



Waltham St Lawrence Parish Church

Annual Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31st December 2019 and other Church Reports

to be presented at the

Annual Parochial Church Meeting
on Sunday 18th October 2020 at 11.45 a.m.

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Annual Report for 2019

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 2019 Annual Parochial Church Meeting the Electoral Roll stood at 86, 5 fewer than the previous year, though it should be borne in mind that this was a renewal year, when numbers on roll typically fall. 33 members live outside the parish boundary.

Excluding weddings and funerals, total attendance in 2019 was 4698 (2018: 5,060), with an average weekly attendance of 90 (97).

There is a part-time Priest in Charge, who is responsible for the day to day management of the church, and there is a paid Organist and paid Choirmaster. 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 excepted 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 2019 until the date this report was approved are:

Priest in Charge: Rev Charles Mason (Chairman)
Churchwardens: David Crawley-Boevey
Fiona Penn
Deanery Synod: Victoria Wickins

Elected: Bertie Gilbert-Smith
David Gray (from 28/4/19)
Chris Howell
Christopher King
Linda Sykes
Juanita Tarn
Vaughan Wickins
Chris Woodhams (until 28/4/19)

PCC meetings are also attended by:

Isabelle Crawley-Boevey *Secretary*
Bob McCallum *Treasurer*

The PCC met 7 times in 2019.

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 3 times in 2019.

Worship Committee:

This Committee reviews and plans the worship for major festivals and other special occasions. It met 3 times in 2019.

Review of the Year

The pattern of Sunday services remained largely unchanged. Average weekly attendance was down from 97 to 89. Overall Christmas attendance was up 19%, with the carol service showing the biggest increase. As often in recent years, more people attended on Christmas Eve than on Christmas Day.

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 £2,591 to church funds.

During 2019 the PCC also ran a monthly Messy Church and a weekly carers and pre-schoolers morning. These are important contacts with many outside the worshipping community.

In March, the church ran a Lent lunch, which raised £400 for a local charity for the homeless. In May it staged a multi-choir choral festival, which raised £330, and a Remembrance concert which raised £548. In June the church played an active role in the village fête, from which its share of the profits was £2,700.

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 £832 for church funds. Harvest Festival in October included a country music style barn dance, which brought people of all ages together and covered its costs.

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

Church Building

During 2019 a number of works have been carried out on the church building as a result of the quinquennial inspection in 2018. The roof has been cleared of moss, the parapet repaired, and rainwater goods replaced. The lighting in the Side Chapel was also upgraded. Total costs of all repairs and renovation work in 2019 were £15,957, of which £12,815 was quinquennial costs. Further costs are almost certain to be incurred in 2020 relating to repairs of the brickwork and stained glass windows; at present the costs are unknown, but the expectation is that they can be met from reserves and with help from a local trust.

A ewer and shell were for use at baptisms were delivered in 2019 at a total cost of £1,094 nearly all of which was met from a legacy of £1,000.

Finance

Total income for the year was £75,911 including a transfer of £6000 from our investment fund to cover major costs (2018: £74,379) and total expenditure was £85,558 (£71,596), giving a deficit for the year of £9,647 (surplus £2,783). This is to be expected in a year when major repairs were carried out.

As always the largest item of expenditure was the Diocesan Parish Share contribution (£32,550). This goes mainly towards the cost of the stipends, housing and pensions of the ordained ministry. It seems likely that in 2020 this parish may become united with an adjoining one; if so, there should be a small financial benefit through the sharing of costs.

Reserves Policy: Waltham St Lawrence Church is a relatively small parish church in an affluent area but with an ageing congregation and falling attendance. Although the Unrestricted reserves of £126,028 appear relatively high, the PCC have decided that it is prudent to maintain them for the time being. Firstly there are further works needed to the building for which there are presently no reliable estimates, and secondly the PCC is now actively investigating the provision of toilet facilities, the cost of which would probably use up all the reserves after setting some aside for contingencies.

