



**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
St Luke with St Bartholomew**

Reading Reg. Charity No. 1158694

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting
29th April 2018**

**Agenda
Minutes of 2017 Meeting
Parish Reports
Parish Accounts**



THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING 2018

12 noon Sunday 29th April 2018, Parish Hall

AGENDA

Meeting of Parishioners for the Choice of Churchwardens

(Anyone on the electoral roll of the church, OR resident in the parish may vote in this meeting)

1. Election of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

(Only those on the electoral roll of the parish may vote in this meeting.

Others may ask questions and join in discussion at the discretion of the Chairman)

1. Apologies for absence

2. Minutes of the 2017 APCM (see attached papers)

3. Elections of PCC Officers and Ordinary Members

- i. Election of representatives to Deanery Synod – every three years
- ii. Election of PCC member
- iii. Appoint Sunday stewards (sidesmen)
- iv. Appoint independent examiner if necessary

4. Outline of the Annual Reports:

Vicar's Report

Warden's Report

Electoral Roll Update

Treasurer's Report

Lunch is served

5. Questions on the tables

Dessert is served

6. Feedback, Questions and Any Other Business

7. Dates of meetings, to be agreed by the members of the PCC in the Turner Room

8. Closing Prayers



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST LUKE WITH ST BARTHOLOMEW FOR THE YEAR ENDED APRIL 2018

Vicar's Report

Dear friends,

We all know life has its highs and lows, but it is rare to have so many condensed into one year, as we have had over the last twelve months. This last year has been, at times, terribly distressing and disorienting, with so many dear friends passing away. These people brought so much light into our individual lives, as well as helping this community shine as a light in the world. We owe much to them, and we will give thanks for them at our Celebration lunch.

The last five years have actually been a time during which a great number of farewells have been made to those who have been part of the fabric in this parish. Out of a number of around 80 people, since 2013 thirty-seven people have passed away, moved away, or become housebound. That is a very large proportion, and each of those people represents countless relationships that have come to an end or changed, which is so painful for those who have had to say goodbye.

At the same time, forty-four people have joined and made their home in this parish Church. This is, of course, wonderful, and as new relationships are formed we continue the legacy of those we mourn or miss. To see this level of change so quickly, however, can only add to the disorientation we feel.

Churches in which there is a deep sense of togetherness have had to face this since the very beginning, and St Paul wrote to the Church in Rome about how to treat one another at times like this, encouraging the Church to 'be devoted to one another in love.... Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.' In other words: don't give up, tempting as it might seem. Instead, where there is hope, celebrate with people; where there is difficulty, be patient with one another; and in both of these things, faithfully pray together and strive to care for those who have joined in the last five years as much as you care for those you've known for 55 years. Choosing to live in such a way means we will continue to build a church community of welcome that, we pray, will be a source of blessing for many more people over many more years.

Graeme

Churchwardens' Report

This has been a year of reviewing for the Parish, so it seems fitting – especially as one of us (Alan Tonkyn) is retiring – for this report to be a review of the reviews!

The reviews

a) **Our first PCC meeting of the year was devoted mainly to a wide-ranging identification of areas of importance and concern.** This highlighted the following as major areas of concern:

- Sunday School: the need for a stronger basis for this to encourage families with young children to form and maintain links with the church, and to provide support for the small existing hard-pressed team of teachers.
- The small size of the St Bartholomew's congregation
- The problem of succession planning – finding people to take over from, or assist, the small core of hard-working parishioners managing a range of activities
- The need to convert, where possible, our 'Fringe' engagements with people in the community (especially through the Garden, Read College, and Messy Church) into pathways to a deeper spiritual engagement.

On the other hand, grounds for optimism were noted, including:

- Messy church is attracting more young families.
- Toddler group is attracting good numbers of regular attenders, some of whom are coming to attend Messy Church services.

b) **In June an 'Away Afternoon' meeting of the PCC was held at St Catherine of Siena church in Tilehurst, focusing on Resourcing key aspects of our work** as a Parish, namely: Our Parish Ministry, Communication, Ministry with Children and Young People, and Sunday Worship/Activities.

The meeting focused almost entirely on Communication and Ministry with Children and Young People. Significant outcomes were

- the agreement to set up a working party to improve communications and to pay for professional help in revamping the website and other forms of communication
- the welcome announcement that Christine Blackman had agreed to head the Sunday School team, providing much-needed leadership and support.

c) **A post-service discussion by clergy and congregation of possible radical changes to the layout and seating in the nave at St Luke's**, involving replacing pews with chairs and reorganization or replacement of the plinth.

This revealed, amongst other things, that several members of the congregation were in favour of the chairs-for-pews change as providing more comfortable and flexible seating and a more welcoming environment. Others were conscious of losing the coherence of the original Victorian interior, and the possible difficulty of maintaining the chairs in a good

condition. The issue of cost vs benefit was also discussed. In general, congregation members seemed to be in favour of retaining the plinth as a permanent feature in some form.

Some outcomes and developments

Sunday School (now called 'Sunday Club'): this has benefited from Christine's leadership and teaching. Volunteers have been forthcoming to help, though the call for more volunteers may need to be repeated.

Communications: Nicola McGaughey and Helen Hopper have teamed up very effectively to work with a professional company, Theme, to develop a new over-arching 'brand name' for our Parish and its projects ('Redlands Parish Church') and have relaunched our website in a more attractive and manageable format.

Some experiments, namely the monthly Parish Community lunches and the monthly informal Pax group evening service, have not been as successful as we would have liked and have ended. We must continue with such experiments but be willing to call a halt if they fail to take root, provided they have been given appropriate resources and time to prove themselves.

Our relationship with Read College of Drama at St Bartholomew's: The College continues to thrive and grow and enjoy its space at St Bart's. How that space is expanded, used and funded will continue to be an important area for discussion, especially as the Sunday congregation continues very small.

