

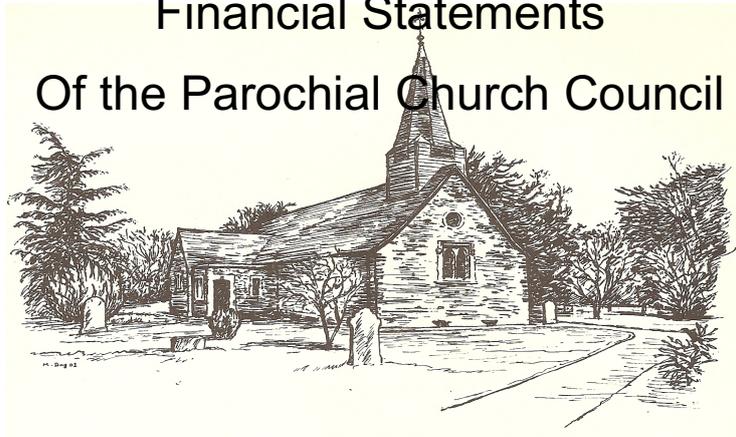
PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY, WEXHAM

Annual Report

And

Financial Statements

Of the Parochial Church Council



Independent Examiner

Mr K Webb ACIS ACMA

E-mail Address: keithcwebb@aol.com

Bank

The Co-operative Bank

Approved by PCC 03.05.22

PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY, WEXHAM
ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

1. BACKGROUND:

Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the governing body of a Parish Church and is a charity. It is made up of members of clergy and lay members of the Church. Together, they are responsible for the overall wellbeing, practical as well as spiritual, of the Church members and the Grade II* listed Church and the Church Hall adjacent to the Church. The PCC also has a duty to promote the mission of the Church within the wider community.

The incumbent and the PCC are required to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish; the PCC is to co-operate with the minister in promoting within the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

PCC members are responsible for managing the Church's finances and should ensure that all funds are properly accounted for, the books properly maintained and the PCC annual accounts inspected and formally approved by the PCC prior to the APCM.

The Rectory is situated at No. 7 Grangewood and is currently being let by the Diocese, as it is not required for a priest at St. Mary's.

Website: www.stmaryswexham.co.uk

2 MEMBERSHIP

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with Church Representation Rules.

Incumbent:	Rev'd Andrew Parry
Warden:	Miss. V. Clayton
Lay Chair:	Mr. P.A. Horth

Elected Members:

Appointed until

2022	Mrs Y. Hickman
2022	Mrs. L. Shelley
2022	Mrs. P. Higgins
2022	Mr. B.J. Edwards (Treasurer & Planned Giving Officer)
2023	Ms. G Knight
2023	Mr. P Horth

2023	Mrs. B Neame
2024	Mrs C. Elderfield
2024	Mr C. Goldsmith

This means we will have 4 vacancies for the PCC to be filled at the APCM as our Church Roll is between 51 and 100 members so there are 9 lay members on the PCC.

3 vacancies for 3 year terms of office and
1 vacancy for a 1 year term of office.

There are also 2 vacancies for Churchwarden

Licensed Lay Minister: Mrs J Bell

Under the Church Representation Rules 2017 Rule 14.1. (e) The annual meeting has the power to appoint “such, if any, of the readers who are licensed to that parish or licensed to an area which includes that parish and whose names are on the roll of the parish as the annual meeting may determine;”

3. COMMITTEES:

The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact the business between PCC meetings, subject to directions given by the Council. The Friends of St. Mary’s report, as necessary, to the full PCC meeting.

4. ELECTORAL ROLL: Paul Horth

During 2021 we have had one person leaving the Electoral Roll, so we are down to 59 from 60 for the year 2022.

5. REVIEW OF THE YEAR:

(a) Finance Report Brian Edwards, Treasurer

With only one lockdown (no.3) at the start of year 2021 and restrictions during the remainder, had a lessor an effect on the Church’s Finances. Direct Giving Scheme (DGS), our main source of Income, in 2021 saw an increase of 7%, (£1,269), where some of the backlog in the envelope scheme caught up from the previous year.

