

# ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR TO 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2020

## PREPARED BY THE CHURCH WARDEN

### Background

The parish is the Parish of Upham in the Deanery of Bishop's Waltham. The Church in the parish is the Church of the Blessed Mary and is located in Church Street, Upham.

NAME	DATE ELECTED OR LAST RE-ELECTED	DATE TO RESIGN AND CAN BE RE-ELECTED	COMMENTS
Rev James Hunt			Ex Officio
Colin Russell	2010 (E)	2024	Ex Officio – CW
Kerry Tibble	2020 (E)	2024	Ex-Officio - CW
Vicky Gardner	2018 (R-E)	2021	
Rosemary Bickle	2019 (E)	2022	
Simon Beloe	2018 (R-E)	2021	Ex Officio Treasurer
Gary Brown	2020 (R-E)	2023	
Anne Watson	2019 (E)	2022	Retired during the year
Janet Dunford	2020 (R-E)	2023	Deanery Rep
Andrea Penter	2020 (R-E)	2023	Ex Officio Secretary
Tammy Taylor	2020 (R-E)	2023	
Jane Perrott	2020 (R-E)	2023	
Barney Dunford	2020 (E)	2023	Deanery Rep.
Cate Smith	2020 (E)	2023	

School Governor Reps. – Judith Carrie, Gary Brown, Tammy Taylor, Cynthia Kimble, Simon Beloe and Vicky Gardner (Gary Brown will stand down this year).

## **Role**

The PCC of the Parish of Upham has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd James Hunt, in promoting in the Ecclesiastical Parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibility for the Church building and the upkeep of the churchyard. The PCC has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (in respect of the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

## **Membership**

The members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. Elected members must resign at the end of three years in office but may stand for re-election. Two members complete their term of office this year but they have indicated their willingness to stand again. Anne Watson has decided after many years as a member of the PCC to stand down and we are extremely grateful for all she has contributed to the PCC over that period.

## **Status**

The PCC is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

## **Bankers**

The bankers to the PCC are Barclays Bank PLC, High Street, Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire.

## **Independent Examiner**

The independent examiner is Mrs Susan Harris of 10 Upham Street, Upham, Southampton SO32 1PH. We are hugely grateful for the work undertaken by Mrs Harris on our behalf. Mrs Harris was also until recently a foundation governor at Upham School. We are extremely grateful for all she contributed to the school.

## **Church Attendance**

There are 70 on the Church Electoral Roll. A review of the electoral roll took place in 2019.

The usual Sunday attendance counted on a "normal" Sunday during the year was 22. This is a slight reduction on the previous year but one should remember that during a significant part of the year congregations were affected by covid-19 restrictions.

## **Review of the Year**

The full PCC met five times during the year, predominantly virtually via Zoom!

The PCC and Churchwarden wish to thank our Rector, Rev. James Hunt and Assistant Priest, Rev. Jane Beloe for leading worship in the Church and for their contributions to the Christian community in the Parish in these particularly difficult times. The PCC also wishes to record its thanks to other members of the ordained and lay ministry who have given their time to contribute to the worship in the Parish or to lead it when the regular clergy were not available.

A number of the PCC members are Governors of Upham Church of England (Aided) Primary School. The PCC values its links with the School and congratulates the Headteacher, Mr Woolley, staff and children on their continued success. We thank Vicky Gardner, a PCC member, for her work as the Chair of Governors. Gary Brown is standing down this year as a Governor and we thank him for his contribution to the school.

Kate Smyth was appointed as the Families, Children and Youth worker (FCY) for Upham and Bishops Waltham in December and we wish her every success in her new position. She and Katie Harrison (St. Peters FCY) have made a huge impact already.

The year (2020) was very different in every respect of church life at Blessed Mary due to Covid-19. Social distancing, only the choir singing, no bell ringing, no communion wine and face masks having to be worn were some of the negative aspects of 2020. Sadly, we weren't able to hold the popular service of Compline at Preshaw during the summer months. We very much hope this will be possible in 2021. However, there were many positives, we were able to meet on line over the internet, Zoom (unheard of by most of us before) became a frequently used meeting tool and very successful it proved! Midweek communion on Zoom reached the dizzy heights of over forty people participating! A joint Blessed Mary and St. Peters choir recorded music to go alongside the on-line worship helping us to reach new people. Pastoral care within the church family and to the wider community was amazing. This raises the very interesting question as to what church life will be like post pandemic – will there be services in church and streamed? Or perhaps prayer groups meeting in person and on line? The future promises to be very exciting for 2021.

