



Waltham St Lawrence Parish Church

Annual Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31st December 2018 and other Church Reports

To be presented at the

Annual Parochial Church Meeting
on Sunday 28th April 2019 at 11.30 a.m.

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Annual Report for 2018

The Parish of Waltham St Lawrence lies between Maidenhead and Twyford in the County of Berkshire and in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It comprises the villages of Waltham St Lawrence and Shurlock Row, and the settlements of West End and Beenhams Heath. The population of the parish is approximately 1,800. The church building is listed Grade II* and dates from the C12.

Church Motto: "Grace and Hope"

Waltham St Lawrence Parish Church practises what could be termed a central churchmanship. Twice a month the main service is Parish Communion with a robed choir, with other Sundays being non-eucharistic (including all age worship once a month). The present incumbent lays particular emphasis on biblical preaching, following a thematic programme. There is an open baptism policy, but baptisms are almost always conducted during Sunday services.

There is a primary school in the parish with which the church has strong links through school governorship and the regular leading of assemblies, and the school holds services in the church at festival times.

A valuable form of outreach to the community as a whole is the church's monthly magazine, distributed free to every home in the parish and funded by advertising. The church also has a substantial presence on the village website.

Membership

At the 2018 Annual Parochial Church Meeting the Electoral Roll stood at 91, 5 more than the previous year. 31 members live outside the parish boundary.

Total attendance in 2018 was 5060 (2017: 5,113), with an average weekly attendance of 81 (85).

There is a part-time Priest in Charge, who is responsible for the day to day management of the church, and until early in 2019 there was a paid Director of Music. Otherwise the church is run by volunteers.

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure (1956) as amended, and as such is to co-operate with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is a charity, but is exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission. Membership of the PCC is constituted in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Churchwardens are elected annually, and Deanery Synod members triennially. One third of elected PCC members retire each year. The PCC may co-opt up to 2 members.

PCC members who have served from 1 January 2018 until the date this report was approved are:

Priest in Charge: Rev Charles Mason (Chairman)

Churchwardens: David Crawley-Boevey
(Lay Vice-Chairman)
Bertie Gilbert-Smith
(until 29/4/18)
Fiona Penn (from 29/4/18)

Deanery Synod: Victoria Wickins

Elected: Chris Bond (until 6/11/18)
Natasha Creffield (until 29/4/18)
Bertie Gilbert-Smith (from 29/4/18)
Chris Howell
Christopher King
Polly Pollecutt (until 6/3/18)
Linda Sykes
Juanita Tarn (from 29/4/18)
Vaughan Wickins
Chris Woodhams

PCC meetings are also attended by:

Isabelle Crawley-Boevey	<i>Secretary</i>
Bob McCallum	<i>Treasurer</i>

The PCC met 6 times in 2018.

Committees

Standing Committee:

This Committee has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the Council and consists of: the Priest in Charge, the Churchwardens, and 2 other PCC members. It is also attended by the PCC Secretary and the Treasurer. It met 5 times in 2018.

Worship Committee:

This Committee reviews and plans the worship for major festivals and other special occasions. It met 3 times in 2018.

Review of the Year

The pattern of Sunday services remained largely unchanged. Average weekly attendance was down from 85 to 81; this is probably due mainly to fewer baptisms – down from 7 to 4 families – at which attendance is often high. Overall Christmas attendance was down 30%, with the carol service showing the biggest drop, though this may have been contributed to by very inclement weather. Interestingly, fewer people attended on Christmas Eve and more on Christmas Day, compared with 2017.

Besides Sunday worship and a Sunday school, the church is involved in many other community activities, some of which are run by the PCC. These include a monthly community breakfast, which as well as providing hospitality, contributed £2,265 to church funds.

The PCC also runs a monthly Messy Church and a weekly carers and pre-schoolers morning. This is a vital contact with many outside the worshipping community.

