



Draft

ANNUAL REPORT

For year ending 31st December 2020

(As required by Church Accounting Regulations 2006)

Registered Charity Number 1129833

**PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
ANNUAL REPORT
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020**

Table of Contents

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION.....	2
AIMS AND PURPOSES.....	3
1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE	3
<i>1a Team Rector's Report [Charles Miller]</i>	3
<i>1b Church Electoral Roll [Richard Kirby].....</i>	6
<i>1c LLM Report [Gwen Bevington].....</i>	7
<i>1d PCC [Eluned Hallas].....</i>	7
<i>1e Safeguarding [Maria Gibson, Parish Verifier]</i>	8
<i>1f Communications [Margaret Horton].....</i>	8
<i>1g Abingdon Deanery Synod [Sue Scott].....</i>	9
2 STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP.....	10
3 PROPERTY	11
<i>3a Musson Close [Linda Hobbs].....</i>	11
<i>3b Fairacres Road [Rob Bough].....</i>	11
OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES	12
PUBLIC BENEFIT	12
APPENDIX 1 ST HELEN'S CHURCH CHURCH WARDENS' & FABRIC REPORTS.....	14
APPENDIX 2 ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS' CHURCH CHURCH WARDENS' & FABRIC REPORTS.....	17
APPENDIX 3 ST NICOLAS' CHURCH CHURCH WARDENS' & FABRIC REPORTS.....	19
APPENDIX 4 ST NICOLAS' C E PRIMARY SCHOOL.....	21
APPENDIX 5 REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH IN ABINGDON	23
APPENDIX 6 REPORT ON THE ABINGDON FOODBANK.....	24

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (Continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020
(As required by Church Accounting Regulations 2006)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames is a registered charity, Charity Registration Number 1129833.

The Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames is situated in the town of Abingdon, Oxfordshire. It is part of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is:

The Hon Secretary, Abingdon-on-Thames PCC
c/o The Parish Centre, St Helen's Court, Abingdon OX14 5BS

The Parish comprises the churches and congregations of St Helen, St Michael & All Angels and St Nicolas.

PCC members

PCC members are the Trustees of the Charity. PCC members who have served from 1st January 2020 until the date that this report and the financial statements were approved are:

Stipendiary Team clergy:

The Revd Dr E C Miller
The Revd P A Smith

Non-stipendiary clergy:

The Revd J Brown
The Revd P T C Masheder

Licensed Lay Minister

Mrs G Bevington

Churchwardens:

Mr A Coker
Mrs L Hobbs
Miss J Kelly
Dr G Meen
Mr P Rast-Lindsell
Mr P Squire

Officers:

Chairman	The Revd Dr E C Miller
Vice Chairman	Miss A E Green (to 22/10)
Secretary	Mrs E Hallas
Treasurer	Dr A R Birks

Representatives on the Deanery Synod:

Dr A R Birks (to 22 October)
Miss A E Green
Mrs E Hallas
Mr P Penfold
Miss A Scott
Mrs S Scott (St M)

Ex-Officio

– representatives on Diocesan Synod:

Miss A Scott
Mrs C Worthington

Elected PCC members:

Mr J Clare
Mrs H Clare
Dr R Cox
Miss M Horton
Dr A R Birks (from 22 October)
Dr H Bishop (to 22 October)
Mrs J Collins (to 22 October)
Mrs S Scott (St H) (to 22 October)

Auditors

Mercer Lewin Chartered Accountants
41 Cornmarket Street,
Oxford,
OX1 3HA

Weblinks:

St Helen's: <https://www.abingdon-st-helens.org.uk/homepage.html>
St Nicolas': <https://www.stnicolasabingdon.org.uk/>
St Michael & All Angels: <http://www.stmichaels-abingdon.org.uk/>

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

AIMS AND PURPOSES

Under the PCC (Powers) Measure 1956, the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Dr Charles Miller, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. Each DCC is similarly required to co-operate with the minister in charge of the district church. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Parish Centre (in St Helen's Court) and Enock House (2 Musson Close).

1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

1a Team Rector's Report [Charles Miller]

Introduction

The past calendar year was the stuff of history books. In so far as 'books' survive the IT revolution now underway, there will be an almost bottomless well of information which researchers wish to access to build-up accurate pictures of "what happened". Our own Annual Parochial Report is a tiny contribution to that sea of information. In that light, what I write here, and what others contribute to this report, will serve less to inform us than those who might wish to learn how a parish like ours lived through this pandemic. I am aware, of course, that as I write this in January 2021 the pandemic is far from over – the Covid-related total of deaths in Britain is sure to rise above 100,000 before effective intervention occurs – so the report for 2021 for next year's APCM will tell more of the story.

Re-cap

We almost reached the end of the first quarter of 2020 before the first and total lock-down began. The Church-in-Abingdon's annual Lent Lectures were in full flow with many from all our congregations attending them at St Helen's. St Helen's experienced major interior damage in early March. But apart from those two notable occurrences the life of the parish and its congregations were moving on course, like the Titanic steaming through untroubled waters!

Suddenly all our plans and planning screeched to a halt.

It was rather like the occurrence with a sudden 'major incident': no one knew quite what was going on or into what we were headed. It reminded me of 9/11 and the days, even weeks following, when we slowly pieced together what had happened, by whom, and with what consequences. It took much longer to grasp the extent of the damage. I was in Manhattan at the time and travelled emotionally and practically with the traumatized population of the city as everything ground to a halt. The start of the pandemic was like that. I discovered some things about myself: I'm not a good lateral thinker, I find it hard to change course quickly and decisively; I'm not necessarily 'the right man for the moment'. This struck me with the arrival of a single e-mail one day within a week of the lock-down: "Charles, where are you?!". As if to say, "Don't just stand there, do/say something!" But what was to be done or said. So much was still unclear; anyway, pronouncements were coming from higher quarters; I was content to listen, assess, and consult with clergy colleagues and other operatives on site.

As to communications, the congregations were unequally equipped. Two (smaller) congregations already had e-lists in place to communicate with their constituencies. St Helen's, with several hundred on its Roll, had not yet graduated to that level of electronic communication. It was clear,

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Annual Report (continued)

FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

though, that now was the time. And that took time. I commend and thank our Administrator, and those working with her, who created a congregational list-serve so that it would be possible not just to communicate electronically with St Helen's folk but with the whole parish. That was a key first step.

