

# **HOLY TRINITY**

Potten End

*The Church at the Heart of the Village*



## **ANNUAL REPORT**

Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

*& APCM Agenda for meeting on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021  
(with minutes of the 2020 meeting)*

# HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OFFICERS

<b>Vicar</b>	Revd. Joseph Roberts
<b>Churchwardens</b>	Mrs Julie Griffiths Mr Andrew Smith (part year) Mr Robert Ferneyhough (part year)
<b>Deputy Churchwarden</b>	Mr Nigel Chadwick Mr Robert Ferneyhough (part year)
<b>Deanery Synod Representatives</b>	Mrs Julie Griffiths Mrs Jane Drake Mr Mike Wallis
<b>Team Council Representatives</b>	Mrs Julie Griffiths Mr Robert Ferneyhough (part year) Mr Mike Wallis (part year)
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mrs Katie Bett
<b>Sacristan</b>	<i>Position vacant</i>
<b>Verger</b>	<i>Position vacant</i>
<b>Music</b>	Mr Richard King, Mr Andy Smith and Mr Daniel King Smith

## **Members of the Parochial Church Council**

the Vicar, Churchwardens, Deputy Churchwardens and Deanery Synod representatives ; Mrs Hilary Matheson (Secretary); Mrs Katie Bett (Treasurer); Mr Simon Barnard; Ms Sara Raybould; Mrs Ann Charlton; Mr Jörg Normann; Mrs Jane Drake (part year); Mrs Emma Harris (part year); Mrs Miranda Seldon (part year); Col John Ansell (part year); Mr Chris Sharpe (part year); Mrs Claire Wallis (part year); Mrs Esther King-Smith (Electoral Roll officer – co-opted); Mrs Bev Hamilton (Safeguarding officer – co-opted); Revd. John Russell (ex-officio); Revd. Canon Timothy Pilkington (ex-officio) (part year); Revd. Stuart Owen (ex-officio) (part year).

*The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation and Ministers Measure 2019) and a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.  
Holy Trinity is one of five parishes which together constitute the Berkhamsted Team Ministry.*

## **Stewards (formerly Sidesmen):**

John Ansell, Simon & Anna Barnard, Ray Bull, Alan & Toni Butler, Robin Charlton, Julie Griffiths, Carole Harrison, Sigi Heath, Daniel & Esther King Smith, Hilary Matheson, Michael & Barbara Mitchell, Chris Normann, Andy Smith, Doreen Turnley.

## **Vicar's Introduction**

I started last year's introduction to the Annual Report with that famous quote from the Prophet Isaiah: "See, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?" (*Isaiah 43:19*). Now I don't think for one moment that anyone would have envisaged that the 'new thing' that would define 2020 and our current year, would be a global pandemic that would cause such loss of life, that our very way of living and being would be turned on its head.

This last year has without a doubt been hard and difficult for so many. I've lamentably been able to see first-hand the pressures and struggles that people have been under in following the key command to 'stay at home' for so long. The mental and physical toll has been immense. And sadly, during this time there have been those who have died. Those who perhaps haven't been able to say goodbye to their loved ones. Covid has taken much away, and we've lost a great deal.

For a time, not being able to physically get alongside people in pastoral ministry has been one of the biggest challenges during this pandemic – it goes against what I would consider is my key vocation as a priest with the 'cure of souls'. Also, it's not how I imagined my first full year as your vicar. It has been difficult as a church too, with many changes to how we worship, gather and share in fellowship. Thankfully, things are slowly changing.

There signs of light, hope and new life. This period has been a touchpaper in discerning our identity. Who are we and what do we want to be as individuals, a community, a church, a country and as the human race? We are still discovering that perhaps *here* is the 'new thing' that we need to hold on to and discern. And as a church we have done so much over this last year – somewhat ironic when we were meant to stay at home. This needs to be celebrated and recognised, and the momentum maintained in moving forward. This Annual Report (although it seems not so long ago that we released our last one!) is a chance to discover just that.

I won't unpack them all here, as there are plenty of reports for you to get your teeth stuck into, but what I will say, is that with the year that we've had, let us all raise up one another in our faith and service. Let us continue to dig deep in the well spring of God's abundant provision and hold fast to the love and peace that can be found by being a part of the family in the church at the heart of the village.

***Revd. Joe Roberts***

*Please note that this Annual Report is a narrative to the **Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2020**. A copy of the Financial Statements is available to view in church and copies can be obtained by either contacting our treasurer, Katie Bett ([treasurer@holytrinitypottenend.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@holytrinitypottenend.org.uk)) or by visiting our website and clicking on the 'annual reports and financial statements' on the 'Welcome' drop down list.*

*In this report we are trying to tell the story of what the church has done over the past year, providing a vision of what the church is here to do, how it has been managed and held to account by the PCC.*

## **Aim and purposes**

Holy Trinity's Parochial Church Council (the PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Joseph Roberts, in promoting, sustaining and developing in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole ministry and mission of the church (pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical) in our village community. In fixing its aim, purpose and mission the parish has drawn on its Christian beliefs, faith and heritage but is also conscious of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance given to charities for the advancement of religion.

In line with its Mission Action Plan (MAP), Holy Trinity has a vision to be a welcoming, inclusive all-age church where all are encouraged and nurtured on a journey of Christian faith, offering loving care and support of each other and the wider community by sharing God's love.

During the year the Parish has:

- Sought to enable all those in Potten End (and beyond) to discover and live out their faith in our church community through worship, prayer, preaching and study.
- Tried to demonstrate Christian love, care and concern for others by our pastoral care, social interaction, mission and outreach.
- Used and maintained the structure and fabrics of Holy Trinity Church, Church Room and Churchyard for the benefit of our wider community.
- Sustained a strong pattern of worship, mission and fellowship during periods of lockdown and constraint through the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Objectives and activities**

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to engage and worship at our church and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship, mission, evangelism, pastoral care and outreach throughout the parish. The various sub-committees of the PCC make suggestions on how all our 'actions' can involve the many groups that live within our parish, mindful of our MAP priorities to 'go deeper into God' (through discipleship), to engage with young people and families, and to be both *a* community and *promote* community.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; developing knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of Holy Trinity and the Church Rooms.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The method of appointment of the Wardens and PCC members are laid down in the Church Representation Rules. The PCC members are elected by a vote of those Church members included on the Church's electoral roll and normally serve for fixed term periods, retiring by rotation. The PCC are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the Parish, including all decisions on how the Church's funds are spent and used.