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 3rd paragraph of 'Finance' clearly show an engagement which reaches far beyond the official membership.

10 March 2020

Signed *Charles Mason*

Revd Charles Mason

Chairman

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 2019 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:

(2) 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

10 March 2020

Serena Bowe FCCA

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

Receipts and Payments Account

	<i>Notes</i>	Restricted	Unrestricted	2019	2018
		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Donations and grants	(2a)		48,267	48,267	54,495
Fundraising events	(2b)		14,599	14,599	14,738
Fees	(2c)		4,309	4,309	2,545
Investment income		67	2,669	2,736	2,600
Investment transfer			6,000		
Total receipts		67	75,844	75,911	74,379
Payments					
Parish Share			32,550	32,550	32,215
Charitable giving and Donations			1,968	1,968	1,669
Subscriptions			481		353
				481	
Diocesan Fees			1,756	1,756	1,664
Other Ministry Costs			8,677	8,677	7,569
Administration			475	475	403
Organist, Choir and Music books			6,028	6,028	7,197
Lay clerks			-	-	
					753
Fundraising costs			885	885	902
Children's Activities			338	338	881
Insurance			3,502		3,891
				3,502	
Wedding Disbursements			68	68	281
Repairs and renovation			15,957	15,957	987
Capital Expenditure			1,921	1,921	-
Churchyard Upkeep			1,017	1,017	830
Parish Magazine			7,005	7,005	7112
Utilities			2,930	2,930	3,024
Investments					
Total Payments			85,558	85,558	71,596
(Deficit)/Surplus of receipts over payments		67	(9,714)	(9,647)	2,783
Cash fund last year end				64,320	61,537
Cash fund this year end				54,673	64,320

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	2019	2018
		£	£	£	£	£
Notes			(3)	(4)		
Cash Funds						
Cash at bank		30,602			30,602	34,469
CBF deposits		15,149	8,922		24,071	29,851
Other monetary assets						
Income tax recoverable		3,146			3,146	1,420
Investment assets						
CBF Investments	(5)	69,427		10,850	80,277	72,713
Assets retained for the charity's own use	(6)		18,071			

Approved by the PCC on 10 March 2020 and signed on its behalf by

Charles Mason

Charles Mason – Chairman

Bob McCallum

Bob McCallum – Treasurer

The notes on pages 8 to 10 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	2019	2018
	£	£	£	£
Collections from Services		6,832	6,832	4,489
Envelopes and Standing Orders		11,026	11,026	20,711
Income Tax received (all sources)		7084	7,084	9,300
Individual donations		1,187	1,187	10,570
Parish Giving Scheme		16,951	16,951	9,394
Trust donations		1,737	1,737	
Bequests/legacies				31
RBWM Donation for churchyard		3,450	3,450	
		48,267	48,267	54,495

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

b. Fundraising events

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2019	2018
	£	£	£	£
Choral Festivals		878	878	588
Sales of cards and mugs		11	11	107
Café		2,591	2,591	2,265
Church Teas		832	832	901
Parish Fete		2,700	2,700	2,634
Magazine Sales and advertisements		7,212	7,212	7,245
Ride & Stride		285	285	195
Harvest Supper		90	90	803
		14,599	14,599	14,738

c. Fees

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2019	2018
	£	£	£	£
Baptisms		65	65	78
Weddings/ marriage certificates/blessings		1,268	1,268	1,389
Funerals, ashes, memorial services burial and cremations		2,976	2,976	1,078
		4,309	4,309	2,545

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	8,855	67		8,922

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	9,118			1,732	10,850

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

	Opening Balance £	Receipts £	Payments £	Revaluation £	Closing Balance £
CBF Investment Fund	63,595		6,000	11,832	69,427

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.

During the year £6,000 was transferred into cash funds to meet some of the costs incurred in repairs and maintenance.

