

REPORTS FOR 2015-2016 FOR THE A.P.C.M ON SUNDAY 17 APRIL 2016

1. Electoral Roll Officer's Report 2016

Total number on Electoral Roll in 2015:	185
Names removed:	-3
Names added:	+6

Total number on Electoral Roll in 2016:**188** A roll revision was undertaken this year: the steady annual increase in numbers continues.

2. PCC Secretary's Report 2016

The PCC has devoted much time this year to prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit when discussing the future direction of our church community and, in particular, the future ways in which SJ's should be used, now that it has been redesigned. Two Saturday meetings were held primarily for this purpose.

In July, the PCC, having considered three separate quotations for the redevelopment of the Beacon Centre, unanimously chose Design Studio London for this work. Although St. John's had sufficient funds to pay for it, church members were invited to contribute towards the cost of its new furniture and fittings: £6,200 was given. The PCC delegated responsibility for day-to-day decisions to a small Core Group of church members. The PCC oversaw the process by which the building was renamed. The PCC also approved the expenditure of £2,500 for the refurbishment of the porch and baptistery, £1000 for the redesign of the church website and other publicity materials, and £300 for the installation of Wi-Fi in the church.

Offerings: the PCC decided to give our Harvest collection to the relief of the Refugee Crisis. The Secret Church collection went to Open Doors and the Christmas collections to FRRME and Bromley Winter Homeless Shelter. In November it chose and approved the annual tithing allocations.

After a detailed discussion of the relevant issues, the PCC re-adopted our Safeguarding policies. Our Safeguarding officers, Sara Fletcher and Michelle Fox, kept them fully informed; they attended the September meeting and it is intended that in future, they will attend two meetings each year.

The PCC discussed the redecoration of the house Peter Churcher, our new curate, and his family were going to live in when they arrived in June, and the minor improvements it required. It might be appropriate for us to contribute to the cost of this work.

A great deal of attention was devoted to our capacity to resource our work with young people. Two long-serving leaders had indicated that they wished to stand down. A wide range of initiatives were considered. One outcome was that Jon held a discussion with our Youth and Children Team leaders, Julie Lancaster and Anna Seabrook, and he and Richard Ford had an

initial, tentative discussion with Hazel O'Sullivan to consider the possibility of working together across West Wickham.

Paul Kingman, Acting PCC Secretary

3. Rector's Report 2016

I typically finish my report with a Thank You to everyone, but I'll ring the changes this year and *start* by expressing my thanks for your individual and collective contributions to the life of St John's. I am conscious that for varied reasons the past 12 months have thrown up considerable personal challenges for many of you.

That you have continued to give of yourselves in and through these struggles is a testament to your faithfulness. The care that we have looked to extend to one another during these times has been heartening to witness, and it remains a privilege to lead a group of people seeking to trust God in all seasons.

Signs of Life

The past year has seen some encouraging developments, many of which have emerged through the life of the Teams. Some of those have been events, such as the Secret Church Weekend and the Thanksgiving/Remembrance Service for the Community. Others have been about developing people and shaping our church culture, for instance worship workshops, growing our prayerfulness and efforts to renew our vigour for evangelism and faith sharing.

Beyond the auspices of the Teams, the Beacon Centre has been refurbished in what was a substantial piece of work. SJ's is finding its feet, but the indications are positive that there is real potential for exploring new uses of this resource.

We continue gently to experiment in our gatherings on a Sunday. It's been great to see new people cutting their 'preaching teeth', as well as witness, the youth increasingly involved in aspects of leading our worship together.

We continue to try and improve the way we inform people what's going on, and grow a more coherent look to our publicity. We are on the cusp of updating our website again, as well as rolling out other improvements to our communications.

There are, of course, a huge number of continuing elements of church life – home groups, schools work, services at nursing homes, children and youth groups, men's group, community dinners, retreat mornings...to name but a selection. This represents the work of lots of people and I suspect we can do more to celebrate some of what we do, as a means of encouragement and to give thanks to God for all our blessings.

Vision & Maintaining Momentum

Stepping back to survey all these activities, I think it's fair to say that we stand at an interesting intersection in the life of St John's.