Communications

After that communication from 'the centre' was possible, and those who were not electronically equipped to benefit from the internet and social media could receive hard copies.

Soon Holy Week and Easter were upon us. For that audio-visual 'broadcast' capacities had to be found and embraced. That too was a learning curve for most of our clergy Team. It meant having suitable equipment, apps and programmes, and know-how. Preparation for the presentation of recorded services via the congregation's websites was a priority for Holy Week and Easter; the clergy and LLM worked collaboratively to make that happen. Steven Thomas was essential at this stage in moving recorded materials onto the St Helen's and other websites. We are in his debt!

In addition to the various Zoomed social gatherings (on Sundays chiefly), two further communication initiatives arose.

- ◆ An e-version of the monthly parish magazine, named 'A Candle in the Window' provided a way to share news, views and creativity from within the parish community. We owe Rob Rutherford, Eluned Hallas and Louise Heffernan thanks for initiating and continuing that effort. (Here too hard copies have been delivered to the non internet-connected members of our congregations in so far as possible.)
- ◆ Through Eastertide, at the initiative of Warden Andrew Coker, the members of the Team and associate clergy contributed a 'Thought for the Day' to our town, linked with the Abingdon Blog and accessible through the congregations' websites. Like the national programme 'Thought for the Day', these were communications of just a few minutes aimed at reflecting Christian-ly on our situation. Of course they varied greatly, just as the presenters themselves do. I was very impressed by the quality of both presentation and content.

In the late spring we were able to offer a recorded said Eucharist with sermon from the South Aisle of St Helen's (the only accessible part of the building since repair work had not yet begun. The Team joined in this effort and, in so doing, we felt very much part of a team.

Re-opening

With the arrival of late July it was possible for churches to be open again. In preparation for that point the wardens, the Team Vicar and I consulted to devise a parish-wide plan. That involved opening first St Nicolas (in the market square) for prayer, and then fashioning a round of services that served three interests.

Keeping clergy and people safe; opening each church for worship on some regular basis; taking account of the smaller number of clergy willing to participate in our rota in light of virus risks.

Challenges faced us with regard to sanitizing our churches after use - a requirement as per diocesan regulation throughout the pandemic - when it came to the provision of an 8 am Holy Communion (BCP) service. It was unworkable to expect that a cleaning team would operate each week between an 8 am and later service in any of our congregations. After consideration, we settled on using St Nicolas for the 8 am HC alternating on a weekly basis with the 11.15 am service there.

At the same time, the other churches would mount one service on a Sunday at their usual time but with restricted congregational numbers (for the sake of 'social distance') and with reduced

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Annual Report (continued)

FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

participants in the provision of the service. We sought to provide a sense of return while working within the continuing limitations of the pandemic and relevant regulations.

But we were on a roller-coaster of sorts.

By the autumn infection numbers had increased (though, note, Abingdon was still well below the national average in numbers of infections) so that by later November a pre-Christmas lock-down was imposed. That didn't affect our worship routine but other aspects of daily life were once again constrained. There was an expectation of a Christmas break in restrictions, but as cases of infection rose the Government's message was more and more forceful: "Have as less to do with others as possible" (my words not theirs).

The clergy thought hard about how to celebrate Christmas as close to 'normal' as possible. In the end there were creative adaptations in all of our churches. Creativity popped its head up at St Helen's with the idea of a 'Christingle Kit' for children distributed from its mostly unused West Porch. St Nicolas' held a virtual Lessons & Carols with recorded music by professional choirs. St Helen's mounted two Lessons & Carols Services to allow for social distancing; St Michael's merged its Carol service with its Sunday Mass. In all our churches Eucharists for Christmas took place. In all instances attendance was lower than hoped for (the Government's warnings had, it seems, been heeded.)

Despite that, as we came out of Christmas and moved toward the New Year there was plenty of mixing throughout the population, and, more ominously, a new 'strain' of virus appeared in the UK. As we stepped into 2021 we could expect a continuation of the pre-Christmas tire-ed lock-down. And so it was.

Pastoral Ministrations

Those year-long scenarios have heightened our attention to one another (in so far as possible) within the parish community of worshippers but they have severely limited our capacity to engage outwardly. National statistics about people engaging with 'church' and worship on-line don't necessarily translate into pastoral contact and connection.

However, the provision of on-line programmes (e.g. Faith Forum, Desiring Life) have drawn in participants who are at a distance and who wouldn't otherwise be involved. That's a blessing to them and us.

Through 2020 almost no weddings took place; no baptisms were celebrated; and a few funerals have been held, mostly in crematoria. Aside from the loss of revenue associated with the first and the third, pastoral engagement has been severely limited for safety's sake. Each of our congregations has lost long-standing members within this period (though few if any to Covid-19) and yet we have not been able to celebrate their lives or commend them to God in death as we would like. That is a continuing grief; maybe 2021 will help us rectify that, but only maybe.

It was a satisfaction to support the renewal of Beryl Clements' license to preach during 2020; her ministry is welcomed and appreciated in the parish and especially at St Michael's.

Daily Prayer

This too has been a casualty of the pandemic. Evening Prayer (at St Helen's) has completely ceased since mid-March; Morning Prayer has continued intermittently either in St Helen's Lady Chapel or in the Parish Centre Hall. A rota of officiants has operated, and the time together, worshipping with Common Worship: Daily Prayer has been the occasion of intercession for one another, for parishioners and for the needs of the world. When that important routine will begin again is uncertain. It can only be when "the coast is clear".

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

So, my experience has been that of two opposing dynamics. On one side, closer coming together in the face of shared challenges; on the other, a feeling of fragmentation and distance with the limitations on face-to-face meeting, congregational worship and fellowship, and general social interactions.

In the face of this we Christians are challenged and called to find strength in the reality of the ‘mystical Body of Christ’, that is, in a togetherness which is gracious and real but not founded on affection, emotion or physical sensation. While at best its out-workings include such experiences, this Mystical Body is, by contrast, founded on invisible ligatures by which Christ, through his Spirit, weaves us into a Body and into members one of another (1 Corinthians 12). That is a challenge to Christians who think of ‘the church’ chiefly as earthly fellowship. But the pandemic has surely pushed us – the marvels of technology notwithstanding – to a deeper and higher, indeed more spiritual posture. A posture, I mean, by which alone or with others we know ourselves to be bound to one another in the bond of agape love, supported by the prayers of the living and the dead (saints and sinners both), and joined to our compassionate Lord and Head of whose body we are blessed to be a part by faith, baptism and sacramental gift.

