



**St Mary's Church**  
At the heart of the community

**The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin  
Wendover  
Buckinghamshire**

**Annual Report  
July 2021 to April 2022**

**Vicar: Rev Sally Moring**

**Bank: NatWest  
22 Market Square  
Aylesbury  
HP2 01T**

**CAF Bank  
25 Kings Hill Ave  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent  
ME19 4JQ**

**Independent Examiner: Gavin Styles FCCA, Chapel Lane, High Wycombe,  
HP12 4BJ**

**The church of St Mary the Virgin is situated on the outskirts of Wendover.  
It is part of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England.  
The correspondence address is  
Parish Office, 11 High Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6DU.**

**The Parochial Church Council (PCC) became a registered charity in August 2009. Its registration number is 1131299.**

**PCC members who have served from 27th June 2022 to the date of approval of this report are:**

**Incumbent: Rev Sally Moring**  
**Associate Priest: Rev Nadine Rose**  
**Curate: Rev Sally Prendergast**

**LLMs: David Blackmore**  
**Ian Sansbury**

**Churchwardens: Jacqueline Smith**

**Deanery Synod Representatives:**

**Sian Chattle**  
**Ian Sansbury**  
**Paul Dean**

**Elected Members: Paul Dean (Secretary)**  
**Matt Ryan (Treasurer)**  
**Mike Senior**  
**Deborah Hale**  
**Tim Crapper**  
**Sarah Frost**  
**Peter Dean**  
**Monica Tompsett**  
**Peter Lockett**  
**Jennifer Ballantine**  
**Johanna Free**  
**Nick Wilson**  
**Catherine Wilson**

**Ex Officio Alison Kirk (Diocesan Synod)**

## **A: Structure, governance and management**

The method of appointing PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. New appointees are given an information pack. The PCC has passed a resolution by which a proportion of the PCC members will stand for re-election every three years, limited to a total of six years served. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. This is achieved by notices given out during church services, articles in the St Mary's newsletter and notices placed around the church.

The incumbent is currently Rev Sally Moring with Associate Priest Rev Nadine Rose and Curate Rev Sally Prendergast. David Blackmore and Ian Sansbury are licensed to serve in the parish as Licensed Lay Ministers (LLM).

The PCC operates by meeting during the year with various sub-committees meeting and conducting delegated activities and taking delegated responsibility in between. Methods of reporting back to the PCC range from the formal pre-distributed reports for discussion at PCC meetings, to informal verbal reports. The PCC became a registered charity in 2009 and is mindful of its responsibilities as Trustees. The major risks to which the church is exposed, as identified by the Trustees have been reviewed annually, and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.

## **B: Objectives and Activities**

St Mary's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the whole mission of the Church – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the church building, St Mary's Centre and the churchyard at Church Lane. Since 1992, the PCC has been a party to the Sharing Agreement of 1986 relating to St Anne's Church, Aylesbury Road, Wendover. The PCC also holds a lease over the premises at 11 High Street, Wendover (JUST shop and Parish Office). All of which contribute to our aim to be a church at the heart of the community. Details of our work are described more fully in the following reports from committees and other groups who contribute to our church community. The PCC depends on many volunteers who give freely of their time and talents. A

major part of its activity is the training and involvement of an increasing number of volunteers, doing practical projects or duties alongside others who are further involved as a trustee or a committee member. The benefits from volunteers' work, and our thanks to them, cannot be overstated, without them the viability of our church would be seriously affected. Our grant-making policy is twofold; special appeals which may arise, and giving at a budgeted annual level, where finances are available, as managed by the Global Church Committee.

## **Electoral Roll**

Our Electoral Roll is managed by Xenia Murray, our Electoral Roll officer. As required, the draft new register has been displayed in church for two weeks prior to the APCM. The number of people on the new Roll was reported at the APCM on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2021 which was 250 down by 3 from 2020.

## **The PCC**

The full PCC met six times during the past year using the online Zoom facility or in person at St Mary's. Committees met between meetings and a number reported formally to the PCC.

## **Church Attendance**

We are required by the Diocese to report on the average weekly attendance for the first four weeks of October. This figure is one of the inputs to our Parish Share allocation. For 2021 the average weekly attendance for in person services was 117 and for online services at home services was 45. This period includes the October half term holidays so cannot be taken as a true reflection of 'average' church attendance. Also, being online it does include some households where more than one individual dialled in

We also had the following numbers for occasional services held at St Mary's: 15 baptisms, 10 weddings and 6 funerals.

