**St MARY THE VIRGIN,**

**BLETCHINGLEY**



**ANNUAL REPORT 2017**

***Parochial Church Council Members 2017***

**Rector** The Rev’d Phaedra Pamphilon Green (From July 2017)

**Assistant Curate** The Rev’d Penny Sherrington

**Reader** John Buck

**Churchwardens** April Alexander (ex officio)

John Thurston (ex officio)

**Treasurer** Ron Napper

**Secretary** Valerie Muller

**Elected members** Glynis Beazley

Caroline George

Sarah Goad

Robin Idle

Jennifer Hyde

Cyril Mighall

Valerie Muller

Leanna Quevado

Sandie Roper

David Sellick

Robert Tucker

Nicky Worsley

**Deanery Synod** Richard Fowler (ex officio)

Oliver Jackson (ex officio)

Alison Horlock (ex officio)

Clare Wilson (ex officio)

**General Synod** April Alexander (ex officio)

**Auditor** Anthony Cock

***Minutes of the   
ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING held   
on Sunday 23rd April 2017***

46 members of the congregation were present at the meeting.  
The meeting was chaired by Jeff Marks, the outgoing churchwarden

**The Minutes of the 2016 Vestry meeting**, having been circulated in the   
annual report, were agreed and signed by the chairman.

**Election of Churchwardens**John Thurston was proposed by Valerie Muller and Jeff Marks to be   
re-elected.

April Alexander was proposed by Lisa Thurston and Valerie Muller to be elected.

There were no other proposals and these two were elected unanimously.

There were no proposals for the position of Assistant Churchwarden, and the chairman asked for a volunteer. There being no volunteer, he emphasised the importance of the role as preparation for the position of churchwarden and asked everyone to consider the matter seriously and for volunteers to come forward during the coming year.

The Annual Vestry meeting was closed.

***Minutes of the   
ANNUAL MEETING CHURCH MEETING   
on Sunday 23rd April 2017***

46 members of the congregation were present at the meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Jeff Marks, churchwarden.

**Apologies for absence:** Valerie Muller, Vicky Williams, Angela and Nigel Price.

**Minutes of the 2015 APCM.**The minutes were circulated. These were agreed and signed as correct by the chairman.

**Matter Arising.**There were no matters arising**.**

**REPORTS**

**The Electoral Roll**

Clare Wilson, the Electoral Roll officer reported that there were 128 members on the roll, 99 are resident in the village, and 29 are nonresident. Two members have died, and 5 members have moved away.

Clare was thanked for her work on maintaining the roll.

***All other reports are available in the Annual Report, which has been circulated and is also available on line at www. bletchingleyparishchurch.org.uk***

**Presentation and Adoption of the 2016 Audited Accounts.**

Ron Napper, the treasurer, presented the audited accounts for 2016. A detailed analysis of the accounts had been circulated, they had been approved by the PCC and a copy will available on the church’s website***: www. bletchingleyparishchurch.org.uk***

Ron drew attention to the fact that income had increased during the last year, largely as a result of the stewardship week last September.

He thanked the Friends of Bletchingley Parish Church, for their contributions to projects which included the roof alarm and the restoration of the statue over the main entrance.

 He also highlighted the very significant donation of £3,189 raised from the congregation for USPG to support their appeal for the refugee crisis.

Our Independent Examiner, Anthony Cock, was thanked for his work in checking the accounts. .

The meeting was invited to ask questions on the accounts, but there weren’t any!

A motion to accept the accounts was proposed by Bill Alexander and seconded by Richard Fowler. It was passed unanimously.

A vote of thanks to Ron Napper for all his efficient work on our church accounts was proposed by Richard Fowler, and approved by all.

**PROPOSAL OF THANKS to the WARDENS**

The Revd. Penny Sherrington, on behalf of the meeting, thanked the churchwardens, Jeff Marks and John Thurston for all their work and efforts throughout the year.

**ELECTIONS**

**Deanery Synod**   
There were no nominations or volunteers to represent St Mary’s on the Deanery Synod. This would be referred to the PCC to seek 2 new members.

**Parochial Church Council**The following were elected unanimously as PCC members: Sandie Roper, Jennifer Hyde, Robert Tucker and Robin Idle.

**Welcomers**  
Leanna Queveda volunteered and was elected

**Money Counters**There were no volunteers

**Electoral Roll Officer**  
Clare Wilson was re-elected unanimously as Electoral Roll Officer

**Gift Aid Sectretary**Michael Barnes wishes to retire from this job, after carrying out the work for many years. There was no volunteer to take it over, and the matter was referred to the PCC.

**Appointment of Auditor/Independent Examiner**  
Anthony Cock was thanked for his work in doing this and was re-elected unanimously.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

On behalf of the choir, Pamela Cock thanked Jeff Marks for ensuring that we always had an organist to play for services, during the Vacancy.

**THE CHAIRMANS CLOSING REMARKS**

It has been an honour and privilege to have served you and the church for the past 5 years. But five years of me is more than probably anyone can cope with and we look forward to a new term under John and April. I will, most likely, miss being involved in the running of the church, but it is time to hand over.

