



APCM

Reports

For the Year Ending
31st December 2020

Chairmans Report

Administrative Information

The correspondence address for the Parish of St. George's, Wilton is:

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The Parochial Church Council

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is registered as charity number 1134647.

PCC members who have served from 1 January 2020 until the date this report was approved, unless otherwise stated, are:

Vicar: Vacant (from November 2019)
Churchwardens: Mr Peter Joyce
Mrs Hilary McKegney (from October 2020)

Deanery Synod Representatives: Mr Christopher Michell
Dr Michael Yardley

Secretary to the Church Council: Mrs Bethan Baigent
Treasurer to the Church Council: Cdr John Page

Elected PCC members:

Mr Pete McKegney
Mr Matthew Norman (from October 2020)
Mrs Hilary Buckley (until October 2020)
Mrs Rachel Neal
Mrs Jenny Norman
Mrs Rosa Parsloe
Mrs Clare Steel
Mrs Carole Smith

Ex-Officio Members

Mr Christopher Michell
Mr Peter Joyce
Mrs Hilary McKegney
Dr Michael Yardley

The charity Trustees are: The Vicar (vacant); Dr M Yardley, Mr C Michell, Mrs C Steel, Mrs R Neal, Mrs C Smith, Mrs R Parsloe, Mrs J Norman, Mr P Joyce.

Other Officers

Electoral Roll Officer: Mr Laurie Jeffery
Christian Giving Officer : Mr Michael Small
Safeguarding Officer : Mrs Elizabeth Flower

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules (1996).

All Church attendees are encouraged annually to register on the Electoral Roll and, if eligible to stand for election to the PCC at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

PCC members are the Managing Trustees of the Church Hall and the Scout Hut; the Diocesan Board of Finance is the Custodian Trustee.

Day to day operational decisions are taken at the weekly Staff Meeting (Vicar, Churchwardens, Parish Administrator, and Treasurer - if required).

The Church is the land owner of the Wilton Church Allotments (a charity) and the PCC is responsible for ensuring that they are kept in good order; that income and expenditure are in balance, and that a reasonable surplus is generated “for ecclesiastical purposes”.

Objectives and Activities

It is our intention that St. George’s Church, Wilton, its Hall, Churchyard, and Allotments should be available to the local community, whether they are church members or not. The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Vicar in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the aforementioned properties. Church Membership and Activity

There are 122 members on the new Church Electoral Roll. The St George’s ‘worshipping community’, as reported to the Diocese at 31st December 2020 was 160, and there were 97 donors to the St George’s Christian Giving Scheme.

St George’s continues to enable the community to mark life’s milestones. However, the year 2020 was quite unusual because of the restrictions of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. There was only one wedding, and although 3 baptisms were booked to be in the Church before the ‘lockdown’, all of them were put ‘on hold’. No funeral services were held in the Church, but 5 were held by members of the Church’s ministry team in Taunton Deane Crematorium with very restricted numbers of people attending, and there were 3 burials of ashes in the churchyard. All of these events bring the church into contact with people at very significant times in their lives, and present an opportunity to make them aware of the church’s mission. At these times, our experience is that the ministry of the church is clearly appreciated.

Finances

Financial review

Government restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic had a detrimental impact on the Church finances. This was felt most keenly with the inability to pay the Parish Share in full and the resulting loss of Hall revenue of approximately £1,100 each month during lockdown periods.

Application was made to the Diocesan Discretionary Parish Support and Relief Scheme which resulted in Parish Share relief of £3,048 and came with instruction to retain three months' unrestricted reserves at the end of the year – to achieve this around four and a half months' Parish Share payment had to be withheld from the Diocese regrettably.

Voluntary Income for 2020 was £113,744, a reduction of £14,856 on the previous year. Christian Giving was down £1,644 and Hall Revenue was down £9,842. The unrestricted and restricted funds showed an overall surplus of £26,675 for the year. The consolidated single CBF Investment made an encouraging gain of £1,422.

We were able to send £4,302 to charities from our Sunday collections this year, which was restrained sadly by the lack of attendance in church due to lockdown restrictions. Nevertheless, Church members were encouraged to make their donations direct to the nominated charity for each month.

The PCC will continue to set a budget with challenging objectives to pursue measures that improve the appearance and functionality of the Hall in order to attract greater usage and increase revenue.

