

2017 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St. Dunstan's, Monks Risborough and St. Peter's, Owlswick

Background:

St. Dunstan's Church is situated in the village of Monks Risborough and St. Peter's Chapel in the village of Owlswick. They are part of the Risborough Team Ministry in the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. Their full addresses are: St. Dunstan's Church, Mill Lane, Monks Risborough, HP27 9JE and St. Peter's Chapel, Owlswick, Princes Risborough, HP27 9RH. The correspondence address for both is: The Rectory, Mill Lane, Monks Risborough, HP27 9JE.

Aim and purposes:

Monks Risborough PCC has a responsibility of working in partnership with the Team Vicar, Reverend James Tomkins, in promoting within the Risborough Team of churches, the whole mission of the church, with all its evangelistic, pastoral, social, and ecumenical opportunities. It has responsibility for the maintenance of St Dunstan's Church, the church hall and churchyard, and the Chapel of Ease of St Peter at Owlswick, together with ensuring that appropriate safeguarding and health and safety procedures are in place. The parish has adopted a strap line of 'Open to God, Open for everyone' to promote its inclusiveness and meet the needs of the many different people within the parish. The Team Vicar of Monks Risborough also has the additional responsibility of enabling mission and carrying out other work across/within the Team.

Highlights of 2017 and Aspirations for 2018:

It is an enormous joy and privilege to be the vicar of this parish with two very welcoming congregations, inspiring places of worship and delightful communities. It is hard work but the rewards are tremendous.

In a different way to previous years I've jotted down some highlights, sadder points and things to look out for in 2018. Inevitably there will be events, services and people whom I have missed off but this should at least give a flavour of the parish and to all that God has in store for us in 2018 and beyond.

'Highlights':

Four young people being confirmed at St. John's Church, Lacey Green

Courses on 'words of worship' and 'how to pray'

An evening pilgrimage to St. Albans Abbey

A day visit to Rochester Cathedral and city

A growing repertoire and confidence within the choir

Very well attended Christmas, Easter and other special services

Open Day to widen the appeal of bell ringing within the parish

Daily services during August to 'sustain our sacred centre'

Regular meetings of the Silent Prayer and House Groups

A varied and well supported range of community and social events at St. Dunstan's

Fascinating and very well attended evening talks at St. Peter's
The introduction of a lunch time club for children aged 5 to 7 at Monks Risborough School.
The first ever wedding at St. Peter's Chapel
Increasingly well attended midweek activities and groups
Beautiful and thoughtfully maintained churchyard and grounds
Numerous people involved in creating a network of pastoral care and support
A team of drivers to bring people to services and events
Monks Risborough School holding services twice a term in St. Dunstan's
People from the parish listening to children read at Monks Risborough School
An Increasing number of babies and toddlers with their parent(s)/carer attending 'Monks Monkeys'

On a sadder note:

A number of much loved members of the congregation have passed away during the year.
A reduction in the usual Sunday attendance from 126 to 112
We continue to 'grow older' as congregation with more roles being filled by fewer people

We are looking forward in 2018 to:

A fabulous Flower Festival (June 8th to June 11th) with a various supporting events
Repairing the stone work and extending the churchyard pathway at St. Dunstan's
Conserving the 'tin arch' at St. Peter's
Obtaining quotes for redecorating, cleaning the windows and conserving the pulpit at St. Dunstan's
Exploring the possibility of providing additional toilet facilities at the rear of the church hall.

There are signs that we cannot solely rely on traditional forms of services and ministry to sustain the life of the church in the parish. As a parish we need to review continually the way we present and promote the Christian message. It is about everyone in our church community establishing and nurturing their links and relationships within the villages and surrounding area to help the Kingdom of God to grow in perhaps surprising and unexpected ways. It is not so much about setting up new initiatives but about celebrating what we already do well, and thinking about how we might do it differently or better so that we continue to be a vibrant and attractive Christian presence in the parish. Not only should we be 'open to everyone' but as far as possible we also need to provide 'something for everyone'.

Rev James Tomkins

Reserves Policy

It has always been our policy to ensure we have sufficient funds to cover all of our expected

commitments over the year. However maintaining an 11th Century Parish Church and Victorian Chapel is expensive. From time to time there is work that needs to be carried out and this can be a very costly exercise owing to their type of construction. In recent years significant restoration and improvements have been carried out at St Dunstan's and St. Peter's. Both buildings are in a good state of repair although some essential repairs to the stone work at St. Dunstan's has been highlighted in the 2017 Quinquennial Inspection.

