

Saint Nicolas Annual District Church Meeting 2020

Monday 12 October 2020, at 7pm via Zoom.

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Election of ONE DCC members to serve until 2022
Election of THREE / TWO DCC members to serve until 2021
 - 8.4 Nomination of THREE PCC representatives to serve until 2021, 2022 & 2023
 - 8.5 Appointment of Church-in-Abingdon representative(s)
 - 8.9 Approve the nominations of stewards
9. Other matters of parochial or general church interest (Chairman's discretion)

Team Vicar's Address - Update on 2020

E Hallas. Acting Hon. Sec.

**Minutes of the Annual District Church Meeting held
on Monday 18 March 2019 in St Nicolas Church.**

Present: The Revd Paul Smith, Dr A Birks, Mrs P Burren, Mr J Burren, Mrs E Coker, Mr A Coker, Dr A Colborne, Mrs E Currey, Mr T G Currey, Mrs E. Hallas, Mrs E Hancox, Mrs J Hicks, Mrs J Lawrence, Ms D Lowe, Mrs H Mafabi, Miss P Randles, Mr P Rast-Lindsell, Mrs L Richmond, Mr J A Richmond, Mrs A Smith, Dr J Smith, Dr J Smith, Mr R Smith, Mrs I Webb.

1. **Welcome.** The Team Vicar welcomed all to the meeting and opened with prayer.
2. **Apologies for absence** were received from the Mrs M Binckes, Mrs J Bishop, Dr H Bishop, Mrs C Cannon-Brookes, Mrs J Fishpool, Miss R Hallas, Mrs J Johnson, Mrs H Nagel-Hyde, Mrs B Randles, Mrs S Stock.
3. The **Minutes of the 2018** Meeting were approved, with no amendments, Proposed: Mr G Currey, seconded Mr A Coker, passed nem con.
4. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere.
5. The **Team Vicar's Report** was noted.
6. **Electoral Roll.** The Electoral roll had been completely revised in 2019. The current St Nicolas' section of the Parish Roll as presented contained 60 names. The 2018 Roll had contained 71 names; 2 members had died during the year, 18 had not their membership, but there were 9 new members. The Team Rector reported that other Churches had experienced similar drop in Roll numbers as a result of the revision exercise.
7. **Financial Report.** The Hon. Treasurer, Dr A. Birks, presented the accounts for the year ending December 2018 – with reference to a summary sheet distributed in advance. Dr Birks started his report by noting that as a charity St Nicolas' used charity accounting; accounting separately for:
 - un-restricted / general funds available for the general purposes of the Church.
 - restricted funds eg Blacknall which may only be spent in accordance with the donors' wishes. This also includes funds raised for a specific purpose, identified at the time of fundraising.
 - designated funds which the Church / DCC has allocated for specific purposes, not available for day-to-day running without prior consideration, but which the DCC could redesignate / release at need.
 - endowment funds where the church had the benefit of the income generated, but could not touch the capital sums.

His report would concentrate on the church's General Funds as it is these over which there was most flexibility, which accounted for the general day to day expenditure of the Church and which were currently in deficit.

Dr Birks reminded those present that the 2017 agreed budget had allowed for a deficit of £5,800. In the event the actual unrestricted deficit on the year was for £1,738, before

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investment losses of £580. (2016, deficit of £2,313, but unrealised investment gains of £3,900).

The better than budgeted outcome was due to a combination of a higher than anticipated deanery share rebate and a reduction in costs due to the lack of a permanent Organist / Director of Music. General expenditure had been broadly inline with budget and little changed over 2018.

Income from donors had fallen by over 6% in the year, with pledged giving down 5.8%

There had been a lot of expenditure on church fabric in 2018: general maintenance costs of £1,518 had been taken from the restricted Church Lands Charity Funds. Expenditure on the new heating system; stone work to the west entrance, south porch and making good the heater flues; and repairs to the organ, totalling around £70k had been charged to the restricted Blacknall funds. As a result available Blacknall funds had fallen by 48%. The new chairs (required by the Diocese) had been partly paid for by grant funding, with the balance been taken from the designated Re-ordering Fund.

Dr Birks noted that the DCC had again approved a deficit budget for 2019. With a worrying downward trend in pledged giving (and donations in general) there needed to be continued focus on balancing the budget.

