

**2020 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. These places of worship 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: St Mary's Parish Office, Church Lane, Princes Risborough, Bucks., HP27 9AW. St Dunstan's and St Peter's are currently in a vacancy following the resignation of James Tomkins in November 2019.

**Aim and purposes:**

Monks Risborough PCC has a responsibility of working in partnership with the Team Vicar 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.

**Highlights and lowlights of 2020 and Aspirations for 2021:**

This report covers a shorter than usual period – caused by the 2019 APCM being delayed by the thing that has dominated all our lives for the last 12 months: Covid-19.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 the Prime Minister ordered us all to "stay at home" and since then St Dunstan's has been subjected to various lockdowns and restricted services with limited access. Little did we suspect that Evensong on 15<sup>th</sup> March would be the last service except for funerals until 16<sup>th</sup> August – although a taped off corridor between the south and north doors was made available for a couple of hours twice a week for those who were happy to attend to sit on a chair under the watchful eye of 'Covid Marshals'! St Dunstan's reopened for something approaching normal services on 16<sup>th</sup> August. The 37-page risk assessment concluded that to comply with Social Distancing and a panoply of other regulations, access would be restricted to 33 marked places where individuals, couples or 'those in a bubble' could sit together. Sanitising stations were set up around the church, a one-way circuit was implemented, services devised that minimised movement, with singing and handshaking banned.

On 5<sup>th</sup> November we entered the second lockdown when churches could remain open for individual prayer and reflection but could not hold communal services 'led from the front'. St Dunstan's took advantage of having a good sound system to open every Sunday for people to listen to a selection of recorded hymns, prayers and music chosen to promote meditation and reflection, and to enter and leave as they felt moved.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December we were once again allowed to hold communal worship, although singing remained too risky and the Government decided that speaking to anyone after the service and whilst still indoors counted as 'socialising' and was strictly forbidden! Churches were allowed to remain open after Christmas, but the rapid rise in the infection rate, known as 'Spike 2', forced us to close the church once again to every type of service other than funerals. Having peaked on 10<sup>th</sup> January, the infection rate remained high and unpredictable for many more weeks.

Mary and Ted Kent kindly set up streamed communion services from their home every Sunday morning. Finally, at the beginning of March we felt it safe to reopen St Dunstan's. On 14<sup>th</sup> March we

reopened for individual prayer, which 9 people attended. On 21<sup>st</sup> March we streamed Mary and Ted's service into St Dunstan's, just to see if it could be achieved. Palm Sunday sees a return to the socially distanced style of service we were having in the late summer and autumn of 2020, with space for 33 individuals, couples or 'bubbles'.

Children's ministry has been difficult to maintain virtually as most children have been schooling on-line for a large chunk of 2020 and further use of screens for interaction with church activities has not been popular.

Pastorally as a church we continue to be a congregation that seeks to support others who are going through a difficult patch by regular visiting, or more lately, telephone contact. This has been doubly important during the last year as so many of our parishioners have been confined to barracks, and whilst this has been the safest thing to do, it has also been extremely lonely for many. During the year we have lost some dear friends who have passed away as well as others who have moved to pastures new in other parts of the country. This constant ebb and flow reminds us the church is always changing in its make-up.

The biggest news of 2021 is the wait for a new incumbent is coming to an end. Our carefully crafted parish profile attracted a number of enquires for the post of vicar, and we interviewed the 3 most promising candidates. A closely fought contest resulted in the wonderful news that Revd Peter Godden will join us in July, together with his wife Caroline. They have not only a change of location to look forward to, but the arrival of their firstborn.