In March, the church ran a Lent lunch, which raised £600 for Open Doors, a Christian relief and outreach charity active in the Middle East. In May it staged a multi-choir choral festival, which raised £402, and in June played an active role in the village fête, from which its share of the profits was £2,634.

In August weekly teas were laid on in the churchyard, which attracted many visitors as well as locals, and some pastoral contacts were developed from these occasions. They also raised £901 for church funds. Harvest Festival in October included a country music style barn dance, which brought people of all ages together and raised £162.

The parish underwent a Deanery Inspection in September, the verdict from which was highly satisfactory, with only a few minor administrative matters requiring attention.

A Lent study course took place in the spring, and a Christian nurture course was held in the autumn.

Church Building

During 2018 only routine maintenance was carried out on the building. However, in February the quinquennial inspection took place, and this identified a number of items needing attention, none of them urgent, mainly relating to the roof, parapet and rainwater goods. This is likely to involve significant expenditure in 2019, which it is hoped can be met from reserves and with help from a local trust.

The churchyard was closed by Order in Council on 8 February 2018, and the local authority has now taken over responsibility for its maintenance, which will save the PCC this expense.

A ewer and shell were purchased for use at baptisms (though payment and delivery had not taken place by the end of 2018), nearly all of the cost being met from a legacy. A faculty is currently awaited for improvement to the lighting in the South Chapel, which will cost about £515.

Finance

Total income for the year was £74,379 (2017: £132,263) and total expenditure £71,596 (£74,122), giving a surplus for the year of £2,783. (The 2017 income figure included legacies of over £56,000.)

As always the largest item of expenditure was the Diocesan Parish Share contribution (£32,215). This goes mainly towards the cost of the stipends, housing and pensions of the ordained ministry.

The PCC took two financially significant decisions in 2018. In January they agreed that the church should join the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), which enables donors to give by Direct Debit, with the option of an automatic annual adjustment for inflation. Gift Aid is recovered continuously on the church's behalf, reducing administration and improving cash flow. The majority of regular donors have transferred to the PGS, though until the Scheme has been in operation for a full 12 months it is not possible to quantify the benefits.

In November the PCC decided that in 2019 they would give 5% of their regular income to outside charitable causes, as many other churches do. This is expected to amount to about £2,000.

Reserves Policy: Waltham St Lawrence church is a relatively small parish church in an affluent area but with an ageing congregation and falling attendance. The works recommended in the quinquennial inspection, already referred to, could cost in the region of £20,000. As a major regular donation has now ceased, and the PCC have agreed to give away 5% of their income in 2019, a deficit of about £25,000 is expected in that year.

Although the Unrestricted reserves of £120,480 appear relatively high, the PCC have decided that it is prudent to maintain them for the time being. Firstly the quinquennial works costs are only estimates, and secondly the level of reserves reflects the receipt of a legacy of £55,060 in 2017, which the PCC may spend on the provision of toilet facilities once it is decided whether this is justified. Such work would probably cost in excess of the legacy amount.

The PCC's bankers are:

Barclays Bank plc, 92 High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1PX

The Independent Examiner is:

Serena Bowe FCCA

North Hatley, Halls Lane, Waltham St Lawrence, Reading RG10 0JB

The PCC's address for correspondence is:

c/o The Parsonage, School Road. Waltham St Lawrence, Reading RG10 0NU

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The PCC has taken into account the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit in reviewing the church's aims and objectives and in planning its activities. In particular the section of this Report headed 'Review of the Year', and the 4th paragraph of 'Finance' clearly show an engagement which reaches far beyond the official membership.

2 April 2019

Signed *Charles Mason*

Rev Charles Mason Chairman

Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2018

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Waltham St Lawrence Parochial Church Council.

I report on the accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2018 which are set out on pages 6 to 9.

