

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF
Christ Church and
St Mary Magdalen and
St Peter & St Paul
St Leonards on Sea**

**Annual Report for the year ending
31 December 2015
Trustees' report**

The Parochial Church Council (trustees) have pleasure in presenting their report and the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2015. The organisational structure, administration details and governance of the PCC are set out further in this report as are the activities of the church throughout the year.

Administrative Information

The Parish Church of Christ Church and St Mary Magdalen and St Peter and St Paul is situated in St Leonards on Sea, within the County of East Sussex. The Parish is part of the Diocese of Chichester in the Church of England. The correspondence address is: The Parish Centre, 2 Christ Church Courtyard, London Road, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex, TN37 6GL

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector, The Reverend Luke Irvine-Capel, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

Summary

This year has been a busy one for the Parish, with services, pastoral care and mission and outreach work continuing, many special services and major events being held, including the Deanery Schools leavers service, the school Harvest Festival and Christmas Nativity Play, the Fellowship of St Nicholas Nativity play. All this was done in increasingly tight financial circumstances.

Activities

The range of activities for Christ Church can be split broadly into three categories – worship, prayer and pastoral care; fundraising and fellowship; and hosting events staged by local organisations, schools' gatherings to concerts.

Worship, prayer and pastoral care

As well as the usual weekday and Sunday worship during the year, Fr Luke has organised and/or presided over a number of special services:

- During Lent we offered Stations of the Cross, a weekly Lent lunch and a study group. We welcomed Fr John Gribben CR as our Holy Week preacher.
- In April members of all sections of our Scout Group (Beavers, Cubs and Scouts) joined in a St Georgetide Mass and then paraded through Hastings with all Scout Groups in the Hastings and Rye District.
- On the Eve of Pentecost Fr Luke attended the Deanery celebration of the launch of the Diocesan Strategy. This culminated in the lighting of the beacon on the East Hill in Hastings.
- In May we celebrated the May Devotion to Our Lady, and Fr Richard Rushforth preached. The Mass and Procession of Our Lady was followed by a Parish Lunch in the Parish Centre.
- On Corpus Christi Sunday (June 7th) we celebrated at Parish Confirmation Mass with 5 candidates. Bishop Mark Horsham celebrated. The Annual Parish Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham took place 22-26th June. The Diocesan School Leavers Service was held in Christ Church on Friday 26th June. June 28th we welcomed Fr Sean Gilbert as Assistant Curate to the Parish, following his Ordination as Deacon in Chichester Cathedral the previous day.
- The School End of Year Mass was celebrated in church on July 22nd.
- In September, we welcomed our Parish School for their Harvest Festival.

The following Sunday we gave thanks for the bounty which the earth brings at our Harvest Thanksgiving Mass and blessing of the Sea. Our Scout Group and School took a full and active part;

In October Fr Luke and Fr Sean attended the Bishop's Charge to the clergy of the Diocese, which completed his Visitation to the Diocese.

Fr Luke, and other members of our CBS Ward, attended the CBS Festival at St John the Divine, West Worthing on October 24th. Fr Luke was elected as District Superior at the Annual Meeting following the Mass.

- Our Advent theme began to explore the 'Year of Mercy'. A weekly Bible Study Group met and reflected on the theme.

As well as these special services, we continued to try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer, learning about the Gospel, and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- Missionary and outreach work.

Acts of worship were carried out on every day of the year, and pastoral care continued through, in particular, the visiting of, and on occasions taking Communion to, parishioners who through sickness or age were unable to come to church.

The average attendance at the main Services at the church was 93 over 16 years and 11 under 16 years, and the number reported to be recorded on the Electoral Roll on 31 December 2015 was 128. Easter attendance was 177 (154 communicants). Christmas Attendance was 327 (183 communicants).

In addition to our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God in the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism, we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commit their loved one into God's keeping. This year, the Rector celebrated 4 baptisms and took 15 funerals. There was 1 wedding.

