

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council

What are the Parochial Church Council's Tasks?

The PCC cooperates with the Incumbent in the whole mission of the Church. As part of the synodical structure of the Church of England, the PCC makes known and puts into effect any decision made by the Diocesan or Deanery Synods and gives advice to these Synods on any matters the PCC considers appropriate. The PCC is responsible for the financial affairs of the Church; the PCC draws up a budget and has the responsibility with the Incumbent of appointing, paying and dismissing paid officers of the Parish. The PCC is responsible for the care, maintenance, preservation and insurance of the fabric of the Parish church. The PCC is also responsible for the care and maintenance of the churchyard.

Vicar's report

The year 2015 was very full. Across the year we had many rewarding worship occasions in addition to our regular worship, such as the Celebration of Baptism (January 11th), the World War 1 Commemoration Service with dedication of the Peace Garden (September 20th), six baptisms, two memorable funerals of church members, Mollie Martineau and John James who in their very different ways gave loyal service to St George's and in the community, four weddings (three in the month of November!) and a record-breaking Crib Service on Christmas Eve with an attendance of 92. Our strategy of bringing together Junior Church children and recent baptism families for All Age worship occasions has enabled many families to benefit from the work we do within Junior Church and as ministers of St George's. We thank sincerely all our Junior Church leaders and parents for their very generous contributions and support. In addition to these occasions, there have been the school services, Edgborne Services, the Christian Unity Service for Edgbaston and Ladywood Churches Together, Holy Week services, Lunchtime Prayer and Trinity Prayer to mention a selection. As well as Lunchtime Prayer being new in 2015, so was our trial of having an 11.30am Holy Communion Service on the second Tuesday of each month to tie in with the monthly parish lunch at 12noon. This has been very well attended and has created an important opportunity for some members to attend worship with us when Sunday church has ceased to be realistic. At the same time as we have had our St George's worship programme, our sister churches of the United Methodist Church and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church have continued to worship with us, enhancing our witness and bringing a very welcome additional dimension of fellowship and partnership in the gospel.

The year saw us join with local partners once again in our St George's Day Picnic celebration event in conjunction with St George's Primary School and Edgbaston High School for Girls. It also saw us pioneer a new initiative of lunchtime concerts on the first Wednesday of every month. These have brought to us many young musicians, especially from the Birmingham Conservatoire, who have benefited hugely from concert opportunities at a local venue and at the same time delighted audiences with the quality and passion of their performances. We thank Zoe Challenor and Phil Ypres Smith for their work in both coordinating these events and participating. In other aspects of

our mission engagement locally, we have continued to work with and support Karis in their neighbourhood schemes and were very pleased that they were our Christmas charity for 2015. We have also been investigating how St George's may be able to support our local credit union in Ladywood, Circul8. It continues to be very important that we sustain strong ties and presence within the northern part of the parish. This has been brought home to us recently in the tragic incident of a young man being shot dead in St Mark's Crescent just outside the parish in what is believed to have been a gang related incident. Our links to other churches and community partners in Ladywood, especially through Churches Together in Edgbaston and Ladywood, are an important basis from which to work together, particularly in times of community stress or crisis.

I have instanced some features of our worshipping and missional life to serve as both a reminder of what we seek to do and be, and as a source of encouragement as we go forward. As we seek to be both a *holy place* where at key moments of life we and others can be held and sustained and a *hospitable space* where relationships can be made and partnerships deepened, we rejoice that it is the work of the Holy Spirit that empowers and equips us as we journey. It has once again been a real privilege to share with you in this Christ-centred commitment that we make together at St George's. It is also very important that we create a sound financial platform to facilitate all that we seek to do. From this perspective, our Funding 15 initiative progressed to completion by the year end showing a £10,000 increase in regular giving, and we thank everyone who has contributed to this increase. It remains to be seen to what extent this uplift will ease our year on year deficits, but every effort we can make to keep up this momentum will release the PCC to plan and implement its developing mission priorities. Across the year our 'Let the Stones live' initiative – to address the pressing need for essential stonework repairs – gathered momentum through two fundraising events, at an evening in June and through the auction with Biddle and Webb on October 15th. The fund now stands at over £4000. On the downside, disappointingly, after further sterling work by Carol Couse and Jane Darnton, our second Heritage Lottery Fund bid proved unsuccessful. This has meant that the PCC has been unable to proceed with the stonework and rainwater repairs. We now await the outcome of our most recent funding bid, a submission to the new government scheme the 'Emergency Roof Repair Fund'. We are also now approaching a variety of charitable bodies to try and secure funds for both roof/rainwater and stonework repairs. As a PCC we have also chosen to earmark £25,000 of our own free cash reserve to serve as a clear sign of our willingness to commit our own resources to these necessary works. This has been necessary (a) because we will have to action some repairs in the near future and (b) in order to attract funding by indicating our seriousness.