## Committees

The PCC operates through a number of committees that meet between full meetings of the PCC:

**Standing Committee** (Chair: Sally Moring) *is responsible for transacting the business of the PCC between meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC.* The committee met five times between the Annual Meeting of 2021 and 2022 and has reported formally to each PCC meeting.

## C: PCC Review of the Year

This was once again an unusual year to report on due to the Covid pandemic and only applies from 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to April 2022 as the diocese allowed parishes to move their APCM dates.

The year started with our first meeting after the APCM on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

No new members were elected to the PCC following decision at 2020 APCM to reduce the number of members on the PCC, the election of officers for the year was also undertaken with Paul Dean elected as Secretary, Matt Ryan as Treasurer, Xenia Murray as Electoral Roll Officer. Peter Dean was elected as vice chair. Revd Sally Moring, Revd Nadine Rose, Jacquie Smith, Matt Ryan, Paul Dean, and Peter Dean were elected to serve on the Standing Committee. The approval of the assistant wardens and stewards list was also approved. A report was received from the Treasurer looking at the last years accounts and a new budget for 2022. The St Mary's Safeguarding Policy looked at and a bigger review will be done later in the year. Some new working groups were set up to give our only churchwarden some help. The groups were a) Finance/Fundraising/Governance, b) Fabric/maintenance/churchyard, c) Review of Assistant wardens, d) People.

The next PCC meeting was on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 where we welcomed Alison Kirk to the PCC as an ex officio member being that she was now on the Diocesan Synod. The Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and approved by the meeting. Mention was made to the new training courses on Safeguarding. The treasurer then gave a report on the current finances. Revd Moring then gave a presentation on the current Mission Action Plan (MAP) progress. We also heard about a new proposed church database that Ian and Adam Sansbury had been investigating. Our current Parish Administrator Amanda Ryan had decided to leave her position and a vote of thanks for all her work was proposed by the

meeting, an advert has been placed for a new administrator. The Commonwealth War Grave Commission want to put a sign up at church saying we have Commonwealth War Graves which was approved by the meeting. Reference was made to Climate Change and that we would be holding a special service on this theme on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021. We also heard that Bishop Steven Croft was making a Deanery visit to Wendover on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

Our third meeting of the year was on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021, items under discussion were the Treasurer's report, including some outstanding monies owed to the Free Church for use of the Christian Centre. Peter Dean advised that the office need some equipment upgrades and the meeting approved the purchase of a new computer and upgrade to the Wifi router. The churchyard is getting full and we had a discussion on how we could extend the churchyard. A new set of church hymn books had arrived in memory of Jeremy Nicholson. Christmas services were discussed and which one would need prior ticketing due to the number limitation in church. Live streaming of Sunday services is now being undertaken.

Our fourth meeting was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022 where we had a treasurers latest update and also an approval to change the bank mandate for signatures. We discussed possible church works that would be required including some electronic opening doors at the church entrance, the audio visual system, and baby changing facilities. We heard that Jacquie Smith would be standing down as churchwarden at the APCM so we are now on the look out for 2 new churchwardens.

Our fifth meeting was on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 where we had a treasurers update a presentation from Helen Blakeman on safeguarding and a discussion on the PCC groups and terms of reference for each group, these are now been written for PCC approval.

The last PCC meeting of the year will be on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022 where hopefully the annual report will be approved in readiness for the APCM on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

I would once again like to offer my thanks to all members of the PCC for their invaluable input during the year and thanks to Sally and our Churchwarden Jacquie who has had an extra workload being the only churchwarden for the year.

Report by Paul Dean PCC Secretary

## D: Financial Statement of the PCC

### Treasurer's Report on the accounts for the year to 31 December 2021

Fund details for the financial year to 31 December 2021 are summarised in the table. Please note that fixed assets and depreciation have been excluded from the figures as they relate to past expenditure and not cash spent in 2021.

The General Fund below reflects the income and expenditure arising from the day-to-day activities of our Church. Other Funds for the Church have special rules applied to them and these restrict how the funds can be spent. During 2021 the Church accounts showed an increase in total funds by £33,268, which is outlined below.