I could not have served as CW without the help and assistance of, first, Valerie and then John. Anyone who knows me well enough will know that administration is not my strongest attribute; I thank them both for their patience and forbearance. I thank also John Buck, Cyril Mighall and Oliver Jackson for their guidance on matters ecclesiastical – they are very special people. And we could not have come through this past 12 months without the spiritual leadership of Penny and Kerry; but I must also thank John Scott and David Coleman for their contributions and I look forward to seeing Liz completing her Readership training. We must also thank Ron Napper for looking after the accounts – only this morning I had a compliment that we pay our bills very quickly; Ron has been a stalwart for many years and is highly efficient.

We have a new era starting in July and we will, without doubt, discover new ideas and practices to guide us through the next few years – change is good, it keeps us on our toes and our minds alive. Let us all embrace that change.

***Rector’s Report***

I was inducted here as Rector of the Benefice of Nutfield and Bletchingley nine months ago. It has been exciting, fascinating and exhausting, as there has been a steep learning curve to climb! I have got to know a lot of people, yet I’m aware there are still more to meet and what I want to do is go through the electoral roll of each church to visit everyone in their own home. Which could take a while!

The nine months have almost taken me through the ‘non- green’ bits of the liturgical year, so I’ve been able to witness all but Ascension and Pentecost in both churches. We’ve had some brilliant festival services through Remembrance, Christmas and Easter and I’ve enjoyed how both churches have responded to them in their own way. Some things have gone well and some, not as well as hoped. I have got some things right, but I’ve also made some mistakes. There have been a few changes, some on purpose and some not, but one things for sure, lots of notes have been taken for next year! I have felt totally equipped for things I never thought I was, but I have also felt totally out of my depth in others. All I can say is ‘thank you’ to those who have supported me and sorry to those whom I’ve really annoyed! I’m sure next year will be easier, as someone said to me ‘You can’t do anything right in the first year, you can’t do anything wrong in the second and they don’t care in the third!’ So here’s hoping!

It was a difficult time moving into the Rectory as we moved into a building site, that stayed that way for nearly 3 months. It was also difficult trying to support our daughter through all of the turmoil she experienced leading up to her wedding, which thankfully was a beautiful occasion. I then developed Gastritis in November and December which lead to an upper Endoscopy being performed just before Christmas, followed by Shingles and then Flu. So I hope next year will not only be a healthy one but perhaps a bit of less stressful one too!

I wish to thank the Church Wardens in both parishes, Alan, Gilly, April and John, for all their hard work during the interregnum and for their guidance since I’ve been here. There is also a special ‘thank you’ to Penny, Kerry, John Scott, John Buck and Liz for their service to the Benefice and also to Alison and David from Christchurch. I am hugely grateful to the choir and Charles at Nutfield; and the choir at Bletchingley with Val’s guidance and expertise without a resident organist, for keeping our worship relevant and life-giving. I also think a special thanks goes to April for arranging the numerous organists that played at Bletchingley…and that’s never easy!

But I also thank our administrator Elaine, the florists, Servers, Bellringers, Sunday Club leaders, Pastoral Visitors, welcomers, readers, family planners…Intercessors, tea makers and anyone else who has made sure this Benefice remained vibrant and alive!

I sat down and pondered over what has happened during these last 9 months and gosh, a lot has happened!

* Bletchingley welcomed Tristan Hall as Director of Music after months of advertising and 3 lots of interviews! I think we are all pleased with how he is working with the choir at Bletchingley, who have had 2 new members join in these last 9 months.
* The Benefice have employed Elaine as Administrator instead of her being self-employed. I’m very thankful to all that she has done and will continue to do. I’m pleased that she will now have regular hours, paid holidays and National insurance.
* Myself and the Church Wardens from Bletchingley have been in negotiations with Tandridge Council with regards to Clerks House with the view to housing a Syrian Refugee family. I would have hoped that I’d be saying the family have moved in, however it is still going through.
* I was able to ensure that Nutfield would no longer pay the debt to the Diocese that was sapping so much of their energy. This will make a big difference to them and I hope will give them some freedom to use their efforts in Mission rather than servicing a debt.
* We’ve had a couple of new services in both churches. First of all on Christmas Eve at 9pm we held our first ‘Bethlehem at Midnight’ Service at Nutfield. We welcomed over 40 people, which was amazing! The other new service was a Tenebrae on Good Friday Evening, which had over 60 people attend. I’m sure both these services will form part of our regular offering from now on. We also had a ‘Retreat in Daily Life’ for the Benefice to take part in during Holy Week. There were people at each of the services offered, from Morning Prayer to Compline and across the Triduum.
* We’ve formed good links with Bletchingley Primary School, where I take Collective Worship every month and who came in during Holy Week for the first time and performed ‘Resurrection Rock’! At Nutfield Primary, I also take Collective Worship on a monthly basis and I also stay for pastoral time. I have been asked to take Collective Worship at the Hawthorns School as well. All of these visits form relationships with the school, the pupils and their parents, helping to make our churches accessible and inclusive to the wider community.

Looking forward, I would like both new PCCs to carve out some space to spend a day together, where we will pray for a vision for the future and form a Mission Action Plan for the year ahead.

I understand the problems there have been with the Rota, so I am very pleased to say that Kerry is going to take this job on! The jury is still out with Church Desk as I fear it is not working for everyone and so we may have to reconsider whether we do continue with it. We are only using a fraction of its capacity, but people are not logging onto it or able to log onto it. It has become a burden rather than a resource.

