



The Bybrook Benefice

Annual Report

For the year ended 31st December 2014

Priest in Charge

Revd Jonathan Philpott

Team Vicar

Revd Sarah Evans

Assistant Curates

Revd Velma Oxley, Revd Gillian Parkin

Licensed Lay Ministers

Alison Flint, Len Scott, Margaret Greening,
Mike King, Mary Pope, Diane Ross-Smith,
Pam Tayler, Tim Woodward

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Composition of the Team Council 2013-2014

Revd Jonathan Philpott (Priest-in-Charge, Chairman)

Pam Rawlins (Churchwarden, St Margaret's Yatton Keynell, Lay Chair and DLT Lay Representative)

Caroline Cook (Churchwarden, All Saints Littleton Drew, Lay Chair)

Richard Oxley (Benefice Treasurer)

Claire Campbell (Team Council Secretary)

Mary Inder Rieden (Team Safeguarding Officer, Child Protection)

Pat Meakins (Team Safeguarding Officer, Vulnerable Adults)

Other clergy representatives:

Revd Sarah Evans, Revd Velma Oxley, Revd Gillian Parkin

Licensed Lay Ministers:

Len Scott, Mary Pope, Diane Ross-Smith, Tim Woodward

Other Churchwardens:

Alison Fovargue (St Nicholas, Biddestone)

Sally Constable (St Andrew, Castle Combe)

Doug King or Rindi Runacres (St Mary, Grittleton)

Janet Elms or Colin Labouchere (St Michael and All Angels, Kington St Michael)

A PCC representative of St Mary, Nettleton and Burton

Anne Godwin (St James, North Wraxall)

Chris Stephens or Merope Sylvester (St Nicholas, Slaughterford)

Dido Lamb (St Mary, West Kington)

Bybrook Benefice Values and Mission

At the end of 2014, a new Vision Statement was launched by the Ministry Team and Team Council, to help us to understand our calling as Christians. Based on Matthew 28:16-20, the statement is:

“Worshipping. Growing. Sharing.”

Because of this understanding, as a group of churches, our desire is:

- To love, serve and worship God
- To love and serve one another, our local community, and the wider world
- To live and share with others the good news of Jesus Christ

Because we know that we are loved by God.

In our mission, we aim:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Additionally, we recognise that we have a responsibility to support the local rural community. The benefice is set across a beautiful part of rural Wiltshire. Around us there are active farms, small businesses, and other employment opportunities that can be at times challenging, stressful, and dependent on so many different issues in order to be able to be viable, let alone successful. We believe that an important part of our ministry as churches in this area is to support our rural community, those working in the area, those who are struggling to find work, those who are facing financial uncertainty, as well as to celebrate alongside those who have something to celebrate.

Priest-in-Charge's Report

2014 was a difficult year for the benefice. I did not foresee coming into 2014 that my health would take the course that it did, although looking back with hindsight the signs were there. I have had the opportunity to talk to some of you about this, but not all and so it is important to draw a line under this now by sharing a few thoughts with you about what I learned and experienced because that will help to shape life in the benefice in the future.

Firstly, in illness I truly discovered the wider family that I have in so many parts of this benefice. The number of cards, letters and messages that I received full of love and support overwhelmed me. It has also been good to give and receive forgiveness for relationships that had been difficult previously, and I would add my wider apologies for times when my communication had been strained prior to my time off. There were as you can imagine a number of issues that led to this, some of which were workload related, some of which were people related.

Secondly came the freedom from discovering that I don't have to solve all of life's problems. The Church is a shared ministry of ministry team, churchwardens and PCCs, and the wider congregation members. For it to be healthy and work well, each member needs to step up to their responsibilities, and not expect the clergy to be the primary be-ers and do-ers. Additionally, the Church is primarily God's and this frees us from the burden of busyness and seeking perfection.

Thirdly, it became clear to me and to the Team Council in my absence that things could not continue as they were. On my return, we therefore sat together and worked through what changes were required to provide viable, sustainable and growing ministry in this group of churches. Together we agreed to cluster the parishes into 3 smaller groups within the benefice. We also agreed a new pattern of worship across the benefice to reduce the expenditure on retired clergy, and to recognise the pressure on ministry team and churchwardens alike in providing so many services each month among other things.

"Mission Shaped and Rural" talks about Jesus' teaching on pruning the vine to see life (John 15:1-17). Pruning is not admitting failure. Any gardener will tell you that it is necessary to see new growth. At the moment, there are a few signs of growth, but it is coming at the expense of the health and joy of both the ministry team and churchwardens in their respective ministries. Ask yourself how many times you hear a member of the ministry team, a churchwarden or PCC member talking about how busy they are, or how much of a burden their role in the life of the church is. We cannot carry on like that.

