



**AGENDA, REPORTS and
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
for the
MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
and the
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**to be held in the Lady Chapel
on
Sunday 14th April 2019 at
11:00am**

*The front cover shows the Court House, St Peter's seventeenth century "Parish Hall",
which has undergone some refurbishment during the past year*



Registered Charity No. 113010

From the Rector, Fr Tim Pilkington

Dear Members of the Electoral Roll,

I have pleasure in introducing these Agendas, Reports and Financial Report in readiness for our Annual Meetings which take place this year at **11:00am** on **SUNDAY 14th APRIL 2019** in the Lady Chapel.

Do please make every effort to be present at these Meetings which are a significant occasion in our communal parish life. We review the past year, and will be making plans and key elections for the year ahead.

Your participation in this decision-making is important to us all.

Please bring with you to the Meetings your copy of these Reports.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Tim

Timothy Pilkington, Rector



Registered Charity No. 113010

PARISH OF GREAT BERKHAMSTED ST PETER

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners
for the election of Churchwardens
held in the Lady Chapel, St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted,
and chaired by The Rector, Fr Timothy Pilkington,
on Sunday 22nd April 2018 at 11am.

Apologies for absence were received from Barbara McKenna, Kathy Lally, Jean Coles, Jane Bartholomew, Barbara and Alan Conway, Peter and Alison McMunn, Jon Lee, Tony Firshman, David and Margaret Burbidge, Bill and Ann Stead, Patricia and Chris Hunt.

1. **PRAYERS** Fr Tim welcomed those gathered and gave a short introduction, thanking the ordained staff and the parish assistant, Richard Hackworth as treasurer and reader, also the churchwardens.
2. The meeting voted to allow Mark Grego to stand as Churchwarden beyond his initial term of six years
3. The minutes of the previous meeting of the parishioners (2nd April 2017) were accepted
4. Election of churchwardens for 2018-2019: Mark Grego and Tim Hennessey were elected as churchwardens
5. Closure of meeting

PARISH OF GREAT BERKHAMSTED

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in the Lady Chapel, St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted, and chaired by The Rector, Fr Timothy Pilkington, on Sunday 22nd April 2018 at 11.05am.

1. The minutes were received of the last meeting.
2. The electoral roll was accepted.
3. Richard Hackworth was appointed as All Saints representative.
4. The sides people were approved.
5. **The annual report and financial statements** of the PCC for 2017, including the general fund summary budget for 2018: Richard Hackworth spoke briefly, presented the financial report to the meeting, approval was proposed by Ted Hatley and seconded by Richard Currie.
6. Richard Hackworth Proposed Hillier Hopkins LLP, chartered accountants, as the auditor independent examiner, seconded by Christopher Green.
7. The report of the churchwardens was accepted without question.
8. The other written reports of activities were accepted without question.
9. The rector's report was accepted, and Fr Tim confirmed that his final Sunday before his sabbatical would be next Sunday 29th April.
10. **The Team Measure:** Fr Tim proposed that we receive the new team measure, Mark Grego seconded and this was agreed in a vote.
11. **Mission Action Plan:** Richard Hackworth proposed to accept the Mission action plan, Uli Grego seconded and it was agreed on by a vote.
12. Hilary Elliot spoke on safeguarding: She read out this report: Here at St Peter's safeguarding our children and vulnerable adults continues to be vitally important to us. We are following the diocesan advice on policies and procedures and endeavour to ensure that our processes are up to date. A variety of parishioners with particular responsibilities have attended the appropriate training. Anyone who needed DBS clearance applications or updates has contacted me. I have continued in the role as Safeguarding officer as a co-opted member of the PCC, raising issues at the meetings when required. My mobile and email details are displayed in the church, in the Court House, on the church website and through the parish office, Anyone with any worries or concerns should contact me.
13. The rector closed the meeting at 11:17am. The next PCC meeting will be held on Tuesday 8th May 2018.

**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS**

11.00am Sunday 14th April, Lady Chapel, St Peters, Berkhamsted

AGENDA

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for Absence
3. To Receive the Minutes of the previous Meeting of Parishioners
(22nd April 2018)
4. Election of Churchwardens for 2019-2020
5. Closure of Meeting

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

11.05am Sunday 14th April 2019 in the Lady Chapel, St Peters, Berkhamsted

AGENDA

1. To receive the Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting (22nd April 2018).
2. To receive a Report on the Electoral Roll.

Elections

3. Affirmation of ONE All Saints representative to the Parochial Church Council for 2019-20
4. Election of two new members of PCC
5. Appointment of Sidesmen of the Parish for 2019-20.

