

**The Parish Church of
St. Peter and St. Paul, Ash**

**Annual Parochial Church
Meeting and Parish Meeting**

on

Sunday 14th April 2019

at

Ash Parish Church

**Agenda,
Minutes of the 2018 Meeting,
PCC Report and Financial
Statement to the 2019 APCM,
and Reports from Officers.**



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Additional Reports may be tabled at the Meeting or presented orally

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH
FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CHURCHWARDENS
(THE VESTRY MEETING)

TO BE HELD IN ASH PARISH CHURCH ON SUNDAY 14TH APRIL 2019
STARTING AT APPROXIMATELY 1.00pm.

AGENDA

1. Appointment of two churchwardens.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

TO BE HELD IN ASH PARISH CHURCH ON SUNDAY 14TH APRIL 2019
STARTING AT APPROXIMATELY 1.05pm.

AGENDA

1. Appointment of a Chairman.
2. Prayer and Welcome by the Chairman.
3. Apologies for absence.
4. Minutes of the 2018 Annual Parochial Church Meeting.
5. Matters arising.
6. Presentation of the new Electoral Roll.
7. Presentation of Financial Statement and Treasurer's Report and questions.
 - Review of the PCC's Reserves Policy.
8. Churchwardens' Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church of the parish and questions.
 - Presentation of List of Sidesmen.
9. Election of two members to the Parochial Church Council for a nominal three year term.
10. Confirmation of the appointment of sidesmen.
11. Appointment of an Independent Examiner of the Church Accounts for 2019.
12. Consideration of the written and oral (if any) reports of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the activities of the parish and church and questions on the reports.
13. Discussion on mission and finance in the church and parish including achievements over the past year and the plans for the future.
14. Any other business.
15. Closing reflections by the Rector.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH
FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CHURCHWARDENS
(THE VESTRY MEETING)

HELD IN ASH VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 24TH APRIL 2018

MINUTES

The meeting was attended by the Area Dean, the Rev. Jim Fletcher, the Rev. Dylan Turner, and 27 parishioners. 2 people who are not resident in the Parish but on the electoral roll of the parish were also in attendance. A list of names is appended to the minute book.

The Churchwarden opened the meeting at 8:02pm.

1 Preliminaries.

1.1 The Churchwarden welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Social Committee for arranging refreshments. She proposed that the Area Dean should take the chair for the meeting and that Cameron Clark should record the proceedings. This was agreed *nem. con.*

2 Minutes of the previous meeting.

2.1 The minutes of the 2017 meeting were proposed by Alison Harding and seconded by John Harding and agreed unanimously.

3 Appointment of two churchwardens.

3.1 Written nominations were received in advance of the meeting as follows:

	Proposed by:	Seconded by:
Nicholas Dunsdon	Carol Bridge	Ray Viney
Ian Nurdin	Marion Simmons	Jan Kennedy

3.2 There being no other nominations, the Area Dean declared that Nicholas Dunsdon and Ian Nurdin were elected for one year as churchwardens for the parish.

3.3 The Area Dean thanked Carol Bridge for her two years as churchwarden.

3.4 The Area Dean closed the meeting at 8:06pm.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

HELD IN ASH VILLAGE HALL ON TUESDAY 24TH APRIL 2018

The meeting was attended by the Area Dean, the Rev. Jim Fletcher, the Rev. Dylan Turner and 30 people whose names were on the electoral roll. A list of names is appended to the minute book.

1 Preliminaries.

1.1 The Churchwarden proposed that the Area Dean should take the chair for the meeting. This was agreed *nem. con.*

2 Prayer and Welcome.

2.1 The Area Dean, the Rev Jim Fletcher, opened the meeting at 8:06pm.

2.2 He referred to the Diocesan Vision with the focus on being called together to be disciples, enrich our communities and to resource the Church's mission and ministry. He used the Called Together prayer.

3 Apologies for absence.

3.1 Apologies for absence were received from 7 people listed in an appendix to the minutes.

4 Minutes of the 2017 Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

4.1 The minutes, which had previously been circulated, were proposed by Ray Viney, seconded by Jean Bentley and approved *nem. con.*

5 Matters arising.

5.1 There were no matters arising.

6 Report on the changes in the Electoral Roll.

6.1 The report was taken as read.

6.2 There were no questions.

6.3 Next year will be the renewal of the electoral roll so everyone will have to reapply.

7 Presentation of Financial Statement and Treasurer's Report and questions.

7.1 The Treasurer formally presented the accounts.

7.2 He explained that negative figures referred to sums paid out of the current account rather than the interest-bearing accounts.

7.3 He noted that there was a significant amount left over from the underspend on the Kitchen & Toilet project. There would be further discussion about how to use this money later in the meeting. The ground rules should be that it is spent on capital items, not current expenditure, to improve the infrastructure of the church.

7.4 He noted that there will, in addition, be significant expenditure on a new organ and thanked George Mills for his work in keeping the old instrument going.

7.5 The Treasurer noted that giving is reducing and this is due to some people not able to give to the church for a variety of reasons and to a drop in attendances. Fewer weddings are expected in 2018. Maintenance costs have been low and it may be possible to spend some of the money now available to save on future running costs.

7.6 There were no questions.

7.7 The meeting agreed unanimously to adopt the accounts on a proposal by Jackie Richardson, seconded by Marion Simmons.

Review of the PCC's Reserves Policy.

7.8 John Harding explained the purpose of the Reserves Policy. He proposed, seconded by George Mills, that the effective level of the PCC's main current account is expected not to fall below £5,000 at any time; this is an increase from recent years to cover occasional spikes in spending, notably for oil deliveries which are now billed as delivered. The proposal was agreed unanimously. This figure applies until the 2019 APCM, at which it will be reviewed.

8 Churchwarden's Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church or churches of the parish and questions.

8.1 The written report was presented to the meeting by Carol Bridge.

8.2 She said that her two years had been fascinating and enjoyable; there had also been tears and pain. She was really grateful for the team of helpers, especially when family issues meant she was absent for several weeks.

8.3 She said she had noticed a change at Ash Church in recent months. There is an increased sense of fellowship, greater imagination and cohesiveness; a greater willingness to engage in important conversations. Events such as the Christmas Tree Festival and concert demonstrated this as did the willingness of people to join in with work such as cleaning the church. She thanked Alison Harding for her ministry, especially with funerals in Ash and in the Group.

8.4 She said that she and Susan will still be learning as LLMs after their licensing on 19 May. Everyone is most welcome to attend the service in Rochester Cathedral at 2:15 for 2:30pm. She will always see Ash Church as her home.

8.5 The Area Dean thanked Carol for her report.

9 Election of one member to the Cobham Deanery Synod for a two-year term.

9.1 The Area Dean said that his 5-year term as Area Dean will be finishing very soon and there is a time of transition in the Deanery with Pauline Foster voted last night as a new Lay Chair. Full engagement by all parishes will be important, including for the election of Diocesan Synod representatives.

9.2 A vacancy has existed for one person during the past year. The Area Dean said that written nominations had been received as follows:

	Proposed by:	Seconded by:
Alison Harding	Jane Davison	Carol Clark

9.3 The Area Dean declared that Alison Harding was elected as a Deanery Synod member and member of the PCC for the parish.

