**St Mary the Virgin, Ardleigh, Essex**

Parish Priest – The Revd Antony Wilson



Photo by David Wright

Annual Report and

Statement of Accounts of

Ardleigh Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31 December 2016

OUR PARISH VISION

Our vision is to make Jesus Christ the foundation of our lives through worship, sacraments, house churches, witness, personal prayer and Bible study and to make the Gospel the standard for our conduct. We aim to extend lay involvement in ministry by training leaders to structure and develop the children’s youth, pastoral care and evangelism ministries. We need to reach out in the community and to Our Lord Jesus Christ for renewal in the fellowship.

THE PARISH OF ARDLEIGH -ST MARY THE VIRGIN

**Background**:

The parish forms part of a joint Benefice with Dedham. The Parochial Church Council has the responsibilty of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the ecclesiastical parish, the wider mission of the Church – pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical.

**Membership**:

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected at the Annual Parochial Church meeting in accordance with *Church Representation Rules*.

During the year the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

**Churchwardens**: Mr Robin Hill

Mr David Barnard

**Representative to the Deanery Synod**:

Mrs Barbara Hill (APCM 2014)

**Elected members**: Mr Francis Perera (Treasurer) (APCM 2015)

Mr Martin West (Secretary) (APCM 2015)

Mrs Elaine Brewster (APCM 2015)

Mrs Elizabeth McGregor (APCM 2016)

Mr Michael Scargill (APCM 2014)

Mr Richard Culley (APCM 2015)

Mr Gregory Frostick (APCM 2016)

**Committees:**

The PCC operates through the following committee that meets between full meetings of the Council: The Standing Committee

The Standing Committee is the only committee required by law, consisting of the Incumbent, Churchwardens, Secretary, Treasurer and another of the PCC.

**Church Attendance**:

On 1 April 2016 there were 35 people on St Mary’s Church Electoral Roll with 16 Non-resident. The Roll at 1 April 2017 stands at 35 with 16 Non-resident.

The average Sunday attendance, counted during October 2016 was 25.

**Child Protection Officer**: Mrs Elaine Brewster

**REPORTS FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

ST MARY’S CHURCH ARDLEIGH

**Report from the Revd Antony Wilson** (Priest in Charge of St Mary’s Dedham and Curate in Charge of St Mary’s Ardleigh)

**Maundy Thursday, Maintenance and Mission**

It’s almost a year since I first saw the post of Vicar of our churches advertised – to be precise it was **Maundy Thursday** 2016. That Thursday falls at the centre between the dates of our APCMs for this year. Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper where the central event of the evening was Jesus’ washing of his disciples’ feet. By doing this he demonstrated his desire to humble himself and serve them. Within hours he would make his ultimate sacrifice by dying on the cross for them and us.

I have been hugely encouraged to see how *service* plays such a big part in the life of our churches. The word *liturgy* means *the work of the people* and this includes both our worship to God when we gather together and our love and care towards others during the rest of the week– so being a Christian is much more than coming to a service on a Sunday – it means serving fellow Christians and those in the wider community – that’s why we often say these words together as we leave a church service *Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. In the name of Christ. Amen*. It’s in His name that we go out to serve others. Reading these APCM reports shows just how much is going on!

**Thank you to everyone who serves** – whether that be helping with our worshipping life on a Sunday or serving others at any other time during the week in the parishes, through our work and witness. I would like to specifically thank David Barnard who is standing down as Churchwarden in Ardleigh after three years of service. Thank you too to my ministerial colleagues Merv and Carol who provide such a great support to me.