The Parish Share was the main item of general expenditure and was expected to rise some 1.5% (excluding rebate) in 2019. The drop in Electoral Roll numbers already noted would not be reflected in the Parish Share for 2019, which was already set. In any case Parish Share calculations are based on an apportionment of Clergy costs (the major factor) with only a small element based on ER. With an expected drop in ER numbers throughout the Diocese, the decrease in St Nicolas' Roll would not result in significant decrease in the St Nicolas' share.

Dr Colborne asked if the investment funds were actively managed to maximise income. Dr Birks explained that the funds were invested in pooled funds actively managed by CCLA Investment Management. The fund was specifically designed for churches and charities so would be not 'high risk' but would still be seeking good returns.

The DCC could investigate other invest forms such as a property based portfolio, and could take advice on this.

Dr Birks was thanked for his work as Treasurer, and the Accounts were accepted – Proposed Mr A Coker, Seconded Mr R Smith, passed nem con.

7 Other Reports.

7.1 Statistics 2017

Funerals: 2

Memorial Services: 0

Weddings: 1

Baptisms: 4 / Thanksgiving Service: 0

7.2 The Church Wardens' Report was noted, and the Wardens thanked for all their work.

- 7.3 The Fabric Report** was noted, and thanks give for all that had been achieved in the year.
- 7.4 The Donations Committee Report** was noted.
- 7.5 The Report on the Choir and Music** was noted.
In response to a question, EH reported that some occasional organists gave their time as a gift to the church, others requested (and were paid) a small fee – agreed in advance. These occasional payments were less that would be the salary of a permanent Organist / Director of Music. (An Organist, essentially, attends on a Sunday and plays the music as requested, a DoM would have a greater involvement in the musical life of the church, directing the choir, working with Ministers to choose music etc.)
Thanks were re-iterated to all who supported the music in St Nicolas’.
- Dr Colborne noted there appeared to have been no movement on appointing a new DoM. It was reported that there had been informal discussions with three individuals but none had applied for the post.
- In general discussion it was agreed that good music could enhance worship. The proposal, ‘Music is important to Worship at St Nicolas’ was proposed by Ms D Lowe, seconded by Mrs H Mafabi, and passed with three abstentions.
- The Team Vicar’s proposal that an ad hoc group be convened (from choir members and others) to consider options for music at St Nicolas and report back via the DCC was agreed.
- 7.7 The Report Ministry of Welcome** was noted.
- 7.8 The Report on the Flowers** was noted.
Mrs Coker was thanked for her work in beautifying the church week by week, and congratulated for encouraging new members to give it a go.
- 7.9 The Report on the Churchyard Garden** was noted, and Mr Coker thanked for his efforts in securing the grant from the Town Council.
- 7.10 The Bellringing Report** was noted, and thanks expressed to the ringers for their ringing Sunday by Sunday, and for special occasions..
- 7.11 The Report on Extravaganza** was noted.
- 7.12 The Report on the proceedings of the DCC** was noted.
- 7.13 The report on the proceedings of the Abingdon-on-Thames Parochial Church Council** was noted.
- 7.14** The report of the proceedings of **Abingdon Deanery Synod** was noted.
- 7.15** The Report of the **Proceedings of the Church-in-Abingdon** was noted.

8 Nominations, Elections and Appointments.

8.1 Church Wardens:

Mr Andrew Coker – proposed Mr P Rast-Lindsell, seconded Mr N Hallas

Mr Paul Rast-Lindsell – proposed Mr T G Currey, seconded Mrs E Currey

These names would go forward for election at the Abingdon-on-Thames APCM.

8.2 DCC Members to serve until 2022:

Of the three people standing down by rotation, two had expressed a willingness to restand. Mrs Julia Bishop was not seeking re-election, and was thanked for her work over the years.

Mrs J Fishpool proposed Mrs E Hancox, seconded Ms D Lowe

Mrs H Mafabi proposed Mr A Coker, seconded Mr P Rast-Lindsell

Were re-elected.

Three vacancies remain

8.3 PCC Representatives:

No nominations, two vacancies remain, although the two Wardens and both Deanery Synod Representatives are ex-Officio members of the PCC.

8.4 Deanery Synod Representatives – no vacancies

8.5 Church-in-Abingdon Representative.

Mrs Julia Bishop was willing to continue to represent St Nicolas’.