Along with the creation of a new path and associated costs (£7,500) at St. Dunstan's to link up the 'Green Lane' and existing churchyard paths various major expenditure to the church and chapel is anticipated in the next year or two. The costs (excluding the provision of additional toilet facilities at the back of the hall) of these projects is likely to be approaching £60,000. Through the application for grants, the continuing of the annual stewardship programme, the receipt of legacies, a comprehensive approach to gift aid and the current balance in the fabric fund, there should be sufficient money to meet these costs.

None of the funds held by the PCC are restricted funds. Provided the total funds of the PCC amounts to two months outgoings (£22,500), this should be sufficient to meet the PCC's liabilities during 2018 and to respond to unexpected demands on its financial resources.

Anne White (treasurer) and James Tomkins (vicar)

Financial Report

The accounts are in a healthy position. A deficit of £8,500 was forecast for 2017 but by the end of the year the balance showed a surplus of just under £11,000. The annual stewardship campaign continues to be very successful in increasing our regular income and there have been some very significant and generous one-off donations towards the general running costs of the church and the maintenance of its fabric. A greater proportion of the fees for weddings and funerals was retained by the PCC and the amount claimed under gift aid from both regular and single donations continues to increase. Legacies are also being received on a regular basis.

Expenditure has been tightly controlled with a significant saving on the heating of St. Dunstan's. There has been a rise in the cost of the parish magazine enabling a greater use of colour and more pages in some editions. The parish share due for 2017 rose by £7,000 and in 2018 this will rise by about £4,500. Hopefully future annual increases will be less and the level of parish share is something that the deanery is very aware of. As anticipated in 2017 very few repairs were required to the fabric at St. Peter's and the level of expenditure on the fabric and organ at St. Dunstan's were less than in the past. The cost of maintaining the churchyard at St. Dunstan's was also significantly reduced with no expenditure on machinery or major tree works.

The projected deficit for 2018 could be as high as £48,000 if all of the works identified are carried out. There are however sufficient funds in the accounts to cover these costs whilst retaining a balance of 30% above the minimum set out in the reserves policy. As a parish we will continue to review our income and expenditure so that we can support the full time mission and ministry that

the parish enjoys. We will also look to finance further capital projects particularly regarding the proposed provision of additional toilet facilities on the back of the church hall making full use of grants wherever possible.

Anne White (treasurer) and James Tomkins (vicar)

Fabric Report 2017

As anticipated, the quinquennial inspection was completed in March 2017 and it was pleasing that the report only highlighted minor works needing attention including gutter maintenance and stonework. Time has been spent reviewing and discussing with contractors the works and estimated costs and we are looking at undertaking a variety of works during 2018.

We have continued to keep up to date with the routine maintenance of St Dunstan's including boiler servicing, clearing gutters, replacement of fire extinguishers, churchyard upkeep, security systems and lightning conductor servicing.

Several panes of glass in the church hall required replacing and this was completed very satisfactorily and a new coir mat sourced for the porch in St Dunstan's.

After many months we finally received permission from the diocese to put up an outside light at St Peters and this has been appreciated during the darker nights.

The scheduled electrical testing for St Dunstan's, St Peter's and the church hall was completed at the end of the year and the final reports are being reviewed and all necessary work will be undertaken early 2018.

The PCC continues to insure St Dunstan's church, the church hall and St Peter's Chapel and their contents at the value determined by the insurers, Ecclesiastical Insurance Company.

Johanna Powell (churchwarden)

Membership:

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The membership of the PCC consists of the vicar, churchwardens, and members elected by the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services or are members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

During the year, the following served as members of the PCC:

Team Vicar: James Tomkins (Chairman)

Churchwardens: Charlie Fairall (Vice-chairman)
Johanna Powell

Elected Members: Jane Curry, representative on the Deanery Synod (from April 2017)
Tim Goode, representative on Deanery synod (until April 2017)
Harry Mullens, representative on Deanery Synod (resigned August 2017)

Margaret Pitman, representative on Deanery Synod

Jane Rogers, representative on Deanery Synod
Keith Barnes (resigned October 2017)
Morna Hinch (until April 2017)
Sue Ingram (until April 2017)
Jan Eacott (resigned August 2017)
Richard Aguilar
Susanne Dodds
Keith Gibbons (Secretary)
David Manthorpe
Anne White (Treasurer)
Libby Keane (from April 2017)
Margaret Hunnibell (from April 2017)

Co-opted Members Keith Woodhead (from April 2017)
 Tim Goode (from April 2017)
 Sue Ingram (from October 2017)

Proceedings:

The full PCC met eight times during the year and also delegates work to the events, stewardship and worship teams to assist in the fulfilling of its role. These teams report back to the PCC with their recommendations which are discussed as necessary. The number of parishioners on the church electoral roll for 2017 was 184 (184 - 2016). The average attendance on a normal Sunday was 100 adults (112 – 2016) and 12 young people (14 – 2016). The number of Communicants on Easter Day and Christmas Day was 108 (121 - 2016) and 129 (129 - 2016), with attendees standing at 192 (167 – 2016) and 697 (748 – 2016) respectively. There were 15 Baptisms (17 - 2016), 6 weddings/marriage blessings (10 - 2016), and 32 funerals or interments during the year (22 – 2016).

