



**St Swithun's Church, Kennington**  
**Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council**  
**For the year ended 31 December 2016**



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**St. Swithun's Church Kennington**  
**Agenda's for Annual Parochial Church Meetings Sunday 2nd April 2017**

**Annual Parishioners Meeting**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of meeting Sunday 24th April 2016
  - a. Attached
  - b. Accuracy and Matters Arising
3. Election of Churchwardens

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of meeting Sunday 24th April 2016
  - a. Attached
  - b. Accuracy and Matters Arising
3. Election of PCC members
4. Election of Stewards
5. Report on Electoral Roll
6. Annual Reports and Financial Statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2016
  - a. Wardens and Fabric
  - b. Secretary
  - c. Deanery Synod
  - d. Treasurer
  - e. Rowley Charity
  - f. Clergy Report
7. Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts of the PCC for year ended December 31 2016, and appointment of Independent Examiner for 2017.
8. AOB

The full Accounts for the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2016 are available for inspection.

**St Swithun's Church Kennington  
Minutes of the APM 24th April 2016**

Present - *Reverend Pam McKellen (Chair), David Jones, Roger Dennett, Mary Dennett, Audrey Jones, Sylvia Rivers, Ruth King, Barbara Bayliss, Barrie Whittaker, Sheila Prior, Jean Mundy, Barbara Boyne, Ann Coulter, Julia Kent, Rosey Hollinrake, Gerry Bowen-Thomas, Malcolm Smith, Tricia Smith, Halcyon Leonard, Helen Horn, Margaret Smith, Nick Horn, Isabel Baggot, Anna Whittaker, Richard Nash, Brian Baggott*

The meeting began with Prayer at 11 am.

**1) Apologies for absence**

Jenny Forder, Gillian Cox, Roy King, Robert Aldred, Alisa Aldred, Brenda Groth, Eckhardt Groth, Sam Partington, Emma Partington, Mark Horseman, Doreen Horseman, Helen Wenham, Alex Wenham

**2) Minutes of the APM Sunday 12th April 2015**

Propose by David Jones and seconded by Halcyon Leonard the minutes were agreed and signed as a true record. All were in favour.

**3) Election of Churchwardens**

Nominations were received prior to the meeting as below;

Nick Horn, nominated by Linda Frankum and seconded by Halcyon Leonard  
Isabel Baggott, nominated by Halcyon Leonard and seconded by Ann Coulter

All present were in favour of both appointments.

Pam thanked both wardens for the work they do and the wardens received a round of applause.

The Meeting Closed

**St Swithun's Church Kennington  
Minutes of the APCM 24th April 2016**

Present - *Reverend Pam McKellen (Chair), David Jones, Roger Dennett, Mary Dennett, Audrey Jones, Sylvia Rivers, Ruth King, Barbara Bayliss, Barrie Whittaker, Sheila Prior, Jean Mundy, Barbara Boyne, Ann Coulter, Julia Kent, Rosey Hollinrake, Gerry Bowen-Thomas, Malcolm Smith, Tricia Smith, Halcyon Leonard, Helen Horn, Margaret Smith, Nick Horn, Isabel Baggot, Anna Whittaker, Richard Nash, Brian Baggott*

**1) Apologies for absence**

Jenny Forder, Gillian Cox, Roy King, Robert Aldred, Alisa Aldred, Brenda Groth, Eckhardt Groth, Sam Partington, Emma Partington, Mark Horseman, Doreen Horseman, Helen Wenham, Alex Wenham

**2) Minutes of the APCM Sunday 12th April 2015**

It was noted that Martin Hull was at the meeting so his name will be added to those present.

Proposed by Halcyon Leonard and seconded by Barrie Whittaker the minutes were then signed.

**b) Matters Arising**

None were forthcoming

**3) Election of PCC Members**

Nominations were received for;

Richard Nash by Rachel Smith, seconded by Margaret Smith

Michael Thacker by Richard Nash, seconded by Helen Wenham

Brian Baggott by Richard Nash, seconded by Mary Dennett

All were in favour of the received nominations and they were duly elected to the PCC.

**4) Election of Stewards**

The current Stewards were put forward; Mark Horseman, Halcyon Leonard, Brenda Groth, Roger Dennett, Roy King, Linda Frankum, Gillian Cox, Mary Dennett, Margaret Smith, Jenny Forder, Michael Thacker and Gerry Bowen-Thomas.

All are willing to stand again. Isabel Baggott proposed the list, Nick Horn seconded. All were in favour.

**5) Electoral Roll Report**

Barrie Whittaker read through his written report, which can be found on page 8 of the 2016 Annual Report. The number now on the electoral roll is 68.

Pam thanked Barrie for collating this report.

## **Annual Reports and Financial Statement for year ended 31st December 2015**

### a) Wardens and Fabric

Both wardens highlight areas from their joint report found on page 8 of the 2016 Annual Report. Nick picked out the organ repairs as an issue which he is keen to resolve soon. Isabel is meeting with the Deanery Area Committee (DAC) regarding the proposed new Kitchenette and accessible W.C in the Church building. It is hoped that the Kitchenette should go ahead more quickly, while the accessible WC may take slightly longer.