Funds	Income	Expenses	Transfer/Gains	Surplus/ (deficit)	Funds at 31.12.21
General	£169,713	£160,831	£-	£8,882	£55,341
Designated (All)	£45,006	£23,907	£-	£21,099	£73,686
Fabric (Restricted)	£9,000	£5,110	£-	£3,890	£17,422
Legacy (Restricted)	£-	£-	£-	£-	£23,207
Other Restricted	£8,737	£10,302	£962	(£603)	£28,624
<b>Total</b>	<b>£232,456</b>	<b>£200,150</b>	<b>£962</b>	<b>£33,268</b>	<b>£198,280</b>

## **General Fund**

2021 saw another year of COVID impacting our finances at St Mary's. Again several of our usual sources of income that the church relies on to finance our work and mission in Wendover were impacted due to restrictions. Our income from hiring the church and centre, and church fees, for weddings etc, were reduced and our regular giving for 2021 was also down. We were extremely grateful to the congregation for extra one-off donations that made a massive impact to our overall financial position. An area that saw a huge amount of additional income was gifts from legacies, where we received £42,000 in the year. As well as this, the JUST shop, despite being closed in the early part of the year, pulled off an incredible nine months producing some of the highest sales figures we have seen and donated £15,058 to the shop from profits and contributed £9,467 towards running costs.

With the uncertainty that came in 2021 we managed to keep costs to a minimum and showed a small decrease from what was spent in 2020, with expenditure falling from £165,619 to £160,831. The whole Parish Share of £115,763 was paid in full which meant that we were able to support the ministry of other churches in the Oxford Diocese.

Incredibly we ended the year with the General Fund making a surplus of £8,882. This left a balance on the General Fund at the end of 2021 at £55,341 which puts us in a great position as we look forward to 2022.

## **Other Funds**

In the year the Ministry Development Fund, which had been setup to support the plans shown in the Mission Action Plan, was nearly used up with £750. The church has a commitment until the end of 2023 regarding payments for our Associate Priest, which are covered by other designated reserves held at the year end. It was agreed by the PCC, that legacies received by the PCC would be designated to be used towards Ministry Development, unless restrictions were given by the donor, and at the year-end we had designated legacy reserves of £66,781 to pay towards this.



It should be noted that none of the other restricted funds can be used against St Mary's running costs but restricted to fabric, the churchyard, bells, flowers amongst others.

### **Thank you**

I would like to say a big thank you to all of you who have continued to support the church over the last 12 months.

Grants from outside sources have been used to support various aspects of our ministry including the Climate Action in Wendover work that has been ongoing. Thank you to those who worked hard on researching and requesting fundraising.

Not only have we benefited from income but thank you to those of you who have helped us to keep our costs down, whether that be volunteering with posts or actively trying to save money on our running costs.

Once again, we are hugely grateful to Helen Blakeman and her team at Just who have run the shop and have really done a fantastic job this year.

I would also like to give special thanks to all those who have supported me as treasurer during this year. I mention in particular Sarah Bishop who has continued to help with some of the finance tasks! There are many others who work behind the scenes, so thank you for all you do.

Report by Matt Ryan, PCC Treasurer

## **E: Churchwardens' Report, including the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments**

I wrote the last Church Warden's report in June 2021. At that time, we had an alternating service pattern, a 9.00 service followed by a 10.30 Zoom service and the next week a 9.00 Morning Prayer service on Zoom and a 10.30 service in Church. Church had just recommenced being open daily, so a big thank you to all those willing volunteers who continue daily unlocking and locking up the building week by week. The cleaning teams had restarted cleaning our beautiful Church building, another big thank you to all of you. Ignite and Surge were meeting periodically as was our walking group and Nadine organised

three trial sessions for a new Toddler group, 'Sparklers' in Church. Another big event happened around June / July, congregational singing! Listening to Church music and singing is such a part of our worship heritage, a feeling for me of joy as our praise and prayer lifts us to new heights in worship and openness to God.

Many plans were made and September saw us with a new pattern of services, a monthly 8.00 Communion, weekly 9.00 Holy Communion and 10.45 Sunday Worship. We also welcomed Michelle, George and Henry to St Mary's. Michelle is an Ordinand who will be worshipping and working with us until June 2023. A new weekly Thursday Communion Services commenced followed by coffee and chat and Sparklers on Monday mornings during term time. Not just Mum's and Dad's with children but grandparents, carers and lots of you coming in and out to help and bring cakes and treats. Numbers are growing and it is great to see lots of babies and little people around having fun. Our Church building has got busier with more people coming through the doors week by week. Many people have come in and said 'wow, what a lovely, calm yet friendly space to come into'.

