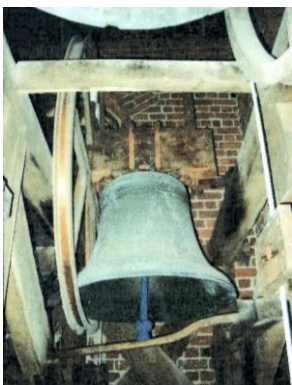


## Other reports

### Bellringing

#### St Margaret's bellringers - Richard Bisgrove, Tower Captain



St. Margaret's bellringers meet every Thursday, 7:30-9pm, to practise with help from experienced ringers from other towers. We ring for Sunday and other services and for special occasions including weddings. On the social side we call in at a pub after practices, have an annual dinner and share outings to other towers with the ringers at St. Peter's, Caversham.

We can usually muster seven or eight ringers (four of whom also ring at St. Peter's) for our six bells on Sundays but if any two are away we have to resort to ringing on five or even four bells so any new ringers would be very welcome.

#### St Peter's bellringers - Doug Beaumont, Tower Captain

The usual programme of ringing has taken place, for the 9.30am service on Sundays and practice on Tuesdays.

Other services we have rung for have been Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day. For the Good Friday service, instead of the usual half-muffled quarter peal, there was general ringing half-muffled, which gave several members of the tower their first opportunity to ring half-muffled. We also rang for services at Christmas, and rang the New Year in. We rang before the Caversham Churches Fete, and also following a number of weddings.

The band enjoyed an outing to the area around Cookham in June, kindly organised by Marcia Dieppe from that tower. Churches visited were Hughenden, Beaconsfield, Cookham, Burnham, and Boyne Hill in Maidenhead.

A St Peter's band entered the Reading Branch Striking Competition at Shinfield in September. We were extremely pleased to be placed second, ringing Plain Bob Doubles. This was a particular achievement for Gill and Roger Hopkinson who were ringing for the first time in the St Peter's band.

A group of cubs from the 3rd Reading Scout Group visited the belfry in November as part of a visit to the church. They found the visit very interesting. If any members of the parish would like to come up to the belfry to see what the bell ringers do, they are very welcome on a Tuesday evening when we practice. Please contact the Tower Captain for more details.

### Children's Work

#### St Margaret's Junior Church – Anne Taylor

Junior Church at St Margaret's is held once a month, either in the small Bell Tower or in the churchyard, weather permitting. We average two regular attendees, but occasionally visitors boost numbers. We all share our thoughts for prayers, then usually mix in a bible story, games

and crafts. Sometimes we work with the bible readings from the lectionary but currently we're also working through an occasional series on Moses. While the numbers are small I always find the spiritual insight coming from younger people thought-provoking and challenging, and it can lead to very interesting discussions. How would you answer "Why does the church want us to be cannibals?" (the bread at communion) or "How does God talk to everyone at the same time?"

### **St Peter's Sunday Club – Judy King**

St Peter's Sunday Club runs on three Sundays out of four throughout the year (except during choir holidays). Activities usually relate to the Gospel or events in the church calendar. Activities are usually craft-based, but the children also enjoyed cooking and drama sessions this year.

The older children - those who made their confirmation this year - now form a separate group, with a separate leader. They tend to follow activities in a Scripture Union magazine.

All the children now regularly play a role in the monthly Service of the Word - either doing the prayers or contributing to the "talk" section.

For the third year running, the Sunday Club performed a nativity play this Advent. I think it was our best yet - complete with liturgical dance! Also over the Christmas period, the Sunday Club prepared the Christingles for the two services (with a little help) and ran two stalls in the Christmas fair.

The Sunday Club also were involved in running the Kids stall at the summer fair.

The number of children attending Sunday Club this year continues to be around 20 children most weeks, aged between 6 months and 14 years old. Most of the children are also in the junior choir but there are other children who regularly attend who are not connected to the choir. Two Sunday Club members became servers this year.

Due to the large number of children, we now routinely use both the clergy vestry and the Vanderstegen Chapel for the Sunday Club activities. This is working okay but is far from ideal. Accommodating children's activities will continue to be an issue in the coming year.

But perhaps the greater issue is volunteers to help run the children's activities. Although we now have a group of four who run Sunday Club, we need someone to take on the older group. No one has yet come forward to take this on.

### **St John's Sunday Club – Georgina Laverick**

With God's grace the update for our Sunday Club this year is full of hope and promise. Last year we continued with the core of children and leaders, continuing in a similar pattern. However, as we look forward we now have 15 children that will be attending Sunday Club on a regular to semi-regular basis. Due to this we are moving into Caversham Hall to give us extra space, both for the children and to enable us to offer multiple activities and games. We also welcome a new leader and a number of volunteers that have come forward to provide additional support and oversee activities.

The aspiration going forward is to create a fun environment in which our children can learn about God and grow in faith. As a group we have spent time listening to the children to

understand what for them are the key ingredients to make great Sunday Club. Now we feel that the foundations are now in place to expand and we are ready to welcome new children as we forge our links within our community.

