



ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS BARNES



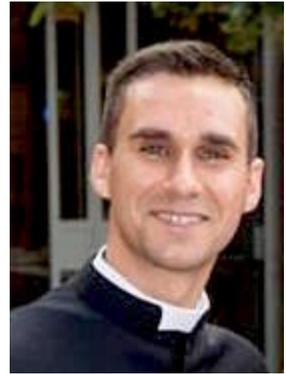
ANNUAL REVIEW 2017 – 2018

VIEW FROM THE VICARAGE

Foundations for hope

'He is not here – he is risen!' Luke 24.5)

In his book 'Reimagining Britain', Archbishop Justin Welby describes Brexit as a key moment in our history. Whether we voted remain or leave we should not be naively optimistic nor unduly fatalistic about the future. Instead, we should embrace the chance we now have to reimagine who and what we should be as a nation. He writes:



'When changes are especially dramatic, they call for reimagining on a grand scale, for an interpretation of our ancient meta-narrative that is faithful to the past, that is adapted to the present, and that guards the hopes of those to come in the future'.

Fundamentally, it is a book about hope. A hope that we can be anchored in our past, while engaging with the changes of the present, to build a new future together in which the maximum number of people are enabled to flourish. It will perhaps be unsurprising to hear that the Archbishop argues that the Christian story should be reaffirmed as the meta-narrative by which the nation understands itself. It is, he believes, the only narrative with sufficient generosity and hospitality to hold together a plural and diverse nation with many competing visions of truth, because it roots us in a coherent tradition without enforcing conformity.

What the Archbishop says about the nation also feeds into what might be said about the Church of England as a whole, and also its individual parishes. We are seeking to serve diverse and plural communities, where ideas of truth and meaning will often only have the vaguest connections with the Christian narrative, if at all. In this context, many people have questioned the parish as a relevant unit, and indeed the whole polity of the Church of England as a sustainable and appropriate structure. In reaction to this, many theologians have strongly reaffirmed the model and role of the parish as the foundational means of presence and engagement in the community.

The truth, as ever, probably lies between two extremes. There are many dismal stories that can be told of dying parishes and closing churches, because they have failed to engage with the changing communities around them, and a world where a Christian faith and

narrative can no longer be taken for granted. But we can also tell many good stories, where parishes are responding imaginatively and creatively, with the generosity and hospitality that the Archbishop commends, to renew parishes so that they become a 'blessing to those places where they live', and don't just survive but even thrive.

At the time of writing I am about to reach the second anniversary of my licensing as Vicar of Saint Michael's, and in this time, I have seen that we are realistic about the challenges of a changing culture, but also hopeful for the future. We do not subscribe to the story of inevitable decline and increasing irrelevance, but to a different story in which the Gospel is always relevant and always leading to new growth. It is not insignificant that the annual meeting always takes place in Eastertide. This is the season of hope, when we rejoice that Christ has risen from the grave, and so given us new life, and you will notice that each section of this report is accompanied by a quotation that comes from one of the resurrection stories in the Gospels. The resurrection changed the world's narrative forever, and it is this story of life and hope that we celebrate together as we gather as a parish at this time.

There have been various comings and goings over the year and I would like to mention in particular Lizzie Hackett-Brown who has stood down from the role as Parish Administrator, which she has undertaken with such energy, dedication and good-humour for the past few years. She has been an enormous support to me, and to everyone, and will be deeply missed. I hasten to add that she is not leaving St Michael's, but only this particular role – and I am sure she will not be found 'twiddling her thumbs'! Prior to her departure, Lizzie worked fewer hours, and thus shared office time with Robbie Lyon who in just a few short months settled into the role. We wish him all the best as he moves into full time work.

Prayer and Worship

'And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy' (Luke 24.52)

Daily worship is the beating heart of any parish, and it has been a joy to see a small group of parishioners regularly attend **Morning Prayer** throughout the week, to the extent that some of them are now being trained to lead the service so that daily prayer can continue, at least some of the time, when the Vicar is away. Last year, **the Saturday Mass** was

new, but it has now become more established with its own small congregation, occasionally swelled when it becomes the foundation for a Saturday meeting or event.

The calendar has included more regular services of Choral Evensong and other **sung services**, which attract a good crowd. A good example would be the new Epiphany Carol Service. Another new service last year was the Open Air Mass for the Sunday of Corpus Christi, which was a wonderful act of Eucharistic witness and outreach to the parish. Our prayers for good weather were answered somewhat too effectively, as it was the hottest day of the year! Nevertheless, there was something profoundly beautiful about celebrating the Holy Eucharist outside under the trees of the cloister with people passing by on the path, and the planes flying overhead, as we took the worship of Christ beyond the walls of the church and out into the parish. Perhaps the most notable area of growth has been our **All-age Family Mass**, which takes place about once a month. These services regularly double the average congregation with over thirty children present, combining the best of beautiful liturgy with a slightly more informal approach to engage children and their parents.

We welcomed a number of **visiting preachers** over the year. Father Brutus Green preached the Triduum. The Dean of St Albans was with us for the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and on the first three Sundays of Advent we welcomed Canon Mark Oakley, Father Gareth Powell and Father Andrew Zihni. At Michaelmas the diocesan Bishop joined us, and the Dean of Southwark for our 150th anniversary foundation service. Brother John Towson, a monk of Alton Abbey preached for Corpus Christi.

A particular success was the first half of **Holy Week** with three different services, all of which attracted a good number of people and answered particular needs. On Monday there was a beautiful service of silent prayer and intercession before the Blessed Sacrament. On Tuesday a liturgy of Healing and Reconciliation. On Wednesday, Sung Compline. This is likely to be repeated next year, with perhaps similar services at other points in the year. It was good to revive a devotion to Our Lady of **Walsingham**, and a small group from St Michael's went on pilgrimage to the Shrine in Norfolk, held jointly with our neighbouring parish of St Nicholas, Chiswick.

Mission Action Plan

'Go to my brothers and tell them' (John 20.17)

Last year I reported on the development of our Mission Action Plan which began with agreeing our Mission, Vision and Values statements. These are now being embedded, and continue to take effect in the life of the parish, as we deliberately and strategically shape our life around them, giving us a greater sense of purpose and focus, and criteria by which to assess our actions and aims.

The incipient Mission Action Plan contains three objectives:

1. *To start a church playgroup for children.*
2. *To establish a community arts festival.*
3. *To build welcoming glass doors.*

The MAP is currently paused, as we focus PCC time and energies on the new Church Hall project, but even so, it is pleasing that two of the three objectives are already coming into existence. A pre-school playgroup and parent coffee morning had its first meeting in March (with more planned later in the year), and Andrew Childs is working on arrangements for an art fair to build on the success of the 2017 art exhibition. By the time the Church Hall project is complete, we may have only one objective to complete from our MAP before starting a new one!

Parish Church Council

'While they stood talking, Jesus himself stood among them' Luke 24.36)

A Vicar works very closely with the **Churchwardens**, and I shall miss working with Fanny Ward who steps down this year. Jane Bennett-Powell has completed her first term as Churchwarden, and I think everyone will agree that they can now hardly imagine her in any other role! I would like to express my thanks to both of them for their commitment and support. The work of a Warden is often hidden, often tedious, and they must receive complaints with great calm and wisdom. At the same time, I have had the pleasure of working with an excellent **PCC** of diverse and skilled people, including several new members. There is now a clearer and increased programme of meetings and social events for the PCC, with a sharper definition of its relation to and working with the Standing Committee.