One of the primary purposes of the annual report is to highlight our vision for mission in the context of our financial commitments and capability. Whilst what we can achieve will always be a function of the depth and passion of our prayers and of the Spirit working through us, money matters too. With this in mind, I would like to thank John Russell our PCC Treasurer and Keith Herbert our Chair of the Finance Committee for their tireless work in ensuring that our finances are administered smoothly and prudently and that we remain alert as a PCC to risks and opportunities going forward. It is particularly timely to note their work here, since Keith steps down this year from his role. We thank him sincerely for his very generous service to St George's in this work over a period that is longer than most of us can remember! We also thank Marion Clarke and Nick Gibbs who administer

our Gift Aid scheme with great consistency and dedication. This is appreciated greatly by all of us and by John and Keith.

The year has included St George's Primary School being awarded a 'Good' outcome in the Ofsted inspection that took place early in the year. We congratulate Shirley Atkar as Headteacher and all the staff on this excellent achievement which also included gaining 'Outstanding' for many significant areas of school life. It has also been a pleasure to welcome Jenny Clinton and Jo Alexander into the school as two new members of the Senior Leadership Team and to note their strong contributions to school since their arrival. In so far as our partnership with St George's Primary School continues to be an essential feature of our mission locally, we are delighted that members of St George's both serve as governors (five in total) and come into school to offer a variety of forms of support and assistance, from working with the head to leading assemblies and assisting in the Youth Club that ran very successfully for a period of time. An additional feature has been the secondment of Reverend Ian Smith, Curate of St Germain's and formerly with us on placement at St George's, to come into school on a regular basis, taking assemblies and working with the Pastoral Committee. We value greatly this vital connection into the community. It was a great pleasure recently to enjoy another wonderful end of term service in church at which the Year 4 children enacted the story of Holy Week and Easter with great energy and style. As we think of St George's we also note the highly valued relationships we have with Hallfield School, EHS, West House and St George's Independent School. It was very gratifying that at the Calthorpe Christmas Switch-On that took place at church in November there was a joint choir from Hallfield and St George's Primary. This very significant collaboration was the fruit of a lot of hard work over a significant period to achieve closer working together. Our thanks go especially to Catrina German and Jenny Clinton for helping to facilitate this. It is my sincere hope that in 2016 we can build on the strong start we made in 2015 with the 'Serving our Schools' PCC open meeting.

At this time of year, when the electoral roll is revised and we look back over recent events, we are always conscious of changes and developments within the membership. 2015 saw Jenny Uff complete her Reader training successfully and we congratulate her on this splendid achievement. It was a great pleasure for many of us to attend her licensing at the cathedral on January 23rd 2016. Early in 2015 we were very happy to welcome Reverend Colin Butler as an Associate Minister in the parish and his wife Sue. Their presence among us has been a great enrichment and Colin's ministry has been greatly valued by the St George's community and in the three congregations. We are only sorry that they will be leaving us soon (April 2016) as Colin takes up a post as Priest in Charge of the Chaplaincy of St Nicholas in Ankara, Turkey. We wish them every blessing in this move and thank them for their friendship and fellowship. We are delighted that we continue to welcome new members to St George's. Often this does not however mean that we increase in numbers as people do move away from time to time and members die. The coming and going of church members reminds us, however, of how valuable our common life is, and how fortunate we are that the church community is a place where we can give and receive so much from one another.

There is one important additional note of thanks that I would like to record. This is to John Hatch our churchwarden. John has served for the entirety of the year as a churchwarden on his own and he has done this with characteristic enthusiasm and determination. We thank him sincerely for the deep spiritual encouragement that he has brought to us with great generosity. And as we thank him we

thank also his deputies who have supported him very faithfully. Can I close by saying one last thank you – for the joy it is to minister at St George’s. Let us bless the Lord!...

Reverend Julian Francis

Reports of Elected Officers

Report from the Electoral Roll Officer

At the beginning of 2015 there were 105 names on roll, of whom 10 were resident in the parish. During the year one was deleted after death and six were added. At the beginning of 2016 there are 110 on roll, of whom 11 are resident in the parish.