Deciding when it has been safe to open St Dunstan's has not been the only challenge. St Dunstan's has been extremely fortunate to be a relatively wealthy church with well maintained fabric and what we believed to be healthy reserves. Diocesan advice is to hold approximately 3 months of reserves. Because many people have generously kept up with regular giving, we managed to meet all our commitments in 2020 by using these reserves. Every expense was rigorously reviewed and reduced, deferred, or eliminated where possible; but many costs can not be avoided. Every income stream such as holding concerts, and the Arts Week have all had to be cancelled since the middle of January 2020. By the end of 2020 it became apparent that we could only eke out our reserves so far. With our reserves depleted we calculated that we would be bankrupt by the middle of the year if we did nothing. The only viable option left to us was to defer our charitable giving, which normally amounts to nearly £10k per annum, and reduce our monthly parish share from £5.5k to £2k with effect from March. This is something no parish wants to do, but it was the only way we could manage a predicted £40k excess of expenditure over income.

At the time of writing we have good grounds for optimism. More than 29 million people have received at least one dose of vaccine. Despite schools reopening, the rolling infection rate for the Risboroughs is 37.7 per 100k per week, having been 842.7 at the start of the year. We hope and pray we have had our last closure and over the course of 2021 we can gradually return to having St Dunstan's open with no restrictions on attendance.

The Churchwardens

### **Reserves Policy**

Our reserves account, held in bank current accounts and three Church of England Deposit Funds, at the start of the year 2020 was £25,000. This amount was sufficient to cover three months of essential church expenses i.e. parish share, insurance and utilities. In a normal year our income would allow for all planned expenditure to be made as well as holding £25,000 as a reserve fund throughout the year.

Restrictions to church opening due to covid-19 resulted in a substantial reduction in income for 2020. During the year £10,000 of these reserve funds had to be transferred to our current account in order to make payment of our essential church expenses.

At the end of the year our reserves now stand at £15,000, the bare minimum necessary for meeting regular payments for three months.

It is hoped to restore our reserve to £25,000 during 2021 by prudent housekeeping and limited capital expenditure.

Anne White (treasurer)

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

Team Vicar: David Williams (Chairman)

Churchwardens: Johanna Powell (Vice-chairman) until October 2020  
Margaret Hunnibell  
Paul Woodward-Court(Vice-chairman) from October 2020

Elected Members: Jane Curry, representative on the Deanery Synod  
Margaret Pitman, representative on Deanery Synod  
Jane Rogers, representative on Deanery Synod  
Tim Goode, representative on Deanery Synod  
Susanne Dodds  
Judi Precious  
Anne White (Treasurer)  
Libby Keane  
Sue Ingram(Secretary)  
Jill Iredale  
Jocelyn Baxter  
Janet Griffin  
Debbie Norie(from Oct 2020)  
Angeline Vere(from Oct 2020)  
Johanna Powell

### **Proceedings:**

The full PCC met seven(including the short meeting after APCM) times during the year, six of those were virtually conducted using Zoom. The PCC delegates work to the events and stewardship teams (and from January 2021 to Pastoral Care, Youth, Fabric, Giving, Monks Risborough School and Communication 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 2020 was 161 (161 - 2019). The average attendance on a normal Sunday up until Lockdown 1 was 74 adults (94 – 2019) and 5 young people (9 – 2019). The number of attendees/Communicants on Christmas Day was 14 (120 - 2019), with attendees standing at 14 (639 – 2019). There was 1 Baptism (12 - 2019), 1 weddings/marriage blessings (5 - 2019), and 9 funerals or interments during the year (8 – 2019).

During the limited opening from August 16<sup>th</sup> there were 33 places available which were nearly always fully booked, sometimes sadly, we had to turn people away.