4 meetings of the PCC were held during the year. The existing PCC structure, which has a number of sub-committees to deal with particular aspects of parish life, has been retained. Regular reports are given at PCC meetings of the Standing Committee, Worship & Christian Development, Social and Pastoral committees and by the representative members of the Deanery Synod and Team Council. In addition, reports are provided at each PCC meeting on safeguarding, church fabric, churchyard, church room matters and financial matters.

During the year the PCC maintained and reviewed its policies to comply with the relevant Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults, Race Equality, Health & Safety and applicable Fire Regulations.

During 2020 there were 2 baptisms, 8 funerals, 4 burial of ashes and 3 weddings. The electoral roll membership is currently 112. At the end of 2020 the regular worshipping community (both online, in person, from Messy Church, Wild Church, Sunday services and the daily offices) stood at 69 adults and 17 worshippers under the age of 18.

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## **Financial review**

2020 was a challenging year for Holy Trinity. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures adopted by the Government to mitigate the spread of the pandemic required the Church and the Church hall to close for 4 months during the year, with additional months operating at restricted capacity, and in the case of the hall not being able to open, resulting in reduced collections and letting fees during this period. This has negatively impacted the financial performance of the Church for the year.

Total incoming resources from unrestricted funds were £55,103 (2019 £67,766), of which £43,416 (2019 £46,895) were giving and associated gift aid, £2,527 (2019 £1,231) were PCC fees received and £6,477 (2019 £17,501) related to income received from letting the Church hall and Newsletter adverts and donations. The closure and limited use of the Church hall following the pandemic has had the most significant impact on our financial position. In 2020 the income from the Church hall just covered the costs to run, however in 2019 the Church hall contributed £7,711 to the unrestricted funds. In addition, in 2019 we recognised £1,921 from donations to the Newsletter appeal in income. This was a one-off appeal.

Total planned giving through the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), envelopes and standing orders was £28,504 which was an increase of 8% from the previous year (£26,482). This reflects the fact that many of the congregation transitioned from giving in Church to giving via alternative means to ensure continuity of giving while the Church was closed.

£66,621 (2019 £72,687) was spent from unrestricted funds. The main decrease compared to the prior year related to our contribution for Missionary and Charitable giving. The PCC agreed to take a prudent approach to the outreach contribution for 2020, given the financial result for the year and as a result we reduced our level of giving to 2.5% of net income, compared to 10% in the previous year. The total contribution for the year was £1,075 (2019 £5,300). We incurred £65,546 (2019 £67,387) for activities directly relating to the work of the Church. We were fortunate to have been able to pay our full Parish Share contribution, which accounted for 73% (2019 65%) of the total expenses relating to the work of the Church.

In order to meet the operating expenditure of the Church, specifically given the reduction in income from the Church hall, the PCC agreed to transfer £10,000 from the legacy fund to the general fund.

The net movement in unrestricted funds after transfers from reserves was a decrease of £1,518 (2019 £4,116 increase). Overall, the net movement in total funds for the Holy Trinity was an increase of £70 (2019 £3,662 increase). The increase is partly attributable to the unrealised gain of £2,523 recorded as a result of the increase in market value of our investments and partly to the unused donations received for the Garden of Remembrance (£5,814), which are expected to be utilised in 2021. Last year the value of our investments increased, resulting in an unrealised gain of £9,523.

There is still significant uncertainty over how the pandemic will impact the financial position of the Church in 2021 and it may be the case that we need to utilise further reserves next year in order to maintain the operating activities of the Church. We are fortunate that we continue to maintain a healthy level of cash and reserves, which is reflected in our balance sheet.

*Katie Bett*

## **Church Wardens' Report**

When we welcomed 2020 in none of us had any idea how it would unfold. Everyone was shocked when the country was locked down last March and churches were closed and life, as we called normal, changed so drastically.

Nobody was allowed to go into the Church not even the priest. We did check it regularly though so as not to negate our insurance, which the Church of England and politicians seemed to have not considered. Many churches went into hibernation but not Holy Trinity.

Following the very important maxim that the Church is not the building, but the people and the community, Joe immediately reached out to everyone and started to 'live' stream Services from his study. The story of how this developed under his guidance and leadership to include beautifully produced music, videos and recorded input from readers and intercessors, has been amazing. The numbers of people from far and near, including abroad, who joined us online has been remarkable. Joe's enthusiasm and drive and the talented people who have worked with him has been wonderful. We have been very blessed by everything that has happened and the way we have been supported in an exceedingly difficult time has been wonderful.

This year Rob Ferneyhough stepped down as Churchwarden after over 7 years. He has done so much for our Church during his time as Warden, it is difficult to thank him sufficiently. We are delighted that he is still serving on the PCC and will continue to manage our beautiful Churchyard.

As well as managing the Covid restrictions, safety measures and social distancing, we still had to ensure that church business continued as usual. This included:

- Churchwarden's routine visual inspection of the Church buildings & grounds.
- Maintenance of the Church logbook and inventory.
- Installation of Wi-Fi to the Church
- Annual maintenance of the boiler and required Gas Certificates.
- Annual testing of fire appliances and electrical apparatus.
- Maintenance of the Churchyard.
- Further development of the Parish Giving Scheme
- Coverage of the role of Sacristan co-ordinating the altar frontals, arranging washing of linen and ordering church requisites and verges duties.
- Replacement of the oak doors, which were vandalised in the break-in in 2019.

