



Annual Reports

For 2019 APCM

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Team Rector's Report

As we prepare for our fourth APCM as a parish I am constantly surprised by what God is leading us onto as his people here in Ashford. Our partnerships with national organisations such as CAP and Make Lunch are making a real difference in the lives of our neighbours - children are being fed and families are becoming debt free. This year has also seen our partnership with the Diocesan Ignite project start - St. Francis Ignite has opened and Christ Church Ignite will be opening shortly. We hosted the Winter Night Shelter, in partnership with CTA, at St. Francis and Willesborough this last year ensuring love and food for our most vulnerable neighbours. All of these partnerships require many volunteer helpers and I am not sure that any would have been possible or sustainable before we became one parish.

The parish continues to show its love by offering hospitality, be that our cafes, our lunches, our breakfasts or our social events. These offerings are key to our communities knowing that there is a place of welcome for all, (perhaps we could look at seeing if any of our church buildings could be an official 'Place of Welcome' in the next year?) I am convinced that isolationism is on the rise in our nation as society becomes more fractured - social media is not an alternative to talking in person with a real human being. I have seen a visible change in people who benefit from a listening ear and a good chat in our cafes.

We are a growing community - our average weekly attendance is around 1000 (a third of these are children and young people), over a 5% increase on the year before. This is in a time when diocesan and national figures are still in decline. I would like to thank all who have responsibility for the worship life of our church families; we have an amazing staff team, well supported by our retired clergy, Readers, ALMs, ministry leadership teams, servers, musical directors and choirs, also thank you to those who do so much unseen in the life of our families; our cleaners, flower arrangers, and those who move our chairs etc so that we are ready for worship.

We have a large number of children and young people who form a part of our family life, this may be in our congregations or in our Sunday schools, messy church, youth clubs, after school clubs. We also go out into the local schools - most of our schools have links with the church and many are very strong links - taking assemblies, serving on Governing boards, taking services and supporting staff and Head Teachers. We are invited in to both Towers and Ashford College as well as the C of E Chaplains in both The John Wallis CofE Academy and Ashford School. I want to thank all involved in this vital ministry.

The mission life of our Church is very active with a wide range of opportunities - I am immensely grateful to Nathan in coordinating and driving so much of this. There are many others who are also very involved in this part of our church life - thank you everyone. There are plenty of areas in our common life where more volunteers would help us to reach even more of our community. One of the greatest joys I have is when I see someone very uncertainly put their hand up or mumble 'can I help?' grow both in faith and confidence through the experience. If you feel God is calling you to be active in His kingdom, please do not be afraid - you will be well supported - and contact me or any of our staff team we would be delighted to help you say 'YES' to God.

This last year has seen some changes in our staff team Tim, Peter and Emma have left us - they all have been so important to our common life and have done so much in helping to form the Parish and to guide us in our early life. Thank you all, and please do hold them and their families in your prayers in their future work and ministry. It has been lovely to be able to welcome Andrew as our new Curate and for Dawn and Cathie to feel called to remain in the Parish as their curacies came to an end. We also welcomed Dawn Stamper and

Dawn Evans as our new Ignite enablers. We are truly blessed to have such an energetic, diverse and faithful team - please pray for us.

The year ahead holds for us many possibilities, we are growing closer together as bonds of love and trust develop between our worshipping communities. I was struck by the very moving Stainer's Crucifixion recently at Ashford church - how uplifting to see the choir coming from a number of our church families - coming together to do what would have been impossible on our own. I hope that we continue to work, sing, serve and worship side by side and as we do so we look less to our internal affairs but more and more to the wonderful town of Ashford which we are called to love and to shine brightly the good news of Jesus into.

Rev John MacKenzie
Team Rector
Ashford Town Parish

Ashford Local Area Report

Having devoted the initial year of ministry to building relationships in the two spheres of the dual role and keeping to my promise not to initiate major changes during that year, I prepared a paper entitled 'Towards sustainability – year 2' for the July 2018 Local Leadership Team meeting. The document looked back on the first year, and looked forward by listing key priorities for the second year of ministry at St Mary the Virgin Ashford. Additionally, we are also up-to-date with our safeguarding thanks to the work of Lynne Miller, our Local Safeguarding Officer.

With the agreement and support of the LLT and clergy with permission to officiate, we have made real progress in key areas, although it is fair and reasonable to say that I find the limitations of time for both church and schools a significant challenge, which can be a source of some frustration and exhaustion at times particularly bearing in mind the town centre opportunities for mission.

Preparations for Lent back in the late autumn, when Canon Paul Miller, together with Dr Tim Bushnell planned and organised Lent groups, which as it turned out, involved over half of our regular worshipping congregation. This initiative has helped highlight the significance of meeting together for prayer and the importance of small groups. Four Lent addresses by members of the church family enabled the congregation to appreciate the role of faith in lived experience, particularly in challenging times. This combination has been far and away the most significant start to the season of Lent that I have experienced as a disciple and as a priest.

Attending to our worship has required a complete renewal of all our liturgical content including new orders of service for the calendar, a project that will be completed by All Saints this year. Work has begun on listening to our family service team and responding to their call to help develop first Sunday services. My thanks to all our guest speakers from within the Parish. Bryan Gipps and our choir continue to offer a wide range of superb music, which is also a significant element in helping new members to settle and join in. Work on new communications began with the development of a new identity scheme, a completely new website and new leaflets soon to go to press now that a phone line and email address have been provided in our completely re-ordered administrative office. A new guide book is underway, which will be of a much-improved quality and so help attract interest and generate funds as well as building on the work of our social gatherings, community café and Foodbank distribution.

