



# St Stephen's Shottermill

## Annual Reports of the Parochial Church Council

*for the year ended  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2013*

(Registered charity number: 1134016)

**Incumbent:** Rev Danny Wignall

**Bank:** CAF Bank Ltd  
25 Kings Hill Avenue  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent ME19 4JQ

**Independent Examiner:**  
Christopher Elsey FCA  
Barter Durgan & Muir  
31 Bepton Down  
Petersfield  
Hampshire GU31 4PR

## The Parish of St Stephen's, Shottermill

Agenda for the Meeting of the Parishioners and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 10.00am

### A: Meeting of the Parishioners

- 1 Re-election of 2 Churchwardens to serve for the year 2014/2015
  - ❖ Duncan Long and Hilary Bicknell

### B: Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

- 1 Welcome
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of the APCM of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2013
- 4 Matters arising and notification of Any Other Business
- 5 Written formal reports on the past year as follows - *please take time to read these.*
  - ❖ Vicar and Curate's Reports
  - ❖ Financial Report - *Tim Standing*
  - ❖ Renewal of Electoral Roll Report - *Jenny Parsons*
  - ❖ Annual Report on the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council - *Hilary Bicknell*
  - ❖ Report on the Church Fabric - *Hilary Bicknell and Duncan Long*
  - ❖ Report on the Proceedings of the Godalming Deanery Synod - *Louise Stevenson and Richard Parker*

There are also reports in our Annual Review and Thanksgiving Booklet on other ministries in the church. *Again please take time to read these*

- 6 Election of Lay Representatives to serve on the Deanery Synod (1 place)  
*please notify Danny if you would like to stand*
- 7 Election of Lay Representatives to serve on the PCC (7 places)
  - ❖ Resigned: Jackie Gray, Jane Kent
  - ❖ Leaving: Ross Cunningham, Bill Kennedy and Andrew Lee
  - ❖ Joining: Toby Beresford, Jean Burchell, Peter Farminer, Tim Morris, Nik Owen and 2 vacancies  
*please notify Danny if you would like to stand*
- 8 Annual Report on the Financial Affairs of the Parish and Presentation of the Audited Accounts
  - ❖ Verbal report from Treasurer, Tim Standing
- 9 Appointment of the Independent Examiner to the Council :  
"This meeting resolves to reappoint Mr Christopher Elsey FCA as independent examiner to the Council for the term of office ending at the close of the next annual meeting."
- 10 Vicars Report
- 11 Questions/AOB
- 12 Date of the next APCM - Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at Church

**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting and APCM of St Stephen's Church  
10am 28<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

**APCM 2013**

St. Stephen's Church, 10.00am on 28th April 2013

Chaired by Peter Soar

**Vestry Meeting**

Peter Soar informally chaired the meeting and explained that as an established Church of England the church has a duty to minister to all in the parish. He had been asked by the church administrator to inform the meeting that the church's electoral roll has been completely renewed this year as is required.

Church Wardens - In the absence of any other nominees, the existing Wardens were re-appointed. Hilary Bicknell was proposed by Anne Laver and seconded by Jenny Parsons. Duncan Long was proposed by David Laver and seconded by Maura Howard. Bill Kennedy was re-appointed as Deputy Church Warden.

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)**

1. Giles Carpenter welcomed everyone to the meeting, saying that this would be an opportunity to look back over the past year as well as looking forward to the future.
2. There were no apologies for absence.
3. The minutes of the APCM of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012 were agreed. Jane Kent proposed that they be approved and Alan Brown seconded the proposal. The minutes were unanimously agreed.
4. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.
5. The written reports were recommended to everyone to read, and questions were invited. There were no questions.
6. Louise Stevenson is continuing as a Deanery Synod representative. This leaves two vacancies, one being carried over from 2012. Richard Parker is willing to stand as a representative. He was proposed by Duncan Long and seconded by Tony Owen, and as there were no other nominees Richard was duly elected.
7. Election of Lay Representatives to serve on the PCC. There are 5 vacancies, one remaining from 2012; Jill Soar and Peter Aucamp are leaving; Linda Kay and Zoe Isaacs have resigned. Nominations have been received from Sandra Gee (nominated by Susie Rusby and seconded by Brenda Petrie), Neil Caie (nominated by Eliot Ambrose and seconded by Neil Bradley), Anne Laver (nominated by Jenny Parsons and seconded by Ann Fitchett) and Peter Soar (nominated by Debs Wignall and seconded by Donna Rigby). There being no other nominations, these four were duly elected. There is still one vacancy.
8. The Annual Report of the Financial Affairs of the Parish and Presentation of the Audited Accounts. These were presented by Tim Standing, the new Treasurer. Tim began by thanking all the people who have helped with the financial affairs of St. Stephens since Ed Walker moved away, in particular Robin Andersen, Bill Kennedy, James Stevenson, Emma Andersen, Duncan Long, Danny Wignall and Ed Walker himself. Tim reminded us that we have been blessed in that we have everything we need - we have paid our bills on time, increased our giving and outreach, and increased the building fund. The Stewardship Sunday appeal has almost reached the required amount. Tim invited questions, but there were none.