10 Election of three members to the Parochial Church Council for a two or three-year term.

10.1 Alison Harding and Susan Heads were retiring by rotation. A vacancy also existed. The Area Dean said that written nominations had been received as follows:

	Proposed by:	Seconded by:
Carol Bridge	Ray Viney	Glenys Davies
Susan Heads	Cameron Clark	John Harding
Jeremy Scott	Jane Scott	Jake Scott

10.2 The Area Dean declared that Carol Bridge, Susan Heads and Jeremy Scott were elected as members of the PCC for the parish. The PCC would determine the length of time that each would serve.

11 Confirmation of the appointment of sidesmen.

11.1 Carol Bridge confirmed that the list of sidesmen would be approved by the PCC.

11.2 This was agreed unanimously *nem.con.*

12 Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Church Accounts for 2018.

12.1 Although he has moved from the parish, Gael Lewis has said he is willing to continue as independent examiner for at least one further year.

12.2 Bryan Parlett proposed, Carol Clark seconded, the re-appointment of Gael Lewis as independent examiner and this was agreed unanimously.

12.3 There was a vote of thanks for Gael's work.

THERE WAS A BREAK FOR REFRESHMENTS

13 Consideration of the written and oral (if any) reports of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the activities of the parish and church generally.

13.1 **PCC's Report** There were no questions.

13.2 **Deanery Synod Report** The Area Dean highlighted the Bishop's visit. There were no questions.

13.3 **Diocesan Synod Report** There were no questions.

13.4 **The Rural North West Kent Group of Churches** There were no questions.

13.5 **Local Churches Together** There were no questions.

13.6 **Friends of Ash Church Report** There were no questions.

13.7 **Lead Recruiter/Parish Children's Representative/Safeguarding Adults Representative** There were no questions.

13.8 **Healing Team Report** There were no questions.

13.9 **Tower Captain's Report** There were no questions.

13.10 **Social Committee Report** There were no questions.

13.11 **Junior Church Report** A written report was provided at the meeting. The Area Dean referred to the need to find ways to respond to the declining number of young people in our churches and noted that this may need to be addressed at other times and in different ways, including schools work. There were no questions.

13.12 **Choirmasters' Report** A written report was provided at the meeting. There were no questions.

13.13 **Flower Team Report** A written report was provided at the meeting. There were no

questions.

13.14 There was no further discussion.

14 Discussion on Mission and Finance in the Church and Parish.

14.1 Carol Bridge said the total cost of the Kitchen and Toilet project was £145,229.53. The money raising activities have been going on for over 20 years. Many people gave money, time and energy towards the project. The PCC has agreed that church members should have an opportunity to be involved in the decisions about how to spend the remaining money. The conditions are that there should be no ongoing cost, a wise use, with ingenuity and imagination; no faculty should be required (unless it is a very good idea). She believed that as part of this the churchyard shed should be replaced and good folding chairs for use in the church are desirable. Everyone was encouraged to talk to a PCC member or churchwarden with their suggestions and she promised that everyone would receive a response. The items suggested may be cheap or expensive.

14.2 The rest of the money will help to fund a Mission Initiative Plan, including the Group youth project. The PCC's role is to further God's mission so it is important to spend some money on this, when we have a Plan.

14.3 There were no questions.

14.4 The Area Dean suggested that the PCC members should be identified to the congregation.

14.5 Alison proposed a vote of thanks to everyone who has worked on the Kitchen and Toilet project.

15 Any other business.

15.1 Ian Nurdin highlighted the Church Directory and noted that GDPR means that there will have to be changes in the way data is held and messages are sent out.

15.2 Carol Clark asked if the milk bottle top collections will be continuing. Ian Nurdin and Bryan Parlett said 1.4 tonnes have been collected, only a relatively small amount of money has been raised but it is intended to continue the collections for a time.

15.3 The question has been raised as to whether the holding of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on a Sunday including a lunch should be considered next year. The Area Dean said the PCC would consider that and a new incumbent should have an input in any decision if possible.

16 Reflections from the Area Dean.

16.1 Referring to 'Called Together' he said that the church world is changing and churches are now less isolated. It is true that we are stronger together.

16.2 The Group has helped to promote prayerful environments where we can share things, working together. Young people do not look at parish boundaries and it makes sense to work together on reaching out to young people.

16.3 Changes over the last year have meant that key leaders in the Group have moved on and financial pressures mean a different approach has been unavoidable. But he thanked all who had helped to lead the churches through that time.

16.4 Joint working is not now just a pulpit swap but a sharing of ministry across the Group as all ministers are licensed to all the churches in the Group. The Group rota now, thanks to hard work by Elizabeth Robertson and John Harding, shows how these resources are being deployed.

16.5 Working together will be a factor in attracting a new incumbent who should value the support from across the Group.

16.6 Following the initial unsuccessful advertising of the vacancy on the Rochester Diocesan website, a revised draft Parish Profile has been prepared and agreed by the PCCs of Ash and Ridley. It will be presented for formal adoption to a joint meeting of the two PCCs on Friday 27th April. That meeting will also be asked to consider:

- The appointment of the Parish Representatives who will be responsible for assessing applications for the living on behalf of the PCCs (Ash PCC has resolved to appoint Ray Viney, who was previously appointed to the role for the first advertisement, and, as the second previous appointee was Carol Bridge who will no longer be eligible following her licensing next month as an LLM, a second person who will be agreed after this meeting);
- A request to the Patron to advertise the vacancy (discussions with the Patron have indicated that he is willing to place an advertisement in the national church press and the Archdeacon of Rochester will assist with this);
- Whether there is a need to request a 'section 12 meeting' with the Patron and the Bishop (the PCCs will discuss the benefits of this); and
- Whether to request a statement from the Bishop describing, in relation to the benefice, the needs of the diocese and the wider interests of the Church (this would put the Parish Profile into the wider context of the Diocese).

16.7 The timetable from here on will depend on how quickly an advertisement can be placed and on the Archdeacon's advice about the most appropriate deadlines and interview dates. Realistically it will mean a decision is possible in the summer, provided suitable applications are received, and with the need for most people to give three months' notice once appointed, it is likely that the earliest someone will be in post is around November.

16.8 Bryan Parlett asked whether the lifting of the suspension of the patronage by the Bishop had been publicised to the congregation and the churchwarden assured him that it had been announced in the church.

16.9 Jeremy Scott said a S.12 meeting may not be useful in view of discussions he had already had with the Archdeacon.

16.10 Carol Bridge clarified the purpose of a S.12 meeting which is to exchange views on the Parish Profile and the Bishop's supporting statement.

16.11 Rev. Dylan Turner said that he really enjoyed being at Ash and felt that he had been welcomed by the willingness to work with him.

Carol Bridge thanked the Area Dean for chairing the meeting.

The Area Dean closed the meeting with prayer and the Grace at 9:42pm.

Electoral Roll Officer's Report

The 2019 Electoral Roll for the Parish of St. Peter and St. Paul, Ash has been prepared in accordance with the Church Representation Rules and was completed on 17 March 2019. The completed Roll was displayed in the church for a period of at least fourteen days as required by the Rules.

This is an entirely new Electoral Roll and includes all those who applied by the published legal deadline. All reasonable efforts, in addition to the required official notifications, were made to give those who currently worship at Ash the opportunity to apply.