In my report to the PCC’s November 2020 meeting, looking ahead to a hoped-for PCC Away Day in the summer of 2021, I suggested we take up a theme like ‘crisis and creativity’. All of us, I think, can fruitfully look back and look forward in terms of crisis and creativity both in our personal lives and relationships, and as towns-people and as members of our parish’s spiritual fellowship.

I propose that as an agenda for us all as together we re-group from 2020 and re-build in 2021.

Respectfully,

The Revd Dr Charles Miller, Team Rector

1b Church Electoral Roll [Richard Kirby]

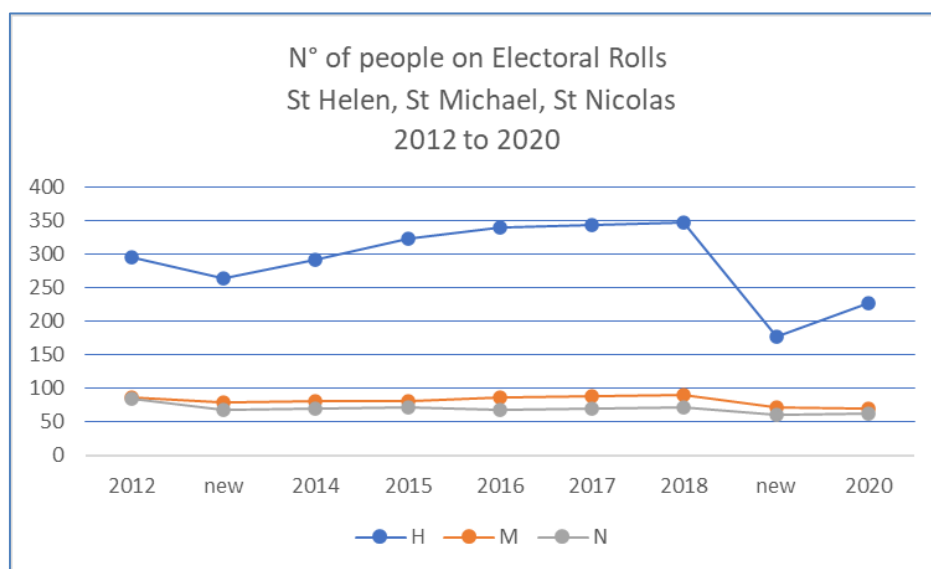
There is a Parish Electoral Roll Officer for Abingdon-on-Thames, but each of the three churches in the parish maintains a section of the Roll. The table below gives the changes from 2019 to 2020 for the three churches in the Parish.

The review in 2020 was completed in October to coincide with the Covid delayed APCM.

Electoral Roll Numbers 2020

	2020 roll	2019 New roll	%age change	2013 Previous new roll
St Helen	228	177	+29%	264
St Michael	69	71	-3%	79
St Nicolas	62	60	+3%	68
Abingdon on Thames	359	308		411

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020



1c LLM Report [Gwen Bevington]

As with all ministries, clerical and lay, my ministry as LLM has been changed by the pandemic. Preaching, first to an almost-empty south aisle and then (in August) to a distanced congregation of 50, was a different experience. I got used to commitments being rather provisional: three dates I had for preaching were unavoidably cancelled. Preaching by zoom lies in store, but will be a subject for the 2021 report. It has been strange to lose the contact I used to have with young families via the much-missed monthly “Morning Praise”.

I was honoured to be included among those who delivered regular “Thoughts” to the website and Abingdon blog early in the first lockdown; and also to be counted in the ministry team for our phone-round of all on the St Helen’s electoral roll. In both cases, the prospect was a little daunting; but the reality was rewarding.

Like all church members, I’ve had to find different ways of “taking in” during this strange time. In addition to the material on our own websites, I’ve appreciated some of the diocesan services. I “attended” a Church Times Advent retreat, and have been enjoying an online Festival of Preaching, with great advice and example from some excellent speakers.

I’m grateful to the clergy team for their encouragement of my ministry; I hope that, as post-pandemic life unfolds, there will be ways for me appropriately to support them.

1d PCC [Eluned Hallas]

The PCC of the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames met in person three times in January – March 2021, the last meeting taking place just before the first Covid 19 lockdown. During the initial stages of the pandemic day to day decision making was carried out by the Clergy Team and Church Wardens, acting for the Parish and individual churches. During this period a number of decisions (particularly regarding essential faculties and grant applications) were taken via email – with members responding with their position (For, Against, Abstain).

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting, delayed under a Bishop’s Instrument, was held – under social distancing constraints – in person in St Michael’s in October.

The new PCC met for the first time – online - in November.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Annual Report (continued)

FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

The business of the PCC concerns those issues best approached on a Parish, rather than Church, basis. It is also a useful forum for communications throughout the Parish, including details of Parish and Church sponsored events, staff updates and feedback on Deanery and Diocesan issues.

The PCC continues to review and approve faculty applications across the Parish, and consideration of GDPR, Safeguarding, Health & Safety and the finances of the Parish remain regular items on the PCC agendas. Work by the Communications Group on a new Parish website has not progressed as much as was hoped, but the creation of a Parish Resources page allowed information from all three churches to be accessed in one place.

During the year the Parish has started working towards a more unified and co-ordinated approach to the handling and recording of accounts, introducing more attentive financial management by the PCC.

1e Safeguarding [Maria Gibson, Parish Verifier]

The PCC is complying and will comply with its duty under Section 5 (reporting any clergy misconduct towards parishioners or church staff) of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, in line with the House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

In 2020 there have been a couple of safeguarding incidents that required referral to the Diocese for more formal input and procedures.

Individual safeguarding training, outstanding at the start of 2020, has been completed online.

One aspect of safeguarding is the provision of a safe environment. During this pandemic every effort has been made by the churchwardens and others throughout the Parish to ensure the health and safety of worshippers when the church has been allowed to open for worship or for private prayer. We record our thanks to all concerned for the high standard achieved.

At St Michael's, following on from the preparatory work done by the churchwardens and church safeguarding officer in 2019, the production of the safeguarding requirements associated with the updated church/church room hire agreement was completed. For multiple bookings this involves the hirer declaring either that they have their own up to date safeguarding policies and procedures to which they must adhere or that they agree to abide by the church's policy and code of practice for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. By the end of February, just before lockdown began, organisations had started to respond and several safeguarding declarations had been signed, accompanied where appropriate by copies of safeguarding policies. This process will be continued as soon as it is possible to start taking bookings again.