9. The appointment of the Independent Examiner to the Council. The meeting was invited to reappoint Mr. Christopher Elsey FCA as independent examiner to the Council for the term of office ending at the close of the next annual meeting in 2014. This was proposed by Ann Fitchett, seconded by Andrew Lee and unanimously agreed.

At this point Giles Carpenter took over the meeting and introduced the readings from scripture. This was followed by:

10. The Vicar's Report.

Danny expressed his view that St. Stephens is a church that has been brave in the past, and said that he is proud to be serving here, and that he is excited about the future. He sees Shottermill as a place of harvest and fruitfulness where we should be 'thinking big'.

At a recent PCC Vision Day led by Steve Cox from the Diocese we were identified as being a transitional congregation; that is to say we have reached an attendance of approximately 150 each Sunday, and this is a point at which we need to decide whether we are happy to stay there, or whether we want to grow. The PCC has appointed a small group (Danny, Giles, Jane Kent, Peter Soar and Ross Cunningham) to look at the way forward for St. Stephens over the next 5 years. Danny urged us to be serious in our prayers about the future (a) for guidance from God and (b) for provision by Him. Danny asked for feedback from our listening prayers - is God calling you? There will be opportunities for feedback via the home groups and a survey.

Danny closed by saying that he feels blessed to be vicar to this congregation, where there is generosity and little hard heartedness.

After offering a further opportunity for questions (there were none) the meeting was closed.

The date of the next APCM is 30<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

Peter Soar

VICAR'S REPORT 2013 - 2014
----------------------------

The Annual Meeting is a time to look back; give thanks for and review where we have been. I have now been privileged to be your Vicar for nearly seven years and there is a tangible sense that God is on the move at St Stephen's. He has entrusted us with so much and with increasing numbers of people - both who attend services and that we serve and minister to in the local community and beyond.

Back in 2011, I felt that God challenged us with the words from Proverbs 3:5-6: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."* As we consider the strategic priorities we believe God has given us in our Mission Action Plan, it remains absolutely critical that we continue to trust in the Lord and submit to him.

Last year the bulk of my report was in the form of a series of questions about our future. We had identified that we were at an important transitional stage in our life together as St Stephen's. I stated that we were at a critical juncture in our life as church in which we needed to develop our infrastructure and our resources to be able to properly nurture, teach, disciple and care for the people that God has already entrusted to our care; as well as having the 'space' (in more ways than one) for those who are yet to come. I called the church to a year of discernment and reflection -

to prayerfully seek the ways in which God wants us to increase our capacity for mission and ministry and to release resources for this purpose. I called us specifically to pray for (i) **Guidance** and (ii) **Provision** - what resources - human, financial, housing/ plant - does God want to release among us? For instance, could you fund a part time post so that someone else in the congregation could cut back on their work hours and give time to church? Could you down size your housing to release capital for more staff housing? What should we build next - office space, increased capacity for worship, join the CROSS and the church?

These challenging questions still remain. **This period of waiting and discernment was the first stage in us moving forward.** We felt very powerfully that **"the place to start is on our knees"**. This has not been a passive period, but an active waiting and listening as we pray, reflect, discuss and research. So much of the last year has been spent seeking God in a variety of ways to try to discern what our key strategic priorities will be for the next few years. That is not to say that we have downed tools in the last year! Far from it! Please do read the rest of this document and the Annual Thanksgiving and Review booklet to get just a taste and glimpse of all that goes on at St Stephen's. Thank you to everyone of you for the way you give of your time, talents, resources and finances. We are all partners in the mission of God together.

As a result of this thinking, praying, listening, discussing and reflecting, the Learning Team (commissioned by the PCC to take this process forward) has developed a Mission Action Plan (MAP) outlining what we believe - in consultation with many of you - what are the key priorities for our future. We present it in a draft form as it is intended to be a 'living' document that provides a framework or trellis for our future - as opposed to a straightjacket that doesn't give us freedom to respond to changing circumstances and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Please take time to read the MAP carefully and please talk about it - with each other, with your Home Group, with the PCC, with myself and Giles. Please feel free to ask questions - we are all partners in the mission of God together - we are all partners in growth.

Underlying this whole process is the sense I have had over the last few years that we are entering a season of fruitfulness and harvest. In John 4, after his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus says: *"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."* Well I want to humbly suggest that we are beginning to see some of that fruit in many areas of the mission and ministry of St Stephen's. Some fruit is clearly visible, some is still hidden under the surface and some is just coming into bud. If we want to remain fruitful, we need to remain/ abide/ rest in the vine which is Jesus so that we rely on his strength and not ours. *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."* John 15:1-2. There may also be times of pruning - both as individuals and as a church. remember, it is only fruitful branches that are pruned in order to bear more fruit.

