

**2020**  
***Year of the pandemic***  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**PAROCHIAL CHURCH**  
**COUNCIL**  
**OF**  
**ST. JAMES' CHURCH,**  
**EASTBURY**



## **Aim and purposes**

Eastbury Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the Vicar of the Lambourn Valley Benefice in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church buildings and churchyard.

## **Objectives and activities**

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer, learning about the gospel, and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of St. James' Church and its churchyard.

## **Achievements and performance**

### **Worship and prayer**

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. All are welcome to attend our regular services of Holy Communion on the first (said BCP at 09.00) and third (09.30 family service) Sundays of the month as well as Festivals and special occasions such as the Taizé style service, Mothering Sunday, Palm Sunday, Easter, St James' patronal service, Harvest, sung evensong, with several at Christmas. Children are encouraged to take part in special family services on most of these occasions. The pandemic has altered the ability to provide these this year.

The parish is also an active participant in the Lambourn Valley Benefice. When there is a fifth Sunday, a Benefice Holy Communion service is held in one of the three parishes.

This has been an unusual year with the pandemic causing restrictions to gatherings and services. These were held as usual in January and February, then mostly remotely from March till July, although we were able to keep the church open for private prayer. From July we had limited services until the second lockdown in December.

There were 37 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll in 2019. The average weekly attendance at services was 17, but we could not hold a Mothering Sunday service, nor an Easter day service nor our annual crib service although we did have reduced services for harvest festival, the Christingle and Christmas day communion.

A lent course was available and meetings were held 'on line' but no breakfast meetings could be held.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. We have celebrated one baptism in our church this year and one reading of the banns for marriage and two funerals one held in church and one at the crematorium. There was one interment of ashes.

### **Deanery Synod**

There is one person, currently Mrs Deborah Phillips, elected to sit on the Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

### **The Church Building and Churchyard**

Our present policy is to keep the church open during the daytime, for visitors wanting to see the Whistler window, and in recognition that open access to their church is part of life for residents in this close-knit village community. This has been maintained during the pandemic and the church is cleaned/disinfected daily

Faculty approval has been applied for and granted by the Arch deacon to replace the southern roof as recommended in the quinquennial inspection, and it is now essential to raise the funds needed to carry this out. The two overgrown yew trees in the churchyard which had become unsightly hiding the memorial stones close to them have been removed after a faculty was granted and plans for new planting are being made.

The PCC is grateful to the Parish Council for its annual grant towards the maintenance of the churchyard.

### **Pastoral care**

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. Revd Julie Minter offers to visit all who request it, to celebrate communion with them either at their homes or in hospital. She has also visited families in advance of baptisms and weddings and the next of kin following a death to provide pastoral care to those who are grieving.

### **Mission and evangelism**

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. The church is actively engaged in fund raising. This year, despite reduction in services and fundraising activities, we made £138 donation to 'The friends of the children of Tanzania', £85 to 'The Childrens' Society' and £200 was donated to the charity 'Starlight'.

Money was raised from Sponsorship for Ride & Stride in aid of the Berkshire Churches Trust.

## **Church News**

Fiona Drake contributes articles on our behalf to the monthly editions of 'Village Views' magazine, edited and distributed by volunteers in all three parishes at an annual cost of £4. The Benefice also has a weekly information sheet, Valley Welcome, which contains notices of importance to the life of the church, & the collects and readings set for each Sunday. A Diocesan newspaper "Pathways" is also made available to those attending services.

## **The Social Committee.**

Usually there are several social events during the year. This reaches out to bring more people into contact with the church and also raises much needed funds for the church. This year it was impossible to hold most planned events, but we raised £8,539. In addition, donations of £680 were made to outside charities.