The new Roll is available for inspection and contains the following numbers of people

A	Members of the Church of England resident in the Parish:	60
B	Members of the Church of England not resident in the Parish:	11
C	Members of other churches who worship in the Parish:	0
	This gives a total of:	71

Carol Clark
Electoral Roll Officer

Treasurer's Report

2018 was the year in which our 'current account' deficit, long foreseen, became a reality. As will be seen from the accounts, the most significant factor was the reduction in income: a reduced number of givers, less Gift Aid income, and a downturn in fees from weddings and funerals.

This is not a cause for a hasty response. We have a healthy capital sum available as protection for now (largely because expenditure on the kitchen-and-toilet project was significantly less than we had feared) – protection, and continued capital funding for the wish-list we have embarked on for further (smaller) projects in the hope of developing our outreach.

But it is a cause for some thinking. Not least as there is good reason to believe that the in-year deficit will be larger in the immediately foreseeable future. There are particular circumstances which will, as things stand, cause a further reduction in our giving income; and there is continuing uncertainty about the amount we will judge it right to pay to the diocese – money which immediately comes back to the parish in the form of support costs and rector's stipend and accommodation. (The way these costs are apportioned among parishes is under review: whatever formula is eventually put in place, it is likely that we will turn out to be paying at least a little less than our share.)

We should as ever keep expenditure in focus: there is likely to be a small increase, largely re-setting to the level of before the vacancy. But that is not at the core of our long-term issue: the main area of focus will have to be our income, both from giving and in other ways of raising funds on a repeatable basis. This is high on the PCC's agenda, with some ideas already being pursued. And we hope that discussion at the APCM will produce more.

John Harding

PCC Treasurer

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES - AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018

Total 31.12.17		Total 31.12.18	General Fund	DESIGNATED FUNDS		RESTRICTED FUNDS					
				Fabric Fund	Projects Fund	Specified Giving Fund	Bell Fund	Junior Church Fund	Discretionary Fund	Choir Fund	Charity Fund
41991	CRF - Diocese	22137		22137							
6115	Bell Fund - Diocese	6140					6140				
47937	Diary Account - Diocese	23040									
25421	Santander main current account *	43075									
8	Santander dormant account	8									
0.02	Santander instant reserve account	0.02									
15780	Santander 30-day access account	15864	53151	-12486	54676	7947	-1758	197	1090	1608	0
10418	Santander bonus account	10450									
11947	Harpenden BS account	11959									
693	Cash	29									
160311	Total in accounts *	132702	53151	9651	54676	7947	4381	197	1090	1608	0
	* Adjusted to reflect amounts paid, but not listed in bank statements till subsequent year										
11118	Debtors **	9240	8238			1000	3				
0	Liabilities	0									
171428	FUND TOTALS	141942	61388	9651	54676	8947	4384	197	1090	1608	0

** Debtors: Tax-reclaim (£9050) and Group parishes £190)

PARISH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL, ASH AND NEW ASH GREEN		
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018		
GENERAL FUND		
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		
RECEIPTS (for payments see next page)	2018	2017
Giving (unrestricted)		
Tax-reclaimable giving	£27,485	£28,085
Other planned giving	£1,490	£2,314
Other collections at services	£3,543	£4,344
Other recurring giving/donations	£0	£0
Non-recurring giving/donations	£303	£1,257
	£32,821	£36,000
Income tax recovered	£8,648	£9,623
Fees	£8,436	£11,389
Fete income	£1,502	£2,232
Other receipts from fund-raising activities		
Webb Ivory	£0	£0
Fund-raising: other income	£1,218	£706
	£1,218	£706
Other receipts from church activities		
Sales	£0	£0
Fees received: Ash Village Hall & Church	£150	£250
Church activities: other income	£255	£190
	£405	£440
Interest	£122	£133
Grants	£0	£0
Contribution from Ridley PCC	£620	£453
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£53,773	£60,977

PAYMENTS (for receipts see previous page)	2018	2017
Internal adjustments		
To Fabric Fund (via Church Repair Fund)	£4,350	£4,350
To Projects Fund (via former Renewals Fund)	£1,260	£1,236
Church premises (inc. churchyard*)		
Utility bills	£2,840	£1,318
Maintenance & running expenses	£4,763	£6,940
* Churchyard element: £700	£7,603	£8,257
Clergy		
Clergy working and rectory expenses	£1,942	£4,754
The church's work: other payments		
Visiting clergy	£688	£310
Upkeep of services and study groups; covenanting churches	£469	£473
Gifts and hospitality	£102	£306
Hiring of venues	£427	£360
Readers' costs	£60	£60
Salaries and service fees	£3,115	£2,405
Development, training, mission & evangelism	£284	£900
Website	£308	£323
Management & administration (inc. Stationery, Photocopying & Postage)	£1,569	£1,286
Advertising (excluding for Rector vacancy)	£108	£0
Bank charges	£0	£10
	£7,130	£6,433
Offer to diocese	£35,760	£31,314
Expenditure for Group parishes (to be repaid)	£190	
Outward giving (from General Fund)	£110	£130
Costs of fund-raising		
Fete	£85	£370
Other event costs	£162	£639
Cost of stewardship	£134	£64
	£381	£1,073
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£58,726	£57,547
<i>Excess of payments over receipts:</i>	£4,953	
Account total at 1 January 2018:	£58,104	
Account total at 31 December 2018:	£53,151	

PARISH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL, ASH AND NEW ASH GREEN		
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018		
FABRIC FUND (including CRF)		
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		
RECEIPTS	2018	2017
Interest	£80	£120
VAT reclaimed (boiler repair)	£347	
Transfer from General Fund (to CRF)	£4,350	£4,350
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£4,777	£4,470
PAYMENTS		
Quinquennial repairs	£25,099	£517
Oil transmission reconstruction	£8,750	
Sump pump	£1,050	
Other work on heating system and boiler house	£1,778	
Banking fee (diocese)	£5	
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£36,683	£517
	Excess of payments over receipts:	£31,905
	Account total at 1 January 2018:	£41,556
	Account total at 31 December 2018:	£9,651
PROJECTS FUND		
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		
RECEIPTS	2018	2017
General fund-raising	£178	£306
Transferred from General Fund (via former Renewals)	£1,260	£1,236
Interest	£112	£383
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£1,550	£1,925
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£0	
	Excess of receipts over payments:	£1,550
	Account total at 1 January 2018:	£53,126
	Account total at 31 December 2018:	£54,676
SPECIFIED GIVING FUND (Restricted Fund)		
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		
RECEIPTS	2018	2017
Individual donations	£5,000	£8,557
Donation - Friends of Ash Church	£0	£10,000
VAT reclaimed	£28,517	£0
Income tax recovered	£2,139	£0
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£35,656	£18,557
PAYMENTS		
Kitchen-and-toilet project	£11,087	£124,106
Organ	£16,311	
New projects programme	£311	
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£27,709	£124,106
	Excess of receipts over payments:	£7,947
	Account total at 1 January 2018:	£0
	Account total at 31 December 2018:	£7,947

PARISH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL, ASH AND NEW ASH GREEN
 FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018

BELL FUND (Restricted Fund)
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	2018	2017
Donations	£10	£0
Interest	£21	£20
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£31	£20
<u>TOTAL PAYMENTS</u>	£0	£0
<i>Excess of receipts over payments:</i>	£31	
Account total at 1 January 2018:		£4,351
Account total at 31 December 2018:		£4,381