People

Our Vicar has been kept very busy in his dual role as our incumbent and as Area Dean. We wonder if he would still agree with the comment reported in the March 2017 PCC minutes: 'GF said it should be a fun role to fulfil.'! We are grateful to him for the thoughtful and lively leadership he continues to provide in spite of the extra workload, ably supported by **Christine Blackman**, and by our curates, **Serena Tajima** and, more recently, **Jane Lewis**.

The 'core of hard-working parishioners managing a range of activities' mentioned above is indeed fairly 'small', but too large to mention, and thank, properly here. However, as Wardens with a responsibility for church property we are especially grateful to **Leslie Green and Roger Cox** for their untiring and persistent care for our buildings. Alan Tonkyn would also like to thank his deputy, **Steve Allen**, for all the work he does which might otherwise fall to Alan to organize!

As can be seen from the Care Group report, this Parish year has ended on a sad note, with the deaths of so many congregation members of long-standing, or their parents, in a short space of time. We have also had to say a final farewell to **Fr Brian Blackman**, for so long a vital and much-loved force within the parish as a Non-Stipendiary Minister and Christine's beloved husband. However, the funeral services have reminded us, and shown visitors, how loving and supportive our Parish family is at times of sadness. Long may that continue!

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST LUKE WITH ST BARTHOLOMEW FOR THE YEAR ENDED APRIL 2018

Administrative information

St Luke's and St Bartholomew's are two churches joined into one parish, situated in Reading, Berkshire. They are part of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is ***The Vicarage, 50 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AS.***

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity which is registered with the Charity Commission.

Members of the PCC from the last APCM (30th April 2017) until the date this report was approved are:

Rev'd Dr Graeme Fancourt Vicar, chairman
Rev'd Christine Blackman Associate Priest
Rev'd Brian Blackman Associate Priest (retired)
Rev'd Serena Tajima Curate
Alan Tonkyn Church Warden, St Luke's
Jane Kenyon Church Warden, St Bart's
Steve Allen Deputy Warden, St Luke's

Deanery Synod representatives (until 31st May 2020):

Leslie Green
Hilary Jakeman
Sally-Ann McDowell Treasurer
Marion Pitman Deputy Warden, St Bart's

Other elected members:

Paul Carnell
Roger Cox
Mary Evans
Ed Hopper
Simon Peatman Secretary
Chris Pyrah

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election on the PCC. Changes to the structure of the PCC were approved ahead of the last APCM and have been implemented this year. More details may be found in the review of the year, below.

Objectives and activities

St Luke with St Bartholomew's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the

Churches of St Luke's, Erleigh Road, Reading; St Bartholomew's, London Road, Reading; and the Parish Hall, Erleigh Road, Reading.

Church attendance

The number on the Electoral Roll is not known at the time of preparing the Annual Report; however, the number last year was 144. The number for this year will be announced at the APCM. The average weekly attendance in October was 71 (of which 12 under the age of 16) at St Luke's and 15 (of which 2 under the age of 16) at St Bart's. The combined attendance across all Christmas services in 2017 was 647.

Review of the year

The PCC has met on four occasions since the last APCM. The Standing Committee prepares the agenda for each PCC meeting by email but in general does not meet formally unless circumstances demand it. This year, the Standing Committee met in person once, on 1st November, to decide on the parish's new branding and website.

Much of the PCC's work this year has been to evaluate the parish's vision of "Creating space for life" in order to affirm that vision or modify or replace it for the future. In particular, this has involved assessing which our activities run well and which stretch our resources (particularly in terms of manpower); hearing about and approving the work of the communications group in creating a new identity (Redlands Parish Church) which covers all of our activities, with an associated new logo and website; and what our spending priorities should be in terms of our parish buildings. Summaries of the PCC's business has appeared in the weekly pew sheet following each meeting.

Simon Peatman
Secretary

Administrator's Report 2018

Another busy year in the life of the Church and the office. Visitors to both continue to be frequent and regular with a wide variety of both church and non-church members calling in. The regulars we saw last year mostly continue to visit but there are constantly new people calling in to chat, sit, pray, listen, socialise, support or to find out more about the building and our activities. With the extended hours due to Graeme's appointment to Area Dean we can open the office for longer and where possible have someone available from morning prayer through to evening prayer. The challenge of completing work around visitors remains and how we manage this is under review but the value of the contacts we make though being here is tremendous.

During the year we have seen the Clergy Team grow with the arrival of Serena and Jane, both of whom are a great help supporting my work.

REInspired continue to use the church on a regular basis as part of their work with local schools and the behaviour of the children attending for this continues to be outstanding and respectful. As a result of these sessions we have had several parents calling in to see where their children are visiting for RE lessons, often they live locally but have never been inside. The church has also been used by Reading Festival Chorus, Reading School and Reading University for their Christmas Concerts. These are all booked in again for the coming year.

There have been a number of activities associated with Occasional Offices (weddings, baptisms and funerals) and several more are booked in the diary for the coming year. Sadly,

we have started this year with a very busy period of saying our sad goodbyes to several members of the congregations.

General Admin

Regular weekly admin is associated with producing newsletters, service PowerPoints, printing of intercessions, readings and music for the choir. The news sheet continues to be well used and I do try to cram in as much as possible to keep everyone up to date with services, events and information. Notice boards are currently under review with a plan to update in line with the new Parish Branding.

It was reported last year that although we have a letterbox at St Luke's it post was still not being delivered. This has been resolved, the letterbox is well used and when the office is open our lovely postman will hand deliver to us.

Work is underway to update all paperwork with the new branding and the new website is up and running a proving very successful. Work is still ongoing to tweak things and to provide useful information to those approaching us for hall bookings and information about occasional offices, services and regular activities. There is an online calendar where people are able to look to see availability although for a number of reasons bookings can only be made by personal contact.

Hall Bookings

The hall is still being used most days with a very wide range of activities taking place. Regular evening bookings have continued – Tango (including regular weekend classes), Capoeira, Karate and 5 Rhythms Dance group plus WI meetings (monthly). The Church Coffee morning and book sales continue the 1st Saturday of the month.