Other Business

6. To receive the Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council for 2016, including the General Fund Summary Budget for 2018.
7. To re-appoint Hillier Hopkins LLP, Chartered Accountants, or another qualified firm if advantageous to the PCC, as the auditor or independent examiner, dependent on the requirements of charity law.
8. To receive a report from the Churchwardens on the Fabric, Goods & Ornaments of the Churches.
9. To receive the other written reports of Parish Activities as circulated herewith.
10. Rector's report
11. Questions and discussions on any matters of Parochial or general Church interest, including Safeguarding.
12. To note the following date:
PCC Meeting Tuesday 14th May 2019

REPORTS FROM THE PARISH

The following groups (here in alphabetical order) have met, worked and contributed regularly throughout the year within the parish community, and the reports of those who particularly wished to write them will be found in the body of this Annual Report.

All Saints Church	<i>Tracy Robinson</i>
The Bellringers	<i>David Burbidge, Mike Below</i>
The Buildings Committee	<i>Christopher Green</i>
Castle Church of England Federation: The Thomas Coram Church of England School and Victoria Church of England Infant School and Nursery	<i>Rob Halls, Executive Head Teacher</i>
Cowper Society	<i>Christopher Green</i>
Julian Meetings	<i>Ruth Treves Brown</i>
Little Fishes Toddlers Group	<i>Tracy Robinson</i>
The Mothers' Union	<i>Margaret Burbidge</i>
The Music Department	<i>Adrian Davis, Jean Wild</i>
The Organ	<i>Jonathan Lee</i>
Pastoral Care Group	<i>Philippa Seldon</i>
Sunday School	<i>Olivia Davies</i>
Sundays Together Lunches	<i>Carolynne Charman</i>
Tuesday Club (Now St Peter's Ladies' Club)	<i>Barbara McKenna</i>
Your Berkhamsted	<i>Jacqueline Hicks</i>
Youth Work	<i>Fr Simon and Olivia Davies</i>

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- 1) **Treasurer's Report for the Parish** *Richard Hackworth*
- 2) **The Rector's Annual Report** *Fr Tim Pilkington*
- 3) **St Peter's Churchwardens' Report:** *Mark Grego / Tim Hennessey*
- 4) **St Peter's Buildings Committee:** *Christopher Green*
- 5) **The Deanery Synod:** *Richard Hackworth*
- 6) **St Peter's Ladies' Club:** *Barbara McKenna*
- 7) **The Mothers' Union:** *Margaret Burbidge*
- 8) **Julian Meeting:** *Ruth Treves Brown*
- 9) **Youth Work** *Olivia Davies*
- 10) **Safeguarding:** *Hilary Elliott*
- 11) **Castle Church of England Federation: Victoria and Thomas Coram Schools:**
Rob Halls, Executive Headteacher

1. THE TREASURER'S REPORT

Hon Treasurer's Report to the St Peter's APCM, 14th April 2019

A full copy of the 2018 Trustees Annual Report and Accounts, examined by Hillier Hopkins, our Independent Examiners, has been on display in St Peter's since 1st April. Copies are available from Richard Hackworth on request. Here are our financial headlines for 2018.