Many other activities are led by individuals who report as required to the PCC. These include:

Finance – Anne White

Gift Aid – Nick Tyler

Church Music – Sarah Fairall

Bell Tower Captain – David Argue/Brian Highe

Church Fabric –Johanna Powell and Charlie Fairall

Electoral Roll Officer – Keith Barnes/Keith Woodhead/Susanne Dodds

Sidespersons' rota – Johanna Powell/Susanne Dodds

Fellowship – Rosemary Woodward-Court

Friendship Group – Marie Colsell

Charity Commission – Keith Barnes/Keith Woodhead/Susanne Dodds

Lunch Club (for seniors) – Anne Baker
Bethany House group – Jill Iredale
Open House group – James Tomkins
Parish Newsletter – Morna Hinch and John McKay
Flowers – Gwen Miles
10 o'clock Club – Cathy Farquhar
Monks Monkeys – James Tomkins and Anne White
Events Team – Position vacant (James Tomkins)
Monks Risborough School – Tom Baskerville
Coffee Rota – Janet Griffin
Churches Together in Risborough - Margaret Pitman
Risborough Team Forum Representatives: The Churchwardens

Deanery Synod

Four members of the PCC are eligible to sit on the Deanery Synod, though owing to the sad death of Harry Mullens we have only three and need to elect one more. The Deanery Synod provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. This year members of the Synod continued to share their experiences as part of the process of mission action planning and the housing developments taking place around Aylesbury. We have received reports on Youth Work, and also on poverty and livelihoods in the diocese. Updates have been given on the proceedings of the General Synod. Members have been kept informed about the collection and process of allocating parish share within the Deanery and there has been a new Treasurer appointed. Margaret Pitman (Deanery Synod Representative)

This report was Approved by the PCC on January 22nd 2018 and signed on their behalf by the Reverend James Tomkins. The electoral roll will be included as an addendum after its revision on March 2nd

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(PCC chairman)

Music Report for St. Dunstan's 2017

The choir has shown tremendous commitment and dedication supporting services at St. Dunstan's throughout the year. We have learnt and sung some 22 anthems, in styles ranging from Renaissance to twentieth century music.

The first anthem we sang in January was, "O come, ye servants of the lord" by renaissance composer Christopher Tye. David Keysell, who had recently joined our choir added a skilful tenor line enabling a four-part rendition.

Ash Wednesday provided an opportunity for us to explore David Halls' setting of Psalm 51 and was contrasted by the modal plainchant of "Attende Domine".

During Easter, we learnt and enjoyed several pieces: "In Monte Oliveti", a serene and plaintive anthem by Bruckner; then a challenging polyphonic "Ave Verum Corpus" by William Byrd and finally, a joyous piece, "Christ the Lord is risen again!" which was sung on Easter day.

Easter also saw three of our younger members attending the RSCM three-day choristers' course held in Oxford, where anthems, mass settings and psalms were taught in the beautiful chapel of Exeter College, with many parents and friends joining them for Evensong each day.

Perhaps two most favoured anthems during 2017 were, Cesar Franck's "Panis Angelicus" and "The Lord is my shepherd" by Howard Goodall, which were enjoyed at the Patronal Festival along with register signings at a number of weddings.

Some of the greater musical challenges of the year came in the summer when we had to work very hard, mastering two new anthems. We sang the serene and contemplative sixteenth century anthem, "Lord, for thy tender mercies sake" a capella, which really enhanced the serenity of this beautiful piece. While perhaps more demanding, "Cantate Domino" by Pitoni certainly proved a most exciting prospect for us, drawing upon expertise in Latin, along with several references being made to YouTube!

We practised a further anthem during early autumn, "A closer walk with God" by Stanford which was sung most poignantly at the contemplative Time to Remember service in October.

As we drew close to the end of 2017, the choir focused and practiced intensively, as we prepared for the special Nine Lessons and Carols service where there were four anthems to master. The "Advent Message" by Martin How and "A little child there is yborn" were favourites, the latter being a modern setting of a fifteenth century tune.