Reserves policy

Having considered what its needs are, the PCC has agreed that unrestricted reserves for a three-month period should be held in order to cover any foreseen and unforeseen expenditure.

Investment Powers and Policy

The trustees are responsible for ensuring that sufficient cash is held to cover day to day expenses of the charity and the best returns available are achieved on surplus funds and the endowment fund.

Risk management

The trustees consider risk and other uncertainties regularly at their meetings. Where possible, policies are established and procedures adopted to mitigate those risks, whether they are financial or not. The level of voluntary income and settlement of the parish share are regularly reviewed and discussed, together with safety and protection issues for those visiting the charity's premises.

Achievements and Performance

While there are areas of overlap, all the activities and mission of St George's can be considered under three headings: worship, nurture and outreach.

Worship is what energises all our activities as a church. Love of God overflows into love for our neighbour, as shown in service and pastoral care (outreach), and also encouraging the best in others (nurture).

Worship

- The congregation of St George's normally meets regularly at two Sunday morning services: an 8am Holy Communion service, followed by a 10am eucharistic service, except on the 1st Sunday of the month when the 4Everyone service (All Age Worship) is held. It is a shorter, more informal and non-eucharistic service to enable those new to church services and families to feel more at ease. A 10am Tuesday morning Holy Communion service was normally held, usually attended by a small, but faithful number of Church members. This provided an opportunity for quiet, reflective worship during the week.
- However, following the start of the first Covid-19 'lockdown' on 23rd March 2020, all services in the Church building were suspended: it was probably the first time ever that a service was not held in the Church on Easter Day! Services in Church were able to resume on 26th July when the restrictions were eased. Gathered worship then resumed with a 9am Holy Communion service on Sundays, albeit where congregants had to maintain 'social distance', wear facemasks, record their attendance and sanitise their hands, and sadly no singing was allowed. The 9am service continued until the start of the second Covid-19 lockdown on 5th November 2020, when once again the Church building was closed. There was a brief respite in the lockdown which allowed some Christmas services to be held in Church. However, the popular Carol service, and the Christingle service normally held on Christmas Eve had to be cancelled this year because of the dangers of large gatherings. Also, arrangements had to be made for people to book their attendance at the Holy Communion services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in order to ensure a maximum of only 50 people inside the Church for safety reasons. However, an on-line recorded service with a community emphasis was broadcast via You Tube on Christmas Eve.
- Although the Church building was closed during the two periods of lockdown, people were able to join in worship through the broadcasting of recorded services uploaded to the Internet on 'You Tube'. This was made possible by Reverend Martin Kirkbride (in effect our 'locum Vicar') recording services inside the Church and then by Bethan Baigent (Parish Administrator) editing and adding other recorded music and prayers to the recording. The analysis of viewings of these recorded services showed that typically more people participated than would normally attend collective worship in Church.
- Also, when the two periods of lockdown were ended, the Church building was reopened on 30th June for private prayer and reflection on Tuesday mornings (10am - 12noon) and, during the summer also on Friday afternoons (4.30 - 6pm).
- In normal times, there is an opportunity for church members to catch up with each other as well as welcome visitors and newcomers, over freshly made coffee in the Church Hall after the 10am service on Sundays. However, the pandemic prevented such social gatherings and fellowship.

- 'Stay and Play', a group for toddlers with their parents or carers, normally met weekly in the Hall during term time. Also the 'Harmony Club', for people with learning difficulties, used to meet three times a week in the Hall, and occasionally for a special short service in the Church. Both of these activities have had to cease during the periods of pandemic lockdown.
- 'Prayer Space' is a meeting of Church members for half an hour on Mondays with the exception of the 1st Monday of the month. It is a mixture of silent and intercessory prayer and takes place in the Winston Room of the Church Hall, or in the Church in warmer months. Unfortunately this too had to be cancelled during the lockdowns.
- The short services regularly held in local residential homes: St George's Residential Home, Elizabeth House and Mountbatten Nursing Home, sadly have had to cease for almost the whole year because of the pandemic. The same is true for the Home Communion service where Holy Communion is taken to a small number of housebound people who are not in residential care.
- We are very grateful to our talented Lay Readers (PTO) Peter Ball and Robert Dunning for their help in leading services and preaching. (That is in addition to the help they give to churches in other parishes).
- Numerous church members make our services possible by generously giving their time to tasks behind the scenes such as cleaning the church, washing altar linen, running the PA system, decorating the church, maintaining our buildings and even keeping records of hymns and songs for the payment of copyright fees etc.
- The joint services normally held with other churches (eg. Choral Evensong on St George's day with St George's Roman Catholic Church, or Ash Wednesday with members of St Michael's Church) also had to be cancelled this year.
- Music is normally such an important part of our worship. Sadly, this year when singing in Church has not been allowed, the choir has been unable to contribute to our worship. However, when the Church was open between lockdowns, worship has been enhanced by organ and keyboard music thanks to the playing of Stephen Page and Ian and Mary Carson, even though singing was not allowed and face masks had to be worn.
- The ringing of the church bells by our dedicated team of ringers normally calls the community to worship. Their ringing and regular practicing has been restricted by the lockdowns.