The Parish held evenings of prayer, discussion, reflections for Lent and Advent. Lent lunches were also held on Fridays throughout Lent, raising funds for the Additional Curates Society.

Ecumenically, the parish shared a Good Friday walk of witness with the Roman Catholic Church, the local Baptist Church and St Leonards Church.

Mission and outreach work

The year saw church members looking further outward in their mission and outreach, including:

- Supporting through contributions of food to the Seaview project, working with and supporting the homeless.
- Supporting through volunteering with the Snowflake night shelter project
- Serving as Governors at our Parish School.
- Parishioners contributing staple foodstuffs and toiletries to the Hastings Food Bank.
- The hosting of two weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.
- Members of the church continuing to be involved with the GCSL (Gensing Central St Leonards) forum. This has developed through the weekly litter pick and Fr Luke serving as Chair of the Forum. Fr Luke and Fr Sean also attend the Town Team meetings.
- Members of the Sewing group and other parishioners contributing to charity by knitting hats and clothing, which were then donated to the charity.
- Parishioners supporting through volunteering to lead our Scout Group and serve as members of the Scout Group committee.
- September also saw the start of a weekly litter pick around the streets of the Parish.

- This is done in conjunction with the Gensing and Central St Leonards Community Forum (GCSL Forum). This arose out of our Mission Action Plan, and is something which all are encouraged to participate in an embrace.
- In October we began a monthly 'bring and share' lunch in the Parish Centre following the Parish Mass. This was one of the objectives from our Mission Action Plan and provides an opportunity for any and all, and especially those who may be alone, to share food and companionship.
- Christ Church Choir continued to participate fully in church services, including a Parish Christmas Carol Service and celebration of Holy Week.
- Members of the congregation made pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in June 2015. Fr Luke, Anne Hanney (Headteacher) and Sharon Blythe (Christ Church School) led a group of children from our school during the Walsingham Children's Pilgrimage. We joined with the Diocese of Chichester Group.
- The church bells, were rung each Sunday, and on special occasions.

Hosting events

In May we hosted the Diocesan Reader Selection Conference.

In June we hosted the service of celebration for pupils leaving first and primary schools in the Diocese of Chichester.

The Parish Centre Hall and Christ Church Crypt continued to be resources for the community. As well as hosting church fundraising events and after-service fellowship, Christ Church Hall was used by the 'active art' group, the Member of Parliament held regular community meetings in our Hall, as did the Community Forum, in addition to our own Beaver, Cub and Scout Group. The congregation at Christ Church is encouraging the local community to make more use of the Hall, including running a table top sale coffee morning each month. In September we collaborated with our school as part of the Coastal Currents Art project. Our hall was a studio exhibiting work from the Christ Church Community, and we welcomed the Mayor of Hastings, and over a hundred and fifty other visitors.

Christ Church hosted a number of concerts, including those by the Battle Choral Society and the Hastings Philharmonic Choir.

We welcomed regular visits to church from different classes from our school.

Christ Church hosted the St Nicholastide (4th December) nativity play for the Fellowship of St Nicholas (FSN).

The town 'Frost Fair' and switching on of Christmas lights began from Christ Church Courtyard.

Incumbent and ministers

The Incumbent is the Reverend Luke Irvine-Capel. He is assisted by Fr Sean Gilbert, Assistant Curate, a self-supporting priest, the Reverend Dr Richard Ralph. The parish is also served by Bishop Peter Wheatley (Hon. Assistant Bishop in the Diocese) and honorary assistant priests, Fr Richard Rushforth, Fr Robin Tree and Fr David Sherwood.

Objectives and activities

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year, looking at what we have achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous twelve months. The review looks at the success of each key activity and benefits of activities in a wide variety of cultural areas. The review also helps us ensure our aims, objectives and activities remained focussed on our stated objectives. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charities Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities.