The PCC went on its second **Away Day** at St Mary's Convent in Chiswick. The first half of the day involved Mass and Bible study on the theme of mission and how this is reflected in our current and future life at St Michael's. The second half of the day sought to relate this more directly to the Church Hall project, and we were joined by a range of interest groups and stakeholders, and was facilitated by the Rev'd Elisabeth Morse, as we reflected on a range of issues and information about the Church Hall. All this helped to lay the foundations for a new Church Hall project (of which more below).

New Church Hall Project

'The Lord worked with them' Mark 16.20

Over the last year we have restarted our Church Hall project, going back to basics to establish our vision and undergo a thorough consultation process with greater transparency along the way. By the time of the APCM we will have had three community gatherings to share the process, and bring people with us on the journey.

At the foundation of the process are five guiding principles that describe the basics of what the project must achieve. In a way, they are all common sense, but by articulating them clearly we have clear criteria by which to assess various ideas.

1. *Supports and enhances the mission of St Michael's as a church.*
2. *Provides a resource to enrich the lives of local people.*
3. *Serves a broad diversity of users*
4. *Offers a long-term and high-quality solution.*
5. *Sustains and contributes to church finances.*

At the same time, the project must also align with our Mission, Vision and Values, and our incipient Mission Action Plan.

With these principles established, we were able to formulate a timeline with clear inputs and stages – and we have (broadly speaking) managed to stick to it. For some people the process will have seemed slow, but it has been essential to make sure that every stage of the process is carefully thought about, well-researched and prayed-through with members of the church and wider community. There could be nothing worse than rushing to conclusions without proper research, consultation and reflection!

After listening to research into various relevant areas (such as other projects elsewhere, condition and fabric, stakeholder needs etc) the PCC and the various stakeholders at an Away Day had the opportunity to discuss that information and begin working together on the new project. On the day we realised a new spirit of co-operation, with a consensus among those present that the issues presented by the existing building made a new building a reasonable response, and a dawning sense of excitement of what we could do together for the parish. You can read all about it in the report from the day, available on the website.

We undertook a Community Audit, and this revealed the very broad range of aspirations and hopes for such a new community facility. The audit was an important part of listening to all voices in our parish, and discovering needs that might be hidden from plain sight. The audit looked at current uses, existing and potential future facilities, and needs of the community. Taking on board the audit and all existing research and consultation to date we were able to affirm three concepts that took us onto the next stage of project development:

1. *That the project would encompass the needs of existing users and hirers, notably St Michael's Nursery, alongside any additional uses that might arise in the future.*
2. *That a new building will best meet those needs and will be less disruptive, faster to achieve, and result in a higher-quality and longer-term outcome.*
3. *That the project should, in some way, reflect a Christian commitment to the less-advantaged and social need in the context of our parish and local area.*

Taking these on board, the PCC shared the broad intention to explore a new Church Hall Project supported by fundraising, loans and grants and with or without some form of accommodation integrated into or attached to the building that might help funding, and might also provide a future resource for the parish. At the time of writing we are about to share the next stage of research into various companies that undertake such projects as a second stage of consultation and feedback, enabling the parish to inform the direction of travel, and take forward the vision together.

Throughout this new process, communication and feedback has been key, and this has been achieved through a variety of mechanisms:

- *A representative focus group who help the PCC to reflect on the process as it moves forward and share any concerns, so that they can be responded to at an early stage, negotiating the diverse viewpoints of different interest groups.*
- *A Church Hall Newsletter that comes out at key points to inform and share progress and information.*
- *The website has a 'Hall Project' section (still undergoing some development) where all important documents are hosted and news can be posted.*
- *A Church Hall email list to inform people about meetings and developments as they emerge.*
- *A display table at the back of church contains hard copies of all documentation and can be accessed whenever the church is open.*

I have described the process in some detail, as a form of recap to show how we have reached the point we are at currently – although there is undoubtedly even more detail that could be included. It has not always been an easy process. Our parish contains many diverse voices, and the PCC has the challenge of negotiating different viewpoints and interests which cannot all be satisfied all of the time. I want to thank the PCC for their patience and fortitude in this long process alongside all the other work that the PCC must do to ensure the effective running of parish. The positive outcome so far however, is that with many restored relationships, there is now a greater sense of confidence and clarity among parishioners and hall users about the way forward, and I urge everyone to keep themselves informed and continue to pray for the project. This project has the potential to transform the life of our parish, providing the whole community with a wonderful new asset, and a sign of our commitment to God and his people, and the belief that both deserve the best we can offer.

Pastoral Care and Offices

Jesus said to Peter, “tend my sheep” (John 21.16)

The day to day pastoral care of the parish continues, often hidden from view, as individual parishioners undertake visiting, offer lifts and a thousand other acts of kindness as part of their Christian vocation. I would like to mention the Rev'd Judith Roberts for her particular ministry of pastoral care, and all who give lifts to members of the congregation so they can attend worship as often as possible.

The hidden ministry of pastoral care rises to prominence however, through the pastoral offices of **baptisms, weddings and funerals**. I shall mention on of each as particularly memorable experiences over the last year.

Oscar O'Brien, son of Felicity and Michael was Baptised in May, and I don't think I have ever seen quite so many people at a Baptism! The church was full to bursting as many people came back for the first time since their wedding here a few years before. It is an example of how important Baptisms can be in welcoming friends and relatives back to church and giving them a positive experience. The church was equally full for the wedding of Sophie Pownall and Humphrey Serjeantson. All weddings are joyful occasions, but there is something particularly special about marrying a couple who are regular worshippers and well known to the church community, many of whom turned out to be with them and offer their prayers at the service. Like weddings, it is always a privilege to take a funeral of any parishioner, but perhaps particularly for someone like Brian Gowan who had worshipped at St Michael's for so very long. Brian was almost never absent from Mass on Sunday and on Wednesday, and so his sudden death was something of a shock for many of us. I still miss his presence among us. The funeral was a quiet affair at Mortlake Crematorium, with a good number of people from St Michael's later coming for a Requiem Mass in the Lady Chapel. A collection in his memory has purchased a beautiful antique piece of embroidery depicting a pelican (a Eucharistic symbol of the sacrifice of Christ) which will be sown onto a lectern fall as a lasting liturgical memorial to Brian who was so faithful at Mass.

Stewardship, Volunteering and Giving

'He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.' (Like 24.30)

Over the last year we have reflected on the importance of **stewardship** in the context of rising costs, and the nature of our charitable giving as an expression of our thankfulness for all that God gives to us, and of our Christian commitment. Sue Pandit took on the role of Stewardship Secretary, and immediately wrote to all those who currently give via blue envelope or standing order to thank them for their giving, and I would like to thank her for her ongoing work and support. Together, we have

established a clear system whereby people who increase, decrease, begin or discontinue giving are always acknowledged and thanked accordingly.

In advance of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting we publicised a new **Charitable Giving Policy** that seeks to focus our giving on two charities, and emphasises the building of relationships and measurable impact – and in line with this we selected two charities (FiSH and the Diocesan Matabeleland Link). In October we held another **‘Celebration of Giving’** season, beginning with Harvest, and involving displays and talks about our giving. Crispin O’Brien, the FiSH Chair of Trustees joined us one Sunday, and Harry Hobson and Father Richard Sewell talked about their recent visit to Matabeleland in Zimbabwe. This year, I was pleased to see more nominations for charities come from the congregation, but there is still more work to do in terms of publicising the new giving policy and its criteria, as well as forming a new understanding at St Michael’s about how we relate to our charitable interests so that we can have active relationships and make a greater difference in the world. October has also become a time when new people are invited to take on roles such as stewarding, reading, interceding, serving, hospitality, and administering the chalice. It is a positive sign that there was at least one new person who took up each one of these ministries at St Michael’s.

