

October 2020

St Helen's Church

Ashby-de-la-Zouch



Loving God, loving others, loving the world

Annual Report for 2019



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Secretary's Report

Administrative information

St Helen's Church is situated in Lower Church Street, Ashby de la Zouch, and is part of the Diocese of Leicester. The PCC is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission

Structure, governance and management

- The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure.
- The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC.
- At the APCM held on 10th April 2019, the Electoral Roll stood at 142 names.

PCC members who have served since the APCM held in April 2019 are:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position (& office held)</i>
Rev. Canon Mary Gregory	Team Rector
Rev. Stewart Betts	Curate
Valerie Bowron	Churchwarden
Helen Smith	Churchwarden
Sue Brown	Reader
David Watson	Reader
Judith Lewis	Reader
Elizabeth Smith	Elected Member (Safeguarding Officer)
Pauline Wells	Elected Member
Mary Handford	Elected Member
Emily Darlington	Elected Member (Resigned Nov. 2019)
John Dennis	Elected Member (Secretary)
Eileen Coombs	Elected Member (Electoral Roll Officer & Deanery Synod Rep)
Steph Whiten	Elected Member (PCC Lay Vice Chair)

David Harris
John Backman
Valerie Backman
Jill Chapman

Elected Member
Elected Member (Treasurer)
Elected Member
Co-Opted Member (Parish
Administrator)

The PCC are also supported in their work by the Independent Examiner – Mr David Howitt, who took over from Geoff Bull in September 2019

Objectives and Activities.

St Helen's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, Rev'd Canon Mary Gregory, in promoting in the Parish our mission through prayer, worship, learning and action. It also has responsibility for the maintenance of the church building and the Community Heritage Centre and its associated grounds.

John Dennis
PCC Secretary



Meetings of the PCC

The full PCC has met ten times during the year, the last meeting being held via the Zoom Conference App during the period of lockdown. Some areas of focus for the PCC during this time have been:

Finance. This has been an area of discussion at all meetings as our new Treasurer has worked tirelessly to stabilise our financial position.

Mission. There have been some changes this year. The Mission Group has been amalgamated into our Worship Leaders Group and the Parish has ceased its support for Jonny and Rachel Vaughan at France Mission and has moved support to Jonglei Mission.

Building Issues. Items dealt with have included the removal of fungal infection from the Priest Room, fitting of new locks to the Vestry doors and looking into electrification of the Sanctuary and Lady Chapel lamps and making these safe.

PCC Away- Day. In October 2019 a Training Away Day for PCC Members and Worship Leaders was held at the Youth Hostel at the National Forest centre at Moira. This was led by Rev. Stuart Burns from Leicester Diocese. This event was well attended and proved very valuable and enjoyable for all taking part.

National Church Issues. These would continue to be discussed as and when they arose.

Churchyard. As a closed Churchyard this is the responsibility of the Town Council. This year the pathways to the north door have been resurfaced, the hedge removed and a new screen hedge planted in front of the waste bins, new kerbstones laid at the eastern end of the Churchyard and new flower beds planted.

Heritage Centre Garden. The Team led by Andrew Chapman has removed the spoil heap from the garden and completed works in this area and thanks to Andrew's hard work finance has been raised to cover the garden renovation costs.

PCC Policies. These have continued to be reviewed and approved as appropriate during the year.

Churches do not have to publish minutes of PCC meetings automatically and make them available to the whole church membership but St. Helen's PCC do make these available after each meeting.

John Dennis
PCC Secretary

Bell ringers

2019 seems to have been a rather quiet year for the bell ringers at St Helen's.

We rang for seven weddings.

The tower hosted the radio mast for the Ashby 20 run which was not cancelled this year.

We welcomed two visiting bands who wanted to ring on our bells.

The bells were rung to three quarter peals and one full peal. To date we have no outstanding requests to ring any peals.

The monthly Tuesday practices continued to be well attended and we are very grateful to the Churchwardens for facilitating this and providing heating in the winter months.

We rang all ten bells for the carol service on 22 December.

We have two new learners.

Michael Davidson

Bible Study Group

Our group continued to meet throughout 2019, although a little depleted. First of all, our thanks to Margaret Worrall for her lovely hospitality and bottomless teapot. Thanks also go to Eileen Coombs who kindly covered my holiday. Rev. Trevor Parkerson also deserves a thank you for covering, sometimes at short notice, plus kindly conducting our Lent studies. I am so grateful to you all.

2019 kicked off with the continuation of our study of Mark's gospel, which took us into Lent. After Easter we tackled Ecclesiastes, which on the surface is a glass half empty! But we persevered. From June up until our summer break, we studied 2 Peter. After we reconvened in September we tackled 1 Peter, followed by Psalms 2 and 6. So 2019 was an eclectic mix.

On 9 December we enjoyed a lovely meal at the Ferrers Arms at which we introduced 2 new members, followed by news of 2 more. After a year of small numbers, we are delighted to welcome our newcomers, who I hope will enjoy our gatherings, sometimes serious, often fun and occasionally controversial.

Steph Whiten

Brunch on Sunday

Brunch on Sunday continues to be a very popular event for the 8:30am and 10:30am congregations to meet and come closer to each other.

The menu continues to be very varied, versatile and innovative especially under Liz Smith and her amazing PRG team. Their enthusiasm and 'professionalism' proved contagious.

We have successfully recruited new members to lead or join teams in the past year and we owe them a huge thank you for coming on board.

We have continued to include generally many Fairtrade products such as granola, fruit juices, bananas, but also to coincide with Fairtrade Fortnight on 1st March.

