



# **St Mary the Virgin, Almondsbury**

## **Annual Parochial Church Report**

**Presented at a meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021**

**This combined report is presented in accordance with the Charity Commissioner's Statement of Recommended Practice commonly known as SORP 2005.**

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Annual Report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council.

#### **Section 2**

Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2020 incorporating:

- Summarised statement of financial activities for the year;
- Balance sheet as at the year end;
- Detailed notes to the accounts;
- Independent Examiner's Report.

**St Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Almondsbury, BS32 4DT**

**Annual Report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council  
and the activities of the parish generally for the year to 31 December 2020.**

**Correspondence address:** The Vicarage, 3 Sundays Hill, Almondsbury, BS32 4DS

PCC Members:

Rev Philip Rowe (Vicar)	Rev Paul van Rossum (Associate Vicar)
Nick Roach (Treasurer)	Mike Jenkinson (Chair/Lay Minister)
Astrid Domingo Molyneux (Lay Minister)	Alison Rowe (Deanery Synod)
David Thomson (Deanery Synod)	Clare Jefferis (Deanery Synod)
Liz Tierney (Safeguarding Officer and Data Protection Lead)	
Mike Tierney	Dick Avery
Becky Painting	Rosemary Griffiths
Judi Thomson (PCC Secretary)	

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The Parish of St Mary's, Almondsbury, is part of the Benefice of Almondsbury and Pilning with Compton Greenfield, of which the Reverend Philip W Rowe is Incumbent.

The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure. The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules and is from those on the Electoral Roll of the Parish. The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission (registration number 1131407).

## **VICAR'S REPORT**

The role of the Vicar together with the PCC is defined as the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. At St Mary's we have focused this in our Mission Statement of 'Connecting with God, each other and our community'.

2020 was the year when everything changed as humanity grappled with a global pandemic. In the midst of this we are confident that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever. So, God's Mission to bring his salvation and our part in this remain the same.

We have continued to connect with God. Public worship has continued on line and in Church when Covid security made this possible. Our prayer group and house group have continued. The Daily Hope phone line has been publicised for those without internet. We have provided and pointed to on line resources for Children and have run an Alpha course on zoom.

We have connected with each other through the means in the previous paragraph. In addition, we contact through zoom coffee, a daily thought email and encouraging people to phone each other. The reordering, including the AV system, is now completed and we strengthen our ability to connect with each other and the community.

We have connected with our community by continuing with the Lich Gate magazine and maintaining our links on zoom with Almondsbury School. The Almondsbury Angels connecting those needing assistance with those who could assist was organised from the Vicarage. We have also continued to practically support local agencies including the Sisters' of the Church Food Bank, Bristol North Home Bank and the Salvation Army Christmas Toy appeal.

I am so grateful to all those who, often in unseen ways, have worked hard to enable us to do all this in ever changing circumstances. It is through good teamwork and mutual and God's grace the mission of St Mary's has continued over this year. Thank you.

Please continue to pray as we seek to join in with God's mission of making connections as we, by his mercy, move out of the pandemic.

With my gratitude and prayers,

*Philip Rowe*

## **CHURCH WARDEN**

This period has been a very different one for the church as it has been for all.

We began 2020 with the completion of the reordering which had seen lots of change and some upheaval. Then soon after we went into lockdown because of the pandemic, we are looking forward to seeing the benefits of the reordering once restrictions are lifted.

Lock down brought a whole new level of learning and change. We very quickly had to learn how to live stream, making good use of the new Internet connection in the church. As we all know things changed very quickly sometimes daily and it was a challenge moving with the changes and trying to keep gods work going and meeting people's needs.

After 4 years as church warden, I decided to stand down at the March 2020 APCM but due to the pandemic this was delayed until September, so I continued until then.

It was a pleasure serving the church during my time as church warden and I hope to continue in other capacities (I do make a nice cup of coffee).

