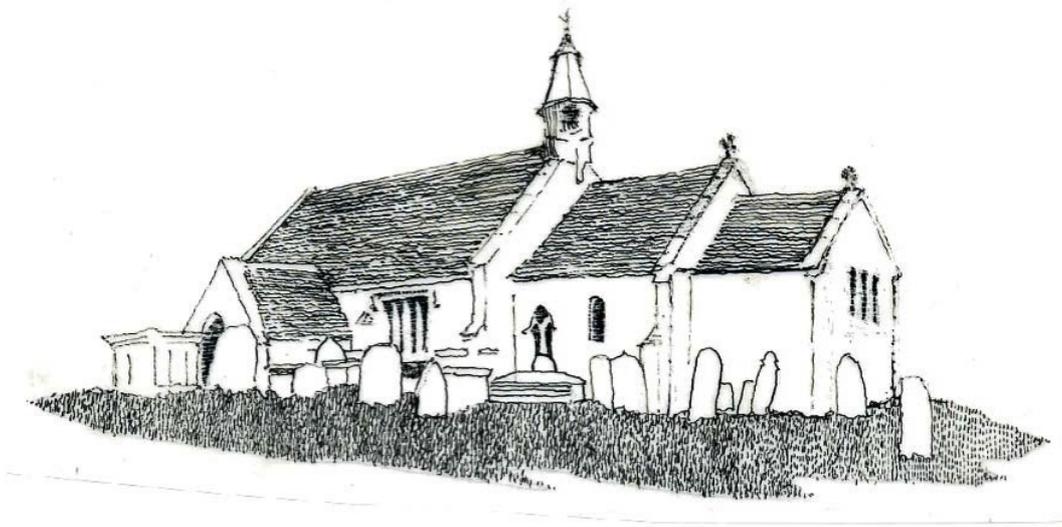


**St Nicholas' Church, Biddestone**



**Parochial Church Council**

**Annual Report**

**For the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015**

**Priest in Charge**

Revd Jonathan Philpott

**Team Vicar**

Revd Sarah Evans

**Churchwarden**

Alison Fovargue

## **1 Composition of the PCC 2015-16**

Revd Jonathan Philpott (Priest-in-Charge, Chairman)  
Revd. Sarah Evans (Team Vicar)  
Alison Fovargue (Churchwarden)  
Jane Iggulden (Secretary)  
Terry Greenwood (Treasurer)  
Diane Ross Smith (Deanery Synod Rep)  
Gertie Draper  
Graham Seeman  
Julia Tisdale

### **By Brook Ministry Team**

Assistant Curates - Revd. Velma Oxley, Revd. Gillian Parkin

Licensed Lay Ministers - Anton Campbell, Alison Flint, Mike King,  
Mary Pope, Diane Ross-Smith, Len Scott, Pam Tayler,  
Tim Woodward

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St. Nicholas' the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (Priest-in-Charge), the team vicar, churchwarden, deanery synod representative and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including worship, mission and outreach, fabric and finance and are all responsible for deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. New members receive initial training from the diocese into the workings of the PCC and will have DBS checks and safeguarding training.

## **2 Churchwarden's Report**

### **Building**

The PCC has continuously been working towards the renovation of the bell cote throughout 2015 and has appointed a new church architect, Mr Toby Falconer of John Falconer Associates, who is familiar with the church. He has moved the bell cote project forward and is waiting for information from a structural surveyor. The weathervane is being expertly restored by a benefactor and the bells will be examined when the work gets underway.

Revd Alice Kemp, Disability Adviser for the Diocese, visited the church in April 2015 to discuss issues around improving access and help us with an access review. Her report was comprehensive and covered all aspects of accessibility including both getting into the church and the experience when in the church. Unfortunately there are limits to what can be achieved in a building such as St Nicholas, but we were able to implement some useful changes. This included updating the audio system to comply with current regulations.

### **Churchyard**

The churchyard and the churchyard extension have been beautifully tended by David Taylor. Ronnie Robinson and many members of the community have kindly helped kept the borders full of flowers and weed free.

The PCC is also very grateful to the volunteers who generously give up their time to keep the church open seven days a week, arrange flowers, clean, make coffee and help at services. Comments in the visitors' book on the welcome table show how much it is appreciated.

## **Worship**

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. This includes services in the church and services held jointly with churches in the Benefice. Everyone is welcome at our regular services and the church is open daily for private prayer.

At the end of 2014 the decision was taken to reorganize the Benefice into 3 clusters to make best use of the financial and human resources. The principal change was that a service took place at 11 am on the first Sunday of the month and there were fewer Holy Communion services.

The new pattern of services was reviewed at the end of 2015. It was concluded that the reduction in Holy Communion services on Wednesday has not had a significant impact on numbers attending to pray for the suffering and it was generally felt that the Sunday services were working well, although there was some concern over the numbers at the Family service.