It is wonderful and encouraging to see so many happy, smiling and contented faces in the Centre and to hear the laughter and chatter of children and adults, all enjoying their tea and coffee, bacon baps, and even the occasional burnt toast.

A big thank you to all the team leaders and their bands of willing hard workers, and all who come and be partakers of our church family Brunch.

Eileen Coombs

Churchwardens Report

It is with satisfaction and pleasure we are able to report on the events and activities of 2019. We continue with the help of our resourceful and faithful volunteers to create and further promote the warmth and hospitality we have nurtured over the years and embrace new ventures to enhance and strengthen our worship - this being clearly evident at the Maundy Thursday Liturgy of the Last Supper attended by over seventy of our friends from across the Flagstaff Family of Churches.

We have welcomed the opportunities to celebrate and whilst we bade farewell to Laura Jackson we rejoiced in her ordination and wished her well in her new vocation. Likewise we were able to share Andy Smith's appointment as Warden of Readers and Steph Whiten's licensing as Pastoral Assistant.

Sunday afternoon baptisms were introduced being supported by members of St, Helen's.

In September we had the privilege and personal delight to host Revd. Stewart's ordination service.

During a year which featured a General Election and withdrawal from the European Union we felt a sensitive need to mark both occasions. In doing

so we were able to engage with the wider community and provide what proved a welcome ministry.

Whilst in general the weekly attendances were slightly down the special services at Remembrance Sunday, Advent and Christmas showed a remarkable increase in numbers and enthusiasm, giving us reason to applaud but also to question.

Regular and familiar events remained in place with a few new additions. We were approached by the NCS scheme and as a result a number of young people based mainly in the Heritage Centre for a week embarked on a programme of community service, this produced mixed comments but, on reflection, knowledge was gained for possible future encounters.

Friends gathered for a Harvest Lunch, an overwhelming Autumn Fair and a seemingly popular 'sleepout' specifically aimed to raise awareness for the homeless.

All efforts generated to stage the Festival of Angels were justly rewarded by a spectacular event viewed and appreciated by many and served to epitomise the progress achieved over the year which we, with your support, have felt privileged to serve.

Val Bowron and Helen Smith

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod meets three times in a year in different churches to update members on recent happenings within the deanery.

Rev. Mary Gregory and Rev. Stewart Betts and a lay representative from St Helen's usually attended.

Topics discussed are varied, from resolutions decided in General Synod, parish share, clergy vacancies, Everyday Faith and Try Praying initiatives, BAME/ IWC ministries, changes to Deanery Synod term limits etc.

Andy Smith, the new Warden of Readers, talked about his new role and how it links with 'Everyday Witness' in the September 2019 meeting.

The 19th February 2020 meeting saw the Licensing of Revd. Gill Pennington as Area Dean following the retirement of Rev. Canon Vivien Elphick.

Eileen Coombs
Lay representative

EAT Team

The 'EAT' (Events & Activities Team) started in July 2019 as an amalgamation of the Church & the Heritage Project Events Teams, when Heritage Funding came to an end in June 2019. Previously, one team had organised 'church' events and a separate team had organised 'heritage' events. From July 2019 onwards, we were all working with the same 'pot' of money, both to fund our events and for income generated by them.

Helen Smith created an 'Events budget' document as a result of the first meeting, listing our proposed activities each month, their date, target audience, event leader, projected cost and projected income.

It was decided that one person would take charge or 'champion' each event, building a team of volunteers around them. This would spread responsibility and work load.

Between July and December there was a Church Fete, championed by Eileen Coombs; a concert series and a Festival of Angels. We put on seven school holiday 'Workshop Wednesdays' for primary age children and a calligraphy workshop for adults. We held several exhibitions inside the Heritage Centre along with our winter Heritage lecture series and took part in the Festival of Archaeology and Heritage Open Days. In July we hosted twelve young adults from the National Citizen Scheme for a week who helped with craft preparation and undertook a bake sale. Three group tours took place including one including the entire fifty members of the Smisby WI. In November we collaborated with Ashby Town Council, Castle, Ashby Museum and the Civic Society to host the group of visitors from our sister city, Evans, Colorado, USA.

We are continuing to build on our relationships with local heritage and cultural groups such as the Leicestershire & Rutland Heritage Forum, Ashby Museum and Ashby Arts Festival.

The team meets approximately every six weeks to discuss our rolling programme of events. Helen updates the document to ensure that all events are in the diary, we are not overstretched, there are no clashes and we have an interesting and varied ongoing programme.

Events are a great way to engage with both our congregation and our local community, provide enjoyable activities and raise some funds.

Sharn Stinson, Julie Starkey, Helen Smith

Fabric Report

We are pleased to report that there were several improvements carried out in 2019. The choir stalls were adapted so that they can now be moved more easily to create a flexible space for worship and concerts. At the same time there were some remedial repairs to the floorboards beneath and around the stalls.

Heritage Lottery funding enabled us to have the peal book and three antique Bibles cleaned, refurbished and boxed to protect them for many years to come.

Ashby Town Council completed the second phase of their work to enhance the churchyard with new and replanted flower borders, resurfaced paths to the north door and vestry door, and the installation of a new bench and bin with Ashby Logos. The church has also ordered an orientation board which is the final piece of our heritage project interpretation.

During 2019 we set up a Buildings Subgroup of the PCC with the remit to ensure routine maintenance of both the church and the Heritage Centre is carried out and to work on larger building repairs and projects as directed by the PCC.

The group meets quarterly and is made up of PCC members and those from our congregation with an interest in the fabric of the church. First tasks included creating a maintenance schedule for both buildings, recording a full inventory of the Heritage Centre, and setting up an email address to report building issues.