6. Assets retained for the charity's own use

	Year Purchase	£
Audio-Visual System	2014	7,034
Boiler system	2014	9,116
Filing Cabinet	2019	395
Baptism Ewer and Shell	2019	1,094
Lawnmower	2019	222
Contactless terminal	2019	210

Other Church Reports

The Vicar writes...

The very fact that our Annual Meetings are being held in October reflects what is dominant in everyone's thinking at the moment – the immense impact of the coronavirus pandemic on everyone's lives, including the church's. With no physical Sunday services at all for nearly 4 months, and only the 8.45 am communion after that, there is still no end in sight

to this unprecedented state of affairs. I am truly grateful under God to all who have risen to the challenge of a new way of 'doing church', especially in the weekly online services with their words, music and technology, but also in virtual meetings and helping with the running of baptisms, funerals, and the 8.45 service in line with the current restrictions. I acknowledge too the wonderful way in which Church Teas were adapted to fit, and those who have contributed financially to compensate for the loss of income from some of our usual sources. As a matter of fact, we have increased our outreach both numerically and geographically since March 2020, though I do not yet know whether this will show up in the official statistics next year.

Stepping back from the immediate circumstances of the pandemic, 2020 saw the long-awaited transfer of Shottesbrooke from its 276-year union with White Waltham to form a new Benefice with Waltham St Lawrence. I took my first service as their Vicar on 6 September. Although legally we are two separate parishes, the small numbers at Shottesbrooke mean that it is sensible to combine for PCC meetings, Annual Meetings, and other events that would take place under normal conditions. It is great that several from Shottesbrooke were attending the online services before the building re-opened.

The Waltham St Lawrence membership of our combined electoral roll has risen from 86 to 90. Although average weekly attendance is slightly down from 97 to 89, this is affected by many variables, eg the number and size of baptism parties, and whether or not there was a school carol service.

Highlights of 2019 in my mind include the Helpers Appreciation Service, the choral concerts in May and November, and the Yeldall Manor evening in November, which gave concrete expression to our commitment in finance and prayer. Several people again enjoyed an autumn study course, this time an 8-week Bible overview. For obvious reasons we have not been able to offer a course this year.

In consultation with others I discontinued our monthly informal service 4th@4 at the end of 2019, as the numbers did not justify the time and effort required. I still believe there is potential for something of this kind, and the Church Outreach Group will be looking at it again.

Since I last wrote in this context, we have acquired a new Area Bishop, Olivia Graham, and a new Archdeacon, Stephen Pullin. The diocesan machine has been working overtime since March in providing parishes with information and advice and online worship resources, and I would say have been doing a good job.

Our church community is greatly indebted to the many people who between them 'make it happen', whether or not their contribution is obvious. This includes the bellringers, vergers, sidespersons, readers, intercessors, chalice bearers, cleaners and flower arrangers, rota organisers, and the people engaged in finance and administration. In recent months several of these roles have had to be performed in new and unfamiliar ways. My personal thanks to you all are no less sincere for being repeated. A task currently facing us is to find a replacement (or replacements) for Chris Howell, who after 15 years of dedicated service has retired from her post as Verger. She interpreted the role very widely, and we are immensely grateful for all she has done.

Charles Mason

The Parochial Church Council

The full PCC met seven times in 2019, and its Standing Committee three times. Routine items of business are fabric and maintenance, finance, receiving reports from the Worship Committee and Deanery Synod, and planning for the village fête and harvest festival.

In 2019 we also discussed the Parish Inspection Report (about the general running of the parish) and how to implement its recommendations; the appointment of Director of Music/Choirmaster/Organist; the destination of our charitable giving; and a toilet feasibility study. We decided to embrace electronic giving with the purchase of a contactless card reader and matching brass dish.

Charles Mason

Churchwardens' Report

During the year David Crawley-Boevey and Fiona Penn continued to serve as churchwardens. They attended the annual visitation service at Bray where they were signed in for their posts by the Archdeacon, now our Bishop Olivia.