Pam mentioned also advised there is a plan is for glass doors to be housed on the inside of the Church Hall (backing onto the new wooden doors).

Malcolm enquired as to a place for the Choir to robe, in the event of the planned WC in the Choir vestry. Pam said this will be taken into account in any plans.

### b) PCC Secretary's Report

Richard added to his written report which is on page 9 of the 2016 Annual Report. The idea for each PCC member to have Constituents was not really working, so instead we are going to try for a bottom up approach and encourage anyone to use and approach all PCC members for information or questions.

PCC will try and ensure dates of PCC meetings will be on the Pew Sheet in advance.

### c) Deanery Synod

Julia read through her written report which can be found on page 10 of the Annual Report. The Deanery are currently short of people to be on the Standing Committee. There are also discussions on fees for weddings and funeral

### d) Treasurer

Brian highlighted important areas in his written report (page 12 of the Annual Report). Brian emphasised the regular giving shortfall. Brian thanked those that have increased their regular giving and hoped further people may think about increasing their contribution if they are so able.

The work in Church and Church Hall has all been necessary work and that money is not being used on unimportant things.

A Hymnathon is planned to raise money for the Church Hall roof work. Pam thanked everyone for their giving to the Church.

e) Rowley Charity

The Trustees are to get together to look at closing the Charity in a way that does not adversely affect those who benefit from it. Julia volunteered to help with any legal work involved.

Pam thanked Julia for her work with regards to Faculties and Legal work she undertakes on behalf of the Church.

**St Swithuns Groups**

A selection of reports from different outreach and mission programmes was received and have been incorporated into the 2016 Annual Report starting on page 18. Below is a selection of the highlights.

**a) Children Young People and Families**

A written report can be found on page 18 of the 2016 Annual Report. Some areas were highlighted below.

Worship Wanderers - the aim is to create a family atmosphere and everyone journeying together with God.

Messy Church – thanks to those who help it has been a success!  
Thank you linked to those that help with the traditional Service in the Church Hall that runs alongside Messy Church..

Open the Book

Storytelling performances of Bible stories takes place once a month in each of the three Schools in the Benefice, so 500+ children are reached and is a positive experience.

Halcyon asked how we can translate the number of people that attend Messy Church and the Holiday Club into regular Children's Church. Pam replied that we should all keep questioning, thinking and praying for people from all three Messy Churches across the Benefice and to try and get together for some joined up thinking.

**b) Liaison**

Extra dates have been added for visiting the Care Homes in the village as recent visits have proved popular, it is very encouraging that people want to attend these.

A list of dates is to be circulated for these in future.

**c) St Swithuns Guild**

Is currently on the lookout for new members as numbers have been dropping.

#### **d) Bus Pass Group**

This has become a successful group in which people are happy to invite people to not just Church Members

#### **e) Charitable Giving**

Homeless Pathways

Pam thanked Ann Coulter for the continuing work she does in collecting for Homeless Pathways.

Viva

£1000 was raised in the past year, thank you from Martin. This has been used towards child leader work in Bolivia.

Carmen has thoroughly enjoyed her opportunities to come and speak at St Swithuns and it was hoped she could come again in the future.

#### **7) Independent Examiners Report on the accounts of the PCC for year ended 31 December 2015, and appointment of Independent Examiner for 2016**

One minor error was found but this has now been resolved, the accounts were signed off on 7<sup>th</sup> April and Kate Rawlings is happy to carry on for another year.

Kate Rawlings was therefore proposed by Roger and seconded by Richard. All present were in favour.

#### **8) Clergy Report**

Reverend Pam McKellen opened by saying confirming for those who may not be aware that St Swithun's is now part of a United Benefice together with Radley and Sunningwell. She praised the way each individual church have embraced the Benefice. Joint PCC meetings have helped us to get to know each other and look at issues which are important to all three Churches. A group outside of the PCC's will be looking at Messy Church and how this can develop.

A team will also be looking at finance, having an open discussion and sharing where all churches are in terms of finance. The aim is to gain a good understanding of where help can be offered in times of need.

Pam thanked those who have attended events and services across all three churches. Further welcome news since the last APCM is that we now have Alison Mathew as our 0.5 post for the three churches. It's also great to have Tony, Glynis Martha and Sue also. Pam confirmed that Glynis role is that of Associate Priest across the Benefice.



Pam asked the meeting to consider how we can develop in the future, particularly with outreach, to think about how the love of God can be shared across the community. Initial idea was for Prayer, this can be in many forms, for example prayer walks and the continuation of the Prayer Partners scheme. Continuing with Open the Book and Worship in Kirlena and Mon Choisy care homes and to keep on encouraging people to bring children to Baptisms were all further suggestions.

Pam encouraged all present to keep praying for mission and outreach across the Benefice.

Pam concluded by talking about people involved in any way with the Church, she thanked everyone for all they do, everyone is involved in different ways and we should celebrate this and keep on enjoying what we do.

The meeting ended in applause and the Messy Church Grace at 11.45am.

**Annual Report's and Financial Statement for year ended 31 December  
2016**

**Electoral Roll Report for 2017**

There were 68 people listed on the Electoral Roll for 2016. Since then one has died and two have moved away leaving 65 for 2017.

