

The Parish of St Mary's Church, Rattery, Devon

Address for correspondence

Mrs Linda Jopson
PCC General Secretary
Ashbourne Farm
Rattery
South Brent TQ10 9JZ

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS Of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31st December 2023

Team Rector:

Reverend Prebendary Professor Gina Radford

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank, Totnes

Independent Examiner:

Ian Fraser
Rupp & Fraser
7 St. Paul's Road
Newton Abbot
TQ12 2HP

Web site:

www.stpetrocsandstmarys.org.uk

The Parochial Church Council is an Excepted Charity

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary's church, Rattery, Devon

Part of the Dart and Avon Mission Community

Aims and purpose

St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC) is aware of its responsibilities of promotion of the whole mission of the church within its locale, of caring appropriately for the Grade I listed building and the intangible heritage it represents, and of ensuring integrity and value for money in its financial dealings.

The parish is part of the Dart and Avon Mission Community in which Rev Preb'd Professor Gina Radford is Team Rector. Between June 2021 and November 2023 we had been without a Team Rector and Gina had been covering the whole Mission Community as Team Vicar. In November 2023 she was appointed as Team Rector, leaving the 0.5wte Team Vicar post vacant. She is officially on duty on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday each week, but does amend her timetable to fit in with funerals and weddings particularly. She lives at the Vicarage in South Brent.

Objectives and Activities.

As stewards of St Mary's Rattery the Parochial Church Council is mindful of its dual responsibilities for the Church. The first of these is maintaining the building in a fit state for its role as a place for Christian worship, the conduct of weddings, baptisms and funerals. However, it also recognises a further role namely making the building available for use by the wider parish community. To that end we welcomed the request that St Mary's become the home of a newly formed local choir, the Village voices, as well as a venue for music concerts. The PCC is also in discussions with the Parish Council about the role St Mary's could play in being an Environmental information point for the proposed nature pathway whose start will be from the churchyard. The church also has a rich history and to share this with visitors arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the building is open seven days a week. In addition we are exploring with the South Brent and Rattery archive opportunities to use the church in a way that would enable them to share, with a wider audience, their knowledge and expertise of local history. Our biggest challenge in achieving these objectives remains the state of the fabric of the building. Currently damp in the walls and its degrading impact on our very rare form of wall decoration namely Sgraffito is our number one issue. However our efforts to find ways of dealing with this problem had to be suspended whilst we dealt with a serious short term issue. The Church's emergency exit is its West Door but this year its condition had deteriorated so much that it was unable to fulfil this important role on a continuing basis. To address this problem meant recognising that the door, first installed in 1550, would have to be subject to a full diocese approved restoration. To address this challenge we were fortunate enough to be

able to raise grant funding for a full Conservators report on the door. This confirmed its antiquity and historic importance. It also told us that to fully restore the door to its condition when first installed would cost in excess of £10,000. So our efforts then turned to finding charitable funding to try and cover the majority of this cost. In this endeavour we were successful and were awarded grants which covered the bulk of the funding for the restoration work thus enabling the restoration to be commissioned. The balance of the money required came from the Church's own fabric fund and a very generous donation from the Rattery plant sale. In addition to this major project we also installed in the churchyard a locally made wooden seat, located next to our Jubilee memorial apple tree. This was made possible through the generosity of Councillor Peter Smerdon who wanted it to be a lasting memorial to his late father. This year also saw us fund a full electrical safety check on the building. For the future our efforts will now be refocused on addressing our damp walls challenge.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and Prayer

PCC is committed to holding worship regularly but as seems appropriate to the community. We discuss and review services and service patterns for forthcoming seasons to re-assess what we do rather than assuming that what happened last year at the same time should be repeated. Our current service pattern is two services a month, with occasional extra services for special occasions and festivals (see below), and we encourage members to join with St Petroc's and other churches in the Mission Community either in person or virtually for the other 2 weeks. We also join with the whole Mission Community on the 5th Sunday of a month for worship in our various churches on a rotating basis.

Our regular congregation are not great in number (6 – 15) but are enormously supportive and adaptable, having become accustomed to a variety of service leaders, liturgies and styles of preaching. Our services most usually follow the Common Worship pattern, with occasional BCP Holy Communion. We are led by clergy, Licensed Lay Ministers or lay-persons (Church Wardens and others). Members of the congregation read scripture and lead intercessions, and all-age worship is often a chance for many to get involved in various imaginative ways.

We have a Pastoral care team jointly with St Petroc's. Home Communion is offered to house-bound individuals and is conducted at two of the Care Homes in South Brent on a monthly basis. Home visiting is also undertaken for those not well or house-bound. Posters on noticeboards around the church inform and encourage members of the community to seek pastoral visits for themselves or those they know.

We have 21 parishioners on our electoral role. We are enormously grateful to our volunteer organist for all her dedication and support. Our bells can be set to chime, and two members of our congregation frequently play the chimes for our regular Sunday and occasional pastoral services. We reintroduced coffee after services during 2022, and this continues to be very popular, with almost everyone staying to chat. We see this as an important part of our fellowship, and a wonderful way to welcome those visitors and new people who come to the service.

