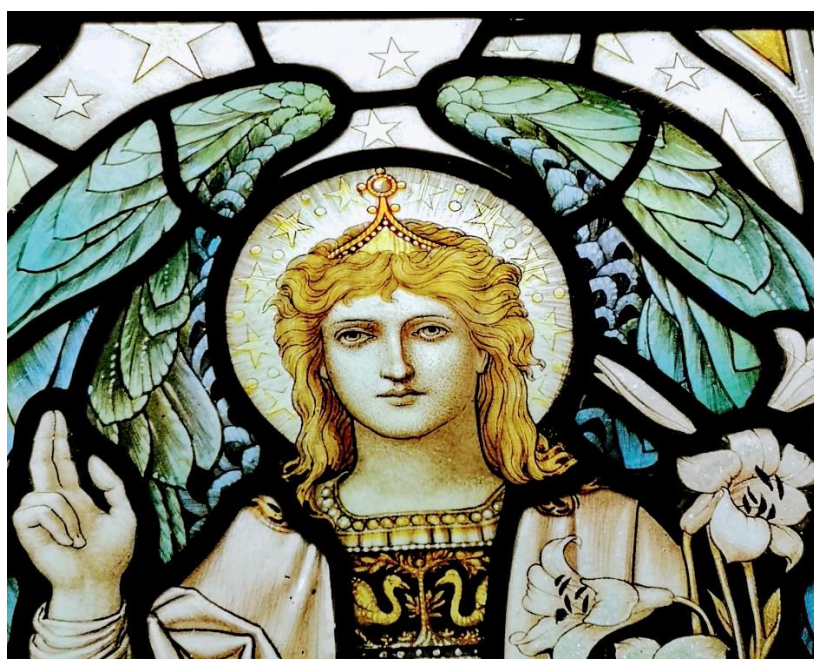


Annual Report for St Mary's Church, Bentworth 2020



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	*This report is unavailable this year due to the retirement of Revd Canon Edward Pruen in January 2021.	



1. Aim and Purposes

St Mary's Church Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the Priest in Charge, the Revd. Canon Edward Pruen (retired January 2021) in promoting within the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church and churchyard.

2. Administrative Information

The church of St Mary's is situated in Bentworth, Alton, GU34 5RE. It is in the Alton Deanery and part of the Diocese of Winchester within the Church of England.

The correspondence address at the time of publication is c/o The Secretary, Mrs Catherine Dumelow, Woodlands, Medstead Road, Beech, Alton GU34 4AJ.

St Mary's Church is part of the Benefice of Bentworth, Lasham, Medstead and Shalden lying in the east of the Alton Deanery, and is part of the Winchester Diocese in East Hampshire.

Each of the four village parishes, has its own Church building and PCC. Bentworth Parish covers 5.9 square miles, having a population density of 92 people per square mile, and has an overall population of 542 people with 207 households.

The Parochial Church Council is a charity exempted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served from the annual meeting to the end of December 2020 are:

Incumbent and PCC Chair Revd Canon Edward Pruen (retired January 2021)

Church Warden Mrs Liz Preece

Church Warden Mrs Cathy Dumelow

Treasurer Mr Mervyn Dunwoody

Elected Members Mrs Jean Baveystock

Mrs Jenny Hales Mrs Sue Phillips

Mrs Poppity Nutting

Persons with permission to administer Communion (under provision of Canon B12.3)

Stella Burnett, Jean Baveystock, Jenny Hales, Jill Hurley



3. Structure, Governance and Management

Patron

The patrons of the benefice are Mr. John Jervoise of Herriard Park and the Bishop of Winchester.

Parochial Church Council

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the new Church Representation Rules effective from 01 January 2020. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Canon Ed's retirement

Canon Ed. Pruen informed the benefice on 07 November 2020 of his intention to retire on 12 January 2021.

