

A summary of the year written in collaboration by the Associate Priest and Church Wardens (in lieu of the Rector's report)

Mandy Jutsum

As we are now in a vacancy, our associate priest, Sandy and the two church wardens, Howard and I, have together compiled an account summarising the year in the church's life and looking forwards to 2018-2019.

Clergy

The past year has indeed been an eventful one. After intermittent periods of illness and a phased return to work, Helen, our Rector moved to pastures new in Broadstone, near Poole: to a single parish by the sea where, I understand, she is very happy and settling in well. We wish her all the very best in her new post. During the year our curate Deborah was priested. What a joyous occasion that was for us all as she was welcomed into the church as a fully ordained priest. There was much sadness when Deborah moved on to her pastures new but it's very good to know that she is well settled in the benefice of Woodchester, Brimscombe and Rodborough.

Throughout this period of change we are all indebted to the steadfastness of our Associate Priest, Sandy, who has ensured that the Parish of Holy Trinity, Minchinhampton and St Barnabas, Box has continued to run normally. We especially thank Sandy for her availability throughout each week for anyone in need, always at the other end of the phone. Sandy has been well supported in her work by Linda Jarvis, our reader and the retired clergy who have committed to seeing us through another vacancy. We are fortunate to have such a variety of experienced ministry in our midst, namely, Alison Guy, John Hunnisett, John Anstey, Mike Tucker, Ann Morris, Brian Andrews and Anthony Roberts. Brian is now fully retired but is known to step in and fill the gaps when the opportunity arises.

The Church Office

Another steadfast person who has contributed well beyond her working hours in keeping the parish and indeed the benefice running smoothly is our church administrator, Christine Gibson. Christine is owed a very great debt of thanks for her smooth management of the church office despite the frequently unpredictable nature of the work entailed. She always manages to maintain a friendly approach for which we are grateful.

The Verger

Colin has been doing the verger's job for almost 20 years. It is very easy to overlook the fact that this work goes on as it always happens! The church is opened and closed and made ready each day, for religious worship and for a wide variety of activities and events. Colin is ably supported by Anne in his role. During the year Colin suffered serious illness and was in hospital and recuperating for some considerable time. It was then that we really discovered how much he does. Lots of people came forward to fill the gaps but special thanks are due to David Goldsmith, Mick Evans and Tim Mowatt for taking the lion's share of opening and closing the church each day. We were genuinely pleased to see Colin return to good health and relieved when he was able to step back into his role. Ann has recently had major surgery so the supporting roles have reversed in the Brookes household. We wish Anne a

very speedy recovery and thank her for all she does in keeping the church tidy and records kept.

Church groups

Another busy year where there has been, by necessity, a strong focus on the reordering and refurbishment of Holy Trinity Church and raising the necessary funds. This has in no way reduced the achievements and activities of the various groups in the church as is reflected in the reports from each group. Please take the time to read these reports from 21 different groups! The number of people involved in contributing to the worship, outreach, mission, organisation and maintenance of our church is quite amazing and frequently includes people who are not regular attenders at the traditional services of worship but who want to contribute to the church in this community in some way. The Flower Guild and Magazine Distributors are an excellent example of this, as is the Cleaning Guild who have been having a rest during the work on the church, soon to be spurred into action again. A point for celebration in the Minchinhampton and Box communities is the seamlessness between church and community and the atmosphere of collaboration that exists between different organisations within the town and village.

Reverend Sandy Emery

Mission:

Mission is about taking God's love out into the community and engaging with people to share in that love.

Examples of mission over this last year has been through the work of reordering where people have taken great interest in what has been happening in the church. Many have come to have a look and comment positively of what they have seen.

Fund Raising has also attracted a great deal of support from the community, resulting in a real buzz as to what we are trying to achieve. This was really evident at our recent wine and cheese evening.

Relationships across the benefice:

Continue to flourish and there have been shared services and social events around festivals, especially Trinity, harvest, confirmation service and preparation, shared Lent groups and Lent lunches, and a Marriage preparation course.

The Benefice ministry team have worked in collaboration this last year during the Rector's absence and all have contributed so much to the ministry and preaching at services across the Benefice. This has enhanced the richness of our worship experiences, with all willing to travel to churches across the Benefice. Benefice team meetings have recommenced since the Rector has left and this has enabled good communication and ensured that we worship and pray as a team.

Churches Together in Minchinhampton, Box and Amberley (CTMBA) include the Anglican, Methodist and Baptist churches who meet every other month to share ideas and pray together. We shared an act of worship on Remembrance Sunday at the War Memorial and an informal gathering in Christian Unity week, and the dawn Easter day service on the common was really special.