The ‘Hatch and Match’ is going very well, but I am disappointed that I can’t offer real preparation for Baptism parents or wedding couples. I would like to establish a Baptism and Marriage Preparation course of some kind, that will help them all understand what it is they are doing and also meet others going through the same and share experiences. I shall be on the lookout for people who feel called to do this vital work. Alongside this, I have been asked to run a confirmation class and there will be two, one for young people and one for not quite so young!

All in all, we are in a healthy position as a Benefice, where we can stand strong on the foundations we have built and look out towards the communities we serve. Some of us will sit comfortably with this and others won’t, but I believe Archbishop William Temple was right when he said, ‘The Church is the only institution that exists primarily for the benefit of those who are not its members’. Our society is very different to even 10 years ago and so we will have to look at how we can make Christ real, relevant and alive, benefitting those non-members who might sooner go to a psychic fair to find spirituality than our churches. The question we will need to be asking ourselves is, how do we make our churches places that people feel they can have a spiritual experience, that brings them into the presence of the living God? We can all work together, in both our own churches and together as a Benefice to do that, with God’s help, ‘We will!’

***Attendance and Worship***

**The Principle Feasts of Easter, Christmas and Pentecost** are celebrated in full. Attendance at Easter remains fairly good and, although the church was packed for the Christingle service, the numbers were down from the previous year. Attendance and Communicants at Midnight Mass fell slightly perhaps because Bishop Jonathan presided the previous year. The annual service for All Souls continues to draw many who have been recently bereaved, but the numbers continue to fall slowly. **Midweek festivals** and special days such as **Ash Wednesday**, and **Ascension Day** are supported by a committed group of people. **Holy Week** observances are shared between the two parishes, with, in the absence of a priest to take Holy Communion in 2017, Compline, Hymns and Address on Monday to Wednesday at Nutfield; Maundy Thursday Liturgy of the Last Supper, Foot Washing and Gethsemane Watch at Bletchingley. The Good Friday pattern of worship in 2017 was Stations of the Cross, Children’s service and the Liturgy of the Day at Bletchingley and Matins and Ante-Communion with a devotional musical work to conclude the day at Nutfield. The Children’s service was particularly well attended.

There were **11 Baptisms** (*21 in 2016*), and **7 weddings** (*6)* The Clergy conducted **5 funerals** in church and **1** at the Crematorium during the year.

Attendance at the major festivals: (with 2016 figures for comparison)

**EASTER:**                Communicants **132** (*127*)

                Attendance **160** (*156*).

**CHRISTMAS:**       Communicants **146** (*212)*

                Attendance **505** (*599*)

**Christingle:**           Attendance **300** (343)

**Midnight Mass:** Communicants **71** (85)

                Attendance **124** (151)

**Christmas Day:** Communicants **75** (63)

                Attendance total **81** (105)

**PENTECOST:**       Communicants **51**(62)

                Attendance **58** (68)

***Churchwardens Report for 2017***

This past year has been one of significant change for St Mary’s - the most exciting news was that in July of 2017 we welcomed Phaedra to our Benefice with a service presided over by Bishop Christopher and attended by many from far and wide. We would like to formally thank everyone who was part of giving her a fantastic welcome. Some of the roles of Churchwarden included helping coordinate the refurbishment and decoration of the Rectory in preparation for Phe and her family to move in, we had to ensure a clean and tidy church (a job meticulously carried out by our cleaning team who work week-in, week-out to create a wonderful environment for us to worship in), we had to decorate the church (again, a task carried out with the great skill and willingness of our flower arranging team) and rehearse the service with servers, sidespeople, chaplains, welcomers, readers and many others. Thank you and well done all.

Before Phe’s July institution and induction, there was a huge amount of work that was carried out by teams of dedicated people to see us through the interregnum. We continued to cover all of our regular services (as well as baptisms, weddings and funerals) and all of the people that work so hard to keep our church running did what they did best - kept going. The Churchwardens would like to offer a huge vote of thanks to all the clergy (and retired clergy) who were willing and able to step in to ensure we had cover. In addition, our thanks also go out to everyone involved in keeping the music going throughout the vacancy - the loyal bad of Organists who travelled (sometimes great distance) to play for us each Sunday, to Valerie for keeping things on track and to Sam who covered each of the Thursday night choir practices.

This past year we have also seen the appointment of a new Churchwarden (April Alexander), had a fabulous open air service in glorious sunshine for Rogation Sunday, enjoyed the theatrical production of ‘Our June’s Wedding’ taking place in the church (and afterwards in Church House), hosted the Civic Service for the new Chairman of Tandridge District Council (our very own Gill Black), and partied during a very successful ‘Last night of the Proms’ concert.

To enable many of these events to run successfully it’s essential for us to keep the church in order. This year we have waterproofed the very top of the bell tower roof (protecting the upper floor where water had been making its way in) we’ve had tiling fixed on the roof and had some leading repairs carried out (filling cracks and renewing the lead in some areas) to avoid any winter damage. A newly formed ‘Fabric Working Group’ busied themselves with clearing a huge Crow’s nest from the Rood staircase, brushing clean the Clayton memorial, clearing some of the heating vents, cleaning window sills around the church and ensuring the anti-climb paint was renewed on the drainpipes. The roof alarm and CCTV continue to be serviced and maintained to ensure the safety of the church and those who use it.