St Luke's Toddler Group continues successfully on Wednesday mornings, the Mothers Union meet monthly and local councillor surgeries run throughout the year in the Turner Room. Sunday School and Youth Group make use of the hall on Sundays.

The NHS Holiday Club continues to make full use of the hall during school holidays which brings in useful income but does impact on our other users many of whom are unable to run their classes during this period. Family Aid use the whole building for one week in December for their annual Tots and Teens Toy Sort which, again, excludes other users, but it is an event which supports many families in need in our community. Last year over 1300 local children received Christmas presents as a result of this activity. In addition to this there was a surplus of toys due to huge generosity of local companies and individuals. At this time a contact at Wycliffe was trying to provide a few packs of sweets for a community in the North East where there is a huge number of families relying heavily on Foodbanks and a large influx of refugees who arrive with only very basic personal items. Contact between the two groups was made and approximately 20 huge bin bags full of toys, games and children's items were reserved to be sent North. It was a wonderful illustration of what can be achieved when people work together – within hours of the connection here being made, transport was arranged, wrapping paper donated, toys bagged, volunteers at a local church in the NE community mobilised to sort and wrap presents, and drivers found to deliver the very next day. Family Aid were thrilled that that the surplus toys could be used rather than going into costly storage for next year.

Family Aid make a donation to the church to help with fuel costs during their usage.

Some of the groups we had last year have now finished. The art teacher, Anna, went travelling and a new art teacher has been trying to launch classes without success. Jelly Tots have moved to their town centre location as their numbers remained low, parking is likely to have been a feature with this. The small yoga group stopped although several new yoga groups have been looking at the Turner Room as a possible venue for future classes. The Friday National Childbirth Trust (NCT) Tots lunch group for Friday mornings continues to grow and has been very successful – I am told some of the mums from this now attend our Toddler group too. The group have been making very generous contributions for use of the hall and several party bookings have resulted from attendees. The hall continues to be a very popular venue for children's parties, and we continue to have repeat bookings and bookings due to people attending events. There were a number of one-off events taking place – guitar recitals, charity concerts, strategy game events, plays, quizzes, pantos and a prize giving event. Some of these have rebooked for this year. Regular new business has come from a Lindy Hop group which may expand to two sessions a week, and the NCT are running a training course which has resulted in ten one day sessions extending through to the summer of this year.

The Local Producers Market continues the third Saturday of each month. There are a few regular traders and the pies made by Phil the Pie Man are very popular among the church congregations. Footfall has been variable each month and publicity is being stepped up to spread the word. Traders are committed until after Easter when a review will take place. Naomi German has been opening the garden during the market and it was a wonderful opportunity to see how that is progressing and stimulated much interest in that work. There were also some hall rental enquiries and bookings have come through the market and garden work.

If the hall is to be a successful income stream for the Church new regular business will be needed. I continue to seek business clients who may be able to hire the hall for meetings, but this is proving difficult as companies often do not have the money for outside venue hire and local parking continues to be a huge challenge. Rates of hire have remained unchanged for some time but are currently at a level which is consistent with other venues in our local area.

Sarah Knight, our dedicated cleaner, continues to strive to keep everything sparkling. The constant challenge of cleaning up after everyone is not easy but she is very dedicated. All hall users will be receiving a reminder to clear up after themselves and to remove rubbish at the end of the session. There are still a number of groups who fail to leave the hall as they would wish to find it! Roger made some amendment to the storage cupboards and Sarah and I had a clear out of unused and unwanted items which had been left lying around. It looked good for a while but has soon gone back to being a mess. We shall be tackling again over the coming weeks to do a second phase clear. The hall floor was refurbished last summer.

The hall continues to offer a fantastic facility both for church use and for the local community. The challenge remains to balance securing much needed income whilst ensuring the facility can support all the work of the church as we engage with the community around us. The biggest challenge comes from parking. With the introduction of permits and expected imminent installation of meters this is presenting our clients with concerns over where attendees will park. We are awaiting information regarding the latest review of parking in our area. This is due some time in April.

My continued thanks to everyone who supports and encourages me in my role. It is such a pleasure to be part of the team at St Luke's and St Bart's and I am looking forward to continuing working with you and serving the Parish and Community.

Sarah Collins

Buildings Committee

Once again we owe a huge thank you to Roger Cox for project managing and, in many cases, undertaking the many tasks involved in maintaining and refurbishing our three properties.

The statutory inspections and annual maintenance contracts on all three properties are up to date.

We would also like to thank Sarah for the day to day management of the Hall and overseeing the cleaning of both hall and St Luke's. This task has now improved following the return to work of Sarah our cleaner.

Parish hall – Routine repairs, maintenance and replacements of expired equipment have been carried out as the need required.

The storage facilities provided to regular hall users has been reviewed and a number of changes made in the storeroom.

The main hall floor has been cleaned and polished.

The fitting of an electronic locking system has proved impractical and it has been decided to fit a new lock similar to the St Luke's church system.

A small amount of external pointing was also completed.

Next year it is planned to replace the main hall strip lighting with low energy strips.

St Luke's church – The repointing identified in the Quinquennial inspection has been completed. The south transit window was successfully repaired during the repointing scheme.

Minor improvements have been made to the vestry storage and the organ loft.

Roof and guttering has been inspected using a drone. No significant problems have been identified.

No further action has taken place on the replacement of the front door or the reordering of the nave, but this will form the basis of a review this year. External Funding would be necessary as the work could easily cost £100,000.

St Bartholomew's church – Due to finances only essential repairs and maintenance were carried out on the outside of the building. The outstanding works identified in the 2009 and 2014 Quinquennial inspections on the roof, gutters, downpipes, windows and brickwork have been costed. The total to carry out the work is approximately £300,000. We continue to monitor the state of these items.

The inspection of the roof and gutters revealed no significant urgent items of repair.

A new fire alarm system was installed.

The electric storage heaters in the vestry were replaced with gas fired radiators.

The main flood lights were replaced with LEDs.

Plans to properly hang a stage curtain from the rood screen are still being discussed.

A satisfactory solution was found for The Read School to provide a secure walk-in storage area to store their exam papers.