Jenny Astley (Electoral Roll Officer)

Report of the Secretary to the PCC

The usual business of each PCC meeting has been to hear financial statements, to receive reports from PCC committees and other church groups and activities, and make any necessary decisions arising from these. Each meeting has been preceded by a meeting of the Standing Committee (Vicar, Churchwardens, PCC Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and PCC Secretary). It is the Standing Committee that agrees the agenda for each PCC meeting. Members of the PCC are *ex officio* or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. The members of the current PCC (2015-2016) are as follows (with retirement dates in brackets): Vicar: The Revd Julian Francis, Churchwarden: John Hatch. Elected members: Doreen Beevers (2017), Kirsty Butler (2018), Carol Couse (2017), Philip Couse (2018), Maggi Cull (2016), Simon Kirby (2018) (Vice Chair), Justin Pinkess (2016), John Russell (2016) (Treasurer), Charles Williams (2018), Pat World (2017), Phil Ypres-Smith (2016). Co-opted members: Susan Booth and the Revd Colin Butler. Representatives on Deanery Synod: Ian French (2017), John Hatch (2017), Caroline Shaw (2017) and Anne Game (2017). Changes during 2015 included Philip Couse standing down as Vice Chairman of the PCC, and Simon Kirby stepping into that role. Philip Couse also stood down as Deanery Synod member and Anne Game moved to become Deanery Synod member. Kirsty Butler’s election to the PCC in May, helped reduce the average age of PCC membership. Copies of the agenda and minutes of each PCC meeting are displayed in the church porch. They are also available on the St George’s website.

The PCC met six times in 2015, with an average attendance of 13 members. As, in other years, 2015 has been a busy year for the PCC, as testified by the issues, activities and events documented below by the many PCC Committees and Church Groups, all of which are overseen by the PCC.

Susan Booth

Reports of the Committees (* indicates non-PCC member on membership of committees)

Finance Committee

The financial statements and reports can be found commencing on page 13

Education and Worship Committee

The Revd Julian Francis (chair), the Revd Colin Butler (part of year), Julie Berrow, David Hill, Aly Merrifield (who has stepped down and been replaced by Suganthi John (for Junior Church)), Simon Kirby, Caroline Shaw, Jenny Uff, Phil Ypres-Smith

We congratulate Jenny Uff who was licensed as a Reader on 23rd January 2016 and welcomed Colin Butler as Associate Priest. The Committee met 5 times in 2015, and has worked to maintain and improve all aspects of our worship and fellowship at St Georges'. New service booklets for the various seasons and festivals have been produced, and we are immensely grateful to Charles Williams for all the time he gives in photocopying etc. The use of the Nave Altar, now 2 years old, is becoming well established. (More offers of help with clearing away afterwards would be lovely!) In September the excellent and long-planned World War 1 weekend took place and was well supported, especially by the extended Lodge family. We Commemorated the Past, and have Hope for the Future, symbolised by a Peace Garden.

A Communion service before the monthly Tuesday lunch has started and is well supported, including by those who cannot get to church on Sundays. We celebrated with our 6 candidates being confirmed at St Faith and St Lawrence on 14th June. The present format of Baptisms services need improving as sometimes visitors don't know how to participate, and we have been pondering on this. The congregation has been asked for its views on the possibility of a single, joint Pentecost service, and the committee has been discussing the fast-approaching Parish Week-End Away in Sept 2016.

Our church year has been marked and enhanced, as last year, by All-age services, joint Edgborne services, 3 concurrent Lent courses, Trinity prayer and Thursday lunchtime prayer, Holy week special services etc. Sadly, the Nativity play (School and Junior Church) had to be cancelled through lack of available Junior Church children. But, the Crib service was happily very well attended. We thank all those who give so much time and commitment to our children. More Intercessors, Readers and Servers would be welcome.

Caroline Shaw

Fabric and Environment Committee

Carol Couse (Chair), John Austin*, Keith Herbert *, David Hill, John Russell, Jane Darnton*, The Revd Julian Francis, John Hatch (Churchwarden)

We received another disappointment in our attempt to secure Heritage Lottery Funding for our rapidly deteriorating stonework and significant roof repairs when our second application was rejected

in September. After a major re-working of our first attempt and putting much more emphasis on our heritage and related events, this was very disheartening. Prior to our submission, we learned that St George's Church had been included in the 2015 Heritage at Risk Register by Historic England and we had thought that this would have carried a little more weight and strengthened our application. Of course, we can always re-submit to HLF but it is difficult, at this point, to know what changes can be made to make our bid more successful. Our own appeal for "Let the Stones Live" might produce better results.