Health and safety factors determined the priority work for the group. Decluttering of the church and reviewing the storage in both buildings has been ongoing throughout the year and should be completed in 2020. Our insurers have identified a risk with the pulley systems on the Sanctuary and Lady Chapel lamps and we have worked with lighting contractors to design a solution by improved electrification and fixing the pulleys – the next step is to gain faculty approval for this work to be carried out.

An inspection and condition report undertaken in Spring 2019 on all the monuments in the church recommended further work to check the safety of the wall mounted memorials and specific actions to monitor some memorials in the Hastings Chapel and the Nundi slab which exhibit deterioration due to damp. We are currently seeking funding to contribute to the cost of this project.

The team has also done work on reviewing the church security; replacing faulty locks; removal and replacement of dangerous ladders; and a trial repair on some of the pews.

Two building issues have arisen during the year. A problem with the church heating was caused by a worn-out sump pump tripping the electrics. Our

thanks to Simon for carrying out the necessary repairs but it has flagged up the need for further work to reduce the impact of damp in the boiler room. Fungal growths were also discovered in the Priestroom and a full survey was conducted by timber specialists Hutton and Rostron working alongside our conservation architect. The growths have now been removed and the area is being regularly monitored as this could be an indication of problems with the lead roofing.

Despite these issues the church remains in generally good order and visitors comment on the fact that it is well cared for. So, we would like to express our continued appreciation to the dedicated team who keep our church cleaned and maintained for everyone to enjoy. Thank you.

Val Bowron and Helen Smith

Flowers 2019

Well here we are again another year , another annual report ... I'm going to start this year with saying thank you. Sue Sibson left Ashby last year and we miss her so much, not just for her bespoke arrangements but her bubbly, loving friendship , we wish her much happiness in her new life nearer to her daughters and grandchildren.

I also thank all arrangers who faithfully decorate the Church and also those who contribute financially.

We have made a few changes this year so you may see more green arrangements or less flowers than usual. We decided this due to fewer arrangers and anticipated that flowers may become more scarce post Brexit.

You don't have to be a professional arranger to get involved, we can give you some help, its quite good fun!! and does not need to be expensive. You may like to give a donation to the flower fund or pay for a week on the rota - there are many ways you can support this very worthwhile ministry. If after reading this you would like to get involved in any way please give me a call 01530 416370 .

Margaret Lawrence

Heritage Centre Garden Project

At the beginning of 2019 Sharn – our Heritage Officer (and former landscape architect) joined our group. She and I had two meetings with a couple of members of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (L&RWT) and our original design was modified. This included redesigning the right terrace to match and complement the left terrace.

In spring the bulbs Steph organised in 2018 all came back to life giving us bright and colourful terraces. Weeds began growing too, of course, and Judy and Derek have been stalwarts with such tasks as weeding and watering.

Clearing the plot continued, with some surprising discoveries under the mounds of rubble and topsoil, including a garden bench, a wheelbarrow, remote control boxes, and a children's plastic climbing frame. There were also an enormous amount of slabs which were successfully sold via social media. Eventually the end wall was rediscovered. Rubble removing, plus the interesting challenge of a very large tree stump, continued throughout the year, sterling work by Vernon, Martin and Mark.; and we filled two skips!!

The sheds, including an electric supply, were installed (many thanks to Hugh in particular). Old fence panels and severely bulky concrete posts were removed thanks to the efforts of Martin, Chris and Simon, and new fence panels were erected

L&RWT returned and constructed a Water Wall on the side of the left terrace, a pagoda and seating area at far end of the garden and a brick circle path. Completing the fully accessible path & planting of the right terrace is due some time in 2020.

Funding has included a £500 grant from East Midland Airport Community Fund, £5235 from Big Lottery – Awards for All, £837 from the Co-op Local Community Fund, and £4550.24 from the Co-op Communities Fund. Liz Smith has been a committed fundraiser through her events.

We had over 200 hours of volunteer 'labour' between May and October. What an amazing difference everyone's efforts have made. Thank you.

Andrew Chapman

Heritage Project

By the start of 2019, we were in the final 6 months of a 3 year Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) project and our staff and volunteers had extensive experience of running heritage activities. A full programme was carried out from January to June 2019, including Heritage Talks, activities for children in school holidays, school visits, a talk on the discovery of Richard III's remains (during the Festival of Archaeology) and guided tours.

The HLF grant conditions required us to have an Evaluation Report prepared by an independent consultant. This was to judge whether the Project was successful in achieving its aims. Team members and staff provided much of the data on activities, visitor numbers, feedback, photographs etc, and our consultant, Jane Seaman, drew up the report.

Our original proposal included a Community Play, written especially for the Project, as the final event of the Project. Our Project Operations Manager, Sharn Stinson, oversaw this. With significant support from members of the Ashby Dramatic Society and Ashby Museum five short plays were written and performed in church on 12 and 13 July. Appreciative audiences enjoyed the performances.

Grants from public funds quite rightly require proper accounting. Our final grant claim covered the period from March to June. It reported on all of the activities carried out in that period and listed every item of expenditure. I submitted it along with the Evaluation Report. On 22 July we received written confirmation that our final grant payment of £30,240 was approved. It was received in our bank account on 2 August 2019, taking the total amount received to £604,800 (the maximum under the terms of the grant).

That's not the end, or even the beginning of the end, of our heritage activities. The terms of the grant remain in place for 20 years. With the help of our volunteers we will hold many more events in our Heritage Centre and church building.

It was a privilege to chair the Team of volunteers that ran the grant-funded Project. We had some difficult issues to deal with over the years, but learned a lot and built strong friendships. None of the achievements of the Project would have been possible without the support of the PCC, clergy and church members.