Respective responsibilities of PCC and examiner

The charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act;
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Serena Bowe

2 April 2019

Serena Bowe FCCA

North Hatley, Halls Lane, Waltham St Lawrence, Reading RG10 0JB

Receipts and Payments Account

	<i>Notes</i>	Restricted	Unrestricted	2018	2017
		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Donations and grants	(2a)		54,495	54,495	112,415
Fundraising events	(2b)		14,738	14,738	14,656
Fees	(2c)		2,545	2,545	4,448
Investment income		44	2,557	2,601	744
Total receipts		44	74,335	74,379	132,263
Payments					
Parish Share			32,215	32,215	31,081
Charitable giving and Donations			1,669	1,669	1,466
Subscriptions			353	353	303
Diocesan Fees			1,664	1,664	1,918
Other Ministry Costs			7,569	7,569	8,443
Administration			403	403	303
Organist, Choir and Music books			7,198	7,198	7,009
Lay clerks			753	753	1,723
Fundraising costs			902	902	705
Children's Activities			811	811	1,123
Insurance			3,891	3,891	3,761
Wedding Disbursements			281	281	
Repairs and renovation			987	987	2,496
Maintenance and Servicing			1,933	1,933	1,963
Churchyard Upkeep			831	831	3,057
Parish Magazine			7,112	7,112	6,908
Utilities			3,024	3,024	1,863
Investments					55,060
Total Payments			71,596	71,596	129,182
Surplus of receipts over payments		44	2,739	2,783	3,081
Cash fund last year end				61,537	58,456
Cash fund this year end				64,320	61,537

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	2018	2017
		£	£	£	£	£
Notes			(3)	(4)		
Cash Funds						
Cash at bank		34,469			34,469	31,834
CBF deposits		20,996	8,855		29,851	29,703
Other monetary assets		1,420			1,420	2,893
Income tax recoverable						
Investment assets						
CBF Investments	(5)	63,595		9,118	72,713	73,998
Assets retained for the charity's own use	(6)					
Audio-visual system			7,034			
Boiler system			9,116			

Approved by the PCC on 2 April 2019 and signed on its behalf by:

Charles Mason

Charles Mason – Chairman

Bob McCallum

Bob McCallum - Treasurer

The notes on pages 7 to 9 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Accounts

1. The accounts of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the receipts and payments method.

2. Receipts

a. Donations and grants

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2018	2017
	£	£	£	£
Collections from Services		4,489	4,489	5,434
Envelopes and Standing Orders		20,711	20,711	36,025
Parish Giving Scheme		9,394	9,394	
Income Tax received (all sources)		9,300	9,300	10,391
Individual donations		10,570	10,570	1,054
Trust donations				2,050
Donations curtains				1,400
Bequests/legacies		31	31	56,061
		54,495	54,495	112,415

b. Fundraising events

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2018	2017
	£	£	£	£
Choral Festival		588	588	910
Sales of cards and mugs		107	107	255
Café		2,265	2,265	1,798
Church Teas		901	901	1,005
Parish Fete		2,634	2,634	2,896
Magazine Sales and advertisements		7,245	7,245	6,696
Ride & Stride		195	195	360
Harvest Supper		803	803	736
		14,738	14,738	14,656

c. Fees

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2018	2017
	£	£	£	£
Baptisms		78	78	186
Weddings/ marriage certificates		1,389	1,389	2,182
Funerals, cremations, and burial of ashes		1,078	1,078	2,080
		2,545	2,545	4,448

Fees received are normally gross and include an amount due to the Diocese, and occasional disbursements to be paid.

3. Restricted Funds

The restricted funds during the year were as follows:

	Opening Balance £	Receipts £	Payments £	Closing Balance £
Organ Fund	8,811	44		8,855
	8,811			8,855

This fund was generated from an appeal some years ago for the preservation of the Church organ. The custodian is the WSL PCC and it is invested in cash with CCLA. Income is retained in the fund.

4. Endowment Funds

The endowment funds during the year were as follows:

	Opening Balance £	Receipts £	Payments £	Revaluation £	Closing Balance £
Wedderburn Fund	9,279			(161)	9,118

This is an endowment fund whose custodian is the Oxford Diocese Board of Finance. The Trust Administrator is the ODBF Trustee Department. The endowment is for the church building and churchyard upkeep. A number of other endowments have been consolidated into this fund. The income generated from this fund is unrestricted and is included in the receipts and payments account under investment income.