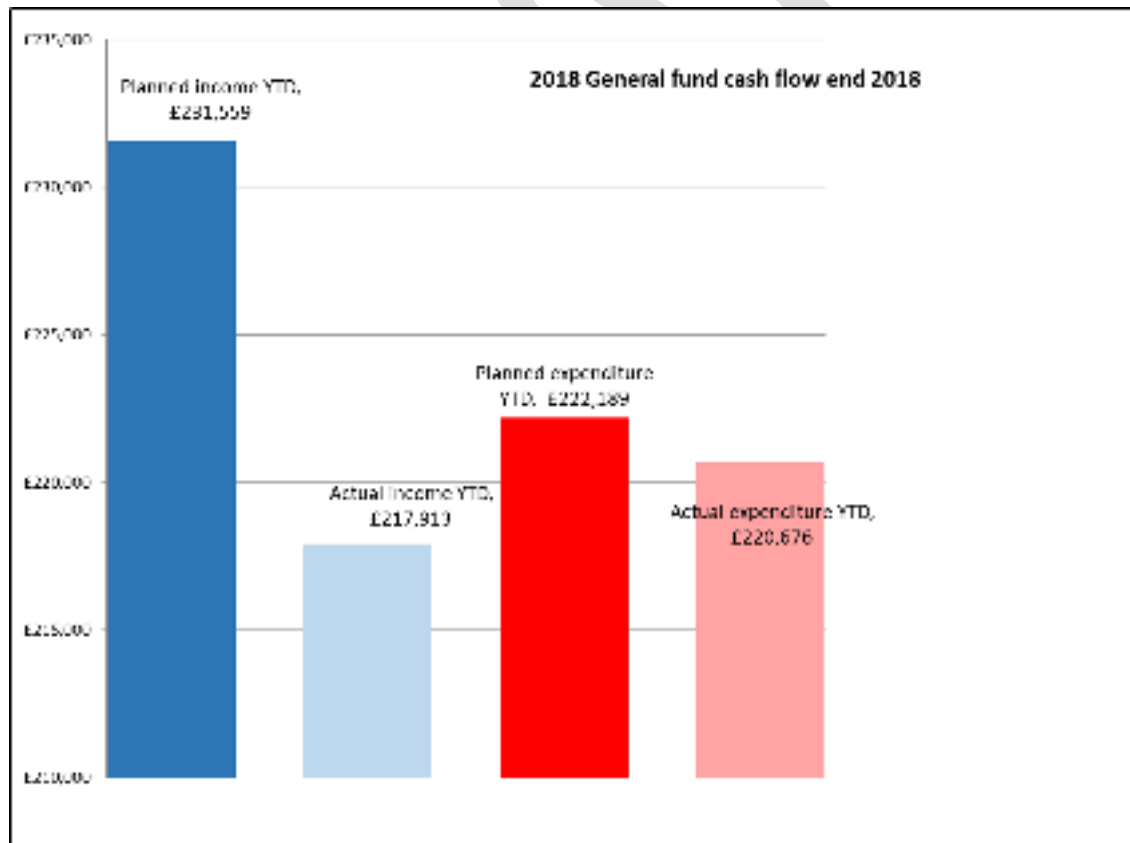
The Big Picture

Because of a generous grant of £82,500 to support improvements to the Court House (see below), and a revaluation of residential property in line with market values, our Balance Sheet shows an increase in net assets from £1.57m to £1.66m.

But this masks a shortfall in day to day cash flow.

Day to day income and expenditure – the General fund

In 2018 routine day to day running of the parish (which represents 70% of parish income and 80% of expenditure) ended 2018 with a cash flow deficit of **-£2,800**. Here is a summary of General fund cash flow.



2018 day to day cash flow deficit is **-£2,800**

We have not yet had to dip into (our limited) reserves to cover this deficit but we are near the point where we might.

The PCC agreed a 2018 plan which assumed that donated income could be increased by 6%. However, the number of automated monthly donations has reduced from 160 to 156, including the loss of some generous donors. Against these losses a number of donors have increased their gifts to the church (**a big thank you**), in addition to which others have made generous special gifts to the parish (**another big thank you**). As a result, total donated income has increased by 2% over the 2017 total, from £171,000 to £175,000.

When various accounting adjustments are taken into account the value of the General fund in our Balance sheet reduced from just over £30,000 to just over £23,000.

I would like to underline that these figures are for the General Fund only. The parish has also received a number of very generous gifts to the Building fund (**a further big thank you**). We are all grateful for all the support given to our parish by all our donors.

What's the General fund outlook for 2019?

At present, assuming some inflationary cost increases but no significant changes to income, I expect 2019 will result in a deficit similar to, or a little larger than, 2018. How can we close the gap?

Donation by contactless payment systems (by credit or debit cards) is being used by other charities, including some churches, to increase charitable giving with apparent success. I am proposing use of this technology at St Peters to try to boost donations. But we need additional sources of income.

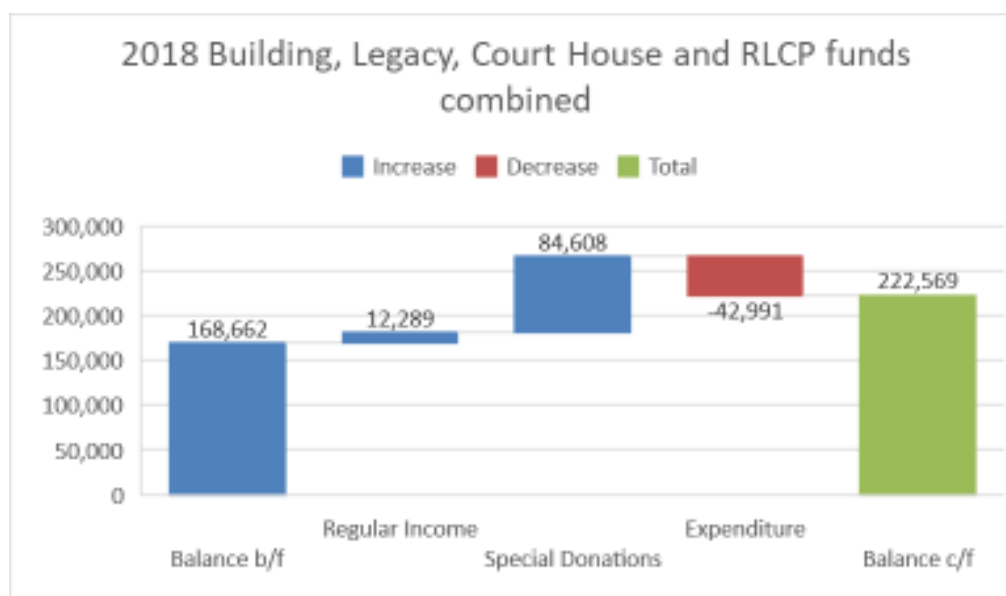
The most obvious option at least in the medium term is, as we have in the past, to let All Saints House when Fr Simon and Charlotte leave us. I think we can reasonably expect this to generate in the region of £23,000 to £25,000 pa. However, at this stage the unavoidable implication is that, regrettably, St Peter's cannot afford to replace Fr Simon, until and unless we can replace this income in other ways. I believe the Rector has made the same observation in his report.