So, as I look back over this past year, it is especially encouraging and exciting that many have responded to my challenge last year to ask yourself the question "Am I being obedient to God's call on my life?" It is in this area that I believe we can see clear evidence of fruitfulness. We now have two people going forward for ordination - Aptin and Debs - with their selection conferences in April and May respectively; three others already exploring ordination with the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO), with 2 others also considering ordained ministry. We have two people exploring LLM (Local Lay Minister/ Reader), one Pastoral Assistant in training (Jo Long) - and one other potential candidate for September, one person - Nik Owen, who has just completed a Leaders of Worship Course and two others who want to do this course in September.

Of course, calling is not just about ordained, licensed or authorised ministry, but serving in a variety of ways. So thank you to all of you who have taken on being Home Group leaders, children and youth leaders, Prime Time committee members, Noah's Ark helpers, Care home visitors, communion lay assistants, members of the welcome team, Alpha and Start course team members, speakers at our newcomers events, music team members, prayer ministry team members, coffee servers, sound desk and song pro operators - and many more. The challenge to consider your calling remains! It would be my pleasure to explore this further with you.

### **Mission Action Plan**

As mentioned earlier, the MAP is the fruit of the consultations, praying, research and planning that has taken place over the last year. I particularly want to thank Home Group leaders for their leadership in this process. They are key leaders in our church and are central to the implementation of the MAP. We had originally planned to present just a few strategic objectives to the congregation as our considered view of the key priorities for the coming years. However, at our recent PCC meeting we decided that we would present to you the full range of options so that we can continue in a process of collective discernment. In addition, as various groups have tried to whittle down the list of strategic objectives to a more manageable number, we have found it almost impossible to do. We, therefore, believe that we need to present the full list of strategic targets to you all because their fulfilment (or not) is entirely dependent on raising up more leaders who are passionate and have a sense of call within a particular area of mission and ministry. One of the symptoms of being a transitional congregation is that we don't have the leadership capacity to implement the full range of strategic objectives. Part of the discernment process will be what resources God releases to us - and basically, this provision is down to you all - your participation and giving of time, talents and finances.

However, we have already begun to implement some of what we believe are the core strategic objectives and these are: For instance, under the heading 'Soft Structure & Organisation': ***We seek to be structured in such a way that we enable growth in spiritual depth and numbers and to transition to a "Program-Sized" congregation. By creating suitable delegation structure of management tasks, enable the clergy to focus on leadership.*** We have begun to work on the outcomes as follows:

***Outcome 1:*** *Review the leadership and management structure to enable transition to a program-size - has begun - see below under Leadership and Vision Team*

***Outcome 2:*** *Two people training towards ordination from St Stephen's - see above*

***Outcome 3:*** *A permanent ministry colleague - beginning exploration including a meeting with the Archdeacon - see below under Leadership*

***Outcome 4:*** *Run "Growing Leaders Course" for under 40s - already attended a training session. Debs Wignall, Paul and Eileen Grant along with myself to head up and implement from September when we plan to run a pilot course.*

### **Leadership**

It would be an understatement to say that we have benefitted hugely from having Giles as our curate for nearly four years. As many of you have rightly observed, we work very well as a team and Giles has certainly contributed to the growth and development of St Stephen's in a big way. My approach to his training has always been that I am training him to be a church leader and therefore he needs to exercise leadership and carry real responsibility. This has been fantastic and, I think you will agree, the fruit is very evident. So I want to thank Giles on behalf of us all for serving us with such passion, hard work, creativity, commitment, love, humour, humility and grace. I also want to thank him and Rachel on a personal level for their friendship, love, encouragement and

support. I think that I am a better leader today because of them, I work best in a team. We will of course want to celebrate the time that Giles, Rachel, Jessie, Libby and Charlie have spent with us and give them a good send off to Eastbourne - details will follow in due course.

The down side of having had such a wonderful curate, of course, is that curacies have to end! What's more, because of the way Giles has initiated, grown and enabled many areas of our mission and ministry, we will be at a severe loss without him. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that we will receive another curate - and if we do - it won't be until June 2015 at the earliest. In light of this, the PCC and the Leadership Team believe that the appointment of a Ministry colleague (possibly an Associate Minister) is another vital and core strategic target if we are to sustain, build upon and develop the growth we are seeing and if we want to continue to see growth in depth of faith and in numbers of people impacted by the gospel and others being disciplined. Part of our exploration of what it means to be a transitional congregation showed us that a church of our size (Usual Sunday attendance of at least 150 adults and children) will not grow beyond that size with only one senior leader.

Added to Giles' departure, Rev Chris Oldroyd and Fran have returned to Farnham Vineyard (the church he and Fran planted some years ago) in order to support the new pastor. Chris is now only available to take some services from time to time. I am so thankful for all they have given and continue to give to St Stephen's.