Much of my time in the first few months has been focused on getting to know you and the people of our parishes. I’ve also been understanding how the churches operate and the challenges facing the PCCs as they care for our historic buildings and start to work together more collaboratively in our new benefice. **Maintenance** of what we already have is a vital part of our work whether that be buildings or worship services that enrich those of us who are already Christians and which help us to live out our lives as disciples. The PCCs have paid close attention to this principle whilst discussing changes to our service patterns which will be shared with the wider congregations in due course. These changes are partly necessary because we now share one full time minister who can not be in two places at once! I would like to pay tribute to everyone who in involved with the running of the Parish Office, particularly to Claire, our Parishes Secretary. Planned changes to the way the office operates should help us to maintain our responsibilities for the future.

At the same time the real thing that drew me to consider applying for this post was its description as a **Missionary** Priest. In its 2004 report Mission Shaped Church the Church of England challenged parishes to think of themselves as agents of God’s mission *‘it is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission that has a church’ (pp85)*. When we pray *Thy Kingdom come* we are asking that God would restore all things, establish shalom or peace, renew creation and redeem fallen humanity. This must start with the commission that Christ gave his disciples at the end of Matthew’s gospel (chapter 28 verse 19) *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,****20****and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* It has been a real encouragement to journey through the *Life Explored* Course with over 20 people – this is one way that we help people to become disciples and deepen their relationship with Christ.

I now see our biggest challenge as churches being to reach out to **children and families** who are present in our communities but not yet part of God’s kingdom. They are largely missing from our worshipping life. God is a missionary God and so we need to ask Him what we need to do to co-operate in that task of helping them to become disciples.

At the heart of all this is prayer – can I ask you to pray for the mission of our churches both on your own and by joining with others: we have services of Morning Prayer on Tuesdays (and a new service of Evening Prayer after Easter on Thursdays in Ardleigh).

In all this I am reminded of the words of St Paul in Ephesians chapter 3

***16****I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,****17****so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,****18****may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,****19****and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.****20****Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,****21****to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.*

**CHURCHWARDEN’S REPORT FOR 2016**

We started the year in transition, it was with great pleasure we welcomed the Revd Antony Wilson as our priest in November.

Robin Hill stood down as churchwarden in April and we are very grateful for his services over many years.

We continued to address items raised on the Quinquennial report and to date have completed the electrical work. We applied for a grant for our roof repairs but we were unsuccessful with our application.

As we build our relationship with our sister parish of St Mary’s Dedham we have started to enjoy shared services together at both churches.

Our good links with St Mary’s school continue and we welcomed them at Easter, Harvest-time and Christmas, as well as for two very successful and well attended iSingPOP concerts in May. I took two groups of pupils around the church to explain the history of the church and about our worship.

Attendance overall this year appears to have stabilised after last year when we lost some long-serving members.

Our beautiful church continues to attract many visitors and we were pleased to welcome a party from the Friends of Essex churches last September.

Christmas services were well attended, both the school services resulted in a full church and a good number were present at the Crib service and our midnight Eucharist.

My sincere thanks to all for their help and support in so many ways to ensure the functioning of our church week by week.

*David Barnard* – Churchwarden

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT**

During the year the PCC met seven times (the last following Antony’s appointment as curate in charge of St Mary’s Ardleigh), and we had one extraordinary PCC meeting to approve annual accounts.

In November we attended Antony’s licensing/collation at Dedham and this was followed later in the month with his first service at Ardleigh (a joint service with Dedham).

In the year our PCC, together on occasions with the PCC of the Bromleys, had a number of meetings with the Archdeacon regarding the dissolution of the benefice of Ardleigh and the Bromleys and the creation of the benefice of Dedham and Ardleigh. The PCC revised the Parish profile for the second time.

Following our Quinquennial inspection the PCC has spent much time looking at the heating and the roof repairs together with the need for urgent replacement of lighting. This has been a considerable burden on our sole churchwarden, David Bernard, who has remained cheerful throughout the year and to whom we are most grateful. As yet, we have no fabric committee. However, Gregory Frostick kindly undertook the work of making an application for a grant for roof repairs; sadly this was unsuccessful.

The times of church services were advertised on our website, the gate and noticeboard of St Mary’s and in the Ardleigh Advertiser.