Her message was **Who we are and what we are we here for** and concluded with “**we are people of hope, Easter people. We are the people of God gathered and dispersed, brought in and sent out. That is who we are and that is what we are about.**” With these words in mind, the churchwardens continue to serve and support our church and community where we can, in both practical and spiritual ways, keeping the faith as God’s servants.

Our challenges continued to be much the same, serving our church with the resources we have and reaching out to our local community. This year we particularly focused on reaching out to ensure we are engaging with both our loyal congregation and the people in our area.

The first of these events was a Helpers Service held in May, with invitations going out to over 100 people who are involved in helping maintain and support our church. The service was well attended and led by the Junior Choir and a lot of positive feedback from helpers being appreciated. Who can forget the theme song, The 12 Days of Helpers.

Also in May we were delighted to appoint Camilla Jarrot as our organist, who works alongside Simon Shaw our Choir Master. They continue to lead a full programme of music for our church and this year introduced a special concert to mark Remembrance.

We held another outreach evening in November, in support of one of our chosen charities, Yeldall Manor. Another well attended evening and a very moving testimony from one of the men who have benefitted from the charity’s programme.

These were in addition to our traditional annual events: 4th Choral Festival, the parish Summer Fête, and church teas for August Sunday afternoons, along with our Easter, Harvest and Christmas Services. Also a first for our church this year, an impromptu Nativity at the Christingle Service, where children of all ages could join in the telling of the Christmas story.

The proposed merger with Shottesbrooke has finally been approved and begins on 1 April 2020. In practical terms it means an interregnum for 2 services a month, and the joining together of the WSL and Shottesbrooke PCC’s for management.

We cannot sign off this year without thanking all the helpers who are involved in our church, but most importantly to say the biggest THANK YOU of all to Chris Howell, who after 15 years of the most dedicated service as our Verger is stepping down. Chris will be sorely missed but we will try to fill the gap she leaves.

Fiona Penn

Deanery Synod

Our elected Deanery Synod member is Victoria Wickins. However, we continue to look for a more parish members to represent Waltham St Lawrence (and now also Shottesbrooke) on the Synod.

Tuesday 4 June 2019 at All Saints, Dedworth:

- Members of our own Deanery introduced and explained aspects of the diocese's Common Vision, including the seven working groups to provide resources to help individual parishes relating to certain areas. More details about common vision and these working groups are available on the diocese's website. The Synod watched a talk by Bishop Steven encouraging us to be courageous.
- Jim Tucker was elected as the new Deanery Lay Chair. John Sykes stepped down after being elected Diocesan Lay Chair.
- The Synod was alerted to a consultation relating to term limits for Deanery Synod members.

Thursday 3 October 2019 at St Peter's, Furze Platt:

- Andrew Anderson-Gear, Director of Mission at the Diocese of Oxford, gave a presentation about and explanation of the new Parish Planning Tool which has been produced to support the mission of individual churches to become more Christ-like. The Synod was given a chance to look at the tool and ask questions.
- Details of how the deanery is planning to manage the parish share increase for 2020 were shared.

Thanks to hard work by parishes and their generosity, the Deanery paid its parish share of £986,103 for 2019 in full and on time. Deanery Share reserve stands at £54,165 and some of this will be used to defray part of the 3.89% increase requested from our Deanery for 2020. (The overall increase in the diocese for 2020 stands at 1.75%; we anticipate a significantly reduced increase for our Deanery for 2021.)

Parish inspections on behalf of the Archdeacon were carried out by the Deanery during the year, as part of an ongoing three-yearly cycle. Waltham St Lawrence last had an inspection on 19 September 2018.

Victoria Wickins - Deanery Synod Representative

Fabric Report

This report covers almost 18 months and for the most part the period has seen a continuation of works in progress.