Susan Boardman-Weston

Lanterns

Lanterns has been ticking over this past year with little change. We have a small number of children who enjoy the sessions we run. Hopefully their enthusiastic descriptions of what they've learned and the activities they've participated in towards the end of the service will continue to encourage others to join in.

We have a new member of the team, Jenny, who has helped with one session so far, and we look forward to having her on board as a valuable member of the team. Several of the Lanterns team have had personal issues to deal with this last year, which has meant that we've sometimes had issues filling the rota but we endeavour to run a session every week during term time - at the back of church if we only have one helper.

Roots magazines continue to be a useful resource for planning and the majority of the team use the online version.

Lynne Munroe

Little Fishes

Little Fishes has had another good year with numbers remaining pretty steady. It has been a joy not only to welcome new mums/carers but also new siblings for current and former Little Fishes.

Our core team of volunteers are ably supported by Adrienne, Val, Zoe and, new to the team, Jenny; their invaluable support means that we always have at least two helpers in the kitchen and two in the main hall.

In July we set up a closed group FaceBook page to enable us to share information with parents. This currently has forty-two members.

We made one major purchase from our dedicated fund during the year, a new table that we use for our craft activity after mid-morning snack time. It means we no longer have to clear any toys away to make space for the craft.

In the autumn we were pleased to be able to increase the donation we make to PCC to cover the cost of coffee/tea and the use of the building. We hope to be able to maintain this increase, especially during the winter months when the heating is on.

We are very grateful that Rev'd Stewart has been able to attend regularly to share a bible story with the children. It is wonderful to see how the children (and mums!) are always fully engaged by his story-telling.

We continue to promote and encourage attendance at family friendly church services and heritage events and it is great to see Little Fishes, both former and current, attending in good numbers.

Caroline Essex, Caroline Fraser, Sue Evans & Judy Hunt

Mothers Union

Here we are at the end of another successful year.

During the year we had a speaker from Rainbows Hospice in Loughborough who gave us a most enlightening talk about the organisation and our curate Stewart Betts also gave a most interesting talk on his road to Ordination. In November one of our members from our MUM2 group gave us a very inspiring account on shepherding, relating to the animals she and her husband keep.

Julie Ann led a Quiet Gardens day at her home and also led another of our meetings when she talked about the Book of Ruth. Our seaside party for AFIA was also hosted by Julie Ann and Barry and we thank them both most sincerely for their support and contributions to our meetings.

We had our usual "open meetings " for Shrove Tuesday and coffee morning, which this year we held in the Heritage Centre and started at a later time which seemed to pay off. The summer cream tea was held at Val Bowron's home and we thank her for hosting these events.

Our extra activities are very much on-going, the Prayer Partners Scheme, gift of bibles to wedding couples and cards presented to children baptised in our church.

Stitching with the Spirit group is still thriving and the evening MUM2 goes from strength to strength. We continue to take part in the annual Wave of Prayer and quarterly Deanery Prayer Meetings and also attend services and events organised by other groups. We have two representatives on the Deanery Committee.

Our new reporter for the Parish Magazine, Beryl Stephens has done an excellent job for us each month and we thank her most sincerely. For all other members who help in different ways for the branch, we thank very much.

Margaret Worrall



Music

One of the key moments of 2019 was the period when I wasn't being Director of Music. In February I headed off to New Zealand for 5 weeks, and was able to hand it all over to very capable hands. In particular, thank you to Caroline Essex for taking charge, to Chris Lewis for organising the music for the All-Age service, and to Margaret and Howard for all of the organ playing. I am very grateful for the hard work and loyalty of our regular choristers and instrumentalists and the support of our extra singers, both during this time, but also throughout the year.

Full Choir

- 7 trebles – and valued support from Elizabeth & Michelle; 5 altos – Carolines E&F, Suzanne, Anne & Adrienne; 4 tenors – Andy, James, Chris & Derek; 3 basses – John, Hugh & Cameron; plus our returning extras
- special services during Holy Week and Easter; Remembrance; Advent & Christmas, continue to receive very favourable comments - the Christmas Carol Service exceeded all expectations - again with a good number of ex-trebles boosting the front rows of stalls – the service was so well received, we are looking at putting on an extra Christmas Carol Concert in 2020
- RSCM Voice for Life training scheme continues for the trebles (and Cameron!)
- Jenny continues her successful role as Head Chorister, ably assisted by Annabel
- In February 2019 Jenny was awarded the Kendall Award for 2018. 2019's recipient was Annabel.
- We lead the Carol Service at Staunton Harold, which has now become a fixture in the calendar; and we even squeezed in some carol singing at 'The Plough'
- We are blessed with having 'sopranos' who can blend with the trebles. This is particularly helpful at Evensong, when a number of our trebles are often unavailable – many of whom have been playing their instruments for the All Age service in the morning.