May I conclude this report by thanking all members of the congregation who have assisted the buildings group in maintaining the fabric of our three buildings.

Leslie Green

Deanery Synod

Between February 2017 and February 2018 Reading Deanery Synod has been active in many ways. Six meetings have been held in various churches across the Deanery.

Good news stories:

Good news stories have been heard which have included how a number of churches opened their doors for one night each week to house those living on the streets during the winter months together with providing them with a substantial meal and clean clothes. Churches remain concerned that Reading Borough Council severely underestimates the total number of the homeless in Reading, they fail to count those who, for example, sleep in tents by the river or those who sleep on sofas when they persuade friends to take them in.

Synod heard of how Beech Hill Church opened a shop within the church owned by its members and, as far as possible, sells local produce ensuring its freshness and reducing the detrimental effects on the environment. A young local farmer loans sheep to the church to keep the grounds in good order.

Themed events, according to the church calendar, are held and afford either practical assistance or are educational, including pet care and aids for dementia care. The coffee shop/tea room also provides lunches and is very popular. The shop is considered to be in the top twelve in country of its kind and has enabled the church to become the centre of village life offering not only a peaceful shopping experience but also affording time of quiet and prayer, opportunity to talk to others. The project has also been recognized as providing experience for those undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

The Churches Together in Caversham Holiday Club, which has run each summer since 2012, gave Synod a taste of the different sorts of activities which the children had the chance to be involved with. Around 150 children took part, with 13 different churches represented amongst the volunteers. The club gives great benefits to the children, mainly from families which are not regular churchgoers, who have a chance to hear Bible stories and learn about the Christian faith.

Also, in Caversham, an inspirational presentation, related how some of the congregation of St John, Caversham, had expressed concern that some local parishioners were travelling to Greyfriars to worship. This led to discussions between the two churches culminating in eight adults and seven children deciding to transfer to St John. On Sunday 4th February Bishop Andrew began a service at Greyfriars then leading those transferring to St John church for a service of commissioning and Communion.

Presentations:

Synod discussed issues raised after each presentation.

Mr Sulayman Munir, the Chair of the Islamic Council in Reading addressed areas of Islamophobia and ways to integrate Muslims into their local communities. Awareness is raised through conferences and local involvement and empowerment by education. The definition of Islamophobia is an exaggerated and irrational fear directing hatred and hostility towards Islam and Muslims and the presentation included headlines of newspapers with biased headlines, adjectives and nouns indicating terrorist or fundamentalism.

Mr John Stevenson, the Deanery Quinquennial Inspections Officer, outlined the five-yearly inspections of church buildings, according to rules set down by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), and are undertaken by an architect or a chartered building surveyor. The inspection consists of a thorough survey of the church building. A report is then produced, setting out the work which is required, in different categories reflecting the priority of the work. The system benefits the parish by enabling the Parochial Church Council to plan for the work which needs to be undertaken.

Mr Ian Shorrocks has since taken over this role as Mr Stevenson has retired.

Diocesan finances were explained regarding sources of funding and the different areas where money was spent. Parish share accounting for 79% of diocesan income, and 80% of funding goes to parishes (including funding for curates). An explanation of deprivation allowances was included.

Also, a succinct presentation of the accounts held by the Deanery, how they had originated and their purpose

A presentation relating to the growth of Reading and wider issues. With 30,000 new houses planned, of which 15,000 of these would be in the Grazeley area, this is a big growth within one deanery. The Oxford Diocese is focusing on Milton Keynes which also has large developments ongoing and where church attendance is less than within the Reading deanery.

The question to synod was “how do we deal with all these new homes, many of which will be apartment buildings with social housing incorporated yet with its separate entrance”. The challenges are multiple and great, we need new ways of mission.

Discussion / agreement items:

Following receipt of a Letter from Bishop Steven to parishes synod considered *What chimes well with you?*

What points would you like to be clarified?

What seems discordant to you?

If we implemented these values, what change might this bring to our corporate deanery life?

Which of the resources mentioned would you likely use in your parish? Are there any we might use collectively as a deanery?

Action from the answers is being taken forward by the Mission and Pastoral committee

Parish share – the formula remains unchanged as the committee is mindful of possible diocesan changes in the way share is calculated.

The 2018 budget, included the idea of being able to refund parishes which host synod for the cost of providing refreshments up to a total of £30.00, be it according to invoices submitted or given as a gift

Current / ongoing matters:

There has been a focus on the Deanery Mission Action Plan in particular by three groups working on areas of leadership, participation, and sharing resources. Questionnaires are currently with Synod members who are seeking information from their parishes to enable the work to be taken a stage further.

A brand-new website is in stages of development which will provide easy access and have a far greater range of information from synod and churches as well as diocesan and national events and much more

A new addition to the budget was for small mission projects, a total of £250 for four churches with small but courageous mission ideas. Application forms are currently with synod members for action.

Hilary Jakeman

Finance

Treasurer's Report

This report is based on the accounts produced by the treasurer this year directly using the accounting software.

At the summary level, in 2017 our expenditure was greater than our income. This is mainly due to the loss of income from the hall rental from the NHS Therapy group. Unfortunately, a replacement long term renter was not found.

INCOME

Total Income was about £117,000 (compared to £153,600 in 2016 when we take the sale of the Nuttall fund into account).

Income from donors

In 2017, this was about £49,000 (compared with £65,900 in 2016). Income in 2016 included a very generous one-off donation.

Income from buildings rent (hall and churches):

In 2017, income from buildings rent was about £43,370 (compared with £64,000 in 2015). Although rent at St Bart's from Read College has increased, we have a reduction in hall rent.

Other income:

There was about £24,700 in other income during 2017. This included, for example, coffee mornings, weddings, funerals, dividends and Christmas Fair.

EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure was about £137,000 (compared to £117,200 in 2016).

Utilities and insurance (excluding water)

Insurance in the two churches was about £8,000 which is slightly lower than 2016 due to a new way of insuring the hall (it is combined with St Luke's and so comes at a reduced rate).

