



*St Michael with St Mary*

# **Annual Report and Accounts 2015**

including the Agenda for the Annual Meeting  
10.00 am Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016 in St Michael's Church

UK Registered Charity 1132915

The Parish Office  
The Vicarage  
St Michael's Street  
St Albans, AL3 4SL

[www.stmichaels-parishchurch.org.uk/home.asp](http://www.stmichaels-parishchurch.org.uk/home.asp)

Governed by the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended



St Michael with St Mary

## THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016

### 10am THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

- Appointment of Clerk
- Election of Churchwardens

### 10.10am THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

#### Apologies

- To receive the revised Electoral Roll
- To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- Delegation of Churchwardens' powers in respect of St. Mary, Childwick Green to those elected as Deputy Churchwarden/s
- Election of Deputy Churchwarden/s
- Method of Election to PCC (please see note below)
- Election of members to the PCC
- Election of St Mary's sub-committee
- Election of Stewards (Sidesmen)
- Election of Assistant Churchwarden/s for St Michael's
- To receive the Annual Report of the PCC including Accounts for the year ended 31.12.2015
- Appointment of Reviewing Accountant
- Chairman's remarks
- Matters arising from minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015 or discussion of matters of parochial general interest – *to be received in advance at [kennethpadley@gmail.com](mailto:kennethpadley@gmail.com)*
- Date of Next Meeting
- Grace

#### Agenda item 6: means of election to PCC – extra info

Most of the members of the PCC are elected by the APCM. An APCM may either elect members on an annual basis, or on a 'rolling triennial' basis – i.e. where one third of the membership is elected every third year. Our parish formerly operated a rolling triennial scheme but the cycles seem to have broken down during the last interregnum. As a result, since the 2012 APCM, the PCC has been elected on an annual basis.

Following representation, the PCC discussed the alternatives in January 2016. There are advantages and disadvantages to both systems but the on-balance unanimous preference of the PCC was to revert to a rolling triennial pattern. The main reason for this is that rolling triennia provide a smoother pattern of service and review: resignations do not all come in at once and the third year is a chance for members to think hard about whether they wish to offer for another three-year stint.

It is a matter for the APCM to decide how it elects its representatives. **The 2015-16 PCC proposes and recommends that the APCM votes to return to a triennial pattern of election.** Should the APCM accept this proposal, *Church Representation Rules* (which determines Church of England governance) says those who are elected to the PCC must then draw lots to determine whether they will retire (or seek re-election) after one year, two years, or three years of service. A triennial pattern is then established.

Whether a PCC is on an annual or rolling-triennial cycle of elections, the rule for filling a casual vacancy is the same: the PCC has the right to elect someone duly qualified to fill the vacancy for the unexpired portion of the term of office of the person in whose place s/he is elected.

## Introduction

Introduction:  
Our Story in 2015

Kenneth Padley  
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Like any Annual Report worth its salt, this document is stuffed with twelve months' worth of activity. It is a record of the collective and individual acts of worship, teaching, and pastoral care which have been offered to God and in service of others through the churches of St Michael and St Mary in 2015. Strategically, that ministry is structured by our two churches' Mission Action Plans (MAPs). These help us strengthen our outreach, deepen our prayerfulness, and enhance our work with children.

Among the significant ministries and initiatives described and analysed in the pages which follow, I must return (one last time!) to the benefits of moving to unstaffed opening at St Michael's. This change has had a number of knock-ons which illustrate what can be achieved in other areas of our life together.

- Unstaffed opening has helped the MAP goal of your Pastoral and Worship Committee that we enrich our call to be a household of prayer. A great variety of need, hope and fear has been recorded in the notebook next to the votive stand, deep emotions which people can now bring into church throughout the week.
- Unstaffed opening is enhancing the MAP goals of your Mission and Community Committee. Having an open church is also an ideal image of the sort of community which we are and are becoming. St Michael's is not a club with carefully guarded perimeters. It is a fellowship whose shape is constantly changing with each new encounter and act of commitment.
- Unstaffed opening is even furthering the MAP goals of your Stewardship Committee, boosting income through visitors' donations.

Unstaffed opening is therefore generating a number of organically integrated benefits. This integration is a useful model for what your Parochial Church Council is trying to achieve in other areas. For instance, in the last twelve months:

- Mission and Community have been using the folk festival in July and the bonfire in November as opportunities for advertising regular services and events; the latter may have contributed to the significant increase in attendance at some of our Christmas services;
- Tiny Tots have been introduced to what Climbers offers for younger children on a Sunday morning;
- the Memorial Hall is now fully assimilated within our wider vision for the parish's buildings and finance.

On a personal note, I have been reminded this year of the great privilege of exercising ordained ministry. Time and again I have been confronted with new opportunities and challenges. In 2015 this has included interviewing potential head teachers, supporting a parishioner in a dispute with bailiffs, and sitting at the deathbed of someone younger than myself. I must record my particular thanks for the collegiality of Revd John Hayton, the Wardens, their Deputies and Assistants, Georgie Ray and Danielle Argent in the Parish Office, and your meticulous Treasurer Gill Huckerby. Their support has enabled me to continue that work which I do beyond the parish: mentoring and assessing those who are offering for ordination, and creeping towards the finishing line of my doctoral study.

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### Church Wardens' Report

Graham Willey  
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and

Stephanie Rainbow  
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Following the opening theme of 'heating' last year, it was with some delight that, after the final completion of the tiling in the west end and the installation of the final fan convactor radiator, our architect signed off the heating project early in the year. Following which, the organ maintainer removed the plastic sheeting and the organ was once again revealed in all its glory. It was with a sigh of relief that the target was met shortly after the fund was notionally closed at the end of July. The completion of the project could not have been achieved without the immense support and generosity of all who contributed, and we thank everyone for their patience, support and contribution during this period of disruption. A particular thank you must go to Nigel Voyce for his creative fund raising and eye-catching displays, specifically the Christmas tree and the copper pipe Cross, to encourage donations from congregation and visitors alike.

After the heating installation came the process of making good, especially the improvements to the Tower Room, for which thanks goes to Imogen for continuing with this project after her duties as Churchwarden were completed in May. Permission to proceed with re-decoration of the Tower Room was sought and has been received and we look forward to the work being carried out in February 2016.

As everyone is aware the temporary lighting has seen us through a difficult time following a fire in one of the lights last year and improvement of this aspect of St Michael's is our next priority. Therefore a lighting proposal was requested and received from our preferred supplier, Instalec, for a dimmable LED system. This will provide a flexible and sustainable system enhancing the atmosphere of our worship into the future. A faculty is in the process of being sought and updates will be provided once permissions have been received. We owe a huge thank you to Bob May who has masterminded the lengthy process to get to this stage and to his helpers who have worked with him to renovate the lights in the Chancel to leave us safe lighting in that area.

As always the maintenance of St Michael's is a continual process, key aspects were the Big Clean organised by Sue Dyson in February with a host of volunteers; thank you to all those that supported on the day, the church looked marvellous and veritably sparkled! Our thanks must go to Sue Dyson for co-ordinating the cleaning teams for so many years and to Jane Larman for taking on this role. Our thanks as ever to Roy Brooks for all the maintenance jobs he so professionally fixed throughout the year, especially for completing the two lovely wooden crosses that adorn the altars when the brass is removed during "open church". Also, the maintenance by Tony Budge on all three churchyard entrance gates and renovation and preservation of the external doors to make our beautiful church and surrounds look stunning.

Geoff Goodall did a fantastic job of renovating the churchyard benches improving the prospect of quiet contemplation in our beautiful churchyard. We cannot forget the sterling work of the churchyard working parties that graft away in all weathers and our especial thanks go to Anthony Taylor who retired this year after 20 years as leader of the working parties. Much to his amazement we enjoyed a surprise celebration and cake to thank him for his many years commitment. We are grateful to Jim Mann for stepping into Anthony's shoes – we hope Jim enjoys the next 20 years!

Whilst on the subject of the churchyard we cannot forget the event in late November when Kenneth was suddenly blessed with a lot more light flooding into the Vicarage! The toppling in high winds of the Wellingtonia tree created some excitement and thankfully narrowly missed the choir vestry. Thank you to all who pitched up and made the area safe.

As always at St Michaels & St Mary's there are opportunities to get together and enjoy some wonderful events, in particular the Swanvesta concert & BBQ, held in the churchyard as part of the wider St Michael's Folk Evening. It was a fabulous to see the churchyard full and buzzing with excitement to hear the Swanvesta band and enjoy a delicious hog roast and local beer. In particular, we would like to thank Alison Evans and her team of bellringers who opened the event with an amazing peal of bells. There

## Parish

was also the presentation by the Marmalade Theatre Company of Much Ado About Nothing performed in Hogg End's garden, the Organ Festival in July of which St Michael's is a venue for the concerts by candlelight and many more, and as always so well supported by all.