The Garden of Remembrance, because of the pandemic, has not progressed as we had hoped. The lack of materials after the initial lockdown for three months, when nobody was working, has meant the new path has had to be delayed. We have managed to replace the external electric cabling and replace the outside lights which was part of the work which had to be done. It is hoped that the Garden of Remembrance will now be completed this Summer.

The Quinquennial was also completed at the end of the year which will direct the maintenance of the work to be done in 2021 and beyond.

We have opened the Church for private prayer when restrictions have allowed and many people, despite the Covid restrictions, have put in a lot of time and effort to make Holy Trinity such a safe, beautiful and welcoming place. That the Church is open for so long and remains a place of calm serenity, is down to many members of the congregation and we all owe them a huge debt of thanks:

- the Church Cleaning Team
- the Flower Arranging Team
- all the Stewards, Readers and Intercessors
- the mowing & strimming volunteers who help maintain our Churchyard
- all those who freely give of their talents and time to make Holy Trinity the place it is today.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all. Without your tremendous support, practical help and good humour during this last year, we would have struggled. As we move towards whatever the new ‘normal’ turns out to be, we will continue to count our blessings and to rejoice that Joe and his family have been sent to minister to us.

*Julie Griffiths and Andy Smith*

### **Church Safeguarding Report**

Our aim as a PCC has to be to keep the children and adults in our community safe from harm. I hope that people in our village and the community of Holy Trinity, Potten End, feel safe and supported by our church. This past year has brought a different focus to the concept of safeguarding, as COVID-19 ‘lockdown’ has made our community more aware of the mental health issues faced by more people. We have not been able to run Messy Church or Trinity Kids due to ‘lockdown’ and therefore children’s safeguarding policies and risk assessments will need to be re-visited once things are up and running again.

As required to report, Holy Trinity Potten End PCC have complied with their duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. This refers to our duty to have due regard for the House of Bishops’ guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and that all persons named are familiar with key documents, “Protecting all God’s Children” and “Promoting a Safer Church”.

Over the past year there have been no serious incidents to report to the Charity Commission (all PCC’s are answerable to the Charity Commission).

We continue to receive regular updates from ThirtyOne:Eight (The Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service) in the form of an electronic newsletter sent to Bev. This keeps us informed at a National level and gives help and advice to us as a church community. We also have regular Safeguarding Bulletins from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Jez Hurst to ensure that we are complying with guidance etc. Jez, and his team, are extremely helpful should we have any queries.

Rev Joe has continued to carry out a rolling programme to update our Risk Assessments in relation to work with children and vulnerable adults for all appropriate activities. This continues to be a ‘work in progress’ – a bit like the ‘Forth Bridge’ as circumstances change meaning Risk Assessments need adapting.



All PCC members and those with sole contact with children have to be DBS checked (to an 'Enhanced' level) and I have carried out three new checks over the past year for new PCC members. As these checks are valid for five years no checks will be due for renewal over the next year for existing members.

Rev Joe and Bev meet several times per year to review the Parish Dashboard. This is an online check to monitor our practice in the area of safeguarding. It uses a 'traffic light' system to rate our practice using red/amber/green coding. We can also print off an action plan from this site to tell us what needs to be updated. We last updated our 'Dashboard' in November 2020.

We continue to keep our training up to date, including CO and C1 (online) and C2 (three-hour classroom course). To this end, we are currently renewing C0 for all member of the PCC which is done in their own time online. Some courses continue to be 'on hold' as they are being rewritten, such as the Safer Recruitment training and the Domestic Abuse training. These have been delayed due to COVID-19 and we hope to be able to offer these courses to relevant people later this year.

As Safeguarding Officer, I am very happy to discuss matters individually with people whether personal or to share concerns about the welfare of others.

*Beverley Hamilton*

### **Worship and Prayer**

Worship and prayer are at the beating heart of Holy Trinity, and even during the roller coaster year of 2020 we have been able to not just sustain our corporate gatherings but also grow and adapt them. Perhaps except for Messy Church (and even then, we created resources in which our families and young people could use) our varied pattern of worship remained. Although this of course looked somewhat different for a time, being live streamed from my mobile phone in the study! Our main Sunday morning worship continued, BCP Evening Prayer on Zoom, Morning and Evening Prayer during the week, Compline and even Celtic Worship took place with almost as much regularity as it did in the previous year – this is a fantastic achievement.

It was important to maintain a somewhat familiar pattern, especially when the world was changing so much around us. Even all the key festal days of the church calendar was celebrated. And yes, it was strange (perhaps even lamentable) in 'processing' around the garden with Felicity and Matilda on Palm Sunday or having our Service of Memories down at St. Peter's and not at Holy Trinity, these were still recognisable as the key acts of worship they were.

Things did become somewhat easier when we were allowed back in church, because that meant we could reintroduce a greater sense of familiarity and connection.

We also were blessed with grants that allowed us to have the internet in church and to purchase a screen and projector. This made things more flexible as we were no longer reliant on my mobile data, plus the order of service could be displayed so people could more easily follow along at home and in church. This invariably allowed us to try new things and introduce liturgy/responses that having a fixed service booklet wouldn't give us the freedom to do.

This impact was also felt in regard to our music. We are blessed with so many great musicians and singers, and the pandemic really allowed us to expand, experiment and enhance our offering. This is a really big accomplishment and as such a report has been written which can be viewed below and a special video will be shown at the APCM!

To encourage and deepen people's prayer lives, pastoral packs were produced over the year that contained various resources and orders of service. Many of these reflected the church seasons and I hope they allowed those who couldn't engage online to still feel connected into our fellowship. We understood that not everyone would engage through Facebook, so we ensured that nigh on all the materials/videos that we produced were available on our website, and for those who didn't have access to the internet, printed material was available. I know that our worship 'wasn't the same' and we couldn't always connect in with everyone on a regular basis, but with all our videos, live streaming, orders of service, emails and materials, I hope people understand that we tried our best with the resources and manpower that we had.