*David Thomson*

## **WORSHIP AND MISSION**

The Worship and Mission Team of the PCC acts as a focal point for consideration of how we, as a church and as individuals, can grow as Christians and share the good news of Jesus Christ. In the report last year, I said that, 'in 2020 Worship and Mission will be considering how best we can use the newly reordered building towards this end.' The various lockdowns in 2020 have prevented this but as restrictions are eased, we will restart discussions.

Up until Sunday 15 March 2020 we held our regular Sunday Services at 8.00am, 9.15am and 10.45am. Mothering Sunday on 22 March brought our first live streamed service, with no congregation in church. For the rest of the year we continued with a single live streamed service at 10am and, for much of the summer and autumn, we were also able to join together in church in a socially distanced COVID secure way.

Virtual meetings using Zoom have helped to keep people connected. These have included After church coffee, Home Group, Oasis, Alpha Course, and prayer meetings.

Normally, each month a different charity is the focus for the church's outward giving. Unfortunately, during 2020 these arrangements had to be curtailed as a result of the various restrictions required by the pandemic.

The church supports the Diocese's Creating Connections vision: Connecting with God, Connecting with each other, and Connecting with our communities. Within this vision there is a focus on the four priorities of Making Disciples, Growing Leaders, Engaging Younger Generations, and Encouraging Generosity.

During 2021 a new vision. 'Transforming Church. Together.' is being developed by the Diocese in discussion with parishes. We plan to take a full part in the discussions.

*Paul van Rossum, Chair, Worship and Mission Team*

## **BUILDINGS**

There follows a summary report on the more significant items of work that have been (or are in the process of being) carried out in and around the church.

### **Woodworm in the Vestry Ceiling:**

Following discussions with our architect and the DAC, local treatment has been put on hold for the moment. However, humidity in the ceiling void is being monitored and improvements in the ventilation of the vestry are being considered.

### **Clock Repairs:**

Following protracted administrative delays in gaining approval for the work, the clock hands, the drive shafts and gears were removed for refurbishment in December and replaced in early February 2021. After further adjustments, the clock now appears to be keeping good time.

### **CCTV for Bellringers:**

The installation of CCTV equipment, which will permit the bellringers to view and time their ringing with a wedding procession leaving the church, was completed in January 2021. The system will also permit the ringing of the bells to be shown on the new screen in the nave, and to be available on social media. Visibility of the refurbished bells to the wider community was a condition of the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

### **Projector and Screen:**

Following protracted administrative delays in gaining approval for the work, the screen, which retracts into a housing above the choir arch, and the projector, which is mounted above the new west door vestibule, were installed during December 2020.

### **Replacement of Central Heating Boiler:**

Following some delay, due to the lockdown, the new boiler was installed during June/July 2020, together with the installation of a replacement flue liner.

### **Lighting of the West Door Vestibule and North Door Portico:**

Installation of the lighting, which was part of the re-ordering work, was delayed, but was completed in May 2020. The lights over the notice boards in the porch were also rewired, allowing them to be switched on and off in the porch.

### **Lighting of the West Front and the Exterior of the North Porch:**

Following protracted administrative delays in gaining approval for the work, this was granted on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020. It is planned that the work will be carried out in a matter of weeks.

### **‘Stepping Stones’ Path:**

The path between the vestry and the turret giving access to the roof was laid at the end of September 2020. It has utilised redundant flagstones from the re-ordering, together with new surplus flagstones.

### **Quinquennial Inspection and Report:**

The inspection was originally carried out by our architect in July 2019. However, the issue of his report was delayed, to the extent that it was deemed necessary to carry out a supplementary inspection in May 2020. A final report, with revisions, was issued in August 2020. As a result of the report, several items of repair to the church fabric are currently being progressed. The more significant and immediate of these are summarised below.