*Martin West* – PCC secretary

**HARWICH DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

The Deanery Synod met three times during the year, Little Bentley in February, Lawford in May and Mistley in October.

In January, the Revd Canon Guy Thorburn said farewell to our parishes after a busy year as our acting Area Dean for Harwich, in addition, to being Area Dean for St Osyth. Thanks were received from Guy for the gift given by the Deanery, on his retirement.

As a result, the Synod Meeting in February commenced with the Commissioning of our new Area Dean, the Revd Canon Simon Heron, Priest in Charge of St Mary’s Church, Lawford. This service was led by the Venerable Annette Cooper, Archdeacon of Colchester.

The *Revised Deanery Plan* was discussed together with MMU’s – Mission Ministry Units, and it was hoped that later in the year stipendiary clergy vacancies would be filled.

At the Lawford meeting in May, it was announced that the Revd Margaret Shaw had been appointed to Harwich as Team Rector. Margaret was licenced on June 7 at St Nicholas Parish church at Harwich. This was on the same day as Bishop Stephen’s ‘Missionary Walk’ through Wrabness and Mistley to Harwich, which as well supported.

The Tendring Show in July was a very successful event. The flower displays supplied by various churches were beautiful and the marquee was placed in a good position.

At the Mistley meeting in October, we said a fond farewell to the Revd Chris Hills, Priest in Charge of Mistley and Bradfield, who was retiring at the end of Qctober and moving to West Mersea. Also, the Revd Liz Barnes had been licensed as Priest in Charge of the Rural Parishes – Wrabness, Wix and Great Oakley and Curate in Charge of Beaumont and Tendring.

The Speaker for this meeting was Mr Steve Kersys, the Chelmsford Diocesan Children’s & Families Adviser, who spoke about his work across the Diocese.

MMUs continued to be discussed during the year and the Pastoral re-organization continues to forge ahead. Hopefully, this will be completed by early 2017. Additional clergy vacancies were filled in November with the Revd Linda Porter being licensed to the Harwich Peninsula Team Ministry and our own priest, the Revd Antony Wilson, licenced to Dedham and Ardleigh.

During the year, our Deanery Treasurer, Mrs Hilary Powell, had addressed the Synod with an outline of the new Parish Share arrangements which will be introduced in 2017, and the MMU’s will be shared among the Benefices.

Finally, as the year comes to a close an enormous amount of sterling work has been completed. Resulting in the Harwich Deanery being well prepared for the changes that the *New Deanery Plan* will bring!

*Barbara Hill* – Deanery Synod representative

**CHILDRENS’ AND SCHOOL REPORTS**

**Messy Church** (from the Children’s Committee of Ardleigh and the Bromleys)

Messy Church has had another busy year in 2016. We have held several sessions during the year starting with ‘Easter Celebrations’ in March, ‘Be an Explorer’ in May, ‘Messy Church Olympics’ in July, ‘Apple Day’ in October’ and ‘Messy Christingle’ in December. Although we held two sessions in Great Bromley Village hall we have started to use the churches more and held sessions in both Ardleigh and Great Bromley church.

We have kept the price at £1 per child donation. The format is the same: refreshments, stories, crafts, songs, prayer and a light meal to finish. We have a mixture of regulars and new faces at the sessions.

Numbers for the sessions vary. We tried Sunday afternoons but the numbers were down and we have decided that they do not work, apart from Messy Christingle. The other sessions were more popular being at the start of the school holidays which raised the numbers attending to as many as 38 children. We have found that using the church as a venue doesn’t put anyone off coming and apart from a few space restrictions, they work well for the sessions. By using the church we are also reducing the overall running costs of Messy church.

Those who came to the sessions seem to enjoy what we do and we have seen a few visitors from Lawford as well. We have a great group of helpers and the committee works very hard to ensure that the sessions cover varied themes, crafts and we now include more active games which the children seem to enjoy. Yvonne ensures that we are up to date with our DBS’s and we are to undergo safe guard training in 2017. Ruth does risk assessments before each session.