Reverend Tony Boyd-Williams has organised the St Mary's Players to deliver successful dramatic productions, as additions to augment our social events, which have drawn together many in our church family, been well-received as performances and increased our fundraising. The joy associated with these activities is evident and emerges from a church family that is familiar with pulling together to face challenges and new opportunities. The dramatic reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday drew the remark from the congregation, 'Thank you for bringing Scripture to life.'

I would like to thank our small yet dedicated Sunday School team serving a larger group of children. The development of the Roots materials has linked the subject matter with the Sunday lectionary and given access to a wider range of helpful resources.

We are very much looking forward to Sue Sawyer starting as our local administrator as part of the new administration plan. Sue will be based in our refurbished office and provide much needed support for a range of administrative tasks to help me focus on ministry and mission. In addition to his support for the fabric of

the church, Robert Blount has kindly stepped forward to be a second Local Warden alongside Sue Sawyer. Together with Lesley Wraxall, our LLT Secretary, they work tirelessly for the welfare of St Mary's Ashford and I am deeply grateful for all that they do and indeed for the support of every member of the Local Leadership Team, sub-committees and the church family as a whole.

We continue to participate in civic events, particularly Remembrance, which always involves Ashford School pupils. We hosted a week-long art exhibition, Religious Education sessions in church as well as planning and delivering a range of church services and assemblies for Ashford Prep at Great Chart and the Senior School in Ashford as well as for St Mary's Church of England Primary School. Pastoral provision for staff, parents and pupils is a not an insignificant aspect of the role. Having asked Ashford School to discuss the development of chaplaincy, plans are in hand to begin improvements which will hopefully see a more effective level of integration, particularly in the senior school.

St Mary's is a spiritually optimistic and steadily growing church family that is also working hard to help contribute to the Ashford Town Parish finances. My hope and prayer is that we will steadily move towards shaping the 'proclamation' element of our mission statement. 'St Mary the Virgin Ashford, a sacred space and a shared space proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus in the heart of town.'

Thanks be to God!

Reverend Richard Bellamy
**Priest to Ashford Town Centre
and Chaplain to Ashford School
Lent 2019**

Christ Church Report

Christ Church has enjoyed a busy year building on a number of initiatives that were green shoots twelve months ago. Having registered as an Eco Church and made a conscious effort to raise awareness of local and global environmental issues, we were duly awarded a bronze award from A Rocha. This presents us with a new challenge as we work towards achieving a silver.

After submitting a bid to host an Ignite plant Christ Church was successfully chosen as a host (along with St Francis) and in September Dawn Evans joined with me to become Ignite Enablers. Months of training and building relationships with the local community will culminate in Ignite beginning on a regular basis out of the Community Hall in the summer. Ignite is a wonderful mission opportunity and several people from Christ Church and St Mary's Willesborough have joined the team as volunteer befrienders – making those of our guests who may be on the edge of society, feel welcome and valued.

Our much loved and used Community Hall is showing its age and the decision was made to undertake a refurbishment with a slight extension to the front. Although in the early stage of planning, it's hoped this exciting project will provide a fit for purpose venue which can be used for weddings and parties, theatrical events, mission projects and hopefully, incorporate a small café which will act as a hub for the local community.

Meanwhile our social calendar grew with different church fundraising and community events taking place throughout the year. We are always surprised and delighted at the response of the local community who come along to these events and remind us how important our church is to so many people even if they don't attend Sunday services.

While there is much still to do, it is my hope and prayer that Christ Church continues to be a reassuring presence in the community offering a warm welcome and generous hospitality. My heartfelt thanks to all those who work so hard to make this possible and to those stalwarts who came before us laying the foundation.

Revd. Dawn Stamper

Associate Priest

Great Chart Local Area Report



To say it has been an eventful year would probably be a major understatement! God has been leading us on a wonderful journey of trust. The year has had its ups and downs but we are thankful to God, whose love, grace and mercy never fails. As Isaiah reminds us, 'Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."' (Isaiah 30:21) As the Body of Christ, remembering our baptism, we are called to 'shine as a light in the world, to the glory of God'. So with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have sought to share God's love with our communities throughout the year.

Mission

- Makelunch – God has just poured his blessing on this wonderful town-wide project. Meals, craft activities, sport and fun have been offered to vulnerable children and adults alike. Over the summer last year, we served in the region of 450 meals to children and at Christmas time a full roast dinner was served to just short of 100 children and adults, with the Makelunch charity giving us £5 per child, for a bespoke Christmas present. We have linked with Meals and More and Fairshare charities locally and as a result, have been able to send families home with healthy food for the week too. Thank you to the fantastic teams who have given SO generously of their time and had fun too. As one team member recently wrote, 'such a great thing to be involved in'. This project is here to stay based at St Francis.
- Ignite – is funded by the Church Commissioners, this project was launched at St Francis in the autumn. Dawn Evans was appointed as Ignite Enabler, taking the lead in building a sustainable team to run a weekly session and is described as a cross between BBC's 'One Show' with media excerpts and Messy Church for adults. It is aimed at people who do not necessarily know what church is or want to do church in a more relaxed style. The project had a 'soft start' with Dawn getting to know the Stanhope / Beaver Green community and listening to its heartbeat.
- Winter Night Shelter – once again St Francis hosted the Winter Night Shelter between December and March every Monday night, thanks to a wonderful team of volunteers. This was part of the Ashford Churches Together project which seeks to provide much more than just shelter, to adults needing support and help.
- CAP – having received national training from Christians Against Poverty, debt counselling has been provided for individuals locally, with prayer support offered. This is just another way of using people's gifts to demonstrate God's love in action. Thanks to a growing team, people locally have been supported and clients prayed for.
- PubTalk – these sessions invite people to have a drink in Singleton Barn for a chance to join the conversation and talk about issues of Life and Faith. Whilst each monthly session has a theme and some questions to provoke the discussion, it is an opportunity to discuss anything about life and faith that you may be thinking about, whether current affairs, a situation personal to you or just a question you have never asked before.
- Bonfire and Firework evening at St Francis – 'is this great night going to be an annual event? It is a safe place to bring the family – we cannot believe you do not make a charge' – this was the comment from