### **Requirement for five-yearly electrical inspection.**

An initial inspection was carried out in November 2020 and, following correction of minor defects, the necessary certificate was issued on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

### **Repair and reforming of box gutters to north porch roof.**

Quotations are being solicited.

### **Replacement of frost-damaged coping stones to south retaining wall of nave ground gutter.**

Quotations have been received and approval is being sought, together with the following three items that require repairs to stonework.

### **Conservation repairs to the base/plinth of arched surround to north porch.**

Quotations have been received and approval is being sought.

### **Conservation repairs to the doorway to the ringing chamber.**

Quotations have been received and approval is being sought.

### **Patch-pointing of the churchyard north boundary wall at five locations.**

The work will be carried out at the same time as the masonry repairs described above.

*Graham Jeffery*

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

At the end of the 2020 financial year our financial position has been substantially degraded by the covid pandemic but thanks to our considerable financial reserves we remain in an acceptable position but need to take action to address our significant day to day operating loss of £18,500. This is largely due to the loss of income arising from the pandemic exacerbated by the operating loss of £6k in the 2 previous years. I would hope that the position will improve as we come out of lockdown but would still expect to make a substantial loss over this year and perhaps for a year or so afterwards.

Although our end year reserve stands at just over £200k the large majority of this is tied up in endowment investments (where we can only access the dividends) and funds that the PCC has designated for specific projects and a longer term reserve held to address our commitments such as becoming carbon neutral.

Our uncommitted funds (those not earmarked by the PCC for a specific purpose) stand at £13k. By comparison, at the end of 2019 uncommitted funds stood at £43k. Although the PCC is not aware of any specific spending obligation for which we haven't earmarked funds our experience is that new demands and problems can and do emerge at very short notice and perhaps even more importantly, it greatly restricts our ability to respond in respect of mission and charity relief.

*Nick Roach, Treasurer*

## **CHURCH REORDERING**

The principal aim of the reordering the church building has been to ensure that it best meets our current and future needs. The main work was completed at the end of January 2020.

It has included:

1. Adding two high quality matching wooden pods at the South West and North West corners of the nave. The one in the South West corner houses a Disability Discrimination Act compliant toilet facility that can be used by everyone and includes nappy changing facilities. The other pod houses a kitchen and servery.
2. Levelling the floor of the rear half of the nave by removing the wooden platform and laying a new stone floor with provision for underfloor heating.
3. Providing improved social and circulation space across the back of the church and along the north aisle.
4. Buying 40 new chairs to provide replacement seating capacity, when needed. When not needed they will be stored in a new cupboard on the south wall of the nave next to the new toilet pod.
5. Moving the font to the South East corner of the nave.
6. Improving access into and within the building by:
  - a) levelling the entrance at the West Door and Installing a glass inner porch.
  - b) moving the Portico from the West Door to the North Door.
  - c) adding handrails to the steps in the North Porch.
  - d) improving the previously temporary deep shallow steps between the choir stalls and the chancel.
7. Removing the old kitchen units and installing new cupboards.
8. Refurbishing the existing WCs.

All of the work has been completed to a high standard.

Following lengthy discussions with the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) and the Chancellor of the Diocese, a new drop-down screen and projector were installed in December 2020. The previously discussed options for placing large TV screens at the front of the side aisles have been put on the back burner, while we gain experience of using the new screen and projector.

I would like to express particular thanks to George Chedburn, the church's architect for all of his work, and to Philip Rowe, for his quiet personal support and encouragement.

*Paul van Rossum, Associate Vicar*

## **SAFEGUARDING – PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH**

It is the aim of St Mary's Church to develop the spiritual and social life of the children and young people in church in a safe and secure environment and to protect them from harm whenever possible. St Mary's Church also aims to provide respectful, pastoral care for adults.

The church endeavours to follow the Safeguarding Principles of the Church of England which are:

- The care and nurture of and respectful pastoral ministry with all children, young people and adults.
- The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable.
- The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is informed vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.