Other news includes the successful recruitment of a permanent Organist and choir leader. We welcome Tristan who is already tasking the choir with getting to grips with more challenging and modern music. We’ve also enjoyed visits from numerous bell ringing groups in our capacity of ‘centre of excellence’ and we’ve welcomed a visit to the village from a previous Rector (John Fredrick) all the way from the USA. We have installed lights in the tree lighting the churchyard footpath and creating a lovely warm glow as you approach the church and in the same month we erected possibly the biggest Christmas tree we’ve ever had in church as part of our welcome to the Advent season.

As we move forward into another year, we have made sure we are compliant with our safeguarding responsibilities and are working towards ensuring that our data is protected with the new GDPR regulations that are coming in. In addition, we are enhancing our Social Media presence as both the Facebook page and our Twitter account have regular interaction with people from far afield who have registered a ‘like’ of the page and enjoy hearing our news.

We look forward to an exciting year full of many joyful moments as we journey together in the name of Christ.

John Thurston & April Alexander

***PCC Secretary’s Report***

The PCC met six times during 2017, three of these meetings were shared with the PCC from St Peter and St Paul Nutfield.

The first six months of the year were largely spent preparing for the arrival of our new Rector culminating in a wonderful Induction Service in July with Bishop Christopher.

At our joint Benefice PCC in September we reviewed the format of PCC meetings and decided that each PCC should continue to meet 6 times a year but that Benefice meetings should be ‘stand alone’ meetings dedicated to discussing the work of the Benefice and these would meet twice yearly.

The work of the PCC is partly delegated to subcommittees who report back to the PCC with proposals and suggestions. Reports from some of these committees follow this report.

We have reviewed our Fire Policy and our Safeguarding Policy has been updated, personalising it for use at St Mary’s, but based on the policy advised by the diocese. We were asked to consider appointing a Lay Champion, a new role promoted by the diocese, to look into lay involvement within the church.  
Mark tantum agreed to take on this role in January 2018. We have purchased a ramp so that there is now wheelchair access to the chancel area and we have begun discussions about becoming an Eco church.

In his closing remarks last year Jeff Marks, who chaired that meeting said

“We have a new era starting in July and we will, without doubt, discover new ideas and practices to guide us through the next few years – change is good, it keeps us on our toes and our minds alive. Let us all embrace that change”

The PCC is here to support and help the Rector as she leads us forward.

Valerie Muller

***Finance Report***

Committee Members: The Rector, John Trott, April Alexander, Jeff Marks, Lisa Swan, John Thurston, David Sellick and Ron Napper

After two years of adding to reserves, this financial year has seen the need to draw from reserves. For 2017 our deficit for the year was £5,172 compared to a surplus of £5,669 in 2016.

By the end of 2017 our reserves to carry forward are £10,919 with £1,631 of this earmarked for restricted use (choir fund, mission events and fabric fund). That means our general unrestricted reserve is now depleted to £9,288. This should be a concern for the PCC and a period of cost consciousness and income boosting measures should be on the agenda into 2018.

The main reasons for this decline has been:

1. A fall of £7,414 (9.4%) in direct giving and associated gift aid recovery from £78,763 in 2016 to £71,349 in 2017.
2. An increase in our quota payments by £1,545 (2.5%) from £61,955 in 2016 to £63,500 in 2017.
3. Additional expenses of £4,597 incurred in 2017 compared to 2016 in setting up and running the parish office in Church House which included furniture, software, and rent.

Other items to note are:

1. The Bletchingley Thomas Chapman Charity, which derives income from Clerks House, continues to donate and fully meet the PCC’s share of parish administrator costs which were £5,556 in 2017 compared to £2,535 in 2016. We are grateful for this continued financial assistance.
2. Repairs and maintenance costs have declined from £4,537 in 2016 to £3,231 in 2017. In 2017 repair work included the glass doors, locks and some roof repairs.
3. Thank you for the continued support of Anthony Cock, our independent examiner, for all his hard work and efficiency.

Lastly, a big heartfelt thank you to our treasurer for 2017, Ron Napper, for his beautifully kept ‘red book’ that contained his meticulous bookkeeping records that has taught me how accounting should be done.

Lisa Swan

***Report on Safeguarding 2017***

Rev Phe identified that we needed to update our policy and guidelines and we worked together on this in the autumn, ready for the PCC to approve at the November and January meetings.

Several people whose old CRB checks had expired renewed via the (new) D&B online system during the year. Only two people are now outstanding.

No other issues were identified during the year.

Jeff Marks, Safeguarding Officer

***Deanery Synod 2017***

In autumn 2016 the deaneries of Godstone and of Caterham amalgamated to form the new Tandridge Deanery, which corresponds approximately to the area of the Tandridge District.

The Deanery Synod is the forum for representatives of all the 26 parishes in the Deanery to meet and discuss. It meets three times each year. A deanery is the bridge between the parishes and the diocese, the wider church and beyond. The Area Dean is Revd Kathryn Percival, Vicar of Lingfield and Dormansland.

The first business meeting of the new Synod was 23 February 2017. Archdeacon Revd Canon Moira Astin introduced herself.