Outreach

- Through its historic role in the foundation of Bishop Henderson CE VA Primary School, and also with Rev'd Jenny Jeffery's continuing role as School Chaplain, St George's has a very important link with the School. Rev'd Jenny gives so much to her role where normally she meets many people (pupils, staff, parents and governors) who would not usually come to church, but are grateful for her ministry. However, for much of this year during the lockdowns and also whilst she was recovering after sick leave, most of her contact with staff, pupils and parents has had to be on line. St George's historical links with the School are also maintained

through the Vicar being an Ex-officio Governor, and also through the nomination of two Foundation

Governors one of whom (Alex Cameron) is a member of the congregation.

- The various social events organised through the Church, including harvest supper and monthly soup lunches, which enable fellowship and getting to know new people from the wider community, regrettably have had to be cancelled this year.

- The Church website and notice boards are important sources of information for church members and other local people. The number of enquiries coming through our website continues to increase. Copies of News Board have been delivered to Church members who were unable to access the website. Many found the publication on the Church website of regular 'Thought for the Day' items during the lockdowns very comforting and enlightening.

- Normally many groups meet regularly in the Church Hall, which we also hire out for private celebrations. It has been estimated that around 500 people use it every week. This important source of income to the Church has dried up during the pandemic, whilst some of the overhead running costs have continued. This has resulted in a significant loss of income of around £1,100 a month.

- Several members of St George's are involved in service to the community on behalf of the wider church e.g. Street Pastors and School Pastors.

Nurture

- Normally two regular Bible study home groups are held, including a monthly one run by a PCC member, and also a small monthly Christian discussion group, "No Holds Barred". These have had to stop during the pandemic when meetings in person and in others' houses have been banned.

- After Easter a Bible study course, with extensive guidance notes on the Book of Jude was led on line by Rev'd Martin Kirkbride.

- Couples getting married at St George's are offered marriage preparation. This usually includes a day of face-to-face sessions. During 2020, because of the pandemic restrictions, only one wedding was held in the Church.

- 'Stay and Play', our weekly toddler group that helps create friendship and support amongst parents and other carers who attend, has been cancelled because of the pandemic.

Buildings: Church, Church Hall, Churchyard and Church Office.

- **Church:** The Church building continues to be maintained in accordance with the recommendations of the last quinquennial survey which was carried out by our Church Architect, Jonathan Rhind in 2014. In March 2020, following a rash of thefts of lead from church roofs in Somerset and nationally, 'Smartwater' was re-applied to the areas of lead on the St George's roof. In April, someone cut off the Victorian decorative wrought iron door handle of the West door and stole it. This was reported to the Police and the Church's insurers. In December we launched our 'WiFi and Associated IT Equipment Appeal' in order to raise the funds needed to enable access to the Internet in Church and to provide the equipment needed for live-streaming services and other events in future. We believe that this will help to enhance our worship, connect us to people outside the Church, and help the Church to grow.

• **Church Hall:** In 'normal times' the Church Hall is used for a huge variety of purposes: exercise classes, Morris dancing, Scouts and other uniformed organisations, badminton, antenatal classes, support groups and private parties. Typically over 500 people a week use the Hall, and the Church Administrator manages all the bookings and invoicing of users. Unfortunately, these have been heavily restricted because of the pandemic. We are committed to improving these facilities which are used by so many in the community. During 2020, the men's toilets upstairs were refurbished, and the external doors on the south end of the Hall were re-painted. After the first lockdown was lifted in July and some activities resumed in the Hall, it was felt that rather than leaving the cleaning to volunteers, a more thorough professional cleaning service was required. So a Cleaner was employed on a casual basis for four hours a week, and she has greatly improved the standard of cleanliness.