8.6 Stewards

8.00am: Mr E Banks, Mrs J Hobbs, Mrs J Lawrence and Mr B Tonks

11.15am: Mrs E Coker, Mr A Coker, Dr A Colborne, , Mr D Dawswell, Mrs J Fishpool, Mrs E Currey, Mr G Currey, Mrs E Hallas, Mr I Hallas, Mr N Hallas, Mrs E Hancox, Mr D Howard, Mrs H Hyde, Mr A Joinson, Ms D Lowe, Mrs H Mafabi, Mr P Rast-Lindsell, Mrs L Richmond

Proposed Mr A Coker, seconded Mr A Richmond

9. Other matters of Parochial or General Interest

Thanks were expressed to all involved in the Church BBQ and St Nicolas Day Lunch.

10. The Team Vicar's Address (also made available to the congregation on the Sunday's after the meeting).

The Team Vicar began his address with the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity. He reminded members present of the out-pouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the effect on the members of the early Church.

In turn he challenged these present to consider:

What kind of Church do we want to be?

We meet together week by week of prayer, teaching, mutual support and to be fed by the

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bread and wine of the Eucharist. The 2018 Parish Council Away Day had affirmed our distinct identity in being open daily for the community. As a congregation we need to consider how we can best meet the needs of those with whom we come into contact. Growth - both numerically and spiritually – was to be sought and welcomed. However there may be some attendant discomfort.

We should also seek a balance between ‘doing and being’

He ended by thanking the Wardens, DCC members, those present, and the wider congregation, for their work throughout the year.

The meeting closed with prayer at 8:15pm

After the formal meeting the Team Vicar presented a card to Mrs J Hicks to congratulate her and Mr Horace Hicks who would be celebrating their Diamond Wedding Anniversary later in the week.

M E Hallas, March 2019

Reports to the 2020 Annual Meeting of St Nicolas Church

4 Team Vicar's Report

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to this report and especially to Eluned Hallas who has assembled it and coordinated the reports, Our church is very well supported by the Clergy Team and I am most grateful to those who officiate at our weekly round of worship. I want to express my thanks to all my clergy colleagues, including our Team Rector, Charles Miller, and our Associate Priest, Mary Williamson, who after three years of ministry among us, left in September. Mary left us earlier than expected due to personal circumstances with her house in Cornwall. We were however very fortunate to be able to recruit Canon Charles Masheder who was licensed on 3 November and who, with his wife, Felicity, is settling in very well. We are indeed blessed to have someone with such a wealth of ministerial experience and we look forward to Charles' ministry among us.

I would like to say thank you to all our Honorary Clergy: John Barton, Jane Baun, David Bevington, Ros Rutherford, Bishop Henry Scriven, Roger Williams, Keith Ward, (who stepped down in retirement from further ministry) and Emma Percy (our Bowles Lecturer), and to our visiting preachers Gwen Bevington and Beryl Clements. We are very fortunate to have such a variety of people to enrich our worship. So, many thanks to you all.

Worship

I want to pay tribute to all members of our congregation who make contributions to our worship on a weekly basis, in whatever way, both those who participate 'up-front', and those whose hard work is largely hidden. I am grateful to you all.

We have continued with our well established service pattern but I think it is important in this report to highlight two acts of worship in particular. Our Third Sunday service is now well presented by a number of lay people and this feature of our worship pattern seems to be enjoyed by more people. During the year one of our key themes was 'The Hard Sayings of Jesus' which stretched over quite a number of months.

Our attendance at Christmas was particularly heart warming with increased numbers, most especially at the Crib Service. Special thanks to Eluned Hallas and Andrew Coker for their work in making this occasion a real success.

Mission and Ministry

In the summer of 2018 there was a well-received PCC Away Day at St Mary's Convent, Wantage, the house of the Community of St Mary the Virgin. This was the first of its kind in many years and was well-attended. We took the opportunity to do this again and this time it was held in June at the Carmelite Priory, Boars Hill. This was another good occasion and there was emphasis on how the parish could work with and implement some of the core values of the diocese's Common Vision.

Time was also spent with a presentation from the Communications Group on how we can better publicise the life and witness of the parish through a parish-wide website and through the social media effectively. There is work to be done, but it is good to see that there is energy and enthusiasm for our three congregations to be working together as one parish.