In addition to the regular musical contributions to worship, the church hosted a very well attended Jazz concert, performed by Big Band Swing, featuring the highly versatile vocals of the choir's very own Jackie Highe. In July, the Chandos Ensemble played at St Dunstan's for an afternoon concert featuring the Bach double violin concerto, with accomplished violinists Henry Fagg and Marion Garrett captivating the audience on a warm summer's afternoon.

During the year, many came to hear the Chinnor Silver Band, who gave two excellent concerts, including their famous Christmas programme, which filled the church with festive cheer, heralding the festivities to come.

Both senior and junior choirs from Monks Risborough School and led by Mrs.Hirst, sang at many special services throughout the year.

As ever, we are most thankful for the organists who play at our services both at St.Dunstan's and St Peter's chapel in Owlswick. We are particularly grateful to Rowena Gibbons for her skilful accompaniment of so many anthems and her invaluable encouragement and advice at weekly choir practice. A debt of gratitude must also be paid to the wonderfully dedicated members of the choir and talented musicians of all ages who add such an important dimension to worship and praise at St. Dunstan's.

Sarah Fairall January 2018

THE BETHANY HOUSEGROUP

"Whose Life is it anyway?" Starting in mid January, this question led us to think about the various aspects of our lives over the first three sessions of the year, culminating in an Ash Wednesday Group Communion on March 1st. It was a thought-provoking time, calling for tolerance of each other's views and the recognition of complete confidentiality within the Group.

"Words of Worship" was the Lent Course led by Canon Rob Brown for the whole of the Parish on either one whole Saturday or 4 Wednesday mornings, so the Bethany House Group did not meet

together again until 5th April for Stations of the Cross, and then a Holy Week Group Communion on the 12th.

“Faith, Hope and Love - but which comes first?” These three tenets of the Christian life were studied and discussed during June and the first week of July, and the Group finished for the summer with James joining us to celebrate Holy Communion in mid-July.

“The Uniqueness of our Faith”, starting at the end of September covered Christ, the Cross and the Bible, (with the Resurrection and the Ascension still to come).

“Reflections on the Hymns of Advent” - on the 4 Wednesdays in Advent - led to the realisation that this time of waiting is not only for the coming birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, but also for the Second Coming of Jesus. Holy Communion closed the last of these sessions before enjoying mince pies and sausage rolls kindly baked for us by Su Viney. Indeed, huge thanks to Su for providing us with our ‘safe space’ and refreshments for another year.

It is a great privilege to prepare and guide the different courses that we study, so thank you to Rose and Avril for their time and care, but above all thanks to everyone who comes to the Group, prepared to share innermost thoughts and also to learn by listening.

Jill Iredale, January 2018
on behalf of the Bethany House Group

St Dunstan's Bell Ringers – Annual Report 2017

The main reason churches have bells and people to ring them, is that for centuries they have informed members of the parish that a service was due to begin, which was essential years ago when timepieces were in short supply. It also let the people working in the fields know what was going on. Such ringing continues to this day for we still ring before the Sunday morning service at St Dunstan’s to welcome parishioners.

In addition the bells are rung for weddings – five this past year - as required and, very occasionally, the tenor is tolled for a funeral. At Christmas they were rung three times on the 24th, including for Midnight Mass, and on Christmas Day morning. Unfortunately, lack of ringers meant that the traditional ringing in of the New Year was missed. On Remembrance Sunday the bells were rung “half muffled” which means that one side of the clapper is cushioned by a leather pad giving a haunting echo to the sound. We have also tried to ring at 11am on 11th of each month when there is a service to remember those who died in the First World War. So a busy year for us.

Our biggest event of 2017 was a Tower Open Day which was widely advertised, along with the church magazine. A regular stream of visitors viewed the presentation material laid out in the church and quite a large number braved the 50+ step climb up to the bells. We offered the opportunity to try bell ringing and several people had a go, including a bride groom to be, who had ordered the bells for his wedding. The object of the event was to recruit more ringers and three people signed up. One unfortunately dropped out and another had to stop ringing as she had a back problem (not related to the ringing). The third has carried on and is now a regular Sunday morning ringer.

We are grateful to our Victorian predecessors who had the foresight to add a sixth bell when rehangng the bells. The ringing of six bells gives a lot of scope to the band, five almost as much, four is limiting, three not worth bothering. This means that St Dunstan's needs a band of at least six ringers to be available at all times and we are finding it more and more difficult to get enough to have all our six bells ringing on a Sunday. We always ring six bells for weddings as we are able to call on ringers from other churches to help us, but on Sundays it is a different matter, and we

sometimes find we only have enough to ring just four or five of them. It is the same on our Thursday practice evenings and we even occasionally have had to cancel a practice due to a lack of ringers. With a couple of our regular ringers being “off sick” we could still do with some additional help so, if you are reading this report and are interested in learning to ring then please contact me, or any of our ringers, and we’ll be delighted to show you what church bell ringing is all about. It is not a strenuous pastime and provides gentle physical and mental exercise, so why not give it a try.