one dad with his family of five children. Last November we calculated that we had WELL over 250 adults and children attending the evening. This could not be run without the support of three teams of volunteers, the bonfire builders, the firework and safety team and the refreshment providers. In answer to the question – yes, this event is now an annual entry in our calendar of mission opportunities with great conversations throughout the evening over hot dogs and hot drinks.

- Brass Band Christmas Carols – hosted by St Francis, the Christmas tree outside is lit and carols sung accompanied by our local brass band. Mulled wine and nibbles are served in the church and again adults and children from the local schools and community enjoyed an evening of singing.
- Children’s Activity Mornings – hosted by Singleton Church, children from the local school have attended Christmas and Easter activity mornings. The wonderful team from Singleton church provide refreshments, craft activities and the gospel message to primary age children – the sessions have been fantastically organised and very well attended.
- Easter Egg Hunt – last Easter groups of children were found scurrying around the grounds of St Francis church looking for clues that would lead them to the final prize of Easter Eggs. A team from Singleton church ran the morning which was very successful and I know, enjoyed by the children who attended.
- Coffee mornings and Strawberry teas – this is Great Chart’s missional style! Sumptuous cakes, strawberries and lashings of cream (clotted of course) and scones are served amidst a gentle background of village and gospel chatter. Both events were hugely well supported and our thanks go to the great teams who work so willingly to provide these local events.
- Grapevine Community Café – running throughout the year on Monday and Thursdays, the café based in Singleton Community Hall continues to thrive, providing a space for mums, children and other adults to savour delicious refreshments, knit and natter and enjoy craft activities on Thursdays during school holidays. The volunteer team is drawn from Great Chart and Singleton churches and they use their gifts in God’s service.
- Many more events too numerous to mention, but a huge thank you to all the volunteers who have given of their time, talents and gifts.

Great Chart Remembers

Like so many churches across the nation, Great Chart remembered the wonderful support offered by an amazing village inhabitant, Elizabeth Quintin Strouts who organised food parcels for the village men at war. On an evening where there was standing room only, we remembered the villagers lost in war and with the Air Cadets in attendance dedicated and laid up a new standard. The Friday before saw school children, together with the Mayor Jessamy Blanford, watching the poignant presentation shown using the new audio equipment and screen installed in Great Chart church, fully funded by external grants.

Great Chart Reordering Project

The Development Team worked tirelessly to submit a Lottery Grant application toward the reordering of the church. Sadly, their application was not successful, but undaunted, they continue with fundraising ideas; one more off-piste suggestion being selling tickets to attend Revd. Cathie Aldis’ wedding!

Reigniting St Francis Church

Teams of volunteers have worked hard in transforming the look of the church hall. Home groups gave up mornings to paint and deep clean the kitchen with working parties drawn from Singleton and Great Chart churches painting and cleaning the hall in readiness for the launch of Makelunch. The church has seen a significant increase in baptisms, wedding and funerals and periodic Sunday services such as Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and a very well attended Christingle service. The twice monthly midweek communion has a growing congregation.

Revd. Canon Tim Wilson

God's calling took Tim to pastures new to three village churches outside Bedford. Tim had so faithfully served the local community and the deanery as Area Dean. His fifteen years of ministry amongst us was celebrated at a Bring and Share lunch in September.

Revd. Cathie Aldis

Associate Priest

Kennington Local Area Report

In April 2018, St Mary's Kennington held an Annual General Meeting, facilitated by Steve Coneys, Mission and Growth Advisor for the Diocese of Canterbury, with whom the LLT had been working for a number of months. Five new working groups were set up at that time and were to begin their work immediately. After a bit of subsequent reshuffling, the working groups became: Children & Families/Mission, Communication, Fundraising, Worship Leadership, Occasional Offices (Life Events).

St Mary's held an AGM on 7th April 2019 during which all of the working groups formed at the previous AGM reported on their activities over the year.

Children and families/Mission

- JAM (Jesus and Me) moved from meeting every Sunday to meeting two Sundays a month (1st and 2nd, for lack of available leaders)
- Food and Fun (Make Lunch) one Friday, every half-term at SMCC or SMKH (October, 33 children, February 30 children, Good Friday). Most of the children are not regular SMK churchgoers. This activity has afforded us:
 - ☐ Contact with new families, particularly with children at the Phoenix School
 - ☐ a partnership with Sainsbury's (they supply goods we distribute to people in need)
 - Lighthouse Service (every fourth Sunday), intergenerational, with children playing a prominent role
 - Outings (JAM outing 14th July)
 - Confirmation preparation (5 confirmands) once a month
 - Christmas Activities (Crib, a more elaborate Christingle in 2019)
 - Services at Kennington School, Downs View, and RE visits

Future Possibilities that have been discussed:

- Vacation Bible School, after-school Study, Clubs
- Messy Church (monthly)
- Linkup with the Make Lunch Franchise

Communication

- Reworking of the layout of the weekly sheet and improving its accuracy as, the weekly sheet has the widest audience of all our written communication and can also be sent digitally and uploaded onto websites
- Seasonal posters signposted in Church vicinity
- Improving our website, updating content
- Regular use of A Church near You for advertising regular and one-off events

Fundraising

The fundraising working group has set up a table of seven fundraising dates (available on request) over the year, the purpose of which is to raise funds to help pay our parish share.

