



THE GENERAL ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHURCHES AND ACTIVITIES OF SALISBURY PLAIN BENEFICE 2015

Introduction

This report is intended to accompany the Annual Report of the PCC of Salisbury Plain Benefice; and includes contributions from the 4 churches, and many of the organisations that form part of our worshipping life and community. Many people have kindly contributed their own reports, for which we are most grateful.

SAFEGUARDING

Report from Angela Webb, Benefice Safeguarding Representative for the AGM on 27th April 2015.

There are five people in the Benefice whose CRB's expired in December 2014. However, having spoken to Alex Weedon, the Secretary to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, I am assured that the Diocese contacts me with the names of those whom they wish to be rechecked. I will, therefore, only contact those people when I have heard from the Diocese.

In addition, there are just a couple of people in the Benefice who will need to complete a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check and I will be contacting them in the near future!

I have received the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team's safeguarding letter 2015. The revised edition of the publication "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013" was published in March 2015. There are key changes to take account of several legislative and policy changes but I do not think they are applicable to our Benefice.

If, however, any one would like to "plough through" all the links to government policies which are contained in this newsletter, do let me have your email address and I will forward it. There is also a feature on "The Care Act 2013" which is quite interesting and deals more with adults. But, again, I don't think we should worry too much about the "National Bell Ringing Guidance"!

THE VILLAGE CHURCHES

THE CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS' & ST MARY'S, CHITTERNE

Report from Robert Pryor and Marcelle Stobie, Churchwardens

Under the auspices of the Benefice and with the new Rector in charge, Church business continued much as usual, though with a bit more spring in its step. The main change in Church was an extension of the Children's Corner, which is now fully carpeted and has provision for heating laid on, making it the most comfortable corner of the Church.

Otherwise the year passed much as usual. The Stitchers stitched on, meeting every other Friday. Thanks are due again to Emma and Nicholas Walters for having the Plant Sale in their garden. The sum of £612 was divided between Salisbury Spinal Injuries Trust and the Church.

The Flower Festival now organised by Beccy Parker and Helen Carter produced £2148.15 for Church funds, £100 odd more than the year before. The theme was Chitterne Life and the new management are to be congratulated for maintaining, if not surpassing, previous high standards. For the Rogation Walk members from all four churches met out on the Plain, roughly in the middle of the Benefice and enjoyed an excellent barbecue.

Chitterne's cooks were called on for the Harvest Festival Lunch on the 21st September which was well attended, and lunch for the British Legion after the Remembrance Day Service, for the 7th year running. Both events produced useful sums for Church Funds.

The effort to raise money for Christians in the Sudan took the form of a Christmas Lunch on December 3rd. It raised a contribution of £670.

The Crib service on the 23rd December was attended by 41 adults and 25 children and the Benefice Carol Service on the 21st December by 80 adults and 12 children.

The Bell ringers continue to flourish. George Unsworth-White after many years at the helm has retired as Bell Tower Captain and Sally Oliver has taken over.

There were two deaths in 2014 Kathleen Babey, who had been a staunch supporter of the Church for more than 50 years, and Doris Windsor, who, among other things, always decorated the pew ends for the Flower Festival. The Rev. Fred Chamberlain has also died at the age of 94. He was the Vicar of Tilshead and then took on Chitterne as well. He retired some years before the Team was created and moved away from the Village.

Michael and Suzannah Hawtrey, who used to live in the Poplars on the Village Green moved away before Christmas. Michael looked after the Church clock as well as opening and shutting the Church each day, and Suzannah was a leading light in the Flower Festival for many years.

Chitterne Bells

Report from Sally Oliver, Tower Captain

Earlier this year George Unsworth White retired as Tower Captain a position he had held for twenty years. During this time he introduced many to the art of ringing and at the

moment we have a band of seven regular members who all contributed to a presentation made to George of a pewter beer tankard. Fortunately George is still going to continue ringing.