In October 2019 repairs were carried out to the church roof which largely involved clearing the moss from the north elevation and replacing a quantity of broken or cracked tiles. The existing guttering, which was in a poor state of repair, was replaced in its entirety with pre-coated cast aluminium guttering and downpipes which should be maintenance free for many years.

The quinquennial surveyor has drawn up a detailed specification for the works required to repair the brick, stone and flint work on the outside of the building. Three estimates have been received and once a faculty has been obtained, a contractor appointed and the necessary funds are in place the work should be carried out during the first half of 2021. Repairs to some of the stained-glass windows will be carried out at the same time. Internally, plastering repairs have been carried out in the side chapel, to the pillar behind the lectern, and on the wall by the front pew on the north aisle.

Last year the lighting was dramatically improved in the side chapel by the installation of four spotlights. This has been greatly appreciated by the choir for their practising. Both the church clock and the bells have been inspected in recent months and maintenance work is required to both installations. Estimates have been received for the required works which will be carried out over the coming months.

In 2019 the churchyard was excellently maintained by the Community Payback team provided by the Probation Service. Due to lockdown and then social distancing, they have not attended this year, so the churchyard has been largely maintained by a local volunteer, who received some assistance with strimming and hedge cutting. Grateful thanks are due to Richard and Hilary O'Rourke who paid for their gardener to spend several hours strimming, and to Gary Boyling for freely giving his time on additional maintenance. A few parts of the churchyard were left unmown allowing a magnificent display of Michaelmas daisies, which was much appreciated by those on lockdown walks.

We are always greatly indebted to the many volunteers who help to keep the church 'up and running', but I would like to give special thanks to Marc Burn, whose services are provided by David Brownlow, who winds the clock each week. Thanks are also due to Nick Kohl, who risks life and limb negotiating the tower steps in order to raise the flag on various saints days and special national occasions. A new flag was generously donated last year by Mike Kay and Mark Hipgrave.

David Crawley-Boevey

Goods and Ornaments

There were no changes to the church plate or other principal ornaments during 2019/20. There are no deficiencies and they mostly remain in good order. Fiona Penn and David Gray carried out an audit of the goods in February/March 2020 per the records in the church terrier and found the items all to be present.

We have acquired the following items for the church in this period:

1. The Goodbox contactless device and its brass holding dish.
2. A large sideboard for storage in the side chapel.
3. 30 chairs and 3 gazebos for use at church teas, donated by WSL Junior Choir
4. A new projector screen.

While great care is taken with the fabrics used on our altars, the current condition of the red and purple ones means we will have to look to replace in the near future. As we are currently not using the main altar during the Covid pandemic restrictions, this will be delayed until services resume again.

David Gray

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. Because of the disruption caused by coronavirus, the most recent meeting was in January 2020.

The outstanding worship event of 2019 was the Helpers Appreciation Service in May, to which all those who assist with the running of the church in any way were invited. Total attendance was 111. Worship Committee planned a follow-up event in November, An Evening with Yeldall Manor, at which the work of Yeldall was presented, and a resident gave testimony. Finally, we organised a follow-up service for baptism families.

We decided to discontinue '4th@4', the monthly informal service, as after more than a year attendance had generally been confined mainly to those directly involved.

Plans for 2020 included a Songs of Praise service, but they were all frustrated by the pandemic.

When the Committee next meets, it will be under a new name: Church Outreach Group.

Charles Mason

Music and the Choir

The main focus of 2019 was in rebuilding choir membership and establishing a good working team of choirmaster, organist and JC leader.

I took over as Choirmaster (once more) with effect from February 2019 and at that time inherited a choir with just three active members, although I was already able to call on a larger number of 'extras' willing to assist with weddings, funerals and the monthly Choral Evensong, drawn in part from Waltham Madrigals and Chorate Chamber Choir, regular performers at our annual Choral Festival.