In terms of Safeguarding, it is the duty of the PCC, with the incumbent, to promote a safer church for all in the church community, and to ensure there is a plan in place to raise awareness of, promote training and ensure that safeguarding is taken seriously by all those in the church community.

Because St Mary's Church provides activities for children and young people and provides pastoral care for vulnerable adults the PCC is classed as a charity. Members of the PCC, as trustee of that charity, are eligible for DBS enhanced checks under the recommendation of the Church of England and Charity Commission. They are also expected to undergo the online Basic and taught Foundation Training as recommended by the Diocese of Bristol. All PCC members have completed the DBS clearance, and completed the required training.

St Mary's Church also continues with its requirement that all those wishing to work directly with children or to undertake pastoral visits on behalf of the church must go through our internal vetting procedure and obtain Enhanced DBS clearance.

We currently have in total 37 have also been cleared to do pastoral visiting. During the past year we have had 4 people who have come off the list and 10 renewals.

The church office keeps an up-to-date record of all the DBS certificates, date of issue (renewal after 5 years), level of clearance, whether children's or adult work is undertaken and what safeguarding training has been done.

The Church of England now expects that all church paid staff and volunteers receive Safeguarding training appropriate to their level of involvement in church activities. The Church of England and the Diocese of Bristol have changed the way training is carried out due to the pandemic. Most Basic and Foundation training can be undertaken online - this is only while face to face classes are not allowed. A zoom training programme has been created for the Leadership course. Currently we are in the process of ensuring that the volunteers carry out their 3-year renewal training.

The Church office will keep a record of all training undertaken so please notify the office and the Parish Safeguarding Officer of any C of E Safeguarding training undertaken.

New for 2020, the Diocese has introduced a new online Safeguarding Dashboard which replaced the yearly Safeguarding Audit – this allows us to be able to track all the Safeguarding Policies and Processes. The PSO is responsible for the Dashboard and has editor rights – and some PCC members have read rights to the dashboard.

The Safeguarding Policy and guidelines have been reviewed and updated and approved by the PCC in January 2021. This policy can be found on the Church's website, under Safeguarding and Data Protection.

Thank you to those who have renewed their DBS certificate this year, also those who have undergone Safeguarding training. Their commitment to Safeguarding in our church is greatly appreciated as is the support from Philip Rowe, the Ministry Team, Group Leaders and the Safeguarding Team at Diocese of Bristol. Thank you for everyone who have supported me in my role.

*Liz Tierney, Parish Safeguarding Officer*

## **DATA PROTECTION REPORT**

It is 18 months since the new legislation for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force. Though we have left the EU, these rules will still apply.

The following can be found on the Church's Website – The Data Privacy Policy, Data Consent Form and Data Protection Procedures Policy. There are copies of the Data Consent Form in church.

Various other data consent forms are available for other areas where personal data may be displayed in the public domain – like Noticeboards, the website or the Lich Gate. These include the Cleaning Rota, Sides Rota and the Lich Gate.

All data, apart from the Lich Gate, is kept in the Church Office. The Incumbent, Data Protection Lead and Parish Administrator have access to the data. The Lich Gate data is kept by the Data Protection Lead and passed onto the Lich Gate Editor for inclusion in the Lich Gate.

We as a Church MUST all emails relating to Church business using the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) option – many of us already do use this. We must remember that not everyone wants their email address in the public domain.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have had limited services and as part of the Government guidelines we have had to adhere to the Test and Trace system. In order to make this easier (by not having to ask people for their contact details when attending services) , we managed to encourage more people to fill in the Data Consent form.

Also, as part of the Livestreaming services, we have ensured that anyone who in front of the camera, had given their permission to be recorded using a separate consent form.

Thank you to everyone who filled these Data Consent forms over the past year.

*Liz Tierney, Data Protection Lead*

## **ALMONDSBURY CHOIR REPORT**

I cannot write anything this year as the choir has not met since March; however, having kept in touch with the choir I am confident of a good attendance when things eventually resume.