Worship Leadership

- Complete reworking of the 2nd Sunday of the month lay-led service, choice of Iona material
- Feedback from the congregation helpful in drawing up service booklets
- Rota for monthly services

Future Possibilities:

- Review of all existing seasonal liturgy

Occasional Offices (Life Events)

Baptisms

- Currently, every third Sunday of the month, there are two baptism slots (12 and 1pm) for families who prefer not to have their child baptised during the course of a normal service.
- The OO group encourages families who want their children baptised during the course of a normal Sunday service, to have this done on a 2nd Sunday.
- The baptism group felt that more information on the responsibilities of being a godparent was needed and has had that information added onto the reverse side of godparents' baptismal certificates.
- Cards are now sent to families on the anniversary of their children's baptism.

Weddings

- Wedding cards signed by the whole team (vicar, vergers, organist, flower arranger) are given to couples that marry here on the occasion of their wedding
- A Valentine's Couples' Day service was held on the Sunday closest to Valentine's Day. All recently couples were invited to attend. Three attended, two of whom came with their newborn babies. Couples who requested prayer were also prayed for during that service.

Funerals

- The service of light has proved to be a comfort to many over the years and is to be maintained as such (very different from the Blue Christmas service, for those facing a first Christmas without a loved one).

The working groups will continue functioning. All those taking part in them were thanked for their previous year of ministry and commissioned for the year to come. The Fabric Committee and the Treasurer also gave a report to the AGM, both available upon request. All other groups and committees were thanked for their role, the Prayer Development Team in particular, whose ministry undergirds the life of the whole Church.

It is worth pointing out that we continue to reap added benefits locally on a daily basis for being part of one wider parish. The most obvious example of this is Make Lunch. Kennington was able to send a number of people to the very first Make Lunch sessions (including training) who brought back much of the know-how and vision, then implanted here. A kind of Make Lunch took root in Kennington which has been welcomed by our local school family liaison officers because it fills an important need. Thanks to our involvement in a scheme that was set up in South Ashford, we now have contacts with local families we never would have made otherwise. Oh the benefits of oily skin, or: How good and pleasant it is when brothers (PC=siblings) dwell in unity, like oil on the head, running down onto Aaron's beard and collar (Psalm 133.1, paraphrased).

Revd Eve Lanchantin-Piggott

Team Vicar

Kingsnorth Local Area Report

Vision: Ministry and Mission

Over two years ago the LLT met for a Vision Day. We decided our main priorities were to reach out to baptism families, families from the Primary School and the community, and prayer. I would like to think, as we invite folk to 'join us on the journey' that we are more about some of these things, while others have not really yet been addressed.

Outreach to families

Our work with families this past year has been wonderful and encouraging, in particular 3 new ministries:

1. The Cafe Church Service which we revamped and relaunched in September last year. It has been a joy to see this service become one of our most popular in the month, gradually growing a new congregation. Truly a work of God, as folk who find church an unknown quantity tell me they enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and can engage. I am grateful to members of the congregation who with grace were prepared to try Cafe Church over several months but who are now taking advantage of the benefit of being within a larger Parish to attend elsewhere on this Sunday.
2. Thursday Ark moved into the church building in January, after some issues around timings and other users at the Village Hall. A popular move with helpers and parents/carers alike. More families are thereby coming literally under our roof and a stronger link made to church and all we offer here.
3. Our new Social and Fundraising Group this year began family Film Afternoons at the Primary School. These events are not fundraisers but provide a fun, safe space for families to congregate. In an area where there is such little sense of community. We are getting regular families here too and it is hoped to show films about every 6 weeks. It has also been good to involve some of our young families in this group so that we have a better sense of what families would like to do.

Church and community

The Community Cafe is currently closed. When 'third spaces' are so rare in this area it is important to reach out to our community so that all might find a welcome, just as Jesus welcomed children and those on the edge of His society. Please join me in prayer as to how we might help increase the sense of community at Kingsnorth. Our midweek coffee drop-in is only attracting a handful of parents - perhaps not the best time for them. Things need to be tried and may not succeed. However, our midweek Morning Prayer, though small in number of attendees, appears to be a real blessing for those who come.

In Shadoxhurst I can report that we are having a St George's Day service this year, as well as a Remembrance Service. In working with Helen Hollands the new Methodist minister, it is hoped to join the Methodists with a harvest service in early October.

After some training in Social Media, I spend more time posting, both on our own Facebook page and in community pages. Our A Church Near You site is up and running. This enables anyone to find us online, with a clear and user-friendly site from the Church of England. Without statistics to hand, it does appear that we are having more visibility within our community.