Due to Covid-19 it wasn't possible to hold the Church Fete in 2020 nor many other events which would have taken place under more normal circumstances. The Village Safari Supper, organised by the church

took place in January. Many thanks to Sarah Tice and Nicola Hill for organising the evening. On 29<sup>th</sup> February we were treated to a fantastic Gospel Singalong hosted by Chris Walker and The Pedigree Jazz Band.

A socially distanced Harvest Festival was celebrated in the churchyard on 27<sup>th</sup> September during which gifts were presented to James and Jane in recognition of their tremendous efforts during the Covid-19 period. A Remembrance Sunday Service also took place outside. Similarly, a Carol Service took place outside on December 20<sup>th</sup> and as always was well attended and a great success. Particular thanks go to Roger Hansford, our organist and the choir. The Christmas services on Christmas Eve and two on Christmas Day had to be restricted in number due to Covid-19 but were much appreciated by all. Many thanks to all those who assisted.

The PCC encouraged awareness among the congregation of the need to give to others by inviting contributions of food to the Bishop's Waltham Food Bank and other items to the people of Hackney.

In addition to those already mentioned, the PCC wishes to thank everyone who contributed in any way, in particular, Mr Dunford for his work as Verger; Mr and Mrs Dunford for representing the Parish at the Diocesan Synod; Mrs Benham for representing the Parish on the Churches' Overseas Support Team and for all her hard work as our Licensed Lay Minister; The Rev. Jane Beloe, Janet Dunford and Ann Wemyss for Pastoral Care; Anne Watson for her work with Christian Aid; Cliff Jacobs for managing the distribution of the Parish News; Judith Carrie and her team of flower arrangers; Kim Gibson and all the Bell Ringers; Lynda Lyons and John Clements for their super efforts in keeping the church and churchyard so tidy; Roger Hansford, Ivan Watling, Rosemary Bickle and others who throughout the year provided accompaniment on the organ. Thank you also to all those who read the lessons and who prepare and read the intercessions; the Chalice Assistants and the Alter Assistants. Lastly Richard Clark and Simon Beloe for their contribution towards the maintenance of the fabric of the Church and the time spent in this pursuit.

Finally, the PCC wishes to record its thanks to all those to whom thanks has not already been given in this report, and who have contributed in so many ways to the life of the Church in 2020.

The Church is in very good order. Repairs to the stained-glass windows are planned for 2021. Working parties tackling issues both inside and outside the church building were not possible this year but will hopefully start again in 2021.

## **Financial Report (Simon Beloe, Treasurer)**

Attached to, and forming a part of this Report is the Financial Statement for the Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. The PCC is grateful to the Treasurer for the Financial Statement and for his management of the PCC's finances throughout the year.

As we all know, 2020 was by no means a normal year and various income generating activities were unable to held due to lockdowns and the like on account of COVID-19. As a result, our income suffered considerably the year totalled £36,429 down by £15,811. The 2019 figure was boosted by a grant of £4,000 being a VAT refund. The more realistic decline of £11,000 was the result of not holding the Church Fete and other fund-raising activities and suffering a reduction of some £9,000. This was partially offset by a highly successful Christmas Raffle which raised £2,000, £500 of which was put towards the Church's Community Fund. Income from Weddings and Funerals was down over £4,000. Weddings and Funerals can also be a generator of Voluntary Income and Collections at Services were also down £3,000 although this was helped by an increase of £3,000 in tax efficient income.

Expenditure was £10,789 lower in 2020 at £44,496 although this amount includes an exceptional £3,000 spent on upgrading the path through the Churchyard. All other costs were kept under tight control and they will continue to be monitored closely in 2021. It is important to note that our Parish Share, which was met in full, reduced by £1,428.

It is extremely difficult to forecast the outcome of 2021, but we have every hope that the deficit will be considerably reduced, not least by the generosity of the parishioners.

At the end of the year, the PCC had reserves totalling £61,892 (2018 - £69,620).