So with this depleted team, I will need you to bear with me when Giles goes, as it will clearly not be possible for everything to carry on as it is now - maybe this is where some pruning is required? Please be praying about what God might be calling you to do and give.

In summary, we believe that the appointment of a permanent Ministry colleague is a strategic priority to (i) minimise the effect of the short term nature of curacy and (ii) ensure that we have the capacity to continue to minister to and serve this parish and to equip and enable each member of St Stephen's to live as a disciple of Christ in whatever context they find themselves in.

If you are as passionate as I am about St Stephen's being the church that God wants us to be, then I invite you to pray seriously about whether God might be calling you to release resources of time, talents and finances to make the appointment of an associate minister/ministry colleague possible. We will have to pay for all stipend/ salary, pension and housing costs as there will not be any funding forthcoming from the diocese.

### **Vision Team**

Another one of our core strategic objectives states that: ***"We seek to be structured in such a way that we enable growth in spiritual depth and numbers and to transition to a "Program-Sized" congregation. By creating suitable delegation structure of management tasks, enable the clergy to focus on leadership.***

***Outcome: Review the leadership & management structure to enable transition to a program-size.***

We have already discussed this in the current Leadership Team and PCC. We agree that the Standing Committee and PCC is now working well in dealing with the practical management of the church - primarily fabric, maintenance and management of buildings. There is clear delegation of tasks and clear recording of ongoing tasks. It is chaired by Duncan or Peter and has released Danny from needing to always attend.

It has also become clear that as the church grows and transitions, it will need to **expand its base of leadership and the number of those who bear weight and responsibility** for implementing the MAP and for ongoing strategic planning and decision making. The current leadership team are all (bar one) also on the PCC and Standing Committee which means that too few people are carrying the load. So, a different structure is needed for the implementation of the MAP so that we can **spread the load and develop and bring on a new layer and generation of leaders**. This is necessary in order for us to have the capacity to do the things we believe we are called to do. We agreed that we need a new Leadership Group and identified the following needs: Vision keepers, backup team, prayerful spiritual leadership team, guidance, strategic leadership and support for vicar and staff. Members of the team will 'own' and implement some of the strategic objectives of the MAP - but not all of them. This is a team appointed by the vicar - but accountable to the PCC. Danny has approached some people directly with a view to arranging a preliminary meeting. This is currently in progress. At the moment, the working name for the team is the 'Vision Team'

I am particularly grateful to the current Leadership Team - Duncan Long, Hilary Bicknell, Tim Standing, Andy Rigby, Bill Kennedy, Giles and Peter Soar. I especially want to thank Peter Soar for also taking on the role of PCC Lay Chair and who has played a significant part in our PCC and Standing Committee operating more efficiently and effectively.

### **Welcome needs to become true hospitality.**

We have worked hard on our welcome and the integration of those new to the church. Many of you will be reading these reports for the first time and have become part of the St Stephen's family since our last Annual meeting - it is great to have you on the journey with us! However, I am aware that not everybody who visits us stays, or that some of those who do stay are not fully integrated into the church family. This can be for a variety of reasons - but I wouldn't want the reason for anyone to be that they are not offered hospitality beyond people being friendly to them on a Sunday morning.

I believe God is calling some of us to fan into flame the gifts of hospitality he has given us and to use these gifts not only to provide hospitality for our existing friends and family, but to use them to make new friends and to reflect the hospitality and love of God to those who need to know they are part of his family. Maybe hosting someone new for a meal or coffee each week could become part of your rule of life?

### **Staffing**

It has been a challenging year for Eliot and Becca. They have faced Eliot's recent illness with courage and perseverance - and continue to do so. We have worked hard together on making their job description more realistic. Becca and Eliot have worked hard at the directing part of their role and as a result, we have a fantastic Youth and Children's team of volunteers - thank you to all of you involved in this vital work. In a recent report from The Church of England (*From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-2013* - available online) it was shown that growing churches are those that invest in children and young people. St Stephen's has been doing this for a number of years, and again the fruit is self-evident. Again, this priority is reflected in our MAP.

We have been so blessed to have Jack as our DNA gap year student. We wish him well in pastures new - whatever they may be (not known at the time of writing!).

Jenny has continued to be the administrative hub and in her third year is very central to all that happens at St Stephen's. I am grateful for her hard work, caring attitude, attention to detail and

ability to plan ahead and keep us on track. Earlier this year, we took the decision to increase her hours from 16 to 20 - to more accurately reflect the hours she was actually working. Please consider whether you might be able to volunteer to help in the church office, there is always plenty to do!

So, there are still unanswered questions - but a sense of purpose and excitement about the future. Our parish pilgrimage was a real highlight of the year and it has and continues to bear much fruit - read some of the testimonies in the thanksgiving booklet for evidence of this. We are a pilgrim people and I invite you to walk with me as we seek God for this next year of adventure. Let's continue to seek to be a 'transformative community' where we seek to be transformed as individuals by the Word and the Spirit of God, and where we seek to be agents of transformation in our workplaces, families, friendship groups, colleges, schools and community.