One of the most important developments has been for the formation of a definite and targeted programme of general **fundraising**. A sample of events were the parish quiz (unfortunately the Vicar’s team won again!), the Michaelmas Dinner, and the art show. I’d like to encourage the congregation to think creatively about how they can be involved in the fundraising that is essential of St Michael’s, not only to maintain its ministry as it is currently (itself not a foregone conclusion), but also grow in the future.

150th Anniversary

A highlight of the last year was our 150th anniversary celebrations that took place between late September and mid-November. This period began when the Bishop of Southwark attended our Michaelmas Patronal Festival, and concluded with the Dean of Southwark preaching at our Foundation Day Mass – the service concluded with a procession to the site of the original mission church, led by a troupe of rainbow-coloured angels with six feet wings!

Either side of these two services, there was the Michaelmas Dinner, a concert entitled 'In tune with Heaven', an art exhibition for children and adults, a lecture on the history of the first 50 years of St Michael's, and a Harvest Tea for older residents held jointly with FiSH. China mugs embellished with a 'St Michael's at 150' logo were created and sold for church funds by one of our parishioners. It was a remarkable time of celebrating our past, our present, and our future as a church and parish.

Making Disciples

'Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations.' (Matthew 28.19)

A parish that grows in numbers but not in depth is likely to run into problems in the long run, and it is interesting that Jesus puts growth in discipleship before baptism in the Great Commission of Matthew's Gospel, as if to say that commitment to faith must be preceded by a firm foundation. How have we modelled this as a church over the year through learning, study and teaching?

In **Advent**, we had a sermon series based on the book 'A good year', in which we reflected on the role that the liturgical calendar plays in forming our spiritual lives. We heard sermons on how to keep a good year, a good Advent, and a good Christmas, respectively. Our other sermon series took place in **Lent**, when we heard about the shape of the Eucharist and its structure of gathering, word, sacrament and dismissal, so that we could more fully understand and engage with the central act of Christian worship. Immediately after Mass, a dozen or so people gathered for the 'Adult Sunday School' which was called 'A tour through the Bible', exploring what the scriptures are and how to read them. In this way we were supported by the twin foundations of word and sacrament in our Lenten learning. Lent was certainly a busy time! On Sunday evenings we continued our series of 'On my desert Island' evensongs, in which we heard about the life and faith of four people: the Rev'd Judith Roberts, Harry Hobson, Jane Bennett-Powell and Anthony Gardiner. All were fascinating and funny in their own way, helping us to understand the many and various ways that God comes to us in our lives so that each person has a very personal story to tell of God's grace.

Numbers are not the be all and end all of the health of a parish, but the number of confirmations is certainly a positive sign of well-being.

Currently at least five adults and ten children are in the process of preparations and we are looking forward to the Confirmation service with the Bishop of Kingston on 10th June. Please continue to pray for the candidates and for more people to come forward to receive this 'sacrament of commitment' as it is often called.

Children's Ministry

'He opened their minds to understand the scriptures' (Luke 24.45)

A recent survey of children and families in the Church of England was sobering reading. In the last decade, the number of children attending worship in church has fallen by 22%, that's 2% a year. At the same time three quarters of churches have less than six children in their Sunday School, with a quarter having no children at all. Even more worrying, a majority of parents expressed a lack of understanding about how to pass on their faith to their child.

I thank God that there are many children here at St Michael's, but that should never make us complacent. We must constantly strive to make St Michael's a place where children are not only welcome and safe, but where their needs and the needs of their families are actively catered for in ways that are relevant to them rather than convenient for others. On the positive side, evidence shows that churches which attract at least some families with young children will almost certainly be growing overall.

At St Michael's we seek to maintain the highest standards of Child Protection, and this work is spearheaded by Lucy Barnes in her role as Safeguarding Officer. I shall once again remind everyone that any concerns about the **safeguarding** of children should be reported to her and/or to me and the Wardens for immediate investigation. Of course, safeguarding includes not only children, but also vulnerable adults, and an incident last Autumn caused us to reflect on how we might deal with challenging behaviour, the fruitful outcome of which was a carefully drafted code of conduct to assist stewards and the Wardens in dealing with such behaviour.

We have launched a new **pre-school playgroup and parent coffee morning** which has had its first meeting, with an almost overwhelming turnout! Thank you to all those who supported the founding of the group with donations and hands-on help. The aim of the group is to provide a place in which parents who worship at St Michael's

can build relationships with one another, while bringing their children together to play in a relaxed Christian environment. Holding the group in church also enables parents with no current worshipping links to St Michael's to enter and experience the church and its welcome,- leading in time, we hope, to a closer connection.

We held our first **Baptism Families Party**, which was attended by about fifteen families of children who had been Christened in the last three years or so. This helped to bring back to St Michael's a number of families who had not recently worshipped with us, and therefore restore the connection that was formed at the Baptism. In connection with this, a *Baptism Welcomers* group is currently in formation. This is a group of people who are individually allocated to families seeking Baptism to welcome them to church, talk them through the Baptism pack and process, and then introduce them to the congregation and assist with their guests and visitors on the day of the service itself. There is much evidence to show that such a personal 'way in' to a congregation has a profound effect on retaining and integrating families, and helping them to acquire a habit of attendance.

Music

'And they were continually in the temple blessing God' (Luke 24.53)

It was evident from our 150th celebrations that music has been central to our life at St Michael's right from the beginning, and we have continued to build on our musical heritage over the last year. A highlight of, not just the Barnes Music Festival, the whole year was the performance of Bach's **St Matthew Passion**, overseen and conducted by our Director of Music, Martin Neary, with the combined voices of three choirs and an orchestra of period instruments. It was perhaps the biggest and most ambitious musical event in Barnes that anyone can remember. The evening was supported by many people who were rightly pleased that the church was packed for the occasion, demonstrating the importance of music as a form of outreach to the parish.

When Bishop Christopher came to us at Michaelmas, he awarded Martin Neary the Diocesan Lancelot Andrewes Medal for services to music and 'zeal for the Gospel'. An award richly deserved. We are, however, about to say goodbye to John West, who has acted as an unofficial 'assistant organist' for many years. We will need to consider

how to support our musical tradition in a slightly different way from now on. The busyness of modern life means that choir numbers have fluctuated over the year, and credit is due to Martin Neary for his flexibility according to resources available. Nevertheless, there is a need for a larger pool of regular or semi-regular singers to maintain the high-quality of our volunteer choir. Please spread the word and encourage people to audition.

Outreach and Publicity

‘And they went out and proclaimed the Good News everywhere’ (Mark 16.20)

Recent statistical data indicates the significant percentage increase of ‘nones’ – people who describe themselves as having no particular faith at all. It is in this context that we work hard to make our church open and ‘porous’ to the community so that we both draw people in and go out to them. The keeping open of the church and the physical opening of the doors has made a noticeable difference to people’s impression. Many people now come into the church for times of quiet and peace, whatever their own spiritual background.