It is with great regret and enormous sadness that we report the death of our bell tower captain David Argue who died as a result of injuries sustained from a road traffic accident just before Christmas. We are greatly indebted to David for overseeing the ringing and the maintenance of the bells at St. Dunstan’s for many years. He was always willing to ‘show the ropes’ to prospective ringers. His gentle friendship and wide knowledge of bell ringing will be greatly missed at St. Dunstan’s and further afield.

Ann Tomkins & Brian Highe

St Peter’s Chapel, Owlswick

Events: In 2017 we continued our “Speaker Evenings” with an ever-increasing attendance, in fact we have had to suggest that it is now advisable to reserve a seat. We heard from Suzie Davies the production designer for the film “Mr Turner”, Suzanne Carr on paintings in the National Gallery, Brian Walters accompanied by his Barn Owls and Mike Dewey on “Our villages in the Great War. We have to thank Roz Wates, who is the main organiser of these evenings, and also the residents of the village who take turns in supplying light refreshments. Other events were Owlswick Morris Dancers dancing outside the chapel on the May Day Bank Holiday and a Quiz thanks to the hospitality of Orchard View Farm Shop.

Special Services included Songs of Praise, preceded by cream teas with the collection going to the Princes Centre, Harvest Festival with produce going to the “White Chapel Mission” and a Carol Service with the collection divided between the chapel and the Princes Centre. The Carol Service was particularly memorable thanks to an ad hoc choir produced by one of our residents.

We were pleased to be included in “Sustaining the Sacred Centre” during August, the services took place on Tuesdays at 6pm and were generally well attended.

The first ever wedding since 1866 took place in the chapel on September 2nd it was beautifully decorated for the occasion and proved to be ideal for a ceremony with a limited number of guests.

Fittings and fixtures: Some of us have wondered about the wording of the inscription above the altar window, we now know that it is as follows:

“Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O Thou Who dwellest in the Heavens.” Psalm 123;1. There are also pictures of angels carrying lamps It is written on a metal band fixed to the brickwork.

Unfortunately, the Victorian fixings have corroded over the years and to stop the metal band falling we have had to give it some temporary support.

We were delighted to have a lamp installed on the outside of the chapel above the door, this has been particularly useful for the Speaker Evenings and the winter services. Also our comfort has been greatly increased by pew cushions, which are much appreciated.

Thanks to a bequest from Vicky McKenzie our hymn books and prayer books have been increased in number so that on special occasions we no longer have to share. Vicky supported the chapel for many years and is greatly missed.

Support: It is good that our flower arrangements throughout the year are all donated and arranged by people from the immediate area, but throughout the year Owlswick owes a huge debt to St. Dunstan’s clergy, organists and choir, your support makes all the difference, very many thanks to you all.

Jane Rogers

Newsletter

The editorial team has remained unchanged for another year so once again we thank John McKay for his creative skills in the production of the magazine *and* as a photographer, June Timms for managing the advertising, Mick White for his careful proof-reading and Penny Hollings for the efficient distribution. Thank you also to our printers, South Bucks Business Products Ltd, who give us such a prompt and professional service.

Last year, following enquiries from some of our advertisers, we added 2 more regular colour pages. The uptake was small at first but we are pleased to report that these are currently full. Extra colour pages always enhance the promotion of important events and this year we have used them to highlight the concerts in May, October and December, the pop-up cinema, the Fun Day and the autumn Craft Fair. It adds a bit to the production costs but we feel it is worth it.

Alongside our popular, regular features on Art from Susanne Carr and Monks Risborough Remembers from Chris Kingham, we have had a broad range of articles from other contributors through the year. There are too many to list them all, but in the April/May issue, Ann Tomkins certainly got us off to a flying start describing her terrifying fund-raising jump from a plane! Particular thanks also go to Jackie and Brian Highe who between them have given us 4 lively articles on their shared hobbies of Scuba Diving and Bell Ringing. All the articles are much appreciated.

The team would also like to thank all our advertisers, those who contribute by writing up church events and activities and those who donate to us through the gift aid envelopes. Everyone is part of the team!

Morna Hinch

Lunch Club

The Lunch Club continues to meet on the first Friday of each month.

Currently there are 37 members of whom, on average 30 come to each lunch which is a home-cooked main course and pudding, coffee and biscuits.