A number of churchwardens have fed back the difficulties in getting people to help with the tasks of keeping the churches open and operational. This was part of the reason for carrying out the benefice audit at the end of 2013. The response was very encouraging to this with over 150 returned and more are still coming in, but there are still a number of people who have not participated.

It is widely recognised that the multi-parish benefice, although the most common pattern of rural ministry, is not designed with mission in mind. Amending our own situation by introducing clusters as the main point of meeting and sharing means that the distinctiveness of each parish can better be recognised and honoured, and that churches of all sizes have the support and encouragement that they need to minister in their own community. It is interesting to see already that the parishes which have grasped the opportunity to adopt a new model for ministry are finding life more settled and secure than they have done in the past. This is, however, only the beginning of the journey. There are all sorts of other benefits that can come from sharing resources across churches.

Administratively, we have also really developed over the past 12 months. The new administrative manual proved very useful in training and resourcing our new administrator Claire Campbell, who we employed in February, and then had to fend for herself with Sarah's support during my time off. We have also welcomed Mary Inder Rieden and Pat Meakins as safeguarding officers for child protection and vulnerable adults respectively. They have really taken to the task and produced an excellent safeguarding policy which we are currently rolling out across the benefice. Also recognising the legal responsibilities of PCCs as charitable bodies, we have been working to get in place the other policies that have been missing – baptism, bullying and harassment, lone working, data protection, health and safety policies. This has been a clear example of where being a part of a group of churches has saved work for individual PCCs. We have a new website, new church management software, and new logo and vision statement.

There were a few other notable events to mention. Revd Gillian Parkin's ordination as Priest, Mary Pope's licensing as LLM. Kington St Michael joining us here in Bybrook. We completed the Lead Academy consultations on Multi-Parish Benefices. I also attended the Diocesan Voyage Leadership Development Programme, and the Bridgebuilders course on Transforming Church Conflict.

So what lies ahead in 2015? The clergy team had an away day and recently shared the feedback with the wider ministry team and Team Council. We have set 4 priorities for the benefice during the coming 12 months (additional to plans set by parishes):

- 1) To identify people to train to lead intercessions in our churches, and to provide training
- 2) To plan and run Lent and Autumn Courses
- 3) To look at the possibility of developing a hospitality team for shared events and wider support for parishes
- 4) To meet with and develop the work of the pastoral care team

We have also booked a number of exciting guest speakers for benefice services including Jull Hopkinson, the Church of England National Rural Officer.

I would like to finish with some thanks. I would first like to thank Sarah for stepping into the breach and keeping the benefice running so smoothly with no preparation. She is such an asset to this group, and I am thankful for the ministry I am able to share with her. I would also like to thank Gillian and Velma, Alison, Len, Mike, Mary, Diane, Pam, Tim, and of course Margaret Greening now sadly missed for their continued ministry, support and encouragement. I am really enjoying being part of the Bybrook Ministry Team. I would like to thank the churchwardens, the members of each of the PCCs, and all others of you who are actively involved in the life of the church. I would like to thank Claire, Richard, Mary and Pat for their tremendous work behind the scenes in supporting the wider benefice, and each of the PCCs respectively. Finally, I would like to thank Tracie, Luke and Caitlin for their love and support, and their patience when I was unwell.

Please do read the rest of this annual report, which contains information about the activities that are shared across the benefice.

Revd Jonathan Philpott

Team Vicar's Report

Events during the early part of 2014 meant that the focus of my role inevitably shifted from mainly looking after Yatton Keynell and Slaughterford to keeping the whole Benefice ticking along in Jonathan's absence. With Claire very new in post, I spent quite a lot of time bringing her up-to-speed, especially in the midst of the busiest wedding season we have had for several years. I also continued, as Foundation Trustee, to chair the Foundation and Ethos sub-committee at By Brook Valley School, in the run-up to their expected OFSTED and SIAMS (C of E) inspections. I was elected to the Deanery Leadership Team to represent the self-supporting and ordained local ministers across the Deanery, and also represented our benefice until Pam Rawlins took on that role as our lay rep.

Inevitably, there were discussions (and much prayer and soul-searching) with the Area Dean, ministry team colleagues and the Team Council about what was happening during Jonathan's absence and about how church life could be put onto a more sustainable footing for all of us – lay and ordained – on his return. These came to fruition in the decision later in the year to organise ourselves into three clusters of churches within the wider grouping of ten. As part of this arrangement, Jonathan has taken on the role of school Foundation Trustee from me.