We also look forward to the appointment of a Family and Children's Worker at St John's - someone that will strengthen our resources, whilst building bridges between church and families in Lower Caversham.

### **Church House - Nigel Smith, Chairman, Church House Leadership Team**



Last year's report contained an 'artist's impression' of what the new extension would look like. This year we can show you the real thing! The construction, which finished in December, was the culmination of years of planning and hard work. It was paid for entirely out of Church House funds.

The extension has provided a new accessible toilet on the ground floor, and another new toilet upstairs, along with two new offices and a kitchenette for use by office tenants. We also put up new signage on the front of the building and inside the hall. See second photo.



During the year we received notice from Thames Valley Police that they would be moving out of their offices in March 2018. So this year we will be seeking tenants for the old police offices and for the two new offices. Longer term we would like to see more of the building used for parish purposes. Discussions on this matter continue.

I am grateful to the Committee – Matthew Coome, Michael Crosbie, Sylvia Harris, Mary Tucker – and to Alex and Caroline in the parish office, all of whom contribute to ensure the smooth operation of Church House.

### **Church House Grants – Richard Purkis, Chairman, Church House Grants Committee**

"The children really enjoyed working in small groups, which were well led by the REinspired crew": to deliver high quality religious education in our schools. Part funding of the project manager post, £5,000.

Based in the newly opened Weller Centre on Amersham Road, the parish, with our Methodist partners, is one of the few organisations to invest in this area": continuing the work with 20+ young people in the Amersham Road Cooking Club, with the Gosbrook Garden Growers under the Food for Families initiative, and for Clergy Training and Retreats, £7,500.

“The junior choir has developed into a vibrant group of around a dozen members, and we are confident that we will be able to continue to support the choir from church funds from 2019: for St Peter's junior choir and youth work, £1,200.

In all the grants made in 2017 amounted to £13,700, around 57% of the £24,638 available for allocation.

### **Fresh Expressions – Sue Jenkins**

The Fresh Expressions (FXC) team continues to be chaired by Rev Jenny Dowding, Caversham Heights Methodist Minister. The FXC team is ecumenical, involving Anglicans, Methodists and members of Riverside Church, Caversham. The core team meets monthly to pray and plan, and additional volunteers help run, the monthly Amersham Road Cooking Club sessions. During the works on the newly revamped and renamed Weller Centre, the Club met in Caversham Children's Centre where there were no cooking facilities, allowing for a focus on healthy eating through raw foods and also using microwave cooking to create chocolate brownies etc. The ARCC team provided refreshments during the all-day opening of the Weller Centre.

Sessions through the Autumn saw an increase in the number of children attending and a call was put out for new volunteers to join us. Our sessions continue to be Christianity-themed cooking and craft activities, followed by eating the food made together and a “God slot” sharing aspects of the Christian faith and praying. We are grateful to Sandra Gough of Food4Families who helps at some of our sessions, teaching the children to plant and harvest fruit and vegetables in the community garden at the Centre.

Over the six and a half years of ARCC, we have reached more than 130 children from more than 84 families on the Amersham Road estate. At Christmas and Easter, we give the children Meaningful Chocolate company chocolate gifts which contain a booklet telling the Christmas and Easter stories.

### **Health & Safety - Richard Havelock, Health & Safety Coordinator**

The latest version of the parish Health & Safety policy, approved by the PCC in January 2018, is a single document which covers all three churches, with references to particular buildings as required. It is on public display in each of the three churches, and it is important that all members of the congregation and other visitors are familiar with its contents, so as to be able to discharge their particular responsibilities.

Also on display in all three churches are posters giving information about (a) first aid, and (b) the precautions necessary for working at height using ladders and other devices.

Updated general and fire risk assessments of Church House have been carried out in collaboration with Mary Tucker. An annual fire risk assessment is required for each church, and will be undertaken again during 2018.

Training will be arranged at appropriate intervals for church stewards and anyone else holding responsibility for any church or other parish premises for any event in the use of the firefighting equipment provided in each church, evacuation procedures and first aid.

Four matters of particular concern have come to my attention this year:

- Carrying containers of hot milk and water, down the steps from kitchen to the back of the nave of St Peter's Church, can be hazardous, given the danger of tripping and spillage onto anyone in the vicinity. A 'safe system of work' has therefore been agreed under which this operation will be minimised and carried out only by designated people in specified circumstances.
- A gas cylinder, brought into St Peter's to supply a portable stove for heating food at a carol concert given by a local choir, because of a defect and consequent leak unexpectedly produced a substantial flame which projected into the body of the church. Fortunately, it was extinguished promptly, but bringing into any of our churches and other parish premises any portable heating or cooking device is now prohibited, except in the rare event of this being agreed with the Churchwardens because of some extenuating circumstance, with appropriate precautions. The incident has highlighted the need for stewards on duty at any event to be familiar with fire evacuation routes and procedure.
- A long-standing member of the St Peter's congregation, who had been sitting to work for some time at a table on the raised platform at the north-west corner of the church, near the font, stood up after a while and, not seeing the step down, which would have been at least partly obscured by the table, fell onto the aisle floor, sustaining a serious injury. To avoid a similar accident in the future, the edge of this step, and others elsewhere in the church, have been made more conspicuous with white tape, which is also abrasive to reduce the likelihood of slipping. Furthermore, the placing of any table, for sitting at, on the font platform, should now be avoided. If, in exceptional circumstances, it is considered justifiable to override this prohibition, appropriate precautions must be taken. This event has acted as a salutary reminder of the need for stewards, and anyone else having responsibility for any event in one of the parish buildings, to have some training in first aid.
- Asbestos has been discovered in the organ at St John's Church, but is being safely managed by a specialist firm, using approved procedures. The part mainly affected has been removed, and the rest sealed as a precaution pending definitive restoration of the instrument. The air in the vicinity has been sampled for any traces of asbestos, of which, fortunately, there have been none.