Bill Hybels (leader of Willow Creek Community Church) has said that the local church is the 'hope of the world' - he adds: "When the local church is working right, people grow in maturity. Lonely people get drafted into Biblical community and experience oneness ... Rich people understand their opportunity to invest their resources on behalf of the poor. When I see the local church working right I stand back - a sense of awe comes over you - there is nothing like the beauty, power and potential of the local church."

Indeed, there is there is nothing like the beauty, power and potential of the local church - that's you and me as flawed and imperfect as we are, God longs for us to become the people he has created us to be. This will involve sacrifice, cost and some pain - but the joy and blessing we receive when we are walking with Jesus is incalculable.

At a recent 1:1:1 Prayer evening, we were led to think about **Ephesians 2:19-22**

*"You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but **fellow citizens** with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined **together** and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit"*

There was a great feeling that it is by our **unity** both older members and younger congregations **TOGETHER** that "the whole building is **joined together** and **rises** to become a holy temple in the Lord." So be encouraged, we are partners together in the mission of God, partners in the gospel and partners together as we build for growth at St Stephen's.

Finally, "**we need to continue on our knees**" and keep listening to God. If you didn't manage the **15 Minute Challenge** last year, **try it this year!**: put a 15 minute slot in your diary or phone for each day; find a favourite chair (or train seat!); read some scripture and ask God to speak to you and then sit in silence ... that's it! I look forward to hearing what God says to you and to us!

**Danny Wignall**  
March 2014

### **Signs of growth...**

In 2011, I wrote the following at the beginning of my annual report “We find ourselves in a church that has an instinct for growth, we seem to look for more and expect that God has so much for us...”. Looking back now, 3 years on, it looks and feels as if that instinct and expectation among us for growth has become an increasing reality both in terms of growth in numbers and maturity of faith.

For tangible signs of numerical growth we need look no further than our two principles services both of which have grown in number to the point that serious questions are being raised, and answers sought, about the demands on these services and the physical building that houses them (more of this in the Mission Action Plan).

But growth has also been evident in the extraordinary number of individuals going deeper in their discipleship, exploring new areas of service and vocation, from very practical acts of service, pastoral ministries, leadership and support of outreach projects, ordained and licensed ministries and many others.

### **Growth by design not by accident...**

So new vocations and ministries are a sign of growth but they don't happen by accident! They are a sign of a Christian community that is intentionally seeking to fan into flame the many gifts and talents that each and every member of St Stephen's possesses.

Growth involves intentional risk; the established leadership being willing and eager to put opportunities in place for new leaders backed up by a community that is equally at home with these new ministries being exercised around it.

The reward for this risk is seen not only in the enrichment of our worship but also in the example and encouragement these new expressions of ministry offer to other emerging leaders. In the embryonic ministries of others they see a pattern and the potential for their own to develop. How might yours develop this year?

### **Trained for growth...**

As well as providing opportunity, this intentionality has been evident this year in a continued commitment to support and provide courses and training that are both nurturing and vocational. They include the Start course, Alpha and Confirmation preparation which all seek to provide a 'ladder' of opportunity for Christian nurture. Moving forward we need more leaders willing to support this vital ministry; could you be called to help nurture others just as you have been nurtured yourself?

Then there is the growth in the numbers of members exploring vocational training to be pastoral assistants, occasional preachers, leaders of worship, communion assistants and even ordination training.

As well as exploring new courses that we can run 'in house' the Diocese provides excellent training much of which we can fit around our own routines. (In 1999 I trained for 3 years in Guildford as a Lay Minister whilst juggling a demanding career and young family - if God is calling he will equip you!)

## **Developing the framework and attending to the roots...**

With all this growth going on around us we must never forget that growth is dependent on our roots being well nourished and a framework being developed to support the growth. Both of these are essential as we move forward as a church.

### **Attending to the roots**

Just as a plant is only as healthy as the soil from which it draws its nutrients so our growth is dependent on where our roots are anchored. It is no surprise that growth has coincided with an increased commitment to being a praying community. It has been noticeable this year how many people are taking the opportunity of fellowship after services to not just chat but to pray for each other. Our PCC and leadership meetings are all preceded with times of prayer and waiting on God and our 1:1:1 church prayer has grown exponentially, due in no small measure, through the leadership Amber Beresford has given.

In addition to being anchored in prayer we need to also be anchored in scripture and in an ongoing openness to the work of the Holy Spirit. We have explored themes of journey this year to coincide with our pilgrimage, themes of how we are guided by the Holy Spirit during our brief foray into Acts and more recently an exploration of Revelation, and prior to that more contemplative forms of Christian Spirituality, through our Emotionally Healthy Spirituality series.