When considering our activities for the year, the incumbent and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

The objective of the Charity is promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. Encouraging and facilitating the practice of the Christian Faith by the Church includes the following:

- The provision and maintenance of the fabric of Christ Church, St Leonards on Sea and its associated buildings;
- Conducting regular Christian worship;
- The celebration of the Holy Eucharist, including on a daily basis at Christ Church; marriages, funerals and baptisms;
- Leaving Christ Church open to the public to enter and benefit from personal spiritual contemplation;
- Promoting the study of Christian teaching, practices and Scriptures;
- The provision of means and encouragement to promote fellowship within the membership of the Churches and the wider community;

In addition to the above, Christian devotional acts and outreach work is carried out, including:

- Visiting the sick;
- Administering the Sacraments to those unable to attend regular acts of Worship, to the sick and dying;
- Supporting pastoral work;
- Fostering ecumenical links between differing Christian denominations;
- Supporting the work of other local charities.

Further activities in the year

Monies were raised by freewill offertory, fund raising activities and specific appeals. These were used to support the work and administration of the church and wider mission. Volunteers, who helped at each act of worship to support the clergy, have donated their time. The church expects to continue with her acts of worship and pastoral care during 2016 and will continue to actively try to increase its Electoral Roll, through its mission work in the community.

The activities of the groups within the church continued during the year. The monies raised contributed to the general income of the church. These activities are expected to continue during 2016. All those involved in group activities and who assist with the main functions of the churches are volunteers.

Structure, governance and management

As required by law, a Standing Committee met to transact PCC business between the PCC meetings.

A Maintenance Committee worked with the Rector and Wardens in managing the fabric of the buildings.

Christ Church Church of England (VA)Primary School

The Parish School is situated on Woodland Vale Road, St Leonards On Sea, East Sussex, TN37 6JJ. The Priest in Charge serves as an ex officio Foundation Governor. The PCC and the Diocesan Board of Education also nominate Foundation Governors to the Governing Body.

Christ Church St Leonards on Sea Housing Improvement Society Ltd

The Management Committee of this Society have the responsibility of administering and maintaining St Richard's House, Pevensey Road, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex. The Management Committee is chaired by the Priest in Charge. The Society employs Manningtons Chartered Accountants, 7 Wellington Square, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1PD, as managing agents.

St Mary Magdalen Educational Charity

The charity is registered with the Charity Commission (306495). The charity offers cash grants to individuals and organisations that will tend to facilitate education in accordance with the principles of the Church of England. The charity mainly operates within the parish of Christ Church and St Mary Magdalen, St Leonards on Sea or in the wider Borough of Hastings. The Trustees are chaired by the Rector. In 2015 a long serving Trustee, Mr Barry Goodwin, died. We give thanks for his long service as a Trustee, amongst so many other roles in the Parish over a lifetime, and pray that he may rest in peace.

Christ Church St Leonards Old Buildings Trust

The charity is registered with the Charity Commission (1087321)

The objects of the Trust are:

1. The advancement and promotion of theological education and training for lay and ordained persons in the Church of England.
2. Meeting rooms for the Ecclesiastical Parish of Christ Church and St Mary Magdalen, St Leonards on Sea.
3. Accommodation for clergy and their families within the Church of England.
4. For other charitable purposes connected with the Church of England

The Rector, Mrs Maureen Shaw, Miss Maureen Mason, Bishop Peter Wheatley, Bishop Nicholas Reade serve as Trustees.

Risk Review

The risks facing the PCC include the state of repair of the church and the financial requirements to meet its stated activities, including payment of its Annual Parish Share. The structure of the church is continually monitored by the Fabric & Maintenance committee and the Church architect (Quinquennial Inspection carried out during 2015 and an Archdeacon's Visitation), and the finances are controlled by careful budgeting and encouragement and appeals to the worshippers and visitors. In 2015 a Stewardship and Finance Committee was formed and a stewardship campaign was planned for Lent 2016.

There have been no serious incidents or other matters relating to this charity over the previous financial year that we should have brought to the attention of the Charity Commissioners but have not.

Organisational Structure

The PCC is responsible inter-alia for promoting the mission of the Church, the parochial budget and all expenditure there under, the care and maintenance of the fabric of the church. The PCC is also the normal channel of communication between the parishioners and the Bishop of the diocese. All members of the PCC are volunteers.

New representatives are told of their responsibilities and of the issues facing the Church by existing representatives, and receive such additional training as required. Officers of the PCC, including the Secretary and Treasurer are appointed at the first meeting of the PCC after the Vestry Meeting.

As indicated, members of the PCC also serve as representatives on the Deanery Synod.

The church is run entirely by volunteers as the clergy are remunerated by the Church Commissioners. Without the work of these volunteers, Christ Church would not function.

Committee structure

The PCC met 5 times in 2015 but between these meetings, a number of committees meet to support the work of the Churches:

- The Standing Committee
- The Fabric Committee
- The Stewardship and Finance Committee

Fabric

Regular inspections and maintenance of the church, plus the other buildings and the grounds, were carried out during the year as required. The Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in September 2015.

Safeguarding Policy

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has adopted the Safeguarding Policy of the Diocese of Chichester. Our Safeguarding officer is Mrs Jane Hart. All volunteers with our PALS group (Sunday School) have the required DBS clearance, and, following advice received from the Diocesan Safeguarding team, the PCC will be implementing the safer recruitment process for all future volunteers. All clergy have enhanced DBS disclosure as a condition of their Licence in the Diocese. Volunteers and clergy have attended Safeguarding training offered by the Diocese and CCPAS. A report from the Safeguarding Officer is attached as an Appendix to this report.

Bankers

Charity Aid Foundation, West Malling

Independent Examiner

Mrs Pam Crow

The Reverend Luke Irvine-Capel, Chairman

Report of the Headteacher

What a wonderful year we have had in school during 2015! In March our school was judged by Ofsted to be 'good' overall with our nursery and reception classes being outstanding. Both the local authority and diocese considered that the Ofsted report showed that we were at the top end of 'good', a very secure base from which we can improve further.

In November 2015 we had a SIAMS inspection. All Anglican and Methodist schools have this inspection where the school is judged according to the difference it makes for the pupils as a Church school by the quality of its distinctive Christian Character, Collective Worship, Religious Education and Leadership. We were thrilled to be judged outstanding in all these areas. I am very proud for the school and recognise the hard work our children, staff, clergy, governors, school and church community in general have contributed to ensure this success. The large proportion of our governors are 'foundation' members from Christ Church and their input is much valued at school.

Clergy from Christ Church lead Collective Worship at least weekly and Fr. Luke has established a programme for masses at school on most Thursday afternoons at 2;20pm. Planning for these is carried out with each class teacher and pupils in turn. (We should love to welcome members of the congregation to join us on these occasions.) We have taken a lead in the Mothering Sunday Mass at Church reporting on our experiences of pilgrimage at Walsingham and have led in Advent 1. Christ Church School has regular end of term and Harvest services at Church where we joyfully fill the building with pupils and families. Pupils had an opportunity to have guidance in flower arranging at Christ Church. No doubt there was a noticeable difference in displays for the following Sunday but what a wonderful experience the pupils had! We are very grateful for all the help church members give us both in our Mass at school and in hosting these events in Church.

Pupils' academic achievement has shown a sustained trend of improvement where those, from a low starting point, have left the school well in line with the national average.

Our children have experienced a wide range of opportunities to enthuse them in learning; e.g. the community art project exhibited in the Parish Hall was a great success in celebrating the talents of the congregation, staff, children and parents of the school and artists from the locality. Pupils contributed work in an exhibition at the Jerwood Gallery. An artists' forum has been established to pursue similar events in the future. Singing in the school is stunning! Music plays a significant part across the school day and numerous opportunities are taken to share it with the community. For a week in spring 2015 our Belgian, Comenius partner came with her family to teach French. In November our German partner visited and exchanged news of future projects. We continue to sustain our strong links with both A Roman Catholic and an Islamic school in Hastings, Sierra Leone. The child initiated fund raising for charities, such as providing help for Sierra Leone, is impressive and demonstrates a high level of concern and desire to help.

Within our school there are 25 languages spoken in addition to English. The links that we establish both in Europe and Africa help children's awareness of the wider world and their own sense of worth. These are but a few examples of Christ Church School experiences.

With some inspections behind us for a while, we want to improve still further for our children but we shall have more time in 2016 to develop links with Christ Church as identified in the Action Plan. We look forward to doing our part.

Anne Hanney,

Headteacher, Christ Church

Report of the Scout Leader

9th Hastings (Christchurch) Scout Troop

After the departure of our previous Leader, Graeme Monk, the Scout troop has continued to grow from 28 Scouts to, now, 31 Scouts with more members joining at the start of the new term. Scouts have successfully worked towards numerous badges ranging from first-aid to astronautics. I am also pleased to say that we look forward to having one Scout who will have met the requirements to have earned his Chief Scout Gold Award. He will be the first Scout of the 9th Hastings (Christchurch) to have achieved this award. I am also happy to say that with the help of Father Luke and Father Sean, we are gradually getting more Scouts to participate in Church activities such as Harvest, Blessing of the Sea and St George's day service. I feel this has been a result of their help and participation. Father Sean now attends many of our Weekly meetings and has agreed to pursue his leader training.

Shaun Kemp

Scout Leader (9th Hastings (Christchurch) Scout group)

Beavers Report 2015

Well what a year we have done so much! I can't believe it's my second year of being at the 9th and I am still enjoying every minute of it. I know that we all enjoyed the camp at the Boathouse dressed as Pirates where some of the Beavers earned their first overnight camp badge and then we did a hike to Glyne Gap followed with swimming then of course McDonalds but I think the Beavers forgot we had to walk back so I think they deserved the hiking badge. It's great to see so many Beavers joining in with the Church parade especially St Francis and St Georges day and each time they have been brilliant. A big thank you to all the Beavers for helping with Bag packing doing this helps with raising money for the group we have another booked for November so keep the good work up. The beavers have made so many wonderful things, like kites that actually flew, bird food, wind chimes, dye tie t-shirts, Christmas show items, Easter items and Mother day cards. They have also experienced and tried new things like Chinese food, Halloween with the wonderful messy games, Christmas show, Gang show, international badge which required them to try food from other countries like feta cheese and olives I didn't quite get to frogs legs and snails maybe next time. They learned how to use the morse code, what it's like to be blind and how to rely and depend on others to guide them and sign language. In July we did an overnight camp to Guestwell where the Beavers earned their Space badge and the weather was wonderful and so were the Beavers.

Thank you and let's keep having fun. Robin

Report of the Proceedings of Hastings Deanery Synod 2015

Hastings Deanery Synod has met four times this year.

The summer saw the launch of the Diocesan strategy with members meeting to mark this on East Hill for prayer and the lighting of the beacon.

The main concentration for the Synod at the present time is the Hastings Deanery Review and the implementation of its Mission Action Plan (MAP).

This will entail each parish:

- developing its own vision and plan
- deciding on its local needs and working to the common good with a strategy for outreach
- Talking and working together with other parishes

Points to think about will be:

- Main points of the plan
- How it is lived out in reality
- When last reviewed and by whom
- Strategy for outreach
- How your church is empowered by its plan

This coming year will see the implementation of this with future meetings designated for each stage of the process and its review culminating in a final presentation in November 2016.

At Christ Church this process is already well on the way with the Action Plan up and running and regularly reviewed by the PCC.

Christ Church Deanery Synod representatives are:

Fr Luke Irvine- Capel

Fr Richard Ralph

George Brice

Louse Fisher

Maureen Harman

ELECTORAL ROLL

There are currently 126 names entered on the Roll, 27 being in the Parish.

C Sherwood

Electoral Roll Officer

Reserves Policy

The PCC discussed the following factors in arriving at their reserves policy:

- Money should only be kept in reserve for specific reasons – whilst the Bible clearly indicates that we should not hoard it is also clear that sensible planning for known events and a contingency for emergencies, are important.
- The PCCs main concern at present is the payment of Parish Share.
- There was concern about the reliance on the church hall/letting income and a feeling that two months income should be kept in the reserves in case the St Peter's hall tenant got into financial difficulties There was also concern about possible legal costs and reinstatement works associated with possible loss of tenant at St Peter's Hall. It was felt appropriate to reserve £5K to offset this.
- There was concern about some necessary masonry maintenance work to St Peter's Church Hall. It was felt appropriate to reserve £5K to offset this.
- It was felt appropriate to keep six months general running costs in reserve (£55K) to cover building emergencies and any unforeseen sudden drops in income.

Policy: it is the policy of this church to keep six months running costs and two months hall income in reserve to cover unforeseen emergencies. The PCC will also reserve £10K to cover work arising from quinquennial inspections and £10K for necessary works to St Peter's church hall and any necessary legal costs.

This policy will be reviewed in twelve months time.

**Combined Report of the Churchwardens and the Maintenance Working Party on the
Fabric of the Church 2015**

As in previous years annual maintenance has been implemented with reference to the church maintenance guidelines drawn up by English Heritage and our architect. Fortunately there were no major works to be undertaken during 2015.

The heating systems, alarms, electrical appliances, the organ, the fire extinguishers and the font mechanism have all been serviced as required.

George Stone (Builders) have replaced some of the weathered stonework around the church; have investigated and made safe brickwork above the south aisle and replaced the south east gutter end. They also cleared a blocked gully above the Lady Chapel, which was causing water ingress.

The Crypt Door has been renovated and its hinges replaced and adjusted. It is planned to renovate the Silchester Road doors this summer.

During Church Cleaning days, the garden areas have been tidied; drains and gulleys cleared; some down pipes painted and wax removed from chairs, floors and other locations throughout the church.

In September the Archdeacon of Hastings carried out a Visitation. His report was very satisfactory though he expressed concern about the condition of some of the church stonework in the long term.

In September, our architect carried out the Quinquennial Inspection. We await his report on the general condition of the church building.

As always, the Churchwardens are immensely grateful to the Maintenance Working Party, the Sacristans, the Friday polishers and cleaners and all who work to keep our church looking beautiful.

Maureen Shaw, Churchwarden

Sue Shaw, Churchwarden

The Maintenance Group

Safeguarding Report

All members of the congregation that work with children in any way are required to undertake Safeguarding training every 3 years, and complete a DBS (police) check.

This includes Sunday School Leaders, Choir Members, Bell Ringers and Servers.

This is an on-going process, and is constantly being updated. It is overseen by Church House, and CCPAS, the National Church Safeguarding Advisors, with whom I am in regular contact to ensure all our procedures and policies are accurate, robust and up to date.

Jane Hart
Safeguarding Officer

PALS ~ Sunday School

PALS stands for Praise and Learning on Sunday, as well as signifying that we are all FRIENDS. We have 7 Sunday School Leaders, who work on a rota system. We provide teaching based on the Gospel of the day, or relevant theme. We are untrained, but support each other with ideas and resources. We set a programme in consultation with Fr Luke.

We meet most weeks, except for August, over Christmas, and when the School or Scout Group help to lead the Mass.

We have 6-7 regular attenders, ranging in age from 4 to 11. We ask for children under 3 to be accompanied by a parent or carer, and encourage children of Secondary School age to Serve or join the choir.

The children are very proud to show the congregation at the end of Mass what they have learnt and made, and it is wonderful to watch them grow in confidence, faith and spirituality ~ however, it is often difficult to tell who has learnt more ~ us or them!

Jane Hart
Sunday School Leader (one of 7!)