- The monthly 'Coffee Pot Café' in church was held only in January and February. It is open to all & 20-40 people gather each time and drink coffee (or tea) and eat home-made cake and chat to friends and catch up with village news. Payment is by donation & raise £139. During lockdown we delivered cake (& chat) to 60 homes and on VE day we delivered cream teas to all houses in the village.
- Our plant sale, jazz evening, summer fête, advent concert could not go ahead, nor could harvest supper, the watermill trip, the carol singing or the crib service.
- September 14th – Gift Day & produce stall did proceed with very generous donations (£6,675)
- In December our published Christmas card was distributed to each house in the village and the remainder were sold. Sales of the community calendar also raised funds.
- a Christmas Raffle win a prize every ticket was well supported, and prizes well received and made £1,500

## **Volunteers**

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church and churchyard a welcoming place for the community. There is a flower-arranging rota, a reading-of-the-lesson rota, and help with cleaning and graveyard upkeep. Miss Betty Eley rings the church bell in advance of our regular services, for weddings and funerals

The church supports the Food Bank by providing a collection point in the church for contributions from anyone in the village. Contents are taken weekly to the central depot in Lambourn.

## **Ecumenical relationships**

The church has joined with the Eastbury Village Hall committee to produce a community calendar using photographs of the village taken by residents. We usually use the village Hall for our harvest supper (not possible this year) and occasionally for other events. James Potter has a team of villagers who help him in his capacity as village warden and river/flood alleviation warden and also in keeping the churchyard clear. The church offers to be a site of refuge in an emergency, with a village generator if needed.

## **Financial review**

Total income for the year was £20,470 of which £1,026 was collections at services, £7,150 donations, £2,850 gift aid and a legacy due but not yet received. Fund raising activities contributed £8,539. The sum that the churches in the Deanery have to find to contribute to support the mission and ministry of the Church in the Diocese of Oxford is shared according to a formula that is based mainly on a usual Sunday attendance. In 2020, our parish share was £11,207. Other expenditure from the unrestricted funds for items such as insurance, electricity, Diocesan fees, architect fees, organist and cleaner, organ tuning, and general maintenance made total expenditure for the year £16,500 resulting in total net surplus of £3,970 transferred to the general fund (down £11,400 on last year).

The annual financial statements which form an integral part of this Report will be presented at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and are available on request.

## **Structure, governance and management**

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England, operating under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is regarded as a charity but under the Charities (Exception from Registration) Regulations 1996 it is not required to register with the Charity Commission.

PCC members are appointed using the Church Representation Rules. In Eastbury, the PCC consists of the incumbent (our Vicar), churchwarden(s), & members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend any of our services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The PCC meet five times during the year, this year by 'zoom' when necessary. There is a liturgical sub-committee that meets with the vicar to make our service formats and order of service. Other subcommittees maintain the church building and contents, maintain the grounds of the church, carry out pastoral work visiting new residents, and the social committee arranging social events including those to raise funds.

Jenny Powell runs a **Sunday School** in Eastbury. This aims to keep children & their families in touch with their Church building, services held there, & the seasonal activities associated with the church year while teaching them the Christian faith. Children are also included in helping with fund raising activities for the church and for charities elsewhere. For several services, in other years, the children have a very active input – making candles for the Taizé Service, posies for Mothering Sunday, building the Easter Garden, making bread for Harvest Festival, making Christingles and performing the Nativity at the Crib Service on Christmas Eve. There is also an annual pantomime outing. Older children who have moved on are happy to return to help and join in and bring their own children.

### **Administrative information**

St James' Church is situated off Church Street (or 'Back Road'), Eastbury. It is part of the Benefice of the Lambourn Valley in the Newbury Deanery of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is: The Old Vicarage, Eastbury, Hungerford, RG17 7JN.

PCC members who have served from the 2020 APCM until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent: Revd. Julie Mintern

Elected members:

Mr Paul Reynolds

Dr Jenny Powell (secretary & parish safeguarding officer)

Mrs Fiona Drake

Mr Charles Barrow

Mr James Potter

Mr Shane Chichester

Mrs Deborah Phillips (deanery synod rep)

Mr Nick Blackwell acting as treasurer

This report was approved by the PCC on April 12th, 2021  
and signed on their behalf by Rev. Julie Mintern.