### **Developing a framework (trellis) for growth...**

This last series in particular reminded us of the importance of attending not only to the roots of our growth through developing our prayer life and keeping sabbath but also offered us a framework intended to support the spiritual growth in our lives. These included developing a 'rule of life' and establishing other means of support such as small groups of mutual support and accountability.

Some of these practices and disciplines are still in a very early stage for us as a church but other structural supports are firmly in place and working well; at least where people are making use of them! In particular, we have seen an increased uptake this year in the numbers of people attending home groups. They continue to be a key support in developing our Christian understanding and giving us opportunity for prayer and for serving others. For those yet to take advantage of these structures I would say that the long term health of your faith depends on it!

### **And finally...**

A very personal thank you to each and every one of you who has made this final year of ours as much of a joy as the preceding three. St Stephen's is an amazing church. Benedict spoke of the community of faith being a 'school of love' a place where we learn to rejoice together, weep with each other, to forgive and be forgiven, to give and receive love. We have learnt so much in this school called St Stephen's and rejoice over our partnership and friendship with each one of you. Go on growing in love and faithfulness in the coming year dear friends....

**Giles Carpenter**

## FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2013

### **The Finance Team and Auditor**

The finance team has gone through a major transition over the last 2 years. Ed Walker stepped down as Treasurer in September 2012 as he moved to Denmark. In order to make the role more manageable he defined a number of roles to perform all of the treasurer tasks. The new team is Tim Standing (Treasurer), Bill Kennedy (Paying in), Robin Andersen (Paying Out and Data Entry), James Stevenson (Flats), and Emma Andersen (Rainbow). Tim started the role of treasurer in March 2013, in between September 2012 and March 2013 Robin, Duncan, Danny, Ed and many others helped to keep the financial affairs in order.

For the 2013 accounts, Tim Standing has prepared the accounts and Chris Elsey of Barter Durgan & Muir has conducted the independent examination.

Tim Standing joined the church in November 2012 having moved with his wife and 3 children from Bristol. He took on the role of Treasurer at the end of March 2013. During his first year he has carried out a watching brief, looking at the roles and the way that the finance team and other areas of the church operate. He has specifically done this to familiarise himself more fully with the functions of the church and the role as a whole.

### **Assets**

We do not show the Church, graveyard or Cross in the accounts as these are considered by the PCC as consecrated land or inalienable to that land.

The PCC owns Flats No 2 and 3 in Glovers House opposite the church. One flat (Flat 3) is occupied by the Youth Directors and the other (Flat 2) is let on a commercial basis. The value of the flats is shown on the balance sheet. We continue to show the valuation provided by Keats Estate Agents at January 2008. A new and up to date valuation is being sought in 2014.

The PCC does not own the house occupied by the Curate. It is owned jointly by a Donor and Guildford Diocese and it is rented from the consortium at a rate equivalent to the cost of funds.

The PCC arranges and pays for insurance on both the Cross and the Church and maintains Employers Liability Insurance cover for both buildings.

### **Income**

We receive some income that is restricted and some that is unrestricted. These are shown separately in the accounts. Where money is given on a restricted basis, broadly, it cannot be used other than for the purpose it was donated. Good examples of restricted income are the money we receive into the building fund and the organ fund.

The general voluntary income (direct giving) for the year £172,750 was increased again from last year (£165,531).

The restricted income for the building fund (£16,561) was down against last year (£16,999). The fund currently stands at £89,099. If this fund is going to pay for the building vision currently envisaged by the church, donations for this particular fund will need to pick up markedly.

The restricted income to pay for the provision of a curate was £138 against last year (£1,713). This has reduced as the previous year's income was mainly one-off giving. If we are to be able to fund a curate for the future, donations for this particular fund will need to also pick up markedly.

There was £140 of restricted income into the organ fund in 2013. This is not a concern as the fund currently has a balance of over £4,100. This has reduced from last year as repairs have been ongoing throughout 2013 on the organ.

Overall the number of donors has remained roughly constant, although we were blessed again with a few more donors after the 2013 stewardship initiative. It is worth reminding ourselves that the tax we reclaim accounts for around 20% of our giving income. The accounts will show that the figure is around 17%, however, this hides the fact that a small number of donors choose to give via their employers (GAYE) or via CAF, where the payment received is made “gross” i.e. it effectively includes the tax element already.

Our Glovers House flat (No 2) was tenanted for 12 months of the year and generated an income of £7,200.

We have a relatively healthy bank balance (£144,909). This is higher than in 2012 (£137,831). There is a significant tax reclaim to be performed (£68,377) and we have paid off some of our outstanding creditors. With everything taken into account we are approximately £25,000 better off this year. However, £80,459 is set aside for restricted purposes (organ, building and curate fund). The maintenance fund ended the year with a positive balance of £16,272 (£12,471 in 2012) despite the maintenance projects conducted over the year (such as the planned new central heating in Flat 3 Glover’s House. The general fund ended the year with a positive balance of £49,750 (£33,372 in 2012). This balance may sound high but with church activities costing (on average) £16,500 a month, we need this to maintain a health cushion and is ahead of the PCC’s prudent target of £33,000 to cushion us from unexpected costs.