**Warden's Fabric report for APCM 2017**

We would like to start by saying thanks to all those who have done small repairs, sorted out problems and generally helped to keep the church in good repair. Thanks also to the Flowerpot gang for their continued work improving the grounds.

The hall kitchen flat roof was re-roofed this year at a cost of just under £2,000 which was financed by money raised by the Hymnathon – thanks to Roger and Nick for that.

The glass doors were fitted to the hall. These have proved very useful – thanks to a generous donation for making this possible.

The organ has been serviced by Bishop and Son. The ciphers have been eliminated and the organ tuned but there is an ongoing electrical problem which they are hoping to solve soon. There is also a 'drunk' pipe which will be repaired. These problems do not cause any issues in the short term. In the future we will have the organ serviced by this firm when they come to do Radley's organ.

At the time of writing this the wall by the plum tree is being repaired and the gate rehung hopefully it will now be finished.

We now have permission to go ahead with the Kitchenette and Accessible toilet in the church but the estimates we have had are more than the money we have available. The lowest estimate was for £58,038.00 this sum is ex vat. The architect advised us that if we left out the w.c. and lobby we could save £22,000 but the addition of VAT of £8,300 and fees of £5,500 gives a total cost of £49,838. We are looking for ways to reduce the cost and to see if we can get grants for this work.

The other cost in the coming year will be the heaters which we have been told need replacing. They are nearly 20 years old so they have done quite well. The cost of replacing all the heaters is £15,500.

There is some woodworm in the altar rail which has been treated but we need to re-spray all the wood in the church which, at the time of writing, we plan to do on April 1<sup>st</sup> as part of the 'big clean'.

The Wardens would like to express their sincere thanks to Alison, Glynis and Tony for all their hard work in keeping the three parishes running so well through the interregnum.

## **PCC Secretary's Report 2017**

Once again it has been a varied and interesting year. The most significant event being Pam's retirement in the autumn. Whilst the work involved in putting together a Parish Profile and getting ready to advertise the vacancy is significant, it has also provided a greater opportunity to work closer together with the two other Churches within our Benefice. We must give a great deal of thanks to all those from St Swithun's and the wider Benefice who were, and continue to be involved in the recruitment process. Their enthusiasm, wisdom and drive enabled the Benefice to get to the point where we were ready to advertise in late February.

As mentioned in the Warden's report we also must thank Alison, Glynis and Tony for keeping things going so smoothly since Pam's departure. We continue to pray for the appointment process for the new Rector in the Benefice and hope that we receive some excellent applications.

Full detailed minutes of all PCC meetings are always available to read in the white folder at the back of the Church building. I would encourage anyone to look at these to find out what is being discussed in further detail. Should you ever have any questions about anything relating to the Church please do speak to a member of the PCC and it can be raised at a future meeting. The names and pictures of all PCC members are on the notice board at the back of the Church.

We have met as a PCC in July, September, November, January and March since the 2016 APCM. Below is a selection of topics discussed from each meeting.

### **July 2016**

The PCC formally thanked those involved in the recent 24 hour Hymnathon, particularly Roger and Mary, Nick and Helen and Brian and Isabel. The final total raised will be close to £2000

The PCC also thanked Sandra Ward and Anna Whittaker who were stepping down as School Governors in September. Jenny Forder was also stepping down in December and the PCC again thanked Jenny for her work in this role.

### **September 2016**

The PCC discussed the issue of Safeguarding of Children and vulnerable adults. Lisa Scott-Russell our Safeguarding Officer will be invited to give a training session.

The Holiday Club was another success with 30 children in attendance the PCC thanked Alex & Helen Wenham and Mary Dennett for their efforts in particular.

Brian reported that a new formula for payment of the Parish Share had been agreed between the Benefice Treasurers to make the split across the Benefice more equal, this will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The PCC formally said farewell to Pam and thanked her for her Ministry. It was agreed that she leaves us in a stronger position than when she took over, and made a great deal of change and benefit for our Church.

### **November 2016**

Estimates had been received for the proposed Kitchenette and accessible WC in the Church building, but felt to be on the high side (the lowest being £58,000), it was agreed to try and seek further estimates.

The first Children, Young People and Families report was received and the PCC discussed how we could connect up Children's Church and 'usual' Church more frequently in certain services.

The process for advertising the vacancy left by Pam was discussed and initial plans made.

### **January 2017**

PCC discussed how wider Church should try to build on good family attendance at the Christmas Services. Suggestions were to have the school Christingle service in Church and a Shrove Tuesday Party and occasional Pram Services.

In October it is the 50th Anniversary of the Methodist Church Building, it is hoped that St Swithun's would join in with celebrations.

Brian and Martin planned to attend a Meeting on the new housing developments, with the aim of how we can welcome potential new residents to the congregation.

### **March 2017**

PCC agreed that collection from the Easter Sunday Service should be donated to the DEC Appeals in East Africa and the Yemen.

Alison introduced a new Global initiative on Prayer called Thy Kingdom Come which Churches Together in Kennington are taking part in. A prayer station is to be set up in the Church between 25th May and 7<sup>th</sup> June as part of this.

## Deanery Synod Report 2017

Your Deanery Reps have been to most of the meetings in 2016 but I am struggling to report anything of significance happening at them. At one meeting Synod reps were so irritated by the fact that the real business of the meeting was not reached for more than an hour after it started that there were vocal complaints.

