



Churches of North
Bradford on Avon
& Villages

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, WINSLEY

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Note. Annexes A and B have been produced on a Benefice-wide basis. The other reports concern St Nicholas only.



Churches of North Bradford on Avon and Villages

Christ Church, Bradford on Avon, St Peter's Church, Monkton
Farleigh
St James' Church, South Wraxall, St Nicholas Church, Winsley

Annual Report from the Rector 2021 - 2022

Introduction

This past year has been a time of further disruption and coping with government restrictions whilst gradually reopening our churches, and activities such as our toddlers' groups and coffee mornings. As I write in April 2022, the Covid rates in this area are extremely high so we continue to review our procedures and practices in light of this.

Funerals have been allowed and have continued throughout. Gradually, weddings and baptisms, often postponed several times, are now taking place, although some of our activities such as our Marriage Preparation course and some PCC meetings remain on Zoom for the time being. Our schools vary in their response to Covid restrictions, so our contact with schools and their worship in our churches has also varied.

One benefit of the pandemic has been to encourage us to use our churchyards and porches for displays whilst keeping our churches open during the day for prayer, reflection or purely for a time of quiet or for historical/architectural interest. Throughout the year we have demonstrated to our communities that our churches are open; and our faith is alive and well. Monthly Forest Church, and an experiment with Lego Church, has drawn in many families with children, as well as members of our churches across the Benefice.

Sunday Services

Easter 2021 saw our last online Sunday service and whilst we would love to continue with online worship, it is extremely time consuming, and we have concentrated our efforts now on in-person services. When Covid rates and government restrictions allowed, we have continued with Sunday services following the decision taken by the Staff team that each Sunday must be sustainable with one or two priests. As families are clearly very happy to worship with us on a Sunday afternoon at Forest Church, we can continue to review the provision on Sunday mornings so that it meets the needs of our congregations.

Most of our regular congregation members have returned to church when they feel safe to do so, although patterns of attendance have been affected by Covid, especially at Christmas, and government restrictions around that time meant that we were wise to hold some of our Nativity Services outdoors.

Benefice Office

Our revised job description for a Benefice Administration clearly showed the role to be mainly about communication in addition to some administration, resulting in the role being renamed *Communications Officer* and we welcomed Caroline Brydon who joined us in May 2021.

Benefice Groups

- a. Our Benefice continues to be supported by a Communications Group which reviews our website, as well as *A Church Near You* and seeks to communicate effectively with those within and outside our churches.
- b. Our Benefice Safeguarding Group meets regularly to review our procedures and policies for keeping our young people and vulnerable adults safe.
- c. We continue in our second year as members of *Thrive*, the Diocesan initiative run by CPAS, an organisation very much involved in training church leaders and PCCs. It brings together

groups of volunteers from different Benefices to be learning communities, reflecting on the life of our churches and exploring ways that they can grow.

Each of our churches is represented on the group alongside me, Tessa and the Diocesan Rural Field Officer for Wiltshire. The group members work together well and support each other with creative ways of engaging with our communities.

- d. As well as Lent and Advent groups, four groups now meet fortnightly for bible study, pastoral support and fellowship and we seek to encourage new groups to form, and new members to join.

Church Buildings

We continue to seek to improve our buildings for flexible use in the present and to preserve them for future generations. Various Faculties have been successful this year including the permission to install a kitchen, toilets and an office in Christ Church; a Faculty for new lighting, wall painting restoration and clock repair is pending at Christ Church, and restoration work is almost complete on the church bells in St James.

Children's and Families Work

Zoe Yeomans continues to be a real asset to our Benefice. Her ideas, her vision and her inventiveness enable us to grow our contacts with local families and enable those volunteers involved in children's and schools work to be well supported. She is creating new ways of being church for new generations.

Church Schools

Our work with our three Church of England Primary Schools and our pre-schools has continued in different ways this year depending on Covid rates and academy and LEA guidance.

For much of the year Collective Worship and Open the Book has been warmly welcomed in school at Winsley, but face to face contact has been limited in Christ Church and Churchfields.