5. Investments

Investments incorporate several bequests received over the years, together with the late Michael Lee's legacy of £55,060 which was invested in 2017. A revaluation has taken place at the year end. Income generated from this fund is unrestricted and is included in the receipts and payments account under investment income.

6. Assets retained for the charity's own use

Both the audio-visual system and the boiler system were purchased during 2014 and are shown at cost.

Other Church Reports

The Vicar writes...

For most churches, including our own, Sunday worship continues to be our 'bread and butter' and our 'shop window' – that is to say the main way the members of the church stay in contact with each other, and the main way we make the community as a whole aware of our existence. The statistics tell us that attendance fell from 85 to 81 in terms of average weekly attendance, though I think that is largely accounted for by fewer baptisms than in 2017. Few if any people (other than those whom we have lost through death or removals) have stopped coming altogether, though perhaps some come less often.

I am encouraged by the fact that in a year when the church electoral roll has been renewed, ie starting again from scratch, numbers have remained exactly the same at 86, and that includes 8 names that were not on previously.

I have continued to try and provide a 'balanced diet' in terms of preaching, covering both Old and New Testaments. Sermons at Evensong and talks at the all age services are usually more topic-based, as working through a Bible book at monthly intervals would be both disjointed and prolonged.

Looking back on the past year, the autumn study course 'Discipleship Explored' was a faith-deepening experience, and we have just finished a stimulating Lent Course 'New World, Old Faith'. In between the two was the men's barbecue breakfast organised by Vaughan Wickins, a brave venture for mid-January, but we got away with it, and Christian

businessman David Gerrie gave a most stimulating talk on the amazing things God had done for him, in him and through him.

A monthly informal service, 4th@4, started in September. So far attendance has hovered on the borderline between single and double figures, but it's been enjoyed by those who come, and we are looking for it to grow.

As I write, the Bishop of Reading, Andrew Proud, is on the point of retiring. Please join me in praying for the appointment of a godly, energetic and visionary person to lead the Church of England in Berkshire. Speaking of matters diocesan, the 'slumbering giant' of the proposed link between us and Shottesbrooke now seems to be stirring again, though whether it or Brexit happens first, if at all, remains to be seen. Both processes have been going on for literally years!

As in almost every church, we at Waltham St Lawrence are greatly indebted to a large number of people who between them 'make it happen' week by week, whether or not their contribution is obvious. This includes the bellringers, vergers, sidespersons, readers, intercessors, chalice bearers, cleaners and flower arrangers, and those who organise the numerous rotas. My personal thanks go to you all.

Being the church of God is never straightforward. I was recently reflecting on how Jesus managed to be at the same time immensely attractive, full of love, forgiveness and affirmation, and fearlessly challenging to both the religious and non-religious people he met. It's a hard thing to do, and we need to pray that he'll guide, help and strengthen us to 'get it right' – or at least more nearly so.

Charles Mason

The Parochial Church Council

The full PCC met six times in 2018, and its Standing Committee five times. Routine items of business are fabric and maintenance, finance, receiving reports from the Worship Committee and Deanery Synod, and planning for the Lent Lunch or Brunch, harvest festival and village fête.

Other subjects discussed this year included implementation of the GDPR and appointing a Data Protection Manager, review of our Safeguarding policy, church publicity, faculties for baptismal goods and the Side Chapel lighting, the giving away of part of our regular income in 2019, the renewal of the electoral roll, and the continuing matter of the proposed link with Shottesbrooke.

Charles Mason

Churchwardens' Report

During the year David Crawley-Boevey and Bertie Gilbert-Smith served as churchwardens until April 2018. At the April Parish Meeting, Bertie stepped down and Fiona Penn was voted in as a new churchwarden along with David, and they attended the annual visitation service where they were sworn in as serving churchwardens by the Archdeacon.