Of the total reserves of £61,892, £15,709 is in restricted funds made up as follows: £3,527 (2019 - £3,620) in the Fabric Fund, £4,604 (2019 - £4,170) in the Bell Fund, £7,578 (2019 - £7,588) in the Organ Fund and £257 in the Wardrop Fund with the remaining £3,620 (201 - £3,680) being for the upkeep of the fabric. Designated funds amount to £34,350 an increase of £500 being the addition of the Hardship Fund raised in the Christmas Raffle.

The remaining £11,833 (2019 - £20,085) is held in the General Reserve and does not meet the PCC's Reserve Policy of maintaining free reserves in the region of £30,000, being approximately the running costs of the church for one year.

Funds which are retained above those which are required for current expenditure are maintained with Barclays Bank plc (£14,255) paying a maximum of 0.01% at 31/12/20) and in a CBF Church of England

Deposit Fund (£37,754 paying 0.15% at 31/12/20). An element of the Organ Fund (£4,882) and Bell Fund (£4,604) are invested in National Savings paying 0.01% as at 31/12/20. Investments in any other form need the prior approval of the PCC.

### **Music Report (Roger Hansford)**

At the start of 2020, the choir and musicians at Blessed Mary were continuing to support the usual programme of worship services, including traditional communion services, modern family services, and (in collaboration with the choir of St Peter's and alternating between the two venues) Evensong.

We have had the valuable support of musicians including Rosemary Bickle, Ivan Watling and Graham Perrott playing for our services, with myself as the main organist. Rosemary has also provided invaluable vocal and organisational support for the choir. We were grateful to be joined on one occasion by the worship band from St Peter's, with the woodwind players really helping to lift and lead our service, so I hope they will be joining us at Blessed Mary in the future.

When the first UK lockdown for coronavirus began on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, this meant a pause in worship as we knew it, and services then took place online for several months. Emma Dean and Andrew Cleary at St Peter's led the way in providing recorded music for online services, myself also contributing recorded accompaniments. However, communal singing as such was not possible, but individual parishioners could sing along to the Zoom or Facebook broadcasts at home.

Churches re-opened from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020, initially with cantor the only permitted singing voice (from August onwards), and the organ allowed to accompany. There was a lack of research nationally at the time to determine how much wind instruments and singing could spread the virus more easily, so caution was needed. Informal feedback from parishioners showed gratitude and appreciation of the music played at services over the summer.

It was heartening, when choir singing was permitted again from September, that our Blessed Mary choir returned strong in numbers and continued to grow through the autumn. Some members understandably could not attend for health reasons. For each service, I kept an attendance register of choir members for track and trace reasons, and planned a socially-distanced seating plan for members who were asked to log

their attendance with Rosemary in advance. I hope these measures made choir members feel more secure about attending. Singers and musicians also wore masks and used hand sanitiser.

Sadly, further lockdowns interrupted workshop at Blessed Mary in November and again at the end of December 2020, but the autumn had provided opportunities for us to innovate. The Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday and Crib Services were held outside using a PA system, and these have established a set-up which could be continued during the pandemic or by choice afterwards for special occasions.

Rosemary and myself were unable to continue organ lessons with Richard Dewland during the pandemic, which personally has restricted the progress I was able to make with organ playing technique (and practice also becoming much more difficult to manage), so I am hoping to make up for this in 2021. All our 2020 weddings which required music were postponed to 2021.

### **Choir (Rosemary Bickle)**

In my voluntary choir co-ordinating role, I continued to assist our Music Director, Dr Roger Hansford and liaise with Andrew Cleary from St. Peter's Church. At the beginning of the year, I recruited several choir members from Upham, plus our extra guest singers from St. Faith's, to take part in the sung Evensongs held at St. Peter's Church in January, February and March.

I offered my voluntary services to play a hymn if required for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday said Evensongs at The Blessed Mary, Upham and was asked to play three hymns and the Mag and Nunc from January onwards.

From February on, at Roger's request, I played the organ at Upham several times for morning services.

In March, because of the Pandemic, the church was closed, so I began to contribute my voice part for the Virtual Choir being compiled by Emma Dean. I completed around 40 recordings myself and after an invitation from Emma Dean, I recruited a number of Upham choir members to contribute their voice recordings as well. The joint choir recorded hymns became available for use in all the virtual streamed services and Zoom services from both The Blessed Mary and St. Peter's Church and were used at the Mothering Sunday and Easter Day services.

