

2019 Trustees' Annual Report for the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone.

Aim and Purposes: The St Michael and All Angels' Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, Fr Neil Bryson SSC, in promoting in this ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the church building and the two church halls on the church site in Tonbridge Road, Maidstone.

Objectives and Activities: The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our worshipping community. In our case this includes developing links, not only with the geographical parish, but also with many people from outside our geographical parish who are committed to the traditional Catholic position within the Church of England. Our worship puts our faith into practice, and seeks to nourish it through fostering our sacramental life with prayer and scripture, teaching and music. Mindful of the Charity Commission's supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion, we try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our community through:

- * Worship and prayer: learning about the Gospel and developing their trust in Jesus
- * Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- * Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of St Michael and All Angels' Church and its halls.

Achievements and Performance:

Worship and Prayer:

All are welcome to attend our regular services. At present there are 54 members of the church Electoral Roll, of whom 31 are not resident within the parish, though the fact that the church is not located in the geographical centre of the parish is probably relevant here. Attendance figures for "normal" Sundays in 2019, recently submitted to the Diocese of Canterbury, indicate an encouraging 54% rise since 2016.

Eucharistic worship, extending into a monthly service of Benediction, is at the centre of our parish life. Mass is celebrated on Sunday and Thursday each week, with celebrations also on holy days of obligation such as Ash Wednesday. In addition, in Lent 2019 Stations of the Cross took place on two Fridays. Our Crib Service, to which younger uniformed group members and baptism families were invited and at which the children, including 7 from church families, gave a dramatic presentation, was held on Christmas Eve, with a record attendance of 88. At our pre-Christmas Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, readers included members of our Scouts, Guides and Brownies and other groups; regular worshippers were joined at this service by many visitors, including a large group from The Air Training Corps, 40F (Maidstone) Squadron, of which the Vicar is the padre, and all enjoyed mulled wine and mince

pies afterwards. The children and younger members of the church take an active part in Sunday Mass as singers and readers and, in one case, as a boat-girl.

Acts of worship at St Michael and All Angels' involve not only children of the immediate church family but also children who attend the schools in our parish or belong to the uniformed organisations, together with their teachers and parents.

Our church seeks actively to support the schools in promoting the spiritual development of pupils in line with the requirements of OFSTED. During 2019, school services in church took place for staff, pupils and parents of the St Michael's Schools Federation: the Infants and Juniors attended services for Easter, Harvest and Christmas, and the Juniors additionally took part in a Remembrance Service on 11th November. Year 6 Juniors came to church in Lent for a service of Stations of the Cross. The pupils' generous gifts of food for their 2019 Harvest service made an impressive display in church and we afterwards delivered these, together with our own harvest gifts, to the Food Bank (see below). Six class visits to the church for the Junior School, including a guided tour, a chance to ask questions and a short service, took place as usual in September, and Founder's Day in July was marked by a church service at which all Year 6 pupils received awards. In 2019 Mrs E Bryson began to lead termly acts of worship for the Infants, and also led church services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas for the Wendy House, the pre-school which uses our halls. Although, owing to considerations of space, St Augustine Academy held its 2019 Carol Services on the school premises rather than in church, the Vicar was again involved in leading these.

The Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Cubs and Beavers were invited to Mass on Mothering Sunday and at Harvest, some of the groups producing craftwork to display during the sermon.

For a church, and for local families and their neighbours, occasions such as weddings and baptisms are significant at several levels, both as sacraments of the Church and also as affirmations of family life and relationships. A local couple were married in church in August 2019, and our Baptism services, preceded by systematic instruction from Fr Bryson and Mrs Bryson, had a strong sense of occasion. At the same time, our church continued its efforts to develop the links with families established through baptism, baptism families being specially invited to take part in worship on Mothering Sunday, at Harvest and at the Crib Service. 2019 saw a total of 20 baptisms: 16 children, 2 mothers who, before Confirmation, were conditionally baptised with their children, and 2 believers' baptisms (one adult, one teenager). At Michaelmas, when the Bishop of Richborough visited St Michael and All Angels', he confirmed 5 candidates – 3 adults and 2 secondary school students. This joyous occasion was followed by a party for the whole church family.