We have voted during the year for the creation of a single benefice incorporating the parishes of "the Damascus Group" i.e. Milton, Steventon, Drayton, Sutton Courtenay and Appleford.

We have also rejoiced in the ability of our new Deanery Treasurer, Martin Steel, and the fact that there has been no repeat of the parish share chaos we endured at the end of 2015, when the 2016 share was set.

Not really for a 2016 report, but I would like everyone to be aware that we have a new acting Area Dean, Geoff Maughan, who recently retired as vicar of Cumnor. He is in post until Helen Kendrick, vicar in charge of the Damascus Group, feels she has the time to take the post of Area Dean on. He seems to be both liked and respected by everyone. We also have a new Deanery Secretary Karen Landon, from Christchurch, Abingdon who is definitely efficient and seems to be interested, as well. So with Shirley Northover from Wootton as Lay Chair, and our own Jenny Forder now on the Deanery standing committee, I feel hope for the future.

Julia Kent

## Treasurer's Report and Comments on 2016 accounts

The full accounts are available as a separate document on the table at the back of the Church.

I have also produced PIE charts, which supplement the full accounts, and these follow these comments. The out-turn of last year's budget forecast is also included together with a budget for 2017

Our unrestricted income was £58,211 and our expenditure was £59,230. Still a deficit which means it is 4 years since we were last able to balance the books. The one good thing about 2016 is that we managed to get by without using any of our restricted reserves. This was due more than in part to the generosity of Radley who gave us £2000 to help us out. Again 2015 the main item of expenditure over and above normal running costs was the Hall. In 2016 the additional Hall costs amounted to £4,225. This was for the repainting the Hall, repairing the flat roof on the kitchen and the installation of the glass doors. It should be noted that £675 of the cost of the doors was carried forwards to 2017. Without the additional work the normal costs for the Hall would be about £4000 which includes insurance and heating and lighting. Our income from Hall lettings was £5733 so in a normal year the Hall would be a reasonable income generator for the Church.

As in previous years our regular giving nowhere near meets our running costs. In fact regular giving, including gift aid relief, does not even pay the Parish Share, which this year is £35915. Our normal running costs are in the region of £57000. This includes the Parish Share, the costs of insuring, lighting and heating the Church and Hall and the costs of our services although this final item only accounts for 2% of our running costs. **But our regular giving last year was only £29065. If the various fund raising activities and donations and our share of fees for funerals etc. are added to this figure it rises to £48380. So our present income does not meet our regular costs. In fact in 2015 it was short by £8620 (almost £166 per week). We got by last year because of the generosity of a number of people who made donations of over £5700 and a £2000 donation from Radley – without these yet again we would have been unable to meet our commitments.**

Of course, giving is about more than money and we are fortunate at St. Swithun's to have such a committed team of people who give of their time, their energy and prayer. However, if personal circumstances permit, I would like to ask you again to think again about your giving to St. Swithun's. The latest figures from the Church of England show that the average planned giving per member is £7.00 per week. Our average giving amounts to £4.30 per week. Only 14 out of 38 regular givers give up to the average!

With these notes is a gift aid form which I have revised this year to show the current weekly expenditure and income. 'Please take a look at this and consider if it is possible for you to review your giving towards the mission and ministry of our church. We are keen to make St. Swithun's a welcoming place and to continue in our outreach to the local community and there is work to be done. For example, the 20 year old heaters need to be replaced: the accessible toilet and kitchen area are still to be done and the planned replacement glass doors in the Church entrance have still to be installed. None of this would have been possible without Bill Hunwick's legacy and with other smaller legacies generously left to the Church in their wills. Even with that as things stand at present doing all of this will totally deplete the reserves we are holding to maintain the church fabric.

I do however, understand that it may not be possible for everyone to increase their regular giving but if at any point you were able to consider a one-off donation to help meet the cost of some of the things I have outlined please do have a word with me. Also if any of you are interested in doing as Bill and others have done and wish to leave a legacy to St. Swithun's in your will, then also have a word with me and I will do all I can to help. Any sum you are able to give will be gratefully received

Finally can I again thank all those who volunteer to do a multitude of tasks which would otherwise cost the Church so much money?

Brian

## St Swithuns Church Budget

### Income

St Swithun's Church Budget 2016

	Income	Projected 2017	Actual 2016	Projected 2016
Ref No		£	£	£
1	Gift Aided Regular Giving	20000	18,999	23,500
2	Non Gift Aided Regular Giving	3500	3,377	3500
3	Non planned giving	2500	2,053	2000
4	Income Tax Repayment	6750	6,690	6000
5	General Donations for Church	2000	5,713	700
6	Fees for Funerals & Weddings	8500	8,525	7500
7	Hall Fees	6000	5,733	5500
8	Interest and Dividends ( <b>See Note</b> )	1250	1,132	2500
9	Fund Raising	2500	2,346	5000
10	Vergers Fees	400	440	340
11	Refund from Deanery	1023	979	970
12	Other Misc Income ( <b>See Note</b> )	500	2,225	600
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54923</b>	<b>58212</b>	<b>58110</b>