It is always a lively event and new members have been welcomed over the year. Anyone living on their own in the Parish is eligible.

We have been able to hold the price of the lunch to £3.00, and after expenses we have been able to give £500 as rent for the church hall for the year, plus some further cash which has been used to upgrade the church hall windows.

The members themselves bring raffle prizes. Grateful thanks as always to the team of lunchtime helpers who lay up the tables, serve, and wash up so cheerfully – and to the drivers who bring our older members – and not least to James who arrives on his bicycle equipped with joke.

Anne Baker

Sidespersons' Report

James and the churchwardens would like to thank everyone who has acted as a sidesperson over the year. Along with Parish Communion we have had many varied services including Baptism, All Age, Easter and Christmas. At these services we welcome many new families, regular members of the congregation and visitors to the parish. Every sidesperson helps to ensure the smooth running of all our services and we are very grateful for this. We are always happy to welcome new sidespeople and anyone interested should have a chat with the churchwardens or James.

Johanna Powell

Monks Monkeys

What a wonderful year we have all had. The regular group of young children, accompanied by parents, grandparents and even great grandparents, have shown great enthusiasm for singing, popping bubbles and listening to bible stories, as well as relaxing with a drink and biscuit. Our repertoire of songs has been extended providing plenty of opportunity to clap, jump, be an elephant, wiggle and freeze. We have all enjoyed sharing in the arrival of new babies, wedding plans and visitors from overseas, hopefully providing a welcoming environment for all to feel a part of St Dunstan's Church.

Anne White

St Dunstan's Churchyard

The usual high standard of maintenance has continued throughout the year in the existing churchyard, with peak times being Summer for grass cutting and Autumn for leaf clearing. It has been most encouraging to have so many willing volunteers again to undertake these tasks. Revised guidelines have been introduced for headstones, memorials and the upkeep of graves so that we seek to maintain the naturalness of the churchyard whilst being sensitive to those who have loved ones buried there. The self-mulching mowers have meant that our compost heap has kept to a reasonable size and the park side dead hedging is providing a good boundary.

The hedging in the churchyard meadow extension has taken well and should thicken up this coming year. Each year has shown an increase in wildlife and plant species in the meadow and scything took place in late summer to help this to continue. Records of the plant species have been taken over the past three years. We have been host to an environmental group who were looking at examples of churchyard maintenance and developing eco spaces. A class from Monks Risborough school made a visit as part of developing a future churchyard trail leaflet.

All of this aims to ensure that St Dunstan's churchyard continues to provide a peaceful, pleasant environment for us all to share.

Mick White and James Tomkins

'Open House' at the Rectory

The membership of this group continues to ebb and flow with people welcome to join the group for as many or as few sessions as they wish to. The group aims to meet monthly on a different night of the week at the Rectory and continues to work its way through the 'Pilgrim Course'. Pilgrim is an innovative and inspiring programme that approaches the great issues of faith not through persuasion but participation in a pattern of listening, reflection and discussion. In 2017 we have completed the series on the Lord's Prayer and started and finished the sessions on the Ten Commandments. Each session stands on its own so people don't feel obliged to make every meeting. In 2018 we will start looking at the Beatitudes which fits in to the new Diocesan Vision about becoming a more Christ-like Church through being more contemplative, more compassionate and more courageous. Everyone is warmly welcome to this group.

Rev James Tomkins

Risborough Team

Since the formation of the team in 1998, each parish has continued to work independently, with its own finances and PCC. The clergy meet regularly for Morning Prayer and monthly pub lunches; views are shared and mutual support is provided. Though a team in name, in practice the four parishes operate as a Group. There are numerous retired clergy living in the Risborough Team who can be called upon for holiday cover and additional support. There is also a licensed lay minister and a youth worker in Princes Risborough. There is a vacancy for the House for Duty post at Bledlow, Saunderton

and Horsenden with a parish profile ready for potential applicants. It is hoped that this position will be filled by the second half of 2018.

The Risborough Team consists of:

- The Reverend David Williams (Area Dean and Team Rector) at Princes Risborough and Ilmer.
- The Reverend Dan Beesley (Curate) at Princes Risborough and Ilmer
- The Reverend Michael Hunt (Associate Vicar) at Princes Risborough and Ilmer
- The Reverend James Tomkins (Team Vicar) at Monks Risborough and Owlswick
- The Reverend Canon Tony Bundock at Lacey Green (house-for-duty)
- The Team Vicar of Bledlow with Saunderton and Horsenden (house-for-duty)

Rev James Tomkins

Friendship Group

Our meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month. We start with our prayer, thinking of our friends who cannot be with us. We then either have a discussion on current affairs or play scrabble or card games.