I want to say thank you to all DCC members for their work over the past year. Special thanks must go to those who are leaving us, and a warm welcome to those who may join us. It is important to know that this is not simply about joining a Committee, or attending more

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meetings. The flourishing of the DCC depends on all its members having a keen interest to see the ongoing mission and ministry of the congregation take place. There is business to be done, yes; but there is also the need for considering how the DCC can both help the existing community grow and deepen in faith and love, and find ways of growing our congregation, under my leadership.

It has been a good year for St Nic's. My own view is that there has been a new release of energy with a community which has renewed vigour and enthusiasm. Towards the end of last year, the Revd Charles Chadwick, Parish Development Adviser (PDA) for our Archdeaconry, came to run a short course for people interested in assisting me with pastoral visiting to those in their respective churches under my care. At the time of writing that group will be meeting with me to discern whether or not the individuals who took part are called to this ministry. It will be helpful to have that network of people participating in this lay ministry, following safeguarding training, and any other training that is needed. There is one person from our congregation who is on that process of exploration.

Sabbatical

At the time of writing, I am planning Sabbatical leave towards the end of the year, between mid-August and mid-November. I am grateful to the Team Clergy and our Churchwardens for their support and encouragement in my taking this time for renewal and study and I look forward to returning refreshed and re-energised.

A Final Thank You

I should like to conclude by offering my thanks to Paul Rast-Lindsell and Andrew Coker for exercising their work as Wardens throughout the past year. Much has been achieved in the past year. You can read elsewhere in this Annual Report about the Fabric works, some of which has been very challenging, so my warmest thanks for that.

I am grateful to you all for your generosity and commitment to our common life. Please pray for me as I do for you.

Your friend and pastor,

Fr Paul Smith, Team Vicar, March 2020

Other Reports

7.1 Statistics 2019

Baptisms: 1
Funerals: 3 (+ 1 celebrated at the Crematorium)
Memorial Services: 0
Weddings: 2
Wedding Blessing: 1

7.2 Church Wardens' Report

Paul Rast-Lindsell

This has been my fifth year serving as a Churchwarden; the third alongside fellow Warden Andrew Coker whom I would like to thank for all his hard work during 2019.

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Services:

Our Sunday Service pattern has continued much the same as last year. An 8.00am Parish Holy Communion is held every odd month, with St Helen's church hosting the even months.

Our main morning service is at 11.15am offering a range of worship types - Morning Prayer (Mattins) on the first Sunday, Holy Communion on the second and fourth Sundays, and a less-formal service on the third Sunday during which the sermon is replaced by a study and discussion on topics from the bible followed by an opportunity for fellowship with a coffee afterwards. This service has become more popular over the year with more people taking on the role of leading it. If there is a fifth Sunday in the month, the service is a 'lighter', more modern, Family Communion.

As is the Church's custom, we of course hold various specific services according to the time of year such as Easter, Harvest Thanksgiving, our Patronal Festival in early December and the Christmas services which include a Crib service for children; a Carol service and two Communion services. There were over 130 for the crib service and the church was almost full. These major feast days are always well-attended.

Other Services include lunch time prayers for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and Ascension Day when St Nicolas' hosts the parish Communion.

Activities:

During the year, St Nicolas has remained open for a few hours on most weekdays – enabling visitors and locals to enjoy a time of quiet reflection, or a chat and refreshment if preferred. The church attracts many visitors, mainly during the Summer months and we receive a considerable number of people from both the UK and abroad; many of whom express their delight in finding the building accessible.

St Nicolas has also continued to be used as a venue Sunday afternoon concerts. The very popular weekly 'market' of home-grown fruit, flowers and crafts came to an end this year though the craft fair continued on Friday mornings.

Members of the congregations from St Nicolas and St Helen's, together with others, make up a house-group which meets up on a fortnightly basis to read and discuss various chapters or books in the bible.

There are other varied and irregular activities throughout the year when St Nicolas plays host to a variety of events, for example, Art exhibitions, talks and film screenings. We once more offered our space to 'Cards for Good Causes', who were tremendously pleased to be able to use St Nicolas again during October, November and December. St Nicolas again had a cascade of knitted and crocheted poppies made by local people to commemorate Remembrance Sunday. These were then offered to the RBL who turn them into broaches which they sell for a premium. A good example of St Nic's being at the centre of the community.