### **Outward Giving**

We allocate 10% of our regular income (as well as any special collections and the Christmas collections) to be given to a broad range of Christian and secular charities and projects locally, nationally and internationally. Overall, at the end of 2013 £19,600 was available to be given to our selected causes. This is in addition to the £18,800 paid out in cash to these causes during the year itself. This will be dispensed to the causes in April and May 2014.

The Christmas collections raised (£685) which was donated equally to CRISIS at Christmas and the Children’s Society.

It is worth remembering that we also expend money on a number of causes and projects which are outwardly directed but which for historical reasons are not classified as outward giving by St Stephens. Examples of this would be significant parts of the children and youth ministries.

### **The Rainbow**

The Rainbow Nursery School made a small loss again this year of £2,007 after paying £6,454 for the use of the CROSS. It does, however, carry forward an accrual of just over £1,000 (2012, £1,305). The Rainbow Head report gives more detail on the activities this year in her report.

### **Expenditures**

The general account expenditure directly relating to the work of the Church in 2013 remained similar to 2012 at £197,682.

### **The Cross**

The Cross has once again been run at a loss (£3,185) (£10,932 in 2012) as a standalone building. The “rent” from the Nursery School for 2013 (£6,500) has increased. The “rent” is designed to broadly reflect the costs associated with that building and the proportion of time utilised by the Nursery School. It is recognised that this level of rent is not yet set at a commercial level, in part because the building does not meet generally accepted commercial standards but also in recognition of the fact that the Nursery School is an important part of the Church’s activities and outreach.

### **Diocese Parish Share**

This amount, at £66,189 is our largest expense. It has stayed about the same as the figure in 2012 (£66,367). It pays for the salary, pension and housing expenses of our clergy, the training of new clergy, the central expenses of the diocese in Guildford and a subsidy to the parishes which do not

cover their costs. It did not rise as a result of our new curate joining in July 2010. It is worth mentioning that this is not something we can opt out of unless we do not want to have a Vicar. When one considers that we have the full use of two large buildings, the full time service of a resident dedicated Vicar and Curate and access to the resources of the diocese it is not an unreasonable charge.

**Curacy**

A separate restricted fund has been set up in the accounts to fund the current and possible future curacy. We are currently funding the curacy expenses (curate expenses, housing expenses etc) from our cash resources and some one-off donations to the church but it is not expected that we will be able to do so indefinitely. However, we do rent Sunvale from the Diocese at a low rent and this is helping us get through this period.

**Tim Standing**  
Treasurer

**ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT**

Last year, 2013, the Electoral Roll was completely renewed producing a new total of 156 members.

This year we have updated our Electoral Roll by revision. As a result 6 names have been removed and 8 names added. This gives a new Electoral Roll total for 2014 of **158** members.

If you would like to be included in the electoral roll, please fill in the relevant form at the back of church and pass it to me.

**Jenny Parsons**

**PCC REPORT APRIL 2013 - 2014**

Vicar	Danny Wignall
Curate	Giles Carpenter
Wardens	Duncan Long, Hilary Bicknell, Bill Kennedy (Deputy)
PCC Secretary	<i>vacancy</i>
Treasurer	Tim Standing
Deanery Synod	Louise Stevenson, Richard Parker, <i>Vacancy</i>
Ex Officio	Becca Ambrose, Eliot Ambrose, Tony Owen
Elected PCC Members	Emma Andersen, Neil Caie, Ross Cunningham, Sandra Gee, Jackie Gray(resigned), Jane Kent (resigned), Anne Laver, Andrew Lee, Peter Soar
Retiring Members	Ross Cunningham, Bill Kennedy, Andrew Lee
Places to be filled at 2014 APCM	2 for 2013 2 resignations 3 retiring 2014

**Up In Out** has been discussed on several occasions and it was agreed that the five year plan incorporates this and is proceeding.

**The Church's Buildings** are discussed regularly. This year the church floor has been re-sealed and repaired. Remedial work is continuing to the organ, and tidier display boards have been erected on the side. A new photocopier has been installed in the office. A request had been made to look into the possibility of erecting a plaque marking the memorial garden in the churchyard. Eventually it was agreed to relocate the memorial book to the chancel with a map showing the memorial garden.

### **Finance**

This is now managed by a team, headed by Tim Standing who makes regular reports to the PCC.

### **Personnel**

Curate: We will be very sorry to say goodbye to Giles in the summer, and wish him every success in his new Parish. The PCC has been considering the way forward for curacy at St. Stephens.

DNA: The pairing of Ella Caie and Jack Robson worked brilliantly, and we were sorry to lose Ella when she left to continue her studies in September. Jack will continue his good work with us until the summer. The PCC are looking into continuing this valuable work in the future.