The main part of the meeting, ‘Inheritance Tracks’, involved discussion first in pairs then larger groups, both to help people get to know each other, but also to discern priorities for the deanery in its next triennium, based on our past experiences of the deanery. This was done by listing on post-its things that have worked well, others we have hated and dreams of things we would love the deanery to do in future. We then ‘voted’ with sticky dots and the Standing Committee will discuss the collated results to make a plan which might form our Deanery Mission Action Plan.

Written reports by Deanery Synod members involved in a range of areas were circulated before the meeting: Diocesan Synod, Board of Education, Spirituality, Refugee Resettlement Scheme and the Winter Night Shelter.

The meeting on Thursday 22 June was the first following APCM elections in parishes, resulting in many changes in Synod membership. The election of officers for the Synod was followed after refreshments by a Eucharist at which Revd Canon Moira Astin, Archdeacon of Reigate preached.

OUR DEANERY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Together Southwark ([www.cuf.org.uk/together-southwark](http://www.cuf.org.uk/together-southwark)) was created in 2013 as a joint venture between the Diocese of Southwark and the Church Urban Fund. It is a charity which aims to promote mission, ministry and practical action to tackle poverty across the Diocese, based on Matthew 25: 31-46. Recognising that much is done already by individual churches, Together Southwark, rather than taking responsibility for implementing projects, seeks to empower local people to do so.

Poverty can take many different forms. Economic poverty means not having enough to buy food, pay for housing, lighting or heating. Poverty can also be about not having choices, being trapped by circumstances, unable to imagine a different kind of life. Relational poverty is being unable to see friends and family and social poverty, not having social networks, can worsen over time. Cultural and identity poverty is being unfairly represented in the media and a situation not being reflected culturally.

Increasing poverty in the UK is due to budget cuts, housing costs, rising cost of living, unemployment and job insecurity. The patterns of poverty are also changing. For example both parents may be in work but on zero hours contracts. In London the number of ‘working poor’ has increased by 70% in 10 years to 1.2 million. Together Southwark focuses more on tackling economic, material poverty in its work with local churches and community groups.

Together Southwark is now part of the Diocesan Department of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. Its vision is to network, resource and develop the Christian response to poverty, transforming the lives of the poorest and most marginalised in the Diocese. Help can be given with ongoing projects and starting new projects, one per Archdeaconry. Collaborative work between churches, voluntary organisations and community groups is encouraged. Together Southwark can also help churches and community groups find affordable training and support funding applications.

The following are examples of projects supported by Together Southwark:

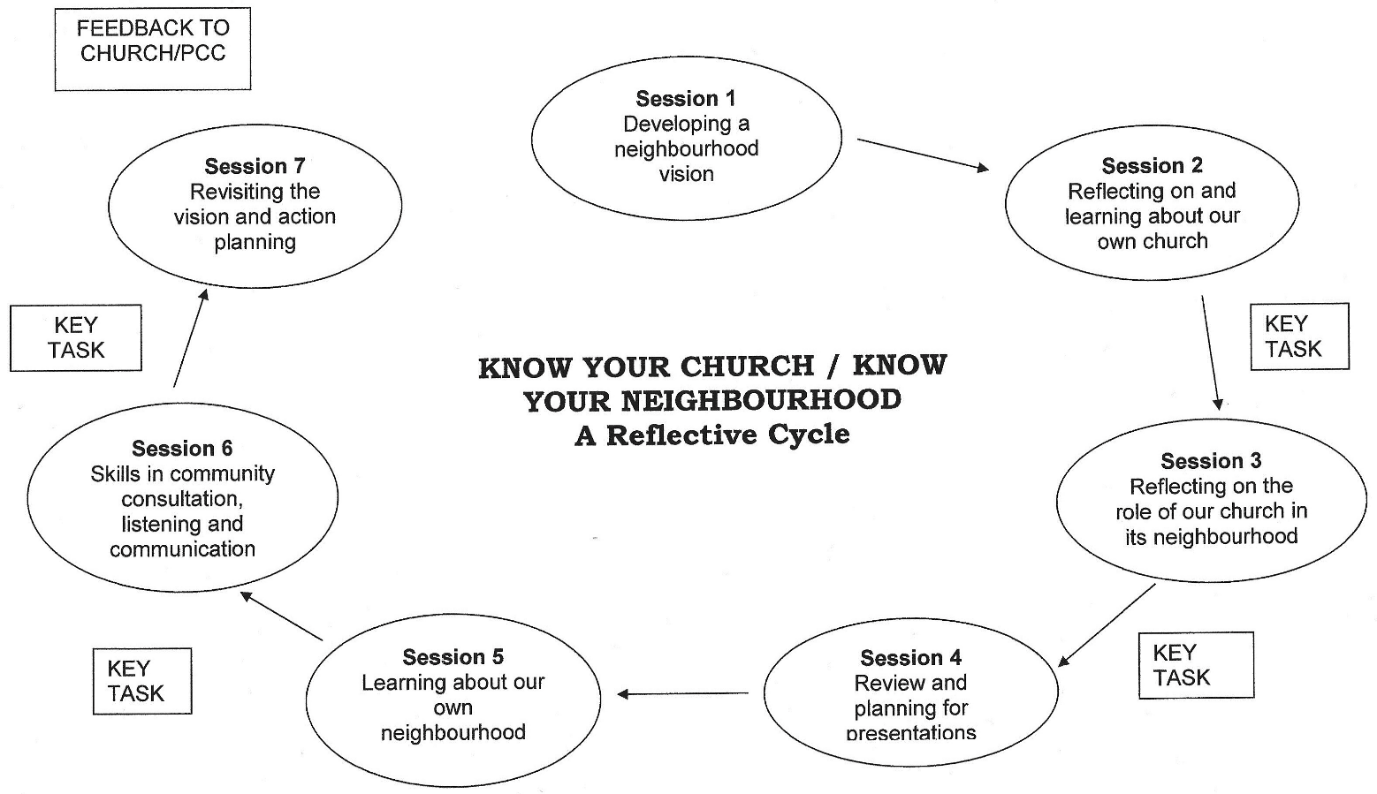
Lunchbox Library - run by a church in Southfields in partnership with local family resources, schools and businesses in the summer of 2016. Children from low income families were provided with a healthy free lunch during the holidays and given extra help with their learning, as these children are likely to fall behind in this area. It was done in the context of giving the children, who often cannot afford to go away, positive experiences in the summer holidays.