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 – Margaret Pitman/Sue Ingram  
Bell Tower Captain – Brian Highe  
Church Fabric –Jane Rogers  
Electoral Roll and GDPR Officer – Susanne Dodds  
Sidespersons' rota – Susanne Dodds  
Fellowship – Rosemary Woodward-Court  
Friendship Group – Avril Clarke  
Charity Commission – Christopher Gee  
Lunch Club (for seniors) – Anne Baker  
House groups – Rose Williams, Jill Iredale  
Open House group – Ted and Mary Kent  
Parish Newsletter – Morna Hinch  
Church Website --John Mckay  
Flowers – Gwen Miles  
10 o'clock Club – Cathy Farquhar  
Monks Monkeys – Anne White  
Events Team – Johanna Powell  
Monks Risborough School – Jane Curry  
Coffee Rota – Janet Griffin  
Churches Together in Risborough - Margaret Pitman

### **ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT 2019**

Following the recent revision in March 2021, there are currently 155 parishioners on the Monks Risborough Parish Electoral Roll. 90 are resident within the parish. Eight names were removed since the last revision and two added.

A record of the changes in church membership since 2007 is as follows:-

New Roll	2007	112	2014	182
Revisions	2008	106	2015	190
	2009	123	2016	184
	2010	126	2017	184
	2011	129	2018	183
	2012	127	2019	161
	2013	169	2020	161

The new roll has been compiled in accordance with the Synod Government Measure 1969 and a copy is displayed in the porch of St Dunstan's church

Susanne Dodds 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

This report was Approved by the PCC on \_\_\_\_\_ and signed on their behalf by the Reverend David Williams.

.....  
(PCC chairman)

### **Finance report**

The start of January 2020 showed healthy balances to St Dunstan's accounts but long church closures due to covid 19 restrictions changed the picture dramatically. Income took a dramatic fall during the year. Cash collections during the few services that were able to take place were halved. No social or fundraising events took place resulting in a fall to our total income for the year, from £140,000 in 2019 to £94,000 this year.

We reduced expenditure by trimming utility costs and holding back on repairs and maintenance. We were able to pay our Parish Share in full, £68,000, which was based on 2019 income figures. The Parish Share is used to pay mission and ministry in the Diocese. Our payment was only possible by withdrawing £10,000 from our reserves.

At the end of 2020 we had £15,000 in our reserve accounts and £24,000 in current account. Without an increase in income and decrease in expenditure for 2021 our financial position will become critical. The PCC is looking at ways to address this.

Anne White  
Church treasurer.

### **Fellowship Group**

We managed to fit in our AGM and Communion Service taken by Rose just before everything closed down in March. I am hopeful that most of the events planned for 2020-21 will be able to be rescheduled. We managed a couple of walks in the autumn. Each year we give a £50 donation to a charity, and this year we thought we would give it to the Florence Nightingale Hospice. Perhaps our next meeting will be the Garden Party in July. Looking forward to seeing everyone when we can.

### **THE BETHANY HOUSE GROUP**

2020 was to be a momentous year but little did The Bethany House Group realise just how traumatic it was to be. This report is therefore, of necessity, very short. The year began with '*Talking about Timothy*' for 3 sessions led by Jill Iredale. Ash Wednesday Holy Communion, led by Rose Williams, is always very special, and then we began the York Lent Course 'Superstar' which was due to run across 5 weeks. However after just 2 meetings, the first national Covid 19 Lockdown began and so that ended all official meetings for the rest of the year. Rose kindly invited some of the Group to meet socially outside in her garden in the summer, when lockdown ended, which was much appreciated by those who were able to attend. Huge thanks also to Rose who kept in touch with 'funnies' and a cheery message every Wednesday across the year and thank you to all those who replied. They also brought happy messages of encouragement and prayer support when times got difficult for some of the Group. It is impossible to know when we can all meet up again but there is no doubt that we shall, because this House Group has been going for some 15 years, so thank you to Su Viney for providing her home for our venue for all that time.

Jill Iredale

for The Bethany House Group

### **Lunch Club**

The last Lunch Club was held at the beginning of March 2020. Our Mayor kindly attended and presented balloons to two 90-year-olds! Since then it has not been possible to hold lunches, but we have kept in touch with our members throughout the pandemic and they have kept in touch with each other! Any outstanding monies were handed over to The Treasurer during the summer as it looked likely that we would sadly not be resuming the Lunches all that soon.