Junior Choir

- regular contributions at Mothering Sunday, Harvest, & Christingle services continues
- attendance varies, depending on family commitments – but there is plenty of enthusiasm and some high quality singing too

Summer Concert

- The Full and Junior Choirs were joined by Great Wood Choir, some talented instrumentalists – including two items from the newly formed Wind Band, the Dads n Lads, Mums n Girls. An excellent event, with high musical standards enjoyed equally by audience and performers alike – the Rugby Song went down a treat

Music Group

- The Music Group, comprises Aimie & Emily F on clarinet; 'Suse' on cello (with very helpful support from daddy James); Cameron on bassoon; Annabel on trombone & Cornelia on the violin; plus the piano
- new arrangements are made to meet the needs of our young instrumentalists, and also new songs introduced by worship leaders
- Andy & Caroline (F) & sometimes a few trebles continue to provide the vocal lead; and we rehearse 20 minutes or so before the All Age Service; (which is not always enough time – there are sometimes lingering brunch eaters to coax away from The Heritage Centre)

Organ & Pianos

- the organ continues to be tuned twice a year, and is generally in good order – I continue to liaise with the tuners – Cousans Organs (based in Coalville) and discuss its needs and any age related issues (they have been called a couple of extra times to deal with little problems)
- the piano keeps in tune well, but some work on the case of the piano still needs undertaking
- the digital piano jointly owned with Concordia Choir continues to be securely stored in the Heritage Centre and has been used more frequently during 2019

Concerts

- There were successful concerts during the autumn, for the Jubilee Singers and for Joint 3 Choirs organised by Philip King, raising the profiles of the choirs involved, and also St Helen's as a concert venue. Philip was also able to give us very useful feedback on our church as a venue. Ashby School returned as in previous years for their annual Christmas Concert.
- The large, rear Choir stalls have a new set of castors & brake system which enables very easy movement. The front stalls still need to be lifted and trollyed, but are now protected from excessive treble leaning, by being secured to the floor. The work was carried out by A1 Maintenance (Ashby).

Andrew Chapman
Director of Music
May 2020

Overseas Mission Giving

As a PCC we have been exploring the wider meaning of 'Mission', this has led to many interesting and ongoing conversations. The Mission taskforce has also been meeting and towards the end of last year suggested some options for the church to consider regarding supporting overseas work. The outcome was that we decided to support A.I.D (Anglican International Development) in a new initiative to help train and disciple doctors in South Sudan. National Institute of Health Sciences (NHSI), Jonglei, Uganda was relocated to Bor in South Sudan after recent peace talks have seen tension ease. Just as the NHSI, this facility provides healthcare training to South Sudanese individuals as well as spiritual care and discipleship. If you would like to know more please follow the link.

<https://anglicaninternationaldevelopment.org/our-work/healthcare/the-jonglei-health-sciences-institute-jhsi-bor/>

Revd Stewart Betts

Parish Magazine

2019 had 12 editions of the magazine. This is not such a strange thing to say as it may appear at first because some parishes produce their magazines quarterly or bi-monthly or not in August or January. This makes me particularly grateful for the contributors who produce a piece for us every month without fail. Thank you, Revd Mary and Revd Stewart, Beryl Stephens who has taken over the role of writing for the MU from Margaret Stalker (also due our very appreciative thanks for many years of writing), Wendy Freer, and Mandy McIntosh.

My holiday in February and March meant guest editors for those two months, and previous editors Julie Starkey and Anne Heaton very kindly and, of course, proficiently, edited a copy each. Huge thanks to them.

Sue Brown hung up her pen in 2019 after faithfully contributing a thoughtful and engaging 'Is Mission on Your Map?' article each month for many years. It was already an established regular when I took on the editor's role in 2012. I'm still hopeful that this might be a temporary pause, although understand absolutely that nothing goes on for ever, and nor should it. We do appreciate your carefully crafted writing though, Sue.

A big thank you too to all the occasional contributors, be it of articles or comments or jokes or photos or even cover paintings.

Perhaps I should also say that every edition in 2019 was printed, which always went without saying until now. 150 copies are produced each month, and then folded and stapled by Margaret Worrall and Val Bowron. Margaret also organises distribution, posting some, delivering others, providing copies for others to deliver – thank you.

Jill Chapman

Pastoral care

I am hugely grateful for the team of people who work with me in offering pastoral care to our congregation. This really is a shared task: with the workloads that Revd Stewart and I carry, we have to focus mostly on 'emergency' care - on the care of the gravely ill and of the bereaved - with others picking up responsibility for the invaluable week-in-week out care which makes such a difference. Thank you so much to everyone who contributes to this work.

Pastoral care at St Helen's takes the form of visits, Home Communion and services in two of our care settings; at Prior Park and at Fernleigh Nursing Home. Tea Time at Prior Park is a hugely valued gathering facilitated by a fantastic team.

Although this Annual Report is for 2019, as I am writing this during the Covid-19 lockdown it would seem strange not to acknowledge the changes to the way we have been caring for each other during the pandemic. I think this has seen a real upturn in what we have been able to offer. Twelve volunteers have shared the church contact list between them and regularly ring those on their 'list', or drop cards to them. Another set of volunteers have been doing shopping for those who need that service. And, during our online services, a team of people have been ringing those who have no internet access themselves. Thank you so much to all those playing a part in this!

Revd Mary

Pilgrim + Discipleship Group

2019 saw us move on from the Pilgrim course material, and we met as a group called Pilgrim+, welcoming the opportunity to deepen our understanding of ourselves and our faith – to grow in faith.

This year, the group met for three sets of six sessions. We met on Wednesday nights and the group (numbering between 8 & 14) discussed, listened and reflected about what we as Christians believe - by considering Luke's Gospel. This was done in two blocks, and we used Tom Wright's excellent commentary on Luke as the basis for our sessions.

Just before Advent we met and used the Grove booklet "The Christmas Stories in Faith and Preaching" which really helped us look at familiar stories with fresh eyes, and helped us see how the different emphases the Gospel writers had in telling of Jesus' birth reflected the style and key theme of their Gospel.

We are currently reflecting on "what next" for Pilgrim +

In Christ
Andy Smith

PRG Priest Room Gang 2019

Hospitality and supporting and serving others.