The churchwardens continue to serve and support the church in both practical and spiritual ways as it faces the challenges of the 21st century.

Over the last 12 months we have worked to provide a variety of services and outreach associated with our church. We strive to offer as much variety in our worship as we can to try and appeal to our local community, but it remains a challenge to increase regular attendance, and therefore secure regular giving to provide the necessary income to fund our parish share and outgoings.

We had a number of highs in the year, notably continued children's work, our third Choral Festival, the parish Summer Fête, church teas for August Sunday afternoons, a special evening service taken by Bishop George Carey, celebration of Derek Tifford being the Bell Ringing Captain for 20 years along with our traditional Easter, Harvest and Christmas Services and the Christian course of Discipleship Explored. There were however lows and the continued challenge of interpreting the word and the right course of action in today's world gave us all much food for thought.

Chris Bond our organist and Director of Music for the past four years moved on to pastures new in January 2019. He and his family had contributed significantly to the musical life of our church and parish, and all appreciated the beauty of our Easter and Christmas Services as well as the success of the choir and their ventures to other cathedrals, most recently Southwark.

The search is now on for his replacement; meanwhile Simon Shaw has kindly stepped into the breach.

We have around 100 people who serve the church through being a lesson reader, sidesman, or cleaner, or through church flowers, refreshments, bell ringing, choir, children's clubs and more. It is wonderful that we have so many people who are able to give their time and service to help the church, but it is still not easy to achieve growing attendance for Sunday services. Our 2019 challenge will be to continue our work, and to engage as much as we can with the local community.

The proposed merger with Shottesbrooke is still being discussed, but no conclusion has been reached yet.

Fiona Penn

Deanery Synod

Our elected Deanery Synod member is Victoria Wickins. However, we continue to look for a second parish member to represent Waltham St Lawrence on the Synod.

The Synod met three times in 2018. The main topics at the meetings were as follows:

Thursday 15 March at St Agnes, Windsor

- Presentations on Dementia. Tina English, who set up the charity Embracing Age, talked about supporting the frail elderly and those with dementia, both within the church and the local care home community; and Revd David Joynes talked about the Rendezvous Project in Cookham.
- Presentation and approval of the 2017 accounts

Wednesday 13 June at All Saints', Boyne Hill, Maidenhead

- Jonathan Farnhill, the then Diocesan Generous Giving Advisor gave a presentation on the new Parish Giving Scheme.
- There was an update on progress of the pastoral scheme for St Mary's and The Walthams.

Wednesday 10 October at St James the Less, Stubbings, Maidenhead

- A number of the Clergy members of Synod presented their views and impressions from the Diocesan Clergy 'Living Waters' Conference that had been in April/May.

Parish Share - The 2018 parish share of £976,036 was paid in full and on time. The majority of parishes accepted our offer of adopting an increase of 2.5% and are paying the balance of 1.15% in 2019. Credit is due to Waltham St Lawrence for electing to pay the full increase straightaway. For 2019, the base increase for the Diocese is 1.75%, but a robust level of fee income has restricted our underlying increase to 1.04%. This year, therefore, we are asked to pay £986,103.

Victoria Wickins - Deanery Synod Representative

Fabric Report

The quinquennial inspection in January 2018 highlighted a number of areas of the church that are in need of remedial works. The most significant repairs are required to the roof, guttering, brick and flint work, and the stained-glass windows. These works will be carried out during the summer of 2019, all being well. Apart from a limited amount of replastering and redecoration, the internal fabric of the Church is generally in good condition.

2018 saw the return of the Probation Services Community Payback Team who maintained the whole of the churchyard on a fortnightly basis over an eight-month period. Although the churchyard was officially closed in February 2018 the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will not take over the financial responsibility for the churchyard maintenance until April 2019. Even then it will remain incumbent on the PCC to organise the maintenance and to make the necessary equipment available. We are greatly indebted to the Probation Service for the provision of the necessary workforce.