In addition to this a leaflet entitled **Parish News** is delivered by congregation members to every house in the parish twice a year (Lent and Michaelmas) to help people connect with their parish church. Our **website** has been overhauled and improved by Robbie Lyon during his time in the Parish Office, and notices are now put on the news section weekly. Moreover, our online presence through **social media** such as Facebook and Twitter continues to grow, and so reaches out to new people locally and further afield. The first disciples used the methods of their own day to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and we seek to use the best methods of our own time to share the hope of the Risen Lord.

Wider Ministry

‘But there are also many other things that Jesus did’ (John 21.25)

As well as being Vicar of St Michael’s, I continue to undertake a number of wider ministry roles such as a director of ordinands for the diocese, ecumenical work for the Anglican Communion and convener of the alumni group for my theological college. Over the last year I have taken

on two further roles, first as a trustee of local charity FiSH, and second as Chaplain to the Guild of Nurses (beginning in May), which is working towards becoming a formal livery company. It is an honour to support these organisations, which in turn support those who care for others.

In late July and early August, I will be taking a ‘mini-sabbatical’ provided by the diocese for clergy who have served seven or more years since ordination (actually it will have been eight by the summer). Most of that time will be spent researching for a book in Cambridge, with a final two weeks on pilgrimage and retreat in Assisi.

Commissioned and sent

I am with you always’ (Matthew 28.20)

At the end of Matthew’s Gospel, Christ commissions his disciples and sends them out, assured of his abiding presence with them always. It is with this confidence that we worship and share the Good News with our parish. The question that presses upon us at this time is how to grow our ministry in imaginative ways that will engage the community, and particularly those who have no current involvement with our church or the Church generally. Churches that think in this way are able to ‘buck the trend’ of decline, but they can only do this by being intentional, strategic and creative. It would be easy to be discouraged, but hope in Christ is, in the words of Archbishop Justin a ‘confidence in the providence of God, that is unashamed of faith and that is witness to the truth of Christ in words, in advocacy, in action, and in sacrifice’. It is with this hope that we look forward to the coming year, thankful for all God’s mercies and blessings.

Father Stephen Stavrou, Vicar



AGENDA

The Vestry and Parochial Church Meetings to be held in the Community Centre on Sunday 29 April 2018 at 11.30am.

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS (VESTRY)

(Open to all members of the Church Electoral Roll and those resident in the parish who are on the Register of Local Government Electors)

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer.
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2017.
3. Election of Churchwardens.

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

(Only members of the Church Electoral Roll may participate)

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2017.
3. Matters arising (not on the agenda already)
4. Report on Electoral Roll.
5. Financial Statement and Treasurer's Report
6. Elections and Appointments
 - a. Appointment of PCC Member.
 - b. Appointment of a Deanery Synod representative.
 - b. Appointment of the Stewards.
 - c. Appointment of the Auditor for the year.
7. Annual Review (slideshow and presentations from the Wardens).
8. Vote on charities to be supported
9. Any Other Business
10. Closing Prayer

**MINUTES OF
THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS
AND THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
HELD IN THE COMMUNITY CENTRE
ON SUNDAY 30 APRIL 2017 AT 11.30am**

In the Chair: The Rev'd Stephen Stavrou (Vicar)
Ruth Martin (Diocesan Secretary)
Fanny Ward (Churchwarden)
Lizzie Hackett-Brown (Secretary to the PCC)

62 members of the congregation were also present.

The meeting opened with Prayers.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Ruth Martin, Diocesan Secretary.

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on Sunday 29 April 2016

Approval was proposed by Anthony Gardiner, seconded by Roger Needham and unanimous. They were signed by the Rev'd Stephen Stavrou.

2. Resolution to revoke Churchwardens standing for more than six years

The resolution was proposed by Jacqueline Russell, second by Hannah Childs and unanimous.

3. The Annual Election of Churchwardens

Fanny Ward and Jane Bennett-Powell had agreed to stand as churchwardens.

The re-election of Fanny Ward was proposed by Lizzie Hackett-Brown and seconded by Jane Gardiner.

The election of Jane Bennett-Powell was proposed by Roger Needham and seconded by Andrew Childs.

Both were appointed as Warden.

THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

This followed immediately after the Annual Meeting of the Parishioners and was open to members on the Electoral Roll.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Lucy Barnes, Edward Henson, Anne Johnstone, Phil Keightley, Charlie Law, Julie Law, Denise Poulton, Mark Poulton, Andy Puddifoot, Anna van Emden, Rhodri Walters and Fanny Ward.

2. Minutes of the APCM held on 29 April 2016

Approval was proposed by Donna Brocklebank, seconded by Stevie McGarrity and was unanimous. They were signed by the Rev'd Stephen Stavrou.

3. Matters Arising

There were none.

4. Report on changes in the membership of the Electoral Roll

Pat Reed-Boswell reported that after revisions the Electoral Roll stood at 193 from 177 last year, with three names deleted due to relocation. This indicated new growth within the church, as the majority of names had come from families whose children had recently been baptised. Pat asked that in order to keep the roll up to date parishioners advised the Parish Office of any changes to the information held Fr Stephen thanked Pat for her work on the revision.

5. The Financial Statement and the Treasurer's Report

Jacqueline Russell distributed copies of the Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2016. She stated that, following work by Roger Needham, they had been independently reviewed and also approved by the PCC. She proceeded to give a verbal report concluding by thanking all those involved in the financial management of the church. She thanked especially John Duncan, Sue Pandit and Roger Needham. She also thanked the members of the Finance Committee for their time and commitment, with special thanks to John Brocklebank, who had stepped down from the Committee after many years of service and had provided invaluable knowledge, expertise and support over the years. A fuller explanation of the Treasurer's Report could be found in the Annual Report.

The Chairman thanked Jacqueline for her commitment as Treasurer.

Three questions were raised:

Planning costs. The planning costs were being split out in order to be more accurately reflected in the accounts. The appeal costs of £6-7k were within the approved budget set by the PCC.

Boileau Road. St Michael's only had a 1% share in the property, which was managed by St Mary's.

Pastoral Care. St Michael's received a £300 annual grant from Barnes Workhouse to help those in need. This was a discretionary amount.

6. Elections and Appointments

Election of the members of the PCC

With Anna van Emden and Jen Bovey stepping down, and Jane Bennett-Powell having been appointed Churchwarden, there were three places on the PCC. Frederick Appleby, Eleanor Stanier and Lizzie Hackett-Brown had been proposed and seconded

Frederick Appleby proposed by Julie Law and seconded by Michael O'Brien; Eleanor Stanier proposed by Lowell Herbert and seconded by Caroline Bull; Lizzie Hackett-Brown proposed by Roger Needham and seconded by Jane Gardiner.

All were elected to the PCC.

Election of the Deanery Synod members

St Michael's had two representatives, Fanny Ward and Jen Bovey.

With Jen Bovey having stepped down from the PCC this left a vacancy. Caroline Bull was proposed by Lizzie Hackett-Brown, seconded by Jane Bennett-Powell, and elected to the Deanery Synod.

Appointment of Stewards

Jen Bovey read out the list of Stewards. Their appointment was proposed by Jacqueline Russell seconded by Lizzie Hackett-Brown, and thereby appointed.

Appointment of Auditors

The appointment of Alex Spofforth at Kreston Reeves (Spofforths LLB had been acquired by Kreston Reeves during the year) as the independent examiner was proposed by Rosemary Hurry, seconded by Marion Kreling, and approved by all present.

7. Annual Review

Fr Stephen presented a slideshow of the year and drew the meetings attention to the various reports contained within the Annual Review.

He anticipated that there would be questions about the Church Hall project and advised that a community meeting had been arranged for 26 June, which would give the opportunity to ask questions about the process.