The year has been a good one for the PRG

Many scarves and hats had been produced during the winter months of 2018/19 and donated to local organisations supporting the homeless. As part of this in January the group had an evening reflecting upon individuals living on the streets, without any of the normal necessities that we take for granted in our daily lives. Shelters were created from cardboard, in the outdoor area of the Heritage centre. The results were interesting and it was agreed that we would not spend the night in them but instead have fish and chips inside the centre (eaten without knives and forks or plates). This proved challenging when trying to eat *mushy peas*.

In March several members of the group made the decision to be confirmed at a service to be held in our church in May. It provided an ideal opportunity for the whole group to be part of the preparation journey. This was enriched by Emily Darlington's decision to be baptised as a Believer through total immersion. Emily joined the group and spoke about her decision to be baptised as an adult, answering questions and sharing her feelings about the similarities and differences between adult and child baptism.

A rap was written by the group and performed as part of the goodbye celebration service for Laura and Andrew Jackson, held at the end of June

The start of the new academic year brought a time reflecting on *"Is everyone welcome to our church community? What would Jesus say and do?"*

In October games and activities were planned and delivered for the autumn fayre.

Members of the group spent time in thought and preparation including writing acrostics using the word PEACE for the annual service of remembrance in November. Each member of the group had an important part to play in the service.

The Festival of angels enabled us to discover how many references there are to angels in the bible! December was filled with busyness and activity with participation in Advent and Christmas activities and community celebrations and services.

It was agreed that as Christmas lasts for 12 days a PRG Christmas get-together would take place early in 2020. Details of that will appear in the next report!

We look forward to 2020, looking for the growth of our church and the voice of our young people shining through. .

Thank you to everyone who has supported us during the year.

Elizabeth Smith

Safeguarding

‘Safeguarding’ means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture in all our churches.

In 2019 there were no concerns reported. DBS checks have been updated and we continue to complete checks for new members involved in voluntary and paid work with St Helen’s Church.

We are working with the Parish Handbook and the Leicester Diocese requirements which set out the Church’s approach to safeguarding supporting the day to day work of safeguarding and those that have a role with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable.

Information about Safeguarding and reporting concerns /seeking help and advice is displayed in the church and the St Helens Community Heritage Centre.

Safeguarding contact details are on the church website and in the monthly parish magazine.

I attended the Safeguarding Coordinators’ Annual Conference held at St Martin’s House. The theme was “Mental Health Awareness” and it provided some information and guidance on mental health, including Dementia, and the impact of mental health on the younger generation. There were workshop sessions to attend and I attended an informative session - “The impact of social media on relationships amongst the younger generation.” I have written several articles during the year for the magazine regarding safeguarding, and following the conference I completed one which outlined advice on ways to help and support children and young people who may be experiencing some poor mental health.

I have registered St Helen’s Church with the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard which ensures that we receive up-to-date information, and provides a plan of any actions required.

The St Helen’s Safeguarding policies for both children and vulnerable adults will be reviewed in in 2020, along with the updating of all materials and information.

The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults at St Helen’s Church, and at all the Flagstaff group of churches, must be a thread which runs through everything we do and the policies and practices we put in place for our church and church community.

The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults is “Everyone’s business.”

Elizabeth Smith
Safeguarding Officer

Schools work

Revd Stewart and I continue to minister in the schools across the parish, especially in our Primary Schools; at Willesley, Viscount Beaumont in Coleorton and St Hardulph's at Breedon. We lead worship times in each of these settings once a month, host seasonal services at harvest, Christmas, Easter and at the end of the school year and support the RE curriculum. I am a governor at both Coleorton and Breedon, and Revd Stewart is a governor at Breedon. This is demanding and time-consuming work, but a vital part of supporting the staff and the headteachers in particular.

Revd Mary

Servers

Since Stuart Lawrence gave up his posts at St Helen's, John Backman now holds the posts of Verger and Sacristan, with myself being Head Server. Stuart did a sterling job for many years and is missed – we all wish him well.

There are seven servers all of whom double as Chalice Assistants, plus a team of five people who solely perform chalice duties. I am pleased to welcome among this team John Backman, John Dennis, Peter Longhurst and Beryl Stephens.

We aim to carry out our duties at all services as required and I appreciate each and every one's loyalty.

Eileen Mary Barradell



Social Committee

Over the course of 2019 the Social Committee have supported various Church and Heritage events throughout the year where refreshments have been required. The main events over this period were as follows.

January 2019

The annual Haggis Supper was held on Burns Night. A traditional piper came to pipe in the Haggis during the meal. In addition, a raffle was held and the profits from the event was donated to the Heritage Centre garden scheme.

March 2019

The annual Skittles Evening was held at the Odd House, Snarestone. The event was well attended with a trophy given to the winner.

September 2019

The Social Committee provided refreshments at the “Ride and Stride” event. Grateful thanks were expressed by participants taking part in the event.

December 2019

The Social Committee arranged carol singing at the care homes in Ashby. Westwood and Fernleigh homes were visited during the evening, followed by refreshments in the Heritage Centre.

This was the third time that the refreshments for the Advent & Christmas Carol Services were held in the new Heritage Centre, so we were a lot better prepared and organised. The numbers were up on 2019, especially for the Christmas Carol Service. The Social Committee would like to thank the generosity of the congregation for providing mince pies.

Neil Adams

Sound Team

Over the past 12 months the sound team have attempted to provide an operator for all the major services in the church. We believe this is an essential part of the church life ensuring the services can be clearly heard by all listeners.

We have run a number of training courses this year. The verger is now trained so they can cover weddings and funerals.

For more information please contact Simon Starkey (simon.starkey@gmail.com) or any member of the sound team.

