

2018 Church Wardens' Report

Life at St Mary's has moved on at an amazing rate since we reported to you all at the last APM. We have been so blessed with our supporting clergy and services have continued throughout the vacancy. We have been pleased to welcome new people and families to our congregation and maintained good numbers at our services. The PCC and co-opted members have met all the deadlines for the finances in reporting to the Diocese and Charities Commission. Our annual events have continued to run and keep our profile very visible in the local community and beyond. I would like to thank all PCC members for their work during 2018/19.

The last twelve months have been as challenging as the previous twelve months and many tasks have been taken on by members of the congregation, who have risen to meet some of our pressing needs. Many of the electrical problems have been solved after years of poor lighting in the halls, churches and the grounds. The boilers in all areas have had a few hiccups but these too have been rectified. The grounds and graveyards are still wonderfully maintained by a willing team of gardeners, who work in all weathers to keep us looking presentable for all our visitors.

The most memorable event of the year was the process of appointing our new Rector - Trevor Mapstone after a very disappointing first attempt. Hilary and I felt very honoured to be involved in the interviewing and we are sure we have made the right decision. We are planning to welcome him and his family to Caterham in the late summer – date has yet to be agreed.

Hilary has worked tirelessly on many projects and innovations over the past year. The Lego Project has taken off and the bricks are being laid as donations arrive. We are about to start Module 4 of St Mary's and we expect to have built St Lawrence's by the end of this summer during the events held in the church. She has developed the Communications Committee whose members have made the new website up and running with its new format. Now it is easier to find information and there are new links to other websites and it enables users to access it on mobile phones, tablets as well as PCs. Hilary also runs the Social Committee, who have taken on new ventures in particular the Secret Cinema, which has now shown three films. Another exciting and successful project she has nurtured is Messy Church, which is held on Sunday afternoons for any local families and members of the church. It follows a chosen theme and combines music, creative activities and a meal followed by a short service in the church. This has in turn helped Junior Church, now often called 'Fun Church' to grow in numbers and enthusiasm. There is a good team of Mums who work together to run the group during term time. Hilary is also the Sacristan and responsible for keeping the sacristy well stocked for the services and special events. The spire is still standing and has suffered little damage, but is in the process of having a faculty passed by the Diocese and Archdeacon Moira to be re-shingled. We are awaiting a report from a structural engineer to check whether the tower and spire are still strong enough to take the equipment for 5G and that the roofers can work safely in renewing the shingles. At the present moment we have bats in the spire so no work can be carried out until they vacate the area.

I think we would all agree that 2018 was another memorable year - and I can cautiously report that we are in a strong position at the end of it, thanks to the way the congregation has supported and worked with Hilary, myself, the deputy Wardens Chris Clementi and Gay Russell and the PCC through very challenging times. Keeping the church running normally during the vacancy has been difficult for all of us, but so much has been achieved, mainly thanks to everybody pulling together and working as a team – enabling us to support Revs Frany, Roger and Simon in their sterling work in keeping the normal and special services going throughout the time.

As many of you are aware that the Caterham Team has temporarily been dissolved. This was put in place by the Bishop in order that the vacancy at St Luke's and St Peter's and St Paul's could be resolved quickly without waiting for St Mary's Team Rector to be appointed. At a meeting with Archdeacon Moira, it was discovered that none of the other churches wanted to be in a team any more. It has been left to our new incumbent to resolve the situation. The other churches want to be a group and we have not said what we would like to happen, so that we can all talk and work with Rev Trevor and agree the terms for the change.

Due to the dissolving of the team there has been little support from the other churches - Father Jerry has helped on a couple of occasions and Rev Catherine from Woldingham has kindly come to take the Tuesday lunchtime communion once a month since before the start of the vacancy.

We thank all the clergy who have helped out during the vacancy, particularly our resident priests and our invited visiting ones - Archdeacon Moira, Father Michael Hart, Revs Charles Bradshaw, John Friendship and Catherine Dawkins.

The completion of the accounts for 2018 has been much smoother this year due to the hard work of our accounting team (Jean Stevens, Di Haslam, Martin Dollery, Anne Pickering and Anne Brownless) and the whole process being kept on target throughout the year. The end of year was finalised by the end of January, and the draft reviewed by the PCC at the January meeting and signed at the March PCC meeting. Richard Dean received the accounts at the end of March and we have them here today. I was hoping that we would be in the black for the new financial year, but it wasn't quite to be!

Our two bank accounts are running alongside each other and enable us to ensure we don't have to pay bank charges. Both accounts are online so money can be moved easily to ensure we can pay our bills. Our accounts have been helped by reducing our Parish Support Fund to £80k and under the circumstances we are expecting to continue this for 2020.

Unfortunately due to the continuing problems with NET and the spire, none of the roof or stonework has been carried out which was highlighted in the Quinquennial Report of 2016 / 2017. It has not been possible to apply for grants to do the work as we are hoping to combine everything in one application.

The Liturgy, Evangelism and Nurture Committee (known as LEN) has continued to meet under the guidance of the Rev Frany and they have ensured that our services and pastoral work continues. This has included the introduction of the monthly Prayer Breakfast and Wednesday evening Quiet Time. It is hoped that some of the other services which have disappeared over the last few years will be reinstated as we still have people asking for them.

