The Parish of

St Mary the Virgin, Welwyn,   
with St Michael and All Angels,

Woolmer Green



Annual Parochial

Church Meeting

(APCM)

Wednesday 25th May 2022

in Church House

Holy Communion – 7.15pm

Meeting Commences – 8.00pm

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**NOTICE OF A MEETING FOR THE**

**ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS**

**A meeting of parishioners for the election of churchwardens is to be held on Wednesday 25th May 2022 at 7:55 p.m.**

**AGENDA**

1. Opening prayer.
2. Minutes of meeting held on 28th April 2021.
3. Election of churchwardens.

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

**The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) to be held on Wednesday 25th May 2022 at 8:00 p.m. following the meeting for election of churchwardens.**

**AGENDA**

1. Chairman’s welcome and opening remarks.
2. Attendance list and apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of APCM meeting held on 28th April 2021.
4. Matters arising.
5. Presentation of electoral roll – Diane Jenkin
6. Elections.
7. Lay members to the PCC.
8. Sidespersons.
9. Finance report and appointment of independent examiner of accounts – Maggie Varco
10. Team Rector’s report.
11. Other Primary reports
12. PCC Secretaries’ report
13. Welwyn Hatfield Deanery Synod Report
14. Team Council Report
15. St Mary’s Fabric Report
16. St Mary’s Safeguarding Report
17. St Michael’s Church, Woolmer Green Report
18. Other reports.
19. Any other business.
20. Closing prayers.

**Notes relating to the 2022 Parochial Church Council**

Candidates nominated for election to the Parochial Church Council must:

1. be on the Electoral Roll
2. be 16 years of age or more
3. have taken communion at least three times in the past year

It is the practice in this Parish:

1. to obtain the express consent of the candidate
2. to complete a nomination form, signed by the proposer and seconder

**Make up of PCC as at eve of APCM 2022**

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| **Ex-officio: Church Wardens:**  Diane Jenkin  Sue Keach  Stuart Westley | Nominated | Seconded |

**Representatives to the Welwyn Hatfield Deanery Synod**

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| **Ex-officio: Deanery Synod**: (Should be 4)  Vernonne Allan  Colin Hull  Shoena Eggington |  |  |

**Readers on the Parochial Church Council**

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| **Readers:**  (Does not mean they are not members of deanery synod)  John Burnapp  Colin Hull  Usha Hull |  |  |

**Election of Lay members to the Parochial Church Council**

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| **Elected PCC members (12)**  Jackie Davis (WG)  Geoffrey (Geoff) Cummings  Georgina Beck  Maggie Varco  Stuart Jenkin  Joan Shelley | **Notes / Position**  Treasurer St Michael’s  Treasurer  Fabric | **Term from APCM 2022**  2 years to go  1 year to go  1 year to go  1 year to go  1 year to go  1 year to go |