*Matthew Thomas, Organist and Choir Master*

## **PRAISE GROUP REPORT**

Praise Group report has not been received at this time.

*Mike Jenkinson*

## **REPORT ON BRISTOL WEST DEANERY SYNOD**

### **Introduction**

This has been a year of major disruption and unforeseen changes within our local communities, across society and experienced on a global platform.

Before reflecting upon this Deanery, Bristol West, we must mark our awareness of, and our heartfelt prayers for, all who have been impacted upon by the global pandemic. Those who have lost their lives, those who have died alone and those whose livelihoods have been irreparably taken away; those who have been bereaved, especially when unable to be with and alongside loved ones; those who have fallen ill to the virus and the many who suffer from the long-term health impact; those many whose mental health, sense of wellbeing and spiritual strength has been damaged; and our brothers and sisters in other parts of our world who, in their millions, are suffering now – without the benefit of the support we have had.

We are also aware of the work of health and social care professionals; researchers and scientists and teachers; key workers and all who maintain the fabric of society. For them we give thanks and offer our prayers. As we do for those whose responsibility it is to make decisions on behalf of communities, nations and humanity.

We should also remind ourselves that this year has shone a spotlight upon local and global issues:

- Racism and minority ethnic groupings
- Relationship between wealth and health
- Disjoints between health work and social care
- Pandemics don't recognize national borders
- Human impact on climate change
- Fundamental importance of social interaction in human wellbeing

Each of us could add to this lengthy list. And in our moments of reflection it does lead us to contemplate our response to Jesus' answer to the question "Which commandment is the most important of all?"

During 2020 Bristol Diocese extended the period in which parishes could hold their APCMs and also gave permission for them to take place digitally. This created a period of a number of months with parishes in different positions in terms of the election of officers and Deanery Synod Representatives. Only two, of the three, Deanery Synods took place.

Deanery Synod Themes:

First National Lock-Down

The Deanery Synod programmed for 20 May 2020 was cancelled.

To remind ourselves of the context:

- 17 March Suspension of Public Worship
- 23 March Full National Lock Down – all Churches closed
- 15 June Churches allowed to open for Private Prayer
- 5 July Churches allowed to open for Public Worship

This was a time when the church and parishes were starting to learn about the importance of digital worship and on-line communication, finding ways to become more flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances and to recognize the importance of ‘connections’ in human wellbeing.

### **Learning from the Covid Experience**

Deanery Synod on 6 October 2020 focused on our (current) Learning from the impact of the Coronavirus on society and our churches. It was also a time to provide Synod members with the opportunity to talk about and reflect on the experience at a personal level as well as in terms of our communities.

Many topics and subjects emerged in the group discussions and were shared throughout Synod. A brief reminder of a few of the key topics (and not in order of priority) are:

- Place of the church in local community – many parish churches became the hub of community support, people turned to the church ‘organization’ to enable telephone support, delivery of provisions and medicine and as a communication conduit. Some of the Primary Care Services in Bristol West turned to the church support groups to provide help.
- Importance of connection in human society – not being able to gather as worshipping communities, families, societies, or any other grouping emphasized the significance of actual social interaction for human wellbeing. This was further heightened by the need for social distancing. Strong and clear recognition of significance of social gatherings (and touch) within worship.
- Recognition of fears and anxieties – People are different. The impact of the virus and the changes in how we live touched people in very different ways, it reinforced the need to recognize difference in our communities. This was especially so in terms of those whose levels of anxiety were heightened and (rightly) shielded themselves risking becoming isolated.
- Digital knowledge increased – the capability and capacity of churches to respond to these changes digitally increased hugely. No longer are good websites, effective digital communication, streamed (or recorded) services, social media platforms simply ‘nice to have’; they are absolutely essential for the modern church.
- Occasional Offices, especially the issue of funerals – whilst deaths increased during this time the number of funerals provided by the church decreased. The reasons for this need to be explored. However, the inability of the church to be able to provide effective funeral ministry at such a time was seen as a real loss.