Church Collections were up 40% (£958) at £3,347, a complete reversal from the year before, as under restrictions, church attendances were resumed.

Hiring out the Hall compared to 2020 was down £1,500, where Hall Hiring resumed from September only. Comparison with actual 2020 was less dramatic as some £800 received in January 2020 related to 2019 activity.

The Highlight of the year was undoubtedly the Community Fair in August, orchestrated by Yvette and her helpers, alongside many from the congregation, and where nearly £2,000 was raised. The Fair was well attended, meeting up with old familiar friends & faces, which had not been possible

since the commencement of the Corona Virus. The Sales of Facemasks total, since Virus Day 1, reached the magical total of £800 during December 2021.

The Friends of St Mary's managed to raise almost double of the previous year, but were also hampered by the virus restrictions. The Church was blessed with Legacies (2) and many donations from various directions amounting to £4,000 increase over previous year, majority to be put to the leaking Vicar's Vestry roof.

The Church is extremely grateful for all donors and givers as well as the Congregation who give via Bankers Credits, which enables the church to have a stable base to the Income each month. General Expenditure was down by some £3,500, mainly due to reduction of Parish Share of £23,943. This figure still covered our Ministry Costs and was well below of 2019 the year before the virus.

The remaining reduction of £750 was shared between Church and Hall Running costs, due to less normal use of the Church, and no use of the Hall until September. This result of the Hall was a £2,000 loss for 2021 compared loss of £900 in 2020. Fixed Costs remained throughout.

On page 2 were the details of the Church's Deposit Account. The General Reserve represents 3.5 months expenditure, in accordance with the Diocesan guidelines. A decent size chunk will be used for capital items when the expenses appear, hopefully this year 2022.

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I am now in my eleventh year as Treasurer and continue to enjoy the experience. I thank the church people for their co-operation.

(b) Young Church Sandra Horth

It has been another difficult year with Covid continuing to have quite an effect on how Young Church could meet, especially with tiers and more lockdowns. Mothering Sunday service for All had to be moved to outside the Church keeping to all Covid rules and safety measures. This was well attended by the families. We continued to have some Family zoom services and started services in the paddock in bubbles. Easter Day was a service for All in the hall in bubbles followed by an Easter egg treasure hunt for the children, this was very well attended by Young Church families and others. At the end of April, we were able to restart meeting as Young Church in the hall in bubbles, with lots of laying up, individual boxes and cleaning of hall afterward. The children and parents were very pleased to be back meeting even if having to keep to bubbles, wearing masks and social distancing. There was no Young church in August and as we could not have a fun day, we had a Church for All service with crafts and picnic. Due the weather we had it in the hall but this did not deter the families from coming and it was well attended. In September we were able to start Young church in a more normal way, still keeping safe due to schools being back with more normality. For All Souls, Young church on that Sunday morning had a Light party with lots of fun things to do while learning what All souls was about. Although we were still not back in church, for Remembrance Sunday we were able to join the adults outside the church for the 2 minutes silence part. This year we were able to have Christingle together with a Church for All Cafe style service, making up our own Christingle's which everyone seemed to enjoy. Church for All crib service was moved to the hall due to the increase in Covid numbers, this was very well attended especially by a lot of non-church families. We continue to have Young church three times a month and a Church for All service, which gives the chance for

all ages to worship together. Hopefully as things get more back to normal Young church will be going back into church more.

There has been a lot of work involved in continuing to run Young church this year and I am thankful for the continue help and commitment of Becky and Hannah as helpers to run it. Andrew has been a great support with everything that was needed for Young church to run this year. Hopefully this August we can have a Fun morning and in the next year continue to outreach to our families in our community especially with football and other activities now back running on Sundays.