In June the New Testament Greek class under the masterful tutelage of Phillip Parr celebrated the conclusion of the excellent course after a year of rewarding study. Highlights of the course were marked with the award of laurel crowns to pupils, a speech of thanks to tutor "Phillippos" delivered in ancient Greek by pupil Colin Roberts, and a celebratory meal at the Waffle House.

This year the 'Open Church' policy was initiated after careful consultation and planning. It has been a great success and very much appreciated by parishioners and visitors, who have enjoyed the opportunity to drop in and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of St Michael's. The prayer book at the votive stand indicates the open church approach has allowed more contact and opportunity for reflection – thank you Kenneth, for your trust in this opportunity.

We were pleased to welcome and we thank our visiting preachers: Rev'd Sally Jones at St Mary's Compline on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, Rev'd Philip Hobday at our 9:30 services on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> April, Rev'd Stephanie Willcocks at St Mary's evensong on 12<sup>th</sup> July and the Very Rev'd Dr Jeffrey John at Choral Evensong for St Michael's Day on 27<sup>th</sup> September. We were also pleased to welcome Alison McCarthy in September as part of her preparation for taking Holy Orders and to hear her preach on 6<sup>th</sup> December at St Michael's and at a lovely service of Compline by Candlelight at St Mary's.

As ever we thank the Friends of St Michael's with St Mary's for all that they have done for us this year and to David Fletcher who has taken on the Chairmanship for 2015/16 – thank you for your support and contribution to our lives here.

Our thanks to everyone who has supported us so magnificently throughout the year, to Georgie in the office, to Sue & Gill for their guidance and support and Imogen for her duties as Churchwarden in early 2015 and for taking time to hand over to Steph and continue her work on the Tower Room project, to Paul and all who support at St Marys, to Peter Lindeman who manages the Memorial Hall and Danielle who has taken the role of the Hall's administrator and to John Mathews who manages the Parish Centre, to John Bethell for his professional photography and great representation of all events at St Michael's and Roger Gray who has developed the website to great success, achieving around 4000 hits per month, which represents St Michael's & St Mary's wonderfully and ensures further outreach beyond our immediate community. A huge thank you to these and to so many others who give their time and talents.

For our music we give special thanks to Richard, Andrew, Rob and all who contribute to this important part of our worship that makes St Michael's and St Mary's so special. We wish Thomas Dilley well in his musical career following his appointment in May as our organ scholar.

Finally our grateful thanks to and for our clergy, Kenneth for his inspiring leadership and this year taking us to bible study at "God in the pub", the sage John who not only reached the ripe young age of 70 in December but thankfully has the Bishop's permission to continue to serve us in his wonderfully inimitable way and Mike who continues to serve us with his unique and refreshing style. Together with so many of you at St Michael's and St Mary's, we are truly blessed.

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### Deputy Wardens' Report

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This year has been one of consolidation and building on the recent past improvements.

The changes to the services mentioned in last year's report have largely been well received and look to be the way forward for the next few years.

Once again this year we held an animal service which was attended by a, broadly, well behaved number, including the animals, and looks now to be an established service held OUTSIDE at St Mary's. We had our organ tuned to a slightly lower hertz (whatever that is ) just in time for what is certainly a fixture - our carol service with the ever improving choir and young choir boosting the numbers to capacity. Thank you, St Michael's.

Our attendance figures are holding broadly as last year with a very welcome number of new attendees and those from St Michael's who might have been unable to make their main morning service, or for those looking for an occasional change. All very welcome.

Sadly, Daphne Stanton died during the year. Daphne had been a stalwart of St Mary's, together with her husband Bill for many, many, years. She was church warden for a number of years and active in the WI and a number of other St Mary's related activities. Bill and Daphne's ashes rest in St Mary's churchyard and their names are commemorated in the book of remembrance.

We held two funerals, and two burials of ashes.

We have moved our MAP commitment along and are on target to increase our element of the Diocesan Quota which will take us to paying our full agreed share to St Michael's.

The refurbishment of the school room has made a clean and free space which has been appreciated by users and again Sara has done a magnificent job looking after all things to do with the letting and much, much more - thank you!

We look forward to 2017 when we will be celebrating our 150th anniversary and have a number of "specials" planned including a Flower Festival which will be held over the late spring bank holiday weekend with a special evensong on the Sunday 29th May.

St Mary's are very fortunate to be served so well by the clergy and our thanks to Mike, John and to Kenneth for their coming so far north. All that they do is truly appreciated.

For those as yet to be introduced to the very special place that St Mary's is please do look at the parish web site where we are well represented in the picture library courtesy of John Bethell, to see what you are missing !

<b>Parish</b>
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PCC Members 2015    Members of the Parochial Church Council and Trustees of the Charity during 2015 were:

**Ex Officio**

Paul Barnes, Deputy Churchwarden  
Eike Davis (Deputy Churchwarden until 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
John Hayton  
Kenneth Padley, Chair  
Stephanie Rainbow (Churchwarden from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
Graham Willey, Churchwarden, Lay Vice Chair

**Elected to PCC**

*15 elected annually at APCM - or appointed subsequently by approval of PCC:*

Chris Allen  
Imogen Broad (Churchwarden until 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
Helen Buck  
Gillian Davey (until 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
Gina Dunstan (until 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
Sue Dyson  
Alison Ferreira (from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
David Fletcher  
Gill Huckerby, Treasurer  
Gerdien Kendall (until 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
Jane Larman  
Sophie Levitt (from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
Kyna Mason, Secretary  
Rachel Naylor  
Bronwen Parr (from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
Steve Roberts (from 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
Alexander Slape (until 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)  
Michael Tutt  
Nigel Voyce  
Angela Walker (until 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015)

**Elected to Deanery Synod**

*3 elected triennially at APCM and sit on PCC also:*

David Bowers  
Sandra North  
Colin Roberts



## Parish

### Parochial Church Council Report 2015

Kyna Mason,  
PCC Secretary  
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The PCC held 6 committee meetings during the year with average attendance of 16.2 people. These meetings are alternated each month by those of the three sub-committees:

- Pastoral and Worship
- Mission and Community
- Stewardship

The PCC also includes members of the Standing Committee (clergy and wardens), The St. Mary's Committee, the Deanery and the Diocesan Synod. All of these committees report back to and participate in decision making for the PCC at the yearly six meetings.

The Mission Action Planning of the 3 sub-committees is on-going and to be reviewed with the Stewardship campaign cycle. The 'From Anecdote to Evidence' document was incorporated into each MAP this year. Many repairs and maintenance projects were completed this year along with several successful parish and community events.

### Annual Meeting of Parishioners Minutes 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 7.45pm

Kyna Mason,  
Secretary  
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The Vicar, Reverend Kenneth Padley, welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish meetings. No opening prayer was said as the Sunday service took place immediately prior to the meeting. The two meetings were delineated into the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (where members of the Electoral Roll and parish residents are able to vote for the churchwardens) and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (where only members of the Church Electoral Roll have voting privileges).

#### **1. Appointment of Clerk**

Kyna Mason appointed secretary

#### **2. Election of Churchwardens**

Two churchwardens elected:

Graham Willey  
Stephanie Rainbow

Acknowledgment and gratitude expressed to past churchwarden for 12 months of service, Imogen Broad. Kenneth expressed appreciation for Imogen's energy, enthusiasm and artistic approach brought to many endeavours and for her role in liaising with the primary school as warden.

### Annual Parochial Church Meeting Minutes 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 8.00pm

Kyna Mason,  
Secretary  
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#### **1. Apologies**

John Hewer, Bronwen Hewer, Rob Milner, Alison Munro, Margaret Shiner, Andrew Wills, Janice Western, Mike Western.

Approximately 75 in attendance

#### **2. To Receive the Revised Electoral Roll**

Kyna Mason presented the Electoral Roll for 2015 – defined as a list of eligible people to vote at such meetings

196 total number on electoral roll divided into:

- 90 resident in parish (St Michael's)
- 86 non-resident (St Michael's)
- 9 resident (Childwick)
- 11 non-resident (Childwick)

Kyna mentioned the total number stood as a single roll for a single parish. Noted the decrease from 199 last year, however, it is an accurate, updated figure.

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Kenneth mentioned the importance of being on the electoral roll and reiterated that everyone should check the copy on display to ensure inclusion.