Safeguarding Officers within the Parish:

Maria Gibson – St. Helen's

Carol Bowman – St. Michael's

Jenny Fishpool - St. Nicolas'

1f Communications [Margaret Horton]

Having made a good start on a new parish website last year, things ground to a halt when the pandemic struck - partly because it would have been more challenging to discuss plans and look at examples remotely and partly because the time and energy of some key players had to be diverted elsewhere in recording services and putting materials online. So, although the specific website didn't make much progress, the parish's online offering did. By lockdown 3 in winter 2021, the three churches were able to offer live streamed and recorded Sunday services (St. Helen's) a live streamed Sunday morning service and recorded sermons (St. Nicolas) and Mass celebrated online via Zoom at St. Michael's. As well as this, our websites offered a wide variety of home grown and

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

outside resources, and links to Diocesan services and other online offerings. It is hoped that once we can meet again in person, we can progress with a parish website.

The pandemic did offer a rich opportunity to revive the Window magazine in online form, and Rob Rutherford reports further on this below.

Our third objective of 2019, to further the use of social media was somewhat limited by having a dearth of activities to put on the Instagram page but we have 135 followers and from Easter 2021 we look forward to opening our churches again with the opportunities for promoting our activities and our faith. A reminder that the contacts for the Instagram account are Roger Cox (St. Helen's), Eluned Harris (St. Nicolas) and Alexandra Scott (St. Michael's)

The Parish magazine, 'The Window' stopped publishing in December 2019. It was described as a pause whilst a review took place. The expense of a paper publication was certainly one problem. Then lockdown happened and suddenly there was an issue – how to keep intact and cherish our community and to help us 'be the church'. Thus an online magazine was born. One of us (RR) had been asked to help with the word processing of the Window after Rachel Shearer moved to Scotland so the format was there already.

Here are the guiding principles we have set ourselves:

- To represent the whole Parish by encouraging as many as possible to contribute to it
- To encourage a wide readership
- To inform, educate and entertain.

Readership - here are some sample figures:

Issue	Downloads from St Helen's website*	Downloads from St Nicolas' website*	Estimated numbers distributed by hand**	Total
2020 Issue 8	101	66	26	193
2020 Issue 9	84	76	26	186
2020 Issue 10	100	71	26	197
2021 Issue 1	78	46	26	150

*Hard to be exact. This is the number of households not people.

**Thanks are due to those who deliver the magazine to people who are 'not connected'

Contributors: To date 74 people have contributed in some way to the content of the magazine. We are helped by having an amazingly rich set of people in our congregations.

Please email candle@abingdonparish.org.uk if you would like to help in some way.

Rob Rutherford, Eluned Hallas and Louise Heffernan

1g Abingdon Deanery Synod [Sue Scott]

The Synod met on three occasions during 2020 – on 30th January, 24th September and 26th November. Due to Covid -19 only one of these meetings took place "in person" the other two meetings being in the form of Zoom meetings which initially made discussions more challenging. Matters for discussion included:-

- The revised criteria for the application of Mission Grants
- PDP Mentor training (Personal Discipleship plans)
- Mission Action Plan (MAP) review

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Annual Report (continued)

FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

- Pastoral reorganisation and implications for ministry
- Parish Share and the Deanery Contingency Fund

The Synod's role is not just to discuss Parish Share (sometimes contrary to popular belief!). Rather it is an opportunity to develop closer links with our fellow brothers and sisters across the 22 churches and 11 Parishes in the Deanery. The year 2020 has shown that we all as church have had to face challenges in the way that we fulfil our privilege to be a witness to Christ in this place. The Synod has continued to seek ways to support the churches in our Deanery which have faced difficulties both financial and pastoral. In the Synod we continue to strive with God's guidance to help each other by sharing our resources and expertise to become an ever more contemplative, compassionate and courageous church which will continue to grow in the future.

Sue Scott, Deanery Synod representative, Lay Chair Abingdon Deanery

2 STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames is served by a Team Rector, based at St Helen's, and a Team Vicar shared between St Nicolas' and St Michael's.

Abingdon has a Local Ecumenical Project – the Church in Abingdon (CiA) – to which all the Anglican churches belong.

The Parochial Church Council of Abingdon-on-Thames is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure, and was formally registered with the Charity Commission on 27 May 2009.

Lay members of the PCC are appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Church Representation Rules, as originally authorized as Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 and subsequently amended by the General Synod. All eligible church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

In addition to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames, there are three District Church Councils (DCCs). The PCC has delegated to the DCCs responsibility for detailed implementation of most of its functions, in a continuation of a Scheme approved by the Bishop. The PCC is therefore able to concentrate on those matters which cannot be delegated, or are of common concern. It has two committees:

The *Standing Committee* (comprising the team clergy, church wardens, the secretary, the treasurer, and the vice-chairman) has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC.

The *Finance Working Group* (comprising the Parish Treasurer and the Treasurers of the DCCs) oversees the financial activities of the parish, and prepares the annual budget and financial statements for the parish. It meets as required. The budget and financial statements are approved by the PCC after individual church finances have been considered by individual DCCs.

PCC members (and DCC members) are encouraged to attend training sessions as appropriate. Most often these are courses organised by the Diocese of Oxford.

The PCC is exposed to risks associated with buildings, finances and availability of volunteer effort. Dealing with the secular aspects first: buildings are insured and regularly inspected, finances are managed by the parish treasurer, and DCC treasurers and volunteers are constantly sought to carry the administrative burden of the PCC and DCCs. The maintenance of ancient buildings is a heavy responsibility for the PCC, but this is not unusual in the Church of England. Health and Safety, Child Protection and other pertinent legislation is adhered to, and there are policies in place to this effect.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

DCCs operate within a budget and financial envelope determined by their annual income and reserves and approved by the PCC. Each church has an annual stewardship programme to invite donors to respond to the income targets. Special appeals are launched for special projects (typically capital projects) as appropriate. To say ‘The Lord will provide’ may not be an acceptable approach to financial risk management in the secular world; but seeking the Will of God through constant prayer and responding to His Will moment by moment are key instruments by which the PCC manages risk in labour and financial matters.