The year always closes with our participation in the annual Abingdon Extravaganza. However, in 2019 there was a real push to make money and £1,300 was raised. Congratulations to all involved.

Inventory:

Andrew undertook to review the church's inventory, finding everything as it should be.

7.3 Fabric

Andrew Coker

The fall of masonry inside the church from the bell tower necessitated work to begin immediately to discover the cause. A faulty is now (February 2020) being applied for and work to make safe should be done in the next few months. A concise reason for the situation is that cracks have formed between the medieval putlocks (scaffolding anchors in the walls) which have disintegrated over time. The bells are silenced whilst the situation is resolved.

The new heating system is continuing to work very well with people commenting on a "warm church" in more ways than one.

Through the generosity of families there has been a renewal of two window shelves with oak to match the Nave altar. In memory of Mike and Barbara, the Randles family paid for the Nave middle south side windowsill to be made good, as opposed to the utilitarian "boxing in." It is a match to the shelf nearest the pulpit on the south side, which was paid for in a most generous legacy from the Snowdon family in memory of Elizabeth and Mac. The Snowdon family also gave money to upgrade the existing sound system install originally by their father, Mac. It is now infinitely better than before, but builds on the really good system which was already had. We are indebted to Clive and Valery Challis, worshippers at Christ Church North Abingdon, for their hard work, dedication, imagination creativity in bringing a good sound system back to life. Moving the mic signal receiver to the organ was a major reason for the better coverage.

Work was undertaken on the main west door to ensure water ingress would not stain or affect it. The kitchen block remains a problem, but it should be sorted this year. We continue to benefit from a payment from Abingdon Town Council towards the upkeep of the closed church yard.

The Blacknall aisle plans will be formulated in 2020 in time for 2025, the anniversary of the death of John & Mary Blacknall.

The historic altar table has been found to be free of current wood worm infestation, but a review of the wood worm insurance with Rent a Kill will happen after an inspection in the summer of 2020.

7.4 Safeguarding

Jenny Fishpool

The Revised Safeguarding Policy was agreed by the PCC in September, and the three Church Safeguarding Officers signed it, along with the Rector and Team Vicar. A copy of the document has been put up on the St Nicolas website, and a hard copy sent to the Diocese.

Those who volunteer regularly at St Nicolas have been reminded that they should complete the Church of England online safeguarding training, and those who have done so have notified Maria Gibson. It was decided that those who lead house groups did not need to have additional DBS checks done, but that those who did the Pastoral Visitor Training (so far, one person at St Nicolas) should, as well as completing C2.

7.5 Donations

Jenny Smith

The DCC allocated money from the 2019 budget for the cost of the "It's Your Move" books for pupils in year 6 at St Nicolas School, and for the St Nicolas donation to CiA sponsored projects. CiA supports Abingdon Bridge, 35 Ock Street, Abingdon Street Pastors, Back to 35, and work in schools as well as making a small donation to the Abingdon Passion Play.

In addition:

- At the end of May a special collection linked to Dementia Action Week raised £87 for Kennington Memory Club.
- At our Harvest Festival the collection of £114.80 and gifts of produce were given to the Food Bank.
- Our Christmas 2019 Collection was over £400 and went to the Children's Society.
- On Sunday 13th October a special collection was made during World Homeless Week and we raised £117.78 for Homeless Oxfordshire.
- Foodbank support has continued.
- We had a poppy collection box for the Royal British Legion and white poppy collection box for the Peace Pledge Union in the run up to Remembrance Sunday.
 - Envelopes were made available during Christian Aid week and raised over £70.

We were also able to host Cards for Good Causes in the run up to Christmas, taking advantage of our position on the Market Place. They make a donation to the church, but also raise funds for their own causes.

If any other member of the congregation wishes to help with donations and charities please speak to Jenny Smith or Eluned Hallas. Further input is always helpful with suggestions of poster displays in church, details of other local or overseas charities or suggestions for special collections during the year.

7.6 Choir and Music

Paul Smith

At the ADCM in April 2019, the matter of music and the Choir, together with the continued absence of a Director of Music was raised again.