We meet to practise on Monday evenings and we ring for the 10 a.m. Sunday services. Also as required for weddings and special celebrations. This year these will include St George's day, 70th Anniversary of V.E. Day and the Magna Carta. Several of us have also rung at Shrewton for weddings when they have been short of ringers, and we have now arranged for a joint practise to be held on Monday 20th April at Chitterne. It is hoped this may be the first of many joint ringing evenings alternating between the two churches.

We are members of the Salisbury Guild of Ringers who offer help through the year with instruction for all levels of ability from beginners to advance ringers. New ringers would be very welcome!

Chitterne Stitchers

Report from Sarah Gooch

We continue to meet fortnightly in the Village Hall at 10.30 on Fridays. The original purpose was to make new kneelers and an altar rail kneeler for All Saints Church. Most of the kneelers are finished now and the seat pads for the rector's stall will soon be completed. These feature the SPB logo. Other enthusiastic stitchers are creating amazing works of art. Recent projects have included bags, pictures, piano stools and wonderful cushions.

Members take turns to provide a simple lunch, and there is always tea or coffee and flapjacks available. New members are always welcome, so do come and visit us. The stitching dates are advertised on the village web site and on the weekly sheet.

THE CHURCH OF ST MARY, ORCHESTON

Report from Paul Taylor and Ewart Grant, Churchwardens

Worship

The church continued to conduct three services every month (Morning Prayer, Family Service and Family Communion). As well as the Rector and the associate priest services were also conducted by visiting or retired clergy as well as by members of the congregation on occasions.

The Flower Festival service and Advent Service at St George's were well attended, as usual. The Church took an active part in the Easter and Christmas services.

Pastoral

The collection point for the Trussell Trust continues to be well supported with regular deliveries of food collected in the village taken to the Charity. A sponsored walk in aid of the Benefice along Hadrian's Wall was the first of many new activities within the Benefice.

Clothes collection points for Alabaré (the Christian charity for the homeless) are to be set up.

Building Fabric

The end of defects period inspection following the re-decoration in 2013 was combined with the Quinquennial inspection. The architect has advised that the decorative finish is peeling due to dampness in the walls. Much of the external pointing needs to be replaced. Total cost of recommended works amount to approximately £25,000; the majority of the cost being a thorough overhaul of the roof. The Church was unsuccessful in an application for a Government grant but will re-apply when the second round grant programme is announced.

THE CHURCH OF ST MARY, SHREWTON

Report from Christine Chisholm and Mike Badham-Thornhill, Churchwardens

Church and Mission

We are gradually adjusting to the new schedules of worship. In spite of several deaths in the last year the size of our congregation has remained stable and we are welcoming newcomers, particularly at the Family Service.

In our village of Shrewton our partners in mission are the Methodist Church and Plain church, working as 'Churches Together' which is chaired by Sue Easton. The Methodist/Anglican Covenant Service is held alternately at our churches in January.

Our mission outreach to young people includes 'Open the Book' at our Church School and at Appleford, help at the Toddler Group, leadership of Uniformed Organisations, and Messy Church. Eleanor has close links with all the Schools in the Benefice and regularly takes school assemblies. The Easter Workshop in Church was particularly successful and thanks must be extended to all those who helped.

For the older generation we have a thriving Mothers' Union, organise study groups during Lent and throughout the year, are involved in the 'Women's World Day of Prayer' and provide help at the Day centre. In our giving we support the needy at home and abroad. There continues to be a good feeling of fellowship in the community.

Each year there is an Ecumenical Service, usually in July, at the Recreation Ground either in the hall or in a marquee. 'Churches Together' organise this event.

The best attended Service of the year is on Remembrance Sunday. The British Legion organises the event which includes a parade along the High Street and involves the W.I. the uniformed organisation, some military personnel as well as others from the community.

Social events including suppers, quizzes and barbecues enable us to engage informally with the rest of the community.