Electricity in the two churches was about £3,650 which is slightly lower than in 2016, which may simply be due to the new energy contract we now have for all buildings.

Gas was lower (by about £4,000) in the two churches (about £11,500). As 2016 was the first year when the December gas bill was accounted for in that year accounts, this may be why gas was lower.

Insurance for the hall cannot really be compared as some time through the year it was combined with St Luke's and so some of what is reported was combined with St Luke's, so it is no longer really possible to show hall insurance. Hall gas and electricity for the hall was consistent with that in 2016.

Charitable giving:

As in recent years, we did not give 10% of our planned giving to charities in 2017. Our plan is to continue to donate to some local charities regularly and then do one off fund raising for others throughout the year. We did, however, still manage to give about £3,950 to charities which was similar to 2016.

Parish Share:

Our Parish share decreased in 2017 and this is due to the fact that from April, we were entitled to a 50% reduction due to only having 0.5 priest as Fr Graeme had taken up the 0.5 post of Area Dean. This actually came as a cheque in early 2018 but has been accrued in the accounts. Our parish share was just over £27,600 in 2017 because of this.

Clergy expenses:

Our clergy expenses were consistent between 2016 and 2017.

Major works:

Major works carried on in 2017 due to some changes that were needed at St Bart's plus some work in the hall and St Luke's. We spent about £12,800 (compared to about £8,100 in 2016). The works at St Bart's were more or less covered by the increase in rent from Read College but as works were needed at St Luke's, our spend was higher.

BALANCE OF FUNDS

Our usable funds have decreased from 2016 where they were £103,000 to £82,000 as we have spent more than we have received.

We do also have some untouchable funds, which were valued at £361,820 on 31 Dec 2017. These are the Lawrence Bequest, the Curacy fund, the Schoolrooms fund, and the Cockburn Bequest.

Reserves Policy

The usable funds that we hold in reserve have been increased due to an increase in rent of buildings. The reserves policy was not discussed in 2017, however our accounts show that we still meet the reserves policy as set in 2011.

The reserves policy is still to maintain reserves of at least £5,000 per building for emergency maintenance to the buildings. The maximum amount to be held in reserves was agreed to be £100,000, although we could potentially hold more if the PCC determined there was a valid reason for doing so.

All reserves are held as funds invested with the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England for the time being.

Sally-Ann McDowell

Worship Spaces

Music Director's report

The choir continue to work hard together to provide and lead music for services. The choir has undergone a lot of changes over the last few months, we have lost several key members due to personal circumstances. This has brought about a big change in the way we rehearse and what we can perform. The members continue to work hard rehearsing and singing when possible and are flexible to new arrangements of pieces. The choir have taken on a couple of new ventures this year; on Sunday 11th February we joined with the choir from Christ Church to sing evensong and hope to invite them to join us for a return visit on a Sunday morning soon. We have also started rehearsals for the performance of a new hymn and Canata for choir, soloists and instrumentalists, written by local composer, Vernon Speed.

We continue to be affiliate members of 'The Royal Schools of Church Music' and some members, adults and juniors are working on their 'Voice for Life' medals. We have been using the new edition of 'Ancient and Modern' hymn books for the choir and are introducing and exploring more new hymns. We are looking to purchase a new set of anthem books, to extend our repertoire. We would be keen to recruit more members, particularly sopranos and juniors. The choir continue to rehearse on Sunday mornings at St. Luke's at 9.45am and now on the last Friday of each month, juniors 7-8pm and adults 7.30-8.30pm. We also have theory sessions throughout the year after church on occasional Sundays.

As ever thank you to those who assist with the other musical aspects; the band for family services, Gordon for accompanying and Timothy for leading the music at St. Bartholomew's

and supporting us by playing at St. Luke's when required. Also thanks to Sarah who ensures all the words and music are prepared for us.

Gemma Bagshaw

'Messy Worship' at St Luke's

Originally introduced as an All-Age Mass, worship at St Luke's on the second Sunday of each month eventually metamorphosed into 2 separate services quite a while ago now. This has proven to be a very successful.

The early said Mass in the Lady Chapel has given an opportunity for quiet and very personal worship. Brief sermons given by Fr Graeme are always meaningful and thought provoking. Numbers attending are now such that we regularly overflow outside the confines of the chapel itself.

Messy Worship has changed to reflect the needs of those attending. We are now, slowly but surely, seeing a set of new families with very young children coming each month. Many have come to us through the weekly Toddler Group. The format of the service has evolved to reflect that. The ingenuity of Fr Graeme never fails to amaze us – the involvement of chocolate tasting, making doughnuts and shooting bows and arrows are but a few of the activities that have somehow found their place in worship!

Musically it is probably a little less challenging than before, but enormous fun to see the children become so involved with hitting drums and tambourines and doing the actions. There is always a 'buzz' at this service that can be enjoyed by everyone – whatever your age.

There are challenges for the future: we need to retain those new families and encourage them to become closer members of our Parish Family and we will need to address the needs of the currently small group of older children that we have. There is still a lot we can do but have no doubt – Messy Worship is a solid base on which we can build.

Steve Allen

Sunday Club

I think we all agree that it is important to have activities for children on a Sunday morning. Jenny and Sally-Anne have been doing a fantastic job for years and in September, having retired from teaching, Christine joined the team.

Every Sunday we are lucky to have Millie as a regular helper and at least one other adult. Members of the congregation have been generous in offering their help, although it has been very difficult to get help setting up the hall and clearing away afterwards.

We begin our session with an action song and then talk about what we need pray about. After our prayers we do something active to understand our story or the main ideas for our learning. Finally, we do a craft activity with some puzzles, mazes, word-searches and colouring for anyone who finishes the craft.

There are 15 children who have attended more than once but on any given Sunday probably only half that number (or less) are present. The age of the children ranges from 4 – 10 which is the widest spread that work well in a single group.

In the future it would be lovely to have a separate group for the younger ones and allow us to invite children directly from the upper age of the toddler group. However, this would need another regular adult helper each Sunday.

