

The Parish of St Martin of Tours, Exminster
Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31st December 2020

Rector

The Reverend John D A Williams
The Rectory, Milbury Lane, Exminster EX6 8AD

Bank

National Westminster Bank
St Thomas Branch
18 St Thomas Centre
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Investment Funds

CCLA Investment Management Ltd
The CBF Church of England Funds
80 Cheapside
LONDON EC2V 6FZ

Independent Examiner

Mr Christopher Hodgson
Church Stile Gardens
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EXMINSTER EX6 8AE

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Church Council is
Charity



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2020

Aim and Purpose

The Parish Council of St Martin of Tours (the PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend John Williams, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is responsible for maintaining the Church, which is a Grade I Listed Building. St Martin's belongs to the "Five Red Churches" Mission Community comprising St Andrew's Kenn, All Saints' Kenton, St Thomas' Mamhead, St Clement's Powderham, and St Martin's Exminster. The church is part of the Deanery of Kenn and the Diocese of Exeter.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our Church, and to become part of our parish family. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish family through

- worship and prayer,
- provision of pastoral care and mission and outreach work. learning about the Gospel, and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus, provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish and
- mission and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is vital we maintain the fabric of the church.

Performance and Achievement in the Light of the Pandemic

Prayer and Worship

The Covid pandemic has provided many challenges for the PCC during the year. Services in church were suspended from 17th March and did not recommence until 21st July. Services were also suspended between 2nd November and 5th December during the second period of lockdown. When services resumed following the lockdown periods, booking was required as numbers attending needed to be restricted to 30 people to facilitate social distancing. Attendances were understandably lower than normal and there was not a single occasion when it was necessary to turn people away. Thanks are due to Rodney Battey for organising

the booking and registration system at services so that worship could take place safely at St Martins.

The nature of the services over this period has been very different with no singing, a different form of communion and no social mingling prior to or after. The services were advertised in the local magazine 'Scene in Exminster' and as appropriate on the church noticeboards. To make up for the reduction of services in church, the Reverend John Williams streamed online services weekly from March onwards on Facebook to the mission community and led weekly online contemplative prayer meetings on zoom. Thanks are due to David Garnsworthy who put together a weekly Sunday sheet of reflections, readings and prayers, which was distributed to all interested persons throughout the mission community. Where we have been able to hold services of any kind, we are fortunate to enjoy the support of our retired clergy and readers who gave of their time and energy to lead worship during the year. Thanks go to them and to all who have contributed to the worship of God. These include our organists, the choir, welcomers, coffee makers, flower arrangers, intercession leaders and lesson readers – not forgetting, of course, the volunteers who organise these tasks - albeit they have only been able to operate on a very reduced scale during 2020 and some not at all since the latter end of March.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life but there have been few of these occasions in 2020 - just two funeral services and two baptisms in the church and no weddings at all.

Two members of St Martin's Church sit on the Kenn Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC not only with a link with the churches around us but also with the whole of the diocese. However, because of the pandemic, the Synod did not meet during 2020.

The pandemic impacted on all other aspects of church activity in 2020 and this is considered in the paragraphs that follow.

Financial Review

The financial statement for the year ended 31st December 2020 together with accompanying notes is contained in pages 9-11 of this Annual Report. This return has been checked and agreed with Chris Hodgson, our independent examiner and the PCC is very grateful to Mr Hodgson for examining the accounts once again this year. His certificate appears on page 8. Most transactions are carried out through the PCC's General Account and this showed that in 2020, the PCC received income of £34036 and spent £38650, an excess of payments over receipts of over £4500. The financial statement also includes details of other small spending accounts (Flower Fund, Choir Fund and Junior Church Account) as well as details of reserve accounts operated by the PCC and valuations on investment funds which are operated by others on behalf of the PCC

Inevitably, the pandemic has had a profound effect on church finances with the most substantial reductions in income being in the money raised from fundraising events and from the receipt of parochial fees for funerals and weddings etc (both down over 80%) and from plate collections at services (down 60%). As a result, income in the General Account

was down from £46266 in 2019 to £34036 in 2020. It would have been lower had it not been for a one-off gift aided donation from a member of the congregation of £5000 though this was given on the strict condition that it would be used towards the cost of essential repairs to the vestry roof (see below). The PCC is extremely grateful for this donation as well as the continued support from regular givers, which meant that these income lines held up well. Without these regular free will offerings, the situation for the church would have been much worse. However, the fact that so many loyal givers are elderly is a concern for the future.

Payments from the general account fell from £41690 to £38650 with over £15000 of this being to pay the invoices for the vestry repairs. Apart from using the gift mentioned above, an additional sum of nearly £7000 was taken from reserves to help meet the shortfall on the vestry repair costs. To prevent decimation of reserves, the PCC decided that it would be unwise to seek to pay the Common Fund request to the diocese in full in 2020. Monthly contributions were thus reduced and by the end of the year, the PCC had paid only £11000 towards the Common Fund request of over £26000. This was the first time the PCC has failed to meet the Common Fund request since 2013. With the pandemic continuing into 2021, it is regrettably unlikely that the request will be met in full next year either.

Finally with such financial pressures, only a very limited amount of money was able to be directed to charitable causes from the General Account but Connect Church (through the Junior Church Account) was very active in assisting local good causes related to the pandemic (see below).