Jo Long is completing the Diocese Pastoral Assistant Course. Nic Owen is taking part in the Leaders of Worship Course.

### **PCC**

In the absence of a PCC Secretary, Peter Soar kindly took on the role of chairing PCC Minutes and established a Standing Committee

The PCC Away Day in January continued to build on the work of the five year plan.

PCC Members were asked to endeavour to be in church on time and to challenge those who arrive late.

### **The Five Year Plan**

A group has been established to investigate whether procedures should be put in place to enable church growth following a PCC Away Day led by Steve Cox from the Diocese in January 2013.

### **Safeguarding**

The Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults has been updated at the Diocese. The Safeguarding Officers are Vanessa Clothier-Pratts, Hilary Bicknell and Jane Harding (consultant). All of the children's and vulnerable adults workers at St. Stephens have attended training courses, either at the Diocese or in house at St. Stephens.

### **Pilgrimage**

The Pilgrimage was a great success, enjoyed by all who took part!

The PCC ensured a careful risk assessment was made of the Pilgrimage route, and that it would be covered by St. Stephens' insurance policy.

**Hilary Bicknell, Churchwarden**

## **REPORT ON THE CHURCH FABRIC**

The maintenance fund is provided with £11000 pa from general church funds, from this figure we have to repair and maintain all our property: The Church, The Cross, Flats 2 and 3 Glovers house and the Curate's house in Sunvale.

In the past few years we have tried to spend the money wisely and responsibly, it is after all money donated by you, the congregation, so we try to budget one large project per year. Recent years has seen major improvements in The Cross and Flat 3.

In 2013 we agreed to fit a new wet heating system into Flat 2, this property is currently commercially rented so any improvements will hopefully help with any future rentable value. A new bathroom and redecoration was completed in Flat 3.

Some large floor repairs took place in the Church, the small doorway mat and framework were removed to allow an under floor problem to be rectified, A much larger and efficient entrance mat was then installed, this was then followed by a sand and reseal to the whole floor.

A maintenance day was held in December and lots of jobs were completed, some not visible but vitally important to the good upkeep of the church. The most noticeable jobs were the temporary car park repairs and the lowering of the trees, this now gives a much clearer and safer entry and exit from the car park.

Every Church has to have a 'Quinquennial Inspection' every five years, ours falls due this coming year. It involves a Diocesan approved architect spending a day inspecting our building and producing a detailed report on its overall condition, so we wait to see what this finds.

The car park will hopefully be fully resurfaced this year (quotations permitting) along with some screening around the storage cabin. The new buildings project will be getting some serious input this year and a new/improved plan will be presented to the congregation. The 'temporary' front doors will at last be renewed with some nice Oak units in the near future.

Please keep alert to any planned maintenance days and consider giving up some time to help, the days can be very rewarding. Don't forget 'its your church as well'

**Hilary Bicknell, Duncan Long**  
Church Wardens. March 2014

## DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Your Deanery Synod representatives are Louise Stevenson and Richard Parker; we have one vacancy.

Deanery Synod met 30/4/13 at St. Stephen's, 31/7/13 at All Saints Witley and 13/11/13 At St. Christopher's Wey Hill. In addition, there was a Special Meeting to discuss the issue of Women Bishops.

Each meeting looks at one of more specific topics and a guest speaker usually addresses the meeting. The main topics covered were Church Growth, Safeguarding, Food Banks and the Deanery Mission Pastoral Fund.

A brief summary follows:

**Church Growth.** Stephen Cox, the diocesan local mission advisor presented on the issue of church growth. He has been working with our own leadership team so it was particularly appropriate that he should be presenting at St Stephens. Members broke into small groups to explore what worked in their experience.

**Safeguarding.** Ian Berry, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor gave a presentation on the importance of safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults and the ensuring that all the appropriate checks are in place. The diocese has a number of resources to assist parishes. Your PCC ensures that all those who work with young people and vulnerable adults comply.

**Food Banks** . A presentation was given on the establishment of food banks. Haslemere is in fact somewhat more advanced than many of the other areas and its food bank is run as an all church project.

**Deanery Mission Pastoral Fund.** This fund has existed for some time but has been little used. It is proposed to reconstitute it in order to make it easier to access grants etc.

**Special Deanery Meeting to hear reports from General Synod on the issue of Women Bishops**

As reported widely in the press the Church of England has approved the proposal that women may be consecrated as Bishops. Appropriate legislation is now being drawn up. The church recognises that some parishes do not feel able to accept this and appropriate steps are being taken to ensure that those parishes can continue within the body of the Church of England. Much of the discussion has been around what form these steps should take rather than on whether or not women should be eligible for consecration. Extensive discussion documents are held in the Parish office and are also available on line.

**Louise Stevenson and Richard Parker  
Deanery Synod Representatives**