There is a complex mixture of challenge and opportunity.

Outlining just a fraction of what has gone on in the past year, there is evidence that progress has been made on some of our stated priorities/vision. However, efforts to turn our vision into action have often come with a reminder of our limitations - not least of all in having the people with capacity to resource what we might like to do.

That challenge is pressing for some of our more long-standing activities. We are finding it increasingly hard to fill gaps in everything from crèche support to rotas for Holy Communion. The area this affects most is our children and youth work, and the reality that we are looking for people to lead, not just help out, in some of our mid-week groups.

It is probably right to assume that we will have to look at the nature and viability of some of what we are doing here. But more generally, we will have to confront the reality that in order for certain developments to really blossom there may have to be an honourable laying down of things we have tried to keep going.

We cannot simply keep adding to what we do.

My sabbatical and subsequent reflection have left me sensing that God is calling us to press deeper into that which is emerging, rather than search for new, radical shifts in direction. Our Teams and SJs are just two good examples of areas of development which are in their infancy; both have significant potential to be realised, but both require real energy and buy-in from the whole church.

I also sense it may be helpful for us to refine and sharpen our vision, as well as reinforce it in our collective imaginations more regularly. In the last year, our leadership have not found coming to a consensus on future priorities a straightforward task, but I believe it will be worth the effort.

In many ways all of that is a call to persevere. It may not sound glamorous, but it's about ensuring there is on-going movement and that we continue to grow in our understanding of what it means to walk by faith.

The Group and Beyond

There has been relatively little forward movement with St Mary's and St Francis. That's not surprising as Hazel O'Sullivan is still getting her feet under the table, and my sabbatical meant I was absent in the latter part of the year.

It's worth noting the licensing of Richard Ford to our Group in the past year. In addition to the support he is giving us as an individual church, he is a positive conduit between the three churches.

Looking forward, Group discussions have been scheduled to consider Children and Youth strategy.

Pulling the lens back further, the diocese continues to invite Deaneries (local area of a number of parishes) to consider how collaboration across parishes might play out. I think it's fair to say that there isn't absolute clarity to what that looks like, but it is part of the wider picture in Southwark Diocese.

Final Thought

I know that as we move into the coming year we will continue to recognise God's faithfulness to us and we will be drawn ever deeper into our commitment to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed.

4. Churchwardens' Report 2016

This report covers areas of church life which are a particular responsibility of the churchwardens. The main aspects of the role are:

- ensuring "good order" in the church building and churchyard (e.g. welcoming, heating)
- ensuring the church building and its contents are cared for and fit for purpose
- supporting the Vicar in the leadership of the Parish.

This has been Jonathan's 4th year and Richard's 3rd as churchwardens here.

As far as "good order" is concerned, our prayer is that the St John's building continues to be a pleasant and welcoming place where we can worship and do the Lord's work. We want to thank all the teams and individuals who support the churchwardens and serve in the practical functions of St John's – in the church building and grounds, for our services at the Assembly Halls, and on various occasions through a busy year:

- the team of Welcomers who warmly welcome us at each service, who count the offering and who tidy up for us afterwards
- the audio-visual teams, coordinated by Bill Derham and Stuart Carey, who carry out their duties so faithfully
- the people who dust, polish, clean and arrange flowers, and whose weekly work make this House of God a lovely place to be

- Peter Brien and John Barter, who carry out repairs and maintenance. This involves both inside and outside work. We have John and James Barter to thank for much of the outside work
- the teams from home groups who make thousands of hot drinks every year
- Margaret Kingman, our Parish Administrator, ever efficient and willing to help out in an increasing number of areas
- And last but not least, a big thank you to our wives, who have supported us so much in our role as churchwardens.

Fabric and Ornaments: we have continued with our project to improve the look and use of the church building. The porch and baptistery have been cleared out and repainted and we will next install new notice-boards there to provide more information about different aspects of church life, as well as improved lighting in the porch. We have created more space in the chapel by removing an old chest of drawers, and additional storage is about to be put into the upstairs office. We plan to appoint a new church surveyor soon and will then work with them on the recommendations from our last “Quinquennial” inspection report, including some improvements to drainage. We are grateful that the building is, overall, in a good state of repair.