The dedicated contribution of our choir and our organist, Mr G James, enhanced the musical dimension of our life, and indirectly the musical life of the locality, during

the year. As well as the Service of Lessons and Carols, an ambitious Choral Evensong and Benediction on Corpus Christi attracted worshippers and music-lovers from farther afield, not to mention the singers, from the local community and elsewhere, who augmented the choir. Our own growing choir has two weekly practice sessions, and with tuition generously offered free of charge by Mr James, two young choir members have achieved good results in recent Associated Board singing examinations. We hope that more local young people will profit from the excellent music teaching provided at St Michael's, as its availability becomes better known in the town.

Various parish activities in 2019 helped to strengthen our links with parishes and organisations elsewhere. A party of parishioners attended the Chrism Mass at Canterbury Cathedral on Tuesday in Holy Week. Parishioners of all ages visited St Peter's, Folkestone, for the Blessing of the Fisheries in June. We have mutually supportive relations with the other Canterbury parishes under the episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Richborough; two of our lay members now serve on the Canterbury Diocese Forward in Faith committee, and our parish was well represented at the inductions of the new parish priests at St Peter's, Folkestone, and Holy Trinity, Ramsgate. A successful residential parish pilgrimage to Walsingham, led by the Vicar, took place in May, after preparatory prayer and teaching. The Mothers' Union Wave of Prayer was marked by a church service in June, featuring reports from MU branches in other countries. In August a group travelled to St Albans to join parties from other parishes at Bishop Norman Banks's Richborough Family Mass in the Cathedral, followed by a picnic and Bible study in the Bishop's garden, and St Michael's was also represented at the Richborough Family day at Rochester Cathedral in September. All these activities have served to express our solidarity in life and mission with members of other churches, and to make our own congregation more conscious of the wider church, at home and overseas.

At the request of the PCC Fr Bryson and Mrs Bryson led a Lenten Alpha Course, enabling parishioners to explore their faith in more detail, and providing preparation for adults moving towards confirmation.

Our Mothers' Union branch has contributed creatively to the life and worship of our church, notably with further attractive additions to our welcoming children's corner and with a charmingly crafted Advent House to appeal to younger worshippers.

Deanery Synod: The Vicar and two PCC members represent St Michael and All Angels' on the Deanery Synod, thus providing the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. One of our Deanery Synod members, Mrs J. O'Sullivan, also served on the Diocesan Synod from 2018 until her retirement for personal reasons in September 2019. Synod members report to the PCC as appropriate. During 2019 a growing emphasis on the importance of mission was evident in discussions at both deanery and parish levels, including a Maidstone Deanery Day, open to all, at which there was a significant St Michael's presence.

Among the five Marks of Mission developed by the Anglican Consultative Council since 1984, particular concern has recently been expressed in this Deanery for the fifth - “To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth” - a concern reflected by this parish in its continued membership of ECOChurch, which we joined in 2018. Mrs Bryson continues to represent St Michael and All Angels' on the Maidstone Deanery Mission and Ministry Committee.

The Church Halls: These are used regularly by the church for meetings, classes, choir practice and church fairs, and for social gatherings to build up our fellowship and to enable newcomers to meet members of the congregation. In addition to after-Mass refreshments, regular parish meals are produced in our hall kitchens by an energetic team of caterers, with a lively community spirit apparent. The halls are used also by uniformed organisations, a local martial arts group, and, on Saturdays, a Seventh Day Adventist congregation. These organisations enjoy a reduced rental, while the halls are also let at a commercial rate for functions. The Wendy House pre-school has prospered since its opening in 2017 and uses both halls. With the help of fund-raising among the congregation, improvements to the Vestry Hall washroom, incorporating a WC suitable for disabled users, were carried out during 2019 – a project that will now benefit all those who use and visit our premises.

Pastoral Care:

The church's two Readers, Mrs E Bryson and Dr E Relle, visit a total of four care homes in the parish for monthly services of the Word and/or home Communion from the Reserved Sacrament. The Care Quality Commission's CQC Regulation 9 (3)(a) emphasises the importance of meeting “the religious and spiritual needs” of service users, and the care homes and their residents are most appreciative of our help in addressing these needs.

In 2019 the Vicar or one of the Readers took home Communion regularly to 2 housebound parishioners, and additionally to another who was convalescing at home. Parishioners who were patients in hospital and in the Heart of Kent Hospice were also visited, and received Holy Communion and Anointing.