• **Churchyard:** The Churchyard Working Group led by Jane Joyce has continued to maintain and improve the churchyard. Except during winter, it holds monthly gardening sessions with volunteers to keep the Churchyard in good order. At other times the grass is cut by both volunteers, and a contractor. The Churchyard is visited by many people and is a much appreciated haven for quiet reflection. It offers a great opportunity for outreach to visitors, and also for improving the natural environment locally.

• On the south side of the Church, the Churchyard is maintained by a contractor, whose cost is largely borne by a generous, regular donation from the son of a former Associate Priest of St George's Church. The beech hedge adjacent to the east side of the Hall was extended towards the northern boundary with the planting of saplings in February. This will help to screen off the Scout Hut, and Scout activity from the graves near the boundary.

• **Church Office & Vicarage:** In January 2020, the Diocese carried out work to separate the Church Office from the Utility Room of the Vicarage, and also to refurbish areas of the Vicarage in anticipation of letting the property during the Vacancy. Tenants occupied the Vicarage between February and August 2020.

People and Thanks

• Throughout 2020, St George's was in vacancy following the retirement of James Clapham in November 2019. During the year we have been extremely grateful for all the clergy who have stepped in to maintain regular services in Church (when permitted), or through recorded services via the Internet on You Tube: Reverends David Ager, Michael Hayes, Jenny Jeffery, Denis Cavaghan, Geoff Treasure, and Martin Kirkbride. However, particular thanks must go to Martin Kirkbride who in effect became our 'locum Vicar' for most of the year, and who mastered the art of recording services to be broadcast regularly via You Tube. Special thanks are also due to our Licensed Readers, Robert Dunning and Peter Ball whose leading of Morning Prayer services and preaching was much appreciated.

• We have been saddened in this year of the pandemic by the death of several long standing and faithful members of our congregation, whose lives we have not been able to remember and celebrate in Church in the way we would have wished because of the restrictions. These include: Phyllis Lloyd, Richard Booth; Nigel Libby; Ron Gibbs; Pearl Heard; Don Rimmer; Pam Thorne.

- Thanks are due to the PCC members and all who helped with the process of preparing our 'Parish Profile', and all the other aspects of recruiting a new Vicar. We were fortunate in having a very good response to our advertisement in August. Four candidates were interviewed on 30th September, after which we were delighted that the appointment of The Reverend Dr Nick Griffin was confirmed. His Licensing was then planned for 19th January 2021.

- St George's owes a huge debt of gratitude to the large number of people who have given their time and talents to the work of the Church over the last year with generosity, good humour, faith and faithfulness as together they create the ministry of St George's. We would particularly like to thank John Page, Treasurer; Michael Small, Christian Giving Officer; Laurie Jeffery, Electoral Roll Officer; Matt Norman, IT specialist; and Bethan Baigent, Church Administrator. We are also very grateful for the dedicated and important work of the team of five Coordinators: Clare Steel (Home Groups); Rachel Neal (Prayer Ministry); Hilary Buckley (Pastoral Care); Liz Flower (Safeguarding); Rosa Parsloe (Social Events & Fundraising); and Carole Smith (Christian Concerns). We would also highlight the work of our Tower Captain Brenda Arscott, and Brain Matthews and all the bellringers; Sheena Page and Sue Stenhouse who produce such beautiful flower arrangements and all those on our Welcomers' Rota.

- We were delighted that Hilary McKegney was elected as a Churchwarden at our APCM on 18th October. She has previously served in this office some years ago, so brings her previous experience to the role.

- Although Bethan Baigent has been working from her home for most of the year, she continues to be the friendly, helpful and perpetually enthusiastic face of St George's to our 'virtual' visitors and all who contact the Church. Her creative flair and IT skills have proved invaluable during the year, not only in enabling the professional standard of our publications, including the production of the Parish Profile and weekly News Board, but also putting together and editing the recorded services and uploading them to You Tube. This has had such a beneficial impact on the running of our Church, and it is greatly appreciated by our congregation.