From the beginning of May, I attended the Upham Wednesday Zoom service hosted by Jane Beloe and from September on, I began to play some hymns live each week to help with the music.

On 27<sup>th</sup> September, a Harvest Festival service was held outside at The Blessed Mary and an excellent choir of eight expertly accompanied by Roger, sang the Rutter anthem 'Look at the World' very successfully.

Following a request from Jane Beloe and a conversation with James Hunt, I invited the Band from St. Peter's to attend one of our informal services. We all enjoyed the service and hopefully the Band will return in the future with Graham Perrott acting as the coordinating link.

On 8<sup>th</sup> November a Remembrance Sunday service was successfully held outside in the church grounds and a good choir accompanied by Roger, sang the beautiful anthem: 'Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts'.

On 12<sup>th</sup> December the outdoor Carol Service went extremely well with an excellent choir of nine. We were ably led by Roger and in spite of limited practice time, we were complimented on all our singing and beautiful descants.

The Service of 9 Lessons and Carols had to be replaced with a joint online service. On Christmas Day, also because of Covid-19 restrictions, there were two services in church and I played the six Carols for 9.30 service.

In 2020, although the Covid -19 pandemic interfered with choir rehearsals and the attendance at services and the Wedding Choirs were cancelled, our choir has greatly benefitted from the addition of three new members – Mary Blow, soprano, plus Jane Perrott and Vicky Gardner - both altos. Social distancing procedures for the choir in church were set up and we have continued to rehearse enthusiastically under the direction of Dr Roger Hansford. Each week, I have liaised with Colin Russell, Roger and the choir to provide everyone in the choir with details of their socially distant choir places.

Although Covid- 19 restrictions have prevented the congregation from joining in with the singing of hymns and the service setting, the choir has been able to provide a good standard of singing and it seems like a good time to emphasize that we are aware of the deep differences between performing in a concert and singing as an act of worship. Music is a gift to the church, which can add an extra dimension to worship in that it embodies beauty and connects with emotions as well as intellect, enhancing words and making them more meaningful to reach the depths of the human soul. I hope that we can build on these ideas when the congregation returns to singing with us and when we begin to liaise with the new Musical Director at St. Peter's Church in the provision of sung Evensongs and other future events. If we build on our musical strengths in this way, it should also help us to reach out to new potential congregation members.

#### **Deanery Synod (Janet and Barney Dunford)**

To be given verbally at the meeting.



## Upham Youth Report (Kate Smyth, Families, Children and Youth Worker)

Tasks undertaken by Kate in her post since joining us include: -

1 Set up a small team to run Thursday Butterflies tots' group which will run Thursday mornings. Cate Smith, Mary Blow, Jane Beloe and Diana Fennel.

During lockdown Diana and I have tidied up and sorted toys. We had a kind donation so we could invest in decent boxes for storage and Kate has brought many toy items on the buy and sell sites.

Completed a volunteer agreement and leaders agreement form. Parents registration form completed.

Sorting out all volunteers with a current DBS

Kate had some postcards made up to invite families in Upham area

2. Helped organize and lead an outside socially distanced Crib service. This was fun and so good to see people! Supported in the church services and created a child's play area during service.

3 Organized Upham Nativity Trail, Winter Scavenger Hunt, United Family Quiz and Messy Church with St Peters.

4 Keeping in touch with Upham Primary school. Sent 2 video links for Assemblies and keeping in touch through email.

5. Keeping in touch through social media email and zoom. Set up a new what app Families group for Blessed Mary. I have a few more contacts from Nativity Trail.

6. Attend online communion. It's so nice to see the gang as I'm stuck here in Gosport!

7. Made contacts with Upham day nursery to form good links and invite to our events etc.

8. While in lockdown and taking the opportunity I am attending a "Raising Faith" course with a view to leading one in Upham/ St Peters. (6 weeks on a Monday night)

9. Attending Pioneers gathering once a month online. Good to chat with other likeminded people. This is a Church of England Pioneers gathering.

10. Attending Crucibles- Urban Expressions college online. Currently looking at a topic called "On the edge." This is really helpful in my work at Blessed Mary as it examines mission and ministry in marginal rural communities.