JUNIOR CHURCH FUND (Restricted Fund)
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	2018	2017
Interest	0.41	£0
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£0	£0
<u>TOTAL PAYMENTS</u>	£0	£0
<i>Excess of receipts over payments:</i>	£0	
Account total at 1 January 2018:		£197
Account total at 31 December 2018:		£197

**PARISH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL, ASH AND NEW ASH GREEN
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018**

	2018	2017
<u>CHOIR FUND (Restricted Fund)</u>		
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		
<u>RECEIPTS</u>		
Fees received		
Service fees (incl. donations for performing)	£425	£1,300
	£425	£1,300
Interest	£4	£4
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£429	£1,304
<u>PAYMENTS</u>		
Purchases	£0	£0
Choir Activities		
Social events	£612	£557
Musical events	£98	£264
Gift		£50
	£710	£871
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£710	£871
Excess of payments over receipts:	£281	
Account total at 1 January 2018:	£1,889	
Account total at 31 December 2018:	1608	

PARISH OF ST PETER AND ST PAUL, ASH AND NEW ASH GREEN		
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2018		
<u>CHARITY FUND (Restricted Fund)</u>		
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		
<u>RECEIPTS</u>	2018	2017
Funds raised		
Collections at services	£591	£715
Special fund-raising	£1,822	£551
	£2,413	£1,265
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£2,413	£1,265
<u>PAYMENTS</u>		
Funds passed on		
To charities *	£2,413	£1,569
	£2,413	£1,569
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£2,413	£1,569
	<i>Excess of payments over receipts:</i>	£0
	Account total at 1 January 2018:	£0
	Account total at 31 December 2018:	£0
	* Children's Society	£591
	* Poverty and Hope	£825
	* Aenon Trust	£524
	* Ellenor Hospice	£473
<u>DISCRETIONARY FUND (Restricted Fund)</u>		
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		
<u>RECEIPTS</u>	2018	2017
Interest	£2	£3
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£2	£3
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£0	£0
	<i>Excess of receipts over payments:</i>	£2
	Account total at 1 January 2018:	£1,088
	Account total at 31 December 2018:	£1,090

Statement of Accounting Policies

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 as amended by the Church Accounting (Amendment) Regulations 2001 and 2006 using the Receipts & Payments basis.

Funds

The General Fund represents the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any special restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC.

The accounts include monetary transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC can be held responsible. They do not include the accounts of other Church groups that owe an affiliation to another body, nor any that are informal gatherings of Church members.

Subject to the above, receipts and payments include income as received and expenditure when irrevocably paid.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Bank balances are adjusted to take account of payments which were irrevocably made during the accounting period but were not yet reflected in the final bank statements.

Amounts owing from the Inland Revenue are included under Debtors.

Other amounts owing from and owed to other bodies at the end of the accounting period are included under Debtors and Liabilities respectively.

The remaining amounts are derived from the closing bank balances, adjusted as above.

John Harding
PCC Treasurer

Independent examiner's report to the PCC of St. Peter & St. Paul, Ash-by-Wrotham

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2018, which are set out on pages 12 to 18, is in respect of an examination carried in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ('the Regulations') and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirements of the Regulations and section 144(2) of the 2011 Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations and section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act

Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Gael Lewis JP B.Sc MBA C.Eng
37a High Street,
Rochester
Kent ME1 1LN

5 March 2019

Churchwardens' Report

Welcome Helen!

On Tuesday 13th November the Rev'd Helen Reeves was installed as Rector of St Peter & St Paul Ash, with St Peter Ridley. Helen had moved into the Rectory in the October and our thanks to everyone who helped with cleaning it up and rectifying all of the various maintenance issues.

We have thoroughly enjoyed working with Helen in these first few months and it has been wonderful to observe how quickly she has settled in and made some small but significant changes and little tweaks here and there.

Our thanks also to the Rev'd Elizabeth Robertson and to all of the clergy and licensed lay ministers (LLM's) who helped us through what was a mercifully short interregnum, we are very grateful to them all. It was great to have the help and support of the Rev'ds Jim Fletcher and Dylan Turner and of course the Rev'd Liz Walker.

The Rural North West Kent Group of Churches has had to say farewell to the Rev'd Jim Fletcher as he has taken on a new role at St George's Gravesend. We at Ash expressed our thanks to Jim at his farewell service and as a Parish we were able to send £100 towards his farewell gift, a wonderful gesture for which we say thank you to everyone who contributed.

Fawkham & Hartley are now under a period of Interregnum and all of the Group Clergy and LLMs will be helping where they can, along with some visiting clergy. We wait to hear what the Diocesan line will be with regards to a replacement for Jim but we and the Wardens at Longfield have already expressed our support to the two new wardens at Fawkham & Hartley, along with offers of assistance.

Services at Ash

Attendance at regular services has remained pretty constant and it has been wonderful to see some young families joining us. Dionne and Chris Munn and their helpers are doing a great job looking after Junior Church and again it is good to see some new faces there as well.

Not so many Weddings last year and that trend looks to be repeated this year but as news gets around that Ash has a Rector it is hoped that couples will look to Ash as part of their wedding planning.

There was a wonderful Group Easter Saturday Vigil held at Ash and because of our location and facilities we have been asked to host again this year, with Bishop James presiding (Health permitting). Attendance on Easter Sunday and the Christmas Eve Midnight service were not as high as hoped, again continuing a trend. But with two very popular Christingle Services more than 800 people came to Ash over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Our thanks to Carol Bridge and Susan Heads for all the hard work they put into the Christingle services.

Church Building

The Kitchenette and Toilets have proved very popular and it is beginning to feel they have always been there. What has also been really nice is to see how many more people are staying after the service, enjoying general conversation and not rushing off. Some minor

repairs and “snagging” works were completed last year and the project has been signed off.

There are some internal repairs to be carried out, with special attention being directed to the South Porch. Helen is also keen to make more of the Lady Chapel and once we have sorted out storage solutions we can look to tidy up this area.

We would like to express a huge thank you to Angela Hodgson for all the work she has done on the prayer kneelers found in the Pews, she has been working her way through them all systematically, making repairs and strengthening the hanging rings. She has also made a new Chasuble for the Rector and for use by any visiting clergy who like to wear one when presiding.

The list of works required by the 2016 Quinquennial hasn't been forgotten and will be addressed, a concern is the glazing and what we can do to try and stop up the gaps and keep the heat inside.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to Barbara Roberts for the Recycled cards and gift tags that she has produced to raise funds, along with the very popular Ash Church fridge Magnets. Barbara's efforts have added some welcome extra funds in the past for the Kitchen & Toilets Project and we are very grateful for the work she has done. Now that project is finished, funds raised are going towards the South Porch repairs.

The new Organ was installed last November and has been very successful. Those who have played it on our behalf have said how much they have enjoyed playing it, which is good news. Our thanks to Ray Viney, John Harding, Nick Noakes, Cameron and James Clark for all their hard work in researching the possibilities, commissioning the project and seeing the installation through.

Church Grounds

Some major work was carried out on the oil tank last year and it has made an enormous difference to the efficiency and performance of the boiler. A new larger pipe line was also installed and this has maintained a constant flow of oil. The church is getting warmer quicker and the residual heat left in the radiators is much improved, meaning the system can be turned off earlier.