Our lighting and electrical needs continue. A major sort out of our problems in November was short lived when we ended the year with yet another high level Nave lamp not working. We now begin 2016 with more problems. A second high level lamp (in the Chancel) has gone along with a high level spot light on the same North side of the Chancel. We have some altar spots out in both the Lady Chapel and at the High Altar. The faulty lectern lamp needs replacing and some of the North Aisle lamps have bulbs which need replacing.

We are now at a point where we need some major re-thinking of our lighting requirements as our fixtures are over 25 years old and parts or replacements are no longer available. Our present lighting system is one in which all the lamps are on at the same time whenever the church is being used instead of being a system in which the lights can be used separately to create a desired effect. If we were able to use the lights differently or in stages for various events then the bulbs might have a longer life.

The church building is being used more and more, by our partner churches, our local schools and other outside groups. This is a good thing but it does mean that certain items wear out more readily (as in the case of the lights) or get damaged and need repairing and missing items need replacing. In July we carried out a large list of repairs which had been building up due to the increased usage of the building.

A major repair during the year was to re-plaster the wall near the main South porch which had suffered badly during a very wet period because of a blocked downpipe a few years ago and needed specialist treatment. In the meantime, we continue to monitor the roof and rainwater disposal situation and employ the services of a specialist firm with high access equipment to keep the roof clear of fallen leaves and debris.

The government has recently opened the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund for a second round of grants and we shall apply to that fund which has a closing date of 26 February 2016 in the hope that we might be successful in, at least, solving one of our long standing problems of water penetrating into the church interior.

Carol Couse

Mission Partnership Committee

At the last meeting of the Mission Partnership committee on 3rd November 2015, the following proposals were made.

- 1) Mission Tithes: Karis Neighbour Scheme to receive a donation this year instead of Generation Ladywood; BIRCH* to be added and given £300, provided by reducing money to several existing recipients; Hope Africa to remain, rather than a change to Farm Africa, which was considered.
- 2) Christmas Fund to go to The Children's Society this year.
- 3) St George's involvement with Malawi is to be kept at an annual donation for the present, with a view to maybe forming a Parish Link in the future. Time and resources for this link at present are not sufficient. We would like to have a Malawi Social/Fund-raising Event this year, if possible, and wait to hear of visitors from there who could be invited to update us on Malawi needs.
- 4) A new event is to be considered – Remembering Srebrenica, now a National Day on 11th July. A further meeting would be needed in order to plan this.

* BIRCH, Birmingham Community Housing Network, has been running since April 2011. Through a network of volunteer hosts, it provides lodgings for destitute asylum seekers whose support and accommodation have been cut off by the Home Office. In addition, there is a befriending scheme for young unaccompanied asylum seekers, also support for families.

Jenny Astley

Social Committee

Carol Couse (Chair), Jenny Astley*, Pat Bullock* Pat World

Our calendar wouldn't be complete without our Souper Sunday Lunch for the 10.30 am congregation and the Breaking Bread for Breakfast for the 8.00 am worshippers. These popular events were held earlier this year in January instead of the usual February (because your Chairman was going to be away and didn't want to miss it!) And, I believe that if we were to serve anything other than Apple Crunch for pudding that we would have a mutiny!

The St George's Day Patronal Festival Luncheon was held on Sunday the 19th of April followed closely by the St George's Day community picnic on the 23rd (a very busy week). The picnic was welcomed back after the cancellation of 2014 because of its close proximity, that year, to Easter and the schools holiday which meant that St George's Primary would not be able to take any part in the music and entertainment which has become such a focus for the day. This year's entertainment featured music, drama, art and gymnastics and we served up a vegetarian menu for the first time which proved very popular.

We are finding it more difficult to hold a church wide Bring and Buy sale because the church is so much in use and are considering having several limited 'table top' sales during the coming year to raise funds.

The Harvest Lunch in October was another successful event. Limiting the numbers to 50 for our lunches means that some people are disappointed but this makes it much easier for our small committee. This works really well for us and there is always plenty of food to go around.

Although we are such a small committee and are not meant to be a fund raising arm of the church, we are very pleased to report that with all the various events we plan during the year, we somehow manage to raise some much needed funds for St George's.

