

St Peter's Church Alstonefield



Annual Report
And
Accounts
2015 /16

Saint Peter's Church, Alstonefield Trustees Annual Report 2015/16

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England, and by which the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure governs. The Parish of St Peter's, Alstonefield is one of the five Parishes within the Benefice of Alstonefield.

PCC Membership and Meetings

The members of the PCC are either ex officio, or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. This year the following have served:

<u>Incumbent:</u>	The Revd Anne Ballard	(Until January 19 th 2016)
<u>Lay Reader:</u>	Position vacant	

<u>Wardens:</u>	Mrs Marion Beloe	(Re-elected April 2015)
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<u>Deanery Synod Representatives:</u>	Mrs P. Gilman	(re-elected 2014)
	Miss Mary Jephcott	(re-elected 2014)
	Mrs V. Littlehales	(elected 2014)

<u>Lay Chair:</u>	Mrs Marion Beloe	(Re-elected April 2015)
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<u>Elected lay members</u>	Mrs V. Littlehales	(elected 2015)
	Mr Neil Beloe	(elected 2015)
	Mr Martin Wilding	(Treasurer, appointed 2015)
	Ms. Carrie Osborne	(Co-opted 2015)
<u>Secretary</u>	Miss Rosemary Crafts	(re-appointed 2015)

<u>Electoral Roll Officer</u>	Mr Neil Beloe	(elected 2015)
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Overview

This has been a challenging year for a number of reasons, not least because the Vicar was on sick leave for a substantial period of time (May – September) during the year.

As a small PCC, comprising members who also have other commitments, it has been difficult to ensure that there is a fair distribution of the workload.

Nonetheless we have continued to function effectively as a representative body, meeting quarterly throughout the year and with extra meetings in between when necessary. Due diligence has been exercised in matters of procedure to ensure good governance.

We have again been very fortunate this year to have willing support from many other members of the community who have helped with routine maintenance tasks, churchyard maintenance, cleaning, flower arranging, clock-winding and opening and locking the church daily. Our wholehearted thanks and appreciation are given for this valuable support.

The Church Warden also expresses sincere appreciation of the invaluable help and support given by the Hon. Treasurer and also the PCC Secretary throughout a difficult year.

Mission: A guiding light for the community, to inspire, refresh and sustain...

Our church is an important focus within the community for milestone occasions, for annual church festival celebrations, and for public worship and private reflection.

Public Benefit Statement

As trustees of the Charity, the members of the PCC are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in the Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit and have had regard to it.

We believe that, by promoting the work of the Church of England within our Ecclesiastical Parish of St Peter's (and as one of the five parishes within the Benefice of Alstonefield), we help to promote the whole mission of the Church (pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical) more effectively within our Ecclesiastical Parish; and that, in doing so, we provide a benefit to the public by:

- providing facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for its members and for anyone who wishes to benefit from what the Church offers;
- promoting Christian values, and service by members of the Church in and to their communities, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

The local and wider mission

St Peter's Church is open every day, and we are fortunate to have a small kitchen facility enabling us to offer self service refreshments for the many visitors to the area, whilst also offering the opportunity for thought and reflection about faith. Prayer cards are also available for people to complete and leave in a specified area; these prayers are offered up at service times.

Scripture mission booklets are available (suggested donation) for anyone who may be interested in learning more about faith. The Prayer Board has been used to raise awareness of local, national and international issues, and remains a focal point for prayer and reflection in Church.

A recent introduction to the church has been the *Peak Pilgrimage*, which has been developed by Eyam church community. It is a 39 mile spiritual walk (for people of all walking abilities) between Ilam and Eyam and is described as '*A soul restoring walk through the Peak Park*'. The route passes through Alstonefield along the way, giving walkers the opportunity to pause and reflect in our church and enjoy the refreshments that are available.

There has been a strong focus on nurturing discipleship and, due to changing circumstances throughout the year there has also been a tangible (and necessary) growth in lay worship.

The Mission Action Plan remained a work in progress, specifically with reference to the development of a dedicated Pastoral Visiting Team and other opportunities for community engagement e.g. midweek services, coffee mornings etc. It is hoped that we will be in a better position to achieve our MAP objectives in these particular areas in the near future.