Church Buildings

The St. Mary's Church building and our three church yards receive regular maintenance from a team of willing volunteers. Our next Quinquennial is scheduled for later this year. We are indebted to the "Friends of St. Mary's" for their ongoing support with finance. From the beginning of September Maddington Church Room will be managed by the LCC and

available for letting to members of the community in addition to our long time commitment to the Scouts, Cubs and Beavers.

Bells of St Mary, Shrewton

Report from Mike Badham-Thornhill, Tower Captain

The sad loss of David Andrews in 2014 has left a huge gap in the ranks of the Shrewton Bell-ringers. David was Belfry Captain for many years and responsible for training many new ringers in that time, as well as general maintenance of the tower and ringing apparatus. We now have just four regular ringers, with two good learners in the pipeline, and have been enjoying practice nights on Mondays to try and improve our standards. With patience and time, I am sure we will again have a team to make a gladsome noise on Sundays more often than we can at present.

St Mary's Choir, Shrewton

Report from Derek Miles, Choirmaster

The Choir has had a happy and progressive year. The level of commitment is demonstrated in that one of the members took private singing lessons. In addition three members advanced in Voice for Life from light blue to dark blue level and one to red. Practices are held at the home of our Organist, Joyce Watson.

A new member, Adele Price has joined and brings with her an ability to play the flute. This has enabled us to produce a small band to accompany the Family Services to replace Alice and friends, who have gone off to Uni.

St Mary's has also acquired an audio system which can be used in the event of not having an Organist.

We would welcome any new members and would be pleased to be involved at Benefice level if required.

The Friends of St Mary's Church, Shrewton

Report from Michael Broadbent

The major works of repair to the church building required by the Quinquennial Survey Report in 2010 have been done with financial assistance from the Friends. The next Survey is due to be carried out in 2015 and will no doubt reveal work to be done. With this in mind the Committee continued with its policy of accumulating reserves so as to be in a position to help the cost which will be involved. However £475 was provided for tree surgery in the churchyard and a number of members gave practical help in carrying out works of general maintenance in the church and churchyard. During the year 2 Members sadly died and 1 new member joined. The Annual Meeting was followed by an engaging talk by Bishop Ind. A most enjoyable outing was made to Athelhampton House Hardy's Cottage and Moreton church

Shrewton Mothers Union

Report from Jackie Avery

After over 40 years as an active branch of the Mothers Union, we are becoming a Prayer and Fellowship Group. We are continuing to meet on the 1st Wednesday in the month, at Parsons Green in Shrewton, with Holy Communion and prayer. Everyone is very welcome, you do not need to become an MU member to join us.

Contact Jackie Avery 01980 620346. jackieavery1@btinternet.com

Maddington Church Room

Report from Mick Brearey, chairman of the FoMCR committee

Maddington Church Room -also known in Shrewton by many as the 'Scout Hut' is a building that's been in the hands/grounds of the Maddington St Marys church since the early 1800's. Used variously as a school before state schools, then a state school, Sunday school and various other uses since. It is now owned in trust for the Salisbury Plain Benefice.

For many years there had been a local agreement that the Shrewton Scouts ran the premises and maintained the fabric for their purposes at no cost to the church -other than annual Insurance liability. The Scouts benefited from free use of the building and keeping any income from hiring it out.

A decision was made in November that the local agreement should be annulled as the premises were not maintained to a sufficient degree and it was necessary to attract funding from outside bodies to upgrade it. A local committee known as the Friends of Maddington Church Room (FoMCR), is run by church members and users of the premises. Still in its infancy, there have been great strides to put things in motion before approaching funders with plans to improve the building and its potential. There is to be a member nominated from the FoMCR committee answerable to and serving on the PCC.

Churches Together in Shrewton & Orcheston

Report from Christine Chisholm

The Plain Church, Methodist Church and St. Mary's Church, Shrewton are all represented on 'Churches Together'. We are involved in the following areas of ministry:

- Weekly 'Coffee and Chat' on Wednesday mornings at the Methodist Church
- Chatterbox Toddler group which also meets on a Wednesday morning at the Rec.
- 'Messy Church' held during each School holiday
- Preparation and delivery of the annual Ecumenical service at the Recreation Ground in July
- A Supper in aid of 'Wells for India' in October

- Remembrance Day Service
- Women's World day of prayer on the first Friday in March
- Lent Discussion Groups and a Special gathering on the Tuesday of Holy Week to discuss experiences of our study and to share a meal together.