### **3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2014**

Minutes confirmed as an accurate representation of the meeting – proposed by Sandra North; seconded Rachel Naylor; Approved.

### **4. Delegation of churchwardens' powers in respect of St. Mary, Childwick Green to those elected as Deputy Churchwardens**

Responsibilities such as care of building and day-to-day running of St Marys delegated from churchwardens (Graham Willey and Stephanie Rainbow) to deputy churchwardens approved.

### **5. Election of Deputy Churchwardens**

1 deputy churchwarden elected  
Paul Barnes

Thank you to Eike Davis for years of service as deputy churchwarden.  
Nominated by Bob May; Seconded Richard North; Approved.

### **6. Election of members to the PCC**

The Electoral Roll stands at less than 200, which requires only 12 elected PCC members, however, because the roll has recently fluctuated around 200, Kenneth proposed maintaining 15 posts which is the number required for over 200 at this time.

15 posts filled; No vacancies:

Helen Buck, Sue Dyson, Alison Ferreira, Gill Huckerby, Jane Larman, Sophie Levitt, Bronwen Parr, Steve Roberts, Michael Tutt, Nigel Voyce – nominated and seconded in advance of the meeting

Chris Allen, Imogen Broad, David Fletcher, Kyna Mason, Rachel Naylor expressed a willingness to stand; proposed: Jane Larman; seconded: Michael Tutt.

Kenneth reported that it was an uncontested election and expressed gratitude to those joining for the first time and to those who have served in the past.

Kenneth expressed significant thanks to Gillian Davey, Gina Dunstan, Gerdien Kendall, Alexander Slape, and Angela Walker for their time and efforts on the PCC.

Kenneth stated he was extremely pleased that there will be a full complement to the PCC.

The first PCC meeting of the new year will be on 13 May 2015 at 8pm and Kenneth will explain sub-committee membership and terms of reference at that time; sub committee chairs to consider new members.

Current sub-committees co-opt non-PCC members: Stewardship – Peter Lindeman, Richard North; Mission and Community – Jo Swire, Gerdien Kendall, Angela Walker; Pastoral and Worship – Mercia Wallace, Gina Dunstan, Gillian Davey. Question around whether subcommittee co-opts require a copy of the PCC minutes.

### **7. Election of St. Mary's sub-committee**

This sub-committee supports the deputy warden in their day-to-day tasks (worship, fabric and finance) at St Mary's; any formal matters have to come to the PCC

10 members elected:

Carolyn Barnes, Richard Craven, Sara Craven, William Davis, Barbie Edwards, Chaiman Highstead, Mike Highstead, Dick Rushman, Rod Woodward, Harry Woodruff

Proposed by Chris Allen; seconded Ginny Allkins; Approved.

### **8. Election of Stewards (Sidesmen)**

Role is to assist churchwardens.

The following were elected as a block: Chris Allen, Ginny Allkins, Steve Argent, Roy

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Brooks, Margaret Brooks, Anne Brown, Malcolm Brown, Val Carberry, Val Chiesa, Ann Dean, Gina Dunstan, John Facer, Alison Ferreira, David Fletcher, Elizabeth Fletcher, Geoff Goodall, Bronwen Hewer, Gill Huckerby, John Hughes, Margaret Hughes, Penny Kent, Wendy Klein, Jane Larman, Fiona Males, Kathryn Mathews, John Mathews, Sarah Mescal, Alison Munro, Richard North, Marjorie Osborne, Russell Palmer, Margaret Shiner, Pat Stroud, Peter Stroud, Jenny Tarvet, Anthony Taylor, Yolissa Tite, Sue Thompson, Michael Tutt, Nigel Voyce, Maureen Voyce, Mercia Wallace, Glen White-Head.

Proposed by Gill Huckerby; seconded Liz Kassel; Approved

Kenneth expressed thanks for the expanded list and especially to Sue Dyson for enlisting more people to the role

### **9. Election of Assistant Churchwarden/s for St. Michaels**

Assistant church wardens assist with the smooth running of the Sunday service and assist when wardens are not available.

Chris Allen and Rachel Naylor indicated interest again – proposed by Nigel Voyce; seconded Michael Tutt; Approved.

Thank you to Chris and Rachel for their service as assistant wardens in 2014-15.

### **10. To receive the Annual Report of the PCC including the accounts for the year ended 31.12.2014**

The annual report has been distributed.

Kenneth expressed thanks to all who contributed and especially to Georgie for organising the report. A significant thank you also to Gill Huckerby for all the work in sorting and auditing the accounts for all of us.

John Bethell wrote a submission for review at this meeting as follows. Kenneth summarised the text and added it to the review of the report:

*Patronal Festival 2014.*

*For members of St Michael's choir, and perhaps more generally, this will have been the year's most memorable occasion and, though it has been mentioned elsewhere in the report, full justice to it has perhaps not yet been done. It marked the 40th anniversary of Richard Bond, our beloved Organist and Choir Master, in the parish. The Bishop of St Albans presided over Parish Communion that morning, itself a high compliment to Richard. The service was followed by presentations, short speeches and refreshments, a delightfully low-key occasion of the kind much relished by St Michael's people. It was pleasant to see a number of former boy-choristers in attendance. That evening, members of the choir from St Saviours joined us for Evensong. The joint choir-practice was followed by tea and a small further presentation to Richard. All in all a joyful and memorable day.*

*I would particularly like to pay tribute to Chris Wiley, former head-chorister, who in the weeks beforehand took on much of the preparation for the event. He supplied the archive prints which formed the backdrop to the presentations in the Parish Centre, which he also compered most capably. John Bethell.*

Further questions or comments were encouraged, however, there were none. The two sections were approved. Proposed: Peter Limebear; Seconded: Godfrey Davey; Approved

### **11. Appointment of Reviewing Accountant**

Jennie Evans reviewed the accounts for this past year. She is a mother at the primary school and kindly did so free of charge. Subject to Jennie's agreement, in her absence, it was proposed that she take on the reviewing accountant role again for the upcoming year. PCC to find an alternative if necessary. Nominated: Gill Huckerby; Approved

## Parish

### 12. Chairman's Remarks

Kenneth was pleased to be addressing a wider cross section of our parish than in past APCMs

An annual meeting is a chance to do 3 things:

1. Revisit our foundational principles and common mission
  - Worship and service grounded in the gospel
  - How we hope to do this is set out in MAP – striving for spiritual depth, outreach, and children and young people ('deep roots, fresh shoots')
2. Review our progress
  - Looking at the annual report
  - Particular thanks to liturgical colleagues – John and Mike; most immediate lay colleagues – Imogen, Graham, Gill, Georgie, Rachel, Chris, Paul and Eike
3. Plan for the future
  - Elections held today; very pleased to have a full PCC and two church wardens
  - Thank you to all for attending this important meeting

Tying all three of these areas together, Kenneth wanted to offer 3 areas of particular encouragement:

1. Encouragement to Attendance:
  - 'Come to church!' Contacts and associational membership is increasing but our congregations are static
  - We need a culture of encouragement – we have worked on our welcome to much success but we need more people to be 'open at the edges, and committed at the core'.
  - Why? The point of coming to church is not to benefit God, but rather to benefit us and those around us when we do attend; gives mutual support
  - We are privileged in that we can come to church in peace and pray for those who cannot. We must not take this for granted.
2. Encouragement to Giving:
  - £86,000 has been contributed to the heating fund (£14,000 under target); many thanks to those who have given; looking to close the heating appeal on 31 July 2015 in order to focus on the very necessary day-to-day, ongoing costs of running the church
  - We have had a lot of fabric costs in the past 5 years, however, the primary cost of any church is ministry (the parish share is over £80,000 each year). Routine maintenance is approximately £10,000.
  - We need regular, faithful giving. Currently fewer than 100 people give by standing order or other regular giving scheme. We have nearly 200 people on the electoral roll, and easily 500 people receiving our monthly communications. We need to encourage regular giving and support for this parish.
  - Thank you to all for your generosity
3. Encouragement to Service:
  - Fantastic to see such a good response to the PCC elections – thank you for your commitment and it is great to have a full PCC
  - Also the sense of urgency created with the crucial churchwarden election not only created a result, but a very fine result indeed
  - We are in a period of significant changeover in other areas of parish life – the following four areas fall below the radar but are very important to the working of the parish:
    - Churchyard Working Party – handover to Jim Mann; thank you to Anthony for 20 years of service
    - Youth Work – Anita Lindeman and Anne Harold – thank you and to

## Parish

- anyone who wants to help, there are plenty of opportunities
- Memorial Hall – Thanks to Mike Western for the finance and to Joan Baker for the bookings. Both have done a huge amount of work over many years
  - Foundation governor of St. Michael's School – Thanks to Alison Penny who has been the chair for nearly 2 years

At one level, cycling of volunteers is good and has been found to create church growth (especially as documented in *From Anecdote to Evidence*). The cycling of volunteers allows us to say thank you and look for what they are called to do next. We have reached a point of relative stability in the church and so people feel they can change.