Although 2014 was a very challenging year, there were moments of joy along the way, not least Gillian's priesting and Mary's licensing, as well as hosting the Confirmation service at Yatton Keynell in the summer. All of us in the benefice have travelled a difficult road in the last twelve months, but the decisions we made in the autumn were courageous and I believe put us in a better place to live out our mission as God's people in this area over the coming years.

Revd Sarah Evans

Administrator's Report

It is hard to believe that it has been over a year since I started in the office. I must confess that when I took the job I did wonder how 12 hours would be filled each week and I remember asking at my interview how work would be given to me and I was assured that it would be self generating. Well I am pleased to report that they were right, the work just keeps coming and I am certainly kept nice and busy, to the point that 12 hours was just not quite enough. Each day is so varied and for me it is so much more than being the administrator. I have the privilege of working alongside the clergy, supporting them in their work and providing them with any resources they need. Obviously with Jonathan having been off shortly after I started, it was a rather sharp learning curve for me, but I was well looked after by Sarah who did an amazing job of keeping things going and it was a real pleasure to get to know her and the team during this time.

As well as supporting the clergy and ministry team I am also the point of contact for the churchwardens and once again it has been lovely getting to know everyone and being able to help with the wide range of queries.

It is also part of my role to process all payments into and out of the benefice account. Making sure wedding couples have paid on time and that the PCC's and the Diocese get the monies they are owed. I must thank Richard Oxley for the time he has spent advising me and making sure that I am doing things correctly.

The bulk of my time however is spent dealing with the Occasional Offices; Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. Last year there were 33 weddings/blessings and I had the joy of assisting the couples with the preparations for their special day. From the initial booking, to organising the finer details of bells, organists etc, answering the many questions that arise as their big day looms and making sure all the legal bits are in place such as banns of marriage, wedding registers and certificates. There were 20 baptisms last year and apart from making sure the day is booked with the clergy and churchwardens it is my job to make sure that the registers, cards, candles and bibles are ready for the special day and it is a real joy being able to pray for each child as I write their certificate. There were 37 Funerals/burials within the benefice last year and whilst most of my time is spent liaising with the funeral directors I have also had the opportunity on occasion to spend time sitting with the bereaved and offering a listening ear when needed.

2015 is set to be an exciting year, with a new Church Management System, Logo and updated website, which should all help provide better communication. We already have 15 baptisms booked for the first half of the year and 24 weddings, with bookings still coming in. I am certainly going to be kept very busy and I very much look forward to it.

Claire Campbell

Ark Report

It has been an exciting year for The Ark and we have enjoyed lots of different activities and events which we hope have helped many families on their journeys of faith. Numbers of people attending has risen and we now have an average attendance of 65-70 each session. We have welcomed some new members of the team and said thank you and goodbye to others, Margaret Greening being a particular loss to us as a team. We didn't run a holiday club over the summer as in the previous year but we hope to run something this summer in collaboration with Trevor Ranger. We did however hold a "Light party" at Halloween which was great fun and very popular. Our future plans include a camping weekend and Doug Horley Praise Party and we are about to sponsor a child collectively as The Ark and the children are looking at ways they can raise money too.

Tracie Philpott

Open the Book Report

The Open the Book Team continue to go into By Brook Valley School each month to present Bible stories in their Collective Worship.

The children and staff always give us a very warm welcome and engage enthusiastically with the stories. It's great fun and a huge privilege to do this; everyone comes away feeling energised and joyful.

The team is really growing in confidence, and the props are getting ever more elaborate. After the benefice service in February, where we demonstrated an Open the Book session, our numbers have increased from 9 to 12 people! We would love to have more come and join us, so why not think about this? You don't have to be brilliant at acting, you just need a willingness to be used by God – he will do the rest.

Revd Velma Oxley

Thursday Morning Prayer Group Report

The group meet for one hour each Thursday morning, 9am at Yatton Keynell Church, to read the Bible and pray together. Not everyone can come every Thursday and numbers vary from 2-8. There are also people who join us as a 'one off' when they have a particular prayer need, and others who send us requests for prayer – we welcome and encourage this.

Over the time we have been together our love for God, and our love and support of one another, has grown. We have seen some wonderful answers to prayer and have been greatly encouraged by seeing God at work in the lives of individuals, the Benefice and the wider community.

Prayer really does make a difference, and praying together helps us to remember this, so please feel free to come along – you would be most welcome.

Revd Velma Oxley

Pastoral Care Team Report

The pastoral care team continues to function in the life of the benefice. We continue to recognise that a lot of pastoral care takes place naturally within our communities, but this team is for dedicated pastoral care needs which might be sought from the church. We will be meeting to discuss other ways in which the role of the pastoral care team might continue to develop in the future, and hope to offer training for new people to join the team as well.