#### Notes

**Ref 8:** - Dividend from Denis Cooper's due for 2016 not received. Amount for 2016 shows 2015 dividend

**Ref 12** :- The income for 2016 included an donation of £2000 from Radley PCC



## Expenditure

St Swithun's Church Budget 2016				
Ref No	Expenditure	Projected 2017	Actual 2016	Projected 2016
		£	£	£
1	Clergy Expenses	1500	1,724	1400
2	Funeral & Wedding Fees due to Diocese (See Note)	2500	4,534	2500
3	Parish Share	35915	34,084	34084
4	Printing and Stationery costs	350	408	400
5	Church Heating & Lighting (including servicing) (See Note)	12000	2,289	2500
6	Church Maintenance	3000	3,697	3000
7	Church Reordering (See Note)	40000	Nil	12000
8	Church Insurance	1335	1,310	1272
9	Costs of services	400	462	300
10	Church Yard	1000	1,019	500
11	Publicity & Outreach Costs	250	194	350
12	Fund raising costs	200	160	500
13	Children's Church Costs	50	20	150
14	Music including organists fees	1000	564	1000
15	CCL Licence for copying and playing music	189	189	190
16	General Admin costs	1500	1,610	1400
17	Church Hall regular maintenance costs	500	325	400
18	Church Hall Heating & Lighting (including servicing) (See Note)	5000	1,598	1700
19	Church Hall Insurance	1014	920	973
20	Church Hall Doors, Damp Proofing and Guttering	Nil	4,233	4500
21	Donations to Charity	1050	1,050	1050
22	Other non specified expenditure and accounting adjustments	300	208	500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>109053</b>	<b>60,598</b>	<b>70669</b>

### Notes

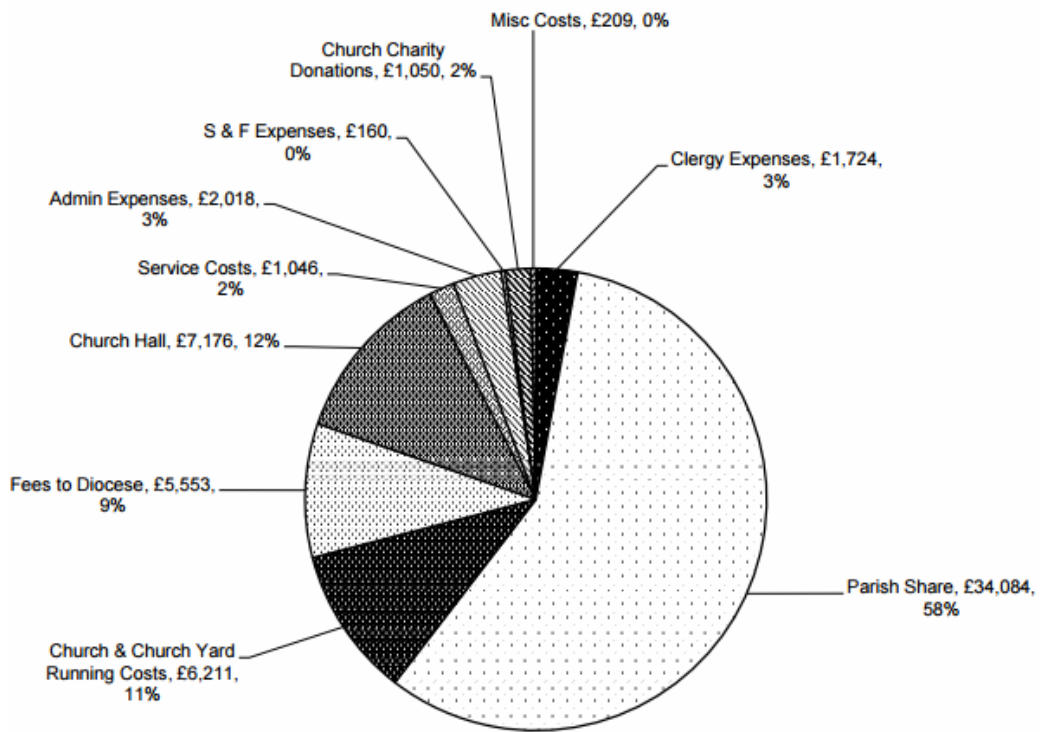
**Ref 2** Fees for 2015 were not paid to Diocese until 2016. Those for 2016 were paid in correct year. Hence a larger payment than normal in 2016

**Ref 5** The Church Heaters need to be replaced because the heat exchangers are cracked. The cost has been included in the projected figure for 2017.