A number of questions were asked about the planning process, outcome of the appeal and state of the hall. A request was made for the front of the Church Hall to be freshened up as it looked rather derelict. This would be discussed at the PCC meeting in early June.

8. Vote on charities to be supported

Jane Sherwin described the work of two charities in each category. These were voted on and agreed as follows:

One year	FiSH
Two years	Matabeleland

9. Any other business

The Rev'd Judith Roberts and the Churchwardens, Rhodri Walters and Fanny Ward, were thanked for their energy and commitment.

The Meeting closed with The Grace.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

As at March 2018 there were 15 members of the PCC. The PCC met nine times during the year and copies of the latest approved minutes can be found at the back of church, with a summary now being published in the Pew Sheet shortly after each meeting. On behalf of the PCC, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Anna van Emden and Jen Bovey, who both stepped down from the PCC last year, for their time and commitment to St Michael's. Particular thanks to Jen, who was not only a long-standing member of the PCC but a past Churchwarden and a Deanery Synod member for many years. She has been, and continues to be, extremely generous with her time and we are very grateful for all she does for St Michael's.



Lizzie Hackett-Brown, on behalf of the PCC

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Income

Total Income this year was £209,844 compared to £231,787 last year. Regular giving has stabilised at £71,339 similar to £72,017 recorded last year. While we have not seen any further deterioration we have not seen the growth we need to keep up with the increase in costs and raising the amount from stewardship remains our main financial challenge. Sundry Donations, grants appeals and legacies were recorded at £5,657, a decrease from £32,088 raised last year as we did not run any major campaign. 2016 saw the highly successful organ appeal which raised £25,602.



Income from fundraising events was however strong at £28,395 compared to £8,339 with the new quiz night and the patronal festival dinner. Total surplus, after costs, from fundraising was £11,053 a significant increase from £4,597 recorded in 2016. Income from Investments fell to £32,257 from £39,840 as Elm Bank Gardens our investment property was empty for a short period during the year. All this income is ring fenced for maintenance work on the church and community centre.

Investment income was reduced as with the uncertainty pre-Brexit we decided to liquidise the investment held by the Arthur Ford fund last year and transfer the balance into cash, which is less risky but does not generate as high a return. This also meant that we did not see the £3,172 loss which materialized last year.

The Church Hall and Community Centre continue to be popular, and well managed by Julie Law, and rental incomes and fees have continued to be strong albeit slightly behind the highs of 2016, income from charitable activities was recorded at £70,568 compared to £74,852 last year. This variance is due to timing differences particularly for the Community Centre as for prudence we tend to cash account due to the constant shifts in hirers.

Total Income – removing the organ appeal and subsidizing the surplus from fundraising rather than the gross income was £192,502 a fall from £202,443 the equivalent of £3,702 a week compared to £3,893 last year. This is detailed below.

Expenditure

Total expenditure fell this year to £232,103 from £251,781 predominately because last year saw exceptional costs for the organ, the majority of which was funded either from the direct appeal or from the Arthur Ford together with the church hall planning costs. Other large costs include £17,342 of costs for fundraising (2016: £3,742) and £18,616 for Elm Bank Gardens (2016: £4,708) as additional maintenance work was done while the property was vacant. Additional costs were also incurred for the Church Hall as new heaters were purchased and the front of the hall repainted, resulting in the annual costs growing to £20,334 from £11,512 last year. Church maintenance was recorded at £19,902 (2016: £8,679) and includes costs for community centre maintenance – with the kitchen renewed during the year - following all reserve and surplus balances generated by community centre hire being transferred for the use of the church. 2016 saw £41,224 spent on the organ, all of which was funded either directly through the appeal or from the Arthur Ford fund. Removing the costs of fundraising and the exceptional organ costs the underlying expenditure trend expenditure is up 17% resulting in a weekly deficit of £295.

	2017	2016	
Total Income	£209,844	£231,787	
Less Fundraising	£28,395 (£28,395)	£8,339 (£8,339)	
Fundraising Costs	£17,342	£3,742	
Add Fundraising Surplus	£11,053	£4,597	
	<u>£192,502</u>	<u>£228,045</u>	
Exceptional appeals - organ campaign		(£25,602)	
Underlying Income Trent	£192,502	£202,443	
Income per week	£3,702	£3,893	-5%
Total Expenditure	£232,103	£251,781	
Less Fundraising costs	(£17,342)	(£3,742)	
Exceptional costs - organ campaign		(£41,224)	
Planning costs	(£6,915)	(£29,152)	
Underlying Expenditure	£207,846	£177,663	
Expenditure per week	£3,997	£3,417	17%
Deficit per week	(£295)	£477	
Deficit per month	(£1,180)		
Stewardship Increase Needed	(£14,164)		

While there is no doubt this year's deficit has increased because of high maintenance costs there is every indication these will continue, so the challenge now remains to target an additional £14,164 from stewardship this year. The pressure on reducing expenses always continues but with very few items of discretionary spend we have to look to increase our income from stewardship and again raise over £10,000 from fundraising.

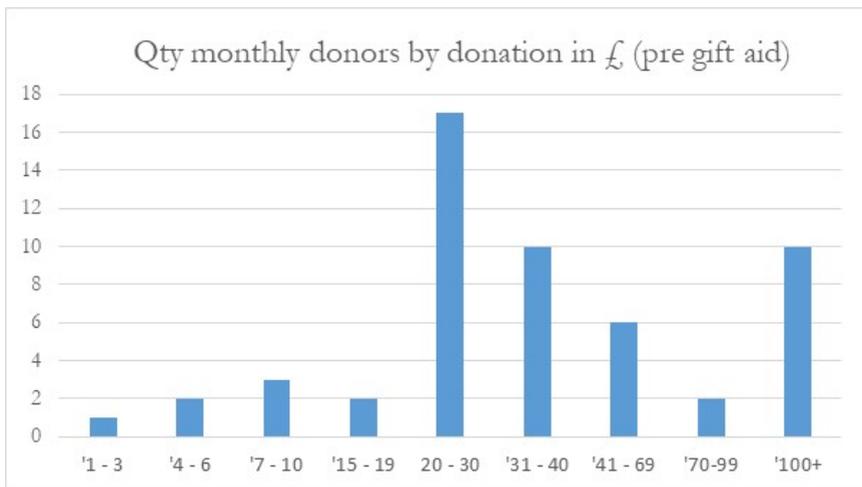
Outlook for 2018 and the need for a new stewardship campaign

With ever increasing costs we have to increase the level of stewardship. Using our Fund filer system, which we use to process our stewardship returns and claim gift aid we can see that on average we have 53 regular donations with 35 under £40 per month, 18 over, with 10 members giving over £100 each month. This has been extracted from November 2017 data, the same month used for the count of the congregation. The graph indicates donation, prior to gift aid claim, by amount of giving by number

of regular givers, namely those that reoccur regularly throughout the months.

Average giving in the Church of England, based on 2014 figures was around £12 a week - £48 a month. Allowing for inflation this would now be just over £50. Our challenge is therefore to not only increase the number of regular givers, given that our average monthly congregation is 100 but also to encourage individual giving to rise to at least the national average. While we know this is not possible for all and we as an inclusive church welcome all – we have to educate and encourage those who can afford it to increase their giving – at least to the national average.

While the data below includes both standing order and envelope giving – giving via standing order is still the most efficient way for the church to reclaim tax – and we also would like to invite those who can to convert their giving to standing orders.