When you have toilets you need some form of storage outlet, ours is a very large cess-tank that is located by the boundary wall. This was successfully emptied for the first time last November and it has shown that it probably only needs emptying once a year, but it will be monitored, just in case.

The Clergy team have generously given up their two parking spots and these will become dedicated “Disabled Parking” bays. Nick has obtained the signage and once the weather allows he will get it installed.

With many thanks to Simon Heads we have at last got a sign installed by the War Graves Commission, indicating that there is a War Grave in the church yard.

Every year the Churchwardens carry out a “push” test on all the gravestones in the churchyard, if you see any lying flat it is probably because we have laid them so, as they may have been too wobbly and dangerous to stay upright.

Once Easter is over work will start on replacing the old storage shed at the rear of the church with a new one. Storage is still required for the chairs that we bring out for larger services and the old shed hasn't been weather proof for some time. The work has to be carefully planned as first the old shed roof has to be removed professionally, due to the asbestos content in the roof panels.

Work will start soon on updating the church signboard, located at the end of the main path, to reflect Helen's arrival and installation and recent changes to our services.

Because Ash Church is the largest church in the RNWK group and because we have access to a large car park and toilet facilities there are sometimes very large services held, mainly but not always funerals. In the past these events have caused some issues with users of Church Road but we have recently used volunteers, equipped with two-way radios, to marshal the car park and the traffic flows and this move has been deemed a success. We are always looking for more people who would be willing to help the team on these occasions, please talk to the wardens for more details and thank you in advance for your help.

Health & Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy, this helps to safeguard us from possible compensation claims. The fire risk assessment and safety risk assessment are up to date, and fire signs have been installed.

Parish Safeguarding Officer

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Rhian Rutland for taking on this role and her report can be found elsewhere in the APCM Documentation

Presentation of Terrier

As Churchwardens we are custodians of the church and its contents and we are duty-bound to keep up to date the Terrier, a log book of all the Ash church fixtures and fittings. We are very grateful to Colin Irving for all his hard work in keeping the Terrier up to date, it has been much appreciated.

Sidesmen (Welcomers)

We would like to say a special thank you to those who have served on the front line activity. You are the first people newcomers meet on arrival at our church and you all do a wonderful job. If there is anyone in the congregation that would like to be a sidesman, then please speak to a warden for more information.

THANK YOU!

To everyone involved with Bell Ringing/Brass Cleaning/Choir/Christingle making/Church Cleaning/ Flowers/Healing/Intercessions/Leaflet Distribution/ Pew Sheet & Leaflet Production/Plant Maintenance/ Refreshments/Scripture Reading/Serving/Social Events/Transport/Working Parties/Rota's/Junior Church/Wedding, Christening & funeral visits & preparations/Church News/Church openers & closers

Once again we would like to extend our grateful thanks to all those who provide support and service in all the vital activities listed above. Forgive us if we have missed any tasks out, let us know what we have forgotten!

There are other unsung heroes, often going unnoticed but without whom we would be the poorer:

Toilets cleaning, magazine delivering, website maintenance & update, parish statistical returns, Church property updates, heating oil deliveries, cess-tank emptying, hole digging for burial of ashes, light bulb changing, Christmas tree decorating, Stable scene provision & positioning, Easter garden making, visiting people, printing, village & church notice board updates, bin emptiers, food bank deliveries, collection envelope provision and distribution, mousetrap setting, linen washing, refreshments supplies, and many more unseen.

Thank you to you all, your efforts are very much appreciated and haven't gone unnoticed!

Thank you Nick!

Nick Dunsdon has decided to stand down and not put himself forward for re-election as Churchwarden. We are very grateful to Nick for standing in and helping us through the Interregnum and Helen's arrival. We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Nick and Pauline for all their help and hard work and we wish them all the best as they embark on the next chapter in their busy lives!

Thank you to everyone for your help and support this past year!

Nick Dunsdon Ian Nurdin
Churchwardens - Ash Church

Presentation of List of Sidesmen

The current list of Sidesmen consists of 12 people, being:

Ann Aves, Pauline Bailey, Cameron Clark, Debbie Nurdin, Rhian Rutland, Jacky Richardson, Julia Kilfoyle, Joan Littlejohn, Christine Jones, Jane Davison, Barbara Holliday, Gillian Noakes.

We need more Helpers!

When you look at the list of helpers in 2014 compared with today it makes sobering reading. We used to have 21 sidesmen, today we have 12. There are 7 less people reading the lessons, and 5 less willing to do the Intercessions. We used to have 6 refreshment teams, now there are 4.

We are urgently looking for people to join the various Rotas of volunteers to help ensure services and church activities can continue to be covered. If you would like to assist as a Sidesman/Welcomer, or with Refreshments, Readings, Intercessions, Premises jobs, Church cleaning, Flower arranging, Opening up/locking up the church or with the Chalice and Serving team - you would be made most welcome!

Please have a think about any of the above roles and contact the Rector or Churchwardens for further details.

Nick Dunsdon & Ian Nurdin
Churchwardens

PCC Annual Report to the 2019 Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The Annual Report to the APCM sets out in a formal manner the basis on which the PCC has acted and continues to act as stewards of Ash Church. The information it contains is largely prescribed by statute.

- *Full name of the parish*

The Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Ash

- *Location of church*

Church Road, The Street, Ash, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7HD

- *Correspondence address*

Ash Rectory, 11 Lambardes, New Ash Green, Longfield, Kent DA3 8HX

- *PCC Organisation – Standing and other committees*

The PCC normally meets monthly. The composition of the PCC is as follows:-

<i>Ex-officio</i>	All clergy in or licensed to the parish The Churchwardens One member of Rochester Diocesan Synod from Ash Church
<i>Elected</i>	Two Deanery Synod members, elected for a three year term Six ordinary members, elected for a three year term

The Standing Committee meets as required to deal with urgent matters or issues that have been delegated to it by the PCC. The Standing Committee comprises the Rector, the Churchwardens, the Treasurer, the Secretary, and one other member of the PCC. Other committees are appointed and meet as required to fulfil their terms of reference.

- *PCC members during the year 2018, with office held and dates*

<i>Ex-officio</i>	Rev Helen Reeves	Rector	November – December
	Rev Elizabeth Robertson	Associate Priest	January – December
	Carol Bridge	Churchwarden	January – April
	Nick Dunsdon	Churchwarden	April – December
	Ian Nurdin	Churchwarden	April – December
	Cameron Clark	Diocesan Synod, Deanery Synod* & Secretary	January – December
	Alison Harding	Deanery Synod	April ⁺ – December
<i>Elected</i>	Carol Bridge		April – December
	John Harding	Treasurer	January – December
	Susan Heads		January – December
	Jacky Richardson		January – April
	Rhian Rutland	(co-opted)	May – December
	Jeremy Scott		April – December
	Enid Viney		January – December
	Ray Viney		January – December

* *Elected to the Deanery Synod in addition to being an ex-officio PCC member by virtue of election to the Diocesan Synod to represent Cobham Deanery.*

⁺ *Elected member of PCC January – April 2018.*

- *Number on Electoral Roll*

The number on the Electoral Roll was reported at the 2018 APCM as 94 persons. A new Electoral Roll has been compiled for the 2019 APCM in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The new roll contains 71 names.

- *Average Weekly Attendance*

The number reported to the Diocese as the average weekly attendance for 2018 was 45 adults and 4 children, which compares with 48 and 3 respectively in 2017.