Erith and Thamesmead Debt Centre - set up by a group of seven churches in partnership with Christians Against Poverty, to help people trapped in spiralling debt.

Baby Talk Family Project - a parish midwife community project to nurture trust and strengthen family bonds in Angell Town. It also integrates and addresses mental health issues, such as postnatal depression.

Places of Welcome - the latest addition, a growing network that helps create safe places for people  to connect,  belong  and contribute. The film ‘What is a place of welcome?’ was shown to the meeting and can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/JXOSTuzuo2c>.

We need to consider what we wish to do and what we can do. The following reflective cycle, ‘Know your church, know your neighbourhood’ was shown:



Everyone was then asked to move into small groups of people who live near to each other, to consider,

* What is church engagement about?
* Where do we see poverty in our area?
* Where are you in terms of church engagement?
* Where do you feel you want to be?

The following answers, ideas and suggestions emerged:

* Hearing Champions
* Bringing the church into the community
* Teaching technology to older people - in a community centre rather than in a church
* Helping to bring people together
* After school club for children
* Finding out from the community what they what from us
* Consideration of social as well as financial poverty
* Making church services both welcoming and understandable
* Wider use of the church building
* Follow up of some very well attended events like Christingle Service and Messy Church
* Church engagement is about living out the Gospel; it is what Jesus did.
* Communication is key
* Particular shortage of activities for men and special needs groups
* Foodbanks
* Welcare
* Visits by school children to help them find out more about the church
* Offering lifts
* Engaging people on their own terms, building relationships
* Helping each other, not just some people serving others

Richard Fowler

***The Church Choir 2017***

This year has been a challenging year for the choir without either an organist or director of music. We have been very lucky to have had the help and support of a number of people so that we have been able to maintain our tradition of singing a motet every week. The Carol Service again received many compliments.

Sam Hayes, the organist and musical director of Great St Mary’s in Cambridge, lives in Bletchingley and volunteered to run choir practices until we appointed a new organist. We are immensely grateful to him for his help and encouragement.

April Alexander worked very hard to find organists to play for us every Sunday. We are very grateful to her, it was a very far from easy job

Ellie Muller, when faced with the uncertainty of visiting organists, volunteered to conduct us so we could sing unaccompanied. She may be young but she is becoming a very good conductor and it was good to see her musicality develop over the year.

We were very happy to welcome Tristan Hall, in January 2018, as our new Organist and Musical Director

It is great to be part of such a loyal group of singers – thank you all very much for your support.

Valerie Muller

***Reports from our Youth and Young People’s Team***

***Sunday Club***

Another year of learning and sharing together with a fantastic group of children, helpers, and regular occasional visitors. All are welcome at St Mary’s Sunday club. A year on and we are still using the Tower for our sessions. I really like us to feel part of the worship and it makes it easier for the younger ones to come and go to parents if they need to. Our dulcet tones, and sometimes even singing is said to be heard in the distance by the congregation but does not seem to be a complaint. Any opinions gratefully received.

We follow lectionary readings and the children come back into Church at Communion, proudly presenting their work. They are pleased to come to the front and share with the congregation at the end of the service what they have been up to. The Clergy are very good at guessing the bible reading.

We had a party at the end of the summer term outside in the churchyard which was a lovely occasion of games and celebration. It was important to recognise the regular attendance of so many of the children and we had about 25 children at this event which we had publicised in advance. There were of course party bags. We also said goodbye to Sheila Mighall who has helped for many years and has always been incredibly reliable and supportive. Thank you, Sheila for all you have contributed to the life of Sunday Club. We shall of course still see you in Church.

We have a regular core of about 10 children but sometimes as many as 25. We don’t always have enough leaders and helpers to divide into two groups, but given the numbers and range of ages, we do need two age groups with different activities for each. I am really grateful to the leaders who give their time to plan the sessions and provide enough craft materials to cater for 8 children or 18 – not always easy. I am also very grateful to the helpers who faithfully support the leaders in so many ways to make the sessions run smoothly. Their flexible and “can do” attitude is much appreciated. Thank you too, to Christopher Green who has been helping us as part of his Duke of Edinburgh’s Award – he is really helpful and a wonderful extra pair of hands. Not so long ago he was one of the group himself. Carrie Shaw had to stand down as a helper and we thank her for her help and we are delighted that, on the same day, Catherine Dewar offered to be a helper. A real answer to prayer.