**There are therefore six places available on the PCC for a 3-year term.**

**Appointment of Sidespersons for St Mary’s and St Michael’s church**

Vernonne Allan

Peter and Patricia Brattle

Martin & Liz Browne

Alice Burnapp

Rose Cantillon Webber

Michael & Gay Carpenter

John Constable

Geoff Cummings

Joyce Davis

Jim Evans

Heather Knappett

Diane Petty

Bill & Pat Morris

Jane Robson

Keith Thompson

Roger & Carole Trigg

Ann Harper

**St Michael’s Church sidespersons:**

Christine Allday

Gill & Simon Blewett

Doreen Croft

Lurline Champagnie

Shoena Eggington

Nita Gowans

Betty Hodge

Margaret Holdcroft

Susan Keach

Janet & Rob Slater

Margaret Paterson

# Primary Reports

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| Team Rector’s Report – *The Rev’d Dr David Munchin*  *This will be read aloud; copies to be made available at the meeting.* |
| PCC Secretaries’ Report – *Louise and David Hughes*  For more than half of the year the Parochial Church Council meetings had to take place over Zoom for reasons that need no explanation now. It seems ironic that they even be described as meetings since council members were not in fact meeting but were being connected via the internet. Needless to say, council members were very pleased when it became possible to dispense with that means of communication and meetings could once more take place in person in Church House, with effect from the 15th September 2021 meeting.  Including the virtual meetings there were six meetings of the council during the year as is normal, one every other month, to discuss and make decisions concerning all aspects of church life including its people, its property and finances.  The 2020 Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) was delayed from April until mid-October by the coronavirus pandemic of course. In 2021 we got back on course by holding the APCM on April 28th, although it was via Zoom only.  As you may be aware we took over the position in October 2020 and have since been on a fairly steep learning curve but are now beginning to get to grips with what is involved – (appreciably more than was anticipated at the outset!). It remains the case that preparing this booklet for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting is probably the most onerous part of the role although we do enjoy reading the varied reports that are submitted. Fortunately, we have each other to share some of the writing up of minutes of meetings, writing of reports and typing.  Our responsibilities include taking steps to ensure that correct procedure is followed, issuing notices of meetings in good time, ensuring that reports are prepared on time, preparing the agenda for the meetings, dealing with correspondence, preparing the minutes of the meetings, keeping a check on the parish diary, knowing what is going on and to act quietly and efficiently.  Please contact my email address if you have any questions relating to the PCC at louise@elhughes37.plus.com |
| Welwyn Hatfield Deanery Synod Report – *Vernonne Allan*  These occasions bring all of the Anglican clergy of Welwyn and Hatfield together as well as laity representatives from the churches.  For some years I have been the laity member representing St Mary's Welwyn and Shoena Eggington represents St Michaels and All Angels Woolmer Green.  Three meetings take place each year, so the ones covered by this report were May 20th 2021, October 20th 2021 and February 3rd 2022.  The first of these was conducted by Zoom online. The guest speaker was The Rev'd Harry Steele, Rector of Therfield with Kelshall, also Church Growth Officer for Hertfordshire, Associate Director of Leading your Church into Growth – a national charity, working mainly with the Church of England. Harry is passionate about helping churches to growth in mission and evangelism, and his talk centred on how the Diocese can help parishes to respond to this [Covid] crisis in general, and plan to flourish.  The next event in our Deanery calendar was to have been a social event in July, but, along with so many others' plans for socialising, this was axed.  October saw our first 'live' meeting, held at St Francis' Church in Welwyn Garden City. Unfortunately, the pandemic continued to dash our plans, as our speaker The Rev'd Canon Dr Tim Bull, Diocesans Director of Vocations on MOSAIC, was unable to attend due to COVID-19 self-isolation requirements following a positive PCR test.  In February Deanery Synod met again at St Francis, and our guest speaker on “Living in Love and Faith” was vicar of Redbourne, the Rev'd Will Gibbs, the LLF Advocate for the Diocese of St Albans who introduced the National CoE Initiative on Identity, Sexuality, Relationships and Marriage.  In addition to speakers there are always other matters for inclusion: finance, reports from General Synod, welcoming new clergy to posts and general discussion. There is often the opportunity to share experiences and offer support where needed. |
| Team Council Report – *The Rev’d Dr David Munchin*  The Team Council has met on only one occasion due to the COVID19 pandemic: September 22nd.  The Team Council consists of the Team Rector, members of the Ministry Team, two lay representatives from each church.  The purposes and tasks of the Team Council are laid out in its constitution.  Matters discussed in these meeting included:   * Safeguarding (Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection) – * Team events and activities (e.g., Summer Evensongs) |
| St Mary’s Fabric Report – *Stuart Jenkin*  1. **Heating**   A new flue, gas main and gas boiler have been completed and are now providing a good level of heating to the Church & Church House. The ground source heat pumps have been investigated and had maintenance carried out in so far was possible. As part of this it was identified that GSHP No.3 had a leak and therefore has now been shut down. The engineers report that the other GSHP are coming to the end of their economic life and may not last much longer.   1. **The Eastern Cemetery Wall**   The Eastern wall fell down in Feb 2020. The Parish Council have engaged a local architect who has prepared a specification for repair. Currently the work is being tendered to building contractors and a planning application has been submitted.   1. **Electrical**   The external flood lighting failed due to a corroded junction box. This has now been replaced along with some failed bulbs and the system is back up and working. The organ lights were replaced, and work took place to trace a fault in the organ that was tripping the main fuses. The fault was identified and rectified. The old external light from the main church entrance have been removed.   1. **St. Michaels House Woolmer Green**   The refurbished St. Michaels House was let on a 12 month Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement with assistance of local letting agents. A new Curate will be moving into the property in June.   1. **Fire Alarm**   A fire risk assessment was carried out by a third-party contractor. This has identified several works that are required. Discussions are currently being held with a contractor and the Diocese regarding the specification.   1. **Lift Church House**   The alternator that powers the lift plate has broken which means the lift is currently out of use. A repair has been authorised.   1. **Compliance**   During the year the following have been completed   * Gas safety certificate for boiler * Electrical Appliances (PAT) Test * Lighting Conductor testing and new ground earthing * Roof Safety inspection * Fire Extinguishers inspection and upgrade of various items * Lift Service Church House * Roof Alarm testing * Insurance Engineering Report on Lift * St. Michaels House – Gas safety * St. Michaels House – Electrical * Gutter Cleaning * Kitchen Deep clean and grease extract clean will be carried out on the 7th March 2022 |
| St Mary’s Safeguarding Report – *Vicky Jenkin*  In September 2021 the PCC adopted and approved the CoE New Safeguarding Policy, ‘Promoting a Safer Church’, dated 01/08/2018 v1. All necessary training was carried out. If you wish to report a safeguarding concern you should contact Vicky Jenkin or the Rector. There were no safeguarding incidents. |
| St Michael’s Church, Woolmer Green Fabric Report– *Sue Keach*  We have had an event free year as regards the fabric of the church. After all the lockdowns and restrictions, the church looked rather tired so we held a big Spring Clean, removed all spider’s webs, vacuumed, and polished and generally restored our beautiful church to life.  All the routine checks have taken place. The electricity supply to the church, the electric appliances, and the fire hydrants have all been tested and certificates issued affirming their safety. The gutters and drains have been cleared of leaves etc. and the roof inspected.  Grass cutting was a problem this year. There were long periods between cuts when the churchyard looked very unkempt. Coopers, the contractors we use, have been so very good in the past, that I am confident that, this year, as things return to normal, things, will get better. In the meantime, we are very grateful to a volunteer who has done a remarkable tidy up of the church yard.  A kind gentleman has offered to buy a gate to fill in the gap in the hedge on the London Road. We have applied for a faculty and once this arrives will have the gate installed, which will look very smart and tidy things up.  We plan to make year 2022 the year of the organ. It has been tuned, and we have a list of necessary repairs. These have been put in order of priority, and we will have to think about fund raising to get as much done as is possible. |