3 PROPERTY

3a Musson Close [Linda Hobbs]

A 4 bedroom town house purchased in 2015, currently used by St Helen’s as the home of Rev. Canon Charles Masheder, Associate Priest, and his wife Felicity.

Since October 2019, the start of the Licence, the house has been used as their residence. At termination of the License, the property is to be returned to the use of the Church. It is currently planned that the property will continue to be used as House for Duty accommodation.

The property 2 Musson Close is situated within easy walking distance of Abingdon town centre, St Helens Church and the other 2 churches, St Nicolas and St Michael’s.

Under the terms of the License, agreed by the Diocese, the Associate Priest has no liability to pay rent, water rates, Council Tax or Insurance. All costs associated with the upkeep and of the property are met by Church funds. All costs incurred by the Associate Priest in fulfilling his post, are also met by Church funds.

Repairs necessary to the property since the last report have been minimal.

- The annual Gas Certificate, (required by law for all properties under license or tenancy) was carried out in September 2020. The boiler passed all safety requirements.
- Blocked guttering need to be cleared, this may prove to be a regular maintenance expense.
- In January a problem with a “smell” in the kitchen was experienced, to eliminate the possibility of a gas leak, a plumber attended. The boiler was found not to be at fault. To eliminate a potential problem with a blocked drain, a camera survey of the drain was conducted, no problem was found. It was suggested by the engineer that the fault might be with the existing dishwasher plumbing. A plumber attended to assess and remedy the problem, but no fault was found, so no work was carried out. At the time of writing, we are still exploring the cause of the “smell” but are relieved that extensive work to the drainage system was not required.

The property continues to be managed by Linda Hobbs.

3b Fairacres Road [Rob Bough]

Pursuant to a bequest from Mr Derek Enock in 2009, each church in the parish has an interest in a residential property in Fairacres Road, Oxford, which is held on a trust. The current occupant of the property has the right to reside there for as long as she wishes. If the property is sold, she will be entitled to the income from the invested sale proceeds. Upon her death the property or proceeds from the sale will pass to the following beneficiaries of Mr Enock’s estate:-

1. St Michael and All Angels Church;
2. St Helen’s Church;
3. St Nicolas Church;
4. Trinity Church; and

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

5. The Churchill Hospital.

The following were appointed Trustees in 2009: David Scott (St Helen's), Michael Beach (St Nicolas), Ruth Sillitoe (Trinity) and Jane Maitland a partner of the firm Henmans now Freeths (professional trustee). In the period covered by this report, all four trustees have indicated a desire to retire from their trusteeship. Freeths will replace Ms Maitland with Freeths Trustee Limited, a trust corporation operated by Freeths to act as a professional trustee of the trusts that the firm advises. Having a trust corporation (as opposed to an individual) act as trustee brings certain administrative advantages and cost efficiencies, and removes the need for other trustees. Having assured itself that it will still receive regular updates and be consulted on any decisions to be taken in relation to the trust, St Helen's has therefore decided not to nominate a replacement for David Scott as a formal trustee, but that Rob Bough should be nominated as the contact person for Freeths in their correspondence with St Helen's as a beneficiary.

Other than these administrative changes, the position remains the same.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The following Vision Statement was agreed by the PCC on 22nd November 2000 and continues to apply to the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames:

“A single unified parish with a Team Ministry in which clergy and laity work together to serve interdependent congregations, within an active ecumenical organisation where:

- The Gospel of Christ is celebrated through worship and fellowship, with individual congregations providing a spectrum of traditions
- The life of the Church is built up through teaching, preaching, evangelism, pastoral care and ecumenical co-operation
- God's love is made known in mission and service to the community and society as a whole.”

The following objectives for the Team Rector appeared in the Parish Profile agreed by the PCC in November 2005.

- In liaison and collaboration with the Church in Abingdon, to refresh and progress the strategy for the development of a Christian presence in south Abingdon.
- To encourage, enable and release lay leadership and ministry to enable the Parish to be better equipped to respond to the changing patterns of stipendiary ministry.
- To continue to develop joint working within the churches and across the team, to ensure we use our resources effectively in the propagation of the gospel.

The activities undertaken to enable the PCC to achieve these objectives are described in the Achievements & Performance section, and in the reports from the constituent churches.

The PCC is heavily dependent upon the contribution of volunteers to drive forward the mission of the church and the Kingdom of God.

The PCC delegates to DCCs the matter of policy for making grants and donations from their income. The financial statements record donations made during the reporting year.

Public Benefit

The PCC is aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in "The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit" and have regard to it in their administration of the Parish. The PCC believes that, by fulfilling its responsibility to work together with the incumbent in the Parish and

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

co-operate in all matters of concern and importance for the promotion of the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, it provides a benefit to the public by:

- providing resources and facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for its members and for anyone who wishes to benefit from what the Church offers;
- promoting Christian values, and service by members of the churches in the Parish to their communities, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

Reports from individual churches, St Nicolas CofE School and the Church in Abingdon are attached as Appendices to this report.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

Appendix 1
St Helen's Church
Church Wardens' & Fabric Reports

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

The pandemic has affected the life of St Helen's in many ways - cancelled services, financially, socially, and pastorally. In addition to the effects of the pandemic, in mid -March, a plaster fall in the Nave resulted in services being moved to the South Aisle while the architect and builder were consulted. The opportunity was used to prepare a Faculty application for repairs not only to the Nave ceiling, but also to plaster panels in the North Aisle, together with the removal of an unsightly, redundant heating duct.

Work finally commenced in October but, as work progressed, the number of plaster panels requiring repair in the North Aisle was found to be much greater than anticipated. Additionally, timber rot in a main beam over the tower door required urgent repair. These additional works slightly delayed the finish and added to the cost. To help finance the project, a grant application was made to the government's Culture Recovery Fund and we were fortunate to be awarded £20,000, which offset a large proportion of the cost. The balance was forthcoming from the annual support donated by the Friends of St Helens.

Both architect and builders did excellent work, with the majority of the scaffolding being removed in time for Christmas services. As part of the project the whole of the North Aisle ceiling has been repainted and looks magnificent.

The first lockdown permitted time for a working party of volunteers to repaint the Parish Centre. The centre now looks resplendent in fresh paint and we eagerly await a time when, restrictions permitting, we can again use the centre for meetings, worship and fellowship, whilst again being able to hire the hall to recoup some of our lost revenue.