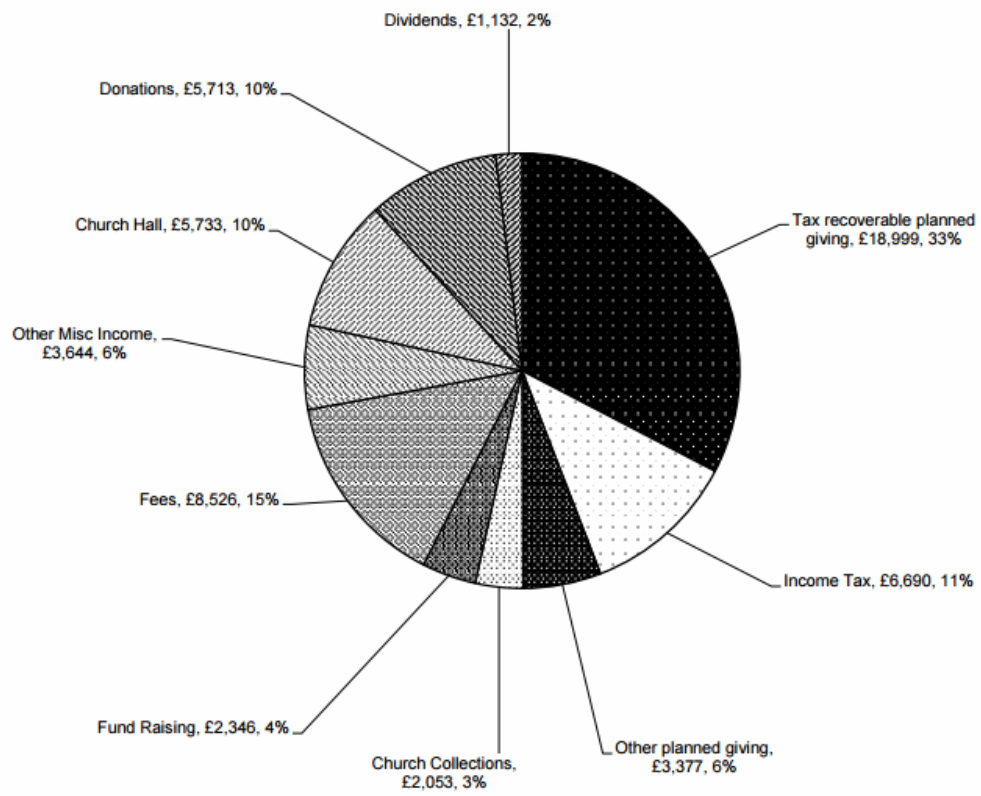
**Ref 7** Work on the kitchen and accessible toilet has still to be agreed. The estimates we have had so far would mean we could not do all the work without substantial extra funds - even allowing for the legacy in memory of Joyce Hunwick

**Ref 18** The heaters in the Hall need to be replaced as they are in the same condition as those in the Church

## Church Expenditure 2016



## Church Income 2017



## The Mary Rowley Charity

In the early part of 2016 the trustees started the process of winding up the Rowley Charity. The stated aim of the Charity is to benefit the aged poor of Kennington who were members of St Swithun's church. Therefore it was felt by the Trustees that after appropriate funds had been set aside to support the two remaining beneficiaries, the balance could be placed in the church accounts as a restricted sum of money to be used for a project which would benefit the elderly in Kennington

## Clergy Report

This past year has been an eventful one in the Benefice, not least Pam's retirement following 12 years of ministry here. It was good to give thanks for all Pam has given towards the mission and ministry of the three parishes and her last Sunday here in Kennington was a wonderful celebration at Messy Church with a baptism followed by a lovely lunch. We continue to hold Pam in our prayers in this new phase of life.

During this time of change and transition our aim is to keep travelling forward in our mission and ministry within the parish and across the Benefice, in particular in response to our LYCIG priorities, all the while bearing in mind that we will hopefully have a new Rector joining us later in the year. Short listing of applicants for our new Rector will take place on 3rd April, with interviews on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May – please do continue to pray for God's wisdom and guidance for all involved in this process.

### **LYCIG Priorities:**

- **Prayer:** over the past year of 2016, we have held another prayer walk in Kennington which was well attended and it was lovely to be joined by members of both the Methodist and Roman Catholic congregations. We have (2017) also started an additional prayer meeting to focus on our response to the new housing developments. We are also making plans to join in with the Archbishop of Canterbury's Global Prayer Initiative 'Thy Kingdom Come' in the coming year (shortly after the

- APCM). We continue to encourage individuals to join prayer partners and generally to make sure prayer is at the heart of all that we do.
- **Occasional Offices:** Glynis and Alison attended a days training on Baptism which was excellent. We are beginning to think as a clergy team how best to roll out the lessons learned from this in order to deepen the quality and extent of our interaction with people who approach us for baptism. We continue to have a reasonably high number of funerals and successful Remembrance services were held in each parish. Development of a pastoral care group who would be able to help with, amongst other things, supporting bereaved individuals and families continues to be on the agenda.
  - **Children and Families:** our links with St. Swithun's School remain good and are continuing to develop. Alison has taken on a Foundation Governor's post and the children visited the church on a number of occasions throughout the year: Easter, Harvest, leaver's service etc. We are however, still in need of an additional Foundation Governor to join the Governing body of the school. Messy Church continues to flourish and grow and we ran a successful Kids Club in the summer. Jane Hull is reporting regularly to the PCC on this area which is helping us to keep focused.

We have also more recently pulled together a small group to respond to the proposed new housing developments, including: liaising with Parish Councils, feedback on Neighbourhood plans and encouraging Christians in our communities to pray for God's guidance and hand on our response.