# Secondary Reports

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| Arpeggios – *Susan Keach*  If you should stray into Church House at 2 .00pm on a Thursday afternoon you will hear the harmonious sound of hand bells. We, ’The Arpeggios’ meet each week and practice playing a wide variety of music especially arranged for a small bell choir. We have recently recruited two new members, but there is room for more, so if you would care to join us do drop by or contact Pauline Anderson 01438 716783 |
| Bible Discovery – *Gay and Mike Carpenter*  At Bible Discovery we aim to enjoy exploring the Bible together in a warm and friendly fellowship, and find out what its teaching has to say to us today.  The year began with a short topic to engage with before joining the Lent course. We chose the issue of faith in the pandemic. Still using Zoom, we began with the Bible’s most frequent command of God’s: “Do not be afraid.” We read the episode where Jesus calmed the storm and looked at where Jesus is for us in the “storm” caused by the coronavirus. The phrase “in the same boat” as the disciples were with Jesus, made us see how, despite being cut off from one another by the virus, we were/are all in this together. How can we support each other? We started by setting up a WhatsApp group. We also discussed the nature of Christian hope as opposed to secular ideas of hope.  Then in February we joined in with the Lent course, covering many social issues. We still had to use Zoom, and our first session was on home and homelessness. We heard Sam Wells of St. Martin- in- the- fields say that getting someone somewhere to live has to be the beginning of help for them. Nothing can really happen till then. The next session was on slavery and our eyes were opened to just how many people are enslaved in our own area. How do we recognise them? This was followed by the issue of waste. We saw a video, an absolute inspiration, of a teacher who had built a school out of rubbish. If a child wanted to join the school the cost was to bring a piece of rubbish. In that way chairs and tables were made and an extension to the building. Two more sessions looked at work and neighbour. We looked at the wonderful example of a couple who adopted an Afghan refugee and gave him a home with them. He had travelled many miles clutching his violin when Isil attacked Homs where he was studying music. He set about recording his wonderful playing and finding his place in society.  After Easter, we asked our groups what they would like to study and the vote went to Isaiah. We chose to focus on chapters 40-66, beginning with God as creator in charge of everything (even if it didn’t look like that to us) and ending with a great message of hope and restoration (a message we were in sore need of!) Then followed the topic of idolatry. Are we superstitious? What are our idols? Is there any idolatry in society? Or in our churches, where there might be statues, paintings, a cross on the altar? Do we pray to saints and should we? Sometimes we disagreed with each other, but we listened with respect and carried on in fellowship. We explored the fascinating “Servant Songs” – who was the servant? Christians see a portrayal of Jesus, who “bore the sins of many and made intercession for the transgressors.” Stunning stuff written centuries before Jesus was born. Isaiah writes of the “beautiful feet” that bring good news. We looked at our own ministries. Do we tell the good news of the Gospel to others? Do we welcome refugees and, if we do, do we share the good news with them if they have a different faith? Or do we show it by what we do, and a ready welcome? Our last session covered the theme of the universal reach of God’s call: “Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth.” And the wonderful promises extended to those who come. Studying the wonderful poetry of Isaiah’s prophecies led us to notice all the hymns, music and poetry it has inspired.  We like to have a summer party, so on 1st September we set up our garden and enjoyed a real celebration, being able to physically meet together and enjoy a wonderful tea party thanks to Katie’s bakery. Seeing just how important it is to meet up, we ditched Zoom in the autumn and reopened our home to our meetings. Again, we asked for votes and the Gospel of Luke won, and we found an excellent course by Tom Wright. It will be a course that will run into next year.  Luke begins by outlining his purposes and his consultations with eyewitnesses, and goes on to record how God considers the needs, hopes and fears of ordinary people like Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary, and the account of their reactions to his call. We considered how we respond to God, and our own needs and hopes. When Mary and Elizabeth meet, we looked at their reactions, and Mary’s song, the Magnificat. What were/are the wrongs to be righted, the changes in society we long for? How can we- even in small ways- become involved in this work God desires in his world? It was all very challenging.  Luke draws the similarities and contrasts between Jesus and Caesar Augustus. The account of Jesus’s birth, the message from Simeon when he’s taken to the temple are not without shadows of the suffering to come. We were challenged to look at how we celebrate his birth at Christmas. It is perhaps easy to be so busy that we forget how it was.  Many more challenges arose- Jesus’s temptation by Satan prompted discussions about Satan, about how he tempted and how Jesus rebuffed him, and to look at the temptations all Christians experience and how we deal with them. We looked at the miracle that brought Peter to his knees when he hauled in a massive catch of fish in response to Jesus when he’d fished all night and caught nothing. And we noted how Jesus needs to go away to pray, and looked at our own schedules and demand on our time.  We asked ourselves what shall we do at Christmas? Usually, we have a bring and share party, sing carols and enjoy being together. In the light of the pandemic, though, that seemed too risky. Helpful discussions led to the decision to try and do something for people less fortunate than ourselves. We found out that the Salvation Army was accepting toys for children who might otherwise not have a Christmas present. So, we met for an hour, sanitised a heap of really good toys and put them unwrapped in see-through bags with a ribbon and a label, enjoying coffee and mince pies while we worked. We shared memories of Christmas, of stories and poems, and music. Three huge boxes of toys went in the back of our car and we delivered them to the Salvation Army a few days later.  After Easter we will continue to explore Luke’s Gospel. Do come and join us! We can promise great fellowship and a warm welcome! |
| Bible Breakfast Study– *The Rev’d Dr David Munchin*  Every Wednesday morning a group meets in Church House from 8am – 9am with breakfast provided from Katie’s. We study the bible by looking at the three readings for the Sunday 10 days hence. We use a version of *lectio divina* before meandering off to whatever takes our fancy. All are welcome, breakfast is free, you can say what you want and get the drop on the Sunday preacher.  This study moved on line due to COVID19 but has continued on Wednesday at 10.30 for 40 mins on zoom. Anyone would be welcome to join. |
| The St Mary’s Book Group – *Susan Keach*  We gather on the second Wednesday of the Month in Church House at 2.45pm. Having been restricted by the pandemic to using zoom, it is good to meet face to face again. We read a wide variety of books, some recommend by members, and some chosen by the Library Service. Of course, you cannot please all of the people all of the time, but a disagreement, now and then, over a book’s merit, leads to a lively discussion.  Susan Keach 01438716657 |
| St Mary’s book/card stall – *Pat Brooks*  The bookstall has a wide range of reasonably priced greetings cards and cards with biblical texts suitable for most occasions. There is also a small selection of mainly children’s books suitable as gifts for baptisms and other occasions and some books of local interest.  Orders for Christian books and daily Bible study notes (samples are available) can be placed by contacting Pat Brooks 01438 715811. All profits from the bookstall go to church funds. |