We are often called upon to provide refreshments for special events over the course of a year. The Christmas period is a particularly busy time and this year's 'Switching on of the Edgbaston Lights' taking place at St George's was a serious strain on our resources. We really would welcome other members of the congregation to join us in building up this aspect of fellowship in the church.

Carol Couse

Reports of Church Activities

Bible Reading Fellowship

The number of people who receive BRF notes remains pretty constant. Seven people receive Guidelines and six take Daylight. I would be pleased to order more copies if people request them.

Eve Kirby

Caroline's Table

I have continued offering things for sale on most Sundays I am here. My enthusiasm for making fudge and oat cookies has waned slightly, but do not fear; I AM still making them! The Table has raised over £1,000 this year alone for general church funds; thank you so much to all who sacrifice their waists! Many thanks too for those who contribute cake, jam etc and to those who make generous monetary donations and offer ideas and interest, which encourage me to continue. Later in the year I hope to bring in again God's wonderful gifts from the allotment.

Caroline Shaw

The Children's Society

This year The Children's Society was St George's chosen Christmas charity. We therefore had Children's Society speakers at several of our December services. The total amount raised from our Christmas services was £841.24 + £114 gift aid. The PCC gave the society £375 from this year's covenanted giving. This year's box collections totalled £600.40.

Pat Bullock

Christian Aid

Our main supportive effort is Christian Aid Week and in May 2015 we raised the final total of £5267.55 [including Gift Aid, for which we are very grateful]. Thanks are due to the legion of collectors, givers, musicians, cooks, quizzers and calculators who made this possible. We are a star church for the Birmingham area in achieving our consistently good annual totals. Our total was up on that for 2014 and we did particularly well on the house-to-house rounds. Though collectors feel that individual house access gets less easy year by year it is still a very well-worth enterprise.

The total accumulates from the house-to-house collection in our usual roads and the holding of our two extra events. In 2015 there was a multi-church evening quiz and the luncheon club soup lunch with a lovely musical recital by Pat Bullock and Phil Ypres-Smith.

This year, Christian Aid week is May 15th – 21st 2016.

Jane Darnton - Christian Aid Organiser

Edgbaston Deanery Synod

The current members are The Revd Julian Francis, Ian French, Anne Game, John Hatch, and Caroline Shaw. There have been 3 meetings in 2015 we get to know each other a little better, and meet members of other parishes. Recently I recognised the name of a tutor from 1975, and was surprised to see that she now looked a little older! We meet in a different host church each time, enjoy coffee and biscuits, and open with a broad range of worship. In February there were very interesting talks on chaplaincy; then, in small groups, we discussed various study courses run by the deanery churches. In June the themes were 'Safe Families for Children', followed by 'Discussion on the Pilling Report and issues arising from the legalization of same-sex civil marriage'. We were moved by amazing presentations from five speakers. November brought a very interesting item about and by people at Queen Alexandra's College, and then a presentation entitled 'Navigating the Faculty Process'. The evenings also include business items etc.

Caroline Shaw - Deanery Synod Representative

Diocesan Synod

A new triennium of the Diocesan Synod began in August 2015. Julian Francis stood for the House of Clergy, and Jenny Uff for the House of Laity; both were deemed elected, as there were more places than candidates.

The first meeting of the new triennium was on 28th November 2015 The postal ballot to choose the chair of the House of Laity had resulted in a tie. This was resolved by drawing lots at the meeting, though in practice there will be both a chair and a vice chair.

The meeting also acknowledged, with a round of hearty applause, Jim Berrow's 7 years of service as Chair of the Diocesan Advisory Council for the Care of Churches.

There were reports on General Synod, on progress on diocesan initiatives, such as providing safe families for children, and on the experience of shared conversations for issues to do with human sexuality.

Jenny Uff

Joined-up Reading

The group, which continues to meet on a Monday evening once a month, usually attracts about seven people. Most of us are from St. George's, some, however, are from St. Agatha's and St. Augustine's. We read a book and discuss it. Books read during the last year include:

Early Christian Letters: Tom Wright

Without God is everything permitted? Bagini

Voices of Morebath: Eammon Duffy

The Jesuit Guide to (almost) Everything: James Martin

Meeting God in Mark: Rowan Williams

Soul of the Marionette: John Gray

Eve Kirby

Junior Church

Junior Church meets weekly in the Whitmore Room with a regular attendance of between 3 and 6 children. Our current team of leaders are: Judy, Lorraine, Eve, Louise, Heather, Kirsty, Suganthi and Dawn (who joined us this year). In June 2015, together with Rev Julian Francis, we reviewed several aspects of the work in JC with very positive outcomes. These are discussed in the report.