The Social Committee have gallantly continued to keep our regular events going in particular the two fairs, which have both added much needed funds for the church. The Summer Fair is in six weeks' time and we need some volunteers to help run stalls and provide new ideas to raise money. Please come forward and let us know how you can help.

Attendances to services in 2018 were similar to 2017, but perhaps the most worrying information we received only a few weeks ago is concerning the renewal of our Electoral Roll. Our numbers have dropped by a third since 2012. Although the deadline has passed for this we have a number of regular attendees to services who have not completed a form and could really make a difference. If you know you have not re-joined please fill in a form from the back of church.

There are a number of people who really make a difference to the life of these churches and without them we might not be in such a strong position.

Hilary and I would like to extend special thanks to the following people, in no particular order:

- John Clarke for managing the church's temperamental heating system, and ensuring the buildings are warm at the required times.
- Chris Bullen and Georgina Johnson for their work as our Safeguarding Officers.
- Chris Buck and the choir, Martin Dollery and Free Spirit, Fiona Izzard and Yvonne Coldron with Junior Choir for keeping our strong musical tradition alive and well.
- Frances Clementi and the team of bell ringers for joyously summoning us to church every Sunday morning and performing special peels when called to do so, in particular the most recent Notre Dame solidarity ringing.
- Mary Clair Kelly for keeping our profile clearly visible in the community, as our Communications Officer, and for the support of Simon with the development of our new website, which is now online.
- Chris Buck for managing our website and editing the Beacon.
- Merlin Skinner, Denise Birkett, Barbara Whiteford and Irene Schofield for organising Servers', Readers', Eucharistic Ministers' and Coffee rotas.
- All servers, Readers, Intercessors, Eucharistic Ministers, Gardeners, Cleaners, Coffee makers, Sides people, sound system operators, Summer teas volunteers.
- Kate Gordon for organising Junior Church and crèche.
- Abi Pedrick, Janine Hercock, Kate Gordon, Vicky Stubbs and families supported by Hilary for organising and running 'Messy Church'
- Barbara Holloway for continuing to manage the renewal of Electoral Roll so diligently.
- Liz Cooke for continuing to organising the rota for transport to church for those who require it.
- Catherine and Alan Turton for taking on and so ably managing our Children's' Society collections and Patrick Phillips for organising our collections for Christian Aid Week. Joyce Lydford for organising the Christingle's for the service in December.
- Kris Daniels and Brian Rochester for everything they do for the church and primarily for keeping St Mary's Hall so clean.
- Vanessa Buck for helping Hilary with the Sacristan's duties.

- Elizabeth Siddall for doing the weekly laundry for communion.
- John Gilbert and his team for keeping the graveyards and surrounding areas tidy and safe. Also for all his work in mending and spotting problems which need addressing in both churches.
- Heidi Dennis and Vanessa Buck for maintaining, repairing and renewing our altar frontals, so they look as good as new.
- Sarah Benham and team of helpers for the Holiday Club.
- Debbie Samuels and her skilled flower arrangers who keep our church looking beautiful throughout the year, plus the Mothering Sunday daffodils and mulled wine making.
- Denise Clarke and Brian with Kris Daniels for decorated St Lawrence's for the vigil on Maundy Thursday/Good Friday.
- The Guild of Friends of St Lawrence's Committee for continuing to oversee and run events in our Ancient Church.
- Tim Coldron for his electrical expertise and solving and improving the lighting in the Churches and Halls.
- Ollie Maurice for his continuing help with our boilers.

Hilary and I are indebted to Anne Pickering for continuing to be our administrator through the vacancy and spotting problems and checking we are aware of everything that happens in the church. We know we lean on her for so many things, as we are not always available when people arrive during the week. We thank her for her support and dedication to keeping things running smoothly.

I know that you will be as sorry as we were to hear that Maureen Edmunds has decided to retire from being a SPA for St Mary's as from today. We have been so blessed with her and her excellent pastoral care for so many years. She will be so missed and difficult to replace, but God willing someone will take up her mantle and help Rev Trevor with this very rewarding and important work.

Finally, on a personal note, I wish to thank Hilary for all her help with the services, running committees, meeting contractors, attending Diocesan training sessions, organising groups to go to conferences and taking the Lego to numerous events to continue to keep funds coming in.

How do we see the next 12 months progressing? We plan to move forward with the spire and roof repairs as soon as we can get all the necessary paperwork completed and the money to pay for it. As a request from Free Spirit for more room to play, we plan to ask to remove two pews and the book rest from the north aisle and so that it is all in keeping the same on the south aisle side. The advantage of this will also allow more room for extra chairs when we have big services like the Remembrance Day service, Scout Christingle and the Christmas Eve services. Please let me know your thoughts on this, before we put it to the PCC in May. Other projects include the flushing toilet in St Lawrence's and a storage unit in the grounds for the tables and chairs used for the summer teas.

The future of St Mary's and St Lawrence's Churches is in our hands, and with help from our new priest Rev Trevor Mapstone, all of us should be proud and honoured to be part of these vibrant churches and carry them forward through the 21st Century.

Thank you.