The Children continue to be a wonderful group who are polite, but lively and questioning and Sunday Club feels well established. It is a privilege to work with them. We look forward to thinking seriously about how to provide more for those who are now getting older and need more age appropriate activities.

Glynis Beazley – Sunday Club Co-ordinator

***Alternative Halloween party***

Once again we held a very successful Halloween party for the young children in the Parish. This is a fantastic outreach event, and very popular. It was very well attended with roughly 80 children there – with some new faces. We had the usual activities of apple bobbing, biscuit decorating, crafts, face painting, bowling and guess the weight of the pumpkin, with spooky music and lighting making it very atmospheric. The piñata lasted a bit longer than last year! Rev Phe dressed up as a fairy and provided a great talk to the children and even got them dancing. The Social Committee kept us supplied with hot dogs and wine. Many thanks to all who help with this event each year – both from St Mary’s and St Peter and St Paul – we really couldn’t do it without you.

***Christingle Service***

This was probably our most popular service in years, and we only just had enough seats for all members of the congregation, resorting to asking some to sit in the choir pews! The Christmas story was told and those children that had dressed up as Mary, Joseph, angels and shepherds were invited to the front to make a tableau. A large team of both adults and children made very light work of assembling 200 christingles the day before in Church House. The christingles were all lit at the end of the service. The highlight of the service was singing The Twelve Days of Christmas, and Rev Phe got everyone to stand up when it was the month of their birthday – adults and children alike seemed to love this! This is an extremely popular service with the village community.

Clare Sturgeon

***The Ark***The Ark meets weekly on Wednesday mornings 9.30-11am in Church House and all preschool children and those who care for them are welcomed We are growing steadily, with between 10 and 15 families attending regularly.

Thank you to the current team of helpers who readily do whatever is needed.  
We are now needing at least one regular helper and another willing to fill gaps   
Please keep these needs in your prayers.

Sue Morris

***The Social Committee***

Committee Members: Valerie Muller, Pamela Cock, Ruth Goodsir, Pat and Ron Napper, Caroline George, Ann Pressey, Gill Black, Stevie Stretton

We have had a slightly quieter year after the last 2 very hectic ones. Our main activity was preparing for the Reception following Phaedra’s Induction Service in July. In October we hosted a wonderful Concert by the Band of the Surrey Yeomanry who encouraged audience participation in their ‘Last Night of the Proms’ concert. This concert also boosted church funds by about £500.  
Some of us spent an enjoyable if not somewhat hectic evening serving refreshments for the Halloween Party and we finished the year with the usual mince pies and mulled wine for our Carol Service as well as providing mince pies for the English Arts Chorale Concert.

Valerie Muller

***Visiting Team***

Under the leadership of the Rev Phe, members of the congregation regularly visit parishioners within the Benefice and offer support as needed. Please do contact Phe or the Church Administrator to let them know of anyone who would like to be visited.

Ann Pressey

***Church Flowers***

Thank you once again to our group of flower arrangers who keep at least one arrangement of flowers going in the Church throughout the year - except in Lent and Advent.    We are so grateful for their time and effort so willingly given.

We have to thank Verity Friend who has resigned from the regular flower arranging list having moved to Reigate but is hoping to come back for the Festival flowers - and we welcome Vicky Gillespie to our team.   We would welcome others to join us - tuition can always be arranged.

We are also pleased to have a separate team of people who decorate the windowsills for the festivals - thank you to them too.   No particular expertise is required just an admiration for the glory of God and the desire to make our wonderful old Church reflect this.

Averil Trott.

***Bellringers’ Report***

We continue to have an active and enthusiastic band of ringers, and have been pleased to welcome some new members during the year. In May, our annual outing was a day in Kent, where we rang the bells of five different churches, each with six or eight bells, followed by our customary curry back in Bletchingley.

Our electronic simulator continues to get good use, both for our own ringers and for the monthly “Drop-In” sessions which have become a regular feature, and are popular with ringers from many other local towers. These Saturday morning training sessions are rung entirely on the simulator, enabling less experienced ringers to gain valuable practice at ringing bells in time with computer simulated bands of “expert” ringers

The latest plan to improve our training facilities is to install a pair of “training bells” later in 2018. They will be rung with ropes in the manner of real bells, but the sound will be computer simulated and only audible within the tower. They will be much more accessible for ad-hoc and individual practices.

If you would like to see these training facilities in action or try them yourself, you are welcome to look in at the tower on the 3rd Saturday morning of every month, or speak to any of our ringers.

Ed Muller - Tower Captain - Tel: 742799.

***Sunday Morning Coffee***

Team Comprises:-Dee Bennett, Wendy Carey, Jennie Davenport, Hanni Dennis, Ann Frankcom, Vicki Gillespie, Debbie and Graham Hay, Lynn Hargreaves-McCallum, Sheila Mighall, Jean Price, Sandie Hooper, Louse Tantum and Robert Tucker and Myself

I am pleased to report that during the year the numbers staying after the service for coffee has greatly increased. I have been able to recruit a few more helpers following a few giving up due to other commitments.