Simon Starkey

Street Pastors

Overview of 2019 - 20

Ashby Street Pastors continued to go out every Saturday night until Saturday 14th March 2020.

Street and Prayer Pastors

We currently have 12 Street Pastors and 4 Prayer Pastors with a Management Committee of 8. We have recruited 2 new Street Pastors still to be trained.

Vital Statistics

Below are the statistics for the previous year which give some idea of our effectiveness on the streets:

PEOPLE HELPED					
Anti Social Incidents	1	Calming Aggressive	8	Support Vulnerable	15
ITEMS GIVEN OUT					
Bottled Water	4	Flip Flops	15	Wet Wipes	5
MAKING THE STREETS SAFER					
Bottles removed	256	Glasses removed	149	Broken Glass*	7
Drinking on the Street*	31				
*Police request mid August to record these items as part of their campaign to keep drinking off the streets					

We are always looking for new volunteers. Should you wish to find out more, perhaps by coming out as an observer when we restart, then please get in touch.

Chris Lewis – Coordinator

Tel: 07828 463368

Email: ashby@streetpastors.org.uk

Tea Time

Tea Time has again grown from strength to strength. In the past year, we met 9 times with an average attendance of 42 each time. It is encouraging to see the profile evolving with many more men joining in, more newcomers giving us a try and inevitably returning. Regular members look forward to each Tea Time, meeting new friends, catching up with old ones, exchanging latest news and enjoying the warm fellowship in a convivial atmosphere as well as sampling a delicious choice of homemade cakes.

Though most of the time is spent in informal conversations and catching up with news, the Revd. Canon Mary Gregory and our curate Revd Stewart Betts have also led us in memorable acts of worship on special seasonal occasions.

This year was made even more special because we celebrated Fred Miller's 100th birthday in April. He has been a loyal supporter of Tea Time since its beginning and we send him our best wishes and may God bless him richly in the years to come.

Thank you to everyone who has faithfully supported Tea Time in their various capacities, be it baking, serving, befriending or washing up. Your role in this very important ministry to and for the elderly in our church and wider community is very much appreciated.

Eileen Coombs



Update from the Treasurer for Year ended 31/12/2019

It is good to be able to confirm a positive outcome for last year as is shown on the bottom of page 2.

I do not intend to go through each line but to highlight the major items. As this year the APCM will be a little different I would ask that if there is anything that you would like to ask please feel free to contact me either by telephone or by e-mail before the meeting so that I can do my best to answer.

Planned giving continues to increase which enables the Gift Aid claim to rise. Wedding/Funeral fee income was in line with projections and disbursements are the payments made to the organist/choir/verger and bell ringers. Donations and events with other income are down on last year as that year had one off donations and a couple of years ago this line was £4729. This shows that we need at least one major fund raising events and last year's Autumn event raised over £2000.00. Thank you to all concerned.

The Heritage Centre income built up over the year and it was an important contributor to the overall surplus. The capital fund meets the Heritage staff costs.

Looking at costs it is good to report that we paid the promised Parish Share in full and on time. We will have an acknowledgement from them in due course to this effect.

I spent some 6 months in discussions with our fuel suppliers and the outcome was a final refund of £6500.00 which was split between the Church and the Heritage centre which is why these figures are down on last year. A one off benefit.

Our insurance is provided under a three year agreement which results in only nominal increases.

Administration cost remain in line with expectations and Designated collections have been shown in more detail on the last page. I felt it was helpful to know how much had been sent in cash to the various organisations involved. With regards to our Mission giving this area was held over until the outcome was known and is under discussion by the PCC.

Turning to the Heritage fund, this year the final 6 months and the following 6 months figures have been combined to give a better idea of activity. Income includes final grants and in future event costs will be covered from the main fund. Staff wages will continue to be paid from this fund and are sufficient to meet both contracts.

The various Funds are all straightforward with the Garden fund having sufficient in hand to complete that project. The Legacy fund had a substantial gift which will not be spent on general running costs. With the General Fund I have written back into the accounts old debtors being long outstanding items for which people have not presented cheques. The Team fund had a heavy year with printing costs which should not be repeated in the short

term.

I must thank Greg Wells for all his help in preparing these figures as well as Susan Boardman-Weston for her invaluable input and support. Also to Anne Heaton for dealing with the Gift Aid claims for us. Anne has now retired from this role and I am looking after this in future. There are so many jobs that go on which we do not know about and how much time is given so freely. Thank you for your support and help and I will continue to keep a careful watch on costs which may give me a reputation for being tight but always a careful steward!

John Backman

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE PCC OF
ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2019 which are set out on pages 1 to 5 inclusive is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2008 and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

As the members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts, you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and Section 144(2) of the 2011 Act do not apply, it is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act and to be found in the Church guidance 2006 edition issued by the Finance Division of the Archbishops' Council. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence required in an audit and consequently I do not express an opinion as to whether the Accounts present a "true and fair view" and my report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, and to comply with accounting requirements of the 2011 Act of the Regulations have not been met; or

(2) to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached


.....
D V Accountancy Service
127 Burton Road
Ashby de la Zouch
Leicestershire
LE65 2LH

Date 15/01/2020
.....