As we move forward it is clear that we have changed regarding our corporate worship and prayer life. There is simply no going back to the way things were – we are not going to turn off the internet one week and expect people back into the building. This mixed mode approach (in person and online) is here and we will continue to embrace that. We have in fact widened our 'reach' with our live streaming, engaged with those who might not come to church in person and for those who have been unable to attend church, they have been able to 'come back' and be a part of our congregation.

Yes, things will change further, and we do need to find a more sustainable pattern for the long term. For instance, we will move away from creating bespoke orders of service for *each* week (which I've been doing throughout) but with the tools and technology that we now have, we can still have that flexibility and creativity.

How we harness all that we've accomplished and move forward, will be central to our new Mission Action Plan and we will continue to refine and adapt accordingly. However, be assured that our varied acts of worship will remain at the heart of our church. For it's in our worship that we are energised, refreshed, fed and commissioned to be able to worship and serve as the body of Christ in the world.

***Revd. Joe Roberts***

## **Music at Holy Trinity during the Pandemic**

Once the shutters had come down on life as we knew it in March 2020, churches were also obliged to close their physical doors to their congregations. For many churches that may have resulted in silence until they re-opened again. But not here at Holy Trinity.

Fairly soon afterwards Andy Smith called me - possibly knowing that my mental health would suffer since all of my work had been cancelled and he suggested that I write a piano arrangement of a hymn tune to be played during the services Joe had started streaming.

This became the first of so far, 49 'Meditations' that would be written on a weekly basis. Initially writing in the old-fashioned way on manuscript paper, I would then email them to Andy, who using music writing software, created legible printed copies. He then spent time bringing my music to life in his 'recording suite'.

It was at this time that more modern worship songs were introduced into the Services. These were either written and/or arranged by Andy and performed by Sara with a host of others including Mike and Claire Wallis, Lyn and Richard Davids, Ann and Mike Lovatt, Esther King Smith, Rob and Emer Sneddon in Liverpool and Jane Pegler in Portsmouth. Being in lockdown involved them recording remotely using iPhones, iPads or other such recording equipment. These were then emailed back to Andy for editing and mixing. To date, they have recorded over 30 songs.

As time went by, what we wrote and recorded became increasingly more involved and complex, speaking for myself, as I gained in confidence and became more aware of just what was possible, adding more instruments and often writing a mini orchestral score each week. Again, this had to be done remotely, but thankfully when restrictions on staying at home loosened, Andy and I were able to meet and do much of the work together, which for musicians is a far better scenario.

The culmination so far of all our efforts and the extraordinary technology at our disposal, was the Stations of the Cross Series, held during Lent this year. Andy and I both wrote music for all 15 Stations in our own individual styles and we had 'help' in the form of Jeanette Ager, who sang in all the Stabat Mater settings I wrote, with Esther King Smith on violin and Narration from David Henson, in Andy's Stations of the Cross. For both Andy and I, it was an inspirational project and we hope, for those who experienced it, that it was both enjoyable and unique.

We must also mention Esther's remote Children's Choir who in order for her to teach them the song - one for the Nine Lessons and Carols Service and one for Mothering Sunday - had to meet online. Having learnt the song, the children then recorded themselves to a 'backing track', provided by Andy and I. This was then synced to video, ready for 'live' streaming.

When ‘lockdown’ regulations eased, and we were once again allowed in Church, Richard King has complemented our worship with his wonderful organ playing.

Out of necessity the way we have worked to keep music alive and kicking at Holy Trinity has changed enormously in the past year and we anticipate many of the changes lasting way beyond the end of the pandemic, whenever that might happen to be.

*Daniel King Smith*

### **Mission and Evangelism**

While there have been various endeavours that have had to stop due to lockdown and the pandemic (such as Tuesday Gathering and the house group), there has been perhaps a surprising continuation of the many ways in which Holy Trinity is outward in our mission and active in developing our discipleship.

During this year we have still been able to have our Lent and Advent courses kindly led by Richard Hackworth. While these moved onto Zoom, it was encouraging in seeing people taking part who do not just belong to Holy Trinity but are also from churches across the team. In many ways there was probably more present online than would’ve joined in person in the Church Room. On a smaller scale I was able to offer on Zoom a ‘deepening discipleship’ course over the summer (Rhythms of Grace) and even though we felt hosting an enquirers course online wouldn’t gain as much traction, plans are coming together for an in person gathering towards the autumn.

In the various pastoral packs that were produced to keep people connected into the life of the church, I ensured that alongside orders of service, there were other opportunities for people to take time to pray and reflect upon their faith. From colouring, labyrinths, Lectio Divina and ding bats. There were five packs created over the year, going out to all households on the electoral roll and those who we thought would value one. Thanks must go to those who helped with the stuffing and writing of envelopes (especially Jaime!) and those who delivered them.

I introduced a weekly email as another, more regular way to keep in touch with members of the congregation. What started off as a simple way of sharing orders of service, has now developed into not just a tool for communication but also a space to offer contemplation and learning. The same is true of our Facebook page which has grown significantly over the last year. This continues to be not just a tool to advertise what we do but is also used to draw attention to prayers, resources and reflections that people can undertake in their daily lives – many of whom have little or no engagement with Holy Trinity.

With regards to our missional engagement in the wider parish community, the pandemic and times of lockdown haven’t been able to stop us. In fact, I would like to think that we have done more!

Not a comprehensive list and I'm pretty sure I've missed things out, here are the endeavours we've undertaken: foodbank box, toilet roll amnesty, co-creator of Potten End mutual aid group, candle lighting every night of the first lockdown, chalking the wall, churchyard Remembrance trail, remembrance washing line, community Christmas Tree, and (not strictly 2020 but still lockdown focussed) the hope/new life photo competition.

Even the church newsletter has continued during this trying time. Although when the printers closed and physical copies stopped for a time, the newsletter was still produced and available online. This publication is a lifeline in keeping parishioners informed of the important matters affecting our church and community and continues to include articles that deepens people's knowledge and growth in faith. A huge thanks to Andy Smith in his collating, designing and editing of this fantastic publication.