Sunday Club is enjoyed by those who attend, and we hope to extend its membership in the coming year.

Christine Blackman

Youth Group has not met since the last APCM so there is no report”.

Cell of Our Lady of Walsingham

This year's report must, of course, begin with the sad loss of Father Brian, Co-Founder of the “Walsingham Cell” in 1987 and our Cell Superior ever since. He valued Walsingham and had visited the Shrine of Our Lady many times. He was always very interested in the Cell, guiding and helping us in his own characteristic way. We greatly miss him and his larger-than-life personality, spirituality, friendliness and generosity. As a Cell, we give thanks for Fr Brian's ministry to us over so many years and we ask the prayers of Our Lady of Walsingham for him, as well as for Revd Christine.

During the past year, with a few exceptions (largely owing to personal circumstances) the Cell has continued to meet on the second Tuesday of the month, as part of the weekly evening Mass at St Luke's, giving thanks and offering intercessions as if we were actually at the Shrine: thus participating in the Shrine's great work and witness of healings, blessings received, and prayers answered. We have also been very pleased to be asked by several members of the congregation to offer intercessions and thanksgivings on their behalf. Our grateful thanks are due to Revd Christine, who has celebrated and preached at our Masses most capably, as always. We also thank those non-members who have joined us for our worship – we hope that they have felt very welcome.

In the coming year, we are intending to carry on with Walsingham Masses. We should like to encourage *everyone* to take part: by coming along – it isn't at all scary! and you will be warmly welcomed; or (at St Luke's) by using at the 'Walsingham Intercessions' book, on the

table by the Lady Chapel entrance; or (at either Church) by speaking to the Clergy or any Cell member.

Libby Stroud
Cell Secretary

Social Spaces

Hospitality Report

Over the last year we continued to run Community Meals and support the Pax Community, through the summer.

Since numbers for these regular events were dwindling, we will be focussing on supporting less frequent "bring and share" meals in future, as well as encouraging people to host meals/teas at home and support the regular coffee mornings. We have also, with the Minster, been investigating Open Table inclusive worship, including visiting Liverpool where this initiative was developed, with a view to bringing it Reading.

We have been working to make our churches more welcoming. We have made a start by tidying up the crèche space, and plan to continue by improving signage and information, and ensuring accessibility.

Kirsten Bayes

St Luke's Toddler Group Report

Every Wednesday morning between 9.15 and 9.30 during school term time, observant passers-by may notice a steady stream of single and double buggies, bikes with child seats on the back and adults with babies on their backs, making their way into St Luke's Hall for two hours of friendship and fun. Our Group continues to flourish: rather quietly in September and October now that the 'Big' children have gone on to Nursery or even School; by January the next batch are confidently climbing on, sliding down, bouncing on, or writhing through the apparatus in the knowledge that they are the Big Ones now! Meanwhile a group of new mums will be sitting on the baby mat happily chatting as their infants lie on their backs and kick contentedly; others are having a less peaceful time as they follow their 'crawlers' and tentative walkers eager to explore their surroundings.

As in previous years, our weekly attendance has varied from mid-teens up to 30+, depending on factors such as the weather and the prevalence of coughs/colds/chickenpox etc. But there has never been a Wednesday when the task of going early to the Hall to set out all the toys and equipment has not been well worthwhile.

We expected a surge of newcomers after we heard that the Council were closing several of their Toddler Groups. Indeed, a few have come, but others, who need to drive from more

distant parts of Reading, have been discouraged by the new parking restrictions in the Redlands area. We are grateful that our Church Warden is in discussion with the Council with a view to finding a solution for us and other groups who use the Parish Hall. We finish each session with 20 minutes of nursery rhymes and action songs, enjoyed by adults and children alike. Our Christmas Party is always popular; this year was enjoyed by more than 40 children with their parents or grandparents or minders, nearly all of whom came into the Church afterwards to see Baby Jesus in the Crib and help find the Ox, Ass and Lambs to join Him in the Stable.

We were very happy to receive some appreciative cards afterwards. One mother wrote: 'To everyone involved in running St Luke's Toddler Group, thank you so much for all your efforts and for creating such a wonderful environment for our children.' To which I'd like to add a big 'Thank You' to everyone who has contributed, this year and in earlier years, to the smooth and happy running of the Group, and also to the ladies who so kindly come along in turn and serve refreshments in efficient and friendly manner. They are a very important part of our Wednesday mornings!

Penny Starr, St Luke's Toddler Group Co-ordinator

Fair Trade

"And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 5:15.

If you read the Bible, Old or New Testament, you very quickly realise that God is concerned for justice, especially for the poor & the stranger. Traidcraft was founded 39 years ago as a response to the poverty that is caused by the powerful nations & corporations using their power to exploit poor producers. "Fighting poverty through trade" became the defining headline, but this may change, when we come to celebrate Traidcraft's 40th birthday! Traidcraft was instrumental in starting the Fairtrade Foundation, and is a major partner in Café Direct, among its many successes. The business has grown hugely, and you can see a great range of products in the catalogue. When you buy items from Traidcraft, you are providing an outlet for goods produced to top quality standards by people who are paid on time & in full. The Fair Trade Premium goes to community projects such as a health clinic or a school. Any profits go to Traidcraft Exchange, a charity which helps people to build better businesses, creating a future for their families & communities. So many people have the talent & determination to succeed in business but lack the opportunity.

The challenge from Traidcraft is to change one item in your weekly shopping from the non-Fairtrade alternative to a Fairtrade one. This is not a "random" act of kindness but a decision to acknowledge that your daily choices impact on people in other countries, & to make your life part of God's plan for justice for all.

There is a Traidcraft stall at the monthly church coffee morning, in the parish hall on the first Saturday of each month, and a stall in St. Luke's church after the family service in St. Luke's

church on the second Sunday of each month. Catalogues are available in each church so that people can place an order in between times from me, Hilary Jakeman 0118 3273325.