Following comments from wheelchair users that the gradient of the shingle path between the lych gate and the Yew tree made access difficult, it was agreed to create a firmer surface. It was discovered that there was an existing tarmac path beneath the existing shingle and this has now been tar sprayed and shingled by ANB Groundcare.

A ewer and shell were purchased for use at baptisms with nearly all the cost being met by a legacy from Mary Smith. A faculty has at long last been obtained to improve the lighting in the South Chapel by the installation of four spot lights at high level. This is likely to cost in the region of £500.

Following an inspection by the diocese we were advised that a number of our registers and other documents should be kept in a fireproof filing cabinet. A cabinet has been acquired and will be located in the north east corner of the side chapel.

As always, we are indebted to all the volunteers, many of whom are not church members, who keep our church in good order both inside and out. A big thank you to them all!

David Crawley-Boevey, Chair of Fabric Committee

Goods and Ornaments

There were no changes to the church plate or other principal ornaments during 2018; there are no deficiencies and they mostly remain in good order. Since that time the church has acquired new baptismal goods in the form of a four-pint brass ewer and a sterling silver shell with carrying case, thanks to a generous legacy in the Will of Mary Smith.

These were dedicated on 17 March 2019 and first used on 7th April 2019. The ewer is inscribed "In memory of Mary Smith 1931–2017".

Andrew Hyde

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee has met three times since last year's APCM, the normal pattern being to review the last major festival and to plan for the next one.

We also discussed the introduction of a monthly informal service, which would aim to provide a 'lower threshold' way to attend church than our existing services, and also meet the needs of those who otherwise spend their time teaching and leading the children. This was launched in September under the title '4th@4'. Numbers so far have been low, but we intend to persevere. Some additional people have recently expressed interest.

Another matter which occupied our time was the planning of a special service to celebrate the contribution to church life of many different people, some of whom are not part of the

regular congregation, with personal invitations to all concerned. At the time of writing, this exciting event is close upon us!

We decided to continue with Matins on the 5th Sunday of the month at least until the end of 2019.

Charles Mason

Music and the Choir

The music within the church follows a strong Anglican choral tradition. Despite some hurdles and setbacks this year, it still flourishes.

Director of Music A major change came at the end of the year with the departure of Chris Bond who had led the music in church very ably for 4½ years, and with him a few choristers. Adverts were placed for a new Director of Music (or an organist only), with Simon Shaw at present running the choir and making efforts to rebuild membership.

Choir membership – over the year, choir membership declined significantly for a number of reasons, and by the end of 2018, when Chris Bond had left, it stood at just three people.

Choir recruitment in rural areas can be difficult, as it involves reaching out to beyond our immediate congregation and our villages to people who could join our church family as well as join the choir. A growing and vibrant church community is important to this. It is worth noting that for some time, a shortage of local volunteer choristers has been masked by the (very welcome) presence of choral scholars, occasional singers and paid deputies, but we believe that local volunteers are the heart of the choir, and their contribution to Sunday services every week is a *sine qua non*.

We need to attract new members to sing praises to God and enhance our worship, and along the way preserve our choral tradition. A significant effort to find new choristers began at the end of 2018, and in early 2019 was seen to be paying off a little, from amongst the existing congregation and with a long way to go before the choir is at an adequate strength, particularly in the lower parts.

Deputies and Extras – these invaluable occasional singers who join us for special services and Evensong have also dwindled in number, partly because some were Chris Bond's family and close friends. Enough remain to be able to continue with Evensong for the time being, but further recruitment in this area is also essential and ongoing.

In the light of reduced numbers, the Choral Scholar Scheme could be of enormous benefit to the church and to the choir, as well as to the scholars themselves. However, in the absence of a music department at Reading University and no one apparently championing musical opportunities outside the campus it has been quite difficult to make contact let alone recruit, and there are currently none in post. Fresh approaches are being made in 2019. We sincerely hope and pray that we can continue to fund this scheme and that recruits can be found.