Thank you....

I am extremely grateful for the creativity and commitment shown by so many members of our churches. Pastoral support has continued via our clergy and LPAs, and our LWLs and musicians have brought imaginative and inspirational influences on our worship.

Thank you to all who support the churches in our Benefice in so many different ways, both practically and spiritually. We are a 'priesthood of all believers', and as such seek to involve people fully in the various aspects of Christian mission and ministry.

There are too many people to name but I would just like to say a big, heart-felt thank you to my ministry colleagues Tessa, Rachel, Paul, Keith, Bernard, Cedric and Penny for their excellent support and ministry, and offer a warm welcome to Revd Tim Hawkings who has recently moved into the area and will be joining our group of ministers to take occasional services.

The future

I am due to retire in May 2023 and wish to leave the Benefice in as strong a position as possible to support Tessa and our retired priests who will hold the fort during the vacancy.

With the ministry team, I have already started succession planning so that hopefully when I leave, there will be a smooth handover of responsibilities.

None of us knows what the future holds for our Diocese, and future recruitment, but there are ways we can show that we are well organised, joyful worshipping communities, working together as a benefice. There are two key things that we need to be mindful of when considering the future.

1. Church finance

Each of our four churches managed to pay their Parish Share in full in 2021 so thank you very much to everyone. Funding our churches and our initiatives however remains a challenge. It is important that we

continue to pay our Parish Share in full so we may need to encourage more fund raising, have stewardship campaigns encouraging people to give via the Parish Giving Scheme, and have a Legacy Campaign.

2. Church Officers

It is important that we have key postholders such as Church Wardens in place as they will be the Bishop's Officers, responsible for preparing a Parish Profile ready for recruiting my successor and will be part of the interview process. This year's APCM is an important occasion to ensure that posts are filled.

Renewing Hope: Pray, Serve, Grow: My vision

There will always be more to work on in terms of encouraging families, growing more leaders, working on different modes of communication, stewardship campaigns and fund-raising. We will continue to explore the creative use of our buildings for mission, ways of growing disciples and how to enable those on the edge of church to know more about the Christian faith. Most importantly, we continue to discern where God wants us to put our time and energy.

Our churches today are vibrant communities, but we need to consider what 'church' in the future will look like, and how we can use our church buildings more to support future ministry and our communities.

We will continue to build up strong links with our communities, with our primary schools and with families. We wish to create new worshipping opportunities, and new communities to enable us to offer Christian support and teaching in ways that work for today's families, and for different generations who might want to engage in ways that fit in with their very busy lives.

We are still in the midst of a pandemic; our country is facing cost of living rises and inflation and there is tragic war in Europe. We cannot predict the future. We do not know if the drift from living in cities to homes in towns and villages will continue. It is likely that our communities will however change as more people work from home for much of their

working week and are therefore available locally. This may open all sorts of opportunities for us to engage differently with individuals.

The future may be uncertain, but we have God with us, and we seek to do his will. I look forward to the coming year with confidence as we continue our journey of prayer and faith together.

Revd Ann Keating, Rector.
April 2022

Children and Families report 2021

The year started in lockdown and I was unfurloughed' (if that is a word?) once children were back at school on March 8th just in time for Easter. It has been a year of getting things going again and I am pleased to say overall they have been successful and well received. Children and Families work is part of many of the other activities and groups within the Benefice so do read this in conjunction with the other related reports.

Easter

The children at Churchfields School, and Look out nursery, Monkton Farleigh, all received a small Easter chick bookmark from the Church and some funding was secured for the prayer space -children's corner in St Peter's, which has been furnished, blessed and used now. The Lookout Nursery Children visited St Peter's for a session with me on new life and really enjoyed their visit. Children who came to the Easter service at Christ Church enjoyed making playdoh Easter symbols and hunting for chocolate eggs in the churchyard. The Children at Winsley school all visited St Nicholas Church, class by class, to Experience Easter – six wonderfully crafted interactive prayer stations -which were thought provoking, interesting and reflective for everyone, and really special as this was a first trip out post lockdown for all the children and a chocolate bunny included! Open the Book in Winsley began on film, and a series of high quality films were made, also a lot of fun for us, so this ministry could continue. Seeing children in the village on walks and them commenting on them enthusiastically was wonderful. I have supplied themed resources for children and Family services including Refresh and we now have 6 pew bags in the Benefice for any children to enjoy while at Church.