Fund Values

St Michaels has two types of Fund, which represents the total assets we hold. Unrestricted Funds and Endowment Funds.

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds encompass funds for the general running of the Church, Church Hall and Community Centre and include the Fabric Fund, Arthur Ford and Arthur Ford Community Fund.

The deficit from the General Fund is eliminated by a transfer from the Community Fund and from the Church Hall fund. Any surplus from the Church Hall fund is transferred to the Hall Renovation Fund.

The fabric fund, which is set aside to fund the fabric of the Church and the Community Centre is £61,040. The balance on the Hall Renovation Fund is £32,788.

The fabric fund continues to repay the Arthur Ford following £95,897 borrowed in 2010 to renovate Elm Bank Gardens. £40,000 remains to be repaid and with no surplus on this fund this year no transfer has been made this year. The balance on Arthur Ford Community Fund, set aside for community projects totals £177,881.

My thanks once more goes to everyone who supported the finance function. Roger Needham who continues to do so much – I would not be able to cope without him, Sue Pandit who now in addition to processing all the gift aid claims has now also taken on the role of Stewardship Secretary, John Duncan who checks and analyses the weekly Sunday Collections and to my Finance Committee of Andrew Childs, Mike Townsend, Denise Poulton, Father Stephen and Rhodri Walters. John Brocklebank has continued to support especially around energy and I am very grateful for his continuing involvement. Thank you to everyone it is a team effort and I am very grateful for all their support.

Jaqueline Russell, Treasurer

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Church Fabric

The church 'fabric' was inspected last summer as part of the five-yearly (quinquennial) inspection by a diocesan-appointed surveyor. The report can be consulted in the Parish Office. Hugh Cullum of Hugh Cullum Architects Ltd. writes *'The fabric of the building is generally in good condition.'* However he helpfully listed some urgent repair work too. Firstly, he writes: *'The roofs and brickwork of the main building are in good condition following major refurbishment of the upper levels in 2001. (In this area), the major outstanding items for attention are the spalling and decayed pointing of the lower level brickwork and stonework,*



tidying up and re-pointing of some flashing, the monitoring of the ongoing structural movement and the obsolescence of the electrical services.'

In addition, however, rot in the Sacristy partition needs urgent attention; there are cracks in the West Apse which need early inspection, ie within the next 12 months by our appointed structural engineers Price and Myers; in the sanctuary, there are cracks across the steps, around the windows and over the altar apse arch as well as some damaged stonework to the north side of the altar steps. In the south wall and over the door to the tower/organ loft, there are very large cracks that are being monitored by Price and Myers.

- The church heating system was fully serviced in August 2017; the sound system was upgraded during the year and the lighting improved. Surveys to check on asbestos and the efficacy of the fire extinguishers were carried out in April 2017.
- Trees to the west of the church were pruned in June 2017.
- The western boundary was replaced by the housing developer in the adjoining plot with a new brick wall matching the cloister. The developer will also fund the reinstatement of planting in the borders.
- A pair of notices was installed near the North door: one alerting vehicle owners that the three parking spaces are for those authorised or on church or community centre business; the other is a legal statement that the public may use the path which crosses church ground but it is not a formal public footpath.

The churchwardens are very grateful to the outgoing warden, Rhodri Walters, for his continued commitment to St Michael's and work in the garden, and to the Vice Warden, Andrew Childs, for his unstinting maintenance work on the church fabric and grounds.

Jane Bennett-Powell & Fanny Ward, Churchwardens

The Life of a Churchwarden

'Describe a typical week,' Fr Stephen suggested. So taking Easter week 2018 as an example, here, I hope, is some insight into what the Churchwarden role involves.

A fairly regular diary date, the vicar and I met over a beverage (me: black

Americano, him: Earl Grey) at The Boat House on the High Street. (Other venues are frequented). We discussed the upcoming open meeting about the church hall and later, I emailed or phoned six companies (sourced by Andrew Childs and Jacqueline Russell) asking them to send material on their modular buildings for us to display to aid deliberations. This important project has inevitably occupied a significant amount of time, too, at the monthly Standing Committee and PCC meetings.

I brought Fr Stephen up to date on progress to replace the baby grand piano in the Church Hall with a better instrument, a generous gift from a parishioner. It involved liaising with Julie Law, the CH manager who fixed the removal, and securing permission for the old one to be recycled humanely, following its long and sterling service.

I outlined to Fr Stephen what Lizzie (our now *ex*-parish administrator) and I still had to do to finalise the accounts for the St Matthew Passion performance during the Barnes Music Festival. It made a profit, thanks to huge effort and generosity on all sides. My input consisted, during the last 12 months, of building the seat-by-seat online booking plan for the tickets, attending BMF liaison meetings, volunteering for bar and front-of-house duty at the other events around Barnes, and singing at the Passion (though that could hardly be regarded as a duty - nor obligatory for a warden!)

On my way home, I emailed the vicar to ask what was going to happen about keeping the church open - and later locking it - during his week's holiday: a small team of us mustered to ensure continuity and security. Once home (a slightly shorter walk than the healthy 22-minute stride between church and my corner of Barnes) I drafted an invoice for the banner publicising the Easter services. It's the latest of the PVC 'adverts' I've enjoyed designing for the outside walls.

A fascinating evening was in prospect, once I'd done some asking around for his contact details, with the help of a local historian. He compiled our thought-provoking book commemorating parishioners who served and lost their lives during the First World War. A talk elaborating his research will coincide with Armistice Day 2018 and should also make a good fund-raising event. Although St Michael's has savings, most are effectively ring-fenced and its income is not healthy, and many of our PCC discussions

are about stretching our resources effectively.

There's frequently spending to approve (upgrades such as the disabled toilet, the church piano and repairs to 41 Elm Bank Gardens); Andrew Childs and I commissioned improvements to the CCTV network and the sound system. There were no formal meetings planned that week, but in the past year the vicar and I have met both our local councillor and the MP. Eleanor Stanier and I paid a visit to the St Michael's nursery and chatted to its head, Debbie Goldberg.

We have a dedicated Safeguarding officer at St Michael's and once I'd been sworn in at a service in Putney (April 2017), I too completed a course organised by the Diocese. Concerts and services involving large numbers of people include ensuring we take proper precautions over fire safety and correct licensing. The Cloister Carol event in mid-December brings over 200 people - half of them children - to St Michael's. It wouldn't be long before I began contacting its team of regular volunteers. Then at the most recent meeting of the Barnes Team ministry committee, I proposed our churches help the Barnes Community Association to stage carol singing at the pre-Christmas evening in the village.

Writing this report and the review of church fabric was frequently enlivened by emails and incoming tweets. I introduced the vicar to Twitter which he now uses as part of his wider communication strategy!

Jane Bennett-Powell, Churchwarden

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

For the first time thank you letters were sent to all who donate to the church either through planned giving (standing orders) or through the blue envelopes. The letters explained how all giving to St Michael's goes directly to mission and ministry. The letters also reiterated that all details about individual levels of giving is kept confidential to those few people who deal directly with church finances. Thank you letters were also sent to all new planned giving donors. These letters remind donors that they are helping cover rising church costs but are also helping to expand its ministry. There are currently 73 donors who give via planned giving. This figure has remained stable as a few donors have cancelled their standing orders and new donors have joined the scheme.

Sue Pandit

ORDINAND'S REPORT

It has been nearly 18 months since you welcomed me to the community here at St Michael & All Angels, Barnes.