Peter Joyce
Churchwarden

15th March 2021

Churchwardens Report

Premises, Goods and Ornaments

St George's Church, Wilton, Taunton
Annual Parochial Church Meeting: 23rd May 2021
Churchwardens' Report: Premises, Goods and Ornaments

1. Unusual Circumstances of this Report

This report covers the period of six months since the last APCM held on 18th October 2020. During this time, the unusually restrictive circumstances of the Coronavirus pandemic which started in March 2020 continued. These have had a significant impact on church activity. Also, the Vacancy continued until the Reverend Dr Nick Griffin was appointed and licensed by Bishop Ruth in an on-line ('Zoom') service on 19th January 2021.

The Church building was closed to gathered worship between 5th November and 5th December. However, the church congregation continued to worship via recorded services on-line, and stewarded 'Open Church' sessions for private prayer and reflection continued on Thursday mornings. The Church building was re-opened for gathered worship following Government and Church of England guidance on 6th December, and Holy Communion services, socially distanced and without any singing were held on the three Sundays before Christmas.

To make up for the lack of a traditional Christmas carol service in Church, there was a very enjoyable and successful gathering for carol singing in the Churchyard at 6pm on 20th December. On Christmas Eve there were 104 'views' of the recorded reflective Christmas celebration service on You Tube, whereas 38 people attended the reflective Holy Communion service in the Church at 6pm that evening, where a booking system had to be used (probably for the first time in the Church's history!) in response to a Covid-19 'risk assessment' of the maximum permitted number of attendances. People were also asked to book for the Holy Communion service in Church on Christmas Day (22 attendances). Unusually, the very popular Christingle service could not be held, and after Christmas the Church building was closed again during the continuation of the second 'lockdown'. Whilst 'Open Church' sessions were able to resume on Thursdays from 18th February, gathered worship (still with social restrictions and no singing) eventually re-started on Good Friday (2nd April). It continued joyfully on Easter Day (46 attendances), and thereafter in tandem with recorded services on-line via You Tube, by when there were 126 subscribers.

2. Church Records

In accordance with The Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991, the Log Book, Terrier and Inventory are to the best of our knowledge up to date and accurate. These are available for inspection in the Church Office. Also, the Register of Services has been maintained and is kept in the Vestry. Other record books (Weddings, Baptisms, Burials and Confirmations) are kept in the small safe in the Vestry.

3. The Church

3.1 Goods and Ornaments

The following instances of damage or loss should be noted:

- **Loss of the Lectionary**

The large, red leather bound Lectionary normally kept on the Lectern went missing just before Easter, and despite thorough searching and asking the clergy, it has not been found. It is hard to imagine that anyone would want to steal it, and difficult to see how this could have happened whilst the Church has been open. If it remains lost or stolen, a new copy will need to be bought.

- **Aumbry Lamp damaged**

The small silver bowl with the Aumbry lamp given to St George's in memory of Roger Colwill whose father, Ray was Assistant Priest here, was accidentally knocked off the windowsill and the lamp and surrounding glass was broken. A cost estimate for repair is being obtained.

3.2 Repairs and Maintenance

Only minor repairs or maintenance work have been necessary in the Church since last autumn:

- *Alarm System*

The Church's alarm system failed and could not be reset on 8th April. Coomers Security were able to repair it and check the system the same day.

- *Church Floodlights*

Somerset West & Taunton estates team repaired the floodlight on the South side of the Church in March, after several reminders as it had been out of action since November 2020.

- *Fire Extinguisher Maintenance*

The annual servicing of the fire extinguishers was carried out on 23rd April.

- *Flies in the Bell Chamber*

Thanks to Brian Matthews for cleaning away masses of dead flies, and the cobwebs and dust in the bell chamber in the tower.

3.3 Other Work and Improvements

- **Internet Access**

The initial stage of a project to provide a WiFi connection in the Church began in January with the creation of a WiFi 'bridge' between the Church and the Church Office. The work, which included fixing a small 'nanostation' on the fascia board on the north-west corner of the Church, was undertaken by Matthew Norman and his boss at the local company QSS IT Solutions. The details were approved (on 4th January) by the Church Architect, Jonathan Rhind; no Faculty approval being necessary. The project will be funded by generous donations from the congregation towards the 'WiFi and Associated Equipment' appeal.

- **Portable Directional LED Lighting**

Two portable LED lights on stands were bought to provide better illumination for recording services in Church.