Coffee Mornings

The monthly coffee morning happens on the first Saturday of each month (apart from January (so close to Christmas), August (middle of school holidays) and - only in 2018 - February (pavements too treacherous with frozen snow). On all other first Saturdays, a small band of parishioners have been busy baking cakes & making preserves, putting up bunting, sorting out books and 'bric-a-brac', preparing a raffle and setting up tables and chairs in the Parish Hall ready to welcome an influx of keen coffee and tea drinkers at 11 a m! And indeed, they come - not as many as we would like! - but a number of local residents are pleased to come along regularly and buy their favourite cake or try something new. We have been pleased to welcome residents of Pembroke Lodge, brought by their carers or visiting relatives. For them it must be a welcome change of scene; we are happy to be able to provide this. We are supported also by a few of our fellow parishioners, whom we thank, especially when they are prepared to talk with people who have come in alone and for whom a chat may be a rare event! It is pleasant to see the tables occupied and to hear the buzz of conversation.

Each month any profit arising from the sale of the fruits of our labour (usually in the region of £100, sometimes less, sometimes a lot more) is sent off to a charity supported by ourselves or requested by parishioners. Recent recipients have included Mothers' Union 'Away from it All' Charity (helps poor families, and weary carers and their charges, to enjoy a holiday by the sea); the Macular Society (helps and advises people who have macular degeneration, an eye condition which affects the sight of many of us as we grow older); Reading Society for Deaf Children, which brings deaf children together in outings and activities to help them to realise that they are not alone in the world, and to give their parents the opportunity to get to know each other and give and receive mutual support; the 'Chocolatada' - to enable the children Pilcomayo, a poor village high in the Andes in Peru, to enjoy a traditional Christmas treat of a fruit bread roll and a cup of hot chocolate - for most of them this is all they will have to make Christmas different from any other day. Also, the Jo Cox Foundation - which works to combat loneliness and encourage tolerance and respect in our communities; and Cystic Fibrosis Research, which seeks to find the best treatment and even a cure for this cruel disease which shortens young lives; and Macmillan Cancer Support, which provides cancer sufferers with invaluable information and advice, and end-of-life nursing.

All of them worthwhile causes, I am sure you will agree! And you can help, just by coming along to the Parish Hall on a 'first Saturday' morning - no entrance charge! - we open at 11, finish at noon. Buy a cup of coffee, sit down and enjoy a chat with someone familiar or even someone new! Browse the bric-a-brac table, the cakes stall, and the varied selection of books on sale in the Turner Room. The Traidcraft stall is an excellent place to start thinking

about Christmas presents! In season there are often 'cuttings' from our gardens. While at our coffee morning, you may be interested to see how the Community Garden is progressing - it's just behind the Parish Hall and is usually open on a Saturday morning. Maybe win a raffle prize ... and go home with a warm inner glow in the knowledge that as well as enjoying yourself, you have helped a good cause and partaken in some 'outreach'. Please come! All are welcome, neighbours, parishioners, and clergy too!

JR and PM Starr

Pastoral Care Team Report

The Pastoral Care Team has supported members of the parish throughout the year, offering home or hospital visits. Lifts are also organised for those who cannot get to church without this support.

The team members are Mary Evans, Monica Gibson and Sheila Cox. Serena, our curate, has now joined the team and Simon Peatman and Chris Pyrah are just about to join. Sadly, Monica has recently become unwell and is unable to provide support at present. We will hopefully welcome her back soon.

Senior Citizens' Teas are held every other month and lifts are offered to the homes of parish hosts. Thanks need to be given to the drivers: Ola, Tim, Francis, Alan and Steve. The hosts are: Sylvia and Steve Allen, Matt and Elizabeth Andrews, Christine Blackman, Mary Evans, Francis and Hilary Jakeman and Alan and Shelagh Tonkyn.

It was a great loss, and much sadness was felt, when Helena Green died at such a young age.

This year, sadly, many older church members have died including: Brian Blackman, Margaret Culley, Eileen Ewers and Rachael Harris. Leslie Green's mother's funeral took place in February and Maria Driver's Mum's funeral service took place just before Easter.

Bernard Harrington, a much-loved member of St. Bart's Church has moved away to a Care Home near to his son.

Jean Bascombe and Myrtle Morris are now more housebound and rely on visitors to see them at home. Lynette Friday-Adams remains in Parkside Care Home and Joan Morgan lives at Mulberry House Care Home and Elizabeth Llewellyn lives in Lord Harris Court. These church members are visited regularly.

The Pastoral Care Team aims to meet monthly, to discuss the support needs of the Parish. Sheila is very grateful and proud of the Pastoral Team.

Sheila Cox
Pastoral Care Team Leader

Thinking Spaces

House Group report 1

In Lent last year, 2017, we offered to run a Lent group during the day, after hearing from a number of people that an evening course does not suit. We used the 5 week Diocese of Oxford Lent Course 2017 - "Acts of Love". Between 12 & 15 of us met in the Turner Room on Tuesday mornings in Lent. We found the course really good, with enough material to make us work hard every morning. The exercises in listening skills were particularly good, & in one session we were asked to consider our impact on the world, with our use of resources (water, fuel) and whether we live in a way that enables others to have fair treatment in their lives.

In 2018 we joined Graeme, & Alan & Shelagh, to lead one of the 3 parish groups, following the Bishop of Oxford's 3 session course "Exploring The Beatitudes". Eight of us met, again being people for whom a morning was suitable, on Tuesday mornings in the Turner Room, on 23 & 30 Jan., & 6 Feb. We found plenty to challenge us in the Beatitudes, and our ideas will be added to the diocesan vision page, along with the ideas from the other 2 groups in this parish, & the ideas from all the other groups using the material throughout the diocese. We found the act of worship included in the booklet to be delightful, & something to use in other groups.

At the time of writing 10 of us are part way through the Bishop's course "Abundant Life - Reflections on the Raising of Lazarus". It is a very different course, being 6 pages of "homework" for each person, one for each day of the week leading up to the group meeting. It is remarkable how much can come out of one gospel passage.

As there is obviously a demand for a daytime group, we look forward to running another one later in the year.