Revd Jonathan Philpott

Bybrook Blokes Report

Bybrook Blokes is our men's group, made up of 'Blokes from Bybrook' (and nearby) getting together for fun, laughs and conversations that may not otherwise happen. Although still a fledgling group, we have already enjoyed a number of varied activities including a quiz night hosted by Will Glennon, skittles at Biddestone Village Hall, and an evening with a fire pit. It is hoped that we might be able to link up occasionally with the newly formed Bybrook Boars for events in the future as well. A programme of activities is available via our website (see our groups for information).

Revd Jonathan Philpott

**BY BROOK GROUP RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014**

	Actual 2014 £	Actual 2013 £
GENERAL FUND		
Receipts		
Parish Contributions		
Biddestone	1,700.00	1,500.00
Castle Combe	1,650.00	1,250.00
Grittleton	1,350.00	1,250.00
Kington St Michael	500.00	-
Littleton Drew	350.00	300.00
Nettleton/Burton	700.05	800.04
North Wraxall	1,370.00	1,250.00
Slaughterford	520.00	520.00
West Kington	1,300.00	1,300.00
Yatton Keynell	1,380.00	1,495.90
Total Parish Contributions	10,820.05	9,665.94
Fees		
Total fee receipts	31,370.00	26,334.72
Less: paid to Diocese	(8,350.00)	(7,073.00)
Less: paid to PCCs (incl verger/heating fees)	(13,228.00)	(9,307.50)
Less: paid to organists/others	(1,989.00)	(2,159.00)
Net fees retained to fund Group expenses	7,803.00	7,795.22
Other Receipts		
Donations	51.06	170.00
Male voice choir concert rec for Wilts Air Ambulance	70.00	-
Deanery Grant	350.00	500.00
Total Receipts	19,094.11	18,131.16
Payments		
Office Premises (rent/tel/electricity)	(3,939.83)	(4,170.93)
Salary of Secretary	(4,464.00)	(5,935.38)
Stationery and sundry expenses	(1,568.68)	(1,752.94)
Clergy and LLM expenses	(6,009.19)	(6,511.44)
Worship resources	(517.90)	(977.34)
Refund of 2014 surplus to PCCs [1]	(2,500.00)	-
Wilts Air Ambulance [2]	(70.00)	-
Less: Expenses reimbursed (YK school bibles)	209.52	832.90
Total Payments	(18,860.08)	(18,515.13)
Surplus/(Shortfall)	234.03	(383.97)
Opening balance	4,230.09	4,614.06
General Fund Balance	4,464.12	4,230.09
MISSION FUND		
Opening balance	11.98	751.72
Income:		
Male voice choir concert [2]	630.00	-
Jonathan's cycle ride	999.95	-
Other donations	910.50	-
Expenditure	(881.36)	(739.74)
Mission Fund Balance	1,671.07	11.98
MUSIC FUND		
Opening balance	0.00	-
Income: (closure of choir account) [3]	1,089.05	-
Expenditure	0.00	0.00
Music Fund Balance	1,089.05	0.00
TOTAL FUNDS	7,224.24	

**BY BROOK GROUP RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014**

	Actual 2014 £	Actual 2013 £
BALANCES		
NatWest bank account (closed January 2014)	-	2,941.76
HSBC bank account	7,203.47	1,281.05
Cash	20.77	19.26
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>7,224.24</u>	<u>4,242.07</u>

Analysis of fees retained in By Brook Group funds before 2014 refund

	£
Biddestone	1,070.50
Castle Combe	3,064.50
Grittleton	817.00
Kington St Michael	731.00
Littleton Drew	37.00
Nettleton/Burton	552.00
North Wraxall	572.00
Slaughterford	236.50
West Kington	384.50
Yatton Keynell	510.00
Non parish related fees received	52.00
Less: 2013 fees paid in 2014	(404.00)
Add: Diocesan/other fees received to be paid on in 2015	180.00
Net fees retained in Group account	7,803.00



Richard Oxley
Treasurer



Simon Bruce
Independent Examiner

Notes:

- [1] Before the refund to the PCCs there was a surplus of £2,733.53 for the year. The By Brook Group Council agreed to distribute £2,500 of the surplus to PCCs pro rata to the total Parish contribution + fees retained in the Group account for each PCC.
- [2] The Male Voice Choir concert at Grittleton raised £700 of which £70 was paid to Wiltshire Air Ambulance and the £630 balance retained for the Mission Fund.
- [3] The By Brook choir has ceased to meet. The balance held in the choir bank account has been transferred to the Group account to fund music related expenses in the future.