A team of "technically able" members of the congregation met the challenge of installing broadband into the church. This enables live streaming and recording of services. The cost of equipment and wiring was partially met by a grant from the Deanery. We are very grateful to the team whose work is continuing.

Thanks to the combined efforts of Rob Rutherford and a small team of volunteers, the Window magazine has been rejuvenated into The Candle in the Window. This on-line magazine has received support and contributions from many amongst our three congregations.

The "business" of church life continues via zoom and regular meetings with clergy and officers ensure that, at all times, efficient communication is maintained.

WORSHIP

In March, in line with restrictions, services were suspended, with pre-recorded services available via the website. Restrictions also meant that mid-week services were cancelled and only two mid-week services have been held since March. It is anticipated by both clergy and congregation that, once restrictions ease, these much appreciated services will be resumed.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

Once restrictions were eased after the first lockdown, regular Eucharist services were permitted in church initially in the South Aisle, with measures introduced to meet COVID-19 guidelines. These services continued to be recorded for those unable to come to church.

Christmas saw two carol services, with fewer people attending each service in order to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. Midnight mass was moved to 10.30 pm, in order to allow cleaning in preparation for the following Christmas morning service. A recorded service as well as an interactive Christingle service via zoom was appreciated by many families, both in Abingdon and overseas! To enable preparation for Christingle, bags of sweets, ribbon etc were given out from a suitably decorated west porch, complete with Nativity scene. Appreciation from the public as well as recipients of the “Christingle kits” showed this to be a very positive “out -reach” event.

Restrictions since December have once again necessitated services being recorded or live streamed and the church is currently closed for services. Faith Forum continues via zoom and is well supported.

The office continues to be run efficiently and effectively with Jenny Balshaw working from home, as well as coming into the office on two days a week. Thanks must go to Jenny who has always enabled the business of the churches to continue under very challenging conditions.

MISSION

The restrictions of the pandemic meant that the church was unable to open to visitors in the summer. Whilst this is very regrettable, we have had to focus our mission to “open our doors” in ways previously unavailable. The streaming of services etc enables us to offer a welcome to everybody via our website. We hope that as people access our services, the newsletter, Faith Forum, they will feel drawn and encouraged, once restrictions allow, to join with us in person.

A zoom coffee morning each Sunday after the service enables exchange of news, the ability to “meet“ and talk with friends. Even in this restricted way, this has been a welcome and enjoyable way for members of the congregation to feel connected. Our thanks go to Ros and Rob Rutherford who arrange and host each session.

CARING FOR EACH OTHER

Visits to care homes and pastoral care visits have all ceased, contact being maintained by phone. The clergy team has phoned everyone on the Electoral register, an initiative appreciated by many. Contact is always important but, with current restrictions, it vital to ensure that people feel connected and part of our church family.

The Pastoral Care team led by Charles Masheder meet regularly (by zoom); they aim to ensure that all who are in need are offered assistance and support. Lockdown saw volunteers shopping for those who are elderly or shielding, an example of our “church family” continuing to look after its more vulnerable members.

Linda Hobbs
Church Warden

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

FABRIC REPORT

The main fabric project during 2020 was the repair of plaster ceiling panels in the North Aisle and Nave. There had been a problem for many years with the plaster ceilings in church because of areas of weak bonding between the plaster and the supporting wooden lath structure. A plaster fall in March left a section of loose plaster hanging precariously over the Nave and worship had to be relocated to the South Aisle. The weakness in the plaster bonding is believed to be historic in nature – probably the effects of the old hot-air heating system, along with unstable environmental conditions during church re-ordering in 2004. Every panel in the North Aisle was inspected closely from a scaffolding platform and any loose plaster sections replaced as a precaution, even when the risk of a plaster fall was judged to be very small. The redundant hot-air heating ducting in the North Aisle was removed and the ceiling and walls of the Aisle redecorated.

There was a complication with the repair of the vertical plaster panels by the tower. The wooden supporting beam behind the panels had suffered from significant decay, a combination of damp penetration over many years, along with insect infestation. Dampness tests showed that the beam and surrounding area had completely dried out - the decay was historic and the infestation no longer active. The decayed section of the beam was cut out and replaced with a new oak beam, attached with steel plates to the remaining section of the old beam.

We have continued with the electrical repairs and upgrades recommended in the 2019 Electrical Condition Report. The contractor retested the lighting circuits which had originally failed the test for insulation resistance. The failure was believed to be due to damp in the insulation where the copper cladding of the cables had become corroded. The circuits now comply with the electrical requirements, probably because the lights in question had been switched on for long periods during the North Aisle repairs, which had the effect of drying out the insulation of the cables. However, the problems with insulation resistance are likely to get worse again over time. The intention is to replace these cables as part of the installation of a new lighting system, so this is not a long-term problem.

The two old central heating boilers in the Parish Centre have been replaced with a single condensing boiler. The new control system retains the flexibility of the original system: four separate heating zones with individual thermostats, plus a timer to prevent the heating being left on accidentally overnight.

Stephen Thomas

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

Appendix 2
St Michael and All Angels' Church
Church Wardens' & Fabric Reports

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Worship and Services:

2020 started off with our regular pattern of services with Mass at 09.30 on Sunday, a Said Mass at 19.30 on most Tuesdays and a Said Mass at 12.30 on a Thursday. We are most grateful to our honorary clergy and our clergy for enabling us to worship at St Michaels.

In addition we did celebrate certain Holy Days (e.g. Epiphany, Dedication Festival, Ash Wednesday, All Saints Day, All Souls Day, and Christmas Day).

On March 23rd, the United Kingdom went into a national lockdown due to Covid-19 and for the first time Places of Worship had to close. The year, therefore, has been one of constant change and decisions having to be made to ensure that we were keeping people safely distanced and requiring people to book for services so as not to over-subscribe the available seating (fortunately this limit was never reached). Thus complying with government and church guidance.

We were unable to celebrate Easter together.

The church was re-opened on 16th July for Private Prayer, having undertaken a risk assessment prior to this as per Church of England guidelines.

We re-commenced Public Worship on 26th July.

There was a further national lockdown in November and again Places of Worship were closed. Private Prayer and Public Worship resumed in December.

Christmas was a decidedly muted affair as we were unable on Christmas Eve, to hold our usual Crib service, popular Carol service and Midnight Mass. On Christmas morning we held a Mass with 31 attending.