While finances have been incredibly stretched over this year and the difficult decision was made by the PCC that our level of giving be only 2.5% of our net income, we were still able to demonstrate our faith in supporting the work of the St. Francis Hospice, the Children's Society, the Church Urban Fund, the British Legion, DENS, the Ian Rennie Hospice and Potten End CofE School.

On a more administrative level we have changed the sub-committee structure of the church. 'Mission and evangelism' is now its own thing and no longer placed within the remit of the Worship Committee. This will ensure that mission and evangelism (in its varied forms) remain central to our identity as Christians and as a church.

With a new Mission Action Plan due to be completed by Pentecost and the commissioning of our new roadmap over this next year, there are many reasons to be assured that our generous faith, service, giving, outreach and proclamation will remain a key focus of being 'the church at the heart of the village'.

*Revd. Joe Roberts*

### **Families and Young People at Holy Trinity**

Messy Church had already moved to being in the Church Rooms and Church due to a reduction in numbers attending and volunteers available to support. Plans were afoot for a relaunch at some point in 2020, yet while we enjoyed a couple of sessions at the beginning of the year, along came lockdown number one! All in-person gatherings including Trinity Kids and Tuesday Gathering – our main 'avenues of engagement' with families and young people ceased.

Fortunately, Joe and Jaime worked hard to create online and postal resources for our families, and we worked on providing more activities to do at home. We were grateful to our DofE volunteer, Claudia, for using her imagination and filming skills to produce some videos for our YouTube channel showing some new crafts.

We didn't do many online live engagement activities, mainly because many other organisations and groups were offering these that it could become too much of a technology overload for our young people. However, we did gather on Zoom for our Advent and Christingle services, and while this was not the same as being in person, it was good to see various families. A special mention must also go to Esther King Smith's remote Children's Choir who rehearsed and recorded songs for our Nine Lessons and Carols and Mothering Sunday services. This was a real creative way of children coming together and developing their singing talent.

In the summer months as restrictions eased Joe was able to establish "Wild Church" allowing a small group to experience Church in the great outdoors and a few fun sessions were able to be held in the church yard and out and about in the village and surrounds.

During the various lockdowns we were still able to engage with our families and the wider community but in smaller more creative ways. The chalking the church wall, community Christmas tree and birthday pictures of the church were good examples. And perhaps over-looked, weekly collective worship to our school was continued by Joe. While videos were produced when the children couldn't come into the church, this important avenue of connection and spiritual development remained.

Whilst it certainly has not been as busy as we would have hoped, the lockdown has given us some time to reflect and review what we offer – watch this space for an invigorated programme for all ages over the coming year!

*Emma Harris and Revd. Joe Roberts*

### **Potten End Church of England Primary School**

I don't think anyone will be surprised to hear that 2020 was one of the most challenging years in living memory for all of us but especially for the staff, children and families at Potten End Primary!

Having started the school year in the previous September with our new Headteacher (Mrs Denise Kennedy) recently installed, we were working hard to continue to develop and grow the strengths in our school. We began the new year of 2020 looking forward to positive changes and improvements. We launched our new website at the end of January which both better represented who we were as a school and also to ensure we were compliant with both our obligations and the expectations of County and Ofsted. Possibly more importantly for us, we wanted it to serve as a useful and accessible resource for parents & carers to access the information they needed more quickly and easily.

Little did we know just HOW central it would become in just a few weeks' time!

The children welcomed in some of their Grandparents in January & February to enjoy lunch with them and in early March all parents/carers were welcomed into school to hear their children read, both events allowed the children to show off both their school and their abilities in a different but no less welcome ways.

As lockdown loomed the Senior Leadership were exceptionally well prepared and the week before school closures were announced Denise Kennedy and her team had already ordered workbooks and had begun planning extra resources for all children to be able to take home and use as well as ensuring there was a high level of activities and learning opportunities ready for all years available to use from home.

No one could have predicted that the closure of schools for all children other than those whose parents were key workers or who had additional Educational needs would have lasted quite so long!

The staff were, as always, absolutely focussed on supporting not just the children in school but also those who were not eligible or ready to return to school as well as their families with regular phone calls home, emails and videos and whole school activities conducted in a virtual way.

One particular event of note was the House Day on 1<sup>st</sup> May when children throughout the school were encouraged to join in a variety of challenges throughout the day to win points for their houses, fortunately it was a sunny day as many of them involved physical activities such as recording distance travelled on daily exercise, how many star jumps you could do in 3 minutes but also fun activities such as building the tallest tower, creating a house theme tune, dressing in house colours and making banners for their houses! Each activity scored points, and everyone had lots of fun!

Whilst lockdown began to ease the restrictions it meant all of our usual exams and assessments (KS1&2 SATS/Phonics screenings) were cancelled and this will leave us gaps in our attainment records (as it will for all schools) but was the right decision considering the circumstances.

As lockdown slowly eased some of our year groups were allowed back to school but support continued both in and out of school to ensure everyone was safe, happy & supported. Sadly, our Year 6 cohort were not able to enjoy some of the usual festivities they would normally have been able to as they finished their journey here at Potten End, but we understand the majority have settled well into life in their Secondary Schools and are still hoping to have their “Leavers Party” at some point in the not too distant future!

We also welcomed a Government grant to enable us to acquire Google Classroom technology which provided both training for staff but also access to virtual lessons for some of the KS2 classes. Again, little did we know just HOW useful this would be in coming months!

As Summer Holidays loomed, the Senior Leadership and Governors worked closely together to ensure we could be ready to safely welcome all our children back into school whilst still protecting our staff and families.

We had a positive start to the new school year with the children returning to school in September albeit with several changes both in terms of staggered starts/finishes and with parents dropping at the various school gates rather than gathering in the playground at the beginning and end of the day. The staff were protected by a very thorough risk assessment and have been provided with all necessary PPE, feedback from staff was broadly very positive about feeling safe and supported. The children adapted well to this new normal and were settling in well and we noted exceptionally high levels of attendance across the school and well above national averages.