We also share with each other news from our individual churches.

THE CHURCH OF ST THOMAS A BECKET, TILSHEAD

Report from Libby Anson, Churchwarden

An extensive programme of repairs to and redecoration of the church was completed in 2012, and as a result the architect's Quinquennial Inspection later that year revealed only minor items for immediate attention, all of which have been attended to. However we cannot afford to be complacent, as repairs to the south aisle roof and the tower roof will be inevitable in the medium term. The next Inspection will be due in 2017.

During the year Church Committee conducted a trial of a new place within the church in which to welcome children; the trial was still ongoing at the end of the year. A side altar was also provided, where private prayers may be offered.

One fundraising event was held during the year, the annual St Nicholas Fair in December. This was for the first time a joint enterprise with the School, and raised a total of £720, meaning that the Church Committee received £360. We are grateful to the Friends of Tilshead Church, who organised a Garden Fête in June and a Harvest Supper in October.

During the year the Church Committee made donations totalling £735.93 to The Royal British Legion, Salisbury Trust for the Homeless, Tilshead School and Nursery School, the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee, the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust, The Friends of Salisbury Cathedral and the Alabaré Christian Care Centre . In addition a food collection for the Trussell Trust Foodbank was made during Lent and the harvest produce was given to the Alabaré Christian Care Centre.

We are grateful to Tilshead Parish Council, which contributed £900 towards the cost of churchyard maintenance, and the Baptist Chapel, which donated £100. Warm thanks are due to all those who helped in the life of the church during the year. Especial mention must be made of:

- the team of Holy Dusters, many of whom are not churchgoers, who ensured that the church was kept clean and shining week by week
- those who helped to decorate the church, both as members of the regular flower rota and at festivals
- The Friends of Tilshead Church, for their unstinting support
- Mr Alastair Haggaty, Mr Atilla Sonkoly and others who gave practical help
- Mrs Jean George, whose glorious music and warm personality so enhanced our services

Friends of Tilshead Church

Report from Michael Teale

The Friends, established in the year 2000, continues to be active in supporting St Thomas à Becket parish church. Funds are being replenished after a substantial contribution to the interior refurbishment in 2013/14. This has been achieved through membership subscriptions and notably by the proceeds from the Summer fête and Harvest supper in the past year. Members also contribute by 'holy dusting' in the church, arranging flowers and keeping the churchyard in good order. Last year we said good-bye to Barbara Newell, who served devotedly as secretary for five years, but are pleased to welcome Hilda Renshaw as her successor. We have a hard working executive committee, amongst whom Marilyn Redshaw expertly manages the accounts.

THE BENEFICE

A NEW BENEFICE

From the Rector, The Revd Eleanor Rance

Spending our first year as a Benefice has been a wonderful experience. We have learned a great deal about the very unique ways each church operates, and we hope to continue to support each church in its own ministry and mission locally. For me as Rector, the most precious times, however, have been when we have worshipped or socialised together.

Many people have reflected to me how nice it is to properly meet fellow members of the Benefice, to walk with them, eat together, pray for one another, compete against each other (at the Quiz Night in Shrewton!). The Rogation Walk in May, the Art Exhibition in September, the Cross Pilgrimage and the shared worship during Holy Week, the luncheon with Bishop Edward in November, all of these occasions have reminded us how good it is to be together, to share our resources and to celebrate our uniqueness. On our new website it is possible to see a 'Year in the Life of Salisbury Plain Benefice'. Do take a moment to have a look... I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the patient commitment of Richard Essberger, and his expertise in creating and caring for our wonderful website. It is our 'shop window' to the wider world, and well worth a regular visit by parishioners, www.salisburyplainbenefice.com

Messy Church

Report from Heather Brearey

Messy church has been running for 4 years now. Initially involving St Marys Shrewton and Shrewton Methodist church, this now includes all churches within the Benefice and The Plain Church. We provide a different sort of 'Church' for families within the Benefice. We run sessions every school holiday on a Tuesday, with games, crafts, worship and a shared meal. No charge is made and all are welcome.