Safeguarding

Jane Phillips agreed to become the Safeguarding Representative after the resignation of Cathy Dumelow. Jane has a strong safeguarding background from her professional work in the NHS and as a school governor. All the PCC have been DBS checked and most have completed safeguarding training. We are very grateful to Jane for taking on this important role. The parish completed the safeguarding return which is a Diocesan requirement.

4. Objectives and Activities

St Mary's fulfils its objectives by encouraging all people from the Benefice and nearby area to take a full part in the life of the church through attendance at weekly services, principal feast days, holy days, festivals and other events held in the church. Families are encouraged to seek baptisms and the church is open to all in the Benefice for funerals and marriage. The church and churchyard provide a well-kept, safe and welcoming space for private prayer and contemplation. Pastoral care is available for those who seek it and communion is taken to the sick and housebound as requested.

The PCC maintains a close link with St Mary's CE School by electing Foundation Governors, attending the school's church services and supporting its activities e.g. ensuring all Y6 pupils receive a Bible on leaving the school. Additionally, the incumbent as an ex officio member of the governing body, provides spiritual guidance and regularly leads Collective Worship.

5. Achievements and Performance

The Influence of the Pandemic

The pandemic and consequential Government lockdowns from 23 March was the most significant factor in the role, functionality and pastoral care that St Mary's Church could provide in 2020.

Along with the other parishes in the Benefice, the churchwardens provided a risk assessment and options for the PCC to determine the feasibility of worship in St Mary's Church in line with Government regulations and guidance from the Church of England and Diocese. This was monitored and revised through the year. The PCC endeavoured to open the church for private prayer and services where possible.

PCC Meetings

The PCC met 5 times during the year with an 83% average attendance. Additionally, email decisions were made on 3 occasions when it was deemed unsafe to meet face to face. On 5th October 2020 the Covid secure 'Vestry' meeting was held in the church to appoint the Churchwardens, followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to elect the PCC. The PCC also elected Neil Saunders as Foundation Governor to St Mary's School.

The Electoral Roll

On the Electoral Roll, the number eligible to vote at this year's APCM (2021) is 58, with 41 living in the parish and 17 residing elsewhere. St Mary's worshipping community, as defined by the Diocese was 23.6. There have been 9 applications to join the Electoral Roll for 2021/22.

6. Worship, Prayer and Church Attendance

At the beginning of the year St Marys was following its regular pattern of worship with an 8am BCP service on the first and fourth Sundays and an 11am Communion Service on the second Sunday, with an average attendance of 17. On 23 March the national lockdown closed all churches for communal and private prayer. All churches in the Benefice remained closed for all purposes until 12 July. Risk assessment completed and mitigation measures in place, St Mary's Church then re-opened only for individual personal private prayer twice weekly.

When communal services were again allowed from 2 August, St Marys was able to hold regular Sunday services following stringent Covid guidelines as laid down by the Church of England. These services were open to all in the Benefice and beyond and were very well supported with an average congregation of 27. We continued with these weekly services until the second national lockdown in November forced us once again to close our churches for the month. Services resumed in December with the last service of the year being Christmas Eve Midnight Communion.

Special Services

We were fortunate to be able to enjoy several special services despite Covid restrictions. Harvest Festival saw the church beautifully decorated with floral arrangements and fruits. Remembrance Day was marked by an outdoor service led with great sensitivity by Revd Peter Owen-Jones. Patrick Ker read the Names of the Fallen and Councillors Jane and Tony Costigan laid wreaths. On Armistice Day the Headteacher and pupils from the school joined members of the public around the War Memorial for a moving service led by Revd Ingrid Owen-Jones. The pupils were able to lay the wreaths they had made in

school. A service of Bereavement was held on 1 November and an outdoor Carol service on 20 December, attracting 43 people, ensured we could all come together to worship and sing carols. Our Christmas Eve Midnight Communion was our final service of 2020 with a congregation of 39 from around the Benefice and nearby communities.