Harvest Festival saw us able to have a Church Family BBQ outside in lovely weather. On into October saw a group of us reviewing the Mission Action Plan document and talking about the future. One of the practical key decisions was to look at office systems for managing our data and activities. Work was undertaken to move this forward and we now have a new website, new email addresses and practical developments are ongoing. Thank you to everyone involved in getting this up and running and continuing this development.

October was also the month we said goodbye to Amanda as our Administrator. Amanda had worked in the office for many years and knew all the quirks and happenings at St Mary's and an authority on the Churchyard. Thank you for all you have done over the years.

She may wish she had stayed as it was the impetus to have a sort out of the office and the equipment. A much-needed new PC was installed and an overhaul of the communications within the office, hopefully now with much better internet connections to cope with the new Church system. Thank you to all who undertook this work and to the office decorating team. Julie arrived in January and is keen to get know everyone and play an active role. Sorry Amanda you missed out, though you will have appreciated the changes as you

and Veronica imparted some of your valuable knowledge to Julie to help her along the way.

We started planning for Christmas services amidst growing number of Covid infections both nationally and locally, making us wonder what would happen. Services were planned and booking systems put in place for previous large number services. A second Carol Service was scheduled as the 7.00pm services, quickly 'sold' out. Christmas Eve services were planned as a celebration in the Churchyard. Sadly, that celebration had to be cancelled due to wet weather on Christmas Eve. Unfortunately, I was not physically at any of the Christmas Services due to a son going down with covid in our house the middle of December and his partner Christmas Eve. Our household was affected like so many others during December and January as covid infection kept spreading and it felt our house was a 'no go' area for friends and family for weeks!

As I write this report, we are fast approaching Lent and we have been purchasing some recommended books to lead us privately and in our worship through Lent. Plans are progressing for our 'normal' Easter week services and the celebrations for Easter Sunday. This year it is looking like there will be no restrictions on the number of us able to worship together, quite a transformation from 'no services' in St Mary's Easter 2020 and limited numbers in 2021.

During the year the normal housekeeping checks and maintenance were undertaken on the Church building. A change was arranged for the gas and electricity to put us on a 'green' energy tariff. As a Church we will see a huge increase in our energy costs this year as will every householder and business.

We did have a spate of anti-social behaviour around the Church grounds in October. Our CCTV coverage helped us in reporting to the Police. Sadly, this was part of a variety of anti-social activity around Wendover at the time.

We also had an emergency with a blocked drain when Sparkler helpers were rushing around with mops and buckets. Fortunately help quickly arrived from Castle House. Crisis dealt with and a plumber was called in to clear the drains.

A huge thank you to all of you who have who helped in the ongoing work and maintenance of all aspects of our Church building, it is a wonderful building but quite a responsibility keeping it maintained and comfortable for us all to use.

This will be my last Church Warden's report as I am standing down at the May 2022 APCM. I have felt privileged to be able to undertake this role with the support and encouragement from so many of you. St Mary's is a very special place to be part of. My first two years were fairly straightforward once I had a grasp of what really was expected following the annual festivals and events. The last two years different from what any of us could have expected with the arrival of the covid pandemic and the lockdowns and changes to all our lives. Once the shock of the situation had receded, it was getting organised and start planning. Lots of conversations with Sally and reading legislation and guidance as it evolved. Our ministry team have been fantastic in how they developed Church Worship on line along with other group activity. Sally M, Nadine and Sally P worked so hard to help keep people involved in activities and connected in varying ways. Throughout the hard decisions to make around closing down, the slow movement forward in reopening, pulling back and reopening again and again, we have all talked, prayed, shared our concerns and worked through the situations whilst remaining supportive and together in all our actions and planning. It has felt a real team effort throughout this strange period. I really do want to thank Sally, Nadine and Sally for all they have done for our family at St Mary's and all the love, care and compassion they have shown and also to those families that come to them in times of need and for celebration. We have an incredibly caring team of clergy. Personally, I also want to say huge thank you for your care, support and encouragement to me as we have travelled together.