(c) Discovery Café Sandra Horth and Gill Knight

Pandemic restrictions during 2021 meant it was not possible for Discovery Café to open. This enforced break meant there was an opportunity for the two of us to reflect upon its value to St. Mary's (in the way of outreach) and sustainability (amount of time and work involved). After much heart-searching we have reluctantly, and sadly, decided to turn the sign on the door to 'closed'.

(d) Oak House Care Home Rev'd Chris Collinge, Lynnette Shelley and Vicky Clayton

Oak House has continued to take great care in the light of the covid pandemic and so taking services in the home has continued to be difficult. We were able to take a service just before Christmas. This was a new experience for us as we had to wear apron and masks throughout and undergo thorough testing beforehand! However, the service was a real joy and it was good to see many people we knew from pre pandemic times. We were able to lead a service which focussed on Mothering at the end of March to which we welcomed 20 residents and staff. The services of late have been held in the "café" area on the second floor – a lovely light, relaxed setting. We have continued to give the residents leaflets reflecting the seasons and sharing items of interest, but, of late, these are irregular offerings rather than every weekend. We must extend our thanks to Natalie and Eliza at Oak House for their unstinting encouragement and expressions of gratitude for the connection St Mary's maintains with the staff and residents.

Our prayers go out to the residents and staff and we give thanks for the times and experiences we have been able to share. We look forward to future times together!

(e) The Pines Vicky Clayton, Lynnette Shelley, David McIsaac, Jill Bell, Rev'd Andrew Parry

The Morning Praise services resumed at "The Pines" in August 2021 but the majority of our previous congregation have not returned having either passed away or moved out. Numbers have been low but we were pleasantly surprised in March when we had a congregation of 11 residents. We do hope this trend will continue.

The Day Centre folk have not returned to their centre at The Pines, and we really miss their attendance at our Morning Praise events.

We resumed the Holy Communion service in October, 2021. We currently have two worshippers, (one communicant), who come to this service, and we take Communion to another in his flat. Our third has just moved into Oak House and our newest recruit died suddenly in March.

We took a service for Remembrance which was very well attended, (18 residents) and there were 9 worshippers at our Christmas service.

Andrew goes most Fridays to visit, and chat, and will join our Morning Praise services when he can.

Church posters are on the notice boards, and are updated regularly.

The church newsletter is emailed weekly to one resident, and three others are posted to a lady there who then distributes them on our behalf, for which we are most thankful.

Quite a lot of work is done by the 4 members of the Pines Ministry Team in putting the services together, a talk to be prepared, prayers written; music for the hymns to be downloaded onto the church music computer and folders containing the Orders of Service and hymn sheets to be collated.

We are very grateful to Clementina in The Pines office, for her on-going support since the autumn, when the previous manager left.

(f) Safeguarding Report Heidi James

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults remains everyone's responsibility and we have a duty to recognise and discuss any concerns we have in the Parish and take appropriate action

The Safeguarding Team continues to be made up of: Christine Elderfield (DBS and training records); Sandra Horth (Young Church Leader and Young People's Advocate); Heidi James (Parish Safeguarding Officer); and Andrew Parry (Rector).

The team meets formally approximately every 4 months (though less often during the period March 2020-November 2021) and to have ad hoc meetings when specific circumstances require.

Training cover has improved as has our ability to track who needs to be trained and who has completed training. The matrix we are using (taken from the "Safeguarding Learning & development Framework 2021" issued by the House of Bishops of the Church of England on 3 April 2021 for review in 2024 and adopted by the PCC on 11 January 2022) has been instrumental in this. Online training provision seems to have improved both in clarity and ease of use, and in the ability to track one's own training record.

The Safeguarding Dashboard is useful and in good shape. At time of writing, 3 points are amber and all are a matter of reviewing something already in place (for example, a Safeguarding report is required to be submitted to the PCC every 6 months, and we were a bit late). The full Safeguarding Action Plan is attached. Andrew and Heidi have view and editor access to the Dashboard, while Christine and Sandra have view access.