- Worship of the senses – In particular music within worship was a loss. The experience of these months re-emphasized that worship is not an intellectual process of word and mind alone but is a worshipful response of the whole body and all the senses.

### **Transforming Church Together – The Venerable Neil Warwick**

Deanery Synod on 11 February 2021 focused upon the Diocesan Agenda of ‘Transforming Church, Together’.

This is part of a year-long process to engage with and understand the perspectives of people inside the church, those who relate to it and those who may never have given it a thought. Their aim is to help understand what the diocese does well, what can be changed for the better and how to create a positive way forward, for everyone. The engagement is intended to last until April 2021.

Led by the Archdeacon, Neil, synod responded to a series of questions designed to illicit considered responses as well as creative ideas. During May 2021 we will hear the outcome of this engagement process – into which the thinking of this Synod will be introduced.

However, to give a sense of purpose the questions we addressed were concerned with our church’s response to the issues of: Supporting people; Worship; Equality and justice; Caring for the environment; Helping people follow Jesus; and Providing safe places in communities.

The output from across the Diocese will become an important part of our thinking in the coming year.

### **The Uganda Link**

The essential platform for this is ‘building relationships of wholeness across culture with Christ at the centre’. In short this is about ‘relationship’; between Christians, across cultures, over geography and with, sometimes, differing views of this world. It is about learning from each other and providing mutual support. The Uganda Link is a feature of every Synod and the working life of our parishes in the Deanery.

Two key thoughts at this time:

- The impact of the pandemic has been serious and challenging within the UK; in Uganda and many other parts of the world it is disastrous.
- Additional impacts of the virus have been loss of education opportunity for young women (due to an increase in pregnancies) and an increase in domestic violence.

*Alison Rowe, Deanery Synod member*

### **DIOCESE OF BRISTOL REPORT**

Diocesan Report has not been received at this time.

*Oliver Home, Diocesan Secretary*

### **THANKS**

The PCC employs Matthew Thomas as Organist and Choirmaster and Judi Thomson as Church Administrator. All other routine activities are undertaken by volunteers and

the Council places on record its appreciation of these volunteers who give their time and skills to the church and community.

### **ADOPTION**

This report was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 for presentation to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021.



# **St Mary the Virgin, Almondsbury**

## **Reports from Organisations**

**Distributed with the Annual Parochial Church Report**

**Presented at a meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021**

## **MOTHERS UNION**

Sadly, this will be the final report to the AGM from Mothers Union, as we closed the Almondsbury branch during 2020. There has been a Mothers Union in Almondsbury for 112 years and amazingly, one of our members has been a member for 67 of those years. It has been a privilege for our branch to be part of a worldwide membership of millions, working and fundraising to encourage family life in many and varied aspects, and although we will no longer have an official Mothers Union in Almondsbury, we plan to continue to meet together informally to encourage and support each other through the changing circumstances that many members are facing.

We would like to extend our thanks to Philip and to John (Poarch) for their many years of encouragement and support.

*Chris Coltham (Branch Secretary)*

## **FRIDAY CLUB**

Friday Club last met in December 2019 and due to falling numbers it was decided, with great regret, to close the club. This decision was made by the remaining members who had supported the club for many years. After consultation with the remaining members money retained in the account was given to Age Concern, The Earl Haig fund and the Children's Society. The club played an important role in allowing people to meet together for many years. However, a similar club would need new leaders and perhaps a different format.

*Margaret Roberts*

## **FLOWER ARRANGERS**

Flower Arrangers report has not been received at this time.