Whether past or present, regular or occasional, the participation of all choristers over the year has been very much appreciated, and the support of the congregation is very encouraging to the choir.

Middle Choir by the end of 2018 this no longer meets separately. Two remaining children join the adults for the first part of choir practice, and for the service on the third "Café" Sunday.

The aim of the middle choir was to introduce older children to singing hymns, songs, anthems and settings and to practise reading music. It is hoped that in due course we will be able to adopt some more formal teaching methods using materials from the RSCM.

Highlights of the year include the services for Lent, Holy Week and Easter, the Carol Service, a Choral Festival in May which included a joint performance of the Haydn Nelson Mass, and three visits to cathedrals: Chichester in April, Guildford in July and Southwark in October. Such cathedral visits will not be possible (as WSL Church Choir) in 2019 and the bookings have been taken over by TDH Choir, with WSL choristers taking part. A fifth Choral Festival concert is being planned for May.

At this time of transition and rebuilding, I would like to offer my own sincere thanks to the choir for their commitment and loyalty, to the visiting freelance organists, the clergy and congregation for their support for the music of our church.

Simon Shaw - Choirmaster

Junior Choir

WSL Junior Choir is run for local children of the community, between the ages of 4 and 11. The aim is to encourage children in their ability to sing and read in front of people, and to enjoy the musical aspect of worship.

JC meets every Thursday evening during term time and sings at the All Age Service for the first Sunday in the month. We have around 12-15 regular attendees, and they range from non- readers to confident singers.

JC were very proud to take part in the Choral Festival in May 2018, where they sang three songs from musicals, with their usual enthusiasm and panache.

After their summer break, JC came back to sing at the Harvest Festival, and entertained the Breakfast Café attendees in November with the Stir Up Sunday Song, as they mixed the ingredients which became the Christmas Cake for their annual Nativity.

This year it was another from the past repertoire "Gold for Bethlehem" all about the King who loses the gold but is rescued by a shepherd boy and a cheeky sheep.

After Christmas they were back to sing, often having Baptisms at the All Age Service. Mothering Sunday too always gives them a chance to sing a special song for all Mothers.

The JC volunteers' team also hold the annual Good Friday Activities morning, when all local children are invited to join in a morning of craft fun! Here they make the Easter Garden for the church, and also have lots of craft tables along with coffee and hot cross buns for all. A short talk and Easter prayers as well are held in the church. Finally they hold their annual fund raising event each May, where they share coffee, cakes and fun with our lovely church friends, supporters and community.

Fiona Penn

Work with Children

Sunday Club

We have held Sunday Club almost every Sunday in 2018, except during All-Age services. Numbers have varied each week from 3 to 14 children, with ages ranging from 0 to 12. We have been using the new material throughout 2018, using the 'Light' resource books from Scripture Union. These resources have been very useful. There are four books to help us meet the needs of the varying ages of the children, and we will continue to use these into 2019. Sessions took place in the side chapel as groups were small and there were also bookings in the Neville Hall. The parent-supervised crèche for babies and toddlers has also been running in the side chapel alongside Sunday Club, this means parents can watch their children and listen to the sermon on the speaker. Challenges can arise when Sunday Club sessions are held in the side chapel with all ages together. Having the toddlers and older children together can be distracting. We would like to look

into ideas of dividing the two groups during services in the church building. Perhaps use of the back of the church could be considered? A solution that would work for everyone is the goal for 2019. As ever, we are on the lookout for more volunteers and helpers to support the children's work at the church.

The older youth group has not really taken off as there was not regular attendance and many of the older youth have joined the choir (which is wonderful!). We would like to see how we can encourage regular attendance/involvement from older youth members of the community, and perhaps could think about starting some form of youth club every other week in the evenings. All ideas welcome.

Victoria Wickins – Children and Families Co-ordinator.

