



**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
OF ST PETER, STONEGATE
ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2019**

Administrative information

St Peter's church is situated on Station Road, Stonegate. The parish is part of the Diocese of Chichester within the Church of England. The correspondence address is Carillon Cottage, High Street, Wadhurst, TN5 6AA. Stonegate PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

During the year, the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC):

<i>Priest-in-Charge</i>	The Rev Dr Paul Ratcliff	<i>Chair</i>
<i>Churchwardens</i>	Tessa Moore-Bick Stephen Burley	<i>Secretary</i>
<i>Deanery Synod reps</i>	Kate Burley David Hollingdale	
<i>Elected members</i>	Neil Cameron Mary Hope Simon Gaffney Ian Kelso Martin Moore-Bick	<i>(to 14th April 2019)</i>
<i>Co-opted members</i>	Katherine Luckhurst Peter Thompson	<i>Treasurer</i> <i>Reader</i>

Structure, Governance and Management

Membership of the PCC is either ex-officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. In addition, the PCC has the power to co-opt members. The PCC's Standing Committee, which is required by law, comprises the Priest-in-Charge, the Churchwardens, the Chair, the Hon Treasurer and the Hon Secretary. This committee has the power to transact business of the PCC between its meetings subject to any directions given by the PCC.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. St Peter's PCC consists of the Priest-in-Charge, Churchwardens, the Reader and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services regularly are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and to consider standing for election to the PCC. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. New members receive initial training in the workings of the PCC. The full PCC met four times during the year with an average level of attendance of 86%.

Safeguarding

We have a Safeguarding Officer. She and the churchwardens have been DBS checked. All members of the PCC appreciate that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; on-line Safeguarding Training, modules C0 (Core) and C1 (Foundation) has been completed. Our Parish has achieved SQP1 in the Diocesan audit.

As we have no Disclosure Officer, the Disclosure Officer for Wadhurst will be approached to carry out that function for Stonegate.

Health and Safety

A Health and Safety Policy, 'Keeping People Safe', has been adopted. The Churchwardens have overall responsibility for implementing the policy and are in charge of First Aid arrangements.

The Fire Risk Assessment has been completed. We do not have fire drills but we comply with all other requirements.

Aims and purposes

Stonegate Parochial Church Council (the PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Priest-in-Charge in promoting the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical in the ecclesiastical parish of Stonegate. The PCC has responsibility of maintaining the church fabric and the churchyard.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of the parish community of St Peter. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. We maintain the fabric of the church, Grade 2 listed, Arts and Crafts style, and its churchyard for the benefit of the whole community. The church is well attended by those living in the village for special events and at festival services, especially the Carol Service. It is a focal point of the village and the church clock striking the hour is much appreciated.

Achievements and Performance

Following the sexennial review the Church Electoral Roll now stands at 45 members, of which 31 are resident within the parish. At the review 4 names were added and 25 names were removed, 8 having moved away and 17 having not responded.

Our Electoral Roll and the accompanying Data Protection information are held in Carillon Cottage. The originals are in our safe.

Worship and Prayer

The PCC is keen to offer different styles of service Sunday by Sunday to enable as many people as possible from the local community to experience worship that is both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

The current pattern of worship is:

1 st Sunday	10am Parish Communion
2 nd Sunday	10am All Age Service
3 rd Sunday	8am Holy Communion (Common Worship, Order 1, Traditional Language)
4 th Sunday	10am Morning Prayer with Holy Communion
5 th Sunday	10am 'Three as One' service, held jointly with Wadhurst and Tidebrook churches

A review of our service pattern was held during the year, in the course of which families in the village were consulted about their preferences for Sunday services. No clear consensus was forthcoming, so the service pattern was not changed.

Seasonal and festival services are very well supported and the church hosts Easter, Harvest and Christmas services for the local Church of England Primary School and the independent preparatory school in the parish, Bricklehurst Manor.

The average attendance for a normal Sunday service in 2019 was 18 adults and 0 children. The 8am service of Holy Communion on the third Sunday has a lower attendance (around 8 to 10) but is highly valued by the faithful congregation.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services and memorial services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. We have celebrated two baptisms and one wedding and have held one funeral in our church this year.