Online Services

When our churches were closed for lockdown, Canon Ed, ably assisted by Revds Peter and Ingrid Owen-Jones led weekly online Sunday services and Tuesday evening prayers. These were well received with average Sunday hits of 80, and 27 for the Tuesday service.

Finally, we are very indebted to the consistent and compassionate support throughout this year of Canon Ed Pruen, and Revds Peter and Ingrid Owen-Jones. We are also very grateful to Patrick and Wendy Busby whose beautiful music has filled our church with joy during this time when congregation singing has been banned. Thanks are also due to all those throughout the Benefice who have contributed to these services. Despite all the Covid restrictions, Sue Phillips and her group of florists have kept the church looking bright and cheerful.



Occasional Offices

There were no weddings, 1 baptism, 2 funerals, 1 burial and 1 interment of ashes.

7. Church Fabric

The Quinquennial Inspection of 2020 revealed the church to be in good order although requiring some maintenance work. Electrical upgrades were carried out by CMC Electric Ltd to ensure the safety of the building. The main finding was the deterioration of the cladding on the spire due to weather conditions and bird action. This major repair is scheduled for 2021 at a potential cost of £23,000. However, immediate work was

required to replace some loose lead and repair a broken rainwater downpipe costing £5,000 (This work was carried out in January 2021 and the cost will be included in 2021)



Plans are in place to provide an extension along the north side of the church comprising an accessible toilet and kitchenette.

Outline Plan for the extension

See attached plans at the end of the report

8. The Churchyard

The church yard is well maintained by a stalwart group of gardeners, although Covid restrictions meant that the annual tidying could not take place. The trees are regularly monitored and a fir tree on the school boundary which was identified as having an increasing risk to those passing by is scheduled for removal in 2021.

9. Fire Safety and Risk Assessment Policy

The PCC ensures that fire hazards are regularly assessed, and the Fire Safety Plan is regularly reviewed with a Fire Safety notice being displayed. The oil boiler is serviced regularly, church candles are lit only during services and are not left unattended, fire extinguishers are checked / serviced annually, and the Church's electrical certificates and PAT testing are up to date. The lightning conductor is also checked regularly. Should there be a fire during a service, the Church has two exits, the main entrance and the Chancel Door. The church has also been checked weekly when it was closed during the Covid lockdown. Risk assessments have taken place for concerts and accessing the belfry, where a harness is provided (and training has been given) for the climber's safety.

10. Common Mission Fund

Formerly known as the Parish Share, the CMF (Common Mission Fund) is the amount this Parish pays towards the administration, overheads and all running costs of the Diocese of Winchester. A high proportion of what is received through the CMF goes directly back into the ministry of our diocese. The upkeep, maintenance and all repairs and running costs for St Mary's Church are supported entirely by donations from parishioners, fund-raising events, other donors and independent grant awarding organisations.

For 2020 £16,949.09 was paid to the CMF. A full financial statement for the year is included with this report.

11. Alton Deanery Synod Report

Lockdown hindered both elections to, and meetings of, Alton Deanery Synod in 2020. Synod usually receives reports from General Synod. At the November meeting of General Synod (reported at Deanery Synod, also in November) a prime focus was the Church of England IICSA report, (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse), on Safeguarding, which followed significant failures including those of Bp Peter Ball. A set of resources "Living in Love and Faith" has been produced to help the church address changing social attitudes about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. Bishop David is leading on this. The Church of England has also urged Dioceses, Deaneries and Parishes to take on board the Clergy Covenant for Wellbeing on how to look after our clergy.

A report on the Deanery link with Karamoja is usually presented. Following a decision within Winchester Diocese to re-focus the Diocese's overseas mission links, Alton is being encouraged to form links with the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo), and run down its commitment to Karamoja. Alton Deanery's intention is to "withdraw with integrity". The Deanery has a Mission Action Plan with five Objectives: to engage with schools in the Deanery to develop the faith and prayer of the pupils and families; to train parish leaders across the Deanery amongst others, the Diocesan School of Mission resource; to encourage Fresh Expressions and the planting of new congregations; to pay 100% of the Common Mission Fund and to raise the average giving per head in the Deanery; to have a consistent and regular pattern and delivery of Christian Explorer & Community Support courses. Despite the restrictions of Covid/Lockdown, there has been some positive progress across this DMAP.