It is important that any adverse incident with implications for health or safety that does occur is reported in the prescribed way (on one of forms available in each church, or alternatively by informing me directly by email, telephone or written note), so that action can be taken to prevent recurrence. Failure to do this could compromise the validity of our insurance cover.

### **Kidmore End School – Rev Judith Ryder**

Kidmore End has now completed the move to academy status within the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST), with careful attention given to ensuring a smooth transition.

Kidmore End has also been consulting on changes to the admissions criteria for the school, to bring it into line with diocesan recommendations by removing the faith criteria. The consultation period now being over, we are moving towards confirming these changes.

After many years of sterling service, Joanna Moriarty has come to the end of her time as Chair of Governors. She has been replaced in that role by Sarah Rodda. Many thanks to both of them for their commitment to the school.

### **Partnership for Missional Church (PMC) – Catherine Radcliffe**

This year we have followed a two pronged approach with the Missional Innovation Team (MIT), our PMC action team, taking up the challenge that the PCC, CLTs and PMC teams formulated at an away day in September 2016 where a need was identified among the lonely or isolated people in our community. Together with the Caversham Methodists after much prayer and deliberation they teamed up with Reading Voluntary Action to promote Champions to end loneliness in Caversham, through pledge cards and coffee companions.

The steering team meanwhile have been discerning and devising ways to promote 'holy habits'. In May we had a Parish event entitled 'What's God up to? How can we join him?' where the holy habits, spiritual disciplines were explained and discussed. We have also promoted 'Announcing the kingdom', aka where have we seen God at work?, and hospitality, with invitations before Christmas distributed to Christingle and carol service congregations as well as at the usual services.

The steering team and MIT again attended 3 training weekends through the year and have started to think about where the church and community will be heading once the 3 year formal period of PMC is completed.

### **Properties - Stewart Bolton**

6 Gosbrook Road: The property is let under a full repairing and insuring commercial lease and is operated as a launderette.

25 Ilkley Road: The property is managed by Walmsley and, apart from a short break on the change of tenant, it was let to third party tenants throughout the year. During the year £3,251 was spent on general repairs and maintenance of the house and garden.

51 Galsworthy Drive: The property was occupied throughout the year by the Curate and her family. During the year £342 was spent on general repairs and maintenance.

### **Safeguarding – Christine Bradbury, Safeguarding Officer ([safeguarding@ctmparish.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@ctmparish.org.uk))**

All policies connected with safeguarding are now up to date and are displayed on the CTM website.

The Safeguarding and Social media policies are reviewed annually, the former in May and the latter in November.

There have been no changes in the Children's advocates, with photographs clearly displayed of each representative in each church.

Caroline Smith continues as the recruiter and verifier for DBS checks and following advice from the Diocese and approval by the PCC, has now started to process DBS checks through Access Personal Checking Services (APCS). Each new volunteer receives and signs for, the required "Good practice Guide" booklet and volunteer agreement as they are registered.

In November 2017, 60 people attended a safeguarding training course, arranged by CTM Parish, at St Barnabas church. The training was conducted by Rebecca Norris- Bulpitt from the Diocese. In addition, others have undertaken training on-line. In October, I attended a Safeguarding course at Greyfriars church.

From time to time, there are updates concerning changes in procedure for Safeguarding. The Rector and Safeguarding officer meet to discuss how the CTM Parish can update policy in order to become compliant with the latest advice.

Safeguarding is included as an item at each PCC meeting where updates are given or approvals sought. There has been no incident reported in relation to safeguarding since the last report for the APCM in 2017.

#### **Parish website ([www.ctmparish.org.uk](http://www.ctmparish.org.uk)) – Steve Jenkins**

The parish website is constantly changing and improving, thanks to the efforts of John Cooke and Chris Fitzsimmons. There is always something new to see on the parish calendar, among the forthcoming events, in the latest news. Parish policies and who's who are regularly updated.

The website links our parish together and puts it all in one place for all of us. It plays a central role in the Easter and Christmas publicity campaigns and leads readers to the rest of the Church through the diocese and beyond.

The more we visit our website, the more it will be seen by others. Setting [www.ctmparish.org.uk](http://www.ctmparish.org.uk) as the home page for your internet browser will register a visit every time you go on the internet and keep you up to date.