Organist recruitment began immediately, and we used freelancers to play for services. Finding singers remained difficult, but we were fortunate that a few members of the church, including the Vicar and a Churchwarden, responded to the rallying cry and helped the choir to continue. Over the first three months, membership recovered to an adequate number. After a break in January, we were able to sing weekly anthems and monthly Evensong.

Further recruitment will need to be from outside the existing church membership and is therefore related to church growth. The Choral Scholar scheme is for now in abeyance but should be revived at the earliest opportunity – likely not before 2021. There remains a long way to go before the choir is at full strength, particularly in the lower parts.

In March, having deputised a few times, Dr Camilla Jarrot joined the team as Organist. With her wide experience and academic and performing credentials this was a major boost for the church's music.

During the year, the choir provided music for most main Sunday services (the Junior Choir doing so for All Age) and the occasional offices and minor festivals. It was also able to raise numbers for several weddings and funerals, with the help of our wider circle of supporting singers.

Choral Evensong continues to be well attended - both in the pews and the choirstalls - with a wide range of volunteers swelling the choir numbers monthly, allowing increasingly challenging repertoire to be successfully attempted. This is due in no small part to Camilla's expertise.

Highlights of the year included services for Lent, Holy Week and Easter, Harvest, Remembrance, the Carol Service, our Choral Festival in May (with the visiting choirs singing a joint performance of the Bach motet 'Singet dem Herrn') and a "Come and Sing" day in November run with assistance from Mary Delaney of the RSCM and including works by Rheinberger, Fauré and Bruckner.

Unlike previous years, cathedral visits were not possible (as WSL Church Choir) – although some choristers joined Te Decet Hymnus Choir for two weekends, at Rochester and Bristol.

The new year of 2020 gave little hint of subsequent turmoil. The first quarter of the year proceeded normally, but by Passion Sunday, services in church had been cancelled, and choir singing in particular was deemed for a long time to be especially risky.

It was essential for the choir to 'go virtual', and this was quickly set in motion so that by the original planned date of the church annual meetings, WSL Virtual Voices had been formed, from the church choir and its wider group of singers – those who had supported us throughout the previous twelve months – and we were producing anthems and hymns for weekly online services.

It will be for the 2020-2021 report to assess the success of Virtual Voices, how any return to live singing for services has been brought about, and our renewed Cathedral visit programme; but for now church music at Waltham St Lawrence is being maintained in the most difficult circumstances.

In conclusion I would like to say how enormously grateful I am for the support of the Vicar, Camilla our Organist, all the members of the regular choir, and those whose occasional help last year and regular help with VV, has enabled us not only to maintain but to grow our capabilities – all in a time of trouble. We have also been much encouraged by the support of the congregation, and we are pleased to have provided a few glimmers of light for them.

Simon Shaw - Choirmaster

Junior Choir

WSL Junior Choir (JC) is run for local children of the community, ages 4-11. 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 is led by Fiona Penn, assisted by Polly Pollecutt-Gray and Allison Beale with John Kiss on piano.

The choir 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.

After their summer break, JC came back to sing at the Harvest Festival and joined up with the WSL School Choir for a first joint service. This was a great opportunity for both choirs to learn a song but then come together in a bigger ensemble, and we were delighted to welcome many of the parents that day.

Breakfast Café attendance in November is becoming a new tradition with the Stir Up Sunday Song, as they mixed the ingredients for the Christmas Cake for the annual Nativity.

This year it was another from the past repertoire “Silent Night”, all about how the carol Silent Night was first composed. It was an opportunity for lots of the children to sing solos and take on speaking parts for the first time.

After Christmas they were back to sing, often having Baptisms at the All Age Service. However this year had a new twist with the coronavirus pandemic and JC as we know it had to halt for a while, meaning no Mothers’ Day or Easter celebrations. Along came the advent of “online” singing, which was not easy as we cannot sing together, but using Zoom we were able to join up as JC from our respective homes and practise some of our favourite songs. The senior choir had migrated to a virtual presence and thanks to Simon Shaw’s skills the juniors were able to record two songs and have their voices mixed for the online services.