Jacquie Smith

## **Churchyard Report**

Throughout the year the Churchyard Care Committee has continued to meet, often walking around the Churchyard before meeting in Church. The committee continues to be made up of members from the Parish Council and members of St Mary's Church with our Vicar, Sally, chairing the meetings.

Volunteers remain dedicated in their care of the Churchyard and play such an important part in it being well maintained and a calm and complete place to be. We owe them a huge thank you for all they do. A contractor undertakes

some work and our Church volunteer sessions, for all ages, along with ongoing eco work also help in care of the land and continuing to create habitats and increase the biodiversity of the area. New bird and bat boxes being installed and donated, earlier this year. We have also had the larger trees checked and some dead branches removed and the tree canopy raised in several places improving access around the Churchyard site. During the year work has been undertaken both in the churchyard and in church as we have worked towards the Eco-Church Bronze award ; it's hoped this would be awarded early in 2022.

During the November 2020 lockdown St Mary's had a very small and informal Remembrance Event. November 2021 brought a familiar Remembrance Service for people to Remember loved ones who may have passed away during the year, or at any time previously. The service concluded in the Churchyard with a planting of a tree in memory of all those from Wendover who died as a result of the pandemic, all our family and friends who had died during the pandemic and the changes to all our individual lives as a result of the pandemic. We were then able to go back into St Mary's for time to reflect, to share and to offer tea and cake. The kind of hospitality that the pandemic has prevented us offering or share. The Easter Garden in 2021 and again this year have been a focus for activity for many of our Church family leading up to Easter, creating a depiction of the resurrection story and the gardens have contributed to our Easter service celebrations to our Risen Lord.

We are blessed to have such a beautiful and peaceful Churchyard space around St Mary's and pray it will continue to offer us enjoyment for Sunday morning coffees and Church family activities as we move forward.

Jacquie Smith on behalf of the Churchyard Care Committee

## **F: Deanery Synod Report**

### **Wendover Deanery Synod 2021**

Our churches are gradually returning to normality after the past two years of Covid disruption. There's still a need to maintain precautions, and the Church

of England's guidelines provide some help in a situation where so much is left to your discretion.

The deanery is slowly recovering activity, and we're beginning to re-invigorate its standing committee. There have been four deanery synod activities over the past year, and the deanery chapter has continued to meet regularly over the period. Meanwhile Bishop Alan has continued to keep the archdeaconry well informed and co-ordinated with a periodic Zoom meeting of area deans and lay chairs.

We had a considerable shortfall in the deanery share last year, and 2022 will continue to be a challenge. Many thanks to everyone for their efforts in collecting and paying parish share throughout the year: those efforts are very much appreciated – and our special thanks to the treasurers who make it possible. Many thanks also to Paul Moring for his work as deanery treasurer – I should add that we would be grateful to hear of interest from anyone in that role going forwards.

2021 now seems a while ago, but here's a reminder of our meetings. We had two online and two physical Synod meetings during the last year (including the visit by Bishop Steven in November and the meeting on connecting with young people): many thanks to the churches which hosted us for these events, and for the welcome we always receive.

### **Deanery Synod Gatherings**

1. Monday 19 July, online: Annual Meeting of Deanery Synod
2. Tuesday 21 September, online: farewell Synod gathering with Deiniol
3. Thursday 25 November, various: deanery visit by Bishop Steven and his entourage
4. Wednesday 8 December, St. Mary's Wendover: on connecting with young people.

Our first meeting of 2022 was on 9<sup>th</sup> March at St. Mary's, Wendover for a general catch-up on Church activities throughout the deanery.

All regular meetings – PCCs, APCMs and deanery synods – may now be held in person, so that Church schedules can now be re-established.

Meanwhile, please remember that our deanery synods – our ‘Chiltern Churches Open Meetings’ - are indeed open to all, including when conducted online: it’s a great way to keep in touch with others across our local churches, and to find out more about some of the key issues which concern us all.

Thanks to all those who have taken part throughout the year.

With best wishes from the Deanery Standing Committee -

Revd. Sally Moring  
Area Dean

Gavin Oldham OBE  
Lay Chair

April 2022

## **G: Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults**

The Church of England and the Diocese require each church to have in place policies on Safeguarding, to support our *‘working with children and young people’*, to consider in our own context all aspects of the *‘Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults in the Diocese of Oxford’* policy - to ensure procedures are in place to ensure a safe environment for children and young people, and Vulnerable Adults - in all aspects of St Mary’s work. Within the policies and guidance, it considers all aspects of current disclosure procedures under the “Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure safe recruitment of volunteers and employees”.