The Ark and Sunbeams

Next was to think about reopening the Ark and Sunbeams toddler groups. The Ark resumed in the well ventilated, large space of Christ Church and was extremely well received! The team works together so well being sure to follow the ever changing regulations and what a joy it was! For Parents and their little ones who had been at home for so long, and for many this was the first opportunity they had to interact with other children, socially connect and have a fun morning. Numbers grew quickly and we have a steady group each week now of 8-18 little ones.

Sunbeams Toddler group followed soon after once everything was in place and has been equally well received by the many parents and their little ones who come along (see Mary's report for more on this). One of my roles is to ensure these things are risk assessed and each volunteer has a DBS and safeguarding training. During lockdown the training moved online, so I set up sessions to support volunteers to complete or renew this, which means volunteers have been able to join each team so much more easily.

Schools work and holiday club

Other highlights were running 3 well received group reflection and fun sessions with Winsley Year 6 leavers, alongside Rev Tessa, the It's Your move Year 6 programme with Rev Jane at Atworth, for the Churchfields School children, Winsley acorns visiting church for their Harvest and Christmas services, welcoming Year 2 and Year R from Christ Church School into Christ Church and the wonderful and valuable contributions Year 5, now 6, made to the FCCCP consultation. The themed porch displays have continued and been a focal point for those passing by in St James and Christ Church. In addition to our first holiday club activity morning on the theme of Harvest in October Half term! Such a wonderful team of volunteers enabled over 15 children to paint, ice biscuits, create the welcome cloth at the back of St Nicholas, play games and learn what football and lunch boxes have in common. (The work of Marcus Rashford in helping to tackle child food poverty).

Forest Church

Perhaps one silver lining of Covid has meant we have come to appreciate the outdoors and 2021 has been the year of Forest Church.

With Rev Tessa and Richard we piloted and ran varied and successful family friendly Forest Church sessions in each of our churchyards, with the theme of Apples at St Peter's, Wood at Christ Church, Leaves at Winsley and 'Ants' at South Wraxall. Such a joy to welcome families with outdoor craft, firepit, delicious fire cooked treats, activities, songs and reflections. Long may these continue and grow.

Christmas and 2022

As Christmas approached a Carols trail appeared at Winsley and in St Peter's, the knitting team amazed us again with beautiful knitted bells for the local children, and Winsley School were back in Church for Experience Christmas. I heard there was a donkey at the lantern procession at St Peters and families enjoyed outdoor carol services at Christ Church and St. James. The Advent Activity Tea back in South Wraxall was very successful with more new and regular families coming along to join in the fun and games, not to mention the tea, mince pies and mulled wine!

2022 began with a hugely successful Lego Church session, replacing forest Church for January, and we have just had a Space Adventure holiday club, welcoming nearly 30 children with edible rockets, balloon rockets, space games and marbling planets, again with a wonderful team of leaders and volunteers. We were pleased to say Mission accomplished!

Thank you

I would like to add my thanks to this report of all the many people throughout the Benefice that support the Children and Families work, it is such a team effort, all sessions, events, groups and clubs take time, energy and prayer, it is not a one man band, so Thank you. We are blessed with a truly wonderful congregations willing to help in so many different ways, which makes all the difference and the growing Children's and Families ministry a success and joy. So, thank you again as we look forward to what 2022 brings.

Zoe Yeomans

1st March 2022

Winsley School Foundation
Governors
Report to APCM 2022

'Some seed fell on the good earth and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams. Matthew 13:8



New school logo.

During the school year Winsley has introduced a new logo and uniform to better reflect its Vision and Values and Church School status.

The school has deepened its partnership with Palladian Academy Trust during the year. The Trust currently is made up of 10 local schools, 4 of which are Church Schools.



