

St Matthew's Church Harwell Annual Report 2004-05

1 Background

St Matthew's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector in promoting the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The council works together with the clergy and the Churchwardens to ensure continuity of ministry for regular services, to ensure that Sunday Schools are run and properly staffed, to organise home groups, social events, lay training courses, etc. It has responsibility to manage the finances of the church, and to care for the church building and for St Matthew's Church Hall, which it wholly owns. The PCC liaises with the higher councils of the Church of England through its representation on the Deanery Synod, and participates in diocesan funding through the Parish Share.

In order to provide a framework for this work, the PCC has adopted a vision statement, and based its strategy for fulfilling the vision around a number of key areas, for each of which a co-ordinator has been appointed. Continual review of these areas provides a way to evaluate the extent to which our vision is being carried forward.

St Matthew's Church Harwell and All Saints' Church Chilton form a Joint Benefice. There is provision for a Joint PCC, separate from the PCCs of the two churches. The two separate PCCs can agree to place in the hands of the Joint PCC any matters involving both parishes.

2 PCC Membership

The membership of the PCC includes the clergy, the churchwardens, representatives on Deanery Synod (all of these *ex officio*), plus members elected for one year at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. From April 2004 to March 2005, the membership of Harwell PCC has been:

Clergy	Rev. Christopher Stott	chairman
	Rev. Jean Barton NSM	
Churchwardens	Allan Macarthur	vice-chairman
	Ruth Slatter	
Deanery Synod reps.	Clive Silver	
	Steve Tunstall	
	Jean Twigger	
Elected members	Kate Evans	
	Sid Gale	
	Georgina Greer	
	Clive House	treasurer
	Tony Hughes	
	Nancy Preston	
	Tim Roberts	
	Jim Sinclair	secretary
	Wendy Sinclair	
Coopted	Rob Thomas	

The majority of PCC members are elected by Church members, and seek to serve the interests of the Church members in their common life in Christ. All PCC members therefore very much welcome hearing from Church members their views on matters that the council are considering, or suggestions for topics of discussion.

The minutes of PCC meetings, once approved, are published on the notice board in the porch at the main entrance to the church.

3 Committees and Representatives

The PCC has formed sub-committees for the following purposes:

Standing Committee required by law. Has power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings if necessary. Consists of the Rector, the Churchwardens, the Treasurer and the PCC Secretary.

Finance and Budget Convenor Clive House.

Missions Gives special attention to encouraging interest in overseas mission work, and recommends allocation of funds to overseas and home missions. Convenor Tony Ullmer.

Buildings Convenor Tony Hughes.

Social Convenor Wendy Sinclair.

Joint PCC reps the Churchwardens, the Treasurer, Rob Thomas, Clive Silver.

The PCC has also given special duties to the following, not all of whom are PCC members:

Bookkeeper	Elizabeth Gill
Covenant Secretary	Geoff Jenkinson
Stewardship Secretary	Norman Ponting
Church Hall caretakers	Betty and Peter McNiven (until October)
Christian Aid representative	The Wednesday Morning group
Village Hall committee representative	Liz Roberts
Winterbrook Youth Club representative	Tony Hughes
Churches Together in Didcot representative	Joan Impey
Visiting Team leader	Margaret Hughes

4 Church Membership and Attendance

Attendance at church services is measured on the Sundays in October throughout the Church of England. The average figures (per Sunday) for 2004 were: 135 adults + 32 children.

The Electoral Roll is maintained by Wendy Sinclair. The number on the roll in April 2004 stood at 163; the annual revision has just been undertaken, and the count will be reported separately.

5 Review of the Year

The PCC met 6 times during the year. The joint PCC did not meet. The following summarises some of the main areas of PCC business during the year.

Every meeting includes a review of the key areas identified for fulfilling the vision statement referred to in Section 1 above – Worship, Prayer, Outreach, Children's and Youth work, Finance, and Management. This review is assisted by reports from the 'Vision Group', which meets separately to formulate and implement strategies in these areas.

The year began with the Rector on sabbatical leave, from April to July 2004. This change from normal not only made us glad of the ministries of Jean and our lay readers Rob and Steve, but also gave the opportunity for many others to contribute in various ways. We were especially grateful for the hard work done by Chris' secretary Naomi in ensuring that everything was in place for each Sunday's services.