We have continued to meet regularly with Jon Ward, our Vicar, to talk through live issues and support him in his leadership of the parish. We have been involved, along with PCC members and others, in the development of a new vision for and refurbishment of what is now SJ's, and in exploring the possibility of closer partnership with St Francis' and St Mary's, West Wickham.

We thank everyone for their prayers, encouragement and support.

Jonathan Tickner and Richard Cienciala, March 2016

5. Safeguarding Report to the APCM for 2016

The PCC takes very seriously the requirement to safeguard children, young persons and potentially vulnerable adults who attend any activity organised by the church. Accordingly, it continues to actively monitor the application of the Dioceses SafeChurch policies and procedures. Part of this monitoring process has been a Diocesan self audit and the production of an annual action plan to ensure that the policies and procedures are being implemented.

All persons who have direct contact with the above groups are required to obtain a clear Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) report and are now interviewed by an independent member of the church who is not directly involved in activities for the above groups. Detailed records are kept and confidential documents are filed in a locked facility. Church Officers continue to attend training provided by the diocese. Leaders of various groups are briefed on the safeguarding practices set out in the diocesan documents. All volunteers are encouraged to take seriously the whistle blowing procedures displayed in the church and shortly to be displayed in SJ's. A copy of the Diocesan Safeguarding Guidelines, “A Safe Church”, may be found in both locations.

Members will be aware of the enormous damage allegations of abuse can inflict on any organisation and they are encouraged to bring forward any concerns they may have. DBS checks continue to be updated and The Safeguarding Officers are continuing to seek job descriptions from the various church organisations that deal with children and vulnerable adults. Training was recently given to church members who will be involved in running SJ's.

Sarah Fletcher and Michele Fox, Parish Safeguarding Officers

6. Croydon Addington Deanery Synod Report 2016

The Deanery Synod met twice during the year as the meeting scheduled for June was cancelled. Rev. Stiiv Knowers, the previous Area Dean, retired in the summer and Rev. Jenny Rowley of St. John's, Selsdon took on the role. In the meeting held at St. Francis, West Wickham in October, the Ven. Chris Skilton, Archdeacon of Croydon, commissioned Jenny as Area Dean.

The meeting was advised that elections were currently taking place for General Synod. Congratulations were extended to Ray Wheeler and Stephen Sam who are the Lay Representatives on Diocesan Synod and Rev. Yvonne Clark and Rev. Jenny Rowley as Clergy representatives.

A presentation was given by Rev. Andy Dovey and Hugh Ridsill-Smith from Children and Young People's Mission and Ministry. Members of the Synod were then invited to join in discussion about the children and youth work in their own parishes, sharing what is going well and aspects that need developing.

Sheila Fenner then spoke about her role as Resource Officer at the Croydon Faith Education Resource Centre. The Centre holds a wide range of resources such as books and posters suitable for schools and churches. A small annual fee is charged for membership of the Centre which may be found at the rear of Oasis Academy, Shirley Park.

The most recent meeting was held in February at St. George's, Shirley. A discussion was held about the role of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group. It was decided that this group would be reformed at a later date if the need arose. The meeting was informed that the Treasurer to the Croydon Addington Deanery had resigned and members were asked to consider individuals who might be invited to take on the role.

A report from Diocesan Synod was circulated. The meeting was advised that the Diocesan Board of Finance had been combined with the General Synod.

Representatives from each parish were then invited to share some 'good news'. Sybil spoke about the developments at SJ's, the groups that are currently meeting there and how we are prayerfully considering how God wants us to use this place in the community.

Members were then invited to write down suggestions for speakers or discussions at future Deanery Synod meetings.

7. Churches Together in West Wickham (CTWW) 2015-2016

The Good Friday Procession of Witness and the outdoor service at the Swan demonstrated our faith to the people of West Wickham. It was followed by a joint service at St. Francis for all the churches, with activities for children in the St Francis hall organised by the Children's Link, and was well attended.

Community lunches hosted by Emmanuel Church, St. Mark's Church and Hawes Lane Methodist Church enabled Churches Together to continue to meet with local organisations and individuals serving the community. Starbucks Youth continue to take the Good News out into the community by meeting at Starbucks fortnightly on Friday evenings.