Our church follows the guidance and good practice on Safeguarding issued by Oxford Diocese. Our Safeguarding Policy, for Children & Vulnerable Adults, was reviewed by the PCC in 2021. This policy can be found in the church porch and centre. We make an annual return the Oxford Diocesan to confirm that we are following guidelines and that we have noted changes in requirements. Making this return has become more streamlined through the Safeguarding Dashboard for Parishes, and the questions asked help us to know that our policies and procedures are in line with requirements, or that some aspect requires

renewal, or needs to be developed. The Dashboard reflects the requirements of the national Safeguarding Handbook 2018 (revised 2019).

The ministry team, led by the Vicar, receive specific Safeguarding training and guidance from the Diocese. The PCC considered St Mary's approach to Safeguarding in the context of current Diocesan Guidance and model Policies, particularly taking account of the role of volunteers and the changing nature of activities in the church. At St Mary's we have many volunteers helping to lead the various activities for both children, young people and vulnerable adults. All volunteers and paid workers have to undertake periodic training in safeguarding awareness under the auspices of the Diocese. Much work has been done by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (now increased in size) to regularise levels of training necessary for different roles, and the frequency of such training. Modes of training have been refined with much now on-line, reflecting to needs of the Covid pandemic period and/or the difficulty individuals face in being available to attend face-to-face training. Most on-line training modules last between 60, 90, or 120 minutes, and the Parish is now considering how to support individuals needing to complete training modules, but for whom doing so online is not possible from home.

The advantage of the online training modules is that materials are continually updated. Each module comes with helpful guidance on how to navigate through the course on a computer or tablet, and it is set up to enable users to pause in a module, or to see the spoken commentary as printed text (Volunteers, whether working with children or vulnerable adults, requiring initial or updated training, have already been able to use online resources from the Diocese during the past year).

Safeguarding and Communication issues in the context of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) remain an important consideration.

What is most important is that all volunteers are aware of 'Best Practice'. St Mary's has adopted two Good Practice Guides – one for children and one for vulnerable adults. These guides include a Code of Conduct and other relevant support materials. These documents have been distributed to volunteers working in the church community in different contexts. They will now be reviewed in the context of current guidance, and will be re-distributed. Bellringers received the specific guidance document from the Diocese which has previously formed the basis of a specific briefing.



All volunteers are DBS checked as required, through AccessPCS, the Diocesan preferred Verification organisation. As the APCS procedures enable automatic renewal communication with individuals (if they sign up to this), the work of the Verifying Officer, Rachel Claringbold is to some extent helped - with her particular focus being that of identifying and submitting applications for new volunteers and new members of the PCC.

Rachel keeps a central list of DBS checks and training to inform the officers of the Church and other leaders and volunteers when checks and training need to be updated. There is a five-year renewal policy. On the Diocesan website there is detailed guidance to clarify which volunteers need to be DBS checked, and at which level. On the Government website linked to DBS is further definition of "Volunteer".

**In the current context of COVID-19**, there has been specific guidance on the Diocesan Website in relation to Safeguarding matters, Training and DBS checking. No face-to-face training has been available locally or from the Diocese. Excellent guidance is available on the NSPCC website in relation to "keeping children safe", and the Diocesan guidance includes helpful protocols for communication with Families, Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults – whether by phone, other electronic means or by distance or face-to-face visiting.

The Diocese has embarked on a comprehensive and ongoing Safeguarding Review, PCR2. Details of the nature of this review are on the Diocesan website. (Church members will be aware of this review because of a request Sally made last year for information to be shared with her in confidence of any Safeguarding incident in the past that caused concern, in relation to a member of the clergy clergy and/or church officers). She responded to the Diocesan Review request last year as requested.

Currently, if anyone has cause for concern about any vulnerable adult or young person and would like to talk in confidence, then please contact Helen Blakeman, the Safeguarding Officer. (h.blakeman3@btinternet.com)

Report by Helen Blakeman, Safeguarding Officer

## H: Vicars Report

We are very blessed at St Mary's, Wendover to have many people who are able to share their time and talents in our Church community that has allowed us to continue to offer worship, comfort, stunning music, beautiful flowers, pastoral care and activities for all ages to come and enjoy. For all of that I say a huge thank you!