We had a stall at St. George’s School Summer Fayre and we had quite a few children doing the activities provided. We were also asked to do a flower display at the Tendring show. We kept some crafts made at the summer fayre, the Explorer session and at the JAM (Jesus and Me) sessions for the display. Then Jenny and Yvonne put the display up at the Tendring show. The theme was ‘Jesus is the light of the world’.

We held an Easter competition which had over 70 entries from both schools, they had to decorate a hard-boiled egg. The results were really good. For the Christmas competition we asked the children to do a 3d Christmas decoration. This only received around 30 entries total and we feel this is because there is so much going on before Christmas. All entries receive a prize and they also provide lovely displays in the churches for people to see.

All our events are promoted by posters, fliers and emails. The schools and playgroups are very good at sending out information for us. The posters are now circulated to Lawford and Little Bentley.

We assisted with the Crib services at both churches. Antony Wilson and Sally Morris took the respective services and we told the Christmas story through a play. The committee and several church members made sure that everything ran smoothly at the services and both churches had around 100 people turn up. All money raised went to the Children’s Society and over £300 was raised between them. We had some candles returned from the Messy Christingle session. We drew names from the hat for the crib figures and the readings and this kept the children involved throughout the service. They seemed to enjoy the services.

We have been pleased to see Simon Heron and Antony Wilson at some of our Messy Church sessions and we are pleased to receive their input.

We have been holding JAM sessions at Great Bromley church on most Friday afternoons in term time for around 45 minutes. The attendance varies but those who come enjoy playing games and eating biscuits. Simon Heron and his wife have attended quite a few sessions. We try to have at least two helpers at each session and have a rota set up.

We hope to have a good 2017.

*Carol Cordwell* - Chairman of the Children’s Committee (Messy Church)

**ST MARY’S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT 2016**

2016 has been another busy and eventful year for the school. Since it was voted a ‘Good School’, it continues to draw interest and has seen numbers increasing with 114 children on the Roll, with a possible additional number by the end of 2017.

The dedication of the Head Teacher and Staff continue to ensure a high standard learning programme is available for all pupils, and this is evident particularly in the Reading, Writing and Maths results which are above average.

The school continues to maintain its Link Partnership with St Paul’s Primary School, in Kutus, Kenya. But during 2016, we were unable to arrange an exchange visit, due to lack of finance being available from the British Council.

Our school maintains its links with St Mary’s Church. The Revd Canon Simon Heron conducted Collective Worship on a regular basis, until our new priest, the Revd Antony Wilson was licensed in November.

The school children were able to visit the church on many occasions throughout the year:

1. At the Pre-Easter service, each child was presented with a Palm Cross.

2. In May, the Church accommodated and helped finance the visit of *iSing POP* (www.isingpop.com) to the school which lasted 4 days. This is a Christian organization with charitable status. It was a wonderful occasion with the church, school and community partnership in action singing Christian songs, presenting two concerts, and cutting a disc. Our PCC was given a disc of the recording in church. Many parents commented on how moved they were by the experience.

3. In July’s final assembly, we were sorry to say goodbye to Mr Richard Tucker and his wife Christine, who were leaving at the end of the summer term. Richard had been deputy head teacher for many years.

4. In October, the school was invited to attend the church Harvest Thanksgiving service. They also held their own Harvest Festival during school time at St Mary’s Church. 5. From November 9, the Revd Antony Wilson became priest of Dedham with Ardleigh. 6. On Remembrance Sunday, the children laid a wreath at the War Memorial and attended the service following. Sadly, during November, the school said a fond goodbye to Mrs Sandra Wignall, a teaching assistant who moved to Yorkshire.

