

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHAURCH MEETING  
14<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020  
CHURCH WARDENS REPORT

1) Intro

- a) We were just beginning to think we had a little bit of an idea what we, as new Churchwardens, should do. Just beginning, not really understanding but at least we were getting to know all the different aspects of running a Church. Both as a community of Christians and the Building. Then, out of the blue, came COVID 19. Instantly we knew as much as anyone else, which was nothing! No one had had to deal with something like this for at least 100 years!
- b) Good job we like a challenge. Even better so did all the rest of those who keep our church going. Julie, Jo and Anne in the office really formed the backbone of our response by keeping everything running even though they had to work separately from home. Colin and Don continued to keep an eye on the building and even progressed the outstanding work on the re-ordering. Stephen started a whole new online service. Others have managed to adapt to do whatever needed doing in the new situation.
- c) As Churchwardens we are pleased to report that everything is in order and being done properly to maintain the Church Building, Church life and our ministry.

2) Pre – Covid

- a. When I say we were just beginning to think we had a little idea about being Churchwardens that is probably an exaggeration. It had been a baptism of fire from May 2019 when we took on the jobs. The Church had just reopened. That meant everybody was finding their feet in the new building. There were new systems, equipment and worse of all new keys – hundreds of them for doors and cupboards we hadn't had before. There was great excitement, as there should be, fuelled by a series of great events. Starting with the return itself and evenings with guests from other Churches, a Passover meal for over 100 people, the full immersion baptism service and the confirmation service.
- b. There were seemingly endless “snagging issues” with the new building. Colin's Fabric Report will cover those. Cleaning and caretaking, opening and closing and generally keeping the practical operation of the building all needed addressing. Fortunately, we, as Churchwardens, only had to

take part in the discussions of all these things as it seemed a small army of people were only too willing to organise and do whatever needed doing. We simply watched bemused as it all happened. Thank God for the work of the Holy Spirit because left to ourselves we would have been in a “right pickle” as my mum would have said.

- c. The Church was just getting to that point of organised chaos where routine things happened routinely, and new ideas were being tried and started, when we came to an abrupt halt. The Lord certainly moves in mysterious ways! No sooner were we established in the Church re-ordered to make it a real community asset, to welcome all and host big events, than we had to close it. That is when a whole new and, as it turns out, creative chapter opened.

### 3) The Office

- a) As I said the Office has proved to be the backbone of our response to COVID. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Julie, Jo and Anne. They have all taken on more than we have a right to expect and more so by having the initiative to find out what we should be doing. We think Julie is now probably more expert on COVID regulations and how to implement them than the Diocesan advisors or even the Government departments! Not only does she know it but she also does it, having taken on the cleaning/disinfecting.
- b) Because the office itself has been closed we have not progressed updating the way it works and the IT equipment. The money for this has been approved by the PCC and the Clintons Trust has approved a grant to meet the cost. The past few months has shown us how much we now rely on information technology and processes, so this will be a project to work on as soon as possible.

### 4) Communications

- a) Speaking of information and communications brings us to the next major area where there has been great change. Starting with just trying to make our notice boards a bit more interesting – a perennial problem for Churches – we now have themed posters, diary leaflets (we call it the Term Card because each one covers a school term) and a range of leaflets on all our Church activities. Our thanks go to the Connections group for the ideas and to Chris and Andy for the artwork.

- b) Our internet communications have developed beyond all recognition. It started with a revamp of the website – thanks again to Chris. Websites need refreshing/redesigning every few years to stay up to date and relevant. Then COVID brought the need for online meetings. Almost all of us became users of ZOOM even though before the lockdown most of us had never heard of it. Stephen took the lead in getting us all up to speed on remote meetings.
  - c) Then he went further and began working on streamed services. The Sunday morning service, streamed first on Twitch the more recently on YouTube as well, has developed a loyal following with more people watching from home than we typically had in Church and enabling us to join with Blunsdon, Hannington and Sevenhampton. The latest news is that the streamed service will be shown in the Methodist Church with some of our brothers and sister in that Church taking part in the streamed services.
  - d) Stephen has devoted a huge amount of time, energy and brain power to keeping our services going while the Church building has been closed. He also deserves a huge thank you from the rest of us.
  - e) Inspired by the Sunday Morning service Lyn initiated and organises a Common Worship Service of Evening Prayer on Wednesdays at 6pm. Phil, with a lot of guidance from Stephen learned how to assemble and stream services to the internet. Others have been involved in recording as service leaders and readers. For some this was a first. Congratulations must go to Jean, who even though one of our more mature (in both senses of the word) Church members, led a whole recorded service! Who said only young people could learn to use IT! However, we are reviewing that service because viewer numbers are very low. It is becoming a case of “use it or lose it”. If you would like it to continue please email or phone the office to let us know. You don’t have to watch on Wednesday evenings as it is available on both Twitch and You Tube for catch-up.
  - f) We have updated and expanded the Audio-Visual equipment in St. Michael’s so that we can now record or even stream live from the Church. Sunday Services are now a mixture of recorded and live streamed elements.
- 5) Church Use
- a) At the beginning of the 2020, as we became settled into the re-ordered Church it became apparent that we would need a clear policy on how the new building should be used. The rationale for the reordering had focused heavily on the building being brought up to a standard where it

could best serve the local community. That led the PCC to think about a lettings policy and pricing. A PCC subgroup considered this in detail and produced a policy. Almost immediately the lockdown meant the Church couldn't be used. However, it is now coming back into use and we have bookings for a Christmas Fair and the Community Church want to hold services in here on Sunday afternoons.

- b) Sadly, within the last week, using the Church for activities other than Services, Weddings and Funerals has, once again, been restricted.

#### 6) Building

- a) Colin and Don deserve a huge thank you. They have not only ensured the Church is properly looked after during the closed period but also dealt with the ongoing snagging issues described in their report. They also made sure the requirements of our insurers were met following an inspection by their surveyor. They have been a steadfast source of advice and knowledge on everything to do with the building from the Flag Pole (that is rotten) to the wiring (there are miles of wire in the Church and a whole cupboard of black boxes where the wires meet in what looks like a bowl of multi-coloured spaghetti).

#### 7) Conclusion

- a) We are grateful to all who have in anyway helped to keep the building and the ministry of the Church running. We have seen the practical outworking of what St Paul wrote to the Corinthians describing the Church as being "a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body."
- b) The last 16 months have been eventful; not what we expected and challenging. None-the-less we feel St. Michael's has responded brilliantly to all that has happened to us as a local Church and to the society we live in.

Pam and Phil  
September 2020