As you will read from the other reports which make up our Annual Report, there is a lot going on and we are grateful to God for his faithfulness and love. The clergy team continue to be very grateful for all the help and support they are receiving through the vacancy and for the hard work of so many people across the Benefice in keeping our mission and ministry going so well. Thank you so much for all you are doing from Glynis, Tony and Alison!

## **News and Updates from St Swithun's Groups**

There are many different groups and activities that make up part of the St Swithun's community, below is a selection of updates from the last year.

### **Children and Young People's report – 2016**

**One of our agreed priorities as a Benefice is Children and Families:**

#### **On a Sunday.....**

##### **Children's Church (Mary Dennett)**

Children's Church runs on average 3 times a month and has a steady attendance of around about 8-10 children. The children growing in their understanding of God and it is good and challenging to hear them express how they see God and life. A number of younger children are coming up behind those who are now in Key Stage 1. The themes in the resources follow the lectionary, so (often) links to what the adults in church are considering.

##### **Worship Wanderers (Sandra Ward and Jane Hull)**

Worship Wanderers meet once a month – we are 4 boys between 7 and 12 and their parents and the occasional other friends (of all generations). We mix discussion and activities around key life and Bible themes to help open our eyes to how God is with us in our everyday lives. We have recently covered topics including being in God's team (using fantasy football team choices!) and God's forgiveness (watching clips from the Simpsons...).

##### **Messy Church (Many fantastic creative volunteers, co-ordinated by Jane Hull)**

Those of us who volunteer with Messy Church are always encouraged to welcome around 25 children and up to 40 adults. The theme of "Messy Hospitality" has linked our gatherings this year - the quotes above suggest that we are sometimes managing to embody God's welcome to all. In June we were delighted to simultaneously celebrate our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Messy Baptism – welcoming Dominic and Jago Partington into the family. In September we celebrated Messy Harvest and inaugurated the swapshop, to reduce our carbon footprints through exchange. In November we raised money to twin our Church toilet by decorating a clean toilet donated by Radley Church. Without any warning (or financial target), the Messy Church family gave £60.12. The cost of twinning a toilet is £60! It is encouraging that some of the older children are keen to help and sometimes even lead activities, including sometimes the Messy Church Band!

We are trying to get better at articulating the 'why' of the activities, to help grow our understanding of our faith journey. We are keen to encourage a wider range of people to welcome people to the Prayer Tent, a quiet space in the hubbub of togetherness.

Looking forward we are now working towards our first celebration of Communion together – significantly on Easter Day. After Easter we will consider “Messy Togetherness” – exploring faith together across all ages.

### **At school and in the village....**

**Open the Book** – There are 3 teams of keen actors from across the Benefice who bring ‘Open the Book’ to the 3 state Church of England primary schools. So 600 children every fortnight see and even take part in retelling a bible story. This frequency means that a good range of material from the Bible can be covered and it is encouraging to see how the children respond to this cross generational activity – often in costume and even with speaking parts. This year St Swithun’s School had its Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection, and the Open the Book group were able to contribute to the discussion with the inspectors, before the inspectors watched one of the sessions. The school passed as “Good”, noting that Christian values were lived out in the school community and that religious education makes a positive contribution to the cultural development and character of the school.

**Toddler Group – Mary Dennett** continues the connection by bringing craft into the Toddler Group fortnightly, much enjoyed by the children.

**Holiday Club (Mary Dennett and Alex Wenham)** For 3 days in August up to 40 primary school aged children attend. This year the theme was Olympic-Champion Challenge – looking at how we can train with Jesus and we had some new helpers this time.– The age range was from 4-11, but with more younger children. Alongside some new helpers we have some regular attendees at Holiday Club.

### **Seasonally...**

**Christmas** - The Christmas Eve Nativity Service and Christingle Services are significant times, some of the most well attended for many local families who would otherwise not come along attend. Younger children have the opportunity to take part in the Nativity play. We could consider how we can build on this opportunity, e.g. a children’s singing group for this service?

**Easter Experience** – We opened the church for a day for the children from the school (usually 3 or 4 classes) to visit. The church has with displays to stimulate discussion on the Easter story and why it is important.

### **Proper protection and training....**

Particular thanks to Lisa Scott-Russell, Helen Wenham and Julia Kent for ensuring that we have recently had Benefice training in safeguarding and getting our DBS checks refreshed. These were important and informative sessions. It is good to be clear on what issues to be aware of, and the process for raising any concerns. It was also a creative idea to hold the DBS checks tea party – mixing two of the things the British are best at – afternoon tea and bureaucracy!

## **Questions to consider and pray about in our journey forward:**

- 1. A number of our young people are coming towards the end of Key Stage 2 (upper juniors), moving into Key Stage 3 (secondary school). How can we continue to support them in their journey of faith? With other pressures on Sunday mornings, this may mean considering other times to meet. How do we connect with the broader church family of all ages?**
- 2. How can we enable Messy Church to recognise itself as a self-sustaining community, not just a service provision from the church? This applies not just to source of volunteers, but also to other 'marks' of a community – a sacramental life, giving, growing in faith.**

*Collated by Jane Hull*

### **Social and Fundraising**

Another year with a varied programme of both social and fund raising events. Fund raising included a jumble sale, Summer Fete, and Christmas market. Most events are social in some form or another with maybe a raffle or a donation box.