Anne Baker

### **Bell Ringing**

The year started normally with practice on Thursday evening and ringing for Sunday morning services. As usual, we were short of ringers and relying on help from Ellesborough in order to keep all six bells going. In March ringing stopped as services were cancelled and we also had to cancel the AGM of our local branch of the Bellringers' Guild, which we were due to host. Our first booking to ring for a wedding in April was also cancelled.

In June I tolled the tenor bell as a sign of respect for the funeral cortege of Ron Pearce who had been Tower Captain some years before we came to the Risboroughs. August 15<sup>th</sup> saw the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day and I tolled the tenor 75 times.

In August services resumed under strict Covid rules and we carried out a risk analysis and decided that we could ring three of our six bells and still keep 2m apart. There were 5 ringers willing to have a go and so we set up a rolling rota for Sunday morning ringing. There are very few methods available for three bells but did manage to try a couple of them.

On Remembrance Sunday I once again tolled the tenor, this time it was 11 times at 11:00 with the added tension for me being that there were worshippers in church who could count. Stopping at the correct moment is sometimes difficult but it went well.

Then came the new Covid variant towards the end of the year and we decided to accept diocesan advice and ceased all ringing just before Christmas with a last ringing down of the bells before the carol service.

Our bank account holds £350.07, less than in previous years due to the cost of rope repairs in 2019, reduce number of wedding income in 2019 and none in 2020. The bells have been inspected sporadically through the year and are in good condition.

Brian Highe

### **Churches Together in Risborough 2020**

*'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, Lacey Green and Speen churches. 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.

2020 started normally with a meeting in January when the year's activities were discussed. The only events that actually took place 'live' were the Service for Christian Unity, (January), and the Women's World Day of Prayer (March 6<sup>th</sup>). Then came Lockdown 1.

None of the other regular events, Christian Aid Service, Easter Celebrations, Lighthouse, and Advent events took place live.

The use of Zoom and IT became the 'norm', being used for Committee Meetings, Lent courses, Lighthouse events, (centrally organised) and online services in some form, from nearly all churches.

CTR has been very involved with the Food Banks, based at Elim and St Mary's, receiving and distributing food parcels to an increasing number of families.

'It's your move' booklets were distributed to primary school leavers.

Despite all the challenges last year, CTR still provided a presence within the town and surrounds, and hopes to continue to do so in the still challenging times to come.

CTR's website [www.risboroughchurches.org.uk](http://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. Thank you.

It would be very helpful to have another from St Dunstan's on the Committee.

Margaret Pitman.

### **Deanery Synod 2020**

Four members of the PCC are eligible to sit on the Deanery Synod, which meets 3 times a year. The Deanery Synod provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

The first Meeting last year (March 11 just before lock down), was held, and then the only other meeting was the November Meeting, which was postponed until January this year.

Talks:           Climate change by Maranda St John Nicolle, in which she encouraged churches to have an 'energy audit' to look into improving the carbon footprint and reducing energy costs.

The work of the Aylesbury Town Centre Chaplaincy, by Catherine Turnbull-Ross.  
Gary Oldham updated us on work at the General Synod

The new Triennium began with the election of the Lay Chair - David Lillycrop was re-elected. This was followed by the Standing and Pastoral Committees.

Finance – the Deanery achieved 93.8% of its share total, the reduction mainly due to loss of income from renting halls and lack of fundraising. The Treasurer advised parishes to look at the Diocesan Development Fund in 2021 for possible grants, as the deanery will find it very difficult this year. She thanked Parish Treasurers for all their hard work in very difficult conditions.

Margaret Pitman

### **St. Peter's, Owlswick**

Due to the Covid restrictions which came into force in March 2020 the only religious celebration in Owlswick after this time was Carols on the Green, this took place without the usual refreshments,

but thanks to the Rev. Michael Hunt; we were able to hold a short, open air service which was attended by 30 people.