Deanery Synod

Two members of the PCC sit on the Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

The Church Fabric and Churchyard

With an Archdeacon's Notice Approving Work of January 2019, a substantial upgrade to the sound System has taken place. It was carried out by specialist firm, DM Music Ltd at a cost of £6,217. Included in the upgrade is a loop system for the hard of hearing and an integrated CD player.

The heating system has been sorted out after it was found that we can either have the storage heaters with fans or overhead heaters and night storage without fans. To prevent overloading, fuses have been removed from two heaters in the chancel and one in the nave.

A key-safe has been installed inside the porch to the left of the main entrance to the church.

The church is now cleaned weekly by Bishops Cleaning Services of Crowborough.

The entrance porch façade has been repaired and redecorated.

The crack in the wall next to the altar rail has been repaired, as has the wall at the end of the side aisle.

A new movement-activated light has been installed above the front porch.

A number of small solar-powered lights have been placed on the path leading to the outside lavatory.

The churchyard, as before, has been regularly maintained to a high standard by John Brophy. The area around the older graves is not mown on a regular basis so that the wild flowers are encouraged to grow. The mature trees are all in good condition. The path between the school and the Glebe Field, which is regularly used by the school for recreation and sport, is regularly mown. The outside lavatory, shared between the church and the school, is cleaned weekly.

As in previous years, a letter went out to all members of the congregation and the wider Village to invite contributions to the Church Yard Fund. This year the Fund raised £2,370.

A new pedestrian gate into the turning circle has been installed at a cost of £583.

Pastoral Care

Two members of our parish were unable to attend church due to sickness or age. Two members of the PCC, who are authorised communion assistants, visit these ladies and take communion to them on a regular basis.

Mission and Evangelism

In addition to local mission and evangelism in our own community, St Peter's PCC seeks to contribute to the Mission of God locally, nationally and globally.

The following donations were made: £500 to the Church Mission Society (CMS), £500 to the Diocesan Family Support Work and £200 to the Street Pastors in Tunbridge Wells.

We support Nourish, the local food bank, on a regular monthly basis by donating items of food and toiletries which have been specifically requested.

We continue to support Daniel and Sarah Brito Medeiros, our CMS link partners. They visited us on 8th September with their two daughters Sophie and Ana before returning to Brazil where they work with street children.

One of our congregation organises a collection jar of 5ps for our CMS partner.

At our Harvest Festival we once again collected for The Farming Community Network (FCN) and raised £264. Produce from this service was shared between The Mount School in Wadhurst and The Salvation Army in Tunbridge Wells.

Our Remembrance Day collection for the Earl Haig Fund came to £421.

On Advent Sunday, as in previous years, members of the congregation brought presents for children and teenagers to be distributed in the Hastings area through the Diocesan Family Support Work.

At Christmas, collections were taken for the Tunbridge Wells Churches Winter Shelter (at the Carol Service, £551) and The Children's Society (on Christmas Day, £309).

Focus, the monthly magazine of the three churches, is delivered around the village to many subscribers; spare copies are always available to purchase in the church.

Ecumenical Relationships

The church is a member of Churches Together in Wadhurst, which, following the closure of the Methodist Chapel in Wadhurst a few years ago, now consists of St Peter and St Paul Wadhurst, St John the Baptist Tidebrook and the Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church (Wadhurst).

In 2019 we held ecumenical services for Christian Unity, Good Friday, Advent Carols and Christmas Carols. We also had a daily prayer meeting for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and marked Red Wednesday with a meeting with guest speakers from Open Doors and Aid to the Church in Need.

A 'Sacred Space' service for Holy Week was organised by a member of our congregation together with a member of the Sacred Heart Church in Wadhurst. It took place in Stonegate on the Monday of Holy Week and at the Sacred Heart the following evening. These services are arranged twice yearly.

Financial Review

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £29,024 of which £17,728 was unrestricted voluntary donations, and a further £4,209 was from Gift Aid. Restricted donations of £2,370 were also received and are detailed in the Financial Statements.