We have had an enjoyable Quiz with fish and chips, a pancake party, mulled wine and mince pies at Christmas and several shared lunches after Messy Church.

They have celebrated Patronal festival, Harvest and Baptisms. These lunches have a jolly mixture of both old and young and serve as a great way to get to know one another more.

There has been an increase in members of the congregation getting involved, but further help is always appreciated.

*Mary Dennett*

### **Christians Together in Kennington**

CTK have produced, for the third year running, a Lent booklet entitled 'Sensing God' for individuals which seems to be well received. This was preceded by a fun filled Pancake Party on Shrove Tuesday which was enjoyed by all who attended.

The service held within our church for the Week Prayer of Christian Unity in January was appreciated by all those who attended. The Liaison Committee felt that next year arrangements for this might be slightly different depending on circumstances, i.e. a possible change to time or venue.



The Good Friday arrangements this year are going ahead as advertised, with slight changes from last year. There will be Hot Cross Buns before the service at St Swithuns and the Rev. J Rowland will be taking the service at the Methodist. It is hoped this will be well advertised and Christians within the village might be able to at least take part in the Walk of Witness.

Four Prayer and Praise services at Mon Choisy and Kirlena have been arranged, 9<sup>th</sup> April (Palm Sunday), 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 17<sup>th</sup> September (~Harvest) and 10<sup>th</sup> December. Please put these dates in your diaries and come if you can.

This year the Churches Together Christmas Card will be the cheaper alternative of a centre page pull out in the Kennington Chronicle.

In October the Methodists celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their building and it is hoped that as many as possible from St Swithuns will join in with the celebrations, plans will be available soon.

The Methodists are hoping to take part with us in the Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative (25<sup>th</sup> May-7<sup>th</sup> June). More information is in the Clergy Report.

The Committee is continuing to seek ways of reaching all Christians within the village to unite with us as witnesses of god's love to everyone.

***Margaret Smith***

### **St Swithun's Guild**

We are a very small group of older ladies who meet together each month on the 4th Wednesday at 2.30pm in the Church Hall. Members enjoy the fellowship and friendship of the meetings.

We have a very short service followed by a speaker then tea and biscuits and lots of chat.

All three Churches in Kennington are represented in the Guild.

### **Bus Pass Group 2016-2017**

Our fame is spreading! To our delight, attendance at our teas and lunches often exceeds 30 and the time flies by, with lots of chatter and laughter.

This year our summer outings were to Millets Farm and to a superb exhibition at St Mary's, Witney where we saw quilts and other fabric crafts including lace and crochet alongside beautiful vestments and flower arrangements. Early's of Witney had put on an interesting display about the history of their wool making, and of course we couldn't leave without sampling the delicious homemade cakes.

In September a group of us were entertained by Alan Ayckbourn's "Relatively Speaking" at the Playhouse Theatre. This was followed in October by the highly professional Oxford Student production of Cole Porter's "Anything goes".

This spring our first theatre outing was to see Sandi Toksvig's controversial new play "Silver Lining". Reactions were somewhat mixed (as they were in the newspaper reviews), but Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit" on 18<sup>th</sup> March has stood the test of time, and promises "ghosts, gasps and other-worldly wit"! Finally just before the APM we shall go to Polly Teale's adaptation of "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte.

As March came in like a lion, let's hope for sunshine by the end of the month and begin making plans for summer outings as well as continuing to enjoy our monthly gatherings, full of warm fellowship whatever the weather.

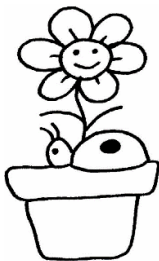
### ***Gillian Cox***

### **Homegroups**

There are two Homegroups which meet on a Wednesday or a Thursday night fortnightly. Both groups are always happy to see new faces so why not give it a try and see what you think. We support each other in prayer and look at a range of topics and bible studies.

To know more you can contact Anna Whittaker, Martha Young or Isabel Baggott.

### **Flowerpot Gang**



Our faithful Flowerpot Gang has met once a month tending the church gardens, while sharing fellowship. We aim to bring colour and wildlife friendliness. Leaving the 'meadow patches' uncut for as long as possible, encourages insect life.

Chris Ingles, from Cotswold Walls, Trees and Fences, pruned the plum at the entrance, and will return soon to repair the wall. Spring bulbs have been planted in this front lawn, and the grass was allowed to grow long. 2 orchids happened to flower here, their roots must have been buried here for years! Evening primrose appeared in the rockery, self-seeded by birds.

Children enjoy playing in the grounds and teenagers use them as a 'chilling out space' in the evenings.

We started our year with a wonderful banquet-like Pow Wow at Audrey and David's house. Our next session will be Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April. Join us in the morning if you like, no experience needed.

***Rosey Hollinrake. (tel 01865 327969)***

### **St Swithun's Charitable Giving**

#### **Homeless Pathways**

The collections for The Homeless Pathways have continued, there are two collections during the year usually April and October but when I have items at other times, when I have several bags I will take them so there could be four deliveries during the year. It has been sometime since I have received a letter of thanks to pass on to church members.

There really is not much to report it happens more or less the same.

Please use whatever information you think suitable

Many thanks to everyone and God Bless

***Ann Coulter***