Speaker Evenings had to be cancelled due to the Covid pandemic although we did manage an open-air social gathering on the Green in July with everyone bringing their own refreshments and in September, we were able to contribute to the collection of goods for the White Chapel Mission. We look forward with hope to a time when we are once again able to meet without restrictions.

### **St. Peter's Fabric**

The cracking in the south west wall was investigated in July by Lawfull Associates Consulting Structural Engineers. The recommendation is to install a rod with pressure plates in the end wall and carry out crack repairs. A quotation received from JG Restorations estimated the t cost, inclusive of scaffolding, to be £13,173.30. The return of the decorated metal band, currently being stored in St. Dunstan's, cannot take place until this work is completed.

### **St. Dunstan's Fabric**

In December Paul Woodward-Court asked me to be the support team leader on Fabric, up until this time my only knowledge of this subject was gathered at St. Peter's. The members of the team are David Curry and Mick White, with serious input from Paul.

**Churchyard and grounds:** The churchyard continue to be well maintained thanks to the many helpers who have mown grass, pruned and cleared leaves throughout the year. The churchyard meadow extension continues to thrive with increasing varieties of wild flowers and wildlife in evidence. Our hedgerows both here and elsewhere in the churchyard are growing well and make a great natural border to St Dunstan's. The self-mulching mowers continue to keep our compost heap to a manageable size. – Mick White

**Storage Shed** Planning permission has been obtained by Jane Curry to place a storage shed in the churchyard meadow extension to house the mowers and gardening equipment. This project is ongoing.

Jane Rogers

## **MONKS RISBOROUGH C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Head Teacher Appointment**

The year began with the school being run by two interim co-head teachers, Mrs. Annette Szymaniak, a former head teacher, working for 3 days a week on a supply contract along with deputy head, Amy Robinson. This arrangement was set up to cover the period during which a permanent head teacher was being sought. The Head Teacher Appointment Panel was helped throughout the process by Marion Standing, the diocesan education adviser. There were 10 applications for the post; of these, 4 were shortlisted for interview. Interviews took place on 27<sup>th</sup> February, following which, Amy Robinson was appointed to commence as the head teacher in September. Mrs Annette Szyaniak continued to work for 3 days a week until the end of the academic year in a supportive capacity. It was later decided that, rather than appoint a new deputy head, Annette Szymaniak, would continue to provide support with reduced hours from September.

### **The School During Lockdown**

The School continued throughout the period of lockdown to make on site education available for the children of key workers and children classed as vulnerable. Some children of key workers and a few vulnerable children made use of this facility. Staff made contact with the parents of vulnerable

children not taking up the offers of places and online education was provided for all pupils not attending school.

### **Extension of School Opening**

Considerable challenges continued throughout the year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with the school needing constantly to make revised risk assessments and adjustments.

In addition to the classes provided continuously since the beginning of lockdown for key workers' children and children with special needs whose parents wished them to attend, the school opened up in early June for Years 6, 1 and Reception as planned. There was a high take-up for Year 6, with almost all pupils attending, but fewer children returned in the younger groups.

### **Year 6 Bibles**

Due to the constraints on church funds this year, we arranged for Bibles to be purchased by the school, with the cost being covered by a trust fund previously set up for educational purposes. The St. Andrew's Bookshop in Great Missenden generously agreed to provide comprehensively annotated Bibles, similar to those given to last year's Year 6 children, at the same cost as they had been provided for the church last year. In addition, Churches Together has bought useful Christian booklets, called "It's Your Move", helping children to make the transition to secondary school. The Bibles were presented to the school leavers by our Area Dean, the Rev. David Williams, at a special service.