September saw the start of the new school term and also saw Simon Barnard step down from our Governing Board after 11 years of faithful service as Foundation Governor, Vice and latterly Chair. It cannot be underestimated just how grateful we all were for his support and love for our school, and we still hope to see him back in school as a volunteer once restrictions are eased.

We were delighted to welcome one of our newer Parent Governors, Rob Dale, to the role of Chair and I as his Vice-Chair. We certainly have very big boots to fill!

In addition to these changes, we welcomed back Bev Hamilton as our new (Diocesan) Foundation Governor and again are very grateful to have her expertise and support on board. One final shout out - we still have 2 Co-opted (Community) Governor roles to fill so if you or anyone you know might have some time to spare, we would welcome the chance to talk through what it entails.

The government had provided a modest "Catch Up" grant to allow us to employ a dedicated Teacher to work across multiple year groups for 2 days a week to work with small groups of children in several different subject matters to support their learning gaps.

We also welcomed a new SENCO teacher, Harriet Ridgeway, following Sue Hood's retirement and she is making great progress supporting the increasing numbers of children in school who have additional needs.

With all the extra precautions Denise and the SLT had instigated, we were fortunate to only have two of our class bubbles required to isolate and move to remote learning - this is in comparison to many other local schools who had much greater levels of infection, disruption and in some cases, complete closures.

In October the children were able to celebrate Harvest, albeit whilst maintaining their bubbles meant we could not have whole school church services or assemblies, it was still a special time for the children to be able to recognise and give thanks.



Again, the same restrictions meant that whilst the whole school took time to acknowledge Remembrance Day it was not quite the same as usual – that said it was still special in its own special way.

Then Boris' next lockdown arrived on the Monday 4th January and we were forced to close the school to all children other than Key workers and Vulnerable categories with only a few hours' notice. The staff had frustratingly spent that Monday planning for the new term and putting together timetables and curriculum maps which all had to be changed literally overnight.

Fortunately having already gained Google Classroom licences meant we had the capability to move to online learning relatively quickly, but it still took a little getting used to for staff, children & parents/carers alike.

Certainly a very different expectation was thrust upon all schools with the minimum expectation that all children receive at least 3 hours of learning materials per day and extra work available should they want it. This was all expected to be uploaded and graded on a daily basis! This extra burden coupled with a huge increase in children who qualified to be in school has added tremendous pressure to the staff, parents and indeed the children. We are grateful that the school was able to reopen on March 8<sup>th</sup> albeit for just a few weeks ahead of Easter break.

We have received two visits (both virtual) from our HIP (Herts Improvement Partner) and have received positive feedback both times on the progress the school is making and has meant our grading is now in the "green" (good) zone which is very much testament to the hard work, dedication and passion that Denise and all of her staff are showing to the children and our lovely school.

*Emma Harris*

## **Pastoral Care**

The pastoral care team is a small group of volunteers who had a challenging year during 2020. Before the Covid 19 pandemic the members of the team used to visit those from the church and wider community who are struggling with being housebound, sick, bereaved or just need a friendly chat over a cup of tea. The team has continued its work during the lockdowns and have had to find ways of keeping in touch with those who have been more isolated than ever. Sending cards and telephone calls have been the most used forms of contact. In addition, as well as each household on the electoral roll all those on the pastoral care list were taken a posy on Mothering Sunday. At Christmas time gift boxes from a Hertfordshire charity were distributed to some and small gifts and cards to others.

All those who had been recently bereaved and had had services at Holy Trinity were sent personal letters of invitation by The Rev. Joe Roberts to a service of remembrance at St. Peters Church, Berkhamsted.

This service was held at St. Peters because of the need for the congregation to be socially distanced and the desire that no-one should be excluded. The service was well attended and was also live streamed.

I would like to thank the six members of the pastoral care team for their valuable contribution to our work in the community. If anyone would like to join the pastoral care team or is aware of someone who might appreciate a visit from a member of the team, please let me or Rev. Joe Roberts know.

*Ann Charlton*

### **Social Committee**

Alas, since the last APCM almost all of the planned activities that we had for a social committee had to be cancelled due to Covid. However, it didn't completely dampen our ability to remain in touch with each other and to have a couple of events in the last year.

Whilst for a while we were able to have coffee and tea after church, it soon became impossible, and we thank Joe and Jaime for having an online version on zoom.

We were able at least to have a “King Smith” concert 4<sup>th</sup> December which featured both a matinee and evening performance (also a Zoom option), so that we could remain covid secure and get as many people as possible into church. People were able to sponsor a piece of music so that we could ensure our very generous musicians were paid for the concert and we raised over £1000 from ticket sales.

Whilst we looked at other activities to do, with so many people organising online quiz's etc. we decided not to generate yet one more but turned-out attention to fund raising through merchandise. Andy and I commissioned a local artist, Debbie Shrimpton close, to produce a picture of our beautiful church. She then produced framed copies for us to sell and for each picture sold was able to donate £10 to church. We also produced all occasion cards from this same image which the artist kindly gave us use of her image free of charge. Last but, not least, we produced Holy Trinity mugs. I am delightedly to say this continues to raise money for us and there are still quite a few available if anybody wants one. To date we have raised around £300 and still counting....

We had decided that by having an open weekend in December, we would be able to sell some of this merchandise as well engage our community in few other activities however the final lockdown put a stop to this. Fortunately, I had managed to pull together a raffle which even though was supposed to be a Christmas raffle turned into a just into the new year raffle. This alone raised £200 pounds.

Looking ahead to next year we already have a Valentines concert in place on 21st May to be performed by Anne and Mike Lovatt with other potential concerts to follow (all within covid regulations). We are also looking at an open day late in summer, a potential wine tasting evening, an online Race Night, and several other activities, all of which you will be informed about through the usual Newsletter and Facebook. We are also planning some activities as joint ventures with the Village Hall including a couple of film nights (possibly on 28<sup>th</sup> May and 11<sup>th</sup> June) and a potential afternoon Tea Dance...all to be confirmed as we hopefully unlock a little more.