The collaborative approach to working together as a 'benefice team' has continued through the year and has been helpful as we faced challenges together.

Church services and attendances

There were 47 services during 2015.

Throughout the year there has been a slow growth of local people returning to church and average (regular) attendance across the year was 12.

On May 8th we held a special VE Day (lay led) Thanksgiving service, which was attended by a large congregation and incorporated speeches from Winston Churchill and HM King George VI. This was a joint collaboration with colleagues from St. Margaret's,

Wetton and St Bartholomew's, Butterton and was well received by everyone who attended.

The Harvest service at Alstonefield was the final service led by the Vicar, at which she informed the congregation of her new appointment.

On Remembrance Sunday, a lay led service was held in church followed by a short dedication outside at the War Memorial.

In 2015 it was decided to hold a lay led Carols by Candlelight evening service on Christmas Eve, which was attended by almost 150 people and received very warmly by locals and visitors alike. The collection was donated to Leek Street Pastors.

Earlier in the year, we had adopted a benefice wide service pattern that was collaborative and flexible. This was in order to better support the Vicar in making more effective and efficient use of her time. It was also intended to allow more time for special services, mid-week activities, community engagement and some pastoral care. The new rota was largely abandoned due to the Vicar's illness and her extended period of sick leave, necessitating use of visiting clergy for Communion services, weddings and funerals, whilst other services were lay led.

Lay led worship has developed across the benefice as a direct result of the challenging circumstances during the year, and a positive benefit of this is the strong support network that is emerging amongst Church Wardens. It has also ensured that a Christian presence has continued to be nurtured within our respective communities.

In 2015 there were three weddings and two funerals.

Community Engagement and Fund Raising

In Alstonefield, there is a predominantly elderly demographic with 48% of our regular congregation being 70 years or older and, with very few young families in the village, only 9% of our congregation is under 45 years old. The remaining 43% comprises people who either attend church regularly or only for specific events and festivals across the year (and some worship elsewhere), or do not attend church; nonetheless there remains a very strong sense that the Church is an important part of village life for different reasons.

Collaborative relationships have been established particularly between the PCC and the Village Hall Committee, and there is scope to work together on future joint fund raising initiatives. Another positive collaboration this year has been Alstonefield and Wetton Bell ringers deciding to hold joint practice nights, which has also ensured that there are more ringers available to ring before services and at weddings.

The PCC has struggled this year to organise many fund raising activities mainly because there are not enough people to help organise and run such events, and the (only) Church Warden is already over stretched. Concerts in church would offer a relatively

straightforward fund raising activity with the minimum of effort. However, there are no toilet facilities in St Peter's and this has increasingly become a problem, not just in terms of fund raising activities, but also at services, especially weddings and funerals where people have travelled some distance.

The self service refreshments offered some income generation this year, especially during the summer months, and annual Friends of St Peter's donations also contributed some income, as does the regular giving by a few parishioners.

St Peter's day was celebrated during the 'Wakes weekend' in June, comprising family games on the playing fields on Saturday and a 70's themed family disco in the evening. On Sunday, afternoon Teas were available in the Village Hall and Old School Garden, culminating in the Wakes procession on Sunday evening to The George village green for an outdoor evening service of praise and thanksgiving.

September again saw the village hosting the Folk 'peace' Gathering. The church was open both days offering a bell ringing workshop and also an historical themed tour of the church based on Graffiti discovered by an historical graffiti enthusiast. This was supported by a display of many interesting old family records that had been compiled by a local historian. Refreshments were also served on both days.

In October, and in an attempt to lessen the load on the Church Warden and the PCC, it was decided to hold a Harvest 'Bring & Share' supper, rather than sell tickets and provide a meal. This was well attended and everyone liked the 'bring and share' format. Harvest produce was auctioned as usual and this, combined with a raffle, raised funds for the church.

Community Carol singing took place around the village in December and a £100 donation was given to the Midlands Air Ambulance.

Electoral Roll

The revised Electoral Roll stands at fifty (50). One person has been added to the Roll.

Fabric and conservation

Routine maintenance checks are carried out regularly by the Church Warden and the maintenance log kept up to date. Various maintenance tasks were also undertaken by willing volunteers across the year.