- *Aims of the PCC*

St Peter and St Paul Ash & New Ash Green's Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector and Associate Priest for the time being, both being committed to Collaborative Ministry in the Parish and Group and to Proclaiming the Word and Work of God, in promoting within the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, evangelistic, pastoral, social, spiritual and ecumenical. The Parochial Church Council also has maintenance and financial responsibilities for the Church and churchyard of St Peter and St Paul, Ash, Sevenoaks, Kent.

- *The value of the church*

The Church in the parish of Ash that is dedicated to St Peter & St Paul meets in an ancient building on a site that has been a centre of worship for nearly 1,000 years – this is recognised by many people who do not regularly worship with the Church but who value the building and the fact that the Church is there when they need it. People appreciate what the Church has to offer to the community and its availability as a building and for the services that people find important – baptisms, weddings and funerals. In this the Church not only has an obligation to its regular congregation but also to the wider community. The challenge is therefore to maintain a sufficient core congregation and, where appropriate, seek resources from other sources to ensure the upkeep of the building and the continuation of worship that is both true to Christian principles and tradition and also meets the needs of a world whose expectations are changing with developments in fashion and technology.

Since 22 December 2016 the Parish has been a part of the Rural North West Kent Group Ministry for the benefice of Longfield, the benefice of Ash, the benefice of Ridley, and the benefice of Fawkham and Hartley. This formalised the previous informal Cluster of those parishes.

- *Report on the church's work, pastorally and through mission and in special projects, towards fulfilling its aims, including significant developments and achievements in the year and matters that have been discussed at PCC meetings*

The PCC met on 12 occasions during 2018. PCC discussions were dominated by the ongoing project work including the purchase of a new organ which was commissioned in November 2018, the future leadership and mission of the church, and repairs and improvements to the fabric and infrastructure of the church building.

The Standing Committee is on call to deal with urgent business between meetings and met once during 2018. The PCC also appointed a Finance Committee which had no need to meet during the year. All Committees report to the next full PCC meeting which will authorise significant expenditure and decisions.

The Treasurer's Report will present the financial position to the APCM. Although a considerable capital amount remains after significant expenditure on the new kitchen and toilet facilities and on the new organ, there has been a significant reduction in regular income, particularly as the number of givers has fallen. We are fortunate once again to have, along with Ridley, a full-time incumbent, but recognise that this will involve higher expenditure, along with the likely need to increase our contribution towards essential measures at all levels both in the national Church and in the Diocese. The PCC is actively considering the implications of reduced income and increased expenditure, and is taking steps to ensure that the long-term financial position of the church remains tenable.

In consultation with the congregation, the PCC has embarked on a programme of further (smaller) projects in the hope of developing our outreach, and possibly generating new sources of regular income.

Following the retirement of the Priest-in-Charge in October 2017 the PCC took the necessary steps to fill the vacancy and to ensure that the work of the church continued throughout the intervening period.

The PCC was delighted to welcome the Rev. Helen Reeves as Rector of the parishes of Ash and Ridley at her institution service on 13 November 2018.

The PCC has taken all reasonable steps to comply with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

The "Friends of Ash Church" organisation has continued to help with fundraising.

Healing services were held monthly to provide an opportunity to pray for people's specific needs with additional services in New Ash Green.

The Social Committee organised the harvest supper in 2018 and more events are planned for 2019. The contribution made to the Church, both financially and in terms of encouraging fellowship was greatly appreciated. The PCC has also supported other activities in the church including the special bell ringing events, the Christmas Tree festival in December, the World Day of Prayer held in the Youth and Community Centre, New Ash Green, as well as events organised by the Friends of Ash Church.

The monthly alternative service in the form of Junior Church provided teaching for children led by members of the congregation under the leadership of Dionne Munn. The PCC received regular reports on the activities of the Junior Church and took a close interest in their work, encouraging them to participate fully in services and other Church activities. The Scouts were also welcomed to the church for St George's Day and Remembrance Sunday.

- *Description and effect of significant events since the end of the year*

There have been no significant events in 2019 likely to affect the work of the church.

- *How the church responded to any important events in 2018*

During the year prayers have been said for the safety of British and Allied troops engaged in peacekeeping activities around the world, and for those affected by economic difficulties.

The church has continued with regular collections for the Gravesend foodbank and provided Christmas stockings for guests at Sanctuary – the homeless shelter in Gravesend.

- *Likely future developments*

The PCC will, following the provision of up-to-date facilities for people using the church building, be examining ways to develop further the work of the church in the community of New Ash Green. Support is being sought from among the congregation for extending the activities of the church to New Ash Green including holding regular meetings and services in Turners Oak, and other activities. A coffee morning for the recently bereaved (Picking up the Pieces) in Partners Coffee and Gift Shop met once a month. Members of the church have also been participating in Group activities including the monthly Messy Church. The church is supporting the three monthly community Hub events in New Ash Green.

There is to be an announcement from the Diocese (due in the summer) regarding 'Called to Grow' and evangelism and mission action plans will be out for completion at this time. The PCC hopes to arrange a parish awayday to consider our response to this.

- *Exempt charity status*

As a church the PCC has exempt charity status.

- *Relationship to other related trusts*

Ash Parish Church is related to the Ash Combined Charities Trust which administers the two almshouses at the North Ash cross-roads. The Rector and Churchwardens are ex-officio members of the Trust.

The Minister and Churchwardens are owners of the land and buildings of the Ash Village Hall by virtue of a Deed of Gift dated 7 June 1912. This property is leased for a 35-year period from 23 September 1994 (extendible to a maximum of 99 years) to a charitable trust that is run by a Management Committee including one member appointed annually by the PCC.

- *Financial activities of the PCC*

Please see the PCC Treasurer's Report and the Financial Statement.

- *Names & addresses of bankers, legal & other advisers and independent examiners*

Bankers:

Santander
Bootle, Merseyside, L30 4GB

Harpenden Building Society
Mardall House, 9-11 Vaughan Road, Harpenden,
Hertfordshire AL5 4HU

Legal advisers:

Sharpe & Perl
23 The Row, New Ash Green, Longfield,
Kent DA3 8JB

Other advisers:

James Wood, Architect
Lee Evans Partnership LLP, St John's Lane,
Canterbury, Kent CT1 2QQ

James Ford, Quinquennial Architect
Clague, 62 Burgate
Canterbury, Kent CT1 2BH

The church can also call upon Diocesan resources for advice and guidance.

Independent Examiner: Gael Lewis JP BSc MBA C.Eng
37a High Street,
Rochester, Kent ME1 1LN

- *Details of any liabilities with resources (cash & non-cash) available to meet them*

The Church has no liabilities; details are in the PCC Treasurer's Report and the Financial Statement.

- *The reserves policy of the church*

The effective level of the PCC's main current account is expected not to fall below £5,000 at any time. This figure applies until the 2019 APCM, at which it will be reviewed. The Treasurer shall call a meeting of the Finance Committee to consider and recommend corrective action if there appears to be a risk that the level will be consistently below this figure; and in any case if it has been below this figure for three consecutive weeks. After any such meeting the Finance Committee shall report to the PCC.

- *Policies on selection of investments*

Money not required for the effective management of routine or immediately foreseeable expenditure is invested in appropriate funds operated by the Diocese, or in commercial deposit accounts. The PCC shall annually review the accounts selected and the principles governing the allocation of sums to the respective accounts.

