

2021
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
OF
ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,
EAST GARSTON

Aim and purposes

East Garston 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 finances of the parish and the maintenance of the church building, its contents and the 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 All Saints' Church and its churchyard.

The PCC, together with the Vicar, have a duty of care to ensure the protection of the vulnerable in their church community. The PCC has appointed a safeguarding officer and has adopted a safeguarding policy statement which is displayed on the notice boards.

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 second and fourth Sundays of the month. At Festivals such as Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas, the services cater not only for the regulars but also for those who attend church on just a few occasions during the year and visitors. The children are encouraged to take part in special family services on most of these occasions.

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.

There were 62 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll in 2021.

The church was closed for public worship on 5th January 2021 and reopened on the 25th April for the first eucharist of the year with an attendance of 14. Services continued, uninterrupted by COVID for the remainder of 2021 with an average attendance at the 9 a.m. services of 13.

In addition to the regular services, we held a combined Benefice Eucharist Service in August and October with 32 and 36 in attendance respectively, a Harvest Service with 38 attending, a Carol Service on 12th December was attended by 57 and 40 people attended on Christmas Day.

There were four funeral services during the year, one interment of ashes and one thanksgiving service. On a happier note, there was a wedding in September attended by 135 guests, and one baptism in August.

The on-line Daily worship started by Revd Julie Mintern in March 2020 continued throughout 2021 and offered daily Online worship with Morning Prayer and Evening Compline Services using Zoom.

As well as our regular services (when possible) 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.

During the year, the parishes of the Benefice have been supported by the Benefice's Associate Priest, Venerable Christine Allsopp.

Deanery Synod

There is one person 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

Following on from the repairs in 2020 to the porch roof and valley gutter, the rainwater downpipe between the porch and south transept was replaced and the lightning conductor system was repaired. The internal walls of the porch, the south wall by the font and the south wall and new roof timber in the Seymour Chapel, all of which suffered from water damage, were painted.

The new lych gates were hung and Ven. Christine Allsopp blessed them following the Communion Service on Sunday, June 27th. The PCC is very grateful to the many hours of dedicated work by Helen MacMaster, Christopher Vaughan and Jon Hing to achieve this after many years without gates.

The external surfaces of the walls of the tower were closely inspected by a team of abseilers. Their report will be used to seek permission from the Diocese to carry out the repairs that were identified in 2022. Other internal repairs to the tower and its roof and repairs to the stone mullions of the East Window and the south facing windows of the chancel have also been costed and specifications are being prepared. All of these repairs were identified by the church architect as needing urgent action. The total cost of the planned repairs, which will be phased to take place as funds become available, is approximately £120,000. A fund-raising appeal is planned to be launched in 2022.

The bellringers have worked extremely hard since they launched their appeal in 2020 for funds to repair the bells and have had tremendous success. This work is scheduled to take place in 2022 although there is still a shortfall between the funds raised to date and the £50,000 target which includes a 10% contingency.

The churchyard is currently maintained by a team of volunteers.

Pastoral care

Revd. Julie has continued offering pastoral care unconditionally. She has written a weekly email newsletter which has been circulated to more than 60 parishioners electronically and a few hand-delivered to those without internet access. Anyone may ask to be added to the email list.

Mission and evangelism

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. Normally specific charities are selected to benefit from collections at our special services but regrettably this did not happen in 2021. There were fewer services and collections as well as reduced opportunities for fund raising. In these circumstances the PCC decided that it would be prudent to conserve its resources. We did make our usual £50 donation to the Berkshire Churches Trust and £615 was raised through Sponsorship organised by Bob Briant for the Ride and Stride programme. We received in return a grant of £307.50 being 50% of the amount raised."

We contribute articles to the monthly editions of Village Views magazine which is edited and distributed by volunteers in all three parishes at an annual cost of £4.

The Safari Supper was cancelled again due to COVID which was a shame as it is an event that many look forward to as well as raising funds.

The church organises East Garston's annual Remembrance Service at The War Memorial. This year the service was conducted entirely at The Memorial. The Wantage Academy Band provided all the music including The Last Post and The Reveille. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Royal British Legion, All Saints' Church and East Garston Parish Council.

The church supports the West Berkshire Food Bank by providing a collection point in the porch for contributions from those attending our regular Sunday services.

The PCC Secretary keeps members on the church community email circulation list in touch with what is happening locally and anyone may ask to be included whether they attend church regularly or not.

Ecumenical relationships

The church has a very good working relationship with the Society of Friends in East Garston and occasionally makes use of its admirable facilities for meetings.

Financial review

Thanks to the continuing generosity of our Parishioners and other donors our receipts increased to £23,524 (2020 £20,797). Of particular note is the increase in Planned Giving from £7,190 in 2020 to £8,530. Having a regular income stream makes the management of cash resources much easier and particularly so when for one reason or another fund-raising activities are limited. With the resumption of services in Church income from collections also increased. There was also an increase in Parochial fees which are charged for weddings and funerals and are shared with the Diocese in line with the Table of Fees that is published each year by the Archbishops Council.

As far as expenses were concerned there was also an increase but our Parish Share – our contribution to the Diocese which goes towards the salaries, housing and other costs of the clergy – which is our single largest expense was unchanged. Insurance, the next largest item, increased by just 1%. Maintenance costs increased by over £1,000 being the cost of the Quinquennial Inspection and the testing of the electrical installation.

So, we achieved a surplus of £5,260 (2020 £3,807) which means the General Fund now stands at £35,814. Unfortunately, this has to be reduced by £9,100 being the deficit carried forward on the Restoration Account. However, the adjusted balance of £26,714 is a satisfactory reserve.

Restoration Fund

The Restoration Fund opened the year with a deficit of £9,912. In the earlier part of the year, we continued to receive donations in response to the Appeal that was launched towards the end of 2020 including two grants from the Englefield Charitable Trust and the Miss Lawrence Trust. Total income for the year was £9,734. Expenses came to £8,922 made up of the balance of the cost of the roof repairs and architects' fees. This gave rise to a modest surplus of £812 so going forward the deficit is slightly reduced to £9,100.

Bell Fund

The fund-raising campaign launched by and lead by the bellringers themselves is going extremely well with more than £20,000 being raised during the year. At the end of the year the balance in the fund was £26,845. Since then, another £5,000 has been received meaning sufficient funds are available to commence the project of which more details can be found elsewhere in the Annual Report.

Churchyard Fund

There was no income designated for the Churchyard Fund during the year. The Parish Council grant went towards the Bell Fund. Expenses were £39 leaving a balance at the year-end of £1,016.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all of the volunteers who work so hard to make our church and churchyard a welcoming place for the community and ensure that the village is provided with an accurate record of the passing of time.

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates 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.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. In East Garston, the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our Vicar), churchwardens, and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church.

All those who attend our services/members of the congregation 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 and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The PCC met 3 times via zoom and once in person. Much of the business of the PCC was conducted virtually via email consent.

Administrative information

All Saints' Church is situated off Station Road, East Garston. 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 PCC Secretary 'Church Cottage', Front Street, East Garston, Hungerford, RG17 7HJ

PCC members who have served from the 2021 APCM until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent: Revd. Julie Mintern

Churchwarden: Paul Tame

Elected members:

Mrs Caroline Bayly

Hon Rowland Cobbold (Treasurer)

Mrs Karen Hack

Mrs Nicola Perceval

Mrs Ann Phillips

Mrs Joanne Rabbitts

Mrs Karen Sperrey (Secretary)

Mrs Emma Stone

Mr Paul Tame

This report was approved by the PCC on 12th April 2022 via email.