ST HELEN'S CHURCH ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2019

	<u>UNRESTRICTED</u> <u>FUNDS</u>	<u>RESTRICTED</u> <u>FUNDS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>2018</u>
<u>INCOMING FUNDS</u>				
VOLUNTARY INCOME	108253	72570	180823	191230
ACTIVITY BASED	5087	44920	50007	8491
INVESTMENT INCOME	<u>69</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>25</u>
	<u>113409</u>	<u>117490</u>	<u>230899</u>	<u>199746</u>
<u>RESOURCES USED</u>				
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES	<u>99937</u>	<u>61272</u>	<u>161209</u>	<u>204208</u>
NET INCOME	<u>13472</u>	<u>56218</u>	<u>69690</u>	<u>-4462</u>
TOTAL FUNDS B/FWD	<u>13315</u>	<u>35558</u>	<u>48873</u>	<u>53335</u>
TOTAL FUNDS C/FWD	<u>26787</u>	<u>91776</u>	<u>118563</u>	<u>48873</u>

ST HELEN'S CHURCH, ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT = YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2019

		<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>			
<u>INCOME</u>			
PLANNED GIVING	58394		57412
INCOME TAX REPAYMENTS	14247		12643
OPEN PLATE	3889		3539
WEDDINGS & FUNERALS FEES - PARISH	3178		3164
	DIOCESE	3217	2291
	DISCR'Y	4025	4516
DONATIONS/EVENTS/OTHER	5087		6099
GRANTS	0		5735
OTHER INCOME	0		4803
DESIGNATED DONATIONS	2245		2422
SOUL FOOD/BRUNCH	267		590
INTEREST RECEIVED	<u>69</u>	94618	<u>8</u> 103222
MAGAZINE - SALES & ADVERTISING		1244	1224
HERITAGE LETTING INCOME	10855		
EVENTS/TOURS	3756		
REFRESHMENTS	<u>1471</u>	<u>16082</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL INCOME		<u>111944</u>	<u>104446</u>

GENERAL FUND

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		<u>2019</u>		2018	
<u>PARISH DUES</u>					
WEDDINGS & FUNERAL FEES	DIOCESE	3217		2292	
CHOIR, MUSIC ETC	PAID	3922		4464	
DIOCESAN SHARE		<u>52500</u>	59639	<u>51000</u>	57756
<u>CHURCH BUILDING & HERITAGE CENTRE</u>					
HEAT LIGHT & WATER		7361		9076	
INSURANCE	CHURCH	6381		6479	
	HERITAGE CENTRE	1083		942	
REPAIRS & CLEANING		<u>4050</u>	18875	<u>4565</u>	21062
<u>ADMINISTRATION</u>					
GENERAL OFFICE		2548		2469	
SUNDRY		<u>1679</u>	4227	<u>6026</u>	8495
<u>MISSION/CHARITABLE GIVING</u>					
PCC GIVING		50		5376	
DESIGNATING GIVING		<u>2245</u>	2295	<u>2256</u>	7632
<u>CLERGY EXPENSES</u>					
RECTOR & CURATE		3579		2636	
STAFF		<u>9696</u>	13275	<u>11333</u>	13969
<u>MINISTRY</u>					
PARISH TRAINING & MISSION			238		948
<u>WORSHIP</u>					
UPKEEP OF SERVICES		830		713	
CHOIR, MUSIC ERC		168		659	
FOOD PROVISION		0		70	
ORGAN/PIANO MAINTENANCE		<u>390</u>	<u>1388</u>	<u>595</u>	<u>2037</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE			<u>99937</u>		<u>111899</u>
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR			<u>12007</u>		-7453

OTHER FUNDS FOR THE YEARCHOIR FUNDSURPLUS/(DEFICIT)

OPENING BALANCE	1391	
INCOME	<u>580</u>	
	1971	
EXPENDITURE	<u>-257</u>	
CLOSING BALANCE	<u>1714</u>	323

HERITAGE FUND

OPENING BALANCE	29895	
INCOME	<u>44920</u>	
	74815	
EXPENDITURE	<u>-52788</u>	
CLOSING BALANCE	<u>22027</u>	-7868

LITTLE FISHES FUND

OPENING BALANCE	509	
INCOME	<u>378</u>	
	887	
EXPENDITURE	<u>-115</u>	
CLOSING BALANCE	<u>772</u>	263

FABRIC FUND

OPENING BALANCE	2517	
EXPENDITURE	<u>-1008</u>	
CLOSING BALANCE	<u>1509</u>	-1008

GARDEN FUND

INCOME	10918	
EXPENDITURE	<u>-1503</u>	
CLOSING BALANCE	<u>9415</u>	-1503

LEGACY FUND

INCOME	60177	
EXPENDITURE	<u>-4140</u>	
CLOSING BALANCE	<u>56037</u>	56037

GENERAL FUND

OPENING BALANCE	13315	
SURPLUS	12007	
OLD DEBTORS WRITTEN BACK	<u>1465</u>	
CLOSING BALANCE	<u>26787</u>	13472

TEAM FUND

OPENING BALANCE	1245	
INCOME	<u>517</u>	
	1762	
EXPENDITURE	<u>-1459</u>	
CLOSING BALANCE	<u>303</u>	<u>-942</u>

CHURCH FUNDS AS AT 31st DECEMBER 2019

TAX REFUND DUE	5735
DEBTORS	1430
CASH AT BANK	<u>112414</u>
	119579
CREDITORS	<u>-1015</u>
	<u>118564</u>

REPRESENTED BY

LEGACY FUND	56037
CHOIR FUND	1714
LITTLE FISHES	772
TEAM FUND	303
FABRIC FUND	1509
GARDEN FUND	9415
HERITAGE FUND	22027
GENERAL FUND	<u>26787</u>
	<u>118564</u>

DESIGNATED COLLECTIONS

CHRISTIAN AID	709
BRITISH LEGION	439
CHORDOMA UK	276
CHILDRENS SOCIETY SERVICE	207
CHILDRENS SOCIETY BOXES	319
SLEEP OUT CHALLENGE	<u>295</u>
	2245