I also recommend, with regret, that we must make this position clear in the Parish Profile which we will offer to those interested in the post of priest at St Peter's after Fr Tim has retired.

The Legacy fund, Building fund and associated funds

During 2018 urgent work was required to repair the flat roof over part of the Court House. The Building fund needed additional support to undertake this work, and the PCC made £20,000 available from our Legacy fund. During 2018 we opened a new fund specifically for Court House renovation, into which we have received a very generous donation of £82,500 from the John Apthorp Trust.

As mentioned above, a number of generous donations have also been made by parishioners to the Building fund during 2018. Some Building fund money is held separately for a short period to support the Rectory Lane Cemetery Project. It is therefore sensible to consider these four funds together, and they are summarised here.



At the beginning of 2018 these four funds collectively held £168,660. After expenditure, and the grant and donations noted above, at the end of 2018 they held £222,570. Please note that this money is NOT available to fund day to day activities and is required to support St Peter's church, the Court House and the other properties our charity is responsible for.

Other funds

We also operate a number of other much smaller funds for specific purposes such as the "Your Berkhamsted" magazine, church flowers and Petertide. These are included in the full Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts. There are no significant points on these funds to report to the APCM.

As ever, I would like to thank sincerely Hilary and Kate in the Parish Office, and the PCC Finance Committee – Mark Grego, Tim Hennessey, Jane Bartholomew, Jon Lee, Christopher Green, Ted Hatley, Simon Vivian and the Rector. Although we have not held a formal meeting for a while I appreciate their support.

I will be happy to try to answer questions at the APCM on 14th April.

Richard Hackworth
PCC Treasurer
19th February 2019

2. THE RECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

For once I am taking an Anglican stance: sitting on the fence and looking two ways, looking back over the past year and forward as the parish has begun to plan for life post-Pilkington. Yes there is light at the end of the tunnel. This will be my final report as your parish priest and team rector after what will be nearly five largely very fulfilled years in post, although there is some way to go yet before the finishing line is reached and anything can happen.....

In July this year, after three years as our Intern assistant, we bade farewell to Lex Bradley and her partner. Lex had made an enormous contribution in our ministry to our Victoria and Thomas Coram Schools. She also revised and revived our Sunday School work, moving from the Court House to the Lady Chapel. I believe that St. Peter's has had a positive effect on Lex's vocation to ordained ministry, together with the welcome that both she and Rhiannon found in our inclusive community, to such an extent that Rhiannon asked to be prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation. We welcomed Miss Olivia Davies in September. She has already settled in happily with us. St. Peter's has a pretty good track record in encouraging vocations to the priesthood, so it was with great joy that we learned that a former chorister, Stephen Julien, was accepted for ordination training this coming September. This speaks much of the crucial part that liturgical formation has in the life of our community.

The departure in July of the Reverend Penny Nash from Potten End after eight years in post has been felt across the team. We have had a number of enquiries from priests and hope to interview in late April or May of this year, once all of the curates have been released from their training dioceses. One might think that there was a standardised approach across the dioceses; alas, such is not the case. This post will continue to have one third of the priest's time allocated to St. Peter's, primarily focussed on holding oversight of our ministry to our church schools, an oversight currently held by Fr. Simon: more of him later! This has placed additional strain on the team and so we have even more reason to be thankful that this past year two recently retired priests have decided to hang up their cassocks at St. Peter's and assist both here and within the team. Fr Chris and Fr David have become familiar faces, joining Fr. Anthony, that evergreen motorcyclist who continues to inspire us with thoughtful homilies. In particular, Fr. Chris has become a kind of acting priest-in-charge for Potten End. Thank you to all three of them. We shall need them even more this year as Fr John in the Gaddesdens begins his well-earned sabbatical leave after Easter.

Last year I made much of the way we opened our doors in a new and creative way on the occasion of the town's Festival of Light. I went on to pose the question, "As people gained the experience did they catch the meaning?" With this in mind I suggested to the planning group this year that we introduce a shortened liturgy of Compline. I simply invited the many folks to either join us in the Lady Chapel, sit in the nave or to continue lighting the many candles in St Catherine's Chapel.