After some discussion it was agreed that a small group would be convened by the Vicar to look at the musical life of the congregation and church and whether it was appropriate to pursue a further advertisement and potential appointment of a Director of Music. A group was convened of:

Paul Rast-Lindsell - Churchwarden
Eluned Hallas
Geoffrey Currey

It had been raised at DCC as to whether it might be possible for us to share a Director with St Michael's. After consultation with St Michael's it was felt that despite the shared need to develop Choirs in both congregations, service times in both churches presented complications.

The group met a few times throughout the year. Eluned Hallas and Geoffrey Currey attended a RSCM course which presented ideas for churches and their musical life and worship. The material that was presented was enough to cover a congregation's thinking and work for anything up to a year if it were to deal with it thoroughly.

It was generally agreed that a Director of Music was something that we should pursue. In order to begin the process of recruitment again (it had not been successful over the last few years), it was agreed that a short questionnaire be prepared for the congregation to complete. Those questionnaires were completed by members of the congregation by the end of February 2020, and the work of the music group is to now collate those answers as to what we are looking for in a new appointment. That work is underway at the time of writing.

7.7 Ministry of Welcome: Stewards and other Duties Paul Rast-Lindsell

Several roles undertaken by members of the congregation are there to assist the clergy and provide help to those attending church services. These comprise of Sacristan, Steward, Reader, Intercessor and Chalice Assistant.

We have both added to and lost from the number of volunteers who do these jobs but there are still over 20 people who carry out these duties. We are very grateful for the time and effort they put into doing so.

This year we said 'goodbye' to Lyn as Sacristan. We offer her our heartfelt thanks for her many years of service.

However, it is often difficult to find enough people to fill all the roles; this coming year we require help with the jobs of Sacristan and Intercessor. We recently had offers from Hilda and Hildegard to take on the roles of Chalice Assistant. Also, it would be beneficial to have an additional Sacristan. If you feel that you can help, please talk to Fr. Paul or the Churchwardens.

7.8 Flowers Emma Coker

It has been a great year for flowers at St Nicolas with the addition of two new shelves to place arrangements on in the nave. Thank you to the Snowden and Randles families for their generous donation of these in memory of family members with a long association with St Nicolas. Many thanks to our dedicated team of flower arrangers who make sure the church is looking festive at Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival. For the rest of the year we hope our efforts add to the warm welcome to everyone who comes into the building. The display of poppies around Remembrance Sunday has become a regular feature. Church flower arrangements are also an opportunity for those who wish to make a donation in memory of loved ones to contribute towards something that is enjoyed by the church community. We are always looking to expand our team and no experience is necessary as we all learn from each other.

7.9 Bell ringing

Hugh Bishop

This has been an eventful year. In April the tenor bell was tolled following the fire at Notre Dame in Paris in response to the Archbishops' request. Pigeons gained access to the bell chamber leaving many toxic droppings that were removed by expert contractors in May. In July we rang for Barbara Randles' funeral.

Two of our ringers, Pat Pugh and Angela Smith, reached their 90th birthday in September. Pat has not been able to ring for the past ten years but Angela still rings at St Helens most Sunday mornings.

A fall of rubble in to the nave during Sunday service ringing in September has resulted in the suspension of ringing until necessary work to strengthen the tower have been completed. However we were able to toll the tenor bell for the funeral of PC Andrew Harper in October.

7.10 Extravaganza & Fundraising

Julia Bishop

This was the most successful Extravaganza so far: there was a constant stream of people coming into the church and we raised more money than ever, (over £1130). The only disappointment was that the number of families with children was still low, although those who came in to watch the cartoon films enjoyed them and parents were pleased to have somewhere warm for the children to wait for the fireworks. We have since been advised to advertise in future on Abingdon Facebook website and also Next Door. One of the highlights was the Community Orchestra which had brought song sheets, and everyone joined in the carols. This was very popular; we will ask for it to happen again next year.

Cakes and cookies This stall made £339.66 with those not sold on the day sold in church over the following days. As before, a considerable number were sold on the Market Place, especially by Paul Smith. Unfortunately one of the outdoor stallholders was handing out similar cookies as an advertisement.

Pocket money presents This stall made £95.50, less than last year. It was agreed that we should abandon this name and just call it "Gifts" as some potential donors were reluctant to donate goods for what they saw as very low prices so we did not receive as many items as last year.

Children's toys and books This stall raised £114.55 which was more than last year.