Another advantage of being part of a wider Parish is being able to participate in missional initiatives which we are too small to manage on our own. Ways of working out our faith in showing the love of God to others, especially those with real needs or who are marginalised in our society. I thank folk who continue to support the Winter Night Shelter and now the new Ignite Project, both running from St Francis. Other projects have

involved people from our churches, such as Make Lunch and Christians Against Poverty, PubTalk and the Foodbank.

Prayer

While I thank God for his moving among families and the community, one area of priority that needs to be further addressed is prayer. After some preaching around prayer last year, more people are having a go at open prayer - but prayer is so much more. I am also aware that we need further prayer support for our friends in Kyrgyzstan, who continue to settle into life there. I hope we can become involved in the Novena Thy Kingdom Come initiative in June this year.

Ministry

Though we can all have ministries, be it serving coffee or delivering our magazine 'Contact', some find themselves called to train and serve in new ways. Rod Gilbert completed an Authorised Local Minister course in worship leading this year and Ian Rich has just finished an ALM course on taking funerals. We will welcome Bruce Watson as Curate at the end of June this year. Bruce, Jacqui, Sam and Freya will continue to be based in Deal while Freya finishes her A Levels. I remain thankful to Canon Gilbert for his faithful support and service - in his 51st year of ordination.

Confirmations

We have had 24 baptisms last year. Pelumi and Layomi Majekodunmi were confirmed in November and Nigel Rumens in April this year.

Finances

We will be holding a Stewardship Campaign after Easter as our finances show an increasing deficit. My thanks to Sally Rickard and the Social and Fundraising team who seek to put on a few events to raise money for our church finances, such as the successful Fashion Show in February. Meantime I am grateful to the Friends of the Churches who have not only helped with fabric costs but maintenance costs when our maintenance budget is tight. They are stepping back from smaller events this year to allow us to raise more money for mission and ministry, for which I thank them.

Electoral Roll

Our roll was replenished this year and as with most Local Areas, our numbers have fallen. We now stand at 96 not 153 but I would rather have a Roll that more accurately represents our church life than one with names on it I never recognised. Thank you Liz Taylor as Electoral Roll Officer for our Area.

Revd. Caroline Mansley

Team Vicar

South East Local Area Report

As I begin this report, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of the churches in the South East Area for the warm welcome that I received upon my arrival in the parish. I have truly felt very blessed to be on this journey with you and am excited to see what God has in store for the parish this coming year.

Throughout my first year, there has been many different groups that I have had the pleasure to be a part of, below within the report I hope to give you an idea of how these groups have become an integral part of parish life and are engaging the wider community in a number of ways.

Church.

As a local area I believe that our work together both in services and in our local community has been making an unexpected difference. Our joint services have all been well attended and the exciting dynamic of combining our liturgical differences has enabled us to experience in a more meaningful way how we worship. To have been part of these services has been a real joy and I look forward to further exploring how we can better work together.

As part of our local area reform we have restructured our Local leadership team, breaking it down into a number of sub-committees. Each of these groups has a dedicated purpose such as; Worship, Fabric, Prayer, Social, etc. These groups meet to discuss the various issues raised and report back to the Local Management Team allowing the team to be more focused and productive. As this structure has only recently been implemented, I cannot report on its progress as of yet but feel that this restructuring will give a bit more responsibility to the sub-committees enabling them to be more focused.

Messy Church.

Our Messy Church at Willesborough has been going from strength to strength, although numbers can be up and down, we have had great growth spiritually including a number of our congregation coming forward for confirmation and baptism. At this time I would like to offer my thanks to the team who works so hard to make this service possible, for the volunteers who man the tables, serve the meal and for those who plan and prepare the session.

Confirmation.

As I reflect on the past year, I have to say it was a privilege to be with a number of our candidates confirmed on the 4th April, some as mentioned from our messy church congregation and others from Willesborough and Christ Church. Thank you to all whom came to St. Francis to support our candidates and for your continued prayers as they begin this next step of their journey with God.

Willesborough Clock.

As many of you will know the clock on the Willesborough tower is currently under some much-needed repair and tlc. I know the church and local community would like to thank Brian Heritage and his team for the work that they have done in making this possible, and for all those who have helped with sponsoring time on the clock.

Night Shelter.

During the winter months Willesborough along with other churches were part of the night shelter programme, this was only made possible through the amazing number of volunteers that came forward to support the project, for this I know the church and the co-ordinators are immensely grateful and offer their

thanks. Throughout this experience we were able to come alongside many people from different backgrounds that were made homeless for one reason or another, joining them for meals and conversation enabling us to do what the church does best, come alongside those in need and offer love, care and support.

Link Lunches and Social Events.

As seems to be the usual Willesborough continues to enjoy a very diverse social life. From the wonderful Link Lunch offered as a way of bringing people together for wonderful meals and fellowship to our very eclectic range of social events set throughout the year. All of these things take a lot of work to organise and prepare and couldn't be done without the volunteers who make them possible, thank you for all that you do. I can only speak for myself in saying how much I enjoy being part of these events and the opportunity to meet people from the wider community at them.

Administration Support.

As many of you will know the Willesborough office (Libby Varley) is almost the centre of all things that go on in the local area and provides external help across the parish so on behalf of all of us within the Ministry team I would like to thank you for your continued hard work and support in all that we do as a church.

Volunteers.

I wanted to put a special thank you in at the end of this brief report to all those who do the un-noticed jobs within the church, for the jam makers, the chair stackers, the cleaners, the counters, the linen makers, and those who do the little maintenance jobs. A big thank you for all that you do that benefit the life of the church in ways you don't realise.