However, cycling of too many people too quickly can potentially cause problems. There are a number of gaps at the moment: Practical jobs (cleaning and electrics); Youth work; Church welcoming. Graham has a list of jobs that might improve St. Michaels, so please approach him if you are able to help.

Group leaders need to think internally and locally about succession planning

Again, this is why a culture of encouragement is helpful; open at the edges, and committed at the core

One particular area of opportunity for service which needs to be mentioned again is liturgical leadership in the parish. We need to have readers from within the parish in order to develop worship and indeed to attract a curate in the future

Kenneth stated that he wanted to draw to attention that 2016 is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of John Hayton's ordination. December 2015 is also his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. This changes his status to 'Permission to Officiate'. He may continue to minister at his earlier levels, but this change in status should not be ignored. Without John, we would certainly have fewer services and diminished teaching. Clergy and readers grow in churches. God calls on ordinary women and men to be the vicars and preachers of the future. Could this be you?

In summary, Kenneth encouraged all to respond to Christ's sacrifice with a natural response in attendance at worship and sacrificial giving of time and money. He was clear to say that it is encouragement that is needed as there is so much that is flourishing and there are great opportunities to build on the successes of 2014.

Commend to God and to you our revisiting of principles, review of progress, and plans for the future as we seek to be deep roots and fresh shoots in this place

### **13. Matters arising from the minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014 or discussion of matters of parochial general interest**

None submitted prior to meeting

Michael Tutt asked about voting procedures. Kenneth explained that uncontested elections could not be opposed, and it would be ungracious to oppose appointment to posts like stewards where there are unlimited numbers. Andrew de Csillery noted that time had been allowed for comment, for example, on the Annual Report.

Gillian Davey expressed a sincere thank you to Kenneth for all he does and for establishing a full PCC for another year

### **14. Date of Next Meeting**

Sunday morning APCM received very well and therefore, will repeat again next year  
24 April 2016

## Parish

### Public Benefit Statement

Kenneth Padley  
01727 835037  
kennethpadley@gmail.com

The Ecclesiastical Parish of St Michael's in St Albans (UK Registered Charity 1132915) exists to offer Christian worship, teaching and pastoral care. Our provisions are open to those of all faiths and none, and are free at the point of delivery. (Some occasional offices do incur statutory fees, although we strive to ensure that none are excluded on the grounds of economic or other disadvantage.)

During the past year, public benefit has been advanced in many ways, including:

1. the provision of regular and seasonal worship in sacrament, liturgy and song;
2. the provision of occasional offices - baptisms, weddings, funerals - to mark important stages in the journey of life;
3. the provision of opportunities to engage with Christian doctrine in public preaching, teaching, small groups and children's activities, both inside and outside of church, including in and for local schools;
4. the provision of services to vulnerable groups, including our Lunch Club for elderly parishioners and the Tiny Tots play group for pre-school children and their parents/carers;
5. the provision of training in musical performance and theory through our choirs, organ scholarship, and bell-ringing;
6. the provision of numerous formal and informal acts of pastoral care;
7. the maintenance of St Michael's and St Mary's as buildings of listed heritage in stone, wood, glass and metal;
8. the supply of St Michael's as a venue for reflection, prayer, and tourism, open most days of the year;
9. the maintenance and supply of the Parish Centre, Memorial Hall, and Childwick Schoolroom as spaces for community gathering and hire, including at discounted rates to partner charities.

Subsequent entries in this Annual Report expand on the above.

## Parish

### Patterns of Church Life

This chart gives some comparison of our current life against figures from earlier years. Statistics should neither imprison nor frighten us, but they do offer some indication of shoots of growth and broader patterns in society.

**Kenneth Padley**  
**01727 835037**  
 kennethpadley@gmail.com

#### Notes

- These figures are for regular services only. The Pastoral and Worship committee monitors attendance at seasonal and special events but these are not listed here because they vary widely in content, publicity, etc.;
- These figures are not the same as the 'Usual Sunday Attendance' (on which our Parish Share to the diocese is calculated) because that figure does not include anomalous attendance (e.g. at baptisms);
- Averages are rounded to the nearest whole;
- Evensong in St Michael's used to be weekly and is currently monthly.

		1973	1983	1993	2003	2008	2012	2013	2014	2015
Sunday 8am	Communicants	28	26	19	17	9	10	9	8	8
Sunday 9.30am	Communicants	65	126	92	69	77	72	76	76	75
	Attendance <16	N/A	N/A	N/A	16	24	19	23	25	24
	Attendance ≥16	N/A	N/A	N/A	75	90	79	86	83	82
Sunday 6.30pm	Attendance <16	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	7	11	10
	Attendance ≥16	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	24	22	27	27
Sunday 6pm (St Mary's)	Attendance	N/A	27	22	18	17	14	15	13	11
Weds 10am	Communicants	14	13	11	12	11	7	7	8	8
Baptisms	Parish	N/A	26	30	26	12	12	13	13	16
Confirmations	Parish	15	15	14	0	0	8	9	5	5
Admissions to Communion	Parish	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	8	6	8
Weddings	St Michael's	32	22	17	11	9	7	9	7	6
	St Mary's	2	1	2	2	1	1	3	2	0

## Pastoral and Worship

### Pastoral and Worship Committee Report

Gillian Davey  
01727 851308

godfreydavey@yahoo.co.uk

The Pastoral and Worship Committee seeks to encourage, support and provide opportunities in all areas of worship and spirituality, pastoral care, study and education, for adults and children.

Two new members have widened our representation of church life. Bronwen Parr is on the pastoral visiting team, particularly – with Phillip Parr—in ministry at Fosse House. Louise Savory has small children and is a link with young families.

The committee discussed regular worship as well as planning and reviewing special services and occasions. Varied opportunities for study have been offered.

Lent Bible Studies, with the theme of “The Wilderness”, were well attended and included some new to these.

The Palm Sunday walk, with donkey, took a new route from Prae Wood School, with an excellent turnout in spite of rain. Good Friday services, including the children’s service, were well balanced, though there is still a call for more silence in the adult services. Rev. Philip Hobday’s talks on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and sermon on Easter Sunday, were particularly deeply appreciated.

Three summer sermons, from Mike, Kenneth and John, focused on different approaches to prayer, charismatic, contemplative and Ignatian. Very Rev. Jeffrey John preached at the Patronal Festival Evensong.

The Autumn Programme offered three “God in the pub” evenings at The Portland Arms, tackling big questions around God, Evil and Jesus in a relaxed atmosphere. Though not drawing in a large number, this was a worthwhile enterprise eliciting discussion with a different feel. These were followed by two evenings on the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke.

In December, Alison Hook led an excellent tour of the church and talk on seasonal traditions. The Quiet Evening offered stillness and silence. There were Advent Carols and wonderful Christmas services, Carols, Nativity Play, Christingle, Crib.....and even Santa’s Singing Workshop!

We are grateful to all who contribute to the richness of our worship in so many ways, to the choir whose part has been greatly appreciated, and all involved with our children and young people.

We have reflected on the results of a survey taken in the September All Age Service about how St. Michael’s helps people meet with God and how we might do that better.

As part of our standing responsibilities, the committee carried out its annual review of Safeguarding Policy, led by Alison Ferreira.

As ever, we thank all those groups and individuals who give such invaluable service and pastoral support. And to Kenneth, huge thanks – for his ministry and teaching, inspiring leadership and generous pastoral care.

### Climbers

Holly Cross

hollystimpson@gmail.com

Climbers is Sunday Church for children from birth to school age, when they move up to Explorers. It runs on a Sunday at 9.30am downstairs in the Parish Centre whilst the service is on in Church (except for Family Service when Climbers are in Church).

The format of the classes is based on the themes in Church that week (where they can be), however as most of the children are very little and the activities include a lot of gluing, sticking and colouring. We always start and finish with a prayer and sometimes have a little music at clearing up time (always with a Christian theme).

Some weeks there can be a lot of children, 10+, then another week only one or two. There are a few regular attendees and then some that only come once a while.