### **School Worship**

The school has been able to benefit from worship sessions via video link being provided by Rev. Mary Kent, a semi-retired Church of England ordained priest; our new foundation governor, Ted Kent, who is also a Church of England licenced lay minister; and Rev. Vanessa Rae, the Princes Risborough Baptist Church minister.

### **Autumn Return to School**

All year groups returned to school in September to start the new academic session, but with many of the usual activities curtailed or cancelled.

Considerable challenges continued, with the school needing constantly to make revised risk assessments and adjustments due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In spite of all the difficulties, the school was able to mark all the important calendar occasions during the autumn term. Each year produced a video to celebrate Harvest Thanksgiving, which can be seen on the school's website, <https://www.mrisborough.bucks.sch.uk/harvest-festival-october-2020/>

For Remembrance Day, the children made poppy wreaths. Year 2 and upwards wrote prayers on their poppies, while Year 1 went with the head teacher to the Monks Risborough War Memorial.

### **Advent**

The staff and pupils all enthusiastically prepared for Christmas during Advent. For Christingle all the children made their own Christingles in school. Years 5 and 6 were invited to participate in the

Advent Calendar aired by Red Kite Radio. Instead of the normal carol singing round the village, school Christmas cards were delivered this year to local residents and a Christmas Jumper Day was held when the children were encouraged to wear Christmas jumpers in support of Save the Children, for which they raised £181.

Staff and children all enjoyed a Christmas lunch in their bubbles and, courtesy of the Friends of Monks Risborough, had great fun watching a recorded panto – “Cinderella Live!” Continuing in their bubbles, the Robins (Reception Year), Wrens (Year 1) and Red Kites (Year 2) performed a nativity play entitled ‘What a Bundle of Joy!’ This was recorded on DVD and distributed to parents instead of the usual live performance before an audience.

The calendar year concluded with Year 3, the Kestrels, featuring in a virtual worship session which was seen by all the school. The Kestrels retold the nativity story while all the other classes prepared and sang a Christmas carol.

### **Foundation Governor Position**

Ted Kent was appointed a Foundation Governor, joining Alex Rees and Jane Curry, which then brought us back briefly to our full complement of foundation governors, although Alex’ term expired in September. Alex agreed to continue for a short while as a co-opted governor, but it is hoped by the school leadership that the new incumbent at St. Dunstan’s will take an active interest in the school and will fill the vacant Foundation Governor position.

Jane Curry

### 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, June Timms for managing the advertising, Mick White for his careful proof-reading and Penny Hollings for organising the efficient team of distributors.

This difficult year of lockdown has given some of the team extra challenges. In particular, the shifting news and information concerning church services, the opening and closing of the building and, more recently, the vacancy have had to be circulated by email, phone calls and on the website. As webmaster, John has been kept busy managing the site and keeping it updated every week which is much appreciated by all of us who use it.

In March 2020, we had just completed the April/May issue and were about to go to press, when the first lockdown was announced. We put it on the website, but had to cancel the print issue and it was not until the end of November that we started to discuss with the churchwardens the possibility of resuming publication. We decided to go ahead starting with the Christmas Flyer and then, with the production of the February/March issue, we were back in business! An essential part of the decision was ensuring that we could successfully distribute the copies, not only throughout the parish but to all on the Electoral Roll, who live outside of the parish and who would previously have picked up their copies from the church. Penny did an excellent job in organising this, finding extra people to plug delivery gaps, and walking and cycling a few extra miles herself! Angeline de Vere was a great help in compiling the distribution list. June made contact with all the advertisers to let them know that we would be producing an issue in January and to check if they still wanted

to be included. We made no charge for this first issue but normal charges will now resume. There have been no gift aid collections for the magazine since April 2019.

At the time of writing, we are finalising the April/May issue and are already thinking of the summer one. The first two issues have been reduced to 28 pages, as most of our societies, local organisations and events are still not taking place, but we have had entries from the school as well as interesting articles from our regular contributors and some new ones. Special thanks go to Susanne Carr and Jackie Highe who can always be relied on for entertaining and informative copy. Finally, we give thanks to our printers, South Bucks Business Products Ltd, who give us such a prompt and professional service. We are very pleased to be back in production and hope there will be no further suspensions.