Since January 2022, PAT has initiated an experimental shift in management structure, appointing Mrs Becky Wilson (current Head of Winsley) as Executive Head of Winsley and Widcombe C of E Junior School, recruiting Mr Tom Brewer as Head of Winsley School. This new structure will be carefully reviewed before the summer. Tessa represents the Governors in this review process.

Governors

During the past year, Mrs Angela Symonds stood down from her position as Foundation Governor.

Angela continues her work heading up Winsley Open the Book Team and is also now acting as a community link person for the school. We therefore need to recruit a new Foundation Governor to work alongside

Rev Tessa Mann. Please contact Tessa if you know anyone who might be interested in applying for this important role.

The school continues to have an active and strong working relationship with Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education.

Tessa continues as Vice Chair of Governors, with Mr Tim Quick as Chair.

Covid 19

As with all schools, Covid 19 has proved challenging, with the school constantly responding to shifting regulations and local patterns of infection. Staff continue to work hard addressing the impact of the pandemic on all aspects of pupil well-being and learning. Zoe Yeomans provided some much needed in school support for a number of pupils during this time.

The school has used the opportunity to be as creative as possible with its learning provision and deepening its relationship with families through a Parent Partnership initiative.

Staff have been very grateful to receive Friday cakes and biscuit deliveries from the Open the Book Team and friends.

Worship and Church Services etc

Weekly school worship and Open The Book were maintained throughout the pandemic via video and Teams links. Sadly visits to Church for services were not possible, however we were able to bring each class into school for Christmas Experience. A huge thank you to Jean Leggbagg and Val Bryant for their creative energies with this project. Zoe and Tessa ran creative outdoor transition sessions for the Year 6 pupils in July 2021.

Face to face worship is now fully re-established, with Tessa and Zoe leading weekly worship.

50 Years at Tynning Road

The school is currently preparing to celebrate 50 years on the Tynning Road Site in June 2022.

Number of pupils on roll: 140.

Rev. Tessa Mann February 2022

Report on Open the Book

The Open the Book team consists of myself (Angela Symonds), Rosemary Rees, Jean Legg-Bagg, Val Bryant, Judith Cable, Penny Pierce and Robin Elven.

Every Thursday morning, we meet in Winsley Primary School where we tell and act out one of the Bible stories from 'The Lion Storyteller Bible'. We have to follow a carefully written script, with instructions and guidance provided by the creator Bob Hartman. A number of children act along with us and, with no time for a proper rehearsal, they always rise to the challenge. It is very rewarding to see them grow in confidence as they gradually gain stage experience.

Because of the pandemic there was a long period when going into school was no longer possible and we had to look for other options. Richard Mann very kindly agreed to film us and we posted our videos on YouTube. Stories filmed this way proved very popular and were eventually used by other schools in the Benefice. My garden provided the setting for a number of scenes and we used trees and bushes to great effect. We also managed to overcome the challenges provided by the weather and noisy machinery in neighbouring gardens. Zoe Yeomans came along to help us and we were always able to have (at that time) the permitted six people meeting together in an outside space. It was a lot of fun, although we missed the interaction with children.

As Covid restrictions have lifted, we have been able to go back into school. Both pupils and staff welcome us warmly and it is a great privilege to be there. Jean, with the help of Val, works wonders with an assortment of costumes. We also have a store of props provided by the more creative members of the group. A cleverly painted cloth on an upturned table makes a realistic house or temple. Penny always has a song ready for the end of the story and, until we were permitted to sing aloud once again, we learnt how to portray the words by hand-signing along to the music track.

We take it in turns to narrate the story, to dress up and act, or to lead the children in a closing prayer. We are a strong team but we always welcome support from other members of the congregation.

Angela Symonds

SUNBEAMS REPORT

We restarted Sunbeams with a "Picnic on the Park" (kindly given to us by Dorothy House) in June 2021 - So many of our Mums carers and G/parents also many new ones came . The weather was kind ,the sun shone and all had a great time .The children had a picnic bowl while Mums had coffee/tea and cakes.