James takes a service for us four times a year, which we all look forward to – Thank you James.

We welcomed three new members in February and in May we had an outing for tea at Haddenham.

We gave £50 to Maina Gandwe in Malawi.

M Colsell

Fellowship Report

This group has been going for a good number of years over which time it has evolved to best provide a regular social get-together for local people. There is a meeting on the second Thursday of every month, at 7.30pm in the Church Hall.

Every year we have a coffee morning in January, a Garden Party in July and a Christmas Party. In April there is an outing. These have included a tour of the Ercol Factory, a visit to Jordan's Quaker Centre and Milton's Cottage, and last year we had a tour of Lindengate which provides social and therapeutic horticulture. This year we are planning a visit to Calibre Audio Library near Weston Turville.

For the other months we have 4/5 speakers and 2/3 in house activities. Last year our speakers' topics ranged from a history of Marylebone and the work of Saunderton Lodge to an introduction to lip-reading and a very popular talk by our very own Charlie Fairall about Britain on film.

There are also easy going walks on the fourth Tuesday of the month (9.15am in the lay by) and knit ins on the following Thursday (2.00pm in the Church Hall).

We are responsible for cleaning the church brass.

If you would like to take part in any of these activities just turn up or get in touch.

To Sue (Treasurer), Pam (Secretary) and Peta (committee member) my grateful thanks for your support.

We have been pleased to see new people coming along this year. We are always happy to welcome you. Why not pop by sometime? You would be among friends.

Rosemary 01844 344417

Events Team

After a busy 2016 we set out for 2017 to be a little more steady, however true to form, we embraced every opportunity presented to us and over the year have had a programme that has been varied, welcoming and raised significant funds for the church.

Our film nights have been re-branded as a "Pop up Cinema". A warm church, large screen and great sound system have attracted adults and children to films such as 'The BFG', 'Eddie The Eagle' and Swallows and Amazons' with other exciting titles planned for this year. Other regular events have included the Super Soup lunch for Christian Aid, the hosting of Bucks Open Studios including our popular weekend Cream Teas, a cathedral visit to Rochester, the family Fun Day in September, Parish Barbeque and Harvest Lunch, a Bonfire night and the Advent Craft Fair. On a musical front our annual sell-out Chinnor Silver Band Christmas concert was supplemented by an extra special visit for a charity concert in May. Jackie Highe and her fabulous Big Jazz Band performed classic tracks in October whilst the Chandos Ensemble returned for a summer afternoon tea concert. In October we were able to help a local family with their fundraising to support a child in Africa in hosting a Mamma Mia singalong film night and we dressed up in 1970s outfits! Planning events is fun and our small dedicated team try to ensure that a varied programme reaches out to the local community and beyond. Some events are big fund raisers whilst others aim to bring people together and experience the hospitality of the St. Dunstan's community. If you have an idea for an event, have contacts who may like to contribute towards an event or would like to join our team please speak to Cathy Farquhar or James Tomkins.

2018 is already looking exciting, particularly our June Flower Festival "Eureka! - British inventions and discoveries". For more information please check "What's On at St Dunstan's" in the church porch, the parish magazine, the weekly pew sheet and the church website <http://www.stdunstanschurch.com>

Cathy Farquhar

10 o'clock Club - 2017

Another year of worship songs, prayer, bible stories, games, glue, glitter, paint and the occasional edible craft!

We regularly have between three and ten children attend each week although there are more on the register. With everyone leading such busy lives it is lovely to have families who bring their children to 10 o'Clock Club on a regular basis or as occasional visitors. Our teams of adult volunteer helpers prepare sessions with ever increasing creativity so that the weekly story and theme is reinforced through listening, participation and most of all fun.

We follow the same passage from the Revised Common Lectionary that is being used in the main service. The children like this link as it means that the whole congregation has focused on the same message. It also means that the crafts and activities they share at the end of the service are easily recognisable to everyone, especially so that James can incorporate them into his welcome of the children, although he has, on occasion, been caught out!

Joining the adults for a blessing during communion each week is an important part of the service and some of our older children have now been confirmed.

Enabling them to process out with the crucifix, candles and the bible is also very inclusive. Our monthly Family Service gives further opportunity for the children to participate in the readings, sermon and songs.

Cathy Farquhar

Deanery Synod 2017

Four members of the PCC are eligible to sit on the Deanery Synod, though due to the sad death of Harry Mullens we have only three. The Deanery Synod provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

This year members of the Synod continued to share their experiences as part of the process of mission action planning, though Rev Phil White is in the process of altering the format, into an audio visual document, and the huge building development taking place around Aylesbury.