| Church Warden’s Report, St Mary’s, Welwyn – *Diane Jenkin and Stuart Westley*  Once churches were allowed to reopen for worship in 2021 there was a duty to ensure that those who attended observed the social distancing guidelines then in operation. Essentially that meant maintaining separation of at least six feet. We were grateful to Peter Brattle who surveyed the area and devised a plan which ensured that the guidance was observed and that, thereby, safety was maintained. Essentially, worshippers were asked to sit only where a service sheet had been placed. The restriction was accepted with conspicuous good humour, particularly on the few occasions when there was a need to ask worshippers to sit away from their preferred area. At times we needed to use all available space with some imagination but, happily, there were no occasions when it was necessary to deny anyone entry to Church.  During the periods of lockdown we were unable to use Church House, causing use by both the regular groups within the Church and external hires to have to be suspended. As restrictions were eased the use of Church House gradually increased but, in the case of external hires, resumption of business was somewhat slow. That, naturally, was the cause of some regret as it was, and remains, part of the vision of the Church that the excellent Church House facility is available to people or groups within the Village and the wider area as part of our community outreach when not required by one of the regular Church groups. Gradually interest from those outside the Church, and from members of our own community, has increased, a development we remain keen to foster.  The pandemic caused the groups which used the Church in the evening to cease operation, in most cases temporarily. Some of those groups had taken responsibility for ensuring that the Church and the gates were locked on the evenings when they were in Church. That system worked pretty well though there were some occasions when there was uncertainty over how those who needed to access the building when it was locked could do so. From March 2020 a different system was clearly required, preferably one well understood which operates consistently. Since then, we have been able to ensure that the Church is open and accessible as a place of reflection and private prayer during daylight hours and securely locked, as our insurers require, at other times. In fact, the Church was open during every day of 2021, including bank holidays; we hope to be able to sustain that record. |
| Church Warden’s Report, St Michael and All Angels, Woolmer Green – *Sue Keach*  In common with Churches throughout the land this has been a strange year for St. Michael’s and I should like to begin my report by thanking David and the Ministry Team for working so hard to keep the church alive during the time of Covid. The use of zooming kept us in touch and sometimes was a source of amusement! As soon as possible we opened up the church again, taking the necessary precautions to keep us safe, and despite masks and social distancing our church kept going.  We have tried to keep in touch with the village during the past year, but not having a curate, this has been difficult. The school, our best point of contact, has been isolating, hasn’t been into church for services, etc. and been unable to accept visitors into school. They did support our Christingle appeal financially but fewer children than usual attended the service.  The New Houses built on the Entech site are now occupied. Each new household has received a ‘Welcome to Woolmer Green Card’, and we delivered the Christmas edition of the Church Magazine to every new home.  We are grateful to Judith Watson who has reinstated the Church Web site and our Face Book page. This is read by a wide circle of people and shows that the church is alive and well and gives information about church events etc. Unfortunately, we have had to change the website address. This is now <https://www.stmichaels-wg.org.uk> Note the new hyphen between the stmichaels and wg!  We have for the last two years had an ‘Open Food Table’ at the back of the church. This is where generous people can leave gifts of food and those in need can collect what they require. Most months the food donated has exceeded that needed by our community. When we have a very full table Codicote food bank collect our surplus and makes use of it, serving people in a wider area.  All through the pandemic the choir and organ have enhanced our services, and we have come to realise what an important part the music plays. We had a beautiful Christmas Candlelit Carol service and a peaceful reflective Taizé Service, not to forget all the weeks, when congregational singing was not allowed and we relied on the choir to lift our spirits.  As thing return to normal, life at St. Michael’s will get going again. We look forward to July 2022 and the arrival of our new curate who, I’m sure will have many ideas as to how we can better serve our community in Woolmer Green. |
| Community Lunch – *Mavis Francis* There has been no monthly lunch since February 2020 due to the pandemic. We held one at the end of November 2021. This was a Christmas Lunch which was provided by Fizz Catering under Maria. Turkey and all the trimmings were served and together with the delicious pudding was enjoyed by all. Tables were decorated with crackers and winter decorations. Unfortunately, numbers had to be limited to 40 for social distancing so some people were disappointed not to be able to attend. |
| Fellowship– *Marjorie Lyon*  This has been another difficult year for everyone and The Fellowship is no exception. We have managed three meetings with speakers and the Christmas meeting was also held in December. Unfortunately, the January lunch had to be cancelled.  The programme for the next year has been tentatively arranged, all the bookings have to be finalised when it is possible to do so.  Our finances have suffered and we need the meetings to generate the monies so that we can support the Charities each year. For this reason, we plan to increase the £1 attendance fee to £2 hoping this will help.  We have had a good attendance when it has been possible so we just hope that all will be well in the future. |
| Fairtrade – *Maggie Varco and the Fairtrade team*  The St. Mary’s fairtrade café and stall takes place on Saturday mornings in Church House, thanks to our team of volunteers. The drop-in café is a popular meeting place, and offers a warm welcome to newcomers to the church.  Due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions we were not able to operate as normal until May, when we re-opened following government guidelines. During the months preceding this, customers were able to place orders and collect from outside the church and pay by card or bank transfer.  We were very pleased with our turnover of £7,370 despite being closed for part of the year. A surplus of £837 was generated which was donated as part of the church’s charitable giving programme to Traidcraft Exchange, a charity supporting people to trade their way out of poverty. |
| Giving Action Group– *Jo Fozzard*  The role of GAG is two-fold: -  **Stewardship**: to look at strategies to motivate people, as they are able, to give of their time, talents and their money to the church.  **Charitable**: to facilitate charitable giving by St Mary’s to achieve a target equivalent to at least 15% of planned and plate giving on a rolling 3-year average.  There is a sense in which giving to St Mary's and giving support to the charitable causes promoted through our church in Welwyn, are one and the same. If we, as a church, are to honour our commitment to give a proportion of income to external charities, we, as individuals, are supporting our church by organising and responding to activities for the benefit of those charities, be it via special collections, social events (coffee mornings, quizzes), or produce stalls such as Fairtrade, to mention but a few.  Due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, 2021 turned out to be another challenging year. As was the case in 2020, the pandemic prevented a number of regular and annual events, that would normally have contributed to the charitable giving total, from taking place. The Giving Action Group approached the PCC again requesting a top up donation in order to meet its 15% target. A total of £5 400 was donated from general funds making the total for the year £19 023.41. This has been donated to 14 different charities. Further details can be seen on the spreadsheet below.  Thank you for your generosity in giving time and money, enabling the church to maintain its mission in this difficult time, and for supporting its commitment to numerous very worthy causes.  **St. Mary’s church charitable giving 2021**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **CHARITY** | **AMOUNT RAISED** | | Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust | £1,086 | | British Heart Foundation | £75 | | Codicote Foodbank | £1,538 | | Christian Aid Week and Afghanistan appeal | £6,025 | | Harpenden Spotlight on Africa | £376 | | Herts Welcomes Refugees | £1,761 | | Home-Start Hertfordshire | £50 | | Royal British Legion | £25 | | Seeds for Development | £350 | | Tearfund harvest appeal and Afghanistan appeal | £3,722 | | The Children's Society | £278 | | Traidcraft Exchange | £837 | | Young Minds | £2,940 | | **TOTAL** | **£19,063** | |