The group restarted in the hall in Sept observing Covid rules!! Since Sept the numbers have been going up each meeting, we had 18 children at one of the February meetings. Mums were given a red rose for Valentine's.

I am very fortunate to have such a dedicated and loyal team of lovely grannies supporting Sunbeams; they love being part of this group.

At the time of writing, our next "Special event" was due to be Afternoon cream tea for Mums on 26th March to celebrate Mothers' day.

Mary Hewetson

KETTLE'S ON

It is a pleasure to report that Kettle's On started again in July. Numbers were initially quite low but have now picked up again and, at about 35, are back to pre-pandemic levels. Far more important is the fact that it is much enjoyed by all.

There have been two talks: one in November on computer scams and how to avoid them, given by a representative of Wiltshire Police, and the other in January given by a lady from Dementia Friendly Bradford-on-Avon. They were both well received.

There is always a splendid array of homemade cakes and biscuits as well as a good supply of coffee and tea. I am most grateful to those who supply them, as well to the regular catering team and others who help on a more occasional basis.

We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 10.00 until midday in the Church Hall. All are most welcome!

Roy Ludlow

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Services

It has been a pleasure to return to **normal Sunday services** (although face masks are still being worn at the time of writing). Having said which, may we say how well people coped with lockdown. Our grateful thanks go to the ministry team and our lay worship leaders for all they have done to enrich our worship during this difficult time. We are also grateful to the many people who minister quietly and faithfully behind the scenes, undertaking tasks which would be greatly missed if they were not done. The clergy did a wonderful job with **online services**, which had between 100 and 200 'hits' each week. Also, members of the congregation were always patient and helpful with social distancing arrangements when we were first back in church. We are grateful for that.

Refresh is up and running again, now in the Church Hall, rather than in the School, and is much appreciated. The most recent Refresh (February) attracted a record congregation of 45. The splendid new digital piano had its first outing. Well done to those who 'fundraised' for it!

The **Remembrance Service** was again conducted entirely at the War Memorial. It was a fine service, very well attended by villagers.

Christmas was delightful, as ever. The church was heated throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons and it was beautifully decorated, largely with a splendid Christmas Experience, mirroring the Easter Experience of the previous April. There was the usual fine tree, amply decorated, and the Crib. Outside we had a Star of Bethlehem over the porch and a Christmas tree festooned with coloured lights.

The Carol Service, by unanimous acclaim, was splendid; the number attending, 75, was considered about right in the circumstances. The meeting to review the service largely concerned itself with how to cope with far greater numbers (hopefully!) next year. The Crib Service, following a new format this year, was very well received, as was the Midnight Communion. The Christmas Morning Service was very well

attended and much enjoyed. The same was true of the Christmas Refresh, which took the form of an hour of Christmas carols and poems. On Monday and Wednesday 13th and 15th December there were groups carol singing around the village.

We again took part in the Christmas Tree Festival in St Peter's Monkton Farleigh. Our requirement was to decorate our tree in green. This tested the ingenuity of the Churchwarden, always a commodity in short supply! The Festival was very successful.

We have revisited the **duty teams** for Sunday morning services. They now include a sacristan, who will set up for communion, and one person or two to welcome members of the congregation as they arrive at the door.

The **gallery** has received a much needed 'tidy up'.

The **capacity** of the church has been recalculated at 160, allowing for five people per pew and a number of chairs borrowed from the church hall.

All in all, we have so much to thank God for at St Nicholas and in Winsley more generally.

Linds Batson
Roy Ludlow

St Nicholas - Fabric Committee Report 2021-22

The Fabric Committee meets quarterly under the chairmanship of John Baxter, following the retirement of Paul Simmonds in early 2021. We would like to thank Paul for his sterling leadership of the committee over many years.