## Pastoral and Worship

**Explorers** January saw several Explorers receive bronze certificates or attending 50 Sundays. These were awarded in church and therefore celebrated with the whole congregation.

**Jo Fabian**  
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In February the children's groups decided that a more accurate description of our Sunday worship would be "children's church" because "School" sometimes put new children off coming. Explorers from St Michael's led a school assembly, explaining what we do and the new name, via a short sketch. We repeated this in church at the next family service.

The Good Friday workshop attracted 8 Explorers this year

A large board is now hanging in the main corridor at St Michael's School, full of pictures of Children's Church activities throughout the year.

July was the end of term picnic and games, where all ages got the chance to help each other take part in group games. Children's church also supplied leaflets and artwork/self portraits around "vine" imagery for display on the church stall at the school fair.

Autumn term saw the children's harvest window adorned with a large seed and leaf picture, made by Explorers celebrating God's creation.

This year's Nativity/Advent play saw the older groups, Seekers and Explorers, tell the Christmas story with a modern twist.

**Seekers** Seekers have had a busy year with new challenges together with the usual highlights. Our age group structure was clarified this year, with children in years 3 to 7 belonging to Seekers and children in year 10 and above acting as helpers if they wish, some for their service section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. A notable event this year was our change of name from Sunday School to Children's Church, which took place in March with a short presentation in church.

**Pauline Wiley**  
01727 868532  
pjw1024@hotmail.co.uk

As always Seekers have joined with Explorers for the start of our mornings in the school. We share a short service of worship with hymns, reading, reflection and prayers before the educational part of our meeting, discussing the lesson in depth and sharing our ideas. We follow this with puzzles, crafts and activities especially related to charity work and how we can be good followers of Jesus. This year, as has been the pattern in the past, we have been supporting Keech Cottage Children's Hospice.

A new challenge this year has been taking on the role of stewards at some family services together with regular coffee making and gospel reading. The children have really risen to the challenge and have proved to be efficient and welcoming. The children also enjoyed taking part in the Good Friday service and workshop where we made beautiful stained glass window crosses.

One highlight this year has been taking part in a national Yew Tree project, under the guidance of Steve Roberts. We measured the girth of the trees and from this could estimate their age. We were surprised to find that the oldest tree was in the Vicarage garden, an amazing 750 years old. We have also had great fun at our end of year sports and picnic, when we joined with Explorers to celebrate the end of the academic year. The Nativity this year took the form of a play involving all the children from reception to year 7. It was a story in which children learned through their actions that life is what you make it and there are always some, including Jesus as a baby, who are much worse off than you.

Finally congratulations to five members of the group who have received their 50 attendances bronze certificates during the year and to our members who completed the Communion course in the Spring, taking their first Communion on Mothering Sunday.

**Jellies (Trailblazers)** Jenny Tarvet, Helen Buck, Victoria Hinton and Berit Muller-Pebody took over the

## Pastoral and Worship

Jenny Tarvet  
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jtarvet1609@yahoo.co.uk

running of Trailblazers in September 2015. Trailblazers is aimed at children from Year 7 upwards and we meet monthly usually on a Sunday evening. Upwards of 9 children regularly attend these meetings. The sessions follow a similar format:-

Welcome and Introduction.  
Prayers initiated by both adults and children.  
An appropriate bible reading followed by discussion.  
Games linked to the theme of the evening.

We held three meetings last year in September, October and November.

The first meeting's theme was "Helping Others" accompanied by the reading of the story of the Good Samaritan, discussion and an hilarious game of "Blindfold Jelly."

The October meeting focussed on the refugee crisis with the group discussing whether Great Britain should take refugees or not and the problems associated with this decision.

In November we discussed if there was such a thing as a Just War. We also made gingerbread biscuits as presents for the past two leaders who had run Trailblazers for many years.

### Study Groups

Kenneth Padley  
01727 835037  
kennethpadley@gmail.com

In addition to **preaching** from our 'home' team, it was a delight to welcome Revd Philip Hobday, then Dean of Magdalene College Cambridge, as our speaker on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Day. Later in the year we heard an inspiring address about angels from Very Revd Dr Jeffrey John at Evensong on St Michael's Day.

Alongside our regular worship and social life, parishioners meet in a number of **small groups** for study and prayer. Some of these like our two **house groups** are ongoing arrangements of long-standing. Others are discrete groups that come together for a short period in order to fulfil a particular function.

- Four Lent Bible studies examined scriptural perspectives on the **wilderness**.
- Eight children were **admitted to communion** on Mothering Sunday.
- Within our **Holy Week programme**, three addresses considered the perspectives of Pilate, Peter and Judas on the suffering of Jesus.
- Phillip Parr's excellent **Greek class** drew to a close in mid-2015, the group having mastered basic reading of the New Testament text.
- Three **God in the Pub** evenings in September and October offered a forum for sharing belief about God, the problem of evil, and our understanding of Jesus. They attracted a slightly different mix from other small groups and I have been made aware of how they were noted in the wider community as a different way of doing Church.
- During November, two Bible study evenings paid detailed attention to Matthew and Luke's famous **infancy narratives**. The second of these was particularly well attended.
- Two **confirmation** groups for adults have run in 2015. I warmly recommend this six-session exploration of Christian faith. Those who attend need not be confirmed at the end of the process if they do not feel that's right for them. Adult confirmation groups may also act as a refresher for those who have been confirmed in the past.

### Adult Choir

Andrew Wills  
john.wills2@sky.com

Another year with a mixture of challenging and familiar music, including the liturgical use of a setting of the Mass. The usual thanks to the guest voices that have augmented our numbers through the year, including some new to us.

Any further voices who would care to join us would be very welcome.

## Pastoral and Worship

Children's Choir 2015 has been another great year for the juniors. Highlights include:

Rob Milner  
01727 761454  
milnerrobert1@aol.com

- 3 Dean's Awards
- 6 attendees at the RSCM Bath Course
- Wonderful celebration of Music Sunday with Haydn Mass and Hallelujah Chorus
- Most challenging music sung to date

We have around 18 members (3 boys) and have retained almost all of our long-standing members and, attracted some more committed members, whilst losing some transient members.

The quality of the choir has increased as our older singers have matured. Our three strong choristers are being joined by a couple of younger singers in that category with a good number following close behind. Rosanna, Jo and Imogen all achieved the Dean's Award this year – the first examined awards we have done with this choir.

We had a good attendance from our choristers at the annual RSCM Bath Course in August. Evensong in Bath Abbey was a wonderful treat. I hope even more will attend next year.

We celebrated the RSCM Music Sunday for the first time this year – singing the wonderful 'Little Organ Mass'. The centrepiece was a wonderful solo by one of our choristers. I think both adults, children and congregation enjoyed this immensely. Watching the congregational heads look back in shock when we started the Hallelujah chorus was another highlight of that service!

We performed our most challenging Evening service setting in July – Howell's Collegium Regale – not perfect but a decent first attempt.

At Christmas we sang the most challenging carol we have done to date – Chilcott's Shepherd's Carol. In Dulci Jubilo went well and there was a major improvement to Taverner's The Lamb. Cantique de Noel continues to provide our senior choristers with a great opportunity to show off their talents and maybe bring a tear to the eye!

A good year. Let's hope for even more next year!

Bellringers

Alison Evans  
01727 856845  
ali-

son.evans@btinternet.com

Although our number of regular ringing members has remained stable at six, the support we get from ringers affiliated to other local bands has diminished which has had an adverse effect on our ability to raise a band for service ringing and practices; we missed three Sunday mornings, nine Evensongs and six practices for lack of personnel. Therefore, it remains the case that we need new members.

During the year, we tried a number of initiatives with a view to recruitment. We rang for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day for which the local press gave us good coverage in print and online; we rang before the start of the Folk Evening in July; and an article was published in the parish magazine and online but none of these resulted in any interest, which is disheartening.

Nevertheless, we try to maintain interest for those who do come, by consolidating and extending our repertoire of methods (especially those we can ring on Sundays) and encouraging different ringers to conduct. The lack of ringers means we normally only ring six bells but we have attempted some out-of-the-ordinary methods, and progress has been pleasing. We also mastered a new method for eight bells which we rang on our outing.

Our finances remain stable and we have made a contribution to the church for the work on the lighting and one to FEED. We continue to take our turn on the rota for serving coffee on Sundays. We rang for five weddings during the year and welcomed eight visiting bands. For our outing in October, we enjoyed ringing at six towers in

## Pastoral and Worship

South Oxfordshire, concluding with an evening meal. A Christmas meal at The Six Bells was also popular.