Messy Church

Messy Church has had a good year in 2018. Attendance has ranged from 16 to 39 people of all ages. The sessions are held on the second Sunday of every month in the Neville Hall. It is a family fun-filled gathering with biblically themed activities and crafts, a short celebration held in the church, and a community meal to round the afternoon off. All activities and crafts are focused around the central theme and we encourage all age groups to get involved. After the activity time, we have Bible reading/story, a review of the activities completed, a short sermon on the key points, and a prayer, ending with a fun worship song with actions.

We look forward to continuing this work in 2019, encouraging more families to get involved and hearing the Word. We are seeing new faces and feel excited about the new relationships we are building. We continue to pray for more regular attendance and more families to get involved. We also pray for more of the attendees of Messy Church to start attending regular church services.

We have loyal servant-hearted volunteers each month and we are grateful for their help and support; the work of Messy Church would not be possible without them.

Victoria Wickins – Children and Families Co-ordinator

3G was started with the help of volunteers who wanted to bring the community together in all different generations – parents, grandparents, and children. It is a place where everyone can have tea, coffee and cake and, most importantly, conversation. It takes place every Thursday morning in the Neville Hall, the hours now being extended to 9.30 – 11.45, and is run by volunteers who each week set up the room full of different toys for all the children's ages and needs.

At 11.15 the children sit on a mat and have fruit and listen to a story from the Bible. They then sing songs from Christian music and finish with a prayer.

Average attendance for the year was 29, with over 40 on six occasions.

More volunteers would be hugely appreciated.

Natasha Creffield

Sidesmen/women

We have had a team of five sidesmen and six sideswomen who have shared the duties associated with the Sunday morning services on a rota basis. Pat Woodford is the sideswoman for all Evensong services. MJ Streather has become a sideswoman during the past year.

Our thanks are due to all sidesmen/women for their continued support. All of them attach great importance to making everyone, especially newcomers, welcome at each service as

well as ensuring that everything is in order so that the service can proceed on time and without a hitch. They also try to encourage and enlist the support of the children at the family service.

There is still a need to recruit new sidesmen/women.

Andrew Campbell

Bellringers

Our regular weekly activities continue to be ringing for the 10.00 (or 10.30) morning service every Sunday, and practising from 6.45 to 9.00 every Monday evening.

At the end of October, Jacqueline Hazell took over as Tower Captain, when Derek Titford retired. Derek's long and faithful service as Tower Captain had lasted for 21 years. His successful leadership led to him always maintaining a happy band of ringers; fortunately for us, Derek continues to ring, even though he has stepped back from Captain duties.

We have carried on ringing for weddings when required to do so.

During the year 22 Quarter Peals have been rung in the tower; sometimes for special occasions, and sometimes to advance the ringing skills of the band members.

(A Quarter Peal is a special piece of ringing that lasts for about 45 minutes, without stopping, or going wrong!)

Maintenance of the bells and the ropes has been conscientiously carried out by members of the band; and we carry out our usual 'spring clean' of the ringing gallery in Holy Week (when there is no ringing).

Eleven people belong to our band, ranging in age from 15 to 80. Ringing is an activity for all ages.

Some ringers in our band cannot ring on a Sunday as they have dual membership at another tower.

So one of our targets for the coming year is to recruit one or more new ringers from the village, hoping that we can build up our numbers for Sunday Service ringing.

We look forward to enjoying our ringing as much in the coming year as we have done in the past year.

Jacquie Hazell, Tower Captain

St Lawrence Café

The St Lawrence Café, whose profits are used to supplement the church maintenance fund, has gone from strength to strength this year. It has a loyal following and is extremely well supported by many in the village and also by some, particularly cyclists, from further afield. Occasionally there is an added attraction at the Café such as a stall or the Junior Choir and the atmosphere is always one of conviviality and companionship, with villagers making the most of the opportunity to sit and chat to each other. We live in a village with a strong sense of community and the Café has become an integral and important part of this.

The Café still has its hard-working team of helpers and its very generous sponsors, all of whom are happy to support the church even though they are not necessarily regular churchgoers themselves. Without them the Café would not happen and this would be a great loss to the village community.

Isabelle Crawley-Boevey