At Private Prayer we had on average 7 attendees and at our Sunday services we averaged 35 attendees.

We held only 1 wedding as all the other couples postponed their weddings due to the pandemic. There was 1 baptism and 8 funerals held during the year.

The pandemic has affected the mission and St Michaels in more ways that we have yet to realise. Just not being able to gather in church, the sung eucharist, the coffee and chat. It must take a toll on our well-being. St Michaels has stood as a rock of faith for 154 years which gives us all hope. Part of that hope is that we will once again be able to meet for sung eucharist and coffee and chat. Hopefully, in the not-too-distant future.

Outreach:

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 St Nicholas Primary School and Abingdon School were unable to hold their usual services at the church.

Also, all the concerts we were due to host had to be cancelled.

The Oxford Diocese Ride and Stride did go ahead, but we were unable to give out our usual refreshments.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

All our bookings for the hire of the church room were cancelled.

Fundraising:

We continue to support:

Abingdon Bridge (a charity in town for young people) and Tariro (a youth charity in Zimbabwe);

The Porch Day Centre in Oxford by giving money this year instead of our Harvest gifts.

Oxfordshire Historic Churches by sponsoring Louise Heffernan and Nicola Ng for the Oxford Diocese Ride and Stride.

Volunteers:

When things run smoothly, we don't always notice or appreciate all the work that goes on behind the scenes. The folks that come in to do the cleaning, the flower arrangers, the odd jobs that get done round the church, the garden that gets tended too, the coffee that gets served (when we are allowed), the website and pew leaflet does not get done by itself. So many thanks to all those volunteers.

Many thanks:

To all who help in our worship – those who serve at the altar, our sacristan, our organists, and dedicated choir members.

To the DCC members, and to all the sidepersons.

Thanks must also go to the congregation who have had to endure much and taken on board safe-distancing, facemasks, booking for church.

Finally, a big thanks to Fr Paul who in this difficult year has given leadership, support, kindness, and love. Let us continue to pray for the Lord's blessing on him.

Joyce Kelly and Peter Squire, February 2021

FABRIC REPORT

Although it has not been possible to use the church for worship for much of the year, the need has remained to keep the building and its contents safe, secure and in good order. Routine maintenance of the heating system, fire alarm, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers and organ all took place as usual.

In view of the constraints placed on access to the building, execution of the remaining lower-priority repairs identified in the 2016 Quinquennial Review was deferred. As a new review is due in 2021 this deferment will allow us to target expenditure more appropriately if this later report shows newly-identified urgent repairs to be necessary.

Last year's report made mention of the damage suffered by the statue of St Michael during the Easter Triduum. The faculty authorising the repairs was granted in January and the contractor was then able to start work when their programme permitted. The repair was completed by the beginning of June. Return of the statue to its proper place in church posed certain practical problems so the contractor kindly arranged to keep the statue in safe storage until return was viable in December.

Keith Bowman, February 2021

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

Appendix 3
St Nicolas' Church
Church Wardens' & Fabric Reports

This has been my sixth year serving as St Nicolas Churchwarden. My thanks go to Rev. Paul Smith; my fellow warden, Andrew Coker; the St Nicolas DCC and the church congregation for their support.

Services:

Our Sunday Service pattern started the year as per normal with the 8.00a.m. Parish Holy Communion, alternating monthly with St Helen's, with our main morning service at 11.15a.m. However, this came to an end towards the end of March when a 'lockdown' was imposed by the Government due to the Coronas virus (Covid-19) pandemic which had started earlier in the year.

During this time, the church was closed, and no worship took place. Then in June it was announced that churches could open for private worship. St Nicolas opened as soon as it was viable and, whilst following the restrictions required, offered a space on a Monday for people to pray and sit in quiet. The restrictions were eased further in July and public worship services were reinstated, again with various restrictions including the mandatory need to wear a face covering and no singing allowed. St Nicolas held 8.00a.m. Communion and 11.15a.m. services on alternate Sundays.

But by November, things changed again. Once more the churches had to close. This led to the development of providing services on-line via the Zoom video system. Using this computer program, the congregation could log in to watch and listen to a minister.

The bright spot amongst all the gloom was that we were able to enjoy a Christmas morning service in the church.

Ministry of welcome:

With services disrupted, there was little opportunity for a full ministry of welcome. However, we continued with our time-honoured tradition with Stewards at the door of the church during services combined with a welcomer during the private worship opening on Mondays. The number of Stewards has remained almost the same during the year and my thanks go to all those involved.

Activities:

The church was not involved in much this year due to the restrictions placed on us by the Corona virus pandemic. We were able to open for private worship during the Summer and at the end of the year we welcomed 'Cards for Good Causes' once more. Unfortunately, their visit was curtailed due to the pandemic and we had to say goodbye to them earlier than expected.

Paul Rast-Lindsell

FABRIC REPORT

Many of the plans we had for 2020 were put on hold. However, we continued to work on the repair of the tower following the fall of masonry back in 2019. After an inspection, the builders informed us that the walls inside the tower required strengthening and the necessary processes were followed to get to the point where work could start. This was postponed due to Covid-19 and it is expected to start in Spring of 2021.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

One issue that cropped up at this time was the fact that large lorries were parking on the pavement immediately in front of the church (hitherto we had not realised this). We considered that this might be contributing to the damage to the tower. After consulting with various local Councils, two bell-shaped bollards were set into the pavement to ensure no further vehicles could use the space.

Our work on the Toilet Block also came to a halt. But this did have a silver lining. The contractor who is refurbishing the building next to the church had asked permission to do some surveying in our garden. As a result of a conversation, they asked if they could buy the toilet block to extend their development. After some consultation and a valuation, we were offered a sum to both buy the block and help us with the replacement of the facilities. At the time of writing this report we are in the process of committing to the sale so that the contractor can obtain planning permission.

In general, the church building is in good repair. When the gutters were cleaned, it was noted that a few tiles were loose. We have also have a small problem with some water ingress near the West door and, although it has been looked at, this requires further investigation. The Lightning conductor was tested and passed.

Paul Rast-Lindsell

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

Appendix 4
St Nicolas' C E Primary School

This report covers the calendar year 2020, when the Covid-19 Pandemic had a significant impact on the school, and its community. It is good to report that despite the difficulties Bibles were presented to Foundation Year pupils as has been customary for at least the past 20 years, and a copy of the Scripture Union 'Moving On' book was presented to each child on leaving Year 6.