| Ladies’ Lunch – *Mavis Francis*  The Lunch in October 2020 had to be cancelled because of the Covid pandemic. We met again in June 2021 but at that meeting no one was willing to take on the responsibility of leadership so it was decided to end the lunches after 15 years. It is hoped that someone will come forward in the near future to start them again. |
| Lent Courses– *The Rev’d Dr David Munchin*  This year our Lent course ‘Connect’ was on line via ‘zoom’ at various times and days, and lead by various people from the team.  The course material came from the Diocese of Norwich and is called ‘Connect’. It looked at how we might connect our faith in practical ways with some of the issues of the day: Home, Work, Waste, Food, Neighbour, Nature. It was written by the Rev’d Susanna Gunner. Susanna used to work as education officer at St Albans Cathedral at the same time David was there, and trained for ordination with our Susannah.  The course was a success, and a ‘spin off group’ lead by Su Blanch – ‘Church taking action’ resulted. This is a WhatsApp group, and anyone is welcome to join – it encourages church members to take positive action on the issues considered, and provides information sharing on how to do so. |
| The Mothers’ Union, Woolmer Green – *Gina Beck, Branch Leader*  Sadly, the Mothers’ Union branch at Woolmer Green closed in December 2021. Meeting attendance had been low over the past few years and, with no meetings during the pandemic, the 6 loyal members subsequently took the difficult decision to close the branch and become Diocesan members, meaning they will still receive invitations to Diocesan/Cluster events and MU communications as before and be able to participate in the sterling work undertaken by the Mothers’ Union. |
| St Mary’s Bellringing Band– *John Williams*  Prior to the pandemic St Mary's Ringing Band rang regularly before Sunday Services from 9.00 - 9.30am (every Sunday) and 6.00 - 6.30pm (2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays) when enough Ringers were available. When it was possible, the Band practised on Tuesdays from 7.45 to 9.00pm.  In normal times we are usually able to ring all 8 bells for services. In addition, the band rings 6 bells for weddings when booked and 8 for special services when requested - if possible, depending on availability. The band also maintains the clock, hoists and lowers flags on the Tower when required and look after visiting bands.  In 2021 because of the pandemic, we only rang for five weddings, a number much reduced from previous (virus free) years. We have lost a number of ringers and currently have only 10 regular ringers. Only 2 are Church members so St. Mary’s owes a debt of gratitude to all the band for turning out for Sunday and special service ringing so reliably – unlike so many towers where service ringing is occasional, not regular. Even at Welwyn it has been difficult to ring on Sunday evenings lately due to non-availability of enough ringers.  It takes quite a while to become a competent ringer so it needs determination, but we do have an enjoyable time on the way. When the pandemic has finally faded away and we are back to normal, please consider whether you could learn to ring and enjoy the gentle aerobic exercise (and the not so healthy – but optional - social activity after practice). We will always welcome learners, especially as several of us are in our 70s!  For more information contact the Tower Secretary John Williams, on 01438 715679 or email [bells@welwyn.org.uk](mailto:bells@welwyn.org.uk).  It's one person on each rope, so to ring all our 8 bells we need 8 ringers. It goes without saying that when we are back to normal, if you have rung in the past and are not currently part of a band that rings on Sundays, you would be very welcome at St Mary’s Welwyn. |
| St Mary’s Evening Reading Group – *Wendy Lawrence*  The St Mary’s Reading Group meets at 8pm on the second Thursday of each month to discuss a book chosen by agreement.  We have read a wide variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction.  We gather in each other’s homes and we always have an interesting and thought-provoking evening.  The group is open to all members of St Mary’s |
| St Mary’s Flower Team– *Jenny Wiseman*  The Flower Team were able to get back together in 2021 with less restrictions, which was wonderful. We decorated St Mary’s Church for the three major festivals: Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Around 60 lilies were sponsored for Easter – with generous donations from the congregation. Those being remembered were recorded in a plaque at the crossing table. We felt the participation was even more special and poignant in 2021, having not been able to hold Easter services in 2020.  The dahlias from Aylett’s contributed to the beautiful flowers the team provided for Harvest. Our Harvest Festival is usually in October and therefore we are never sure if the dahlias from the St Albans Aylett’s fields haven’t succumbed to the first winter frost.  We gathered on the Saturday before Christmas to decorate the church. We used the traditional reds and greens and some gold for our theme. There were two sponsored arrangements for Christmas – one on the Font with white amaryllis remembering Fiona and Rowena’s parents, and one on the pulpit including red roses sponsored by Katie’s bakers (The Dinsdale Family) commemorating the first anniversary of Dennis’ death.  There were 6 weddings at St Mary’s. The Flower Team arranged flowers for 5 of these including for a bride who had originally planned her wedding for April 2019, then postponed it for obvious reasons to September 2019, and then had to postpone it again to September 21. She gets the award for patient bride of the year!  The main altar pedestal arrangement was provided for most weekends other than Lent or Advent and I am very grateful to those members of the team who did this, often generously donating the flowers and greenery themselves. Their efforts are much appreciated by the congregation. For me, having fresh beautiful flowers in the church adds to the feeling that this place is loved.  The restrictions placed on us in 2020 taught us during 2021, if nothing else, to never take for granted the opportunities we are given.  We are so thankful too, that Alice who suffered a period of ill health, has been restored to fitness. It is a joy to have her back with us in the Flower Team. |
| St Mary’s Website and Social Media – *Su Blanch and Jane Carr*  During the continued lockdown, we continued to use social media and the website as methods to communicate with congregation and the wider community. Jane Carr also produced a weekly email bulletin which went to everyone on the mailing list, updating them on what was going on with services and providing useful local community news, as well as some fun facts! During the year, Jane decided to step down from her roles in communications for St Mary's and it feels important to record a big thank you to Jane as she kept so many people informed and connected. A really splendid job!  In essence, little has changed with the St Mary's website and our social media presence and it would be good to be able to develop this further. At the moment the "team" is just me and although I keep things (mostly) updated there really is a requirement to review what we are providing online, so would welcome anyone who has an interest in communications, writing or social media to get in touch. The internet and social media are so useful to enable people to find out about St Mary's and connect with us - the potential is huge! |
