

The Parish of St Martin of Tours, Exminster
Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31st December 2021

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
Cowick Street
EXETER EX4 1DE

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
Milbury Lane
EXMINSTER EX6 8AE

The Parochial Church Council is an Excepted Charity



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Annual Report and Financial Statement for the year ending 31st December
2021

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. In December, the Parish of Kenton with Mamhead was transferred to the pastoral care of Revd Patrick Parkes, who was licensed as their Interim Minister, and that of Starcross, as an experimental measure within the Deanery.

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 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

St Martin's Church has continued to function under the shadow of Covid throughout the year. In January, a third lockdown was announced as a result of which our in-person services were suspended once again, and the Church maintained its online presence mainly via our Facebook reflections, together with the Sunday sheets of readings and prayers co-ordinated as before by David Garnsworthy. On Mothering Sunday, Palm Sunday and Good Friday,

these reflections were live-streamed from Church and, during Holy Week, the Revd John Williams presented a series of reflections on St John's Passion Gospel.

Thankfully, we were able to open again for attended services on Easter Day when there were forty-three worshippers present.

Since then, the Church has held services every Sunday, with two Eucharistic services and two services of Morning Worship each month. These services have attracted between twenty and thirty worshippers. In November, the Wednesday morning Eucharist was also re-introduced and is well-attended.

Over the months since re-opening we have been slowly but steadily relaxing Covid restrictions when allowed to do so, although we continue to administer Communion in one kind only. Initially closing worship with a hymn sung outside with accompaniment by Richard Jeffery on the accordion - who has also continued to serve magnificently as temporary organist- we have since sung inside as well, increasing the number of hymns over the months. The recommendation to wear masks when entering or leaving Church and while singing remains in place, but attendees are permitted to remove them in the pew. It was also decided at the November PCC that after-service refreshments would resume in the New Year. We are also advertising for an organist and choir director in the hope that our choir will be able to re-form next year.

St Martin's is particularly fortunate to enjoy the ministry of so many 'retired' Clergy and Readers, and we have benefitted greatly from the willingness of Simon Guy, Richard Jeffery, David Robinson, John Trickett and Faith Wood to give so generously of their time and talents in leading services when required. In July, Simon celebrated the Eucharist for the last time as he has taken the difficult decision not to apply to the Bishop for the renewal of his Permission to Officiate. We have been truly blessed by Simon's contribution to the life of St Martin's Church, especially as Priest and Editor of the Parish magazine, and we are glad that he continues as a member of our worshipping community.

We are also very grateful to all those who have contributed to our worship over the year, including organists, welcomers, cleaners, flower arrangers, intercession leaders and lesson readers, together with all who co-ordinate these tasks.

Life Events have also continued with a backlog of Baptisms (eight in total) taking place over the Autumn, together with two Weddings and four funerals in Church.

In consultation with Exminster Parish Council, it was decided to hold two Remembrance Sunday ceremonies this year, due to the likely high numbers present. The service in St Martin's had an attendance of forty-nine, including representation from the Exminster Scout Groups, while a second ceremony was held in the Victory Hall, led by John Trickett and Faith Wood.

The emergence of the Omicron strain, leading to the enforcement of 'Plan B' and the increase in cases in the village and especially in Exminster Primary School, did affect our Christmas services, although it was good to welcome thirty-six to a joyful celebration on Christmas morning.

As we look to the New Year, we are aware of the fresh challenges that face us but pray that we may continue to move forward with confidence and in faith.

Financial Review

The financial statement for the year ended 31st December 2021 together with accompanying notes is contained in pages 10-13 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 9. Most transactions are carried out through the PCC's General Account and this showed that in 2021, the PCC received income of £42268.91 (up £8000 from 2020) and spent £29489.74, (£9000 down from 2020). This gave a healthy surplus of payments over receipts of over £12000 and an end of year balance of just over £17000. The financial statement also includes details of other small spending accounts (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. It also contains details of the Flower Fund which was closed during the year as the PCC felt that a separate account was no longer necessary in view of the reduction in the numbers of weddings held at the church. The credit balance in the fund was absorbed into the General Account

Inevitably, the pandemic has continued to have a significant effect on revenue but income levels have now recovered to something closer to pre pandemic levels.

Income was swelled by a very successful gift day which raised nearly £4000. Grants were also up as the PCC was able to obtain a substantial grant from the government Listed Places of Worship grant scheme, which was enhanced by being able to claim a sum equivalent to the VAT paid on the costs of the 2020 repairs to the vestry. Donations remained relatively stable overall and as might be expected cash donations at services increased. However, the amount raised through regular free will offerings (the foundation of the PCC's income) through standing orders and donation envelopes declined by 6%. With the St Martins congregation aging, it is expected that the sum raised through regular donations will continue to fall in the coming years unless the church attracts new members.

The reduction in expenditure in 2021 compared with 2020 is almost entirely because no major repairs were needed to the church in 2021. Moreover, the increase in income allowed the PCC to contribute payments of £20000 to the diocese toward the parish's Common Fund requirement compared with £11000 in 2020. By the end of June, only £4000 in Common Fund payments had been made as Covid restrictions continued to bite but £2000 per month was paid thereafter and an extra payment of £4000 was made at the end of the year. The PCC felt that it was unwise to seek to pay the common fund requirement in full for 2021 as it was aware that work to the building was likely to be needed and insurance and utility

costs were likely to rise in 2022, the latter very steeply. In addition, it was recognised that a new printer and possibly a new computer was also needed for the rector. The retention of a healthy balance in the general account therefore gave the PCC the best opportunity to meet the 2022 common fund requirement in full.