The Churches Together Christian Aid collection raised £7,205.32; of this sum, £1,893.11 was raised by St. John's collectors ably organised by Anne Ford and Jeff Seabrook. The 'Fun and Games' at Sparrows Den due to take place in August 2015 was cancelled so on Sunday 19th July more than 30 of St John's children/parents/carers enjoyed a 'Picnic' afternoon on the Coney Hall Recreation Ground.

During this year the Revd Hazel O'Sullivan was appointed Priest-in-Charge of St Francis and St Mary's Church on the 3rd August. Revd Alison Judge has left to take a post in Merton; Revd Richard Ford was licensed to the benefices of St Francis and St Mary's and St John's on the 4th June. There have been meetings between the PCCs of all three churches to discuss how we can work more collaboratively and we have been considering Group Ministry.

The 'Big Christmas Sing', organised by St Francis Church and the Christian Aid representatives of 'Churches Together', and led by the choirs of St. Francis, St. Mary's, Emmanuel and the Pickhurst Junior Academy choir, raised £1,080 for Christian Aid.

The Week of Prayer for 'Christian Unity' services were varied in structure, hosted by a different CTWW church each evening and well supported this year. Children's Link: the February half-term special with lunch for the under-eights accompanied by carers/parents, included activities and a Bible story puppet show about Moses called 'Travelling light'. It was held at St. John's and was a great success, with the church full of 50 lively children and 25 chatting adults.

The Women's World Day of Prayer on the 4 March was hosted by St. Francis Church. The resources were prepared by women from Cuba; the theme was 'Receive children, receive me' based on Mark 10:14 – 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.' We focussed on praying for Cuban women and children. It was a super service. We made butterfly jasmine flowers on arrival with our names on; the flower is a sign of commitment and inspires us to be united in the building of God's Kingdom, giving fragrance and beauty to life. At the end of the service we took a flower and prayed throughout the day.

The Work Club continues to support job seekers on Monday evenings at West Wickham Library from 4.00-6.00pm, and runs Ignition Courses on Wednesday evenings from 7.30-9.30pm to equip people with the skills to find suitable employment. It is very popular, with 80 clients to support, so, if you have two hours to spare on Monday evenings, why not get involved, as the Club requires more volunteers?

Ann Gardner & Penny Seabrook

8. SJ's Report

We finally received the keys and safety clearance for SJ's in the middle of January and held an open 'celebration' morning there instead of a formal service on January 31st 2016, which was attended by approximately 65 of the church family. We are currently in the process of collating a financial forecast and report so there are still decisions to be made and communicated. We

are praying for guidance on the long term direction of SJ's. However, the existing users have been able to continue there, including the parish administrator, and we are working on how to accommodate other users and uses.

Heather Showell and Anna Seabrook

9. **Ministry Teams**

a) **Prayer**

The core prayer team have met to pray 3-4 times. Initially we focussed on the prayer ministry in the church after the morning service. There are always 2 people available and others on standby. Members of the ministry team are also available to pray at other times.

We have reinstated the email prayer list – if you would like to be added to the list please speak to Barry, Richard or Tony Holloway.

In January nearly 40 people participated in a prayer drive around the parish and we will be looking to repeat this later in 2016.

At the beginning of March the church was opened for a Saturday morning of prayer and quiet reflection.

If you have any ideas about ways the prayer life of St. John's could be enhanced we would be pleased to hear from you.

Barry Clements and Richard Greenhalgh

b) **Worship**

It's been a year since our team was formed. We had a large number of meetings early on and it was very exciting to consider our worship with a fresh eye. However, whilst these seemed successful, diary pressures made it difficult to arrange them, so, after a meeting with Jon, we switched to a more measured approach.

The worship life at St John's is a huge umbrella to oversee and one which both Barbara and myself are looking forward to developing; we would like to look at introducing other forms of worship into our services - poems, art and crafts, for example. In 2016 we intend to do so. We will be going ahead with a Friday night Pizza and worship evening at SJ's. We hoped to hold one once every two months, but busy schedules has made this difficult.