In this period of time, I have been able to witness and join in with some of the life events and situations that are intrinsically connected with (hopefully) my future ordained ministry. You have provided generous opportunities to be beside you, learn from you and share experiences.

As my final year at St Augustine's College of Theology (and St Michael's) approaches, I look forward to what God has in store and hope to witness and help discern God's intervention and presence in Barnes. It is an immense privilege to be part of this church and work alongside Fr Stephen, Rev'd Judith and the whole team and be amongst the people of St Michael's.

Hayley Argles-Grant

MUSIC REPORT

The choir has continued to lead the worship at the Sunday 10am Mass. There has also been Choral Evensong approximately once a month, and it is good to report that attendances at these extra services is increasing; likewise, at the Requiem Mass on All Souls Day, when the setting was the Requiem by Gabriel Fauré. The Choir sang at three Carol Services: Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.



In 2017 the choir took part in two concerts with the English Chamber Singers: the first, including the Fauré Requiem as part of the Barnes Music Festival, and the second, In tune with heaven on 15 October, marking the 150th anniversary celebrations. Both events, attended by large audiences, were much appreciated; and we felt sufficiently encouraged to plan an ambitious performance of the St Matthew Passion for March 2018.

Choir numbers have varied. Despite understandable absences, there has generally been a quorum of singers; and we have been well supported by some very good deputies. These include on the tenor line, George White, and on the bass line, Philip Gowman, Nicholas Harries, Prabhat Malhotra and Paul Snudden. We were delighted when Amelia Talford-Cook joined

the sopranos, but we need to find more good singers, who can sing regularly. As yet, we have not made any further progress with the idea of setting up a choral scholarship scheme for students (especially sopranos, tenors and basses), in their last two years at school.

As ever, we are greatly indebted to John West; his accompanying of the services, and at the 150th anniversary concert in particular, have been outstanding. Other heroes are Lowell Herbert, who never lets up as choir librarian, and Jane Bennett-Powell, for all her help with the Barnes Music Festival events at St Michael's. All the singers deserve our thanks for the time they give and for their willingness to take on new challenges! The music department is also most grateful to Lizzie Hackett-Brown, whose assistance has gone beyond the call of duty; and I will finish by thanking her and all at St Michael's for being so supportive and helpful.

Martin Neary, Director of Music

LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

Servers

It continues to be a pleasure to be a part of the serving team at St Michael's as we seek to play our part in contributing to our community's worship, and so to our life as a community. In recent months, we've been fortunate enough to welcome Stevie McGarrity and Freddie Light to the Sanctuary. With Barnaby, Clementine and other younger participants acting as boat boys and girls, we have felt very much in tune with St Michael's mission to be 'a church for all ages' and hope that we help further our aim to worship in the beauty of holiness, balancing – we hope creatively – respect for the liturgy with warmth and humanity. Thanks to all those who serve – and who make it such fun to do so – but, as ever, special thanks must go to Ray and Gilly Valentine. They have done so much good work behind the scenes for so many years, preparing for services and looking after everything behind the scenes, and are soon to step back from their role as Sacristans. No doubt we will find a way of managing without their thorough and loving care, but as challenges go, that's a big one.



Andy Puddifoot

Readers

In February; those who read met together for Mass and an address from Fr. Stephen on the history of a reader or 'lector'. In the church, since scripture was read by a member of the Synagogue, the office of lector and the reading of scripture were taken very seriously. The roots of this ministry are very interesting. We then met for discussion, and were asked what we enjoyed about reading, what we found challenging, how we prepared to read, and then we aired our questions/ideas which we had. It was a very useful exercise to have worked through.

Intercessors

Another morning we met with the same format (as we did for readers) in reference to intercessors. It was similarly helpful to all, and the exchange of thoughts and ideas from each other was most valuable. We all felt that it was important that prayers were well prepared and delivered. Sue Blenkinsop has recently been welcomed as an intercessor.

Eucharistic Ministers

This is a special ministry which involves understanding and training, and is at the Vicar's discretion. Sam Turner and Robbie Lyon recently joined this ministry and we welcome them.

These three ministries are important to our beautiful liturgy and spiritual offering in this community. We all want it to feel accessible, hopeful and uplifting, and, of course, welcoming to all who come into the church.

Rosemary Hurry

Stewards

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all our stewards. As Fr. Stephen reminded us when we met together in March, "The heart of the Stewards' ministry is welcome". We have 15 members of St. Michael's who give their time this way, and who ensure that the services run smoothly. It is a pleasure, and a wonderful way of getting to know and to help everybody who comes into church. If you think that you would like to join us you would be more than welcome, and as we work together in pairs, someone who is more experienced can show you what to do when you start.

Jen Bovey

PARISH SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is at the heart of our mission, in particular because we declare ourselves to be a church for all ages, a faith for all people and a place for everyone. Safeguarding requires us as a church to keep our activities and environments as safe as we can for children and for adults who may be vulnerable. The community described in our vision statement commits us to protect all those mentioned above, and our values statement confirms that we are similarly open and welcoming to all those mentioned above.



Within the broader mission vision values comes the practical requirements associated with safeguarding. At the March PCC meeting we reaffirmed our safeguarding policy, which is on display at key places around the church and its buildings. The policy also provides a picture of me and my mobile number to aid identification. This should also allow easy contact, either in person or by phone, whenever an issue may arise.

Other practical aspects include carrying out DBS checks on new volunteers and paid staff within the church. Over the last year, I was consulted in the formation of a set of guidelines for dealing with challenging behaviour in church, aimed at supporting the Stewards and Churchwardens when managing such behaviour. I was also involved in preparations for the new Saturday morning pre-school playgroup. The Vicar and I discussed what measures needed to be put in place to ensure maximal safety for all involved.

Lucy Barnes

COMMUNITY CENTRE AND CHURCH HALL

Both spaces continue to be well used. We currently have 17 long-term paying clients booking a total of more than 36 hours a week (more than last year). I am also in discussion with potential clients for future long-term bookings for later in the year. Classes on offer include toddler music sessions, children's dance sessions, kids' karate, adult yoga, pilates, choir rehearsals and adult ballet. Since January 2018 we have added teenage yoga, a pre-school phonics class and a lunchtime dance class to our schedule. From April we are also going to be helping Richmond

Integrated Recovery Service in connection with adult community support. We also host several “Anonymous” groups including those helping rehabilitate those who have been alcohol and cocaine addicts. We continue to have birthday parties and christenings on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and some evenings.

The aim of the Centre is to provide a venue for the diverse interests of the whole community and to involve as many people and groups from different places in and around St Michaels as is possible. The Centre is home to the Wednesday Lunch Club, Sunday School, the Church Choir and FiSH, which hosts concerts and lunches for the elderly. FiSH continues to use the space on Monday afternoons for the elderly with dementia. This is a very popular and well attended weekly event.

The Hall in Elm Bank Gardens is also being well used although its amenities are outdated. The Nursery School continues to thrive and our other long term hirers there include The Barnes Ballet School, BROS (Barnes and Richmond Operatic Society) and St Paul’s School Christian Union. Last year we added a music class and gymnastics class to the list of long-term hirers. It is also good for parties particularly if the Centre is not available to give an alternative venue and some hirers prefer the larger space at the Hall to the Centre depending upon the type of party they are hosting.