| St Mary’s Parish Prayers – *Wendy Lawrence*  Prayer underpins the life of the parish.  There is an informal prayer meeting in St Mary’s every Saturday morning, from 9 – 9:30, led by the clergy.  Everyone is welcome to attend.  We pray for the parish and the churches in the team, and also for individual concerns and topical issues.  Prayer requests can be given to members of the clergy, or attached to the prayer board by the entrance to the St Nicholas Chapel. |
| St Mary’s Theatre Group – *Sue Knowles*  I have not been able to organise any trips to the theatre for the past year due to Covid 19. I am pleased to announce that on February 17th we will be running the first trip to Milton Keynes theatre to see a ballet. I feel that a few people are still very worried about going to these venues so I will not be planning too many this year as I find it very difficult to fill a coach. There is nothing much else to report at this stage. |
| St Mary’s Walking Group – *David and Louise Hughes*  This group was started in about 2006 by Joy and Robin Whitten and by the middle of 2021 they felt that they had been managing it for long enough and that it was time to hand it (the administration) on to someone else. They evidently thought that we were suitable candidates – not sure why but there you go. We were asked very nicely if we would consider looking after their walking group although the question was phrased in such a way that it was fairly clear that ‘no’ was not an option!  Since we took over in June 2021 fourteen people who were not previously members of the group have applied to join and we have enjoyed walks based around;  June – the Crooked Chimney, Wheathampstead led by Jill Allen and Janet Coates.  July – the White Horse, Burnham Green led by Barry Northrop. (My goodness it was hot that day).  August – started in Welwyn Evangelical Church car park in Fulling Mill Lane and ended at the White Horse, Welwyn led by Jenny Wiseman.  September – St Mary’s Church, Ware led by The Rector, David Munchin. David’s wife is the vicar there. David led a walk along the River Lee Navigation Canal and the New River with time taken out to appreciate the nature reserve at Amwell. A two-course lunch was provided at the church following the walk.  October – the Lytton Arms, Old Knebworth led by Robin Whitten. Unfortunately, the pub was not open for lunch on the day so those interested in staying for lunch repaired to the North Star at Oaklands. I was most impressed by the level of service they provided to our canine companions!  November – The Goat at Codicote led by Sue and Geoff Knowles. Sue provided some interesting history and background to Codicote and its environs as well as mince pies half way round.  December – No walks are scheduled during December because walks usually take place on the third Monday of each month but in December the third Monday falls close to Christmas Day, of course. The thinking is that everyone would be too busy preparing for the big day to go out for a walk on December 21st regardless of what the weather was doing.  As mentioned, the walks are almost always on the third Monday of the month and are about four miles in length or about two hours in duration. They are generally based around a pub (because pubs are usually prepared to allow parking during the morning providing they can expect some trade from us at lunchtime). Ideally the walking location should be no more than a 20-minute car journey from Welwyn.  Membership of the group is now about 65 persons although only between 12 and 20 turn out for the walks. |
| St Mary’s Welcome Team– *Jenny Wiseman*  It sounds pretentious to talk about the “Ministry” of welcome, but I don’t know how else to express the importance I place on this as being fundamental to the life of any church community. Some years ago, I attended a Diocesan Seminar on Welcome and one of the key speakers was a person from the John Lewis Partnership who told us how fundamentally important customer service was/is to their chain of stores. He said there were techniques which could be taught if they didn’t come naturally to their staff. We all know how we feel when asking for help from a shop employee to find something. We get a warm fuzzy feeling when someone has been kind and gone out of their way to help us, as opposed to a bark “It’s over there” approach.  2020 changed so many things for so many people during the pandemic. Our church, like so many other places, was completely closed and opened in a limited way at Harvest 2020. 2021 has seen our services resume and our clergy, churchwardens and others have done an amazing job adapting to an ever-changing situation. Our church community, I believe, has sensitively and thoughtfully adapted to the ever-changing climate. This has impacted on Welcome. It is lovely that new people are coming to events in church. This includes new people coming to services. My impression over the last year is that the congregation is aware of newcomers and are introducing them to others and letting me know that they’ve spoken to them. Maybe Covid has taught us to take nothing for granted and to be much more open to new people we may meet.  A tip when greeting a new person – “You’re new aren’t you” is not the right thing to say. It sounds accusatory! Better “I don’t believe we’ve met before, have we?” Also, never be afraid to say “Really sorry, I’ve forgotten your name”. |
| Time for God – *Mavis Francis*  The Time for God group now meets in Church House on the third Friday of the month when there are discussions, study or various speakers. We started back in September 2021 with a planning meeting. Since then our programme has consisted of members talking about their favourite characters in the Bible; Rev’d Susannah Underwood speaking about her life and family; a Christmas musical concert by Daphne Skinner and Cathy England followed by a bring and share lunch and a study on the life and quotes of the late Rev’d John Stott. |
| The Welwyn Magazine – *Jane Carr*  The Welwyn Magazine Team was pleased to make **a donation of £9,000** in 2021 split equally between St Mary’s and St Michael’s churches.  This is a big team effort with many elements brought together to achieve publication ten times a year.  Particular thanks this year go to Helen Thompsett who has handled the advertising so brilliantly for many years and has agreed to continue, at least for the time-being, even though she is moving away from the area.    We are conscious that publications of this nature in printed form aren’t going to be viable for ever, although we will make every effort to keep it going as long as possible.  The advertising essentially provides the profit and the subscriptions the printing costs.  We used to have a waiting list for advertising but this is now more challenging, as is keeping subscriber numbers up.  We have increased the number of outlets selling the magazine both in Welwyn and Woolmer Green but with cash disappearing fast that too will become more of a challenge.  If you can think of people who might like to subscribe, we would be pleased to hear from you.    The readership is far wider than church-goers and to this end we are trying to make the balance of general interest much higher vs church content to attract new subscribers.  We have also tried to introduce more striking/intriguing cover pictures last year in an attempt to encourage people to buy the magazine.  Email Bulletins:  Church Updates – David Munchin  This was started in lockdown by Jane Carr, who worked very hard on this for nearly two years. As time passed and restrictions eased, so people began returning to in person worship and meetings. So now it stills fulfils the function of keeping in touch with those shielding or vulnerable (it always has links to online worship included) but also now operates as a more general information service for church members. It now goes to over 260 email addresses.  If you wish to be included, please let the team office know. |