From the darkened Lady Chapel came the sound of Fr. Simon's mellifluous tones as cantor, the response of the small choir with the ancient plainsong melody, along with the smell of incense as the *Nunc Dimittis* was sung. The effects were quite stunning as many crowded into the Lady Chapel to see and hear the Night Office or sat in the nave in a respectful silence. I do hope that this will continue to evolve as a significant act of invitation and outreach to the many who would never normally cross the threshold.

The issue of finance continues to cause serious concern, so much so that I have had to bring it to the congregation's notice on two occasions this year, following the poor response in March. I then warned of serious consequences if we could not close the forecast deficit. Do please read Richard Hackworth's comments about this most carefully in his Treasurer's Report. In Richard we have a first rate Treasurer as well as Reader, with whom it is a great joy to work. It was with a heavy and sad heart that in November I had to inform the community that once Fr. Simon leaves us there would be no more assistant curates in the foreseeable future. This still remains the case and its effects will be a serious loss to us, but the decision has had to be made due to a lack of financial response. This is particularly sad for St Peter's and the wider team since in recent years we have been blessed by having young priests of outstanding quality.

For the first time in over thirty years as a priest I was able to enjoy a period of Extended Study Leave or a sabbatical to use the old language. This space really did force me to ponder what my personal future as a priest might look like in the rapidly changing Church of England. As I thought about St Peter's it became clear to me that as St Peter's prepares to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the first known incumbent, a younger priest with a fresh vision and far more energy than I now have, should be at the helm here. There are other issues to do with ecclesiology, the understanding of priestly ministry, which give me grounds for certain misgivings for the future, such that retirement would seem the best option. Whilst I retire on All Saint's Day, 1st November, my final Sunday here will be 6th October.

We are most fortunate to be in a diocese where the Diocesan Bishop is so committed to NOT reducing posts. Even more fortunate are we in that Bishop Michael of Hertford does not favour a long vacancy. With this in mind I announced my forthcoming departure in good time in order to give the PCC and Churchwardens time to prepare a new parish profile, complete the necessary round of meetings and so be ready before I leave to advertise, in the hope that you will have a brief vacancy.

There is one further important point to note concerning the post of Team Rector and how this might affect finding a young priest here. The facts speak for themselves. In Fr David's former parish where he was team rector the post was advertised. No candidates came forward suitable for appointment. As soon as the team rector element was removed and given to an existing team vicar, a strong list of candidates applied with a successful appointment.

This has been repeated across the country. A priest with, say, five years in her or his first post, brimming with energy, ideas and some wisdom, simply does not wish to be deflected by the tasks of leading a team, albeit a very loose one in our case. This will surely be the case here where there is no prospect of a curate unless the finances are improved.

Bishop Michael and Archdeacon Jonathan both agree with me that it would be better for the parish at this point in its history for the post of Team Rector to be offered to Fr. John Russell. He has much experience, is hugely respected both by me and his parishioners and would make an excellent Team Rector. The post here would then be for Vicar of St. Peter's with oversight for All Saints' (with whom we have excellent relations). The terms "rector" and "vicar" are actually meaningless these days, dating as they do back to the 17th century and the right to receive tithes for income. With this in mind, at its meeting in January the P.C.C. voted unanimously that the post of Team Rector be offered to Fr. John once it had been approved by the Team Council at its next meeting in mid-February. This proposal will then go to Bishop Michael who can induct Fr. John into this post as soon as I shuffle off, thus ensuring continuity of oversight and involvement in the appointment process.

I have written at some length about all of this because it is important that you should be aware of the processes involved. As I look back over these past years with you I do so with a profound sense of thanksgiving and gratitude for the way in which you have put up with my humour and ministry. I shall have more to say about certain individuals who have been a tremendous support here in my last homily. ("Vengeance is mine" saith the Rector!)

Before I sign off for the last time, that word about Fr. Simon. That we have a priest of integrity, gifted liturgically and with a warm pastoral heart in Fr. Simon is beyond doubt. Many have doubtless wondered why he could not be offered the living. In truth I had proposed to Bishop Michael that he might be asked to stay on until the vacancy was filled, something which Fr. Simon was prepared to do, way back in the summer.

No decision was forthcoming and as the clock ticked on our curate was coming to the view that he should, quite understandably, find his first living. Stepping out of the role of being the “friendly curate” and into that of the incumbent would be no easy task. The diocese sees St. Peter’s as a senior living and Fr Simon needs to gain experience elsewhere to broaden and deepen his priestly ministry. He has until January 2020 so there is no panic or rush, but given the educational requirements of his children he may well try and go by July. He has been a joy to have alongside me; his infectious enthusiasm and creative insights have enriched all our lives at St Peter’s. I have been amongst the most fortunate of priests to have such an outstanding assistant priest as my last curate.