Morna Hinch

### **Flowers**

2020 has been a very challenging year and soon after the end of Lent the usual routine of flowers was put on hold. However, where possible and when the church was open the team of 22 St Dunstan Flower Arrangers provided flowers for the porch, Wilberforce Chapel niche and two ledges of the chancel arch on a weekly basis.

Easter and Harvest were minimal, with services limited and numbers restricted. With the prospect of a more "normal" Christmas the team ensured the church was decorated with candles, greenery, a splendid Christmas tree, the angels and an arch over the south door. All this was achieved in one morning accompanied by Christmas organ music and a finale of mince pies and mulled wine.

Weddings, christenings, Bucks Art Week and many other events and celebrations scheduled for 2020 were cancelled so the year has been very quiet. 2021 has begun quietly but we look forward to a return of a "new normal" and the opportunity to ensure St Dunstons is enhanced with flowers by the team.

Gwen Miles & Jenny Masterton Smith

### **St Dunstan's Music**

The choir began 2020 well, following the busy and challenging period at the end of 2019. They continued to provide music for all the regular services until March when everything stopped.

Contact was maintained by emails etc, which was very beneficial. No live sung music was possible even when services began again, but it was possible to play the organ, before and after the services, which was very welcome. Thanks to all the organists who participated.

We did manage to sing at the celebration of Rob's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with 5 choir members. It was quite moving if rather strange.

We were also asked to provide a group to sing in St Mary's for a Remembrance Day recording to be broadcast on the Council's website, which we managed successfully.

Thanks to all who took part in those events.

Although we weren't able to sing as a group again, Jackie sang at the opening of the Carol service which took place on Christmas Eve, with the Choir of King's College following her lead! Thank you very much.

Once again thank you to all who helped throughout such challenging times, and I look forward to seeing you all in the not, too distant future when we can all sing and play to the glory of God.

Margaret Pitman

### **Friendship Group**

We only had two meetings last year but both were well attended. After Christmas we each brought a favourite card and told the group why it was special. And the other meeting was a Beetle Drive, I think! It is so long ago! Since March last year we have not been able to meet of course, but really hope to get together soon, gosh! how chins will wag then! Perhaps we will be able to welcome some new members for a cup of tea and chat I do hope so.

Avril Clark

### **Gift Aid Secretary Report**

The report covers the claim year April 2019 -2020

The total amount of tax recovered from HMRC amounted to £14492.16

On the submission form this year there were 241 different names and addresses to input, this figure is down from the previous year by 23.

195 donations were made via the Blue Envelope Scheme total Donations Received £9249.79

61 Regular Standing Orders, total Donations £34019.30.

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. This year we were again able to claim a tax refund of £2228.18, which is included in the above total amount claimed of £14492.16. This year we were able to claim the Maximum from donations made at St. Dunstan's but not from St. Peter & St Paul at Owlswick

Our total claim this year was 13% higher than the previous year despite the fact that the number of people giving fell by about 10%.

We still receive a number of donations in Blue Envelopes, which do not qualify for a reclaim as they are incorrectly completed or totally ineligible. These are usually from people attending weddings or funerals who would not be known to us. Our Tax Re-claim is probably reduced by about £30 to £40 each year because of this. Where I know or recognise the donor of an incorrectly completed blue envelope, I do complete these myself and include them in the claim.

As for the current Tax year, I am predicting being able to make a tax claim for in the region of £9,600. Despite a fall of 11 in the number of people making regular donations by standing order, the actual sum being donated is still probably going to be about £34,000. It looks as though the donations made through the Blue Envelopes will be about half and there will be nothing to claim through the GASDS scheme.