We are hoping to get back to service as usual in September 2020.

Fiona Penn

Work with Children

Sunday Club

We have held Sunday Club almost every Sunday in 2019, except during All-Age services. Numbers have varied each week from 3 to 11 children, with ages ranging from 0 to 12. We have been using the Scripture Union resources as well as some of our own material. The Scripture Union material is useful with larger groups to keep the various ages connected and exploring the same theme, but with age-relevant activities. Sessions took place in the side chapel as groups continued to be small enough. The parent-supervised crèche for babies and toddlers has also been running in the side chapel alongside Sunday Club, which means parents can watch their children and listen to the

sermon on the speaker. Challenges can arise with all ages mixed together. Having the toddlers and older children together can, at times, be distracting. We are also finding that the older youth are falling away from wanting to attend. This will be a combination of a number of factors; our children's work not having capacity (volunteers), outside activities (sport) held on Sunday mornings, as well as the sessions lacking in relevance for them as they start to tackle more complex life topics in senior school. To continue the children's work and keep children engaged, it would be good to look to find more volunteers committed to seeing children's faith grow, and to help expand the work.

During the lockdown period a virtual children's Sunday Club was offered. This unfortunately did not take off and only one child attended for a few weeks. The decision was then taken to leave children's work during this season, until we have a clearer view on what is happening with getting back to the church building.

Victoria Wickins – Children and Families Co-ordinator

Messy Church

Messy Church ran throughout 2019. Attendance has varied throughout the year with numbers in attendance ranging from 5-16 adults and 4-21 children. The start of the year had good numbers, but there was a steady drop in attendance throughout the year, leaving the end of the year sessions very quiet. By the Christmas session in December numbers had significantly dropped, and a collective decision was taken to have some time off Messy Church and pray about what might be next. The intention was to regroup by July/August 2020 to discuss next steps for family-orientated activities. Unfortunately since then we have had to continue to be on hold because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have had servant-hearted volunteers each month and we are grateful for their help and support; the work of Messy Church would not have been possible without them. We have really enjoyed delivering Messy Church for the last 6 years, but it feels like the right time to find new ways to reach young families local to the Church.

Victoria Wickins – Children and Families Co-ordinator

3G (Three Generations)

3G takes place on Thursday mornings, and is for anyone who wants to bring their children to play with toys and mix with other children to help build social skills and confidence before starting school. It's also a place for parents to meet with other parents and relax while their children play safely, and for grandparents and child minders to meet up.

3G caters to the elderly too. It's nice for them to come in each week to have a cup of tea, a slice of home-made cake, a selection of biscuits and some conversation.

We have a Bible story at 11.15 while the children sit on our story rug and have fruit. After they've eaten their fruit they dance to two Christian songs and then we all tidy away.

All the work that goes into 3G is done by volunteers each week.

Unfortunately 3G has had to be suspended since March because of pandemic restrictions. In the year up to that time, average attendance was 10 adults and 6 children.

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. Chris Howell retired as a sidesman and we are very grateful for her many years of service. 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

From April 2019 to February 2020 our regular weekly activities continued as usual. We rang for the 10.00 (or 10.30) morning service nearly every Sunday, and practised from 7.00 to 9.00 every Monday evening.

During October 2019 we had a maintenance visit from Whites of Appleton. They carried out a professional service of the bells and fittings, and made recommendations for further work to be done.

Everything was carrying on as normal. Members of the band turned up regularly for service ringing and for practices, and we were enjoying our ringing and making good progress. We were looking forward to launching a recruitment campaign for new ringers in Spring 2020, to boost our numbers.

But of course in March 2020 everything ground to a halt. The bells have not been rung since then. We very much look forward to restarting when circumstances allow.