This year has seen two of our members follow the call to undertake new forms of ministry. Kate Evans has begun training to have a Licence to Preach, while Rob Thomas was accepted to begin training for ordination. Recognition of such undertakings by the Bishop and by the bodies providing the training is dependent on there being wholehearted support from the local church, and the PCC was delighted to confirm that support in both cases.

A new service sheet for Holy Communion was drafted by Jean and approved by the PCC.

Special services during the year included Songs of Praise in the marquee on the Village Recreation Ground just before the Village Feast. This was attended by about 450 people. In November, the Youth Fellowship group conducted a very successful Youth Service. In December, a new Crib Service was added to the many Christmas offerings, and was widely appreciated.

The PCC continually keeps under review the facilities available to enhance worship services. Digital projection systems have been discussed, but have not yet been acquired for Harwell. The stock of hymnbooks has been reviewed, bearing in mind the need to embrace new material, to provide for those to whom small print is a problem, and to have sufficient music books for orchestral or choir use.

The Mission Praise books are currently failing on these criteria. The solution approved is to move to reproducing hymns on a weekly basis in duplicated sheets; this will begin in 2005.

Another important facility for worship services is the sound reinforcement system. After careful consideration of the serviceability of all the existing components, a renewal process took place in 2004. This embraced new speakers and amplifiers, a new mixing desk, additional microphone wiring, additional microphones, and finally, in January 2005, a new induction loop for hearing aid users, now covering the whole of the Nave seating area. The installation was achieved using voluntary labour, headed by Jim Sinclair.

Renewal and maintenance of the church building and its furnishings is the subject of continual discussion in the PCC. During this year, four multi-purpose furniture units, for uses including book tables and coffee serving, completed a process of refurbishment of the West End. A move to renew the toilets & kitchen facilities has proved rather troublesome. Progress on this project will be reported separately. To fulfil our responsibility to care for all users of the church buildings, we undertook this year a Health & Safety Audit, benefiting greatly from the professional experience of Jane Vickers.

Some aspects of caring for the church and hall require individuals to take responsibility for particular jobs. This year saw Betty Pyke bring to a close her splendid service over many years as flower co-ordinator. Debbie Davies has taken over in this role, which leaves us in need of a new co-ordinator for church cleaning. The PCC were very grateful for Peter and Betty McNiven's service as Church Hall caretakers, which they had to relinquish from October. Liz Roberts stood in for a few months, and finally Wendy Sinclair has taken over this role. The PCC has also discussed Church Hall cleaning and hedge clipping, and we are again grateful for those who have provided the work required.

In its continual review of Children's and Youth work, the PCC has noted the continuing pressure on leaders of groups. We have been encouraged by the successful special events, some in school holidays, including the 'Y God' course. The flourishing Youth Fellowship is also most encouraging.

Outreach, community involvement and individual growth and development constitute a further area given strong emphasis. We have attempted to express our involvement in the community in several ways, including running the Pig Roast at the Village Feast, keeping informed about the Village Hall affairs, and funding a new provision for giving to local caring organisations. Home Groups are seen as a key means of encouraging personal growth. Both regular and seasonal groups are fostered. Alpha courses have again been held, providing a way to explore deeper Christian commitment for people, whether they are already connected with the church or not. Some of our members have recently attended a conference organised by the Willow Creek organisation, which is specially devoted to making the Christian life accessible to people of all backgrounds.

6 Financial Position

As expected, we had again to call on reserves this year. Although expenditure was only marginally up, income was well down; this made for a deficit of £8,400 compared with £1,800 last year.

Income from regular giving was slightly up on last year, but one-off donations were down by £6,800 and loose alms by over £1,000. The Parish Share was up by £1,400; other regular expenditure has been kept down to make up for this and the total was up only £300 for the Harwell account and £600 for the Joint costs.

The bank reserves fell by over £12,500; the extra £4,100 came from money set aside for the West End Furniture and Sound System.

Next year our Parish Share has again been increased, by a further £3,700; we have set a budget that forecasts a deficit of over £9,000 at current rates of income. A Stewardship campaign was initiated in January 2005 to raise awareness of this problem.



C J Stott, Chairman, Harwell PCC