We have received reports on Youth Work, and also, 'For Richer for Poorer - poverty and livelihoods in the Diocese', a statistical based report on various aspects of all types of poverty, to enable us to highlight where needs should be addressed - copies available to read.

Deanery Rural Officer – Rev Jenny Edmans gave an update of her work, which involves links to other organisations involved in rural life. She mentioned the work done at Bucks County Show, plus the Farming Festivals, Plough Sunday, Harvest, Rogation Sunday and Lammas. These could appeal to people who don't know where their food comes from and so provide a link between rural and urban/city communities.

There was a 'Rest a While' tent at the Bucks County Show – Anne and Mick White helped there.

Updates have been given on the proceedings of the General Synod.

Members have been kept informed about the collection and process of allocating parish share within the Deanery and there has been a new Treasurer appointed. She is Tania Dovey, from outside the deanery, so was first co-opted to the synod, then elected as Treasurer.

Margaret Pitman

Churches Together in Risborough 2017

'Working together in unity to serve the community in God's love and for God's glory'

This group meets approximately every 3 months and comprises the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Elim and Methodist Churches in Princes Risborough plus Little Kimble and Lacey Green and Speen

Whilst each Church pursues its own work within the community there are several areas where we can and do work together or provide background support for each other.

Lighthouse 2017 continued to be one of the largest events that CTR is involved with as a group and is very successful. Other activities for young people continue to be provided under the umbrella of CTR. They include, 'Later' held at the Methodist Church, 'No Limits' held at St Mary's, a presence in the Upper School, and as well as links with Church schools the distribution of 'It's your Move' booklets to all primary school leavers provides a link and a witness to all primary schools in the area.

The Women's World Day of Prayer took place early in March at St Dunstan's with particular emphasis on Cuba.

There was a Lent Course again at Costa Coffee which proved popular. The March of Witness on Good Friday and the Dawn Service on Whiteleaf Cross again saw good attendances from all congregations.

Although CTR did not have a rest tent at the Town Festival last year partly due to changes in the organisation of the event and timing issues, we did assist in the children's activities and road closure for the Queen's Birthday celebrations.

The Advent service, was held at the Elim Church, but this year the Christmas light 'Switch on' was done differently without our traditional carol singing.

Other joint services included Christian Unity held at a packed Owlswick Chapel (58 - is this a record?) and Christian Aid which was held at St Dunstan's in May.

CTR's website www.risboroughchurches.org.uk acts as shop window for our activities and provides a link to all the member churches as well as further afield

Any areas where you think CTR should have a presence please advise myself or James. All will be carefully considered. Thank you..

Margaret Pitman.

Gift Aid Secretary Report 2017

The report covers the claim year April 2016 -2017

The total amount of tax recovered from HMRC amounted to £13,772.26

We have had a total of 292 different donations during the year, a lot are for one offs, like Weddings, Funerals, Easter and Christmas.

181 donations were made via the Blue Envelope Scheme total Donations Received £7282.35. This represents a 5% increase in number of donors and a 12% increase in the value of donations made.

66 Regular Standing Orders, total Donations £36,090.60. This represents an increase of 10% in numbers of donors and an increase of just over 11% in the value of total donations.

Special Donations such as Easter Lillies, Parish Magazine, memorials etc. The total amount recorded was down in value from £4541.05 to £2554.60 but I do believe that a lot of these donations have been recorded in the Blue envelope scheme this year.

We have also benefited substantially over the last four years from the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) this covers the donations which are usually cash donations during the services at St Dunstons' and St Peter & St Paul at Owlswick. From the small donation scheme this year we were again able to claim the maximum tax refund of £2282.06. This was an increase of over £700 on last year as the limit we can claim had increased.

Contrary to my report last year, it is quite comforting to see an increase in the number of people making donations. We have seen an increase in donors of roughly 10%.

I have also seen a decrease in the number of blue envelopes, which I have had to discard, as they were not completed properly. This means that the message of clearly completing the envelopes is getting across. It is imperative that names and particularly postcodes are completed fully and are legible otherwise I cannot make a legitimate claim on that gift. The amount that I had to discard this year were negligible.

Nick Tyler

Monks Risborough School

Monks Risborough Church of England School continues to be a good school with an excellent approach to teaching with a creative curriculum.

The last academic year saw a continued focus of growth mindset within school, which is proving a positive challenge to the children's approach to learning.

Cultural awareness has once again played an important role, with each class attending a non-Christian place of worship.

The school and its staff have worked collaboratively with many local schools to foster both academic excellence with teacher collaboration, but also sporting opportunities for its pupils to play in local competitions; advancing sporting skills and greater community engagement.

Lauren Flaxten