7. In December, the school attended church for their Christingle service and also participated in the Messy Church competition, making a Christmas tree decoration. There were lots of lovely entries and many prizes given to the pupils. During the last week of term the school gave a Christmas Concert in the Church. This was a wonderful occasion and well-attended by parents, friends and church members.

Finally, ‘After School Clubs’ continue to flourish, with a residential trip to Mersea Island in September. We have enjoyed a Music Festival and participating in community projects and a wide range of activities from football and cooking, to flower arranging and squash. All these clubs have been well supported during 2016.

*Barbara Hill* - PCC Church Foundation Governor

**MY WORK IN THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY**

I have had another varied year working with children in Ardleigh and other communities. The largest amount of my time is spent at Ardleigh St Mary’s Church of England Primary School where I am a Co-opted Governor. I take weekly assemblies around the Christian value for the term. This year the Christian values have been Friendship, Justice and Humility. I have termly meetings with the Head to discuss the themes and I produce a plan and some back ground research for the staff. The plan also appears on our web site so parents can follow our theme. I am also responsible for maintaining notice boards which explain the Christians Values to the children. These are found in the school hall.

I also run two lunch time clubs, called ADD club, Ardleigh Discovery Detectives, which are open to any children wanting to hear bible stories or run/take part in assemblies. There is time in these sessions to reflect on our school assemblies and an opportunity for the children to attend staff meetings six times a year to report back their findings.

One afternoon a week I take a session called ‘Spirituality and the Outdoors. “***Sometimes the world is very busy and noisy. Sometimes it is good for us to be quiet and still. Sometimes it is good to stop what we are doing and just look and listen around us.” ’*** *The sessions include:*

* Experience moments of stillness and reflection
* A sense of awe and wonder
* Care for nature and living things
* To encourage children to listen, watch and absorb
* Look Hear Smell Touch
* Reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of the world around them

We have a small garden, The Peace Garden. The garden has Christian symbols as part of the design which helps the children to reflect and have times of quiet.

I visit Orchard Barns Kindergarten fortnightly to tell the eldest class a bible based story and prepare the children for assembles for whichever school they are going to attend. I took in an Easter Garden and made Christingles with the class at the appropriate time of year. Orchard Barns continue to have their tree in the church which they periodically redecorate. I always leave a picture for them to colour in and take home about the story.

Ardleigh Pre-School attends assembly half termly, the week before this visit I go in and tell them a bible based story and leave some colouring for them to do. I then accompany the children to the assembly and then take the assembly. The children bought their harvest gifts to the church and I told them a story. I narrated their Christmas Nativity. They also made Christingles.

The children are a delight to work with and come up with amazing challenging questions. I look forward to the coming year.

*Amanda Watts*

**FRIENDSHIP GROUP REPORT**

It has been a good year for the Friendship Group, some months not so many people but mostly with an attendance of 15 to 24. People enjoy coming together for coffee, cake and company. We welcomed Antony to our December meeting. As usual, Elizabeth treated us to haggis to remember Burns’ Night. In August, many of us went to see the ‘Summer Show’ at Clacton and then for a fish and chip meal. Then we went for a Christmas meal at Acorn Village arranged by Rita. We are hoping for another good year. We saw several new faces during the past year and hope to see many more. It is always good to meet new friends.

*Pat Newton*

**TREASURER’S REPORT** for the year ending 31 December 2016

**Introduction**

This is my tenth report as treasurer and I am now able to spend more time on PCC matters having retired in December 2015. I would like to thank David Wright and his team in ensuring that the weekly collections are banked timely with supporting documentation prepared on a timely basis and my wife in completing the book-keeping. I also offer my thanks to all those who have donated cash and given their time to organise and support fund raising activities. Finally I thank Mr Phipps for his role as Independent Examiner of the accounts for the year to 31 December 2016.

**Operating Statement**

I refer to the operating statement as it is important to communicate the continuing adverse financial results for the year ended 31 December 2016.