Tombola, Lucky Dip, Treasure Map These stalls raised £134.70, mostly from the Tombola.

Mulled cider and popcorn We were surprised to see that the cider had only raised £77.40; the popcorn was also popular. It was agreed that we should charge £1.50 next year.

Chocolate fountain This raised £19.50 but would have probably made more if more children had come in. We would have to consider whether it was worth doing again next year.

Raffle, history books These raised £264.33, more than last year.

Refreshments raised £79.08, more than last year, because we charged for the coffee and also sold mince pies and stollen.

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Children's cartoon films About 20 children watched these films and we received several thanks and complements from parents and others. Hilda would find out which were her children's favourite cartoons so that we could think about getting some new films for next year.

Rota There was confusion as some volunteers arrived when they were not expected. Andrew and Julia would compile a briefing note for Paul's signature to encourage the volunteers to concentrate on the customers and passing on the positive comments we had received in the past.

Tables For next time, we would look into the possibility of laying St Nic's boards along the pews instead of borrowing tables from St Helens and Trinity.

A big thank you to everyone who made donations to the event or helped out on the day.

Julia Bishop

The Extravaganza was our largest fundraising event of the year, but we were also delighted to benefit from the proceeds of a piano concert by Akino Kitahara. Her programme, which included unpublished material by English composer Eric Gilder was a delight, and we hope to hear another concert in 2020.

A very successful Coffee Morning and Cake Sale in July raised over £320.

The Church is also a venue for concerts – in particular the public concert series arranged by Abbey Chamber Concerts, but also private concerts by Abingdon Music School and individual music teachers. The use of the church as a venue by Abingdon Film Society, Abingdon Artists and Abbey Artists, and of course Cards for Good Causes all brings in both footfall and rental income.

7.11 St Nicolas DCC

Eluned Hallas, Secretary

Membership:

Church Wardens

Andrew Coker

Paul Rast-Lindsell

Representatives on the Abingdon Deanery Synod

Andrew Birks

Elected 2017 to serve until 2020

Eluned Hallas

Elected 2017 to serve until 2020

Representatives on the Abingdon Parochial Church Council

Hugh Bishop

Re-Elected 2017 to serve until 2020

Members of St. Nicolas' Church Council

Emma Coker

Elected 2017 to serve until 2020

David Howard

Re-Elected 2017 to serve until 2020

Hildegard Hyde

Elected 2017 to serve until 2020

Dee Dee Lowe

Elected 2018 to serve until 2021

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Jenny Fishpool
Hilda Mafabi

Re-Elected 2019 to serve until 2022
Re-Elected 2019 to serve until 2022

Church in Abingdon Representatives: Julia Bishop

Appointments made by DCC:

Treasurer: Andrew Birks
Secretary: Eluned Hallas
Safeguarding: Jenny Fishpool
Health & Safety: Paul Rast-Lindsell

The DCC & Standing Committee met regularly throughout the year to discuss the maintenance and enhancement of the church fabric (reported elsewhere); church services and other events; inter-parish, inter-CiA and community co-operation; and finance (see separate report).

The proposed changes to the toilet block were put back until the full cost of the tower remedial work was ascertained. The financial position of St Nicolas remained of concern.

The Standing Committee (The Vicar, Churchwardens and the Treasurer) met to review various elements of church business, consider the budget and set DCC agendas.

The elected and ex-Officio (Vicar, Churchwardens) members continued to attend Parochial Church Council (PCC), and Deanery Synod, meetings to represent St Nicolas' views on wider matters.

This year members of the PCC attended an 'away-day' in Wantage to have a more informal discussion about the Parish and what was of importance. This proved to be very beneficial as the group was freely able to 'bounce around' ideas and 'think outside the box'. The list of thoughts included items such as worship, outreach, communications and social activities.

7.12 Abingdon-on-Thames PCC

Secretary to the PCC

The PCC of the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames met six times during 2019-20 (and the Standing Committee once). 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 and the finances of the Parish remain regular items on the PCC and Standing Committee agendas.

During the year the Parish Safeguarding Policy was revised, updated and adopted, and a Lone Worker Policy adopted. Work began on implementing the parish GDPR policy,

and gathering the permission of congregation members and other contacts to hold and use the date in appropriate ways.