During 2023 our wonderful and much loved Licensed Lay Minister, Pam Saunders, died unexpectedly. Pam had a strong link with the church in Rattery, and frequently took services, did home visiting and supported individuals. This was a great shock, and she will be missed enormously. However, we hold on to the hope that Pam both preached and lived out, that she is now with her Lord.

Families & all-age worship We hold various Family services during the year, including at Harvest and Christingle..

Baptisms. There were no baptisms during the year

Weddings. We had 1 wedding during the year, which was a joyful occasion

Funerals. We had no funerals and one burial of ashes

Life events services are seen very much as part of our mission, and the church members work hard to make sure the church looks and is as inviting and welcoming as possible.

Our services are promoted via the weekly pew sheet, our website, Facebook, hand bills, notices at the lych gate and inside church, and via the established village news email.

A combined SPARX for South Brent and Rattery children continues. St Mary's PCC are kept apprised of South Brent's youth outreach (Youth bus etc).

We held a wonderful concert in the church which was very well attended and a great opportunity to welcome the community to the church for a non-religious activity, something we are keen to develop further.

A well supported Harvest Supper was held in the Village Hall, and was very much appreciated as an opportunity for the community to meet together.

Prayer Group

Members attend the weekly Wednesday Morning Prayer at St. Petroc's and the virtual Morning Prayer on Fridays, as well as the weekly Thought for the Week virtual discussion group.

A group of adult members (6 - 7) meet every first Wednesday of the month as a house group. This New Way of Being Church involves prayer, scripture reading and sharing.

Deanery Synod

One member of PCC sits on the Deanery Synod with an occasional deputy.

Church Fabric

PCC remain committed to keeping the church unlocked during the day. The entries in the visitors' book confirm how much appreciated this is. We have second-hand replacement wooden altar candlesticks and a wooden altar cross thus the main brassware, including the processional cross and church wardens' staves are locked in the vestry during the day.

Our heating system has experienced a new lease of life. All the boilers were bled, the boiler serviced, and the heat level in the church has improved greatly. This is a great benefit for the congregation (and minister!)

Churchyard

Our churchyard continues to be wonderfully tended and maintained by our Associate Churchwarden Rob Needham, together with a small band of volunteers. It is a beautiful and sacred space, and much loved by the community. We encourage people to enjoy it and to engage with our re-wilding endeavours in part of the churchyard.

Financial Review

For the year ending 31 December 2023 the total balance of funds stands at £23,436. This is a deficit of £3,685 from the previous year.

Of the total balance the unrestricted General Fund stands at £20,141 and the total Restricted funds £3,295.

Grants totalling £7950 towards the refurbishment of the West Door were gratefully received from Archbishops CBC, Benefact Trust, Archbishops Council and Devon Historic Churches.

As a further £2180 needed to be paid from the Fabric Fund to cover the total cost of the £10,130 refurbishment, the Fabric Fund could not contribute towards the buildings insurance as it had in previous years.

A grant of £370 was received from Exeter Diocese towards heating costs.

Fundraising this year raised a grand total of £2,688 and included the plant sale, quiz, harvest supper and music evening.

The General Fund's deficit of £2,401 this year is concerning. Current income is not sufficient to cover the church running expenses.

Reserves Policy

PCC is aware that it is prudent to maintain a level of 'special contingency funding'.

Sustainability

We are starting to consider our use of resources in order that our worship and building become more sustainable. These will also be aspects that the PCC will think about carefully as the building project progresses.

Safeguarding

Our PCC safeguarding representative is a member of the Mission Community Safeguarding Group. PCC continues to monitor training requirements and also to promote personal responsibility, helping to ensure that situations which might cause problems are avoided (such as children in church with a single adult, or lone working in the church during the week).

Volunteers

St Mary's continues to be so well supported by volunteers who clean, arrange flowers, maintain the churchyard, provide refreshments and play the organ, as well as those who take part in services (readers and intercessors). There are also those who take active part in fund-raising for the church. Our amazing group of volunteers have continued to support the church as and when it has been possible. The PCC is so grateful for their tireless work to support the church.

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The PCC comprises the Rector, LLM (until Sept 2023); Church Wardens, Deanery Synod representatives and other members elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The PCC met 6 times during the year. The Ministry Team of the Mission Community meet monthly to plan services, and there are regular meetings of the Church Wardens from across the MC.

Administrative Information

The Church is situated in the centre of Rattery village. There is no church office. Correspondence may be addressed to Mrs Linda Jopson, PCC General Secretary, Ashbourne Farm, Rattery, South Brent, TQ109JZ

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, and the Church Representation Rules 2006) and a Charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2023 until the date this report was approved were:

Team Rector/ Chair: Revd Preb'd Prof Gina Radford

Licensed Lay Minister: Mrs Pam Saunders (until Sept 23)

Church Wardens: Dr John Dean

 Rt Hon Michael Jack, CBE

Assistant Church Mr Rob Needham
Warden

General Secretary: Mrs Linda Jopson

Deanery Synod rep: Mr Rob Needham

Treasurer-bookkeeper: Mrs Elaine Barrington

Elected members: Mr Arnold Barrow

Approved by the PCC onand signed on its behalf by:

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Revd Preb'd Prof Gina Radford (Chair)

Dr John Dean (Vice Chair)