It is clear that more than ever the social committee must continue its work which is threefold, 1 - community, 2 - fund raising and 3 - mission building.

Any ideas that anyone has please feel free to contact me (sararaybould@mac.com) however I would be even more grateful if your idea was something you were willing to take forward with us or even join the happy band of social committee members of Mike Wallis, Emma Harris, Jean Sudbury, Joe and Jaime Roberts and myself.

*Sara Raybould*

### **Church Women's Fellowship**

The Fellowship (CWF) meets in the Church Room on the afternoon of the fourth Monday of each month, usually throughout the year. The meetings are attended by between 25 to 30 ladies (and the occasional gentleman) and the programme covers a wide range of topics including local and national charities, discussions and sometimes a quiz. Sadly, this year because of the Covid lockdown we were able to hold only two meetings. The first was a 'Chat, Quiz and Cake' members' meeting. The second was also a member's meeting in that our own Stella Glen regaled us with a most interesting account of her recent visit to Australia. The rest of the year's programme was put on hold. Two of the topics cancelled were 'Friends Against Scams' a talk to have been given by Sarah Thompson from Nat West Bank and Mike Wallis' presentation on 'The Village Hall'. These and other cancelled speakers all said that they would be happy to come as soon as Government Restrictions permitted. Despite the curtailed programme, during the year we gave a total of some £300 to a number of charities, including the local 'Riding for the Disabled' group, the Hospice of St. Francis and 'Mercy Ships'. Our thanks here must go to our Treasurer, Jane Hazard for the expert way in which she handles the albeit modest money matters.

As the 'lockdown' began to drag on, concerted efforts were made to encourage and maintain contacts with and between our members by telephone and other means. Largely as a result, before long on most Tuesday mornings when the weather was fine, a small group of ladies, complete with their flasks of tea, folding chairs and blankets could be found, appropriately 'socially distanced', near the pond on the Village Green, chatting and gently putting the world to rights. On at least one occasion they had the pleasure of being joined by the Rev. Joe. Clearly, all good things come .....

Until this year when it was prevented by the lockdown, on every Tuesday between April and October, a dedicated group of ladies - members and non-members of the CWF, several of them octogenarians - provided inexpensive buffet lunches for up to 35 all-comers from the Village and further afield. Sadly, this simple, effective and significant contact between the Church and Community had to be discontinued and at present remains so. At the beginning of 2020 however, some of the ladies had the pleasure of meeting-up at the few 'Tuesday Gatherings' that the Rev. Joe and Jaime had been able to hold before these too came under the lockdown axe. The 'lunch ladies' thoroughly enjoyed spending time with the young mums who had just dropped their offspring at School and brought their younger toddlers in to play together in the Church Room whilst the mums themselves chatted over cups of Jaime's excellent coffee. It is perhaps not surprising that some of those same 'lunch ladies' were to be seen amongst the Village Pond group mentioned above.

The only Tuesday Lunch that took place in 2020 did so before the lockdown struck. It was the 'Winter-warmer Lunch' held each year to raise funds for 'Hope for Children' – a charity founded many years ago in Hemel Hempstead. Fortunately, this year it was on Tuesday the 25th of February. The meal was prepared of course, by the Tuesday Lunch ladies and as usual, ladies from the Charity conducted the raffle. Some 50 diners were served the traditional main course of tasty Shepherds' Pie. All proceeds went to the Hope for Children Charity; they amounted to £470.

The lockdown has now begun to be eased and the intended route ahead plotted, although timings are uncertain. The past year has shown the vital importance that human contact, love and companionship have for us all. It could well be a long time before we are able to get-together in the Church Room for CWF Meetings and/or Tuesday Lunches. Meanwhile, we will keep in touch by 'phone and other ways and, weather permitting, there will be Tuesday mornings on the Green. Do come, but best bring your own seat. I look forward to seeing you soon, there or elsewhere.

*Toni Butler*

## **Churchyard**

Despite the various lockdowns, it was business as usual for most of the volunteer much appreciated band of volunteers, who help to keep our churchyard looking so good throughout the year. The 2021 plan is now being prepared and this will commence in the first week of April and run through to the end of October with the final act being the annual leaf pick and tidy up ready for Remembrance Sunday.

As well as the regular mowing and strimming activities that our volunteers carry out, in the summer a working party was organised to tackle some of the more overgrown graves, low hanging branches and hedge cutting. So, a big thank you to all those who have given up their time to support us.

In addition, special thanks to our local Explorer Scouts, who came forward to organise and run the autumn leaf pick and churchyard tidy up, helping them meet the Community Service requirements of their Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

As always – any new volunteers are most welcome. Please do let me know if you wish to find out more about this role or wish to volunteer to help with mowing or strimming.

***Rob Ferneyhough***

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## **ANNUAL MEETING OF HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, POTTEN END**

*Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7pm in Holy Trinity Church, Potten End  
and via Zoom*

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82172238463>

Meeting ID: **821 7223 8463**

Passcode: **APCM**

Dial by your location

+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom

+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom

+44 208 080 6591 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 821 7223 8463

Passcode: 866035

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbyuJ6SWFT>

### **AGENDA**

1. Prayers
2. Apologies

### **MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

3. Minutes of the 2020 meeting
4. Election of 2 Churchwardens  
*(Nominations must be given in writing before the meeting)*

### **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

5. Minutes of the 2020 meeting
6. Matters arising
7. Vicar's introduction  
*(including special photo presentation and video on our music over this last year)*