Work with Families and Young People:

All Age services continue to be well supported and Messy church continues to thrive with increasing numbers.

Junior church continues to struggle with low numbers of children attending on Sundays and with only a couple of people willing to lead it.

Building up our family and children attendance on Sundays is a long-term project that the new Rector will need to address.

Minchinhampton school - We continue to have a well-established partnership with the school in leading assemblies (Collective Worship) every other week.

The School Services at Harvest, Christmas, Easter were held in the school due to the reordering but the School Leavers' service in July will welcome the children and families back to the church. Some of the School children have expressed that they missed coming into church.

Experiences such as Experience Harvest, Christmas and Easter were not held during the reordering due to church unavailability. The challenge in the future will be having enough people prepared to undertake the commitment of setting up stations and then teaching the children during their visits.

Occasional offices: weddings, baptisms, funerals:

We did not have any weddings in the last year due to the Rector's decision to suspend weddings during the reordering year.

We continue to hold Baptism preparation sessions engaging with the Christian faith. A new initiative has been introduced this year to help to engage with parents and their children and maintaining contact with them. We have been giving a knitted teddy bear to those being baptised and will be inviting the families to come back to church for a teddy bear's picnic. There are also plans in the future to develop a baptism team for support and follow-up.

This last year there has been an increase in Funeral ministry and the retired priests have thankfully helped undertake funerals. It is hoped that there will be a possibility of setting up a bereavement group to help with the aftercare clergy give already.

Communications:

We have an excellent website thanks to our Webmaster Mike Gwilliam who endeavors to keep it up to date with our events. This last few months we have been proactive in putting our events on Twitter.

This last year has seen our dedicated Parish Magazine editor Kathy Hurst hand over the role to Angie Ayling who has continued the high standard of producing our magazine.

We continue to be grateful to Wizzy Lapping and her term of dedicated distributors who ensure our news is delivered to well over 900 households.

Pastoral work:

The Pastoral Care Team (PCT) under the leadership of our Reader Linda Jarvis continues to be a real asset to the life of our parish. Their hard work has enabled us to be aware of the

needs of most people. However, the PCT still relies on individuals being vigilant in reporting concerns to them.

Prayer life: Worship and learning:

Worship is about celebrating God's love and remembering the times when we may have failed to do this. Asking for and getting the opportunity to start again in celebrating God's love with all is not just on Sunday, but on every day of the week. Enabling people to explore and commence their spiritual journeys in faith and love with God and eventually to share their faith journeys with others, must be one of our goals.

Howard Browning

We generally sweep up reordering, repair and Quinquennial Inspections into one catch-all. We have had all of them this last year.

2012, we decided we wanted to change the church, but didn't have the money.

In 2015, we got a very generous grant from the David Thomas Trust, not enough, but well on the way. We checked out the church, and the most pressing problem was damp that had probably been there for nearly 200 years. More recent damp problems were in the roof. We went forward.

We finally got the raft of permissions in August 2017, and got started.

Alarmingly, we found a broken drain under the nave, and our structural engineer found that four of our six pillars were loose. At a late stage, we found asbestos. Nonetheless, we went forward, with Antony and Nick, and Chiz.

So now it is time to thank all of you. Some have given money or some other financial support, especially, but not only, chairs. Some have helped us in getting grants. The net result – we have completed Stage 1 of our development, and raised sufficient cash to do it (just). We are the darling of the Diocese, as we have completed the task in one of the shortest times known, and again, on budget. Well done.

This is the end of Stage 1. We really want to complete the Audio-Visual system, and also complete the architect's designs for the entrance. Inevitably, there will be more fund-raising, more applications for grants, and, longer-term, thinking how we can fund repairs to the stained glass, lighting, and, the biggest of all, repairs and refurbishment of the organ: all within the time till the next quinquennial in 2022. We need to continue.

Do, nonetheless, appreciate where we are. We have done the largest stage, which puts us in much better shape, and with David Goldsmith's favourite word, flexibility, in our mind. The main purpose of the church is worship, but it is also the largest space in Minchinhampton, and increasingly the best equipped. It is important to our future that we develop new activities in this space, both to get back to how the church was used before the Victorians, and also to pay our way. Tim Mowat and his team showed that with his wine and cheeses evening. There are many more events and concerts in prospect this year, and we can now have weddings. It is an exciting prospect, I hope you agree.