# APPENDIX 1 – Draft Minutes of the 2021 APCM

 **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mary’s, Welwyn with St Michael’s, Woolmer Green via Zoom on Wednesday 28th April 2021 at 19:15**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Names** |
| **Attendees** | David Munchin (DM) host, Shoena Eggington, Susan Keach (SK), Maggie Varco (MV), Chris & Joyce Lund, Geoff Lund, Geoffrey Leddra, Gina Beck, Stuart Jenkin (SJ), Diane Jenkin (DJ), Vernonne Allan, (VA), Don Bell (DB), John Burnapp (JB), Stuart Westley (SW), Joyce Davis, Jackie Davis (JD), Colin Hull (CH), Peter Brattle (PB), Jenny Wiseman, Mavis Francis, Mark Hafkenschield, Joy Whitten, Geoff Cummings, Daphne Skinner, Stephen Jupp, Peter Lee, Usha Hull, Jane Bacon (JB), Marjorie Lyon (ML), Louise & David Hughes (Secretaries).  With apologies to anyone who was on the Zoom call but is not named above due to the difficulty of gathering names from the Zoom participant list. |
| **Apologies & Absences** | Pat Brooks, Bill Morris, Su Blanch, Wendy Lawrence and Alice Burnapp. |
| **Minute taker** | Louise Hughes (LH) |

**Meeting 1 – Election of Churchwardens**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Agenda Item** | **Notes** | **Who** | **When** |
| **1** | **Welcome and**  **opening prayer** | The Rector opened the meeting with a welcome and a prayer. |  |  |
| **2** | **Review of minutes of delayed APCM 14/10/2020** | Approved by all as an accurate record. To be signed. | DM |  |
| **3** | **Election of Churchwardens** | The Rector thanked the present churchwardens for their continued ministry. There were no nominations of persons not already acting as churchwardens. In the circumstances the incumbents were duly re-elected and approved by the meeting.  Diane Jenkin was nominated by Jenny Wiseman and seconded by Peter Brattle. Stuart Westley was nominated by Chris Lund and seconded by Peter Brattle.  Susan Keach was nominated by Nita Gowans and seconded by Gill Blewitt. |  |  |

