guitar and piano. The music service also runs a school choir (free of charge to parents), where the children are prepared for events during the year. They proudly performed in front of their families at the O2 Arena on 1st February this year.

St Mary's is a voluntary-aided (VA) maintained school. Maintained schools receive their running costs from central government via the local authority. In contrast to other types of maintained schools, only 90% of the capital costs of a VA school are met by the state. The foundation (in our case, the Governing Body), has to contribute the remaining 10% of the capital costs. Parents are encouraged to pay a voluntary contribution towards the school's maintenance funds in VA schools.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the Governors who have left during the past year, for their dedication and contribution. Our Chair since September 2017 is Alan Kemp and The Reverend Jonathan Gordon is Vice Chair.

Aa we are a Church school the majority of the Governors are appointed by the PCC and the Diocese. Replacement governors are urgently required and we would ask for consideration to be given by anyone who would be interested in this very rewarding position, which makes a real different to the school and the local community.

The Governing body has worked extremely hard throughout the past year, providing support and challenge, for which the school is most grateful.

Vanessa Hunt, Head Teacher Alan Kemp, Chairs of Governors

2018 REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

St Mary's Church, Northchurch

Annual Reports and Accounts

of the

Parochial Church Council

for the year ended 31 December 2017

to be held in church after morning service on Sunday, 22nd April 2018

Incumbent:

Revd Jonathan Gordon 80 High Street Northchurch Berkhamsted HP4 3QW

Hon Treasurer:

Emma McCann 7 Tortoiseshell Way Berkhamsted HP4 1TB

Independent Examiner:

Janet Hart
Harts Accounting Business &
Tax Advisers Ltd
Berkhamsted

Bankers:

National Westminster Bank 199 High Street Berkhamsted HP4 1BH

Treasurer's Report 2017

Summary:

2017 was a reasonably strong financial year for St Mary's as the fund raising for the roof continued to gain momentum and we once again had a superbly successful summer fete. Through monies raised at this and other events we have been able to continue our charitable giving both overseas and closer to home and as 2017 ended we had a surplus of income over expenditure of £23,550 which, although not as large as the surplus we saw last year, is still encouraging.

Income:

Voluntary income during 2017 is shown in the accounts to be significantly down on last year although much of this is due to the reduced income from legacies and donations of some £37,255. Planned giving, ie monies given via standing orders and the regular envelopes scheme, were also down as were cash collections and both PCC and Rectors fees fell due to a decrease in the numbers of weddings and funerals held.

2017 did, however, see an increase in income from Parish Room hire and magazine income and we need to thank both Emily and Jill for the time and effort they put in to making these income streams a success.

With the exception of planned giving the bulk of this years income, £37686, came from the building fund.

Expenditure:

The largest expenditure for 2017 was the £54,287 paid to the Diocese in relation to the Parish share which covers clergy stipends, pensions and diocesan costs. This was once again paid in full and on time.

Church running expenses were slightly up on last year but, not alarmingly so although we will look to make savings this year on utility bills as fixed tariffs come to an end. Printing costs have been reduced but, there were no other major variances in expenses.

Money has been spent on 98 High Street but, this should be re-cooped via rental payments during the coming year.

Going Forward:

St Mary's is in a strong position to meet future challenges but, we need to consider ways to reverse the year on year reduction in planned giving, which is £17,000 down in total over the last 3 years. Fundraising events for both the roof and general fund will continue and the fete team are, once again, working hard and already promoting what we hope will be another record breaking first Saturday of July.

2018 will not be without obstacles, I'm sure, but I am looking forward to the challenges.

Emma Mc Cann

Independent Examiner's Report to the Parochial Church Council of the St Mary's Church, Northchurch

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017 which are set out on the following pages.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Independent Examiner

As trustees of the charity, the members of the PCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- State whether particular matter have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the management committee concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention.

- 1. Which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - To keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act; or
 - To prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or
- 2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding to be reached.

except that, the accounts are not exactly in the prescribed format as per the guidance produced by the Business Committee of the General Synod - PCC Accountability 5th Edition and attention to the Statement of Assets and Liabilities (Balance Sheet) split between Unrestricted, Restricted and the Endowment Funds and accompanying notes needs to be considered for future accounts.

Janet Hart FCA

Harts Accounting Business & Tax Advisers Ltd

Berkhamsted, Herts.

6 April 2018

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Charity/Fund Title	Account No.	Shares	Share	Interest	at 31/12/17
National Westminster Bank					£157,054.21
With St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance					
Northchurch Development Fund	132001842D			£54.13 reinvested	£19,291.14
Donald Lockhart Memorial Fund	132001875S			£5,303.65	£163,034.61
With Central Board of Finance of the Church	of England				
ixed Interest Securities Fund	632008001F			£180.39 reinvested	£4,698.47
Deposit Fund	632008001D			£63.89 reinvested	£17,469.23
COIF Charity Funds					
Nagstaff Trust Income Fund	C0000403186			£0.00	£54.02
Hadden Trust Income Fund	C0000403185			£0.00	£40.00
Bailey Charity	282190001T	18	£11.48	£8.79	£265.84
Ridley for Church Fabric Fund	282190002T	56	£11.48	£27.33	£827.06
Ridley for Churchyard Fund	282190004T	56	£11.48	£27.33	£827.06
lichael Memorial fabric Fund	282190003T	58	£11.48	£28.30	£856.60
Swynedd Charity	282190005T	89	£11.48	£43.44	£1,314.44
helwall Trust for Churchyard Upkeep	282190006T	89	£11.48	£43.44	£1,314.44
Ashley	282190007T	32	£11.48	£15.61	£472.61
B Kings Children for Churchyard	282190008T	15	£11.48	£7.31	£221.54
Randall Memorial Foreign Mission	268810000T	62	£11.48	£30.26	£915.68
Browne Charity	332730001T	128	£11.48	£62.47	£1,890.43 £8,999.72
					£370,547.38

PCC of St Mary's Church Northchurch

Year Ended 31 December 2017

	2017 2016	£	157,054 122,788		370,547 321,377		321,377		321,377 251,155	23,550 54,883	14,904 15,339	359,831 321,377
Balance Sheet (Statement of Assets and Liabilities)	20		Cash at bank 15	Investments 21:	37	Accruals - 10,716	CCC	Represented by:	Funds brought forward 32:	Surplus of income over expenditure	Gain on investments	358

Signed as accepted on behalf of St. Mary's Northchurch PCC by Reverend Jonathan Gordon

Signature: Jonathan Gordon

31-4-1

Date: