

ST MARK'S CHURCH, ENGLEFIELD
in the Deanery of Bradfield

ANNUAL REPORT of ENGLEFIELD PCC
April 2019 - September 2020

Organisation

Benefice of Englefield

Rector	The Revd Nicholas Wynne-Jones, Chairman of PCC
Parish Office	St Mark's House, Englefield, RG7 5EP
Bank	Lloyds TSB, 1-2 Market Place, Reading, RG1 2BQ
Independent Examiner	Mr F W Wells FCA

During the year the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

Wardens	Dr Carolyn Boulter Mr Torquil Montague-Johnstone	
Representatives on Deanery Synod	Dr Hugh Boulter (until 28 June 2020) Mr Torquil Montague-Johnstone Mr David Gibbons	until APCM 2020 until APCM 2020 until APCM 2020
Elected Members	Mrs Gill Barton Mrs Dinah Perkins (resigned 23 March 2020) Mrs Penny Savage, Secretary Mr Don Barton Mrs Liz Marillier Lady Benyon Mr Richard Benyon Mrs Victoria Fishburn Dr Aldo Guiducci, (Vice-Chairman) Mrs Catherine Haig Mrs Susan Smith (resigned 23 March 2020) Mrs Melanie Townsend	from APCM 2019 from APCM 2019 from APCM 2019 until APCM 2020 until APCM 2020 from APCM 2018 from APCM 2018 from APCM 2018 from APCM 2018 from APCM 2018 from APCM 2018 from APCM 2018 from APCM 2018
Co-opted	Mr Ron Marillier, Treasurer Mrs Paula Fenwick	at APCM 2019 at Sept 2019

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio, co-opted annually or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The Council maintains 12 elected lay representatives having declined to accept the default laid out in the Synodical Government (Amendment) Measure 2003. Twelve elected members served for the majority of the extended year, and two members were co-opted during the year.

The PCC has met four times (physically) during the year with average attendance of 78%. The Covid-19 pandemic restrictions stopped public gatherings on 16 March 2020. Members of the Standing Committee (Rector, Churchwardens, Vice-Chairman, Lady Benyon, Treasurer and Secretary) held a meeting by telephone conference call on 23 March in lieu of the scheduled PCC meeting.

The APCM due to be held on 30 April 2020 was postponed until 12 October 2020 under guidelines from the Diocese.

ATTENDANCE (Last year's figures are shown in brackets):

The electoral roll has been revised as required in accordance with Church Representation Rules and stands at 94 (93), 73 (73) of whom are not resident within the parish and 21 (20) of whom are resident. The average 'normal' Sunday attendance up to 17 March 2020 was 62 (57) including children. The "Statistics for Mission January to December 2019" includes the following data:-

Baptisms, Blessings or Thanksgivings 2 (2) Marriages 7 (4) Funerals 2 (0)

The special family services, eg Harvest, Christingle, etc are always well attended. The church is full at Remembrance and Christmas services. Sunday services in church ceased due to the restrictions of the Coronavirus pandemic beginning with Mothering Sunday. Services were subsequently held on line using Zoom and the approximate average attendance between March and September was 47. Maggie Murphy's talk 'Less is More' and the work of Tearfund gave a preparation for the following Sunday Harvest family service when the popular Word Puppets provided young and old with the Gospel message. Col (Retd) Richard Sandy served as Team Leader for Military Ministries International in the Middle East and was guest speaker at the Remembrance service. The Christmas Shoebox appeal produced about 40 boxes for Operation Christmas Child and the Christmas tea party held in the church was as successful as ever.

The Council ensures that Bible study classes are open to everyone, the church is left open for visitors to the maximum extent possible and special services are held for the local school. Having referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission general guidance on public benefit, the trustees are confident that they comply with the Charity Commission guidance.

The Eucharistic Prayer B of Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer (1st Sunday in the month) are used for Sunday services. A rota is provided for those leading intercessions and the coordination of prayer requests is much appreciated. During Lockdown the services used a condensed form of Common Worship.

The Council aims to keep the church in good repair and to monitor the upkeep and appearance of the graveyard in accordance with the latest Diocesan and parish regulations. Christian Randall and Partners were appointed as architects and were commissioned to deliver a feasibility study with regard to future renovations of the vestry. A small group from the church community joined the Rector and Churchwardens on the Building Provision for Ministry and Mission committee, planning for future building works and producing the Statement of Need, with the preferred option.

The following Fabric items were approved and implemented under DAC regulations as required: The architect, Christian Randall was kept informed where necessary.

- the two vestry cupboards enlarged to increase storage
- a step and handrail to the organ platform
- repair of the west side Quatrefoil windows
- updating the Boards of Incumbents
- replacement floorboards at the front pews
- contactless card reader stand
- upgrade of the Biolo
- vestry kitchenette upgrade

The church was used as a polling station for the December 2019 General Election.

PCC and PARISH

The Covid-19 pandemic brought in restrictions on public worship and social gatherings on 16 March 2020. A Coronavirus continuity plan was compiled and put into action with measures including on-line worship for Sunday services and Sunday Club; liaison with Englefield Estate and the Village Stores to provide pastoral and practical support along with a team of church members offering telephone help.

Mission has supported the Mama Bahati Foundation in Tanzania; Tearfund (Harvest); The Royal British Legion (Remembrance); PACT, Christians Against Poverty, and Embrace the Middle East (Christmas). The Council aims to provide 10% of its unrestricted income, averaged over any three year period, to specific outreach appeals. Good stewardship of St Mark's is encouraged amongst the congregation and parish community. The annual Pottenger Bequest is distributed to those living alone in the parish in the form of a loaf of bread.

The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) was introduced with the aim of relieving the Treasurer's workload. An electronic 'tap to donate' terminal was also acquired and a *Just Giving* page via the church website was set up to enable on-line donations..

The PCC was consulted and provided input to the refurbishment plans for the Englefield Social Club which is being transformed into a community resource. The PCC is grateful to the Englefield Estate for making safe the drain which was a serious trip hazard outside the lych-gate.

A historical guide to St Mark's church was compiled and published, for which the editorial committee deserve much thanks, particularly Anne Edgar and Carol Boulter.

Spiritual development highlights: Between Ascension and Pentecost 2019 the Englefield Chapel was organised to support the Archbishops' prayer vision *Thy Kingdom Come; Time to Pray* is held on the first and third Mondays each month. A Lent course 'To Seek and to Save' – daily reflections from St Luke's Gospel - began with meetings but continued individually once lockdown arrived. '40 Days with Jesus' and '5 Things to Pray in a Global Crisis' were chosen as suitable for individual study and reflection during the lockdown period with sermons based on each chapter topic..

Our communication is extensive. The St Mark's website, www.stmarksenglefield.org.uk, provides information about the church, its history, facilities, rota and calendar of events, alongside the weekly reflections, the Rector's monthly letter and a daily Bible reading. It is managed through ChurchEdit and statistics show an average for the year of around 40,000 pages visited per month. During Lockdown a *Just Giving* account was set up to encourage financial giving whilst the church building was closed. The Englefield Parish News is published every two months and is distributed free of charge to members of the congregation, all residents of Englefield parish and visitors to the village. This is a church and parish magazine with regular features on church matters, as well as articles about the Estate, the Primary School, the Fiveaday Market Garden, the Garden Centre, the Old Fire Station Nursery, Theale Medical Centre, Holy Trinity Theale, Cobbs at Englefield Farm Shop, Rushall Farm and Bradfield Young Farmers. Costs are largely covered by advertising revenue and Englefield Parish Council generously underwrites any shortfall. The magazine is also available digitally on the St Mark's and Parish Council (www.englefieldpc.org.uk) websites.

The Sunday pew bulletin contains the readings, reflection on the sermon, prayer requests and details of local church/parish events, as well as a focus on the persecuted church. During lockdown contact details of the special team to provide practical help and a 'listening ear' have been on the bulletin which is emailed to over 100 members of the Englefield congregation and community, within GDPR guidelines.

St Mark's is listed on A Church Near You and on the National Churches Trust Explore Churches website. Information on the history, architecture and monuments of St Mark's can be found on Richard Smith's website englefieldhistory.net and is also available in the recently published guidebook, compiled by Anne Edgar, previously available in the church and on request during lockdown.

A warm association with the village school is welcomed on both sides. During Lockdown the school was open for children of keyworkers and the Headteacher provided a daily assembly on-line. During normal circumstances the Rector takes an assembly each week and his wife is a valued helper at the school. Spiritual links with the school are enhanced with special services in St Mark's Church, to which parents are usually invited..

Sunday Club attendance varies week to week, but about 20 children join in Sunday Club at any time during the year. There are 10 leaders and helpers who provide a creche and primary-age teaching/activities on a rota basis. The

children are always enthusiastic to take part in the family services. The PCC appreciates the wonderful work of the Sunday Club organisers and volunteers and all who fervently support this vital ministry. As one organiser stepped down another stepped up into lockdown so her on-line ministry began very quickly afterwards with a 30 minute session provided on Zoom, prior to the morning service each Sunday.

The Child Protection policy is reviewed annually and PCC members are encouraged to use the on-line Basic Awareness (formerly C0) training module. The Council is grateful to have so many volunteers all of whom are checked and cleared via DBS procedures, thanks to the Safeguarding Officer and Verifier who were reappointed during the year.

Music is provided by a rota of experienced organists, with one providing an afternoon recital in St Mark's in September 2019. Guest singers support Christmas and Easter services and the School Choir is invited to perform at the family services. The Council is mindful of restrictions on music and singing once church worship resumes.

The team of six regular bell ringers and those who join them for weddings and special services are highly valued. On Tuesday evenings they practice ringing different methods. In the summer of 2019 all seven weddings had eight bells rung thanks to the support of other ringers from local towers. The team is always actively looking for new ringers to join them and practice evenings are open to everyone. Some visiting bell ringing bands successfully rang a peal, whilst others have just enjoyed ringing the bells as part of a tour of visiting towers in the local area. In early 2020 St Mark's tower hosted a Reading branch practice but, unfortunately because of lockdown, the annual Bradfield Ringing Course in August was cancelled. The bell ringers are still considering the replacement of the ropes that are beginning to deteriorate which were last replaced in the year 2000. The ringers look forward to the lifting of restrictions.

Health & Safety is reported at each meeting. New coffee making arrangements were introduced which greatly reduce the risks to health and safety with good quality coffee, and are much appreciated.

A basic First Aid training session for members of the PCC and a few other key church members was held in February. The list of those qualified in CPR use of the defibrillator (AED) and other basic first aid is displayed in the vestry. A member of the congregation kindly donated a folding wheelchair to be used in emergency situations in church.

A Commemoration service was held via Zoom on Friday 8 May, the 75th anniversary of VE Day. It was very well supported and the congregation greatly appreciated the reflection and personal tribute by Christopher Fenwick MBE. In the afternoon the village watched a lone piper processing through The Street and villagers were encouraged to raise a glass in thankfulness to past heroes, along with the nation.

For many years we have had three experienced lay representatives on the Bradfield Deanery Synod who have kept the PCC well informed. It is with great regret that one of those, Dr Hugh Boulter, passed away suddenly during the summer of 2020. His knowledge and wisdom both on Synod and with the Spiritual Development Group (SDG) will be greatly missed. Hugh's influence on providing high-calibre SDG speakers is evident: Prof Martin Parsons, The Revd Dr Adam Carlill, Professor June Boyce-Tillman and Regius Professor Keith Ward. The 'Let's talk Theology meetings series concluded at lockdown with reflections on 'The inspiration of Christ in literature, in painting and in music.

Signed Michael Lynne Voe Date 30/10/20