Jacquie Hazell, Tower Captain

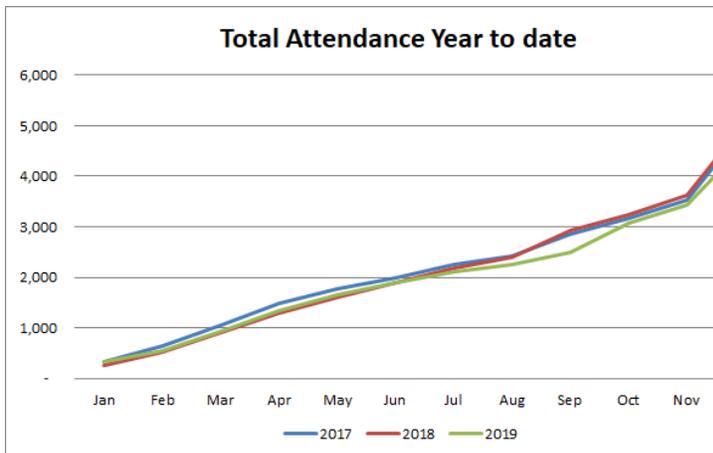
St Lawrence Café

The St Lawrence Café continued to thrive throughout 2019 and up until March 2020 when sadly we had to close temporarily due to the Covid19 pandemic. Up until that time, despite the attendance varying from month to month, the Café had proved to be a popular village event. Our take, which was all in aid of the Church maintenance fund, also varied from month to month for no accountable reason, but we always averaged a respectable profit which was a remarkable achievement for 90 minutes' serving time.

Naturally the Café would not happen without the wonderful team of willing helpers who give up their time so freely. We are blessed to live in a village where people are happy to step up and provide such a valuable community service which is so appreciated by the attendees. The Café is all about people meeting and communicating and enjoying a range of breakfast choices. This format has made it hard for the team to see how the Café will be able to restart whilst social distancing is still compulsory and the restrictions on the buffet-style serving of food still applies. The team is in constant discussion but sadly feel that it will almost certainly not be possible to recommence this happy and successful indoor event until these restrictions are lifted.

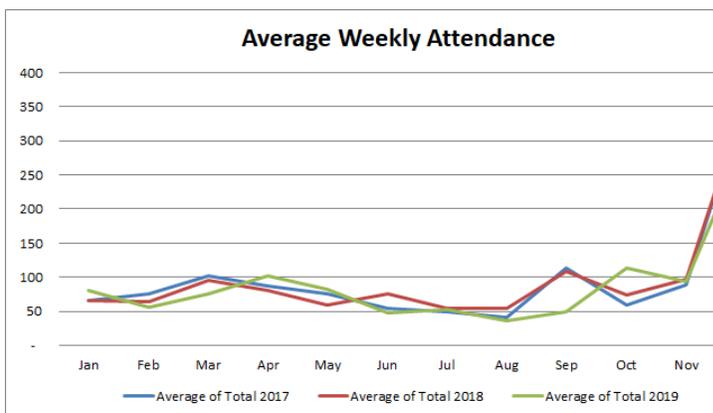
Isabelle Crawley-Boevey

Waltham St Lawrence Church Attendance 2019



Total attendance for 2019 was 4,638 (2018 – 5,060; 2017 – 4,971).

There has been a decrease in attendance this year of 8% (2018 increase 1.8%)



Average weekly attendance for the year was 89 (2018 – 97; 2017 - 96).

Summary of Monthly Attendance 2019-2017

Month	Sum of Total 2017	Sum of Total 2018	Sum of Total 2019
Jan	331	260	323
Feb	304	254	227
Mar	405	383	377
Apr	438	404	406
May	301	299	326
Jun	218	301	236
Jul	248	272	208
Aug	166	217	146
Sep	456	545	246
Oct	300	294	571
Nov	353	389	376
Dec	1,451	1,442	1,196
Grand Total	4,971	5,060	4,638