The safeguarding team and members of the congregation are actively engaged in supporting and being advocates for, particular vulnerable children and adults. All concerns we have are being addressed and monitored. There are no matters of which we are aware, that need to be drawn to the attention of the PCC.

(g) Report on the Fabric of St Mary's Church, Wexham Vicky Clayton Churchwarden

Following on from the Covid restrictions, services have now resumed, and general maintenance has continued.

Regular Inspections

17 September 2021 - Fire extinguisher servicing.

17th September 2021 - Organ servicing.

(There was no inspection of the Lightning Conductor System this year, the next one is due in 2025).

The church is due a full electrical check this year and this will be done at the same time as the P.A.T. testing. Mr. Brian Edwards has this in hand.

Leak in Priest's Vestry Roof

This has still not been resolved – please see attached Time-Line. (It is likely that more will be added to the time-line between the date of this report, 18/4/2022, and the APCM 21/5/2022). A new part for the hand-held microphone had to be purchased in March, and this is now working well. However, the sound system has some interference problems and these will be dealt with shortly, courtesy of the husband of a member of the congregation.

Plans for the Spring Clean are currently in hand.

We are most grateful to Mrs. Patricia Higgins who has been overseeing work carried out within the Church, and who has now stepped down from this role.

Bats

On 20th January 2022 we were advised that St. Mary's had been selected to take part in the National Bats in Churches Survey. The survey will involve a short (60-90 minute) visit to the church to look for evidence of bat activity, collecting any bat droppings found and placing a bat recorder in the church for two nights. We are currently liaising with their representative to fix a date, probably in June.

This information will be published in the weekly newsletter in due course, in case anybody would like to be present during the inspection.

Most grateful thanks are due to those who have worked meticulously within Government guidelines to ensure that the Church is regularly cleaned, decorated with flowers, safe and welcoming for visitors.

(h) Report on Hall Maintenance Susan Edwards

Use of the hall during 2021 was minimal due to the restrictions of Coronavirus. Hall bookings have not returned to the pre-covid level, so income has been greatly reduced.

Wi-Fi was installed in the Hall this year.

Due to the lack of hall use, maintenance has been kept to regular cleaning and ventilating the premises.

(i) Social and Fundraising Events Yvette Hickman

A successful Community Summer Fair was held in August and a stall at the George Green light switch on were the fundraising events held over the past year. These were successful events, which it is hoped may be repeated this year.

(j) Magazine Report Chris Collinge & Jill Bell

It continues to be a joy to edit the magazine, if a little stressful when deadlines loom. It is so rewarding when our readers submit regular or one-off articles or little snippets of information and humour. They really help to make the magazine reflect St Mary's.

It's always great to get feedback as it helps to know what our readers enjoy.

The magazine is the work of a team of people without whom it would never happen.

We are grateful to Pat and Gordon Briggs who have kindly taken on the roles of printing and correlation and our team of distributors who not only deliver but also collect the magazine subscriptions.

Thank you to our advertisers who help with our funding but also serve an important need in the community.

Please continue to send your own articles – both one off and the regular items. Bear in mind that we do reserve the right to edit and shorten submitted items.

Once more, thank you to the whole team for all that you do.

(k) Churchyard Care Team Judith Allen, Gill Knight, Colin Goldsmith

Over the period of this report, we were permitted to gather for a greater number of care sessions than during the previous pandemic year. From June-December 2021 we met six times and, when the team was unable to meet, individual volunteers made sure the churchyard was safe and was kept as tidy as possible. This year, our first session was at the beginning of February, with another in March and more to follow throughout the year.

Notices encouraging adherence to Diocesan regulations were placed in the churchyard and work on this resolutely, but gently, continues.

In 2021 the main hedge was cut by professionals and, as recommended by them, arrangements were made for the hedge to be flailed. This was carried out by a local contractor in February this year – see photos on our website and popular YouTube video! The next phase of the 2016 Tree Survey took place soon afterwards and involved the removal of large laurel branches (which overhung the car park) and self-set trees (which had grown close to a grave on that side of the churchyard). The Tree Surgeons appointed by St. Mary's at the beginning of the survey completed this work. Less specialised tree-work continues to be carried out in-house. One such task was cutting down the large laurel shrub near the main path which, combined with the flailed main hedge, has opened up the view of the church.