Another very successful PCC Away Day in June enabled PCC members to discuss Parish communications, and action planning – with particular reference to Diocesan priorities. The PCC has also received and discussed reports from the three cross-church Working Groups covering Finance, Communications; and Spiritual Growth.

7.13 Proceedings of the Abingdon Deanery Synod

Sue Scott

The Synod has met four times this year and has provided an opportunity for Parishes to share information and learning opportunities together.

Each meeting is comprised of both business and a presentation from a speaker. This year there have been enlightening presentations from Andrew Anderson Gear the Diocesan Director of Missions who spoke about “Setting God’s People free”, another about the work of Christian Aid. In addition there have also been presentations about the services provided by the Citizen Advice service and finally a presentation from Tina Molyneux Discipleship Enabler in the Oxford Diocese about the Personal Discipleship Plan (PDP).

Business has been varied and has included issues which face all parishes – including information about how the Parish share is calculated and Safeguarding.

In all aspects of its work the Synod is there to support and enable parishes as we all strive to become a more Christ like Church in today’s challenging world.

The Abingdon Deanery website has been redesigned and is a valuable resource for anyone who would like to find out more about the work of the Synod.

As a member of the congregation of St Michael and All Angels and also of the Parish of Abingdon PCC it is a honour to serve on the Synod.

Sue Scott, Deputy Chair Abingdon Deanery Synod

7.14 Proceedings of the Church-in-Abingdon

Julia Bishop

The CiA was shocked and saddened by the sudden death of pastor Ed Evans in July. Ed was Pastor of the Abingdon Community Church and Chairman of the CiA, and played a very active part in its many activities. He will be much missed.

A new Salvation Army Captain, Alexandra Devine, has been appointed and is in post.

United activities in 2019

- Abingdon Street Pastors continued to operate
- Christian Forum column has moved from weekly in the Abingdon Herald to Round and About (monthly magazine). It was felt that it might have more chance of being read in the latter. New contributors are needed as many of the long-term contributors are now stepping down.
- Passion Play 2019: It was a lovely day and a good turnout but the format in 2019 of modern dress did not appeal to some people, and children in particular had difficulty in identifying characters. Holding the event in the Market Square, in the heart of the town, was thought to have more impact than in the Abbey Park

Saint Nicolas Annual District Church Meeting 2020

- Alpha launch: About 85 people attended the successful event, showcasing churches working together and reaching out to spread the gospel.
- Midday prayers as part of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: Attendance is usually in the range of 15-20 with different people coming each day. These are informal, reflective cross-church events with good fellowship after.
- CiA Lent Lectures: These require a lot of effort to organise, and, as churches no longer suspend their own meetings or concurrent events during the Lent lectures (as happened when CiA was founded) attendance is falling. Churches and their congregations need to support the lectures, otherwise perhaps they should stop.
- Maundy Thursday shoe cleaning, children's crafts were introduced which helped to draw in parents.
- Good Friday procession: This is a good witness and stopping in the square to sing worked well.
- Trinity Learning Experience Easter: The still, quietness of this event had a great impact on both children and staff.
- Fun in the Park: This is a great outreach event for the CiA to take part in and people come back year after year to take advantage of the activities that the CiA stall offers. However, volunteer help has declined considerably and unless this improves, the CiA may have to pull out of taking part, which would be a big shame and loss of a good witness to the people of Abingdon.
- South Abingdon Play & Activity Day: a free community fun day for families in south Abingdon, mainly led by the community churches in south Abingdon.
- CiA Annual Bereavement Service
- Pre-election hustings, 2 December 2019, held at the Amey Theatre. Very good turnout and successful evening with all candidates attending. Organised jointly between CiA and Abingdon Chamber of Commerce.
- Prayer Spaces in schools

8 Nominations, Elections and Appointments

8.5 Stewards

8.00am: Mr E Banks, Mrs J Hobbs, Mrs J Lawrence and Mr B Tonks,
Mr P Watkinson

11.15am: Mrs E Coker, Mr A Coker, Dr A Colborne, Mr D Dawswell, Mrs J Fishpool,
Mrs E Currey, Mr G Currey, Mrs E Hallas, Mr I Hallas, Mr N Hallas,
Mrs E Hancox, Mrs H Hyde, Mr A Joinson, Mrs H Mafabi, Mr P Rast-Lindsell,
Mrs L Richmond