Thanks to everyone for their generous coffee donations, which has enabled me to finance the coffee refreshments, (apart from the milk, which the helpers donate) the cleaning equipment for the church. I have also purchased during the year, a new urn, mop and bucket, hard garden brush and donated £l00.00 to Church Funds.

Many thanks to the current team.

Joan Millar

Tel. 01883 743514

E-mail: the [millars@uwclub.net](mailto:millars@uwclub.net)

***Gods Acre 2017***

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| The monthly Churchyard working party and the team of mowers, ad-hoc gardeners and litter wombles do their best to keep our little part of Gods acre at St Marys beautifully tended and as a result we often receive lovely comments from neighbours who walk through, and from visitors. We are blessed that our churchyard somehow manages to be a peaceful place despite its proximity to the A25.  Over the last couple of years we haven’t completed any special new projects, we just maintained what we have, selective strimming, path clearing, weeding along the base of the Church, trimming the yews, a ‘hay cut’ in August of the wild area and in November 16 the Bletchingley in Bloom team planted daffodil bulbs in front of the boundary wall which are looking beautiful at the time of writing. Unfortunately some of our work parties over the last two years have had to be cancelled since we didn’t have enough volunteers to make up a group. We also lost a faithful member of our gang in 2016 Lydia Daws who, despite being in her 90s, continued to help weed the front path, (and provide the flapjacks) until shortly before she died, so this is really a fresh plea for new help. In order to keep our churchyard looking as lovely as it always has done, we need more of you to help. Please join us, you don’t need to commit to every month, just when you can.  If you would like to join in we meet once a month on the third Saturday from about 10 a.m. to 12 noon and we have a coffee break with biscuits or cake at half time.  Meet at the church entrance or just join in whenever you arrive with doing anything you can help with; tidying, pruning, hedge trimming, battling with the compost area, filling up the bird bath, weeding and tending the beautiful surroundings around the church and make some new friends at the same time.  If you have some of your own garden tools, then bring them along, otherwise, there is always plenty to share around.  We are also always very grateful for any donations of wild flower plants from your gardens, or wildlife homes such as bird or insect boxes that we can put up. In 2018 we will complete a refurbishment of our bat bog garden so donations of pond/bog garden plants would be especially appreciated. |

Annabel Smith

***Report from the Church House Committee***

Members of the Appeal Committee: Ann Butler, Richard Fowler, Graeme Hay, Sara King, Richard Miles (Chair), Sue Morris, Ed Muller, Revd. Sister Phaedra Pamphilon-Green, Annabel Smith (Secretary), Lisa Swan (Treasurer), John Thurston, Robert Trotman, John Trott.

It’s hard to believe, after such a long time in the making, that our lovely new building has been officially open and in use for over a year now. So many people put their hearts and minds into the project over many many years which culminated into a ‘soft’ opening at the end of July 2016 before Rev’d Peter Moseling, who had helped drive the project, left the Parish. We then suffered a few setbacks in terms of a real opening to business due to delays in several areas of the build and fitting of the fire curtain. We were able to fit out the Parish office in August 16; our Parish Administrator Elaine Chalcraft is now based there, held an official opening with Sir Richard Stilgoe in early November 16 and then finally were able to hold the first official event later in November 16 with the Christmas Market. Early in 2017 some of our regular users moved back in and by the end of the year we were delighted to report that there were several regular new users.

The work of the Committee is not yet done though. We still have money to raise to pay back our loans which were necessary to take out because a VAT rebate we expected to receive has, to date, been denied us meaning we were £70,000 adrift. If you can help us in any way, please contact any member of the Committee. We are also going to need help with the ongoing running and management of Church House so would love to hear from you if you are interested.

Thank you to all of you who have already so generously donated or helped to organise fund raising events. Without you we would not have this beautiful new building for our whole community. Thank you to all the members of the committee who have worked tirelessly on this project for many years each bringing their own particular skills and knowledge to the table. This last couple of years, when we have so often seemed so close and yet suffered frustrating delays and disappointments, has been challenging. The committee always showed resilience, professionalism, continually rising to the challenge and all the while keeping a sense of humour!

On behalf of the Committee and thank you again for everything you have already done and given.

Annabel Smith (Secretary)

***CHURCH CLEANING***

The Church Cleaning team are: - Margaret Boulton-Smith, Wendy Carey, Ruth Goodsir, Sheila Mighall, Jean Price, Bill Shillito and Myself.

Unfortunately, we are struggling a little at the present time! Due to various family commitments and other appointments, we have only been able to clean the Church on alternate Tuesdays instead of every week, although at Christmas and other Festive Seasons, when the church gets used more, we do try to clean every week. We meet at 9.30 a.m. for approx. one and a half hours. Ruth works alone on a Wednesday keeping the Bell Tower clean for the Bell Ringers.

Bill Shillito has been cleaning the brass, but unfortunately due to eye problems is resigning. WE URGENTLY NEED SOMEONE TO CLEAN BRASS CANDLESTICKS AND THE LECTERN

I would be pleased to hear from anyone who feels they could spare some time on a Tuesday morning. With regard to the brass cleaning, this does not necessarily need to be done on a Tuesday. All equipment is provided. As well as undertaking an essential part of the Church Maintenance, we are all very sociable!

Joan MIllar

Tel. 01883 743514

E-mail: the millars@uwclub.net