*Sarah Redmond, Flower Organizer*

## **THE LICH GATE**

### **General**

Last year – as with virtually everything and anything else – was dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Clubs and societies either stopped meeting altogether or had limited on-line activities.
- Public events did not take place.
- Many of the advertisers' businesses were unable to continue to work.
- Door-to-Door delivery was suspended during the first national lock-down.

The lack of meetings and events meant that much of the usual content for the magazine was no longer available and obtaining content, whilst it is always a struggle to get good contributions, became much harder. I am grateful to the “usual suspects” who continued to supply articles plus those (following appeals) who had not done so previously, who made contributions.

This meant that except for one edition that had to be reduced by four pages (forty-eight instead of fifty-two) all editions were produced in full and printed. One consequence of this is that the lack of free publicity for charitable or not-for-profit events meant that there were more general interest articles that actually led (in the opinion of several people who commented to me about it) to a better quality of publication.

It has been the impact on the advertisers that is most critical as they are sole source of funding for the publication. Virtually none of them sought cancellations or refunds, but the Acid Test will be next month (March 2021) that is the start of the new advertising year and it remains to be seen how many will choose to continue to advertise. The magazine was profitable during 2020-2021, and it can only be expected to continue if it can cover its costs (and hopefully make a positive net contribution to finances). Information from Advertising Manager (Mr John Ingle) is that as of 25 January he has had 20 responses to request to renew so far out of nearly 60. Of these 18 said yes, 1 said no and 1 said not yet.

There are always other vehicles for advertising in the shape of for-profit local publications that are run on a full commercial basis with a wider circulation. The time and effort required to produce a magazine is a Fixed Cost, and the same regardless of circulation – the only Variable Cost being the printing and distribution.

### **On-Line**

The website provider we had been using cease operation in July. To move to another provider would have meant rebuilding the website from scratch and the associated costs with this and renting the site. It was therefore decided to move the on-line presence to a dedicated public Face-Book page.

### **Printing**

All issues during 2019 / 2020 were produced on time – Motion Printers of Severn beach who print it are reliable and flexible and provide a very good service. Personally, I am very happy with them and I see no reason for any change in this area.

### **Other Issues**

I am aware of a number of local similar parish magazines that have scaled back their operations recently – combining two issue into one and / or going online only.

I am very much against such actions: they are easy to initiate, but then much harder to come back from (particularly if no thought has been given to how to do this before introducing them in the first place). It would also mean refunds for advertisers (with all the work THAT would involve, plus loss of funds) - and this would prompt many who had not thought to do so, to reconsider advertising at all. Additionally, many of the village residents appreciate having a printed

magazine and would not be comfortable for an on-line version only. It would also mean loss of business for the printers, and loss of goodwill with them.

### **Thanks**

My grateful thanks to everyone involved with the Lich Gate magazine, particularly the PCC, Philip Daniels and John Ingle.

*Edward Ranger, Editor*

### **CHILDREN'S WORK**

The weekly All Age Service has been a focal point for our children and young adult's ministry. Unfortunately, the various lockdowns and COVID restrictions has prevented this from the time of the first lockdown in March 2020.

As we could not meet in person, a special video service was published on Facebook for the Good Friday Activities Morning. The Christingle services were also replaced by a short video service combined with Christingle packs available for collection from the Lich Gate.

We look forward to moving to a more normal situation during 2021 which will enable the regular groups of children and Young Adults to resume meeting face to face as part of the All-Age Service.

*Paul van Rossum, Associate Vicar*

### **BABIES AND TODDLERS GROUP**

We haven't met up this last year. We have given up our slot in the old school hall and when we are able, we hope to reopen our group in church.

*Sandy Thompson, Leader*

### **OASIS GROUP**

Luke 12:31 ff

"Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of GOD and these things (clothes, food and life) will be given you as well....For where your TREASURE is, there your HEART will be also."

Since March 2020 OASIS has gone online with Bible stories for those families who want to receive this.