**Servers** On some Sundays I serve at church.

**Perdy Broad** It was scary the first time I did it because I thought I would do something wrong. But it all went well and now I enjoy it.

I start off going to the vestry, where everyone goes to get ready, to get my Alb on. After that, me and my friends (there's normally 3 or 4 of us), go down to the choir chamber.

In the middle of the Service, we do the Gospel Procession, in which I hold the candle. We also help get the bread and wine for Communion.

At the end of the service we lead the Procession out and say a pray.

In summary, I would recommend becoming a Server to all those who like being helpful and want to get involved with church activities.

**Sacristan Team** I write on behalf of the invisible band of helpers that, every week, 'set out' the communion table, those who 'clear away', others that wash the linen, replace the candles and mend the frontals. A small job some may say, but important we think in the life of the church. To all Sacristans, may I say thank you for your support over the past year.

**Ann Dean,**  
01727 867664  
d.dean868@btinternet.com

**Flowers** There has been an arrangement at the altar all Sundays except during Lent and Advent. Now that the church is open during the week it is recognized that the flowers are an important part of the welcome that should greet our visitors and we endeavour to keep them looking fresh throughout the week.

**Wendy May**  
01727 853695  
postmaster@i-c-  
a.demon.co.uk

The Festivals of Christmas, Easter and Harvest have been marked with decoration throughout the church. All members of the congregation are encouraged to participate and the more people who contribute with decorations and flowers, the more beautiful the church looks.

**Pastoral Visiting Team** Visiting has again been principally at Fosse House, a residential home within the parish. Phillip and Bronwen Parr have visited usually several times a week, making contact with a number of residents. In addition, Bronwen has organised simplified services approximately monthly. There is a Bible reading and singing familiar hymns, accompanied by Phillip on the electric piano and also the distribution of Holy Communion, for any who wish to receive, followed by a chat over coffee and biscuits. The opportunity to share in worship is clearly valued by the residents. A highlight was when the St Michael's Junior Choir, conducted by Rob Milner, visited Fosse House just before Christmas.

**Bronwen Parr**  
01727 864645  
bronwenparr@hotmail.com

It has been a privilege to be part of St Michael's outreach in our community. The Vicar would be pleased to receive the names of any other parishioners who would like an occasional visit in their own homes.

**Bereavement Support Team** About three years ago, this team was formed and then commissioned in church, with the aim of being available for people in the Parish who have been bereaved.

**Bronwen Hewer**  
01727 864224  
j\_hewer@sky.com

When one of our clergy visits a family to arrange a funeral, it is ascertained whether further contact from the church might be welcomed. Our group is then notified and we follow this up with a phone call and a visit if requested.

## Pastoral and Worship

This year we have made contact with 12 people, mainly by phone, but have also made a number of visits together with a chat over a cup of tea. We are mainly offering a listening ear and a little companionship.

We also hold a Service of Remembrance in November, when people who have previously been bereaved, are invited to come to church to remember and reflect on their loved ones in the peace and quiet of our church.

**Luncheon Club** Every second Tuesday of each month the Parish Centre buzzes with the happy chatter of old friends as members and volunteers of our Lunch Club meet to share a home cooked lunch. Our team of cooks continues to produce a range of nourishing and tasty meals, the highlight of the year being our renowned Christmas Dinner.

**Margaret Shiner**  
**01727 866082**

margaretshiner  
@btinternet.com

In 2015 we again had a summer outing to Frost's Garden Centre, Woburn Sands and, in November, members were able to make a start on their Christmas shopping and enjoy lunch at Burston's Garden Centre.

**Gill Huckerby**  
**01727 864269**

gill.huckerby@btinternet.co  
m

Our membership has dropped a little over the last few years and if you, or anyone you know would like to join us, please ring either Gill or Margaret.

To continue to offer this very important support for our members we need your help in one or two ways:

- Could you cook a main course or a pudding for 36 people just once a year? All expenses would be met, and our members are very appreciative!
- Could you offer an occasional lift to and from the Parish Centre on Lunch Club days? It would be so useful to have a list of drivers who could help now and then.

I look forward to being inundated with offers!

## Mission and Community

### Mission and Community Committee Report

Rachel Naylor  
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thesallylunn@hotmail.com

The principal aim of the Mission and Community Committee (the "M&CC") remains to encourage, support and initiate activities which raise the profile of St Michael's and enable us to connect and engage with, and make welcome, the wider community within our Parish.

During 2015, M&CC has continued to run a number of events to seek to achieve this. Once again, we ran two large community events, the St Michael's Folk Night in July and the St Michael's Church Bonfire party in October. Both events brought in record numbers of people and profit this year and the M&CC would like to offer our sincere thanks to all the people who helped us make these so successful.

St Michael's Folk Night saw:

- Over 1,300 people come into the churchyard during the evening to enjoy the festivities.
- The opening of the St Michael's Folk evening by the Bell ringers, which proved hugely popular and received great feedback..... 'I loved hearing the bells'....'The bells really set the scene....great overture'. Thank you to all concerned; your contribution was enjoyed by many and we hope that you will remain a regular part of the folk evening in future years!
- The return of the legendary Swanvesta Social Club, who ensured the evening went with a swing and again, generously provided their services, on a charitable basis, to support St Michael's Church.
- The return of the very popular local brewery, the 3 Brewers, to complement the St Michael's bar staffed by various members of the St Michael's congregation.
- The addition of a hog roast and marquee cover, courtesy of the Lower Red Lion.
- A great community event, enjoyed by all - a huge thank you to ALL involved.

The Annual Church Bonfire saw:

- Record numbers, with tickets completely sold out...and again record profits made.
- Fantastic teamwork from a large number of volunteers, who turned up on a very soggy morning, to set things up and made sure it was a fantastic success.
- A number of new families wanting to find out more about St Michael's as a result of attending the event. Again, a huge thank you to ALL involved!

Other ongoing projects include:

- Reviewing the St Michael's Charity Giving. We would be interested to hear from anyone who wishes to promote a particular cause in 2016.
- Distribution of Easter and Christmas Cards within our Parish, with the help of members of the congregation. Thank you to all involved.
- The continued review and improvement of the communications function at St Michael's, through both the monthly Parish Magazine and our online communications.

We are also keen to consider a number of new initiatives to broaden our community reach, albeit progress has been slower than we had hoped in 2015, largely due to lack of manpower. The second half of 2015 saw us welcome a number of new members to the M&CC and we hope to be able to progress some of these new initiatives further in 2016. We look forward to working with the Friends of St Michael's and St Michael's School PTA on some of these... watch this space!

If anyone wishes to find out any more about the work of the M&CC, or is interested in getting involved, either as a member of the M&CC, or to assist with specific events/projects, we would love to hear from you...any help you can offer is always welcome. Why not come along to a meeting and find out more? If you are interested please contact Rachel Naylor ([thesallylunn@hotmail.com](mailto:thesallylunn@hotmail.com)/ 01727 846511).

## Mission and Community

Welcome,  
Visitors and  
Stewards

Sue Dyson  
01727 833524  
sue.dyson2@gmail.com

As members of the congregation of St. Michael's, we are all responsible for the welcome we extend to each other and to newcomers on a Sunday or at any event during the week.

I give my particular thanks to the Stewards, who arrive early before a service, to give out service sheets and pew sheets but mainly to give a smile and a friendly welcome to those crossing the threshold.

Special thanks are also due to the Churchwatchers, who volunteer to do a regular session for a few hours each month in the summer, to welcome visitors to our church.

As the Welcome Coordinator, I meet and greet newcomers on a Sunday morning, introduce them to other people in the congregation and act as a point of contact for them in the future. I welcome other groups such as the International Organ Festival to St. Michael's and whenever possible, extend hospitality to those working in the church.

Tiny Tots

Katie Casemore  
01727 812306  
kt@katiecasemore.com

Tiny Tots continues to be a fun, relaxed and friendly place for mums and children to meet every Tuesday during term time.

We are lucky to have an extensive toy collection, suitable for babies & toddlers alike, including a playdoh table and arts & crafts activities each week, provided by our wonderful volunteer Susan.

Michael continues to be an asset to our team and his 'cafe' downstairs in the latter part of the session is still a highlight for both mums and toddlers!

Jane has also joined the team of volunteers this year and her continued support in the setting up and clearing up of toys has been invaluable so far!

We look forward to another great year at Tiny Tots in 2016.

Schools

Kenneth Padley  
01727 835037  
kennethpadley@gmail.com

The appointment of Mrs Alison Rafferty as Headteacher of **St Michael's Church of England Primary** has brought renewed vision and energy to the school with which the parish has most significant and frequent contact. The PCC continues to nominate five Foundation Governors; in addition I am an *ex officio* Governor and two other parishioners serve as Foundation Governors for the diocese.