To encourage more people to lead intercessions, training was given at St Margaret's, Yatton Keynell. A number of parishioners took up this offer as an opportunity to learn more about this ministry and grow in confidence.

## **Statutory Offices and special services**

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism and thanksgiving services we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funerals and memorial services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and commend the person into God's keeping. We have celebrated 2 baptisms and a thanksgiving for the gift of a child and held 3 funerals and 2 memorial services in our church this year.

## **Terry Greenwood – Treasurer 2012 -2015**

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Terry in December. Shortly after having moved to Biddestone from Devon, he kindly volunteered to become Treasurer and proved to be a diligent and levelheaded steward of the church. His expertise as a surveyor was also invaluable. But what we remember most is his incredible sense of humour and his kindness.

## **Outreach**

The church continued to be involved with the wider community by supporting local organisations such as the Corsham Food Bank with Harvest donations, Julian House with Carol Singing on the Green and Ride and Stride which raises funds for Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust. We have also held our regular Thursday coffee mornings including the annual Fairtrade coffee morning.

We have also been able to give to The Royal British Legion, Dorothy House, Shelterbox (for disaster relief) and The Children's Society and to send shoeboxes full of gifts for Operation Christmas Child.

## **Teamwork**

Information on the Bybrook Team can be found in the Bybrook Team Ministry Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2015. Copies are available in church and on the Bybrook website at [bybrook.org.uk](http://bybrook.org.uk).

## **Safeguarding**

Mary in der Rieden arranged many DBS checks and safeguarding training for volunteers who help in the church. Her full report can be found in the Benefice Annual Report.

## **Chippenham Deanery Synod Report**

One member of the PCC, Diane Ross Smith, sits on the deanery synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

In September Revd Sally Wheeler was licensed as the new Area Dean of the Chippenham Deanery. She set out the future Deanery Synod plans in October by explaining that she would like to take the five marks of mission as inspiration. These are proclamation, discipleship, service, justice and care for the environment.

Diane is also the Deanery Synod representative on the Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust.

## **Electoral Roll**

The renewal of the Biddestone Church Electoral Roll has seen a reduction by 2 members to 53. In fact, 4 were removed and 2 were added. One person died and 3 moved out of the village, which accounts for the 4 who have been taken off the roll. Catherine and James Armstrong have been added.

3 members have also left the village but have chosen to stay on the electoral roll as they still attend St Nicholas' church and church events.

## **3 CHILDREN'S WORK**

### **Jesus' Birthday Party**

This took place, as usual, on 24<sup>th</sup> December. The service included the story of The Nativity acted out by the children in various costumes. They also took part in decorating the crib using the olive crib scene and figures from the Holy Land.

A Shoebox service for Operation Christmas Child and a Christingle service in aid of the Children's Society were also held during the run up to Christmas. For the second year running the children loved making their own Christingles from oranges, dried fruit and sweets.

### **Edward Bear**

Edward Bear, led by Tracie Philpott, has continued to provide pre-school children and their carers with bible-based activities, singing, refreshments and fun in the church on the first Friday in the month.

### **The Ark and Open the Book**

Open the Book, a benefice initiative to bring the Bible to life for primary schoolchildren, has been well supported by a number of parishioners who act out the stories with homemade costumes and props and the help of By Brook Valley School's Year 6 pupils. The Deanery asked Alison Flint to talk to them about this in the hope that it can be initiated elsewhere.

The Ark is a family activity for the whole benefice that takes place on the 2nd Saturday of the month. It explores a different theme

each month through games, crafts, and songs. Volunteers also provide a delicious lunch. It is extremely popular and examples of the crafts are displayed in the church. Gertie Draper who has supported this from the start, often with the most amazing theme related biscuits and other items was given a grateful farewell when she left including bunting made and signed by all the children.

### **Lent Course - Biddestone Lent Group 2015**

The series of popular afternoon Lent courses, led by Alison Flint and Diane Ross-Smith, continued in Biddestone and were well attended. The course in 2015 focussed on The Gospel according to Mark and discussions took place over tea and delicious homemade cakes.

### **4 Financial Statement & Highlights**

Planned giving was slightly lower in 2015, collections and other giving was also significantly lower and statutory fee income from weddings and funerals almost halved. Income from fundraising was higher than in 2014. This was mainly due to the Bruce's incredible Harvest and Advent events for which the PCC is very thankful.

Our payments relating to the work of the Church include our Diocesan quota of £6,488 and our parish share of £1,331. We have agreed to keep our parish share at the same level for 2016 but we have pledged to increase our contribution to the Diocese £6812. This represents an increase of 5% on this year's figure.

2016 will see an increase in the amount spent on buildings repair and maintenance as we deal with the bellcote and repairs revealed by the latest Quinquennial report.