

**ANNUAL and FINANCIAL REPORTS of  
THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
of  
ST OSWALD'S CHURCH HOOE  
For the year ended December 2016**

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***Website:*** [www.ninfield.org.uk](http://www.ninfield.org.uk)

***Incumbent:*** Vacant since 31.05.15

***Independent examiner:*** Stephen Chambers

***Bankers:*** Barclays Bank plc,

## Our Aims and purposes as a charity

During the Interregnum (commenced *31.05.15*), the PCC has the responsibility of:

- Promoting the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England;
- Maintaining the continuity of Christian work and worship of our forbears
- Promoting, within the Parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, social, evangelistic and ecumenical
- Providing practical support and care for people in the parish
- Providing financial support to those in need and to other organizations with similar objectives

## What we planned to do to achieve our charitable objectives

Before planning our activities for the year, the PCC considered:

- The Diocese of Chichester's Strategy for:

*Christian growth and nurture;*  
*Re-imagining Ministry;*  
*Contributions to the common good;*

- The PCC's strategy (*November 2015*) of consulting, via open meetings and written communications with the people of the Parish. The consultation asked:

*"What would you like from your church both spiritually and practically and how might it be provided?"*

- Enable as many people as possible to worship at our Church at regular and special services and for private prayer and to involve more individuals and groups in worship
- Enable as many groups as possible to use the Church for community/social activities  
Enable as many people as possible to become part of our church community
- Provide a warm and helpful welcome to those who seek to bring children to baptism, would like to be married, arrange a funeral or enquire about interment of ashes.
- Putting faith into practice through prayer, music, sacrament and readings
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- Providing assistance for the sick, housebound poor and needy of the parish
- Reaching out to the parish by providing social events, meals and events
- Seek to make the church more visible and inclusive by involving non-churchgoers with social events

- Improve communications with the wider public through improved web-site
- Maintaining the fabric of the church building and its rural surroundings as the Christian Centre and focus of the village, sanctuary and historic building.

## What we achieved

### Attendance at worship

We welcome all who come in through the door to services wherever they may come from, however they arrive and from any denomination and none. Churchwarden and a sides-person welcome people to Sunday worship and this year we introduced the offer of coffee and biscuits after every service. We celebrated a combined Eucharist service with our neighbouring parish, St. Mary's Ninfield monthly. On Remembrance Sunday we joined the congregations of St. Mary's and the Ninfield Methodist Church. As a regular alternative to Parish Eucharist on Sundays, we provided a non-eucharistic Family Service led by a Reader or visiting Minister (*in line with the Diocesan Strategy to re-imagine ministry*). New for our Harvest Thanksgiving Service, was the involvement of a group of children who contributed readings, thoughts, prayers and poems. Produce was sold and donations made to the Bexhill Food Bank.

Attendance at Sunday services remained constant at an average of 17 people. However our Carol Service with 152 attendees saw an increase of 47% with numbers at our Armistice Day, midweek Service increasing from 28 to 32, Christmas Day was steady at 54 and Easter was similar at 37. During the year over 50 prayers were hung, by visitors and parishioners, on our prayer tree. A prayer meeting attended by up to 10 parishioners met at the tree monthly to pray for the people and situations mentioned on every leaf. Eight parishioners served on the PCC and there are 33 on the electoral roll - an increase of 5, of which 12 reside outside the parish. Parishioners enjoyed visiting Priests and Readers but there was disappointment at the lack of interest in advertisements for a Priest in Charge. There is concern that despite the magnificent job being done by the two churchwardens, is not realistic for this situation to be maintained long term. We shared a simple lunch of bread, cheese and salads in the church before the APCM and repeated this following the service on the first Sunday of Christmas 2016 with a "bring your Christmas leftovers" lunch.

### Use of the Church Building by individuals and groups

It is important to us that the Church is open and available for private prayer and although our church is a mile outside the village and set amongst fields it is always open during the hours of daylight. This is much commented on with gratitude in our Visitors Book and it was clear from our village consultation that the "church as a private place for prayer" was highly valued, being cited by 10 of the 31 responders. 73 entries were made in our Visitors Book - an increase of 20 over the previous year. The content of the entries is notable as not only are there many thanks for the church being open but also many comments on the "Peace" to be found. The church welcomed visiting Bands of Bell Ringers by opening in the evenings on 11 occasions – an increase of 10 visits over 2015 and a group celebrating Water in the surrounding countryside met and presented a film. A group of                      came on an educational visit to our Bell Tower and were welcomed and the bells demonstrated by our Band of Bell Ringers

### Involving more people in church activities

As a result of our village consultation several new people offered help with church and churchyard cleaning and we have widened the pool of people who will deliver the Readings in church. Flower arranging for Festivals and other events are joyful occasions and we were delighted to receive the help of lots of children (up to eight at any one time and aged 2- 13 years) with Easter, Harvest and Christmas decorating. A local wheelright and carpenter has replaced broken bell stays, carved a wooden batten for bell-ringing notices and crafted a wooden cross as a focus for our prayer tree.