As always, we are thankful that loyal volunteers have so far been able to cover the variety of general churchyard work. We are however keenly aware of our reliance on volunteers and were delighted to welcome a new member to the team – we hope soon there will be more.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In July 2021 we were approached by the Commission to try and locate the grave of a possible war victim. Research was carried out in the church records, the grave located and visits made by the Commission representatives to check on, clean and repair the site. Intermingled with this was a request from the CWGC to allow a notice to be displayed indicating that war graves are present in the churchyard. This has resulted in a sign being attached to the main gate, "*At this site there are Commonwealth War Graves*". We were pleased to be able to assist the Commission in their enquiries; there are three known war graves in our churchyard.

(l) Men's Fellowship Paul Horth

Since the last report, we have emerged, butterfly-like, from the cocoon of the lockdown and managed to hold some face-to-face meetings both in restaurants and in the Church Hall. We have had some good food and interesting conversations ranging from, (guess what) how covid is being handled, to the Ukraine crisis.

We meet every last Thursday of the month so if you'd like to join us, please contact Paul Horth.
paulhorth@virginmedia.com 07986 518621

(m) Friends of St Mary's Lynnette Shelley

As with everybody 2021 started in lockdown. We made phone calls to all our Monday nighters, checking that they were alright and didn't need any assistance. Any concerns were passed to Andrew, if we were unable to help (e.g., hospital visits)

After speaking with Andrew and having the PCC's blessing, we were able to restart our Monday fundraising bingo evenings. We opened with masks, social distancing and no tea at half time. We would like to thank all those that did feel able to return to our regular bingo sessions, even with restrictions.

Unfortunately, we were unable to run a stall at the Church Fete. Sue Prentagast stepped up, on behalf of The Friends, and ran a knitwear stall. She donated £90 to us and we are very grateful. Thank you, Sue.

In January we were able to run a big bingo night which raised £ 376. Even with allocated seating, due to restrictions, all seemed to enjoy the evening.

We have continued to support projects to keep our Church in good repair. This has only been possible with continued support from people in the community and Church, a big thank you too all. Thank you to Andrew for his continuing support of The Friends and their activities. He just loves bingo now.

We hope this year will be a little easier and that others will feel confident to come along on a Monday night and find out how sociable we are.

We are committed to keeping our Church looking beautiful for all to enjoy.

(n) Main Topics of PCC Discussion Yvette Hickman and Christine Elderfield

(i) Ongoing Covid 19 Pandemic:

- * Services during the pandemic
- * Continuing contact with Church members
- * Outreach to the local community
- * Safe distribution of consecrated elements during services

(ii) Safeguarding continues to be a priority, working on people obtaining safeguarding training and certificates. Continuation of Diocese Safeguarding Dashboard

(iii) Permission to administer Communion was granted to:

Jane Boot, Vicky Clayton, Yvette Hickman, Diane Goldsmith, Patricia Higgins, Paul Horth, Jill Bell, John Higgins, Lynnette Shelley, Christine Elderfield

(iv) War Graves Commission request to erect signs in the Churchyard

(v) Social Media Policy

- (vi) Repairs to the Vestry roof
- (vii) Churchyard Regulations
- (viii) Installation of Wi-Fi in the Church Hall
- (ix) Wellbeing Coffee Morning
- (x) Reflection Day for PCC members
- (xi) Flailing of hedges

8. A FINAL THANKS

While it would be impossible to individually name all names, the PCC is indebted to the large number of people who voluntarily devote huge amounts of their time, skills and resources to the life and ministry of St Mary's. It recognises that without such input, the work of the Church would collapse and is grateful for the support and commitment it receives from the congregation and the community.

On behalf of the PCC: _____

(Chaired by): _____

Date: _____