The Carol service was greatly enjoyed by the many who came. For the first time the choir practices were taken by Barbara, who also helped a great deal with its preparation.

After at least a decade, the software used to project the words of our hymns and songs has been changed: we now use 'Easy Worship'. There is a long, exciting road ahead. It is a privilege to guide this team together and we thank you all for your prayer and support.

Jonny and Barbara

c) **Children & Youth**

We have a wide age range of children and young people at St John's and are grateful for all the prayer and practical support people give, especially our regular helpers with the different age groups.

For venues, we use not only St. John's and SJ's, but also Parklands Nursery for Sunday Club, the Assembly Rooms for Cru2 and Coney Hall Baptist Church for Club 2000; this has given us strong community links. We are open to addressing change in terms of budget requirements and practicalities. Numbers at each group fluctuate but we are seeing an increase in friends being invited to some of the groups. Half the children in Club 2000, for example, are not church members. We very much welcome a new leader to this group, Nana, who is officially 'cool'. As we welcome new families into the church we hope this trend will continue. We hosted a well-received event for Churches Together during February half term for under eights, attended by 50 children and their parents and grandparents.

We are very grateful for the use of Parklands Nursery on Sunday mornings. However, we need more helpers and teachers for our Sunday Clubbers, with their endless energy, sporty enthusiasm and readiness to hear the word - they do have some very reflective moments and discuss ideas well. There is also an urgent need for leaders to replace some long-serving volunteers in certain other groups and more helpers would be welcome with all age groups.

Judy Lancaster and Anna Seabrook

d) **Care and Befriending Team Report**

The team have been active on many fronts and, of course, caring and befriending is going on all the time amongst the church family. Two new initiatives have been: to organise a welcome event for newcomers to the church, with another one planned for the spring. We have also had a Thanksgiving Service for parishioners to attend and remember those close to them who have died over the last 2 or 3 years. That was well attended and those who came found it very helpful, some suggesting that they hoped we would hold another this year. Meals have been planned and delivered to new Mums and those in difficult situations have been supported for the longer term. A quiet day for the team to reflect and pray is in the planning as we go to print.

f) **Faith Sharing**

Our brief was to encourage Faith Sharing at St John's, rather than arrange evangelistic events, although that may well happen in the future. We want to help an ever-developing mind-set within St John's that will cause faith sharing becoming a passionate part of our spiritual DNA, not an add on, nor something we do out of duty, nor merely to keep the church going. The Survey results (Jul 2015) revealed much useful information about people's concerns and aspirations. It helped focus the sermon series in Jan/Feb 2016 which has centred on Relationship with Jesus: who we are in Him and all the resources we have in Him. We pray that as this knowledge grows in us all, the Good News will overflow from our hearts as we develop friendships with neighbours, colleagues, class mates, etc.

We have also started learning from other churches who have been on this particular path longer than us. We are also investigating alternatives to Alpha, because it is increasingly difficult for people to commit to a 10 week course.

We are seeking to liaise more closely with Teams whose brief overlaps with ours.

Team: David Biddle, Tony and Beryl Holloway, Bronwyn Ward, Nick Porter, Joy and Mike Slatter.

g) **Mission Outside the Parish**

Through the year we've had team meetings to **discuss and pray** for missionaries we support.

We had **great fun and learnt a bit about Japanese cuisine** when we organised a '**make your own sushi**' lunch after one Sunday service in March to say good byes to the Jeggo family who were returning to their mission field in Japan.

Each month we especially pray for one or two of the missionaries we support (**Monthly Focus**).

We have recently **updated the information** on the St. John's website about this.

We have **started short prayer meetings** once a month on Sunday after Morning Worship and before Holy Communion to which **all are welcome!**

In September, together with 14+, **we organised a Secret Church meeting** - a 6.30 am service in the graveyard, to **empathise and pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters**. The service was very well attended and a lot of people were touched by this experience.

Throughout the year **we have maintained contact with our missionaries** through their newsletters and through visits by some of them to our services or home group meetings.

We would like to take the opportunity **to thank our small but very dedicated team** for their support, participation and commitment.

If, after reading this information, you think that you might **want to find out more what MOP is all about** please just ask.

Milly Johnson and Elzbieta Cienciala