The churchyard is maintained to a very high standard, thanks to a willing team of local people, and the new lawn tractor (purchased in 2014 from a memorial donation) has made a big difference. In 2015 the church received a Nature Friendly Award and also a

Silver Award, reflecting the ongoing commitment of our dedicated grounds maintenance team for which we are very grateful.

In September work began on the Boiler House to replace the asbestos roof and rotting wooden doors, and also to replace the rusting metal oil tank with a smaller plastic double bunded tank. The work was completed successfully in four days. We acknowledge in this report the generous funding received from the Leaden Boot Committee which contributed significantly to the costs. As a result of replacing the large metal oil tank with a smaller one, there is now a large space in the boiler house that can be used for storage.

At the end of September it became clear that there was active woodworm in the beams above the ringing platform. A visit from the architect and a Rentokil Surveyor in October confirmed this, thus the whole of the area was treated at a significant cost. Following this intervention, the Rentokil treatment carries a 10 (ten) year guarantee.

Unfortunately we have been unable so far to realise our plans of installing a much needed toilet in the disused south porch, which we had hoped to do by the end of 2015, early 2016. This is because a deviation from our original specification (which would have been fit for purpose and affordable) resulted in our church Architect's student drawing up bespoke plans which do not suit our needs and are at prohibitive cost (£15,000 +). This has a direct impact on our ability to have concerts etc in church, which would raise much needed income, and is also a significant problem for many guests attending weddings, funerals and the larger festival services.

Other future projects include:

- ❖ Interior decoration of the Church
- ❖ Cleaning of the War Memorial
- ❖ Secure storage for the lawn tractor
- ❖ Clock casing

Finances

Regular attendance and service collections are affected by the fact that Alstonefield comprises a significant number of second homes and holiday lets, thus the actual number of people residing full time in the village is less than 50% of the total population. It has become increasingly difficult to pay our Parish share in full and, given the demography, this is unlikely to change in the near future.

Although some regular giving has been lost to the church, this has been offset in a small way by increased collections from larger congregations attending, for example, Remembrance Day and Christmas Services, and also gift aided giving. The self service refreshments continue to contribute to our income generation, especially throughout the

holiday season, as do the scripture mission booklets, which are available to everyone for a small suggested donation.

Fund raising events in general have been moderately successful, but at a cost to the very small number of people who organise and run them.

In 2015 we also received income from 2 funerals and 3 weddings.

As far as general running costs are concerned, and excluding the Parish Share, we continue to be able to meet those expenditures. Our priorities have to be insurance, heating oil and utility bills. We have for some years struggled to pay the Parish Share in full, and we were not able to do so this year.

The generosity of our wider community, and also of those who attend Church regularly, is acknowledged here, however we are still unable to generate the income required to pay the current level of Parish Share in full.

At year end 31st December 2015 our finances were:

❖ Current account balance	<u>£1,117.47</u>
❖ Fabric Deposit account (ring fenced)	<u>£10,245.47</u>
❖ Water Fund (ring fenced)	<u>£96.79</u>
❖ Wall fund (local legacy)	<u>£3186.00</u>

The Fabric deposit account is ring fenced and used specifically for fabric (capital) expenditure and not revenue costs.

We also have a Water Fund (ring fenced) which will be used for the proposed Toilet project.

Finally, we are fortunate to have a legacy bequeathed by a local family and specifically designated (at their request) for perimeter church wall repairs.

This has been a busy and constructive year in which, notwithstanding the challenges of our Vicar's ill-health and preparing for the forthcoming Vacancy, a lot has been achieved in terms of building bridges and maintaining an active presence in the community.

Our mission, as we go forward, is to continue to grow that active presence in the community during the interregnum period. Collaborative working and support has been a positive development across the Benefice this year, and the growth in Lay Worship / Lay Leadership is encouraging. Whilst congregations at regular services remain small (average 12), the church remains an integral part of village life. This is highlighted by the time and effort willingly given by people to care for, and maintain, this ancient building; a building which bears witness to significant family milestones within this community.

Our greatest challenge going forward remains the Parish Share and, given we are such a small (resident all year) community, it is realistic to suppose that we can no longer sustain a full time incumbent in post, thus we are prayerfully minded to seek a more pragmatic solution.

Signed on behalf of Alstonefield PCC: *Marion Beloe*

Marion Beloe MA
Church Warden
13th April 2016