There is an informal network of parishioners who visit those who can no longer come to church, delivering copies of the magazine and generally “keeping an eye”, so that they remain in touch with church life. Ill and housebound parishioners and those preparing for marriage, together with the families of those about to be baptised and those who have recently died, are remembered by name in the intercessions on Sundays, so that the congregation remains prayerfully aware of them.

Mission, Evangelism and Outreach:

This is an item on the agenda of every PCC meeting, and the PCC remains conscious of the Six Priorities for Mission outlined in 2016 by Bishop Philip North.

We have a particular asset for mission in the form of our church building, which is significant both as a place of ongoing worship and as a piece of Maidstone church history and heritage. Designed by Arthur Blomfield, St Michael and All Angels'

Church – which has a handsome interior, a striking programme of angel windows by Hardman & Co., and other impressive glass by Heaton, Butler & Bayne - was one of the few local places of worship to open as a venue for Heritage Open Day in September 2019, acting simultaneously as a host church for Kent Ride and Stride. A variety of visitors, with a variety of interests, were attracted and came to enjoy the church; some had travelled a considerable distance. At the invitation of the Kent Equality Cohesion Council, St Michael and All Angels' took part in the Interfaith Week Diverse Open Doors event in November 2019, an opportunity to welcome a number of visitors involved in local government and to explain something of our faith and history as expressed in our building.

Relations with the schools within the parish - both the St Michael's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Schools and St Augustine Academy, part of the Woodard Academies Trust - continue cordial, and we see prospects of further development. Fr Bryson is a Governor of the St Michael's Church of England Schools, and two more PCC members became Governors during 2019. In each of the 6 terms of 2019, Fr Bryson led Worship at the Junior School, and Mrs Bryson led Worship in both Junior and Infant Schools. Other acts of worship involving the St Michael's Schools and St Augustine Academy have already been mentioned above.

We remain aware of the continuing need to make information about our church and its activities readily available to people within our local area and indeed outside it. In addition to our internet presence on *A Church Near You*, our dedicated St Michael and All Angels' website (<https://www.stmichaelallangels.org.uk/>), designed and managed by our webmaster Mr Mark Elvers, provides a valuable link with the community and with interested people farther afield, presenting forthcoming events, information and teaching material in an attractive and accessible format. Our parish magazine, produced entirely “in house” and edited by Mr Michael Trout, is supported by local advertisers and has a good local circulation, while various parish events receive additional publicity in the local press.

As Christians we believe that people's spiritual needs cannot be addressed without considering their physical needs. Some years ago the PCC decided that our church should collect imperishable items for those in need, particularly as food bank workers were then reporting that many of their clients were, owing to administrative problems, simply not receiving benefits to which they were in fact entitled. The advent of universal credit seems not to have improved matters greatly, and bags of food from St Michael's are still regularly delivered to the Food for Thought food bank based at the Maidstone Day Centre in Knightrider Street, Maidstone.

Ecumenical Relationships:

It is important to us to emphasise and develop our links with fellow-Christians of other denominations as we seek to make known the love of Christ in Maidstone. St Michael and All Angels' is a member of Churches Together in Maidstone and is represented at its meetings. In 2019 Churches Together once again organised a Winter

Shelter for rough sleepers, at which a member of our congregation was once again among the helpers. In March 2019, St Michael's was represented at the ecumenical Women's World Day of Prayer held at the United Reformed Church in Maidstone, and in May Mrs Bryson represented St Michael's at a Churches Together planning meeting for an ecumenical open-air Passion Play to be performed in Maidstone in 2020.

Members of St Michael's are always to be found participating with members of other denominations in the Good Friday ecumenical Walk of Witness and the open-air service in the centre of Maidstone, at which the prayers were led in 2019 by Fr Bryson. An informal group of ministers from several local churches and denominations who meet for a monthly pub lunch normally includes the entire St Michael's ministry team, and Fr Bryson and Mrs Bryson frequently attend the ecumenical ministers' breakfasts held in Maidstone. A Seventh Day Adventist congregation uses our halls at a reduced rent (see above).