Looking forward.

It has been a fantastic year for Willesborough and the parish, as they are going from strength to strength. So might I encourage you that you are doing an amazing job and as we approach this next stage it is my prayer that we can do so as a stronger and more unified church to go forward and do incredible things within Ashford.

Revd. Andrew Brown
Assistant Curate

Team Missioner's Report

2018 has been a busy year across our Parish, as you will undoubtedly read elsewhere. There has been much going on, and lots of it missional and looking out.

Each Local Area report will talk about some of the local mission opportunities but I wanted to reflect on some of the Parish wide initiatives

Winter Night Shelter

This year the Anglican's provided a venue for two nights of the WNS at St Francis on a Monday, and St Mary's Willesborough on a Wednesday, and volunteers from across the Parish came together to make the shelter a success. This is a great example of ecumenical working and putting faith into action.

With the launch, in 2018, of Ashford Together, an ecumenical Charity that will hold the WNS, as well as possibly other projects too, the future is looking brighter for the homeless of Ashford Town.

Christians Against Poverty

We have now had 12 clients go debt free across Ashford!

Jerry Fox and Martin Lees continue to see 4 new clients every month. They visit, along with a befriender, the client 3 times in their own homes to support them on their journey out of debt.

2018 also saw the launch of the CAP network across Ashford which brings together different providers to provide a holistic response to those in poverty.

Make Lunch

Summer 2018 saw the launch of Make Lunch in Ashford at St Francis Church. It ran for 10 sessions over the summer holiday, and then 1 in October and 1 at Christmas. It was only possible due to the large number of people from different churches who came together to run the sessions, preparing food, running games and activities, and making sure everything behind the scenes went to plan.

In October, having seen what was going on at St Francis, a team from St Mary's Kennington opened the doors of SMCC to welcome in members of the community for their 'Fun and Food' event. This was well attended and plans are afoot for this to continue in 2019.

The original vision for Make Lunch was to look after and feed children, this has developed into looking at the whole family and we hope to continue to see Make Lunch grow and develop in 2019, opening more doors and serving more people across our Town

Ignite

Ignite launched in Ashford in September 2018. A diocesan project, funded for 3 years has bought Dawn Evans to Ashford to work full time, and employed Dawn Stamper part time. Between them we will launch 2 Ignite centres, at Christ Church and St Francis in 2019. These will involve an evening congregation of 'church but now as you know it' as well as opening the doors of these churches throughout the week to the local community

Schools

In 2018 we participated in our First 'Prayer for Schools Week' which involved every school receiving a box of biscuits and a card of Thanks from the Parish for all they do throughout the year. Our ministry to schools is also growing with new projects established in Norton Knatchbull and Ashford College this year.

The Church of England's Mission Statement is 'A Christian presence in every community'. This is our desire as a Town, and we continue our mission to see more lives changed through Jesus

Nathan Wilson

Church Warden's Report

The fabric of our Churches is generally in good order apart from St Marys Great Chart where the Church tower and some windows are in quite serious disrepair.

Ongoing projects are:

- Sevington Church reordering
- Christ Church Hall refurbishment and extension
- Great Chart toilets and improved access.
- Willesborough tower and clock repairs.

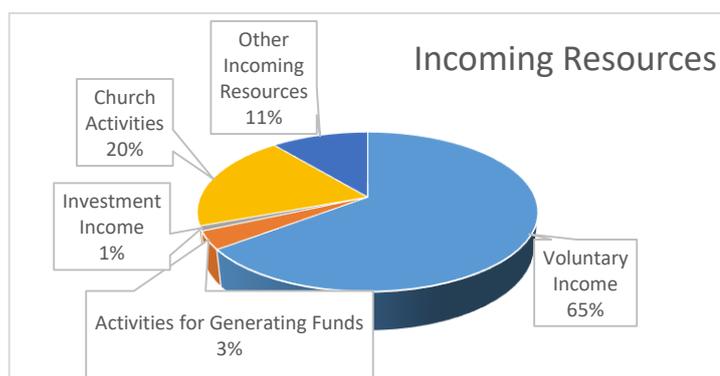
Jerry Fox & Alan Stamp

Church Wardens

Treasurer's Report

2018 saw the achievement of full payment of Parish Share for three successive years since the formation of Ashford Town. This resulted in the write-off by Diocese of the historic arrears of £135,000. This is no mean achievement given that prior to formation, six of the former parishes were not paying their full Parish Share and two of the remaining three were drawing on reserves in order to do so.

This success would imply that the parish is sustainable but the year was dominated by a significant projected deficit by the year end. However, in His inimitable and mysterious way, God provided in the form of three legacies which arrived in the closing weeks of the year, totalling in excess of £50,000 and these together brought our income and expenditure for the year into a surplus of some £5,000.