So there we are then. I must leave enough for the Churchwardens to write about. You are fortunate to have such committed Wardens as you face a vacancy, just as you have been in the past. Do pray for them, for your PCC members and pray that God the Holy Spirit will nudge a number of good priests to offer themselves for this post when the vacancy arises. If you should have a prayer or two left over, please find time to pray for this priest and his wife in the months to come, as, rest assured, you will be in my prayers and in my heart for many a day. Thank you for all that you have given me.

Fr. Tim

Candlemas 2019

Fr Tim Pilkington

3. THE CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

It is with a sense of sadness that we write our report in the knowledge that Fr Tim will be leaving us. For over five years he has led us in worship and spiritual development and we are the richer for it. We have benefitted from his accessible style and dry wit, and the numbers who have already signed up to his final Lent Course are a testament to his teaching. We all pray that he and Alice will have a fulfilling retirement in Cornwall.

We will also be bidding farewell to Fr Simon, who is more than ready for his own Living. We cannot do better than echo Fr Tim's words on Fr Simon.

We are extremely fortunate to have the services of Frs. Anthony, Chris and David; Olivia is also a welcome addition to the team. The inevitable interregnum will be tough, but much less than it might be, with their help and support.

Both Fr Tim and Richard Hackworth reflect that the response to a plea for an increase in planned giving has sadly been insufficient to cover our costs. The most immediate impact of this is that we won't be able to afford a replacement curate for Fr Simon. St. Peter's has had a Curate for over half a century, so it is poor that we have been unable to match the generosity of previous years. It also means that we must husband our resources ever more carefully, so our plans for the St Catherine's Chapel and the development of the West End have been put on hold.

On a more positive note, the refurbished Court House roof nears completion, the new lighting has finally been finished, and the new children's area works extremely well.

The duties and responsibilities of Churchwardens are extensive, and we would be incapable of discharging them without the assistance of many people. We are indebted to Dr Christopher Green, and the Buildings Committee members, who diligently maintain our buildings; and to those who clean and decorate the Church and we give thanks for the generous gift of their time. We are grateful to Hilary and Kate for running the office, and for Richard Hackworth's oversight, especially given the recent disruption.

We have witnessed a marvellous year with a steady congregation at our regular masses, and wonderful turnout for the Easter Triduum and Christmas services, all enriched by wonderful music and singing, and heralded by our bell ringers. Although not a service, the numbers who visited St Peter's during the Festival of Light was truly outstanding.

For the future we pray that we find a fantastic new incumbent who will help us grow and prosper as we approach our 800th anniversary.

*Mark Grego & Tim Hennessey
Churchwardens*



Registered Charity No. 113010

4. THE BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

The Committee met twice during the year and members gathered on several occasions during the summer to undertake maintenance work in and around the church and Court House, including repairs to rainwater goods and levelling of ground affected by subsidence in the churchyard. Individual committee members also attended to minor maintenance work and negotiations with contractors throughout the year.

During the autumn stumps were removed in the NW corner of the churchyard in preparation for final clearance and seeding of the area to grass. All three wall-mounted notice boards around the church have also been repaired and re-stained. Unfortunately ingress of rainwater has recurred in the choir area and will require attention to rainwater goods and the copper roof. Other important work that remains outstanding is repair to stonework of the church identified in the 2015 Quinquennial Inspection.

Inside the church, the new lighting scheme has been completed, and the brass panels inscribed with the names of the Rectors of St Peter's, having been with conservators during the year for cleaning and restoration, are now back in place. At the west end of the north aisle a new children's area has been created with carpeted floor, a new display board and redecoration defining and highlighting the area. It's very popular with children and their parents.

Further work on the scheme to enclose and re-order the St Catherine Chapel has been temporarily delayed due to funding concerns, but a phased programme of work is expected to commence in the coming year. In the Long Room in the Court House the folding wooden partition, which was always difficult to manage and which hasn't been used for many years, was removed.

A major undertaking in the latter part of the year has been the formation of a new flat roof over the Square Room in the Court House. This was close to completion at the end of the year and has also involved the renewal of the ceiling in the Square Room and the introduction there of new lighting. Other major work remains to be undertaken in the Court House with the refurbishment of the toilets being a high priority. In this connection the parish was successful during the year in attracting a grant of £82,500 from the John Apthorp Charity specifically to support the refurbishment of the Court House. This should make possible work on the toilets in the coming year.