Finally with the restrictions still imposed by the pandemic which meant that events like the Lent lunches were again cancelled, only a very limited amount of money was directed to charitable causes from the General Account but Connect Church (through the Junior Church Account) was very active in assisting local good causes (see below).

Church Fabric

As indicated above, thankfully no major works to the church building were required during 2021. However, the PCC is aware that some minor work was identified in the 2020 quinquennial which needs addressing. Moreover, the church's insurance company requires a comprehensive electrical survey of St Martins to be undertaken early in 2022 and this may lead to additional work being required. The insurance company is also recommending an increase in the valuation of the building and its contents which if agreed would lead to a significant increase in the insurance premium.

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 2020 and a replacement is still sought for this important role

Fundraising Activities

At this difficult time all social and fundraising events in the first half of the year were cancelled and in July because of illness, Gail Heath who has been the bastion of St Martins fund raising activities for many years sadly resigned from the PCC and with it relinquished her role as the chair of the Social and Fundraising Committee. She has subsequently moved away from the village. We thank her for all her efforts and wish her well for the future. She will be much missed. In her absence, some events were cancelled but the Annual Gift Day went ahead in September and sterling efforts from Barbara Edmund and her team enabled the Christmas Fayre to take place in November as planned. Joan Markham also organised St Martins Christmas Cards and Candles to help swell the church coffers and raise the profile of the church in the community. Hopefully, with the easing of restrictions, a fuller programme of events will be possible in 2022. As ever, thanks to everyone who helps 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.

This year has been another challenging one because of the pandemic. Nonetheless, at the start of the year, Connect continued online with Zoom and introduced a new monthly Kid's Connect Zoom for families where a resource pack was delivered to all the participating children. At Easter, Connect supported the primary school with its Easter trail and in Summer, as restrictions eased a Summer Party was held at the Deepway Centre, with 150 people joining in the fun with crafts, games, stories and plenty of time to get to know each other in person.

In person meetings have resumed as much as possible. The Character Course, which looks at modern insights in psychology in the light of the ancient wisdom of scripture has been explored. The midweek group has been enjoying Desmond Tutu's "Made for Goodness" and "God has a Dream", while in September, the Friday group took a break from the normal pattern of prayer and bible discussion, to complete the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith Course. Several people from the St Martins' main congregation joined Connect for this and the group had rich, insightful and respectful conversations exploring this vital aspect of our shared life.

The highlight of the Connect year was probably the ecumenical, Love Christmas event, held at the Deepway Centre alongside St Martins and the Exminster Methodist Church, celebrating Christmas with many from the wider community who are not so connected to Church. With lovely food, drinks, live carols, crafts and nativity it was wonderful to be able to share the news of the incarnation in such a fun, accessible way.

During the year, Connect continued to help fund charitable and community projects. Help was made available to the local primary school to support vulnerable children with their learning during the Covid crisis. Grant aid was provided for Nayamba School in Zambia, with which the church in Exminster has had a long relationship, with Covid support and the Westbank Healthy Living Centre was assisted with the establishment of a food cupboard in the village. Finally following last year's silver award from A Rocha, the charity that runs the Eco Church awards, Connect was able to establish an eco-refill scheme in Exminster, which enables containers for household goods to be refilled, thereby reducing the amount of plastic used.

Activities at St Martins have been severely curtailed by the pandemic. The choir has not met or sang at services but flowers have continued to be put in church. Little Treasures and coffee after the Sunday service remained suspended for the whole of the year. Bellingring on a regular basis has also not been possible. Ringing did not resume until July but due to a lack of ringers Sunday Service ringing did not recommence until September. With the rise of the omicron variant, ringing was again suspended in November. A recruitment drive was held in Autumn to attract new members and as a result nine people said they would like to be contacted when ringing resumes. There are therefore grounds for optimism for the future. During this time of restrictions, the bells and their fittings have been checked regularly. Hopefully, ringing and other activities will be able to be resumed in 2022.

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. 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 ongoing pandemic the PCC met six times during the year always attracting a majority of the membership. The PCC has a number of sub-Committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of Parish life and during the course of the year the standing committee met on two occasions to discuss urgent business between full PCC meetings. It is anticipated that as restrictions ease, other sub committees will meet in 2022.

PCC membership for the period 1st January – 31st December 2021 has been as follows:

Rector and Chair: The Reverend John Williams

Vice-chairs: Mr Raymond Adams (from April 2021) and Mrs Barbara Edmund

Churchwardens: Mr Raymond Adams (from April 2021) and Mrs Barbara Edmund

Deanery Synod representatives: Mr Raymond Adams and Mrs Faith Wood

Treasurer: Mr Philip Markham

Secretary: Mrs Joan Markham (from November 2021)

Elected Members: Mr Rodney Battey, Mrs Gail Heath (until July 2021), Mr Francis Jeffree, Mrs Caroline Jeffree, Mr John Trickett and Mrs Pam Wilkie (until September 2021)

Safeguarding Officer: Post Vacant

Electoral Roll Officer: Mrs Faith Wood

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

Allotments Officer: Mr Francis Jeffree

The departure of Gail Heath during the year was mentioned above while Pam Wilkie also resigned during the year. The PCC gives its thanks for their service. Moreover, long serving churchwarden Ray Adams has also indicated his intention to stand down from this role in April 2022 and the post of Safeguarding Officer is vacant. Assistance is needed so if you

think you can help by becoming a churchwarden, serving as the safeguarding officer or just joining the PCC then please contact the Reverend John Williams on 01392 824283.

Approved by the PCC on 23rd^h March 2022 and signed on its behalf by:

Revd. John Williams (Chair)

Mr Raymond Adams (Churchwarden and Joint Vice Chair)

Mrs Barbara Edmund (Churchwarden and Joint Vice Chair)