St Nicolas is a successful primary school - larger than average with a full pupil roll of some 400 pupils aged from 4+ to 11+, and over 50 staff. The School has active links with both Abingdon Parishes, and with other members of the Church-in-Abingdon. Whole school assemblies are an important part of the school life, and opportunities for class reflection are sought.

In March 2020 all UK schools were closed to most pupils in response to the Covid 19 Pandemic. During this closure, in accordance with Government guidelines, St Nicolas School:

- Remained open (including during some school holidays) to provide schooling to our most vulnerable pupils, and the children of designated key workers.
- Kept in regular contact with our families and pupils – particularly vulnerable and at risk families.
- Provided opportunities for home and blended learning, through the provision of paper based Learn Packs, and a gradual introduction of online teaching and learning resources. Aware that not all families have easy access to online resources, staff worked hard to provide good quality hard copy materials to enable all children to continue with their learning.
- Used the online learning platforms to deliver direct communication between children and their teachers through set tasks, videoed teaching and messages, and uploaded resources and giving the opportunity for families to share, and staff to respond to, the incredible efforts being made at home.
- Continued, where possible, to provide differentiated learning opportunities appropriate to each pupil's needs.
- Arranged for free school meal / voucher provision for eligible families, which continued throughout school holidays.

In June as lockdown eased St Nicolas

- Begun the gradual re-opening of school in accordance with government guidelines and best practice, offering full school provision for children in Foundation and Year 1.
- Welcomed Y6 back 2 days per week, offering transition work that the children to facilitate the children's completing their final year at primary school.
- Continued to provide in-school teaching for vulnerable and key worker children in Years 2-5.

Over the summer staff worked to prepare for a Covid secure opening for the whole school in September 2020. School procedures and curriculum were adapted, in line with Government guidelines, to give each child the best re-introduction to a school based environment – being aware that some pupils returned / joined having had very little or no in-school experience for some 6 months. Transition arrangements for children in school, and for those joining in September ensured a smooth return to school learning. Revised, and staggered, drop off and pick up arrangements saw

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

parents remain off-site. Breaktimes were staggered, and lunch was eaten in classrooms (except for the Reception children who used the hall), although only cold school meals could be offered initially. Regrettably all external trips had to be cancelled after March, and there were some curriculum limitations such as no singing and limited team sports.

Staff and pupil wellbeing was the priority, with greater flexibility introduced where possible, for example Parent Teacher Interviews took place remotely. Teaching of core subjects and the wider curriculum was adapted to take into account the varying experiences of pupils during the Lockdown. A carefully planned Catch-up programme was developed for those pupils identified as 'at need' ready to start from January.

The return to lockdown from the start of January restricted in-school attendance to at-risk and key worker children only. This has put the Catch Up programme, and plans to restart hot meal options hold. However, with staff and pupils' on-line teaching and learning skills now considerably enhanced, it is good to be able to say that St Nicolas' continues to provide a full range of age appropriate, and differentiated, learning opportunities, to pupils at home and in school.

We give thanks for the dedication and hard work of the school community - teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, specialists, cooks and cleaners - at this difficult time,

Please pray for all schools and educational establishments, young people and their families, teachers and all who work in education, and governors and other volunteers who give their time to support the future.

Eluned Hallas, Foundation Governor

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

Appendix 5
Report on the activities of the Church in Abingdon

Changes in clergy

Captain Alexandra Devine was appointed leader at the Salvation Army
Michael Ivey took over as main leader at Abingdon Community Church.

Projects which were able to continue, if in a limited way:

The Abingdon Bridge staff worked from home to continue providing support, advice and guidance to vulnerable young people.

Christian Aid organised some events online.

The Christian Forum columns appeared in the Round and About magazine.

The work of Desire and the Prayer Spaces have continued in secondary schools where possible.

The monthly CiA News has continued but the work of Christian Focus has been reduced.

United activities in 2020

Christian Aid's annual New Year's Day walk started and ended at Abingdon Baptist Church.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was marked by midday prayers at St Nicolas' church, the annual quiz at St Michael's and a United service at Christ Church.

A service for the World Day of prayer took place at Trinity Church, put together by the women of Zimbabwe.

Trinity Learning went into St Nicolas' School to support a group of 8-9 year old children delivering an assembly to the whole school.

The Annual Bereavement Service could not take place in November but Deacon Selina Nesbitt organised an online service that was posted on YouTube and on the Abingdon Facebook page.

"Carols on your doorstep" took place across Abingdon, supported by Abingdon Council.

Groups and activities unable to take place because of the Covid19 restrictions:

The Shoe cleaning event on Maundy Thursday, the procession of witness and Good Friday service at St Nicolas' church, Fun in the Park, South Abingdon Play Day in Southern Park, the Alpha launch, the Michaelmas fair and fair service, the Extravaganza.

5. Financial support was given to the following projects:

The Abingdon Bridge £2000, Desire youth network £1000, Abingdon Street Pastors £1000, Experience Easter £750, 35 Ock Street £500, Back to 35 £150 and Thrive £1000.

Julia Bishop 15.02.2021

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

Appendix 6
Report on the Abingdon Foodbank

As with all aspects of our lives, the pandemic has had an impact on how Abingdon food bank has had to be managed. In April the food bank transferred to the management of Trussel Trust, this enabled easier access to fresh foods from supermarkets, more training, less responsibility for those managing the food bank. Apart from a slightly different way of measuring the distributed food, clients would have been unaware of the change.

When the country first went into lockdown, many of the older or more vulnerable helpers were “stood down” in a bid to ensure their safety until the relaxation of restrictions, when many again returned to volunteer. Fortunately students and younger helpers were willing to volunteer, so the work of food bank continued.

As the repercussions of lock down were felt, loss of employment, children home from school (no school meals) there was an escalation in “food poverty” resulting in more referrals for assistance. The people of Abingdon were and continue to be very generous, with increased donations of both food and money, everyone needing assistance received help.

As Christmas approached, plans were again made to distribute Christmas parcels. In excess of 200 parcels of food and toys were handed out, these being appreciated and welcomed.

Unfortunately, with more unemployment and more families in need, it is difficult to see a time in the near future, when the need for food banks will decrease, or even, no longer be required. The church congregations of Abingdon are very generous in their support of the Abingdon food bank, support which is appreciated by staff, volunteers and of course those given assistance.

Linda Hobbs
Church Warden