The work of the Diocesan Resilience Task Force, responding to a significant reduction in Diocesan income, has impacted the Deanery. When this was reported to Deanery Synod in November it was said that the impact of this situation will become clearer across the diocese, including Alton Deanery, in December 2020 and January 2021, and full consultations would then be initiated. In March 2021 the consultation began. Synod always receives (usually encouraging) updates from parishes across the Deanery.

Provided by Revd. Brian Pritchard, Alton Area Dean

12. Financial Report

The detailed Statement of Assets and Liabilities for Year 2020 is attached on page 10 of this Report.

For the first time since 2014, a loss was recorded in the finances for the year. The loss of £1,731.90 is entirely due to the Pandemic. With weddings being postponed and heavy restrictions on funeral and baptism attendances, both Fee Income and collections at these events were significantly reduced. Fewer services also caused a reduction in income through the plate. No events were possible, which meant that there was no contribution from the Village Fete or the usual concerts with our exceptionally talented local performers. Due to all of these reductions, the loss of income is estimated to have been close to £3,000 compared with an average year. In these circumstances, the loss sustained represents a good effort from parishioners to support St Mary's.

13. Report by the Independent Examiner

There are no qualifications in the Examiner's Report.

14. The Future of St Mary's Bentworth

Winchester Diocese was showing a £2 million shortfall against its budgeted income for 2020 leading to the need for significant cost savings for 2021 and beyond. In December 2020, we were informed that to achieve this, a decision had been made to reduce the numbers of stipendiary clergy in the Diocese and a pastoral reorganisation is being undertaken. In March 2021 the impact of this pastoral reorganisation has become clearer and consultation with the parishes began. We are supported in the interregnum by the Archdeacon of Winchester, the Venerable Richard Brand and the Alton Area Dean, the Reverend Brian Pritchard. Nevertheless, the PCC believe that St Mary's Church has a positive future with active, supportive church goers and sound finances, and will continue to fulfil our mission through the interregnum and beyond. The church is central to Bentworth village as a valuable community asset which the PCC is keen to see used increasingly for community activities. With the planned extension facilitating greater community involvement, St Mary's can look forward optimistically to continue and to extend its future at the heart of the village.



St Mary's Bentworth Annual Accounts

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS OF 31st DECEMBER 2020

Cash Funds	As at 31/12/2020	As at 31/12/2019	Movement
Current Account (unrestricted General Fund)	56,496	56,548	-52
Deposit Account (Unrestricted General Fund)	15,585	15,585	Nil
Fabric Account (Unrestricted General Fund)	-9,599	-7,919	-1,680
Total Assets and Liabilities	62,482	64,214	-1,732

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FROM 1st JANUARY to 31st DECEMBER 2020