2021 saw a gradual return to a more or less normal pattern of maintenance/clean-up activities and a resumption of delayed safety inspections. A clear-up of the church grounds with volunteers took place in Oct, and a deep clean of the church interior is planned for Spring 2022. On the safety front electrical Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) completed in Sept, and the 5 yearly testing of fixed electrical installations is planned for Autumn 22. Also of note is that in January the church heating control system was upgraded with a modern digital programmer/thermostat. Overall the church hall is in reasonable condition, but the windows frames are showing signs of some decay and require close annual inspection, repair and maintenance.

The future of the church hall remains a subject of lively debate, with various concepts being discussed. Feasibility studies on specific options would require dedicated funding. One idea, originally mooted by Paul Simmonds, is for the current hall site to be sold for high quality village housing, whilst retaining some parking rights, with the capital used to build a modern energy-efficient annex on the north side to the church. The annex would contain kitchen and toilet facilities, as well as a meeting room, with the main church seating reconfigured for flexible use to enable larger events. Another idea also in play is to work with the Parish Council to form a new village amenity centre which would combine the functions of the existing village and church halls.

A longer term project which is in the early planning stages is an extension of the existing graveyard with associated landscaping of the area adjacent to the boundary walls at the back of the houses closest to the church. This could see a woodland walk, a rotunda for quiet contemplation and associated work within a two to three year timescale,

Grants and other donations will be sought to cover projected project costs.

Finally we are always seeking new Committee members to assist with our work so please contact John Baxter if you are interested as we will have further stalwarts who have indicated a desire to stand down after many years of service in the next few months.

Churchyard proposals

It is proposed to enhance the Churchyard for our use and to benefit both the community and nature. Those held particularly in mind include family and friends of those visiting graves, local people who come to the churchyard for quiet contemplation, local organisations (eg Cubs and school) who enjoy the natural environment and Forest Church meetings.

Ten ideas have been proposed:

1. Extend the grave area: partially into the wilder area and allow an extra row adjacent to the eastern boundary wall.
2. Re-create the full line of trees along the Northern boundary line by planting silver birch.
3. Place four climbing roses and arched frames to support them in the centre of the graveyard where the natural cross shaped crossing lies. This would be a great place for wedding photographs as well as providing visual and scented appeal.
4. Place an 'outdoor classroom' for shelter, as a space for reflection, for the use of Forest Church and local groups eg cubs/scouts/school.
5. Create a meandering path using log sections as both a prayer path and nature trail through the wild area to arrive at the 'outdoor classroom'.
6. Place log piles to encourage wildlife.
7. Place a circle of log seats around a fire pit.
8. Develop a couple of feature low level dry stone walls (also good for wildlife!)
9. Remove the breeze block hut.
10. Create a landscaped bank of wildflowers.

It is envisaged that once a final design is agreed that work would be undertaken over the course of say three years and very intentionally involve community groups in helping us so they feel connected to the

project and gain from it as much as we will as a church community. The considerable support we get for churchyard tidy ups suggest such invitations will be gratefully received.

RM Jan 22

CHURCH ORGAN
INSPECTION REPORT
January 2022

A. Preamble

Keith Bennett and Roy Ludlow met with Gary Cook of Liberty Organs on Wednesday 26th January. Gary carried out a thorough hour-long inspection. His full report, running to eight pages (but with plenty of photographs!), is available for examination. Please ask me if you wish to see it.

B. Summary

The organ is incredibly well built and generally in good order. However, it is beginning to get quite dirty and dusty, and the bellows are beginning to show signs of fatigue. Other than the bellows, there was nothing found which would give cause for alarm.

C. Work needed

1 Immediate:

Adjustment of oboe mechanism, to be done before Easter, estimate £120 plus VAT

Tuning, to be done in May (when outside temperature is suitable), estimate £300 plus VAT

2 Long Term (5 - 10 - 15 years; Gary could not be more precise):

Major work on bellows, winding and trunking

Minor work to keyboards; pedalboard; drawstops; console; blower; casework and front pipes; woodworm infestation

estimate

£13,414 plus VAT

D. Other

A longer and sturdier rail needs to be fitted along the gallery

A fire extinguisher needs to be provided in the gallery

I would recommend that we give thought now to setting aside funds for the long term work.

RAL 29th January 2022