I always enjoy receiving invitations to speak with pupils in the others schools in the parish, **Prae Wood Primary** and **Townsend Church of England Secondary**. New departures this year include commencing the parish's Palm Sunday walk from Prae Wood, the opportunity to welcome parents to the Prae Wood Christmas service, and Bob May's gathering of six parishioners into a careers carousel for Year 12 students at Townsend.

From beyond our parish, it was a pleasure to welcome **Bishop Hatfield Girls' School** to St Michael's as part of their annual visit to Verulamium. I have had preliminary conversations with Verulamium Museum about whether more could be done with visiting schools, now that St Michael's is open throughout the week.

Traidcraft

Val Chiesa  
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chiesa@btinternet.com

The value of Traidcraft sales in 2015 over 2014 has risen again. The Fair Deal World Shop in Luton has changed its trading name to My Fair World and continues to be my source of supply. I visit the shop monthly to make up and collect my orders and all our invoices are paid to them rather than Traidcraft directly; we benefit from the bulk discount offered on consumables.

Eswatini products from Swaziland have survived their rocky patch and are now part of

## Mission and Community

the Traidcraft catalogue stock of sauces and jams. The range of products has slightly reduced to ensure a regular supply and we no longer get cape gooseberry (apologies to the Ferreiras!). A second Swazi co-operative, Mavubetse, made up of 9 grandmothers caring for their grandchildren, grows the chillis for the Black Mamba sauces we now stock. Many of the children are HIV/AIDS orphans, or their parents have left to work elsewhere. As with all Swazi products, the ingredients are fully organic and the income from these enterprises offers much needed income in a poor country with few resources. If you haven't tried these or the Ukuva condiments, such as lemon pepper, rainbow pepper and peri peri, I would recommend them to add flavour to any dish. The Green Mamba range includes a coriander jalapeno pesto which passed the Italian taste test at home and goes well with Traidcraft organic pasta.

New products this year include a bigger range of quinoa products from Peru, including microwavable packs with split peas. Liberation has also increased the range of nut-based snack packets to include seeds and berries, pear, dark chocolate and ginger. Clean and Fair produces handwash, washing up liquid, laundry liquid and multi-surface cleaner in individual or large refill sizes (5 litres). Tea bags, either one- or two-cup, can be purchased in catering sizes (440 or 550) and I can order these for anyone interested.

Cards continue to sell well be they the paper cut-out Cards from Africa made by young people caring for their siblings or the embroidered cards from India and Bangladesh made by women, many of them widowed and unable to work outside the home.

As usual, I would like to thank regular customers for their support and whichever Caesar Augustus decreed that we have ground coffee every week after service, as it is being sourced from Traidcraft.

**Website**  
www.stmichaels-  
parishchurch.org.uk

The website has continued to expand. The contents of a number of pages have been updated and a large number of photographs of parish activity have been added to the gallery. John Bethell has supplied most of these, with Pauline Wiley providing those from the children's groups.

**Roger Gray**  
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Recently, the menu structure has been altered in order to emphasise some of the more important activities of the church.

### Visitor Statistics

Visitor statistics for December 2015 were generally similar to 2014 and are shown below:

December 2015	January 2016 (1-29)
Sessions UK: 1,030 Rest of Europe: 546 North America: 1,944 Rest of World: 219	Sessions UK: 925 Rest of Europe: 420 North America: 1,633 Rest of World: 719
Time Spent per Session 1 minute: 110 2.5 minutes: 198 6-15 minutes: 201 16+ minutes: 133	Time Spent per Session 1 minute: 88 2.5 minutes: 171 6-15 minutes: 121 16+ minutes: 85
Most Visited Pages Home: 1,527 Gallery: 432 Parish: 310 Worship: 216 Communications: 166 Meeting Rooms: 165	Most Visited Pages Home: 1,527 Gallery: 286 Parish: 310 Worship: 216 Communications: 166 Meeting Rooms: 377 Heritage: 355



## Mission and Community

### Other Statistics

Total space allowed by web host: 15 Gbytes  
Total space occupied by website: 300 Mbytes (approx)  
Total number of files in website: 1,704

**Parish News Magazine** I would like firstly to thank everyone involved with the Parish News, committee members and contributors, for the help and support they have given to both myself and Editorial Committee in general this year.

**Kerry Wells**  
jkwells79@yahoo.com The Editorial Committee currently consists of Peter Limebear, Jenny Roberts, Sue Dyson, Imogen Broad, Nigel Voyce, Val Carberry, Denise Gaskill and myself. During 2015 Jenny Roberts has stepped down as copy-editor of the magazine but remains a member of the committee. Her role is being ably shouldered by our new member, Katherine Crowdell, who is currently in the process of having the role handed over to her. A great thank you must go to Jenny who has been an invaluable contributor to the magazine and we are very grateful to retain her expertise on the editorial committee.

There are currently 2 vacancies for additional committee members. Val Carberry has continued as distributor of the magazine and we thank her very much for continuing so ably in that role. Nigel Voyce continues on as our financial manager and Denise Gaskill as our producer. We are very grateful for their experience and input. I'd again like to make special mention of Sue Dyson and Peter Limebear who have been endlessly helpful and generous with their knowledge of the Parish and parishioners.

This year will be my last year as editor and we are currently looking to recruit someone to fill this role. If we are unable to do so I will continue in my role until the end of this payment year and then we will have to close the magazine.

We have no member of the Editorial Committee from St Mary's, Childwickbury. Consequently there is some concern that we may not be serving the Childwickbury community in the way we might like.

Kenneth continues as a regular contributor and his enthusiasm for the magazine is very encouraging. As a committee we feel supported and valued by Kenneth's input and interest.

We have endeavoured to keep editions to approximately 23-25 pages, making exceptions for larger editions where we publish over two months. This has been in order to bring printing costs for the magazine under control. We have frequently been unable to achieve this number with our average page number sitting at 30 pages per edition. Improved revenue from advertisements and a reduced print number have instead helped to keep the magazine closer to budget this year.

We continue to hope to achieve a closer working relationship with the Church's other committees and groups, in order to better publicise Church and Parish activities. The committee has this year decided to offer the magazine as a pdf by email. There has been limited take up of this service but we believe that will increase over time.

Kalkwik continues as our printer.

## Stewardship

### Stewardship Committee Report

Nigel Voyce  
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Yet another very active year in 2015 with many challenges which your stewardship committee have grasped. My sincere thanks to all those on the committee for their time, support and dedication. I am pleased to report that the committee remains at full strength.

The replacement of the entire church heating system started in 2014 and was completed in 2015. Through generous contributions we exceeded our fund raising target of £100k towards this essential project. We also completed the floor replacement at the west end of the church to allow for a more versatile usage of that space. We have investigated a new fold back sound system for the choir together with estimates for organ cleaning once the lighting project has been completed.

We have been working to address many of the items in the 2012 quinquennial inspection and to that end, we have needed to submit several Archdeacon and faculty requests for improvements. Notably this has included the new lighting project which was identified in 2014 and which has now been passed, quotations received and approved, ready for the work to start in the first half of 2016.

Plans have been put in place and quotes sought to prepare the School House Flat for our new training curate.

The churchyard gates have been repaired and the benches and wooden church doors have all been treated with preservatives to ensure longevity and appearance.

Following the 2014 rental review of the Parish Centre and Memorial Hall, new ways of working are now attracting new groups as we seek to maximise hire usage and income. To this end the Memorial Hall has replaced the floor, installed a keypad entry system, appointed a new heating maintenance supplier, fitted a notice board and undergone redecoration. Concerning the Parish centre, we continue to work to a longer term business plan to provide further improvements to the fabric.

In addition to maintaining the overall fabric of the buildings, we also strive to ensure the financial well-being of the church through giving programmes, and wherever possible to identify economies and to seek to rationalise and simplify the work involved. We also continue to review and update all the health and safety aspects of the church and its associated buildings.

### St Michael's Memorial Hall

Danielle Argent  
07444 835274  
memhall3@gmail.com

**Committee:** Kenneth Padley, Danielle Argent, Rosie Tasker, Peter Lindeman

**Treasurer:** Gill Huckerby **Hall Administrator:** Danielle Argent

2015 included many big changes for the Memorial hall. The administration was successfully moved from various people to one point of contact in August, and is now based in the Parish Office. Our regular hirers and new clients can now benefit from a single point of contact and dedicated phone number and email. This has allowed us to provide a much better service and also creates opportunities to offer other facilities such as the Parish Centre if requirements or availability are an issue at the hall.