- *How parish activities will continue to be funded*

Funds for the day-to-day running costs of the church come largely from occasional and regular giving by members of the congregation, including the recovery of tax under the Gift Aid scheme. Fund-raising activities, including participation in the New Ash Green Village Day, provide a significant additional contribution which has been crucial in helping to meet liabilities. The Friends of Ash Church have also provided generous funds for specific projects. Giving by the church to external charitable causes has largely been the result of specific appeals and fund-raising events.

The sale of Ash School in April 2006 realised £180,939 which the PCC decided, after consultation with the congregation, to devote principally to the construction of improved facilities for the church. This project has now been completed, and the organ has been replaced, so the PCC will be considering how to use the remaining money on further projects. The PCC has continued to monitor closely the financial outturn against the budget; it remains extremely concerned about the long-term financial position and the factors which, as foreseen in recent years, are now starting to cause a deficit in our routine transactions. It plans to promote the use of the church for events which, as well as providing a cultural focus for the parish, will generate some income.

The level of contributions by parishes to the work of the Diocese (including the pay, training and housing of priests) is currently determined by PCCs themselves, however Diocesan guidance on how to do this is still being clarified and will be watched carefully. The PCC was in 2018 able to make the payment regarded as appropriate to the cost of a part-time (0.5 FTE) priest, and to make, as invited, a modest additional 'generosity' payment. The PCC hopes in the future to be able to cover the increased cost associated with our full-time priest and perhaps again to add generosity payments as circumstances allow. These decisions will continue to be reviewed annually.

The appointment of a part-time incumbent from April 2013 helped us for a while to keep the costs to a manageable level: the PCC will now continue to explore carefully all possible options for improving the financial position of the church but it must be recognised that the new factors contributing to it are not reversible and virtually all discretionary expenditure has already been eliminated.

Signed: 
PCC Chairman

Date: 4 April 2019

Deanery Synod Report

Cobham Deanery is the smallest in the Diocese with just seven stipendiary clergy and nine parishes – Ash, Cobham with Luddesdowne & Dode, Fawkham & Hartley, Istead Rise, Longfield, Meopham & Nurstead, Ridley and Southfleet.

Topics considered by Synod in the past year included a focus on prayer with our involvement in the 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative. Rev. Andrew Vaughan encouraged us in October with an illustrated travelogue of his sabbatical adventures in our Tanzanian link diocese. Synod has also engaged in discussions about the Diocesan proposals for helping parishes to meet the costs of clergy and other work through the proposals for 'indicative offers' and we had an opportunity to meet with the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, Canon Judith Armit, for this purpose. Sadly, the temporary pause in our involvement with Christians Against Poverty, which provided debt counselling and advice to people in Gravesend and Cobham Deaneries has become permanent because no-one has been found to continue this work.

Deanery Synod is an important link between the congregations of each parish and the Diocese of Rochester. Not every parish has a direct representative on Diocesan Synod (although we are fortunate to have two) but each parish does send at least two people to Deanery Synod and in that way can influence what goes on in the Diocese. Do please speak to our Deanery representatives (Alison Harding and me) if you don't understand how the wider church supports us or there is anything you would like us to raise about an issue that is concerning you.

Cameron Clark

Diocesan Synod Report

Yet again, finance, and the associated topic of clergy deployment, have been important areas of discussion with a lot of time devoted both in Synod meetings and behind the scenes to try to devise the fairest way to pay for the services that are provided centrally for parishes, including clergy and their training and housing as well as other expertise that individual parishes could not manage themselves. This subject did not fully overshadow our meetings however and in March, Synod looked at dementia and the work of Anna Chaplaincy. The June meeting reviewed the Dignity at Work Policy and adopted new measures to deal more effectively with bullying, harassment and discrimination in the church. In October we began the process of developing a Christian response to the environment and climate change, a topic of great importance to many who expect the church to have a view on the subject. We were also updated on current developments in the area of safeguarding where, again, the general public expect the church to be fully on top of the issue following unfortunate lapses in the past.

Elizabeth Robertson and I were pleased to be re-elected in 2018 to Diocesan Synod by members of Cobham Deanery Synod and we are always open to talk to people about the Diocese which, we realise, does often seem distant and unrelated to our worship and work here in the parish and yet its work is a vital support for our local worship and outreach in our parishes.

Cameron Clark

The Rural North West Kent Group of Churches

The most visible work of the Group in 2018 was in the collaborative events and services, though other things have been going on behind the scenes.

Messy Church has long been established, and the 'Messy' brand has now grown to encompass not only 'Messy Nativity' but also 'Messy Good Friday', building on the foundations laid by the Covenanting Churches in their day.

There are now more joint services, usually involving a combined choir, with a particular focus on the churches' patronal festivals: happy events, though the dates are, by quirk of calendar, not ideally spread across the year! In addition a new service was created during the year for Holy Saturday, and the existing ones for Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday completed their three-year tours around the churches. One hope for the future is that more people among our congregations will join in Group services 'away from home'. Particularly on the (relatively few) Sundays when there is just one service for the whole Group that service itself feels healthily well attended, but one is conscious that there are several faces missing.

In Group Council life has been a little quieter, after the initial work of earlier years in setting up routines and establishing principles. We meet at two-month intervals, with dates set to enable us at alternate meetings to play a part in consultation over the forthcoming four-month service rota. Other themes have included GDPR compliance, safeguarding across the Group, and communication about events and opportunities.

We are also represented in the Community Forum's work to develop youth provision in our area. Existing provision is being mapped: it appears to confirm that there is much available for primary school children and younger, and for those over 55, but very little for those in between. It is likely that the diocese's 'Called to grow' initiative (referred to elsewhere in APCM reports) will provide a context for this in due course. The Group clergy will be taking the first steps.

John Harding
Chair – RNWK Group Council

Friends of Ash Church Report

This report is in respect of calendar year 2018 and is submitted as a summary of the activities of Friends of Ash Church, a small group of individuals who come together to organise a variety of fundraising events to provide funds for the repair and maintenance of the fabric of the Grade 1 listed Church of St Peter and St Paul, Ash in West Kent.

2018 saw membership hold up well and good support for the fundraising events which were held during the year. These included

- Annual General Meeting with guest speaker Kevin Barnes from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.
- The AGM was combined with our Spring Cream Tea.
- Quiz Night in September

- Reflections on Remembrance and Beacon Lighting for the centenary of the end of World war One.

A May concert with two West Gallery Quires – London Gallery Quire and Thomas Clark Quire – which had been planned well before the announcement of the Royal Wedding of Meghan Markle and Prince Harry was postponed to 2019 as Saturday 19th May produced a clash between the two.

We remain financially sound and able to respond to requests from the PCC for projects / works required which fit within our aims and objectives and regular communication with the clergy, church wardens and the wider church community is valued.

We welcome Helen Reeves who came to the Parish as vicar towards the end of 2018 and look forward to building on our initial discussions with her in supporting her in her ministry.

Joe Whittaker – Chair FoAC

Parish Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding is part of our core faith and an integral feature of Christian life in our parish churches. The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is at all times paramount and takes precedence over all other considerations.

We are committed to ensuring that those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults who require a disclosure and barring check (DBS) have undergone this at enhanced level.