The planned giving through envelopes and banker's orders has increased by 13.1%. Total income, including tax recovered, has increased by less than 1% (excluding vat refund on last year's expenditure on the Steeple) compared with last year. This was due to fewer fees received from Wadhurst PCC

£31,121 was spent from unrestricted funds including the contribution of £12,000 to the diocesan parish share that remained the same as the previous year. £6,260 was spent proving a sound system which includes a loop. Cleaning of the Church was an expenditure that was new this year and £2,400 was spent. This expenditure will continue.

The net result for the year was an excess of payments over receipts of £2,097 on unrestricted funds. Adding bank and deposit balances brought forward at the beginning of the year, the balances carried forward at 31st December on unrestricted funds totalled £20,882.

The CBF Investment fund was valued at £141,897 (2018 £115,916)

A Legacy Policy template has been adopted.

Reserves Policy

Money should only be kept in reserve for specific reasons. Although the Bible clearly indicates that we should not hoard, it is also clear that sensible planning for known events and responsibility for others is important. We consider it prudent to keep sufficient of our reserves in cash or near cash to cover at least three months' outgoings and relatively minor unplanned building works. It is also considered prudent to have funds in reserve to cover any significant building work and to allow future generations to maintain the church building in good condition.

The policy states that the PCC should keep approximately £15,000 - 20,000 in the CBF Deposit Fund. This is to cover at least 3 months normal expenditure and any unforeseen maintenance work. In order to provide sufficient funds for future maintenance work and to ensure a stable future for the church, we will retain the balance of our reserve funds in a long-term investment account, such as the CBF Investment Fund in which we are currently invested.

Community Benefit

St Peter's church provides engaging worship on Sundays for all in the community to attend and the church is open every day of the week for quiet reflection and prayer.

We continue to maintain the churchyard to a high standard for the enjoyment of the village as a whole. The churchyard is on one of the routes to a popular footpath.

We continue to host the Stonegate Community Choir for their regular rehearsals and concerts.

St Peter's actively supports our local Church of England School. The incumbent and his wife take collective worship weekly and she and one of the parishioners serve as Foundation Governors. As well as hosting the school's Christmas, Easter, Harvest and School Leavers' services, the church is the designated safe space to which the children and staff will be evacuated if the school site needs to be vacated, for example in the event of a major fire. The school has approximately 100 pupils and 15 staff.

We invite the children and their parents to our Mothering Sunday service, as well as to our monthly All Age Worship. These services are flagged up by the School through their on-line newsletter.

A member of staff or someone on the governing body is invited to read at our Carol Service.

The Forest School takes place in the wood belonging to a couple from our congregation who generously allow free access.

A policy relating to a significant event of national or local mourning has been drawn up and adopted. The church would be open for all those wishing to record condolences or simply to reflect or pray.

Optional Information

We are blessed that many give of their talents to make St Peter's the happy and well-organised community that it is. We have groups of flower arrangers, brass polishers and there are many who provide refreshments after services, as well as those who help at larger services such as the 3 as 1s.

There are too many to mention by name, although some should be accorded special recognition:

Mary Hope who does such a great deal for our church in so many ways. Her outstanding contribution was recognised by Bishop Martin when she was awarded The Order of St Richard in 2019. This is a new and very prestigious award.

Peter Thompson our Reader whose ministry is so greatly appreciated.

Malcolm Curtis our organist.

Phoebe Cameron, Foundation Governor, whose contribution to our Church of England Primary School has been extensive and most significant in helping them to achieve their recent 'Excellent' SIAMS report.

Also, to **Heather Ratcliff** who has joined Phoebe as the second Foundation Governor.

Kate Luckhurst for her work as our Hon. Treasurer

Kate Burley for her work as our Safeguarding Officer.

David Hollingdale, who has done a great deal in assisting **Stephen Burley** to maintain the fabric of our church and Stephen in his role as churchwarden.

Stuart Wood, who has given professional advice and assistance in maintaining the fabric.

Neil and Phoebe Cameron who raise funds from church members and the wider community to contribute towards the maintenance of the churchyard.

Anne Scoones our Electoral Roll officer.

Charlotte Snow who acts as the primary contact with our CMS Link Partners in Brazil.

Christopher Simmons who is our independent financial examiner.

(TM-B)