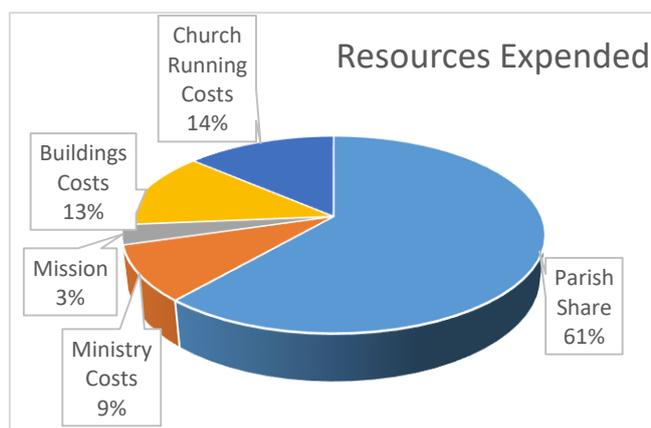


INCOMING RESOURCES

Voluntary Income	£387,401
Activities for Generating Funds	£21,873
Investment Income	£5,892
Church Activities	£117,803
<u>Other Incoming Resources</u>	<u>£66,004</u>
Total	£598,972

RESOURCES EXPENDED

Parish Share	£364,262
Ministry Costs	£53,999
Mission	£19,223
Buildings Costs	£75,459
<u>Church Running Costs</u>	<u>£81,009</u>
Total	£593,952



At the end of 2017 the stock markets closed on a high but dropped back a little early in 2018, with the result that the shareholdings which were sold and the end of year revaluations for the remaining holdings have produced a small loss which turns the £5000 surplus into a very small (£600) deficit.

Maintenance of our church buildings has been strictly controlled again this year, with anything other than basic regular maintenance checks being charge to Restricted Funds. We are indeed thankful to past members who have provided for our churches in this way and, to this end, leaflets are now available across the parish for those who wish to consider making such an arrangement in their Will for the future care of our churches.

Special collections and events during the year provided support for the following charities:

- Children’s Society Embrace ME Porchlight Royal British Legion Madagascar
- Kerala Flood Victims Open Doors Tear Fund Ashford Food Bank Pilgrim’s Hospice

We also sent donations to Madagascar after the devastation wreaked by Cyclone Ava and to Indonesia for the relief operation following the Tsunamis there.

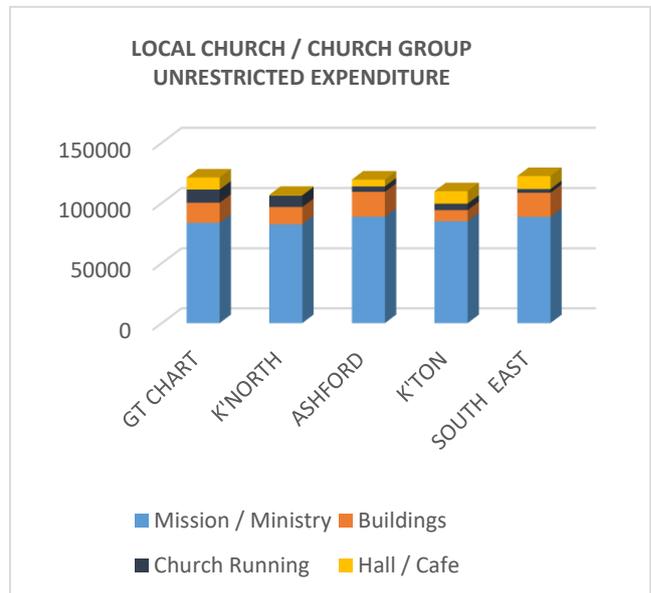
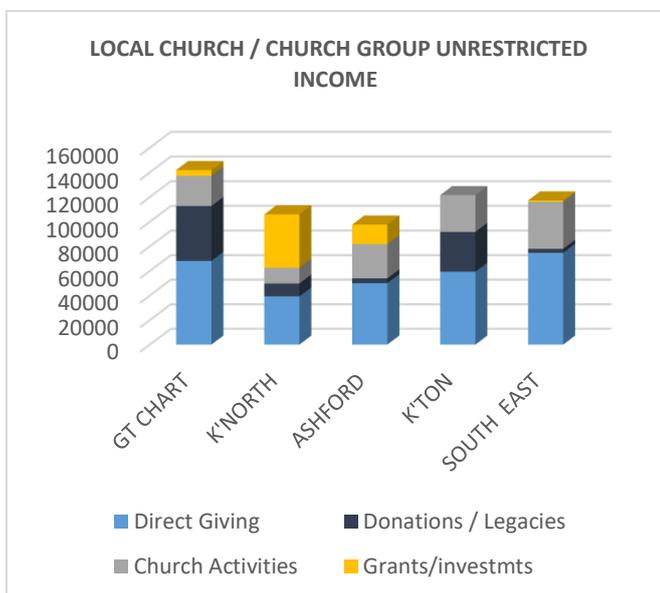
The financial cost of supporting CAP and Fresh Start amounted to £9,128, support for the work of Graham Nunn in and around the parish was £1,000 and we spent over £1,700 on children’s ministry and £800 to top up the Parish Discretionary Fund for support of the homeless, destitute and needy. The Make Lunch project attracted grants and donations of almost £2,000 and specific donations amounting to almost £1,700: costs included initial set up and essential premises improvement of £1,588 and provision of food and entertainment amounted to £1,008 leaving a healthy balance of around £1,000 for future provision.