GENERAL FUNDS	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Receipts							
Standing Orders	4,065.00	4,212	4,272	4,532	4,812	5,562	13,048
Gift Aid recovered on Standing Orders and GASDS	4,584.95	5,457	4,372	4,923	18,337	1,890	845
Standing Orders (Glos) (excl Tax)	7,789.42	7,721	7,645	8,079	8,248	7,559	0
Envelopes	872.40	2,670	3,450	3,089	1,947	3,330	4,135
Donations	1,817.90	629	2,434	332	1,197	1,073	1,232
Cash collections	1,108.93	1,726	4,424	2,800	5,502	2,248	997
Legacies	0.00	0	0	0	1,000	50	0
Charity Collections	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	219
Bank Interest	114.24	191	155	38	26	28	34
Village Fete	0.00	1,375	1,650	2,100	1,500	1,250	1,851
Parish Council	0.00	250	0	500	500	250	250
Parochial Fees	1,441.00	1,586	3,743	2,573	-247	3,565	4,324
VAT Recovered (General Account)	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	0	0
Other Income (Events)	0.00	990.00	2,452	462	408	0	0
Total Receipts	21,793.84	26,807	34,597	29,428	43,230	26,805	26,935
Payments							
Parish Share	16,949.09	16,233	15,252	20,216	18,000	8,288	25,696
Utilities	1,144.00	1,975	1,786	1,293	1,315	1,558	2,095
Other expenses (incl organ etc)	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance	2,631.68	2,845	2,784	2,604	2,631	2,595	2,547
Clergy Expenses	660.00	847	872	622	1,403	-813	1,034
Visiting Clergy	0.00	0	0	0	0	229	25
Cost of Services (incl organist, wafers etc)	200.44	1,022	954	511	950	828	435
PCC Expenses	260.51	54	147	409	248	135	886
Bank Charges	0.00	0	0	-194	0	0	0
Charitable Grants	0.00	532	1,826	831	2,042	2,903	2,602
General Maintenance	0.00	199	0	0	507	141	848
Unrecoverable VAT	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	334
Total Payments	21,845.72	23,707	23,621	26,292	27,096	15,864	36,503

General Fund Balance for Year 2020	-51.88	3,100	10,976	3,136	16,134	10,941	-9,568
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FABRIC FUND

Receipts	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Standing Orders	100.00	100	100	100	300	1,754	1,100
Standing Orders Glos (ex Tax)	1,553.06	1,519	1,474	1,437	1,417	240	0
Gift Aid recovered on standing orders/Donations	388.28	380	368	1,484	354	60	0
Donations	250.00	0	1,500	6,683	1,105	0	0
GASDS	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Income (VAT Recovery)	0.00	181	0	3,250	0	0	0
Bank Interest	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Receipts	2,291.34	2,180	3,442	12,954	3,176	2,054	1,100
Payments							
Church Maintenance	3,731.36	3,181	3,635	1,230	401	665	680
Capital Works	0.00	1,269	3,320	8,746	11,068	0	418
Architects Fees	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Expenditure	240.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Payments	3,971.36	4,450.00	6,955	9,976	11,469	665	1,098

Fabric Fund Balance for Year 2020	-1,680.02	-2,270	-3,513	2,978	-8,293	1,389	2
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TOTAL INCREASE/LOSS FOR YEAR 2020	-1,731.90	830	7,463	6,114	7,841	12,330	-9,566
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Notes:-

	TOTAL	SO	Tax
SO Glos Total (incl Fabric)=	11678.15	9342.48	2335.67

- 1 Standing Orders down due to losing contributors.
- 2 Lower Fees and Collections due to fewer Weddings and Funerals and low numbers
- 3 Coronavirus Lockdown and restrictions hitting Envelopes and Cash collections, reduction in year approx £2,400
- 4 No Fete or other activities
- 5 No Parish Council contribution to Churchyard upkeep