Autumn 2019 saw the launch in Canterbury Diocese of Anna Chaplaincy, an ecumenical initiative focusing on ministry to the elderly, particularly in care homes. Mrs Bryson, as one of the first Anna Chaplains, is vigorously encouraging ecumenical involvement in Care Homes Ministry, and now co-ordinates the people from different churches who visit care homes in Maidstone; in the Maidstone Deanery itself there are 20 care homes, of which 3 were found to have no church services.

Financial Review:

2019 has been a steady year financially. Month on month income has regularly been more than expenditure, allowing for an end of year credit of £5,016.40.

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £71,529.57 versus £53,209 in 2018. This increase is attributed to the collection of back-dated Gift Aid claims that had not been collected since 2014; gift aid claims in 2018 amounted to £15,004.93. This figure will return to the average of £3000 in 2020. There continues to be regular invoicing of regular hall hirers, ensuring a steady monthly income.

During 2019 the church benefited from a 0% interest loan from a member of the parish allowing the whole of 2019s parish share to be paid in full. Paying the parish share in full allowed the church to benefit from a saving of 1.5% on the full cost, which amounted to a saving of £435.12. The loan was repaid in full by the end of the year.

Expenditure for the year was £66,513.17 which is a £17,226.17 increase on 2018. This is due to two main factors: a quarter of the 2018 parish share was paid in January 2019 (£7,077) and there were higher than normal maintenance and building costs due to the conversion of the disabled toilet (£6,528)

There continue to be funds held in two restricted accounts. At Close of 2019 the bell ringers' fund totalled £10,933.65. This is significantly higher than 2018, owing to the bell ringers' having previously kept their finances in a separate account. This account has now been merged with that held by the PCC, and the bell ringing treasurer is given the bank statement of this account on a regular basis. The general restricted Fund has a balance of £5,156, of which £4,147 is specifically allocated to the organ. The remaining balance of £1,009 is not designated to a specific item.

There still continue to be areas where savings can be made, and the production cost of the parish magazine has been reduced by 60%, making an annual saving of over £240. Also, moving into 2020, there will be a review of the utilities expenditure as this is one of the highest expenses during the year.

Looking ahead to 2020 there needs to be much consideration towards raising funds through fundraising and other events to ensure the financial situation stays positive.

Volunteers:

We are most grateful to all the volunteers whose hard work makes St Michael and All Angels' a lively, welcoming and outgoing community. Particular thanks are due to our Churchwarden, Mrs J O'Sullivan, to our Treasurer Mrs Heidi Elvers, to our sacristan and servers, to our magazine editor and webmaster, to our sidespersons, church cleaners and gardeners, and to our remarkable teams of musicians, bellringers, flower-arrangers, caterers and fair organisers. We wish to pay a special tribute to Mr David O'Sullivan, who died on 22 November 2019 after serving our church in a variety of capacities, including those of Sidesman, PCC member, Deanery Synod Representative and Churchwarden. His warmth and generosity, as well as his great understanding and appreciation of people, are much missed.

Structure, Governance and Management:

The method of appointment of Parochial Church Council members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Michael and All Angels' the membership of the PCC consists of the Vicar, Churchwardens, Readers and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the Electoral Roll of the church.

Representatives elected to the Deanery Synod are *ex officio* members of the PCC. All members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC; a new Electoral Roll was compiled in 2019. PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. Regular PCC meetings occur bi-monthly; 6 such meetings were held in 2019 with an average level of attendance of about 80%.

Administrative Information:

St Michael and All Angels' Church is situated in Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, Kent. It

is part of the Diocese of Canterbury within the Church of England. The correspondence address is:

The Vicarage, 416 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, ME16 9LW
The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC Members who have served at any time from 1st January 2019 until the date this report was approved are:

***Ex Officio* Members:**

Incumbent: Fr Neil Bryson SSC (Chairman)

Readers: Mrs E Bryson, Dr E Relle

Churchwardens: Mr D O'Sullivan, Mrs J O'Sullivan

Deanery Synod Representatives: Mr D O'Sullivan, Mrs J O'Sullivan.

Elected Members:

Mr J Ardley

Mrs F Callaghan

Mr M Coates

Miss S Dray

Mrs H Elvers (Acting Treasurer and Treasurer)

Mrs I Horton

Mr G James

Mrs A Ponter (Treasurer)

Dr T Samuelson

Mrs M Smith

Mrs M Thresh

Approved by the PCC on and signed on their behalf by

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Fr Neil Bryson SSC (PCC Chairman).