In the Rectory Lane Cemetery the first year of the Delivery phase of work supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund has been successfully completed. This has involved the repointing and some rebuilding and buttressing of the boundary walls, the restoration of the sexton's hut and the main entrance gates in Rectory Lane and conservation of many of the more important monuments. There are more developments planned for the coming year, focussing on landscape projects including the reinstatement of the main paths, the introduction of new seating and the creation of a Garden of Remembrance.

Christopher Green

5. BERKHAMSTED DEANERY SYNOD

Our Rural Dean is Revd. Jonathan Gordon (St Mary's Northchurch). The Deanery Synod has met three times during 2018. Terry Waite was our guest speaker at the May meeting.

Guest speakers during 2019 include Margaret Pritchard Houston who will be speaking about the churches outreach to children and young people, and Rev Lucy Winkett who will give the 2019 Deanery Lecture.

Richard Hackworth

6. ST PETER'S LADIES' CLUB

The Ladies' Club (formerly Tuesday Club) have been meeting since 1973.

Sadly our numbers are going down but we still enjoy fellowship, social occasions and interesting speakers. Father Simon joined us and explained the significance of the colours in church and we also had an entertaining evening having a go at "handbells."

We have helped with the Christian Aid Lunch and Petertide Fair.

The Club is open to everyone even if you are not a church member and if you are interested and would like to come along there is always a warm welcome. Please contact Barbara McKenna on 01442 871159 or Rosslyn Laidler on 01442 879992

Barbara McKenna

7. THE MOTHERS' UNION

Members around the world follow in the footsteps of their founder, Mary Sumner. This was MU's theme for the year and was marked with a service and tea party for members, friends and clergy in All Saints Church in August. With prayer and worship at its centre, MU seeks to build flourishing relationships and make a difference in 83 countries. This, in the words of Mary Sumner's Personal Prayer, is to "touch lives for Christ". For the first time in its history the Worldwide President who takes office from January 2019, is not from Britain and Ireland; Sheran Harper lives in Guyana.

8. JULIAN MEETING

Be still and know that I am God

In this busy modern world it can be difficult to find a quiet time for prayer, a time to be aware of the presence of God. The Julian Meeting continues to meet twice a month on a Wednesday morning at 11.30am to practise silent contemplative prayer. Our meetings last 30 to 40 minutes and take place at 3 Sherwood Mews, Park Street. Details are to be found on the weekly pew leaflet.

The Julian Meetings are ecumenical and worldwide and take their name from Julian of Norwich, the 14th century mystic who believed that the highest form of prayer consisted of simply waiting on God. She said, 'The best prayer is to rest in the goodness of God knowing that that goodness can reach right down to our lowest depths of need'. We would welcome anyone wishing to join us in a peaceful setting to 'wait on God'. Julian Meetings teach no specific method, but they produce some very good short booklets of guidance on prayer, eg 'Some Basics of Contemplative Prayer'. Please speak to me if you would like to borrow a booklet or learn more.

Ruth Treves Brown

9. YOUTH WORK

It is important that St Peter's outwardly provides ministry to the children and young people of Berkhamsted and it is vital that this is done to best suit the needs of each individual, be this in school, in Church or in outreach work in the local community. It is lovely to welcome so many families on a Sunday morning and for children and parents to worship together but we must also be conscious of our duty to foster the faith of all those we meet throughout our working life.

Sunday Club meets in the Lady Chapel during the homily, creed and prayers in the Sunday mass. The weekly session consists of a short, gospel-based explanation from the leader, followed by a craft activity. Gathering in the church enables the young people to be included in the whole act of worship and encourages children visiting St Peter's to join in activities because they do not have to leave their parents. It does also mean that younger members of the choir can come along and after the 'Be a Chorister for the Afternoon' event we are pleased to welcome six new faces to the fold. This afternoon was a great success and 20 youngsters enjoyed the full 'St Peter's experience' including a trip up the tower, explanations of the elements and vestments and the opportunity to sing Evensong with the choir. Being located in the Lady Chapel does have its drawbacks and limits the range of activities that can take place and as numbers begin to grow (and noise levels increase!) we may consider moving these activities into the Court House.

The monthly TSS (The Sunday Service) continues to welcome young families to worship in a more informal setting. The worship focusses centrally on the Christian calendar whilst outwardly looking to organisations and events working and taking place globally. Children and parents enjoy songs, reflection and craft activities as well as a delicious tea afterwards. The Advent Celebration was a wonderful culmination of TSS giving the children an opportunity to reflect on the journey to the birth of Jesus and we are looking forward to our 'Good Friday Reflection' and 'Easter Saturday Celebration' where our young people can experience the drama, emotion and celebration of Holy Week.

Looking ahead, we are currently in the process of training up a group of teenagers as acolytes and servers. This is a great opportunity for young people to be involved in and increase their understanding of our Sunday mass.

