

The Parish of Bishopstone with Stratford Tony

Annual Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2023

Objectives and Activities

The general functions of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) are set out in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 and include the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has responsibilities for the maintenance of the Bishopstone church building.

Achievements and Performance

In addition to the ministry of the two stipendiary clergy in the Chalke Valley Team, all the activities covered in this report rely upon the support of volunteers: our non-stipendiary Team Vicar (The Revd Canon Jenny Taylor) who is responsible for the pastoral care of the Parish, retired Clergy, Churchwardens, Lay Worship Leader, Lay Pastoral Assistants, PCC members and all who give of their time, energy and financial support to ensure that services take place in a well preserved building, the Churchyard is maintained and the Church is able to serve the wider community.

Policies The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). All policies on Health & Safety, Safeguarding and Financial Management issues are reviewed annually, in line with Church of England policy.

Worship The regular pattern of two Sunday services of Parish Communion a month has continued. In addition, five 1st Sunday Morning Services and a Good Friday Service were led by our Lay Worship Leader, Mrs Sally Leaver. The annual Carol Service made a welcome return to the Village Hall with increased numbers and for the first time in memory, a Carol Service was held in Stratford Tony in spite of the challenging weather conditions on the day.

Organists We were immensely grateful that Mr John Powell, Mr Arthur Willoughby, Mrs Shelagh Lamb and Mrs Margaret Barter were able to continue to support our services. A fund established in the memory of Dr Richard Seal has raised over £17,000 for the restoration of our church organ planned to begin in April 2024.

From the Registers 3 Funerals were conducted in the Church.

Mission and Outreach Pastoral support to individuals in our community continued to be provided by the Team Vicar and Lay Pastoral Assistant. 2023 Mission Giving was: £500 to the Deanery Chalke-Cueibet Link, £200 to Morning Star, £250 to Salisbury Foodbank and £50 to Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust. The Augustus Montgomery Coal Trust funds administered by the PCC have provided financial assistance to individuals in need in the Parish. Our Lent Appeal Coffee Mornings for CRESS raised £1,159.

Our magazine, STaB, continues to play a valuable role in the life of our community. The PCC is most grateful for the work of the Editorial Team in maintaining such a high quality magazine, for the contributors and for the team of volunteers who deliver it to every house in the Parish.

Fabric The PCC is very grateful to the Friends of Bishopstone Church for their support in ensuring that the building is well maintained and secure. In 2023 this involved making repairs to some of the stonework and a start was made on removing four layers of distemper on the interior nave walls before repainting in 2024. New hand rails were also installed at the entrance to the porch, a gift from Hester Kirkham.

A much needed clearing of the overgrown areas of the Churchyard was undertaken by a team of volunteers and a tree surgeon was commissioned to secure the safety of a Beech tree overhanging Church Lane.

The day to day care and welcoming appearance of the building and churchyard, cleaning, flower arranging and refreshments after services are undertaken at no cost to the PCC. These and other items of maintenance could not happen without the generosity of finance and time of a small number of volunteers.

Financial Review

In 2023, activities in the PCC's General (unrestricted) Fund were, Total receipts: £31,863.50 (2022- £31,363.96) against Expenditure of £33,172.78 (2022- £31,059.04), giving a deficit of £1,309.28 (2022- surplus £304.92). Unsurprisingly, expenditure increased and the PCC will need to consider how to encourage financial support to meet this. The PCC is grateful to the Parish Council for its ongoing financial contribution to the maintenance of the churchyard and the additional grant made available for tree surgery.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the PCC to maintain, where possible, a balance on our unrestricted funds which equates to one year's running costs to cover any emergencies that may arise, particularly bearing in mind the significant costs that can be incurred when work is required to the church building.

Electoral Roll 47 members

Structure, Governance and Management

PCC Members are either ex-officio, elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, or co-opted in accordance with Church Representation Rules 2020.

During 2023, the PCC held five meetings. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting was held on 23 April.

Administrative Information

The Parish of Bishopstone and Stratford Tony is part of the Chalke Valley Team Ministry in the Chalke Deanery, Diocese of Salisbury. The Team address is: Church Office, Byworth, Meadow Close, Dinton, Salisbury SP3 5HY.

The PCC is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission. PCC members (trustees) who have served during the period of this report are:

Ex Officio:

Team Rector: The Revd Catherine Blundell (until 8 January 2023)
The Revd Dr Ruth Howlett-Shipleigh (from 27 September 2023)

Team Vicar: The Revd Canon Jenny Taylor (Chairman)

Churchwardens: Mr George Brutton (also Treasurer)
Mrs Sarah Seal

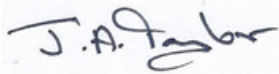
Deanery Synod: Mr Geoffrey Taylor (also Secretary & Team Council)

Elected:

Mrs Margaret Barter
Mrs Jill Ford
Mrs Sally Leaver
Mrs Alix Ricketts
Major James Thompson

Electoral Roll Officer: Mrs Anne Stutchbury

Approved by the PCC and signed on their behalf by the Chairman



The Revd Canon Jenny Taylor

Team Council Report

The Team Council met in February, June and October 2023.

The standard Team Council meetings considered Finance, Safeguarding, Vacancy for Team Rector and Team Vicar, the Benefice Website, Contactless Giving and the Lent Project. The 2023 Lent Project was in aid of CRESS to provide training and support to 10 new agricultural groups for the refugees from the Diocese of Liwolo living in Uganda and raised £15,253.

In addition, The Team Council met with the Archdeacon of Sarum in February to discuss the Team Rector Vacancy process and in March to appoint a group to create a Parish Profile and to appoint lay persons to the interview panel. Unexpectedly, this was to result in three sets of interview panels in 2023 with the Bishop of Salisbury making three new clergy appointments. The Revd Dr Ruth Howlett-Shipleigh was licensed as Team Rector by the Bishop of Ramsbury on 27 September, The Revd Kate Woolven was subsequently licensed as a part-time Associate Priest on 29 January 2024 with the Revd Alison Waterhouse to be licensed as Team Vicar on 1 May 2024.

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod met for two themed meetings in 2023.

- Equipping the Saints – February 2023

The Synod met at Wilton Community Centre and enjoyed a very informative presentation 'Equipping the Saints' by Canon Karen Hutchinson, looking at how Lay Pastoral Assistants, Lay Worship Leaders and Licensed Lay Ministers are vital to church life.

- Making Jesus Known – October 2023

The Autumn Synod was held in Charlton. The Synod received an update on General Synod discussions and considered the Diocesan Synod Report. Geoff Taylor shared a brief update on our link Diocese of Cueibet in South Sudan.