The Committee has undertaken some key refurbishments to the hall in 2015. The main hall floor was replaced in April creating a much safer environment for all our users. The main hall was also redecorated in August. This much needed work has vastly improved the space and people's perception of it. It is now a calm and welcoming area with much more appeal for potential hirers. The final improvement we made was replacing the lock to the side entrance door. This has eliminated the need for multiple key holders and the risk of ad hoc hire failing to return them. All hirers use a four digit code which is issued and controlled by the hall administrator.

Ad hoc hire was consistently strong in the last quarter of the year due to seasonal business and improved administration, especially the minimal turnaround time of initial enquiries. The hall also has 7 regular clubs ranging from a Theatre group to Archery.

## Stewardship

Most of these clubs have been with us for many years. We also have a full time nurse-ry in the hall that have been with us for almost 20 years.

St Mary's  
Schoolroom  
Sara Craven  
01727 838772

The St Mary's School Room bookings for 2015 remain steady at approx. 180.

The weekly art classes & monthly Philatelic Society, craft & ladies' groups continue to meet & regular bookings are made by the Parish Council, Young Farmers & flower arrangers.

In summary, the School Room is in use most days of the week & is a greatly valued meeting place for mainly self-funding, non-profit making groups who wish to pursue their hobbies & interests.

Parish Centre

John Mathews  
01727 864750

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The Parish Centre continues to be used regularly by a wide range of groups and Societies – sometimes making it difficult to keep all the facilities in clean and good working order. However, despite its regular use we have managed to install a new Combi gas boiler last summer and now have a reliable and efficient system for heating and hot water. In addition, the kitchen area was redecorated and the cupboards sorted out in time for the start of the new school year.

It is still planned to redecorate both the interior and exterior of the centre once the better weather arrives – last year's attempts to paint the exterior of the building were thwarted by the weather but the work will be done this year after repairs to the gut-tering on the museum side of the building have been completed. Work is also re-quired on the downstairs windows to clean the internal surfaces of the double glass panes – this will be done at the same time as the external painting works.

Plans are also in progress at revising the kitchen layout with new cupboards and appli-ances to meet current hygiene standards but no final design or costs have yet been produced.

Regular health and safety checks are carried out on the Parish Centre in line with the agreed action plan developed last year and the building continues to provide a first class facility to the local community.

St Michael's School  
House Flat

Gill Huckerby  
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The tenant has renewed the tenancy for a second year and the flat is still being suc-cessfully managed by Leaders. As mentioned in the report last year, the school gov-erning committee arranged for the damp areas in the entrance hall to be treated. The contractor carried out the work during July; the hall area was then redecorated and cleaned.

The damp proofing was financed by the trust fund; however, due to the continuing support of the rental the fund still has a healthy balance to support both repairs to the flat and any ecclesiastical or educational projects.

St Michael's  
Churchyard

### **Responsibility Holder**

Anthony Taylor and Jim Mann have worked together during the year and Jim will take over responsibility from Anthony in 2016.

Anthony Taylor  
01727 863808  
Anthony.L.Taylor  
@btinternet.com

### **Grassmowing**

Thanks to John Bethell, David Fletcher, Geoff Goodall, Roger Gray, Mike Western and Graham Willey who have kept the grass cut and weeds strimmed.

## Stewardship

Jim Mann  
07770 324375

jimmann147@sky.com

### **Trees and Hedges**

The most significant event was the fall of one third of the Wellingtonia tree adjacent to the Vicarage wall during high winds on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Fortunately nobody was injured and there was relatively minor consequential damage to the winter-flowering cherry alongside and the large cedar tree opposite. Thanks to the City Council for arranging a prompt removal of the remainder of the tree and the fallen debris, enabling the driveway to be reopened within a few days.

The Yew hedge fronting Bluehouse Hill was trimmed in August but this year trimmings were not required by Limehurst and were added to the bonfire pile. Other hedges have been trimmed by David Fletcher with his own equipment.

### **Old Garden of Remembrance**

Thanks to Marjorie Osborne who has weeded and watered the Garden since it was replanted, but who is now retiring from that role.

### **New Garden of Remembrance**

The flower plinth is used increasingly as more interments take place. Thanks to those, known and unknown, who take the trouble to tidy the plinth, water plants and dispose of dead flowers when they visit. Additional help with weeding and with trimming the shrubs in the planted area would be welcomed.

### **Working Parties**

Thanks to all who have assisted in the monthly Saturday morning working parties and in ad hoc sessions to sweep paths, clean the church gutters, downpipes, gullies and drains. We have also received valuable assistance on a couple of occasions from the St Albans School conservation corps volunteers with jobs such as leaf sweeping and compost shifting.

### **Bonfire**

The abundance of fallen wood and routine trimmings from the trees and shrubs again provided material for our annual bonfire which was the centrepiece of an enjoyable November social event.

### **Compost Bunker**

One half of the collapsing compost bunker has been reconstructed, with the second half to be completed after removing the compost next year.

St Michael's  
church and brass  
cleaning

We now have three groups of volunteer cleaners - 1 Saturday morning group and two Thursday morning groups. The 2 Saturday groups have amalgamated and now meet on the first Saturday of the month. This gives us a larger team enabling us to carry out a more in depth clean

Jane Larman  
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The new floor polisher has made life a lot easier and helped to maintain a deeper shine to the floor tiling.

One group ends the session with coffee, cakes or biscuits in the Tower Room. This is a lovely way to catch up and chat. We would welcome any additional members to swell our ranks, even if it's only half an hour it can make a big difference.

On Wednesday mornings after Communion another team of volunteers set about the task of cleaning the brass: candlesticks, crosses, wall plaques etc.

I am very grateful to all of the volunteers for helping to keep our beautiful church clean and tidy. It is heartening to read the comments left in the visitors book regarding how well kept the church is.

## Partners

### Friends of St Michael's

David Fletcher  
01727 860628  
photofletcher@btinternet.com

The 2015 AGM was followed by an evening of verse with John Mole. The committee has now enlarged with the addition of three members, Ruth Jerram has taken the role of membership secretary. David Fletcher has taken over as Chairmen. Elizabeth Fletcher has joined as a committee member. The organisation of events was very challenging due to the small number of committee members. The Friends were offered a charity performance by Abbey Theatre on 17 September which was well attended and raised £1180.

Following in October was a performance of the Bedford Quire, giving a performance of medieval music which raised £181. The Friends in December were able to give the Church £3000 towards the cost of the new lighting system. A programme of events is planned for 2016.

The Friends is a registered Charity number 279810, so any donations can be Gift Aided.

Contact David Fletcher Chairman. 01727 860628

### St Albans Deanery

Colin Roberts  
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colinroberts@nasuwt.net

It has been a year of change in the St Albans Deanery. The February meeting at St Stephen's was David Ridgeway's last as rural dean, and in addition we were told that Simon Sarmiento needed to be replaced as lay co-chair following his move north. The main topic of the meeting was 'Better Together – Anglican and Methodists Look to the Future', led by Bishop Michael Doe of Southwark diocese and the Rev'd Rosemary Fletcher, superintendent of the St Albans and Welwyn Methodist Circuit since September 2013. We were briefed about the Anglican/Methodist Covenant of 2003, and the progress in implementing it. The Covenant Partnerships in Extended Areas, agreed in 2011, were also discussed.

The June meeting was the first with the new rural dean, Mark Slater of St Luke's. Mark has a remit to enhance the role of the Deanery Synod in St Albans church life, and he asked members to assist in helping him form a collective view of developments in the future. The main talk was on 'Reaching Out to the Young: The 267 Project' and Mike Palin of 267 talked about the work of the project. The evening concluded with an extended open-ended discussion of what sort of synod members would like to see. We were given a set of questions to put to our PCCs: St Michael's PCC discussed these in the meeting on 8 July.

Shortly after the June meeting, Sandra North was elected to the Diocesan Synod. This is an excellent outcome for Sandra and for St Michael's. We look forward to the new insights she will be able to give us into diocesan affairs.

The main topic at the November meeting was a presentation and discussion led by Canon Tim Bull from the Abbey on how to motivate lay people and engage them in formal roles within our churches. This target of the diocesan MAP is clearly going to be a major project of the Deanery in the coming months. Further changes are coming in the way the Deanery operates. The Standing Committee and the Pastoral Committee are to be combined, and instead of a person appointed by each PCC as its representative, there will be a smaller committee elected by members of Synod. There will also be a series of ad hoc working parties, such as the one for setting up the Deanery website.