**Meeting 2 – The APCM then proceeded as follows**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Agenda Item** | **Notes** | **Who** | **When** |
| **1** | **Chairman’s welcome and opening remarks** | During the meeting reference will be made to the agenda, the reports and the financial accounts. |  |  |
| **2** | **Attendance and apologies for absence** | As above. |  |  |
| **3** | **Review of minutes of previous meeting (14th October 2020)** | Approved and to be signed. | DM |  |
| **4** | **Matters arising** | Mavis Francis noted that her report of the Community Lunch group 2019 had been omitted from the APCM booklet altogether and that the report of the Church Fellowship group 2019 had been incorrectly presented. Refer to addendum. |  |  |
| **5** | **Assistant church wardens for St Mary’s and St Michael’s.** | Need to look for assistant wardens during the next twelve months. |  |  |
| **6** | **Lay members to PCC.** | Donald Bell and Jean Perriman did not wish to continue to serve on the PCC. Jackie Davis agreed to continue for a further term. Nominated by MV and seconded by SW and was therefore duly elected.  There remain up to five vacancies to be filled.  DM thanked members for their service to the PCC. |  |  |
| **7** | **Sidespersons.** | No change. |  |  |
| **8** | **Financial reports**  **and appointment of independent examiner.** | Treasurer MV gave a summary of her report which please find in church or on the website.  2020’s accounts were independently examined by Peter McKay, whose firm (Nicholsons) has merged with Jones Hunt & Keelings and is no longer able to examine our accounts free of charge as for the past 15 years. For 2020’s accounts a fee of 50% of their standard charge plus VAT was paid.  It was agreed that the PCC would seek a replacement independent examiner for 2021. Discussions are taking place with someone who may agree to carry out this responsibility free of charge as well as considering Jones Hunt & Keelings. Their charge would be £3,000 including VAT. |  |  |
| **9** | **Team Rector’s report** | The Rector gave a very full report of the exceptional year that 2020 had been due to the coronavirus pandemic. With everything being closed in the first lockdown, worship and activities were supported by live-streamed services, weekly emails, YouTube recordings and website updates which were excellent. Following the meeting the Rector’s report can be found in full on the church’s website.  Various attendees at the meeting voiced their appreciation of The Rector’s ministry. |  |  |
| **10** | **PCC Secretary’s report** | No questions were raised. |  |  |
| **11** | **Deanery Synod report** | It would be nice to recruit a fourth Deanery Synod representative. Deanery Synod enjoy some good speakers at their meetings. |  |  |
| **12** | **Team Council report** | Refer to APCM booklet. No queries were raised. |  |  |
| **13** | **St Mary’s fabric report.** | Refer to APCM booklet. No queries were raised. |  |  |
| **14** | **St Mary’s safeguarding report** | DM reported that there had been no safeguarding incidents since the last APCM. Vicky Jenkin has agreed to take up the role of safeguarding officer. |  |  |
| **15** | **St Michael’s Church fabric report** | Refer to APCM booklet. No queries were raised. |  |  |
| **16** | **Secondary reports** | Jane Bacon thanked Maggie Varco for keeping the Fairtrade stall going throughout the pandemic.  Colin Hull noted that Usha Hull had been unable to carry out her visits to care homes or drama group activity. |  |  |
| **17** | **Any other business** | Peter Brattle noted that the number of readers has declined and proposed that new people should be recruited.  Diane Jenkin noted that six people had applied to be on the electoral roll and Sunday worshippers had increased from 58 -60 to 74-75.  Jenny Wiseman asked how many people were on the electoral roll at present. DM advised that the present total is 257 persons. |  |  |
|  | **Grace** | Grace was said by all over Zoom. |  |  |
|  | **Thank yous** | Throughout the meeting there were many thank yous and expressions of appreciation for work done by members of the committee, both for committee work and outside it. These were all appreciated but are too numerous to itemise in these minutes. |  |  |

**Addendum**

The following report of Community Lunch activities was omitted in error from the 2019

APCM booklet (presented October 2020):

**Community Lunch Report 2019-2020**

The Lunch is still very popular. Numbers vary from month to month. For our Christmas one there were 52 enjoying food, pulling crackers and wearing hats!  Many people who live on their own find eating with others most enjoyable.  As usual a drink is served and pieces of interesting breads with butter start the meal.  This is followed by a main course, a pudding and finishes with coffee or tea.  We are very grateful to Maria of Fizz Catering for providing a very tasty meal. Diners often linger over coffee for a good chat and then it is home for a sleep! Since the Lunch began just over two years ago around £2000 has been donated to the Church so thank you to everyone who joins us and thank you to Maria and her helpers from Fizz Caterers.

Mavis Francis

October 2020

Secondly the report of the Fellowship Group in the 2019 APCM booklet (presented October 2020) was not correct and should have read as follows:

**Church Fellowship report 2019-2020**

We have had another year of interesting meetings.  These have included talks about the Dead Sea scrolls, birds, the Salvation Army, spies, growing up in South Africa, and embroidery amongst others.  A strawberry tea was enjoyed, the handbell ringers entertained us at Christmas and a lunch took place in January.  Attendance continues to grow.  The Salvation Army and CPRE were our charities chosen for support this year.  We also gave £300 to St. Mary’s Church Restoration Fund. Our new programme starts in May.

Marjorie Lyon

October 2020