8. Report on the financial affairs of the parish and the audited accounts for 2020  
*(followed by questions)*
9. Report on the Church Electoral Roll
10. Report on the Deanery Synod
11. Annual Fabric Report
12. Safeguarding Report
13. Elections:  
*One representative to the Parochial Church Council 2021-2022*  
*One representative to the Parochial Church Council 2021 - 2023*  
*Four representatives to the Parochial Church Council 2021-2024*
14. Appointment of Stewards
15. Appointment of examiner of accounts to the Parochial Church Council
16. Questions and discussion on the annual report:  
*Vicar's introduction (aims, objectives and activities)*  
*Church Warden's report*  
*Worship and prayer*  
*Mission and evangelism*  
*Families at HTPE including Messy Church, Trinity Kids*  
*Potten End Primary School*  
*Pastoral Care*  
*Social Committee*  
*Churchwomen's Fellowship*  
*Any further questions/comments on the report*
17. Any Other Business. To be notified to the Secretary by 17<sup>th</sup> May:  
hilaryjmatheson@btinternet.com

**The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is composed of:**

The Vicar; the Churchwardens; the Team Rector and Team Vicar; up to 3 Deanery Synod Representatives; 12 elected members (each elected for 3 years); plus, up to 2 co-opted members.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING  
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, POTTEN END**

Held on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020 in Church and via Zoom

1. Reverend Joe Roberts, who chaired the meeting, opened proceedings with a prayer.
2. Apologies were received from Sara Raybould and Andy Smith.  
There were 19 parishioners present in Church and 7 on Zoom.

**MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

3. Minutes of the 2019 meeting: Agreed and signed by Joe.

4. Election of 2 Churchwardens:  
Andy Smith and Julie Griffiths were proposed and seconded and duly elected.  
Rob Ferneyhough, who had served 7 years in total as Churchwarden, was thanked for the highly valued advice and experience that he had brought to the role and given a gift from the church.

## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

5. **Minutes of the 2019 Meeting:** Agreed and signed by Joe.
6. **Matters Arising:** None

**Copies of the Annual Report had been available in church and could also be viewed online.**

7. **Vicar's Introduction:**  
Joe referred the meeting to the Annual Report, where his introduction covering predominantly the year 2019 could be read in full.  
He wished to thank the Churchwardens and everyone else who had helped during the interregnum. A huge effort had been involved and it is hoped that the momentum created then will continue and carry us forward in our mission.  
Joe was also most appreciative of all the friendship, advice and encouragement that greeted him on his arrival in the parish. He is keen to move forward with discussion on the Mission Action Plan (which has stalled during the pandemic). The aim is to have in place a coherent, sustainable strategy for the future of our church.
8. **Report on the Financial Affairs of the parish (including to the present day) and the audited accounts for 2019:**  
Details for 2019 could be found in the Finance Review in the Annual Report.  
Treasurer Katie Bett stated that 2019 had been a year of transition and that 2020 has been financially challenging due to the pandemic. However, collection monies are broadly similar to last year. Also positive is the fact that there has been good uptake of the Parish Giving scheme, with several people transferring to this form of giving. It now accounts for 20% of giving. Our Parish Share contribution has been maintained. On the downside, takings from the Church Room, which was closed for several months, are a fraction of what they would usually be. A significant deficit for 2020 will necessitate a transfer of funds from reserves. It is hoped that the situation will return to normal thereafter.  
Thanks were expressed to Katie for doing a grand job as treasurer and for keeping us updated.
9. **Report on the Church Electoral Roll:**  
Esther King Smith has worked on compiling the Electoral Roll twice this year. She was pleased to report that the number on the latest roll was 109.
10. **Report on the Deanery Synod:**  
Has not met formally this year. There was mention of a talk on Youthwork, held at some point at Aldbury Church.
11. **Annual Fabric Report:**  
Rob Ferneyhough spoke of the considerable damage to the doors and wall caused by the burglary. Nothing had been stolen. Work to repair the damage has only recently been completed, with virtually all costs covered by insurance.  
The churchyard volunteers have done an exceptionally good job this year.  
The Quinquennial is expected to take place imminently.

## **12. Safeguarding Report:**

This report could be read in full in the Annual Report. Beverley Hamilton, our Parish Safeguarding Officer, summarised by saying that, since Joe's arrival, she has fortunately been able to share discussions on safeguarding bulletins and guidance with him. In the past year there were no incidents to report to the Charity Commission. The latest safeguarding information is displayed in the porch and in the Church Room. Work on risk assessments in relation to children and vulnerable adults is proceeding. DBS checks on PCC members and those with sole contact with children continue to be carried out as appropriate. Beverley was thanked profusely for all her hard work.

Joe added that safeguarding must be seen as a vital pillar of the church, particularly bearing in mind the widely publicised institutional failings of the church in general in this regard.

## **13. Elections:**

- 3 representatives to the Berkhamsted Deanery Synod  
The following were proposed, seconded and duly elected:  
Mike Wallis, Jane Drake and Julie Griffiths
- 1 representative to the Parochial Church Council 2020 – 2022  
John Ansell was proposed, seconded and elected.
- 4 representatives to the Parochial Church Council 2020 – 2023  
The following were proposed, seconded and duly elected:  
Claire Wallis, Rob Ferneyhough. (leaving 2 Vacancies)

## **14. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts to the Parochial Church Council:**

Mr. Timothy Cook had indicated that he was willing, once again, to act as examiner of accounts for the year. Proposed by Nigel Chadwick and seconded by Simon Barnard, he was duly elected. Julie Griffiths suggested making a gift to Tim Cook in appreciation of his work in auditing the accounts.

## **15. Questions and Discussion on the Annual Report:**

- Vicar's introduction (aims, objectives and activities)
- Churchwardens' report
- Worship and prayer
- Mission and evangelism
- Families at HTPE including Messy Church and Trinity Kids
- Potten End primary school
- Pastoral Care
- Social committee
- Churchwomen's Fellowship
- Any further questions/comments on the report?

Clear and detailed reports on all of the above appeared in the Annual Report. Questions and comments were invited.

It was noted that, with regard to Potten End school, Simon Barnard is standing down as Foundation Governor after many years' service. He was thanked heartily for his dedication and devotion to the school.

A vacancy for Foundation Governor now exists.

## **16. Any Other Business: None**

There being no other business, Joe said a few closing words, in which he thanked all the people who serve on committees for their contributions and hard work on behalf of our church and the wider community.

The meeting concluded with the saying of the Grace.