Francis & Hilary Jakeman

House Group Report 2

Our evening House Group continues to have 11 regular members, with occasional – and very welcome – attendance by Dianne Irish-Tavares's mother, Marie, and daughter, Amanda, when they are in Reading. Before and during Lent, as happened last year, Francis and Hilary Jakeman left us to lead a day group studying two courses produced by our Diocesan Bishop, Steven Croft. (See below.) The remaining evening group, as has happened in the past, welcomed three new members who joined us for our Lent discussions and reflections.

Our May and June meetings focused on one-off Bible studies. We looked in May at Revelation ch. 22 in relation to Jesus's claim to be the 'Alpha and Omega'. In June we examined Matthew, ch. 10, focusing on Jesus's instructions to the first evangelists and His seemingly disturbing statements beginning 'I have not come to bring peace, but a sword'.

After a summer break, we reconvened in Autumn, looking towards Christmas by taking up an interesting suggestion of Francis Jakeman's, namely that we should study the Old Testament readings traditionally assigned as part of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Accordingly, and sharing the leadership role amongst us, we looked at Genesis, ch. 3 (The Fall of Adam and Eve), Genesis ch. 22 (Abraham and Isaac), Isaiah, ch. 9 (the foretelling of the birth of Jesus), and Isaiah ch. 11 (the Messiah and the Kingdom of God).

Our spring discussions, moving into Lent have been built on two three-session courses written by our new Bishop, as part of his drive to make our church more Christ-like, namely more Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous. The first of these was 'Exploring the Beatitudes', and the second 'Abundant Life: reflections on the Raising of Lazarus.'

We continue to enjoy one another's company and fellowship, and also stretching our minds as we rediscover – often with some hard thinking – what God is saying to us through the Scriptures, and through the ideas and insights of our fellow-Christians in the Group.

Alan Tonkyn

St Bart's & St Luke's Mothers Union

We had a successful year starting by raising money for Make May Better which went to the Away From It All project run by the M.U. We also undertook other activities during the year – from knitting Easter Chicks and Dignity Shawls to making up sponge bags and donating toiletries to hospitals in Reading and Oxford.

This year's projects will include making cot blankets for Ronald McDonald House at the John Radcliffe Hospital. This provides accommodation for parents whose children are in hospital.

We have had a variety of speakers and social occasions.

The start of 2018 has been a sad time as we lost some members and others are poorly and in Care Homes, but the Branch will do its best to carry on. We would welcome any new members with open arms!

Barbara Walton, Branch leader

Creative Spaces

Erleigh Road Community Garden

We had a productive year at the community garden and grew a wide range of vegetables, fruit and flowers and it was lovely to see so much enthusiasm about the project from the local community. During the growing season Food4families ran two sessions in the garden each week to give people the opportunity to learn how to grow fruit and vegetables, help maintain the garden and - the best bit – harvesting the produce! We also held an apple press day in September and a pumpkin carving event in October.

We formed good links with Redlands Primary School who have limited growing space of their own in the playground. Classes came down to use the garden for one off sessions and as part of the University of Redlands scheme whereby pupils could pick a gardening 'degree' course from a prospectus and then have six sessions at the garden with a Food4families tutor and learn valuable horticultural skills. Local art group Jelly Tots also held some very popular 'Jelly Tots in the Garden' sessions over the summer holidays where children had the opportunity to create garden inspired art.

One of the highlights of the year was our performance in Reading in Bloom 2017. The garden came second in the Best Community Garden category and we also won the very impressive Jessica Cecil trophy for our 'Outstanding contribution to Reading's environment'!

We are really looking forward to 2018 in the garden. Regular sessions will start again after Easter and are open to everyone and we're also hoping to open the garden up to more groups in the community. Mary has kindly provided her delicious cakes and refreshments at many of our sessions and we are currently exploring the option of having a garden café once a month using some of the produce from the garden. We are also hoping to install a mud kitchen for our smaller visitors as well as plant some wildflowers to encourage pollinating insects. Details of our regular sessions should be finalised soon but for more information please contact Naomi at garden@lukeandbart.org.uk.

Naomi German

Read Chaplain Report

I have been going to Read college on a weekly basis during term time since September. I usually go to Read on Tuesday afternoons but as time has gone on I have felt it was important to be visible more often, so I have started going on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons as well. When I go in I sit in the Green room, a social space, to be present and available to any student who would like to talk. I found that it has taken time for students to open up and to see me as a person they can confide in. This has been improving gradually the more I have been present in the community. I have also been asked by the college to support a particular student with learning difficulties manage his assessments. In this regard we meet each week and we discuss his progress in order to give him an external figure to whom to be accountable.

I have felt incredibly privileged to be able to spend time with the students as well as the staff at Read. To be able to watch the students improve and grow not only in how they

perform but also as individuals has felt inspiring. For the students the transition from school to a dance and acting college is not an easy one.

The students are grouped into their particular discipline depending on whether they are actors or dancers, however all the students are expected to attain a certain standard within all the disciplines. This means even those actors who do not feel they are good dancers have to learn all forms of dance, from ballet to contemporary to tap. During the year not only do they have to learn all the disciplines but the second and third years are required prepare for auditions to performing arts colleges which are the equivalent to going to university. When they go for auditions there is a huge amount of pressure on them as they as individuals are the product that they are trying to sell. If they don't get accepted it can understandably really affect their self-confidence and self-worth.

In February I went to a staff training morning about mental health with all the staff at Read. It was run by the in-house counsellor Siobhan who is trained in supporting young people through counselling. I learnt a lot about understanding how different adolescent brains are to adult ones and how this can affect how they deal with difficult situations and emotions. The students have a student counsel, which meet to discuss any student issues. They were recently asked to give feedback on the support given by me and they said it was really great having me around and knowing I was there to talk to. They especially love having Bertie coming along with me as sometimes when they are feeling tense he really helps to break the tension and make them feel happy.

As I have got to know the students and staff and they have got used to having me around, I have found they are more able to come and see me, so I hope this will continue during my curacy.

Serena Tajima