4. The Churchyard

4.1 Gardening and Maintenance Work

- Churchyard Gardening Volunteers and Contractors
Details of this work are described in the separate report on Churchyard activity. To help with grass cutting around the graves, a new battery operated strimmer was bought to replace the old petrol engine model, which was beyond economic repair.

5. Church Hall

5.1 Hall Closure

Following a period of restricted use in the autumn because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Hall was once again closed to hirers after Christmas, until restrictions were eased in April 2021. This has meant a significant loss of income (£1,100 approximately a month). Despite this, some running costs were still incurred (eg. low level heating during the winter, and mains water).

5.2 Maintenance

The water boiler in the kitchen had developed a major electrical fault that was beyond repair, and it had to be scrapped. A replacement 'Lincat' Filter Flow Counter-top Automatic Water Boiler was purchased and installed in November 2020.

5.3 Cleaning

The new Hall Cleaner who commenced in September 2020 has provided an excellent service. She continued to work up to the second 'lockdown' of the pandemic after Christmas, and then has resumed work from 16th April 2021. This has greatly improved the standard of cleanliness in the Hall.

6. Thanks

Special thanks are due to the retired clergy, especially Rev'd Martin Kirkbride, and our Readers Robert Dunning and Peter Ball who greatly assisted us in maintaining our worship in Church and on-line until Nick Griffin commenced as the new Vicar.

Also, we continue to owe a special debt of thanks to Bethan Baigent, our Parish Administrator for her hard work, and creativity, whilst working mostly from home in difficult circumstances. She has regularly compiled the recorded services and uploaded them on You Tube, as well as preparing the services for projection in Church. She has also maintained our general communication and connectedness with church members through the weekly News Board and social media during a time when many have felt isolated.

We would also like to thank the many volunteers who have helped with Welcoming in Church; those helping with Churchyard Gardening, and our Flower Arrangers and Bell Ringers, as well as many others in often 'unsung' roles.

Peter Joyce & Hilary McKegney

Churchwardens

Churchyard Group

This report summarises the work of volunteers and contractors, and other activity in the Churchyard since the last APCM in October 2020.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE & GARDENING:

Late Autumn/Winter:

Raking & sweeping of leaves; clearing of drains & runnels around church, church hall and along driveway.

Clearing of the Old Choir Vestry gutters and removal of rubbish & overgrowth from between OCV and Flower Shed.

A new rain butt was installed to replace leaking old one.

A winter flowering Cherry tree was planted in the NE section of the churchyard to replace the dying Crab Apple, which had been donated in 2015 by Mrs P Harrison in memory of her husband.

March, April, May 2021:

Contracted gardeners recommenced work in March:

Mr Patrick O'Shea, 'Cut No Corners', mows and tidies generally the South side of the churchyard, fortnightly March to October inclusive.

Mr David Bailey, 'Cemetery Services', strims the far North-East section of the rear churchyard, monthly March to October inclusive.

Mr Tim Denovan-Smith mows & strims other grass areas on North/North-West side of churchyard, as required to ensure the grass looks sufficiently well-tended and access to graves is safe.

(NOTE: The grass in certain areas around the Yew trees in the rear churchyard is being left to grow long for a few months, in order to protect & encourage wildlife - as part of "Wilder Churches" project being promoted by Somerset Wildlife Trust in conjunction with Bath & Wells Diocesan Environmental Department.)

Volunteer gardening recommenced in March:

Great thanks go to Mr Peter Matravers, who is retiring from the considerable job of controlling the grass in the NW section of the churchyard. Peter has given his time and energy to this for many years.

Churchyard Gardening sessions take place on the 3rd Saturday of each month, 9.30 - 12.30 between March & November inclusive.

Posters in church porch & lych gate and hall lobby, regular notices in News Board and word of mouth & email messages remind people of these sessions.

Numbers attending vary between 6 - 12. Some people who can't come on the Saturday choose to work on an agreed task during their own free time in the week.

Regular tasks include raking, sweeping, edging, weeding, light pruning & watering.

There are a few churchyard tools available; however, most volunteers prefer to bring & use their own tools. This has been important during Covid-restricted times, when work has been carried out socially-distanced and in our own 'bubbles'!

Churchyard Group

INTERMENTS OF ASHES:

There have been very few interments of ashes over the past 6 months, due to Covid restrictions and delays. However, as the situation improves and business and travel restrictions ease, families are starting to make clearer arrangements for memorial services and interments.

SEASONAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCHYARD:

Christmas 2020:

Christmas carol singing in the churchyard on Saturday 20th December between 4.15 – 5.15pm was very successful. The weather was dry and seasonally cold. Over 100 people - regular church-goers and community - gathered, socially-distanced around the front area of church to sing carols, accompanied by Stephen Page on keyboard & Stuart Paul playing his trumpet. The church & porch lights were all on, there were fairy lights in the Magnolia tree, and most people brought a torch or lantern. Due to Covid restrictions, it was not possible to offer any refreshments, or for people to socialise for long at the end; but there was a great atmosphere of 'cheer & good-will'.

If repeated this year, it would be good to be able to offer a mug of mulled wine or juice and mince pie.

DEVELOPMENTS - ONGOING & FUTURE POSSIBILITIES:

Much of the maintenance and gardening of the churchyard has been able to continue despite Covid restrictions. In fact, the scientific advice given for avoiding the spread of the virus - space, fresh air and outdoor activity - has highlighted the great scope and potential of the churchyard for developing new forms of worship, fellowship, outreach and nurture.

Jane Joyce

Co-ordinator St George's Churchyard Group

Pastoral Care

Providing practical care and support in times of crisis or difficulty for church members and others living within the Parish is considered a strength at St George's.

We believe that we are all responsible for pastoral care to one another and those in our local community. However, we have a dedicated Pastoral Care team led by our Pastoral Care Coordinator who is working hard to develop a larger team of pastoral care support helpers.

The team encourages, organises and provides:

- transport to church for the less able
- social visits to combat loneliness
- visits to those in hospital
- on-call to help in emergencies.

All this has been hampered by Covid and meant that each PCC Member had to take on responsibility for Church members to check to see if everyone was ok and to flag up any needs that arose.

Hilary Buckley

Prayer

Prayer Space provides an opportunity for a small group to meet weekly and be quiet in God's presence, and have a time of open prayer. The purpose is to try to bring God into the centre of our life at St George's.

The Prayer Circle pray regularly for anyone who has a need and would like prayer, the information is confidential within the group. Members of the Prayer Circle pray independently once they have received a prayer request.

Prayer Ministry is provided by a small group who have undertaken training to enable them to support those requesting prayer in the best possible way.

During these Covid times Prayer Space has only really been able to go ahead when restrictions have allowed but our Prayer Circle has been able to continue and has been really valuable during these difficult pandemic days.

Rachel Neal

Home Groups

We have a very small number of home groups, but this is an important area of church life that we would like to strengthen and grow as we aspire to many more people being part of a home group.

We would like to explore fresh ways of engaging people in group-based exploration of faith and Bible study.

At the moment we have or have recently been able to offer to our Church members:

- Advent Courses
- Lent groups
- 24/7 Prayer Course
- Alpha Course
- Daily Bible Reading Books

Our Church members have appreciated and found these teaching & learning tools very helpful as they have helped their faith journey and encouraged fellowship opportunities too. We are keen to explore new ways of learning together.

Again all of this has been very compromised by Covid so we are looking forward to finding new ways of doing things, new courses and encouraging people to join a group when restrictions are lifted.

Bellringers

We continue to support each other during the Covid situation and look forward to more flexibility soon.

On February 27th one bell was rang 100 times by Brian Matthews in celebration of Captain Toms life.

Also Jeremy Taylor tolled one bell, half muffled, 99 times following the death of Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh on the 9th April.

The day of the funeral the 17th April, Brian rang one bell leading up to the one minutes silence.

We are very grateful for the continued support of Bethan and the PCC and look forward (when restrictions allow) to welcoming our 'New' Vicar Nick Griffin and family, to come and see us in 'action' in the Tower!

Mothers' Union

This is going to be the shortest annual report ever.

In February 2020 I stood down as leader after 6 years and Ann Hall as treasurer after over 20 years. We then planned the rest of the year's programme with meetings planned and led by 3 different pairs of people.

We had our March meeting and then we haven't been able to meet again.

When the 2 church halls are opened up for us to meet again we will regroup.

Meanwhile our knitters have been hard at work and produced many garments for RAFT refugees and a bag of hats for the Seamen's Mission at Avonmouth Docks.

Helen Clegg

Bishop Henderson School

For the last 15 months life at school for everyone has been very different, and in some ways, ever changing. New vocabulary from the youngest to the oldest has become common place and there has been an escalation in life's experiences that we would not have planned for. Last years new intake of 4/5 year olds hardly had time to get their feet through the door before they were introduced to home school learning and key worker bubbles in school.