We are fortunate to have many helpers from all churches in the Benefice and Churches Together. We also involve the Guides and other teens from the villages who attend as additional support.

We hold each session at The Methodist church, but over the summer holidays we held our session at Chitterne village hall, making good use of the playing field and the church. We intend to have our summer session again this year at Chitterne.

Numbers of attendees vary each session but we average 40+ people, and some very regulars, who also attend family services at the churches in the Benefice. We recognise a need to extend Messy Church to provide an alternative session for the children as they grow older and the simple crafts lose their appeal, this is a 'work in progress' at the moment! We also acknowledge that it would be nice to see more of our families in our churches and not just at Messy church session. We are exploring ways of encouraging this.

Open the Book

Report from David Walters

After a regrettable gap it was decided at the end of 2014 to re-form the *Open the Book Team* which is a project from the Bible Society designed to offer Bible stories as part of school life. It consists of a programme of themed and dramatized Bible stories about 10 minutes long designed to be performed in Assemblies and collective worship. The team of between four and eight parishioners from across the Benefice use a variety of visual aids to present the stories in a lively, compelling way, which is welcomed and enjoyed by both pupils and staff. The cast visit Tilshead and Shrewton Primary Schools as well as Appleford School. The vision is for every child to hear the story of the Bible at school in their primary years. It is planned to re-start the project this coming Summer Term.

Lay Pastoral Assistants

Report from Eleanor Rance

Licensed by the Diocese to support the ministry within the Benefice, Lay Pastoral Assistants form an invaluable part of the team within the church community. Over the years many individuals have held this important role within the villages that now form our Benefice. In 2014, the remaining two LPAs, Peter Sweet and Liz Broadbent, both decided that it was time for them to 'retire from active service', while remaining part of our new group of 'Prayer Warriors'. At our Annual Meeting on 27th April, we will thank them for all the time and care that they have committed to their work.

SCHOOLS

Report from Eleanor Rance

Within the Benefice are three schools: two primary church schools in Tilshead and Shrewton, and Appleford school in Elston. The schools are supported pastorally by the clergy, and both primary schools receive weekly assemblies from David and Eleanor. In addition a team of Foundation Governors, nominated by the Benefice PCC, serve in numerous ways. During 2014 several replacements among the Foundation Governors were sought and we are delighted that we were able to provide assistance on every occasion. Appleford boarders worshipped at Family Services in Shrewton on a regular basis during 2014; and as in previous years, the school came to St Mary's, Shrewton for their Harvest and Christmas services. All three schools continue to welcome visitors from

among the church community, whether for reading with the pupils, delivering *Open the Book* sessions, or in a more formal context.

A FINAL WORD OF THANKS

From the Rector, The Revd Eleanor Rance

As a church community we are well aware that every member plays their part in the ministry and mission of this place. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my personal thanks to all of you who have given of your time, expertise, money, labour, and especially prayers in order to see the Benefice thrive in 2014. I cannot name you all, but I would like to single out a few groups of people who are a particular support, and whose work often goes unnoticed...The churchwardens, Libby Anson, Mike Badham-Thornhill, Christine Chisholm, Ewart Grant, Robert Pryor, Marcelle Stobie and Paul Taylor, our Benefice Treasurer David Chadwick and his team of village treasurers, our wonderful musicians: organists, Andrena Badgery, Jean George, Carole Thomas, and Joyce Watson, and the Shrewton Choir; and my fellow clergy David Walters and Ian Chisholm who continue to serve the community in numerous unseen ways. Thank you all for making this first year in the Benefice of Salisbury Plain such a happy one.