2021 began with another period of lockdown when our church was closed and we were very limited in who we could see and where. We had learnt what worked regarding 'broadcasting' our services and became very proficient in 'zooming' services every week that involved a wide range of people and with a huge amount of creativity.

It was on Easter Day that the first groups of people attended church with music being sung by a small group from the choir. Their music lifted our services and spirits. Gradually as time went on the numbers able to be in church increased; in the meantime services were being both live streamed and still on Zoom. For me one of the biggest changes/learning points in all of this pandemic has been the use of technology that has enabled far more people to access our worship but also kept us all safe.

From June onwards it felt like we were playing catch up as a number of weddings took place that had been postponed from 2020 and they were filled with joy. We have had a large number of baptisms since September, again some that would have taken place sooner and were wonderful opportunities for families together who previously couldn't.

Sadly during 2021 several members of our congregation died. We were all very sad at the death of Rev'd Canon Peter Louis who in his retirement to Wendover with Marian gave so much to the benefice, particularly at St Mary's. We also mourned the deaths of Maureen Morley, Richard Birchley, Liz Griffin, Margaret Sammons, Martyn White and Hilary Gilby; they are much missed. Memorial services took place for Fletcher Nicholson, Jan Judd and Gill Andrews who had all died in 2020 and had restricted funerals. Our clergy were also involved in funerals for members of the community.

In September we felt able to return to more services and so regularly have an 8am service once a month, 9am and 10.45am every week. The 9am service remains quite traditional with hymns sung by the choir and accompanied on

the organ. The 10.45am service varies in style with 2 Communion services a month and 2 services which are aimed at our families and those newer to the faith with a huge wealth of teaching and ways to engage.

Throughout the year Surge led by Becky Murgatroyd-Morton and Ignite led by Natalie Armstrong and Zoe Fyfe have met with others assisting at the sessions. We have a strong group of young people who meet as Surge and Older Surge who debate theological questions, study the bible in many ways and have had some prayerful sessions. It's wonderful to see the small group of children in Ignite grow and learn more and more of the stories of Jesus developing their own faith.

Other new additions to things happening at St Mary's has been the introduction in June of Sparklers; Nadine writes "As a trial in June 2021 for three weeks we ran Sparklers. These sessions were very popular and the decision to hold this group weekly during term time (10am to 11.30am) was made. This has been made possible by the very committed and dedicated team of volunteers. This is for preschool children and their parents, grandparents, childminders etc. A very relaxed toddler group – toys, puzzles, books, refreshments available. At Christmas time Sian Chattle came along to lead us in carol singing and we did a short nativity." By April 2022 there were 52 names on the register with a core of 18 attending each week.

In September we introduced a 10am Holy Communion service on a Thursday morning. This has grown with a regular congregation of 12-14. After the service coffee is served which gives an opportunity for conversation and fellowship.

All this increased activity whilst still living within Covid restrictions has been hard going on everyone and there is no doubt has had an effect on those who feel able to come to church and those whose situations have changed and are no longer able to come. For some the laying down of roles when church was closed or limited has help them realise the time has come to lay them down completely; of course, things still need to be done for the church to run smoothly and so we have gaps that now need filling. A huge thanks to everyone

who have had roles in the past they can no longer do and thank you to all of you who continue to all that you do.

Our clergy team are supported by a strong Ministry team and a great addition to that in September is Michelle Fotherby. Michelle is training for ordination at Wycliffe College, Oxford and St Marys is her placement church; it has been a joy to welcome Michelle and her two sons George and Henry. I am very grateful for all the ministry team contribute to the life of our church and the work that Nadine and Sally P do supporting the life of our parish and community.

At the APCM we will say thank you to Jacquie Smith who has been churchwarden for the last 4 years- and for the last two on her own. She has worked tirelessly especially through the difficult times of church closure and restrictions caused by the pandemic and we thank her hugely for that. Often in the background Simon has supported Jacquie with lots of handyman type jobs- thank you Simon!

It's certainly been a very strange year but one that we have grown in. Please continue to pray for St Mary's Church as we strive to be at the heart of the Wendover community and share the good news of Jesus Christ to all whom we serve.

Sally Moring

***Annual Report was reviewed and approved by the PCC at their meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022***