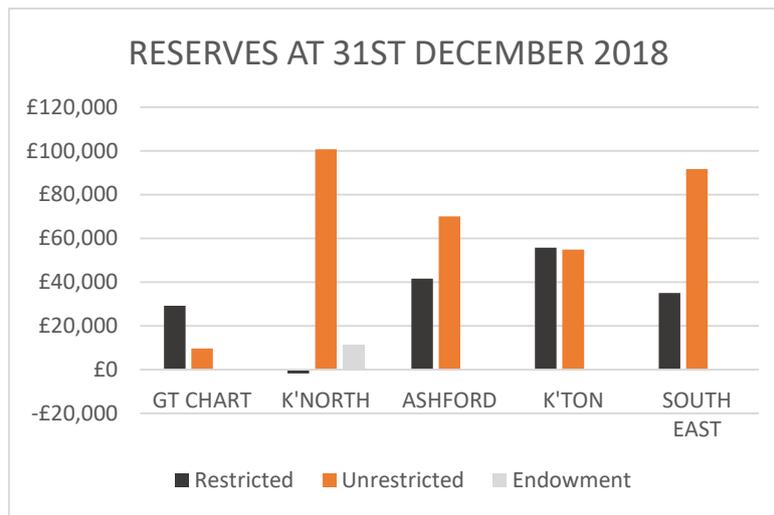
Long term projects at St Mary’s Church Sevington and St Mary’s Gt Chart are now under way but each in the very early stages with expenditure being mainly in respect of professional services from architects, and in the Gt Chart project, quantity surveyors and a firm of professional fund raisers. Major expenditure on halls has been funded at Kennington from a legacy received in 2017 and includes the provision of new hand-driers at each of the two halls (£3,228), new flooring (£6,350 at Rylands Road) and floor maintenance and redecoration (St Mary’s Church Hall (£3,735).

Total Restricted Income £39,776; Expenditure £56,287; Deficit £16,511
 Revaluation losses £2,450; Net reduction in funds £18,961; Restricted Funds remaining £327,150

In 2019 as new staffing patterns emerge we have a unique window of opportunity to balance the budget which is based on a lower Parish Share and clergy expenses (due to one less ordained minister) and reduced administration costs (due to the removal of the post of Halls Administrator and reallocation of the work to our existing administration team). An increase in regular giving equating to less than the cost of one cup of coffee per week per head of planned givers could achieve the desired result. However, one quarter of the year has already gone and as the weeks and months roll by without addressing stewardship, the climb to achieve target becomes steeper and the increase higher.

Full copies of the annual report and accounts (29 pages) are available from the treasurer, preferably electronically. Income, expenditure and reserves of each local church / church group are shown graphically below .





Shirley Leslie
Parish Treasurer

Safeguarding Report

We take safeguarding seriously in our group of churches so we follow the Diocesan Guidelines. Our aim is to protect children and vulnerable adults from any type of abuse.

We have four Disclosure Officers spread across the parish. They deal with the Disclosures of all members of our congregations who hold a role of responsibility.

We have nine Safeguarding Officers, again spread across the parishes. Their job is to be responsible for seeing that their own place of worship is safe from abuse for all people who attend any activity within that church family. We work closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers who are extremely efficient.

I am the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator and my role is to be accountable to the PCC and to keep in contact with all local Safeguarding Officers and Incumbents.

We aim to have all people in posts of responsibility trained on one of the Diocesan Training courses and at present we have most people trained.

We have not had any serious incident during this last year, but we have had some minor concerns which have been dealt with efficiently.

If anyone suspects a problem, they should alert a Safeguarding Officer or report directly to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers. Each church has a poster on display giving our policies and procedures, also contact details for a Safeguarding Officer.

Anita Sorrell

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Electoral Roll Report

As most people were aware, we have start again with the Electoral Roll due to the six-year rule.

The responses for the Electoral Roll this year are as follows:

Local Church	Roll Count
Ashford	131
Great Chart	113
Kennington	107
Kingsnorth	96
Willesborough	184
Grand Total	631

Yes, this was a large drop since the number the count for 2018, this being 805.

However, this is to be expected when you rewrite an entire roll from scratch. Due to people who have moved away, passed away etc.

I would like to thank all the Local Area Electoral Roll people for their usual work in collating the information. Thanks also must go to Emma Bishop for typing up most of the information.

Phil Sibbald
Electoral Roll Officer

Team Development Officer's Report

I have now completed 2 years as Team Development Officer and I am looking forward to the third year post the administrative restructure.

Staff Changes

The only changes in staff that have taken place since the last APCM is George Wheeler left the position of Hall Hire. We took the decision not to replace the role like for like but use the 10 to 15 hours per week amongst the existing Admin staff.

Parish Herald

The Parish Herald still continues to be published quarterly. I am always looking for articles to go in, so please feel free to pass any news or events on to me for publication.

Website/Communication

Regular updates continue to be made to www.ashfordchurches.co.uk and published weekly. Those that are also on Twitter will also see that major items of news are issued as Press Releases. The releases are also contained in the weekly web update emails that are distributed.

Following the updates on the GDPR, we are now in a positions with those who are given our permission to contact the by email for news updates, my circulation list now contains over 300 names.

Others will still continue to be notified by Parish Notice Boards.

GDPR:

The Communications Team meets regularly and have been dealing primarily with GDPR. We are currently in the process of writing the parish policy on GDPR and what we need to go to continue with this project and this will be bought before the PCC in the near future for their ratification.

Technology / The Future

I am currently looking at two items of technology.

The first is a new online portal for the organisation of Occasional Offices. This has been paid for by the National Church for use by all Parishes within the UK. I am in the process of trialling the system to see if it will suit our needs and it looks very promising and could streamline our processes immensely.

The other piece of technology would be a mobile application for marketing of events and services. I have yet to look into this further as I believe there is likely to be a cost involved and I want to keep any spending to an absolute minimum

Thank You

I would like to thank everyone in the parish who has supported and helped me over the last year. These include the Staff Team, all the local administrators and anyone involved on any of the sub committees I have been involved in.

Phil Sibbald

Team Development Officer