The Centre and the Hall reflect the needs of the community so in a wide sense the plans for the future are to continue to meet those needs. When the Hall is rebuilt then it will at least match the Centre in usefulness. The Nursery School will remain integral to the Hall. My warm thanks go to Andrew Childs for his help in the general upkeep and housekeeping of both spaces. The Community Centre and Hall are both established in Barnes, particularly in the ‘Little Chelsea’ area and we will ensure that they continue to reflect the needs of as many in our community as possible.

Julie Law

CHURCH CLEANING (‘Holy Dusters’)

‘Welcome. Church Open’. The invitation that stands outside the south door of St Michael and All Angels has brought many a resident of Barnes (and beyond) to enter our church in the past twelve months. What impression might the new visitor gain once inside? We ‘Holy Dusters’ believe it

important that a church should look well-cared for by its' own members. Together, we show an affection for our spiritual home just as we do for our own homes, in the hope that our beautiful stained-glass windows illuminate clean pews, swept floors and an inviting presence to all who enter. As we wield our dusters on a fortnightly rota, some say it is a 'form of worship', of 'prayer-in-action': for others it might be a time of mindful activity in a peaceful setting. Yes, we chat whilst we work and get to know a cross-section of our church family. We have recently completed our Spring-Cleaning session: this was followed by a delightful buffet lunch thanks to the culinary skills of our team and the warm hospitality extended by Fr Stephen at the Vicarage. I am extremely grateful to all my fellow HDs for their commitment and generosity of spirit throughout the year. Thank you Ladies (and one Gentleman) for your ongoing support and friendship.

Pat Reed-Boswell

CHURCH FLOWERS ('Flower Fairies')

This year, we have been delighted to welcome Jane West to the Flower Fairy Team. It was also really good to have help from two very much younger fairies at Christmas – Zoe Muller and Alethea Williamson. Alethea also brought her mother Claire along, a very popular addition to the team as she is so tall. Sadly, most of the rest of us are vertically challenged ...

The Advent Greenery was rather wonderful this year and much admired by our own congregation and visitors over the Christmas period. Flamboyant displays by James Macdonald and Mo Saunders stood ready to welcome all comers at the door and Fr Stephen weaved greenery into the gates. As always, Lynda Nesbitt and Felicity O'Brien prepared beautiful swags and a charming Advent Wreath in pastel colours for the Lady Chapel. At Easter, when members of the congregation generously help to pay for the lilies, we had a wonderful display and earlier in Lent, some fairies helped with the preparation of posies for Mothering Sunday. For the Patronal Festival, we had our usual display of purple, gold and white flowers and throughout the year we have pretty and varied arrangements from our four teams. It is a particular pleasure for us to arrange flowers in memory of a loved one or a special occasion at the request of a parishioner.

Thank you to all the regular flower arrangers; to Gilly and Ray Valentine for all their help through the year; to Anne Gretton, who is always willing to help us when we are shorthanded; to Lynda for collecting the flowers from the wholesaler in her BIG car and to Rosemary Hurry and others who help us when they can, in all kinds of different ways from providing coffee and buns to bringing in greenery from their gardens. As always, we would be delighted to have more volunteers to help with the flowers. We regulars are all getting rather long in the tooth and a team from Family Mass to do the arrangements every so often would be super.

Fiona Brannon and Jane Gardiner

READING GROUP

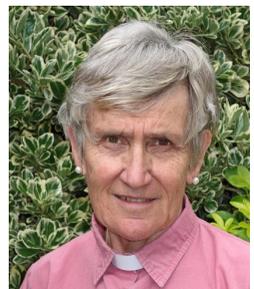
We have renamed the Book Group the Reading Group. We meet six times a year in a member's house. Our reading and discussions are focused on papers, poems and chapters of books, chosen by the members in turn. This allows for in depth discussion and exploration of ideas.

The meetings start with a member presenting their ideas on the reading for that meeting, or the reading of a poem if appropriate. In recent times we have explored poems by Donne, Shakespeare and Jane Sherwin. We have read chapters from "How Then Shall we Live" by Samuel Wells, "A Good Epiphany" by Bishop Libby Lane from Mark Oakley's book "A Good Year" and Sertillanges' "What Jesus saw on the Cross". We are looking to attract new members to add further depth and stimulation to our discussions. Anyone interested please contact the Parish Office.

Ena Siddall

ASSOCIATE PRIEST'S REPORT

Last week I received an email from someone I last saw over 35 years ago – she was a pupil at my school and is now an ordinand at Westcott House. She tells me that her decision to become a priest happened when I was preparing her for first communion! – followed by all the things we did in school and church at that time. I was delighted to hear from her but it also made me become aware of how much we do influence and affect



each other especially in our own journeys of faith. This is quite a responsibility for all of us to consider and reflect upon.

I realise how much I enjoy Sundays. I start early at St. Michael's and listen to music as I prepare for the 8 o'clock service – where there is a small group of faithful parishioners – a lovely start to the day. Sometimes I need to cover/support at the main service or go to Kingston Hospital or do a pastoral visit and then often return for the children's mass at 11.30 when Jane Gardiner and Jen Bovey and pianists support me in welcoming new families to St. Michael's. Sometimes I lead a small gathering for evensong and occasionally have the joy of sung evensong or a concert.

I need to thank Gilly and Ray for their forbearance when I have a creative idea!! And friends who do wonderful flower arrangements for the hospital memorial services. And also for those people who make my donkey handling challenge of the year more manageable – I discovered a cunning ploy – one hand on the donkey's rope – one hand holding up an exceedingly large cope (a potential death trap!) and one hand to read the gospel – I was ably assisted by rather bemused fathers!

I am constantly aware of the kindness, compassion and generosity of people at St. Michael's. In all our joys and sorrows it is these qualities, that for me, are the building blocks for an open, inclusive and thriving church community and I feel very blessed to be part of it.

Judith Roberts

CHARITIES

The PCC updated St Michael's Charitable Giving Policy in February 2018. Fr Stephen approached Rosemary Hurry, Phil Keighley and me to be the Charitable Giving Group. Our brief was to examine the charities suggested by members of the congregation and to recommend a shortlist of the charities which most met the Policy. The guidelines can be found in the charitable giving policy on the website.

Suggestion of charities were requested during Lent, and the group met and then submitted an interim report back to the PCC as we needed some guidance. As this was the first year we have been operating in this way we encountered some teething problems, which hopefully will be avoided next year, and these were discussed with the PCC. Issues arising this year included:

- *Insufficient information about the charities suggested.*
- *Only one person connected their charity to the criteria.*
- *We were concerned about the status of a national charity with a strong local presence – could it count in the ‘local’ category?*
- *How are we to make contact and develop a relationship with the chosen charity?*
- *We need some administrative help in the gathering of information.*
- *We need a longer period to consider our recommendations.*

After discussion with the PCC we recommend the following three charities to be considered at the APCM for support for one year:

- Trussell Trust
- Holly Lodge
- SPEAR

The Rev'd Judith Roberts

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School seems to be particularly vibrant at the moment with a regular attendance of 10-15 children. It is noticeable that the Family Mass once a month has helped to build relationships and increase attendance. We have had a creative year, and many of you will have seen the Community Centre decorated with stars for Christmas or carrots hanging outside the church to entice the Donkey on Palm Sunday! Gus and Philly MacKinnon have joined as leaders, who work with Harry Hobson, Carole Seaton and Hannah Childs, but there is still a great need to increase the number of volunteers and parental involvement to make sure we are secure in moving forward.

Father Stephen on behalf of Harry Hobson and the Sunday School team.



St Michael & All Angels Church, Elm Bank Gardens, Barnes SW13 0DR

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