In order to provide clarity and transparency in respect of the Finances of the Church accounts I have maintained the classification of the Funds as at 31 December 2016 with comparatives together with the adoption of robust financial management principles.

For the year, expenses have decreased by 7% from £22,937 to £22,111. Income has increased by 1% from £20,210 to £20,409 leaving an operating deficit of £1,702 for the year ended 31 December 2016 (Deficit £2,727; 31.12.15). The operating result for the year reflects the slight decrease in the monthly Parish Share payable from £864 per month to £856 with effect from 1 January 2016 resulting in full payment of our Parish share of £10,272 for the year (2015; £10,376). This is the second consecutive year where the full Parish Share has been met.

It is nevertheless imperative that alternative income streams be researched and implemented e.g. hire of the church for activities, rental of church facilities for telecommunications if feasible, increasing the contributions from the church electorate and seeking a realistic contribution from the Roman Catholic Community.

**Detailed Review**

**Expenses**

The Parish Share expenses for the year to 31 December 2016 amount to £10,272 (2015; £10,376) and has been paid in full despite there being no resident Vicar for 11 months. This is by far the biggest expenditure of the PCC. In December 2011, the PCC decided to decrease the Parish Share contribution further from £1,000 per month to £700 with effect from January 2011. The operating deficit for the year is £ 1,702 (2015; £2,727). There are no further significant savings that can be made with regard to expenses, although savings will be sought wherever possible. There has been a significant amount of work gifted by members of the Ardleigh Church thereby reducing the calls on cash reserves.

**Income**

As noted earlier, income has increased by 1% to £20,409. Voluntary income has reduced by 5% with collections decreasing by 20% to £1,966. It is important to note that the level of comparable income for the year ending 31 December 2007 was £46,000. It will be challenging to raise the level of income to these levels but clearly as a congregation we need to take active steps to achieve this aim.

There was no significant fund raising activity for 2016 (2015 £Nil). Donations from the Roman Catholic community have increased by £100 to £850 per quarter; £3,400 (2015; £3,000) per annum. There is a strong case to be made that the running costs apportioned should be nearer 50% as the Catholics are able to utilise a wonderful and warm environment for worship.

Another significant impact on the accounts is the continued extremely low interest rates with the decrease in interest as reported.

**Non-Recurring Expenditure and Income**

There was no major non-recurring expenditure in the year. A claim for Gift Aid Tax refund was made on-line in September 2016 for £10,106 including interest receivable of f117.26 with the refund settled in the same month.

**Overall Funds at 31 December 2016**

There has been no change in the classification of the various funds with the classification documented to ensure transparency in reporting. The closing cash balance of the designated funds amount to £176,766 an increase of £7,238 from 1 January 2016.

**Conclusion**

The Parish share is the single largest item that St Mary's needs to fund and for the year to 31 December 2016 amounted to £10,272. We have paid this in full for the second consecutive year using valuable cash reserves amounting to £1,702 and using the same method in place for the previous 15 years. The PCC is taking active steps to ensure the Parish Share for 2017 is calculated on a fair, just and consistent basis in the light of the implementation of a new basis taking effect from 1 January 2017. As trustees of the Funds raised from the sale of the Vicar's rooms, we have to ensure that Charity Legislation is complied with fully not only in respect of these funds but all other funds including any potential change of use.

Francis Perera ACA

Treasurer

21 February 2017

**Independent examiner's report to the PCC of St Mary the Virgin, Ardleigh**

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended December 2016.

**Respective responsibilities of the FCC and the examiner**

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an Independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

• Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;

• Follow procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and

• State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of Independent Examiners Statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an opinion on the accounts.

**Independent examiner's statement**

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

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

• to keep accounting records in accordance with s. 130 of the 2011 Act: or

• to prepare accounts, which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or

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



Mr R .1 Phipps ACMA, PGCE

181 Eastwood Drive

Colchester

21 February 2017