We base our work on the good practice advice set out in the church of England's own guidance also called Promoting a Safer Church which was produced by the churches National Safeguarding Team.

We seek to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, protect those who are at risk of being abused and respond well to those who have been abused.

We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk to others and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks.

We will safely recruit and support all those within the church with responsibilities towards children, young persons or vulnerable adults.

We will respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation. We will care Pastorally for victims of abuse, those who are subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons. We will respond to those that may pose a risk to others.

There have been a number of safeguarding updates this year. The national safeguarding team have created a number of new documents and we have been asked to complete a safeguarding audit. I have been working on the audit in time for submission on 1 May. I have also been working on the information that we now need to display in church and on our website. You will notice a new section on our website headed safeguarding. Please do have a look at it. As well as this a new section specifically about safeguarding is being developed on the noticeboard in church.

An invitation regarding training has been sent to all people who have a role in church. This can be completed either online or in a group. It is hoped that everyone concerned will respond positively to this. All necessary DBS checks have been completed.

The protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults in our church is the responsibility of the whole church. It is therefore important that we must all play our part in promoting a safer church for all. In the event of any person becoming concerned about protection issues concerning a child, young person or vulnerable adult they should contact Rhian Rutland Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible either by email or by phone.

Please see the Diocesan Website, our own website or notice board for further information about safeguarding.

Rhian Rutland (Parish Safeguarding Officer)

Email: rhianrutland51@btinternet.com or telephone: (01474) 831216

Healing Team Report

There are currently four members of the healing team who offer prayers for healing at the 10.30 service on the 2nd Sunday of the month, with one prayer station at the back of the church and one in the Lady Chapel.

A list of requests for prayers for healing is kept and updated by Julia Kilfoyle. The names on it are normally included in the intercessions each week and are prayed for by members of the team. Anyone is welcome to add new names to the prayer list but should only do so with the individual's knowledge; names added with no contact details will be included for one month only.

There is a permanent prayer station on the St Blaise altar in church which provides the facility for visitors to leave anonymous prayers which are then offered up to God during the 10.30 service.

All members of the Healing Team play an active part in the All Souls' service, which is now an established annual event attended both by funeral families and by members of the wider community.

Picking up the Pieces coffee morning for people who have been bereaved continues to meet once a month in Partners coffee shop, hosted by Alison Harding and Jane Davison. However, the date has changed to the 2nd Tuesday of each month, in order not to clash with the Community Hub singing morning.

New team members are always welcome

Contacts:

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Alison Harding tel 874770 alison.harding@btinternet.com

Tower Captain's Report

The past year has proved to be another positive and successful one for ringing at Ash.

The band have continued to develop and refine their ringing skills and this has been greatly assisted by the recruitment of two ringers returning to the activity after a gap of some years. Their input, coupled with the welcome involvement of more experienced friends from other towers, has enabled the band to tackle a wider range of ringing methods on a more regular basis.

The band continues to hold twice-weekly practices at Ash, with individual members also attending practices at other towers or the regular district practices. Members are also starting to make use of training courses offered by the district. Our increasing skills are appreciated at regular service ringing, weddings and other church events. This year, amongst other things, we rang for Helen's Induction and to commemorate the centenary of the armistice.

We have hosted two District wide events – a District Meeting and a Ringing Competition. We have also seen an increase in the number of requests from visiting bands to ring at Ash, and an increase in the number of quarter peals rung by local bands. Such events serve to raise the profile of the church amongst both the local community, through hearing the bells more often, and the wider ringing community. The refreshment and toilet facilities now available at Ash have contributed greatly to the popularity of these events, for which we are particularly grateful.

The bells themselves continue to be in a sound state, subject to regular checking and maintenance. It is intended that, as part of a training programme, any interested ringer(s) will be assisted to attend a Tower Maintenance course, one of several ringing related activities offered by the County Association. No major expenses are envisaged at the moment and we are in a good position to deal with any minor replacement costs which may arise.

The band were particularly pleased to welcome the Rev. Helen to our recent AGM. Her obvious interest in our activities, and her informed and practical contributions to the meeting were much appreciated. We look forward to a long and productive relationship.

We are moving forward into the next year's ringing with considerable anticipation.

Brian Ashmore
(Tower Captain)

Junior Church Report

Ash Junior Church continues to meet on the third Sunday every month at Ash Village Hall. We have three to five families attending each time, each bringing one to four children with them. We do see new families as well, from time to time, which is wonderful.

Each session continues to be very interactive, starting with a game or craft linked to the theme, some Bible based learning which is based on the fabulous Lightlive Scripture Union resources, and a prayer and hymns linked to our theme of the day.

George Pender and I often split the children into different age groups, and Rhianna Munn has been enjoying working with the smaller children.

Dionne Munn

Choirmasters' Report

A mixture, for the choir in 2018, of the familiar and the new.

We have again performed our core task of leading in Sunday services, and making ourselves available for weddings and funerals; and Advent was as busy as ever, as we again took our selection of carols on the road and also led set-piece carol services, as guests at Ridley as well as at Ash, culminating in the Christmas communion service on Christmas Eve.

But if these things represented a familiar round, there was much in the year which was different.

Two specially created services (Ash Wednesday with Taizé music, and Maundy Thursday with Stainer's 'Crucifixion') completed their tours of Group churches – in the case of the Stainer coming 'home' to Ash.

Although we are always willing to travel among local churches, it is a fact that our building is the best suited to host services and events which many attend. So it was that the newly created ceremonial service on Holy Saturday came to Ash, and once again we were the venue for the October 'Chorus of Praise'. In the former the Group's choirs together made a spirited contribution centred on Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus. The highlight of the latter was a stunning performance by the choir (from across the Group and beyond) of Ireland's 'Greater Love'.

In these events it is fair to say that our singers formed the backbone of the choir, and for the future we hope that greater numbers from the other churches will be encouraged to contribute in Group events.

Very special was the institution of our new rector, at whose request we were introduced to the delightful 'I believe'. (Not the last 'new' piece she has brought to us – a welcome development which we hope will continue.)

In the summer we stepped well outside our comfort-zone to take part, in various guises, in the 'Midsummer Madness' event inspired and created by Jean Bentley for the entertainment of the paying public in June. The shipping forecast, and particularly

'Rockall', will never seem quite the same again!

Towards the end of the year there has also been an increased involvement in the community beyond the church. We took our carol singing for the first time to the Royal Oak, joined the Front Room Singers in singing at the Community Hub and at the primary school's Christmas service; and were ourselves joined by members of Local Vocals in Trafalgar Square. In each case these are links which we can hope to develop as a contribution to the church's outreach to the wider world.

At the start of the year we were coming to terms with the retirement as organist of Gillian Noakes after many years of faithful and brilliant service. This significant gap was filled by a number of others week by week, and, on behalf of the church, we have been grateful for the 'guest appearances' of Gillian herself and Jean, and of Kathy Dyke, Valerie Dyke, and, on occasion, a tenor recorder; and, as has become almost traditional, of Ann Jennings and her brothers at Christmas. But the bulk of the work has been done, since April, by Jo Love, who has been able to fill the vast majority of the slots, both in services and at rehearsals, and quickly established herself as a welcome member of the choir family. We are very grateful!

We look forward to further years in which the routine and the new continue to mingle, as the choir's role in the church, along with the church's role in the community, continues to evolve.

John Harding
Nick Noakes