Our ministry in our Church of England schools - Victoria and Thomas Coram - also continues to deepen and develop through weekly collective worship led by Fr Simon and Olivia. This worship introduces children to Christian liturgy, with a focus on their school values, and once a month it is held in St Peter's for Victoria School. Now the 'Castle Church of England Federation', the two schools together enjoyed a shared service in St Peter's for Harvest – at which a large donation was made to DENS shelter - and celebrated the Christmas message through music, songs and readings.

Swing Gate and Potten End School also frequently visit St Peter's for Collective Worship and Religious Education.

In February Fr Simon, Helen Nichols and Olivia attended an engaging training day at St Alban's Cathedral titled 'Learning and Growing Together', and were inspired to address how we can nurture the youth within our church in order to encourage commitment.

A huge thank you to Charlotte Vivian who has taken the lead in the organisation of Sunday Club this past year and we are very grateful to all parents and carers who continue to support our youth in their spiritual growth.

On a personal note I would like to thank the clergy, the congregation and the community of St Peter's for their warm welcome to Berkhamsted.

Olivia Davies

DRAFT

10. SAFEGUARDING

Both the Policy for Safeguarding Adults and the Policy for safeguarding Children were updated and ratified at the Parochial Church Council Meeting held on 19th June 2018. All policies connected with safeguarding are displayed on the St Peters website and on the Church and Court House notice boards. In line with recent advice safeguarding arrangements are clearly visible on the front page of the parish website. The 'Promoting a Safer Church' poster is also displayed in both the church and Court House with local contacts included.

As a co-opted member of the PCC I continue as the recruiter and verifier for DBS checks and as Safeguarding Officer on behalf of the PCC.

Safeguarding is included as an item at each PCC meeting where updates are given or approvals sought. I attend the necessary additional training courses for my role and seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding officer when required.

Members of the clergy, readers and parishioners attend safeguarding training where appropriate. We are presently arranging a local training session to be held at Thomas Coram School and are waiting for the Diocese to supply a trainer. The Friends of St Peters will also be invited to share in this training.

Safeguarding is an item on the agenda at every PCC meeting. From time to time, there are updates concerning changes in procedure for Safeguarding or situations within the parish. These are brought to the attention of the PCC. Recently a statement has been added to the e newsletter reminding parishioners to be aware of personal space and boundaries and not to allow themselves to be in a vulnerable position.

There has been no incident reported in relation to safeguarding since the last report for the APCM in 2018.

Hilary Elliott Safeguarding Officer

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11 SCHOOLS



Since last year's report, Victoria and Thomas Coram Schools have completed their federation process, and they now comprise Castle Church of England Federation. Whilst the schools remain separate legal entities, with their own identities, the merger of the two Governing Bodies became effective at the start of May 2018. After a busy period of activity, the joint Governing Body and the new Federation Leadership Team is working well across the two schools, benefitting pupils, parents and staff.

The vision and aims of the Federation were reviewed at its outset, and the two schools' common vision is now **"to flourish in learning and love, within a happy, Christian family."** Both schools are "proud to be an inclusive family in which to belong; a place to explore and go deeper in learning; a place to pray, grow and serve."

Last summer's results showed that the Federation's pupils continue to achieve high standards, with Victoria School's results showing pupil attainment outcomes consistently above the county and national averages for Early Years and at Key Stage 1. Likewise, for Thomas Coram, the Key Stage 2 results are strong in reading and maths, being well above national averages, whilst a slight deficit in writing has been identified and is being addressed across the school through a number of initiatives.

Aside from these academic successes, Victoria and Thomas Coram's pupils have engaged in a wide range of sporting, music and arts activities, events and trips, and each school has an active Parents' Association running events and raising vital funds for the schools.

Thomas Coram was inspected by Ofsted in February 2018 and was judged to continue to be 'Good', with the inspector commenting "You have a lovely school ... your children love being here; your staff love being here ... Thomas Coram would be proud of the young people you turn out by the age of 11."

The five community (ie non-church) schools in Berkhamsted (including Swing Gate Infant School with whom Castle Federation works closely) continue to progress towards a multi-academy trust (MAT), which is scheduled to come into being later this year. As Church Schools, Victoria and Thomas Coram are unable to join a non-church school MAT, but the Federation continues to be active in the wider debates around informal collaboration across the town. The Federation also remains particularly close to other Church Schools in the wider area, and continues to monitor the potential for conversion to an academy.

The school communities would like to thank the parish (and especially Fr Simon, Olivia and, until her departure, Lex) for their continued time, wisdom and support to our two schools in ensuring the parish's contribution to the education of young people in Berkhamsted.

Further information can be viewed on our websites:

www.castlefederation.org

www.victoria.herts.sch.uk

www.thomascoram.erts.sch.uk

*Rob Halls,
Executive Headteacher*

DRAFT