16. St Mary's Church, Bentworth Easter Vestry Meeting (Meeting of the Parishioners)

7pm, 5 October, 2020

St Mary's Church, Bentworth

1. **Opening Prayer:** led by Canon Ed Pruen
2. **Present:** Jean Baveystock; Tony Brooking; Cathy Dumelow; Hilary Dunwoody; Mervyn Dunwoody; Mary Green; Jenny Hales; Jill Hurley; Peter Nutting; Poppity Nutting; Liz Preece; Rev'd Canon Ed Pruen, (Chair); Diana Willis
3. **Apologies:** Marietta & Nicky Branch; Maureen Brooking; Ron & Stella Burnett; Brenda Mills; Sue Phillips
4. **Minutes** of the last meeting 4 April, 2019, were ratified and signed as a true record.
5. **Matters Arising:** None
6. **Election of Church Wardens:** Cathy Dumelow and Liz Preece were elected unopposed.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. **Notification of Items to be Raised under Any Other Business:** Harvest Festival; the church tower; church funding for projects; church re-ordering
2. **Minutes of the 2019 APCM:** These were available.
Matters Arising: See below
3. **Presentation of the Annual Report:** As this was produced pre-Covid, it did not show the reality of the last seven months. Canon Ed noted that the church was regarded as a safe space during the pandemic with risk assessments completed and National Churches' guidelines adhered to. Online services have been very well received with 57 produced so far and the website has been popular, with 57,000 hits. Sarah Rees, the Benefice Administrator, has stood down after 3 busy years and Canon Ed expressed thanks to her in absentia for her commitment and hard work. Rev'd Ingrid Owen-Jones is taking on this voluntary role and the question of expenses for the Administrator needs to be addressed by the parishes. Messy Church made a good start to the academic year last September but sadly this was curtailed by the pandemic, as was Open the Book. Canon Ed is exploring ways of engaging with the school children, possibly through online Collective Worship.

Audited Financial Statement for the year ending 31.12.19: This was presented to the meeting by Mervyn Dunwoody. Whilst the income for 2019 was good that for 2020 is likely to be considerably lower due to the pandemic. In reply to Peter Nutting's question about the £64,000 liquid resources of the parish, Mervyn Dunwoody explained that the annual outgoing, including our parish share is £35,000 and it was expedient to maintain an extra year's surplus, particularly this year as income was lower than usual and, as a result of the Quinquennial Inspection, there will be a considerable spend on building upgrades and repairs. Tony Brooking asked how Bentworth's resources compared with the other parishes and Canon Ed explained that all four churches maintained a similar amount. Tony Brooking also asked if this money

4. was available to spend and could it be used towards the tower refurbishment, rather than having to fund raise. Mervyn Dunwoody explained that this would be possible. Jean Baveystock commented that it would be useful to have the parish BACs on the website which could be activated with 'one click'.
5. **Election of PCC Members:** The following were duly elected without a vote as there were only five nominations: Jean Baveystock; Jenny Hales; Mervyn Dunwoody; Poppity Nutting; Sue Phillips.
6. **Deanery Synod Representatives:** none
7. **Election of Sidespersons:** The following were duly elected: Nicky Branch; Maureen Brooking; Stella Burnett; Cathy Dumelow; Mervyn Dunwoody; Jenny Hales; Jane Phillips; Liz Preece.
8. **Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2020:** Sally Hayes was duly appointed.
9. **AOB:** the non-perishable items collected at Harvest will be donated to the Alton Food Bank. The schedule of work for the repair of the tower has been completed by Nick Carey-Thomas who is now seeking quotes; the question of whether the church should pay for this out of its resources or by fund raising was discussed but no decision made. Tony Brooking was concerned that little progress on the re-ordering and extension of the church has been made during the year and a working party of, Tony Brooking; Nicky Branch; Peter and Poppity Nutting; Diana Willis are to take on this task. Although Jean Baveystock thought fund raising for the tower repairs would be a viable project, Tony Brooking felt the effort would be better directed towards the extension which would provide a community space. Canon Ed felt the diocese would very much approve of the project as it is keen to open up churches to the wider community by providing local facilities. This is especially important at a time when the future of many churches is uncertain. Tony Brooking will therefore contact Nick Carey-Thomas with a view to obtaining detailed drawings for an extension.

Closing Prayers: the meeting closed at 8pm with the Grace

St Mary's Church, Bentworth
Easter Vestry Meeting (Meeting of the Parishioners)

7pm, 20 May , 2021

St Mary's Church, Bentworth

Agenda

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. Election of Church Wardens

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the APCM 2020
2. Matters arising
3. Update on the planned church refurbishment and extension.
4. Presentation of the Annual Report
5. Audited financial statement
6. Election of PCC Members
7. Election of Deanery Synod member
8. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2021
9. Update of the pastoral arrangements
10. AOB
11. Closing prayer