11. I am also supporting Alpha online and leading a small discussion group. Currently we have 1 person on the course from Blessed Mary. I hope to learn how to lead Alpha online and lead some at Blessed Mary.

12. Attend a weekly prayer meeting online for Blessed Mary and St Peters. (7.30am! This is a killer time for me!)

13. I am in the process of sending a wellbeing pack to families to offer them a 1.1 cuppa and chat with me when it suits them. The wellbeing pack includes tea coffee chocolate and a personal handwritten note. I hope to post these out by 11<sup>th</sup> Feb.

It had been a really challenging time taking on this job when we are in a pandemic, but I can say I have learnt new skills on the computer and had to be creative in my style.

I do however look forward to getting my feet stuck in and meeting and making friends with the folk in Upham. I want to share the love of Jesus and see people follow Him and have their own personal faith.

When things get easier, I intend to start a post school club and youth club, holiday specials etc. It's frustrating but we have to wait and trust God on what He is doing today and throughout the pandemic.

I feel very welcome at Blessed Mary and love it so far! You all make me feel like I belong in your patch and I hope it continues.

### **Upham Church of England Primary School Report (Vicky Gardner, Chair of Governors)**

It seem strange that the report I wrote for the last APCM was before COVID 19 had even hit the UK, since then the school and our wonderful staff and governors have been on a real rollercoaster learning new ways of working and having to change things overnight as things changed with very little or no warning.

#### **Learning**

For the first lockdown the teachers were able to very quickly produce engaging learning via our website quickly learning remote teaching skills and using some of the fantastic resources produced nationally such as White Rose academy and Oak academy which had luckily been recently updated. children accessed work from dedicated learning pages for their classes and were able to send in work and pictures and parents were able to ask questions via email to their class staff who responded with in the day. Keyworker children were able to attend school and the school remained open for those key children that needed it for Easter and half term.

The beginning of this year started with all children back but in their bubbles with our top class bubbling with our new starters to ensure that the wonderful buddy system that works so well at Upham could continue this year. We had a successful term and all children respected the social distancing rules that had to be adhered to which made playtimes very different as strict adherence to zones in the playground had to be kept to allow the bubbles not to mix.

The first half of the Autumn term was all about evaluating the children to see where each child was and helping them build up stamina and concentration to get the most out of a full day at school.

We felt it was important to ensure that the Christmas productions still happened this were performed in school and recorded and sent out on a private link to parents. The benefit of this was that the productions could be shared with grandparents and wiser family members bringing a little Christmas joy to families a lot of whom were apart for Christmas.

With the second lockdown at the beginning of the spring term the school had between 20 -30 key worker children in school more than double that of the last lock down. They now have access to google classroom to have live interaction with their teachers and support staff on a regular basis and attend twice weekly assemblies run by David Woolley our Head teacher.

The children that were in school had attitudes that were very positive. They knew what the closure was like before and they really valued being at school. At home vast majority of children completed the home learning that was set. The teaching staff monitored their children closely contacting and supporting any that struggled to engage.

At time of writing the children have one more week of remote learning before hopefully permanently returning to school.

### Vision

In the last year we as a school community worked on our vision and this will resume to further this now that school is getting back to normal routines.

To remind you our values are:

Love and care

Open our minds,

Value all achievement,

Encourage Independence

## Achievements and community links

We have been linking with Blessed Marys new Children's Worker Kate Smyth who has produced lots of fun activities and a really successful crib service that lots of our children was involved with.

## Looking forward

Our main areas of strategic improvement for the coming year focus on;

- Re engaging in in school learning and fill the gaps in learning that will be identified for individual children.
- Really trying to develop the curriculum to have coherence of planning, develop expert knowledge across the curriculum not just those formally tested.
- Develop positive wellbeing for all and try to work with children to increase the children's fitness and stamina that had noticeably reduced over the last year due to reduced opportunities for activities both inside and outside of school.

We are very blessed to have the support we have from Governors, parents, children and the community and would like to thank you all for this. We are particularly blessed with to have Dave Woolley our Head teacher, all our teachers and school staff who have worked tirelessly throughout this very stressful year often having to be very reactive as things changed overnight with no advance warning, throughout this year they have continued to produces extremely high level of education for all our children to keep them on track and learning and we are extremely grateful to them for this.

Dated this                      day of                      2021

Colin Russell and Kerry Tibble

Churchwardens