### Making the Church more visible and inclusive through Social Events

One of the responses to our village consultation was a request for “More social Events with Food” we therefore increased our programme by two events offering:

- in the Church and Churchyard

*March* - Church and churchyard Clean Up weekend with Bread & Cheese;

*July*- Garden Party - we combined with the Hooe Parish Council (civil) to organize what in previous years had been our annual Church Garden Party in the churchyard and re-titled it “The Queen’s Church Garden Party “. We were able to extend the hours to run all day and offered a wider range of activities thanks to the great input from Parish Council members and villagers. Free entry made it difficult to record numbers but the income raised more than doubled that of previous years suggesting a large increase in numbers. The Parish Council generously agreed that all proceeds went to the Church

*December* - Carol Service with mince pies and mulled wine

- in the Village Hall

*February* - Soup & Pancakes on Shrove Tuesday;

*March* - Bun-fight at Village Hall for families;

*October* - Harvest Supper;

*November* - Bonfire tea for families;

Provision of pastoral and practical care for people living in the Parish

In the absence of an Incumbent we have two members of the PCC who provide home communion visits and also assist visiting Ministers at services. They and others carry out social visits and, for one household, were responsible for regular shopping trips and liaising with family members. Hospital visiting is also undertaken and one member of the PCC helps at the local Food Bank in line with the Mission Action Plan. Two members of the PCC volunteered with reading support at the local church primary school

Provision of tangible support to the poor and needy

We made donations to Feed the Minds; World Vision; Water Aid; Practical Action; MSF; Ninfield CE School, Bexhill Foodbank, Bexhill Street Pastors; Beachy Head Chaplaincy; St Michaels Hospice at Home; St. John Ambulance Homeless Service; St Wilfrid’s Hospice; Seaview Day Centre, Hastings with after church coffee monies being donated to The Childrens’ Society and Bexhill Foodbank Save the Children.

The Church Roof Repairs

This has been an important part of the not inconsiderable work required from the two Churchwardens and other PCC members in a Parish during an Interregnum. However, the activities related to the Roof Repair Appeal have also co-incidentally furthered more of our aims and objectives than are covered by the dry expression “fundraising for the roof”.

Following two Quinquennial Reports highlighting the need to plan for the repair of both slopes of the nave roof, we applied to the Listed Places of Worship Fund for a grant and were awarded up to £32,000. Thereafter we launched a Roof Repair Fund Appeal with a Concert in the church, “September Song”, the semi-professional soprano being a local village resident. This event brought 114 people into the church, many of whom had not been there before and the evening was a resounding success with many people asking “when is the next one “. Supper afterwards was provided by a group made up of both PCC members and friends of the soprano. Together with donations taken on the evening a surplus of £1,200 was generated. Our own Band of Bell Ringers organized a quiz in the Village Hall raising over £300 and a personal approach Appeal aimed at 200 households in the village was launched in September and by the end of the year over £15,000 had been raised.

The Appeal has generated significant interest with 50% of donors being non-churchgoers. It was clear from written and verbal responses that the church as sanctuary, historic building, special place for prayer and centre for worship is important to many in the community.

### Financial Review

- The total receipts on general unrestricted funds were £60,322 and are detailed in the Financial Report. Of this £38,600 was donations, LPOW grant and funds raised for the Roof Repair Appeal leaving £21,222 received for the general upkeep and services of the church. This is a decrease of £1,535 on the previous year.
- The planned giving through envelopes and Bankers Orders decreased by £883 compared with 2015. Our total voluntary income including tax recovered, decreased by £607 (3%)
- The largest expenditure of the PCC was the sum of £8,200 paid to the Diocese to cover Ministry costs. This amount covers the housing, stipend and pension costs of the clergy and the church insurance and also a standard sum for diocesan central costs, clergy training and a contribution to national church funds. The expenditure for Clergy and Rectory expense was considerably reduced due to the vacancy of incumbent.

### Reserves Policy

It is the PCC's policy:

- to maintain a balance on the general unrestricted funds that equates to approximately six months' worth of unrestricted payments as contingency against unforeseen situations. The closing balance of £32,481 (not including Roof Repair Fund) achieved this.
- to invest funds balances with the CBF Church of England deposit Fund.

### **Structure, governance and management of the charity**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), but is excepted from registering with the Charity Commission within the meaning of the section 30 of the Charities Act 2011. Its Governing Document is the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. During the year the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council.

#### *Ex Officio members*

Incumbent:

*Vacant*

Wardens:

Mr. Jack Rist

Chairman

Mr. Simon Pattison

Vice-Chairman

#### *Elected members*

Mrs. Anne Bourner (2019)

Mrs. Cynthia Fairclough (2017)

Treasurer

Mr. John Fairclough (2018)

Secretary

Mrs. Janet Pattison (2018)

Mrs. Julia Stickells (2018)

*Deanery Synod Members:*

Mrs. Margaret Rist (2017)

Mr. Simon Pattison (2017)

The Wardens are elected at the annual Vestry meeting prior to the APCM and are on a one year term of office.

The elected PCC members serve for a 3 year term of office, the dates show when this comes to an end. Those whose term of office ends this year may seek re-election. There was one vacancy during the year.