Church Fabric

Last year's report mentioned that in the second half of 2019, a portion of the ceiling in the vestry had collapsed and it was necessary to undertake repairs both to the ceiling and the roof as a matter of urgency. Work was scheduled for the early spring of 2020 but because of the pandemic, the work was not completed until July. The opportunity presented by having workmen on site also allowed minor repairs to the chancel screen to be carried out. Repairs to the tower clock were also undertaken during the year funded by a grant from the parish council, while the quinquennial inspection of the church was also carried out. Thankfully, the quinquennial did not identify any major issues with the church fabric but listed a small number of more minor repairs and surveys that will require attention in the next five years. Some of these will need addressing in the next two years.

Safeguarding

The PCC recognises the importance of ensuring that the church and church activities are a safe environment for vulnerable people and has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have regard to House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The PCC adopted its own safeguarding policy and procedure in June 2020. Our safeguarding officer, Alison Sykes resigned from the PCC in October because of her impending move away from the parish but was able to continue as safeguarding officer for the remainder of the year. The PCC is grateful for her work in this important role. She will be replaced by John Trickett in 2021.

Fundraising Activities

In this very difficult year, we had a very successful quiz in January and had begun our programme of Lent Lunches - the proceeds of which this year were sent to Shelterbox - when everything stopped and we went into lockdown. All the remaining events on the calendar were ultimately cancelled. We look forward to the easing of restrictions in 2021 and being able to go forward with our usual fundraising events namely, quizzes, fayres, concerts and various social gatherings not to mention the annual gift day. Our thanks go out to all of you who so willingly help with these events.

Connect and Other Activities

Connect Church is affiliated to St Martins and offers a complementary church experience in Exminster for those who prefer a different way of expressing and exploring faith to traditional church services. It is financed entirely from the contributions of participants and its financial affairs are managed through the St Martins Junior Church Account. Participants are usually younger and more confident in using modern technology than many members of the main congregation and as a result Connect has through online zoom been able to maintain all regular Sunday evenings, mornings and kid Connect meetings, along with the Friday morning Prayer & Bible Chats, fortnightly Tuesday Discussion groups, other various mid-week meetings and planning meetings. When restrictions allowed, a summer Garden Safari was held outdoors in 2 local gardens and several 'safely distanced' local beach walks took place.

Under the banner of Connect & St Martin's Church, a Community Support Fund was established to financially assist local vulnerable individuals and families during the early months of the pandemic. An online fund-raising platform enabled a total of £2,700 to be raised to provide small grants to local households in urgent need of help. Leftover funds were transferred to the Exminster Feoffees when the fund was wound up. Connect donated £600 of its own resources to the Community Support Fund to get the scheme off the ground. In addition, Connect also assisted during the pandemic by supporting the fantastic work done by Exminster Print Farm during the Covid to provide PPE for the NHS and primary carers and by providing vouchers to enable needy households to access fresh produce not available through the local food bank. As a result, Exminster Parish Council kindly nominated Connect for a Good Neighbour Award run by Teignbridge CVS for its work supporting the community during Covid and cream teas were delivered and enjoyed in acknowledgment. Finally Connect Church was excited to receive its Silver Award from A Rocha, the charity that runs the Eco Church awards.

Other activities have been severely curtailed by the pandemic. The choir has not been able to meet or to sing at services since March but flowers have continued to be put in church when services have been able to be held. Flowers were provided on the window cills for the Christmas Day service and the advent wreath went into church on the first Sunday in

advent. Also over the Christmas period, the porch was decorated with greenery and nativity figures and this remained in place for the twelve days of Christmas. Little Treasures met in St Martins on Tuesdays until 10th March after which it closed due to the pandemic. It continued to take place as a zoom meeting from April until July. Bellringing was halted abruptly when the first lockdown was introduced and the bells at Exminster rang for the last time in 2020 on practice night on Thursday 12th March. However, the bells and their fittings have been checked regularly through the year as restrictions have allowed. It is expected that all these activities will be resumed in 2021 when it is safe to do so.

Structure and Management of the Parochial Church Council

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The Council comprises the Incumbent, the Churchwardens, those elected to the Deanery Synod, and other members who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) by those on the Electoral Roll. This year it was not possible for the APCM to be held until October because of the pandemic. Members of the congregation are always encouraged to join the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance in the parish, and for all financial matters. Despite the pandemic the PCC met five times during the year always attracting at least two thirds of the membership. Two of these meetings were on zoom and called to discuss very urgent business while the last two of the year were socially distanced meetings in church. The PCC has a number of sub-Committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of Parish life but because of the pandemic and in the absence of essential business, none of these met during the year. The post of Secretary to the PCC is currently vacant. If you feel that you would like to serve the PCC by taking on this role, then please contact the Reverend John Williams on 01392 824283.

PCC membership for the period 1st January – 31st December 2020 has been as follows:

Rector and Chair: The Reverend John Williams

Vice-chairs: Mr Raymond Adams and Mrs Barbara Edmund

Churchwardens: Mr Raymond Adams (until October 2020) and Mrs Barbara Edmund

Deanery Synod representatives: Mr Raymond Adams and Mrs Faith Wood

Treasurer: Mr Philip Markham

Secretary: Post vacant

Elected Members: Mr Rodney Battey, Mrs Gail Heath, Mr Francis Jeffree, Mrs Caroline Jeffree, Mrs Alison Sykes (until October 2020), Mr John Trickett and Mrs Pam Wilkie

Safeguarding Officer Mrs Alison Sykes

Electoral Roll Officer: Mrs Faith Wood

Friends of St Martin's Co-Ordinators: Francis Jeffree and Caroline Jeffree

Allotments Officer: Mr Francis Jeffree

Approved by the PCC on 24th March 2021 and signed on its behalf by:

Revd. John Williams (Chair)

Mr Raymond Adams (Joint Vice Chair)

Mrs Barbara Edmund (Churchwarden and Joint Vice Chair)