Sue Hewson has prepared CRAFT SHEETS which are sent to families beforehand and once a month Jan arranges a time and date to suit each family session and situation.

Our BIBLE STORY theme is following the regular readings and focussing on main festivals. We also have times of family PRAYERS to be THANKFUL, say SORRY if needed, and to ASK for help.

It is a learning curve but we have enjoyed greatly the games, conversations and teaching/crafts. In lockdown it has proved an important link with our homes and friends. We have learned to be flexible depending on the individual situations – with some short sessions and some more active.

Of the regular 8 families who have attended OASIS monthly meetings after school for several years, half are now regular with skype teaching. Some children are too young or parents are balancing work/school etc.

**PRAISE GOD:**

- *that we have learnt new skills and that the children and families are growing in FAITH and LOVE and learning to become OVERCOMERS.*

**PLEASE PRAY:**

- *that we may share our faith with others and that, whatever the future, we build community life within and outside the church family for all ages.*

With thanks for all prayer support,

*Jan Cooper and team (Sandy, Sue, Ro and Michael)*

### **MESSY CHURCH**

Sadly, we have been unable to hold Messy church in the past year because of Lockdown.

*Alison Rowe*

### **CATERING COMMITTEE**

It was with great joy that we opened our new church kitchen in March 2020.

Cafe Almondsbury opened for the first time on 2nd March and it was a real treat to be able to serve coffee and cake at the back of the church in our newly refurbished cafe area .

We had a visit that day from South Glos council who gave us a 5-star rating for the cafe .

By the end of the month Lockdown came into force and we have not opened since .

5 ladies in the church have completed the food standards safety award .

Let's hope we can one day get back in the building.

*Alison Rowe*

### **BELLRINGERS**

Well, what a strange year! There has been no “normal” ringing since March 2020. However, thanks must go to the following people for keeping the metaphorical flag flying.

- The Jefferis family for ringing on Sundays and occasional events. Thank you so much for keeping the sound of the bells ringing in the village and reminding them that the ringers and the church is still there.
- Gerry Anniss for maintenance, risk assessments, our plaque, overseeing the installation of the peal board and return visits from Taylors and just about everything else that wouldn't have been done without him!
- Steve Crane and Nigel Waters for arranging the making of the peal board. A fine job and a real landmark in the tower history.



- Thanks to Alison Holliday for making this peal happen
- To Philip for his support of the ringers through this difficult time
- The Adam Mead for continuing as secretary and doing all the paperwork and keeping us abreast of the news and developments, locally and nationally
- Mike Tierney as Treasurer, Adrian Cooper as Deputy Tower Captain, Nigel Waters as project treasurer and David Smith as our technology guru.

So, in terms of activities, one other peal of Bristol Surprise Major was rung on the bells by a band from St Mary Redcliffe on 14th March, (just in time!) as well as a quarter peal of Grandsire Triples on 2nd January by a visiting band. The bells have been rung where possible on Sundays and Marcus Booth rang the Ellacombe at midnight on New Year's Eve/ Day, keeping the tradition of Almondsbury bells ringing out the old year and ringing in the new. Let's hope for a better year.

Finally, I should note the passing this year of Don Haskins, tower captain for many years and rightly represented in the tower for his service and dedication to Almondsbury bells. His funeral was attended by some of the band, but his memory will live on with us all.



This was commemorated in the following.

6 December 2020  
St Mary the Virgin, Almondsbury

360 Plain Bob Minimus

1. Madeleine R Jefferis
2. Timothy J Jefferis
3. Clare L Jefferis
4. Caleb R Jefferis

Rung for morning service by the Jefferis family in memory of Don Haskins who was for many years Tower Captain at Almondsbury.

Last year in my innocence I put "I expect the 2020 report to contain many more exciting events and "firsts". I will make no predictions for 2021!

I hope you are all well and safe and look forward to being together again when it is safe and practical to do so.

*Marcus Booth, Tower Captain – Almondsbury*