Words such as social distancing, sanitiser, quarantine, pandemic, covid, lateral flow tests etc are all in everyday use. The pupils, in the main, have adapted incredibly well and the staff have worked tirelessly and creatively making sure every child could access technology and online resources. The school is in good heart and although adhering to continuing restrictions, are pleased that now all pupils are able to attend. Pupils remain in "year bubbles" and there is a staggered start and end to the day. There are no opportunities (apart from on line) for the school to meet together as a whole.

So this is a rather different report than usual. Zoom! Zoom! and more Zoom!
The following are some of the things I have had the privilege of being involved with:
Weekly Staff prayer meeting

Weekly Collective Worship. This was joined by all school pupils whether at home or in school and included many parents watching at home too. (a real positive!)

Frequent pastoral care, (a listening ear!) and support given to staff and families. I have been writing a “pastoral* letter of encouragement to staff every few weeks. A weekly conversation and update with Mrs Rachel White the head teacher

Leading a school day of reflection on the pandemic.

Joining in during Lent with The Diocesan initiative. Prayer – everyone, everywhere! We hope too to join in with Christian Aid and Thy Kingdom initiatives using their excellent resources.

Celebrating Christmas and Easter with on line contributions by each class bubble which were available on line for parents to watch. Plans for celebrating Ascension Day, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday are in hand.

Contributing to the butterfly display at St G’s and the poppy display at St M’s.

I am currently involved in the appointment for some internal posts of responsibility created at school as part of a reorganisation of the curriculum.

The school has greatly appreciated the prayer support of the two churches as it deals with the ups and downs of change and challenge.

The school is very blessed that once again this year St M’s and St G’s have agreed to fund the Scripture Union Booklets “It’s your Move” (helping Year 6 children with their transition to Secondary School) and a copy of a Bible for each leaver. We do hope that this year we will be able to have a service of celebration as they leave Bishop Henderson, as last years was of course cancelled.

I am particularly grateful to Rev Justine who is so interested in the school and her energy and spirituality have greatly benefited the school following her appointment at St Michael’s. It is very important that St G’s maintains its relationship with the school and we look forward to Rev Nick Griffin (a former pupil!) joining us.

Thank you too for all your support for me personally.

Jenny Jeffery (Bishop Henderson School Chaplain)

Stay and Play

From having a very successful start to the year with a great new format, new Mums/ Dads/Carers and Granparents bringing their babies and toddlers each Wednesday term time morning, it came to an abrupt end in March when we were closed.

We have tried where possible to keep in touch with one another and those who would come along but this has been very challenging with many parents/carers also having to become home schoolers.

Always checking the guidelines to see when we can meet again we are hopeful that we will be able to pick up again next year and hope to re-launch again to attract new families to come along.

Brownies and Scouts

Wilton Brownies enjoyed a few weeks in early 2020 at the Church Hall before Covid 19. We had 24 Brownies at the beginning of 2020, however due to age and lack of face-to-face meetings we are now at 9 Brownies with a few on the waiting list.

We started meeting by Zoom in May 2020 and have continued term time meetings ever since. We have had a virtual sleepover with an ocean theme. We have done various crafts, played games, quizzes, learnt to draw cartoon characters, baking and had international themed meetings. Our favourite thing to do is Scavenger Hunts.

Girlguiding UK has been very supportive and provided lots of resources to help us through the Pandemic.

We hope to return to face to face meetings soon.

Emma Pretty

Brown Owl

1st Wilton Scout Group Annual Report 2020

All sections had a very successful start to 2020 running archery sessions, making pancakes, movie making and much more. Beavers and Cubs even managed to squeeze in an overnight camp at Flipout before lockdown came upon us.

Since March we have successfully run Zoom sessions for all sections on a fortnightly basis. We have run many quizzes and cooking sessions. We have made everything from bread to Oreo fudge to Thai curry!

We have also had visits from a Forensic Scientist and Commando Marine Chef. One of our Explorers also gained their Queens Scout award in lockdown. We are all looking forward to getting back to face to face scouting. We can't wait!

We currently have 110 children across all sections, 12 leaders and numerous helpers. Covid 19 has not defeated us.

Nadia Atherton

Group Scout Leader