New resources

In consultation with the Bishop's advisor for Children's Ministry, Claire Wesley, we are currently using the 'Roots' resources for our weekly JC meetings. We pay a yearly subscription for these materials and there are books as well as online resources to develop our weekly sessions. We have found these materials flexible, meeting the needs of a rather diverse group of children in terms of age (between 3 years and 9 years). The feedback from leaders has been positive thus far. Later this year, when we are due to renew our subscription, we will review our use of these materials and consider if we ought to renew our subscription. We have also bought new stationary supplies and the church has purchased a laptop which we can use with the children.

Organisation and meetings

The organisation of the activities around JC is now shared by a number of the leaders. This has proved invaluable as we can support each other and the organisational aspects are then not felt to be too onerous. We have held two all group meetings this year (28th June 2015, 8th October 2015) and two additional planning sessions on Saturday mornings (16th January 2015 and 20th February 2015) for specific all-age worship services. Our next meeting is planned for 2nd March 2015.

All age worship

At the time of writing this report, we have had several services which have involved the children. In the summer of 2015, the children planted lavender and rosemary plants in the Peace Garden and were part of the service of Remembrance in September. We had an extremely well attended Crib Service on Christmas Eve. In January, we had a successful all-age worship service for Christingle when St George's School choir were present. This made up for the disappointment of having to cancel our joint Nativity service with the school in December. We are currently planning our next all-age worship to take place at the 'Pilgrimage to Jerusalem' Service on 6th March.

There have been general discussions in the Education and Worship committee meetings about how we might include the children during all-age worship services in terms of intercessions and serving. This is something we hope to work on in the coming year. We are also reconsidering how we might work with the school for the nativity service this year. It will be the focus of our meeting in the summer.

Forthcoming events

We are looking forward to our meeting in March to discuss the following items:

- Summer outing/picnic
- Harvest Service
- Nativity and Christingle (preliminary discussions)

Suganthi Daniel, Junior Church Co-ordinator

The Parish Magazine

The Parish Magazine has, for another year carried out its function as a medium for parish news, views and records and to publish articles of church and general interest. It circulates among the congregation, and old friends who wish to keep in touch, as well as libraries and archive collections and a slowly increasing number in the local community. Eleven issues are published each year, monthly, with a double issue for July and August. The magazine continues to be free, paid for by advertisers: I am very grateful to David Allen, the Advertising Manager, whose assiduous work makes this possible. As in previous years I would like to thank my regular and occasional contributors, and only wish there were more of them. Thanks are also due to our helpful and efficient printers, Bromsgrove Printing Company.

Justin Pinkess – Editor

Prayer and Share

The group meet every few weeks, six times in 2015, for a short time of silent prayer or reflection, followed by sharing, as far as any wish, their experiences. The meetings are shown in the pew sheets, and any who wish to try or to join this format of prayer are most welcome.

Jenny Uff

Safeguarding Group

The Safeguarding Group was set up in response to the Church of England's decision to implement safeguarding policies and procedures in 2013.

The St George's Safeguarding Group is comprised of Julian Francis, Vicar; Jane Francis Child Protection; Pat World Adult Protection, and the churchwarden(s). We normally meet once a year to review events of the past year and take on board any new guidance.

In the past year the diocese has provided training on Safe Recruitment and Domestic Violence and Abuse, attended by PW and JF; and Safeguarding, attended by PW.

A procedure manual has been developed and contains guidelines for Child and Adult Safeguarding; Forms; Sexual Abuse Disclosure; and Role Descriptions for most of the regular jobs in the parish. Copies of all policies that we agree to take on are in a blue box file in the church office.

No direct safeguarding work has been undertaken in the past year. The Vicar has been contacted on several occasions with crisis issues and has provided pastoral care and support. These generally have been within the Mental Health remit and he has signposted as appropriate. Confidentiality is always a primary concern and is maintained.

There is information on the bulletin board at the back of church with contact names and details for parishioners to call if needed. There are also leaflets detailing the diocesan program for survivors of sexual abuse with a free Listening Service available to those who need it. Contact details are on the leaflet and on cards which are there to be taken if desired.

Pat World

Sewing Group

The Sewing Group continues to meet fortnightly through the year and this year we enjoyed a bring and share Christmas lunch as well as our Summer outing to Coughton Court, near Alcester, the home of the Throckmorton family for over six hundred years. The house contains a vast number of portraits of family and friends, also fine tapestries, of which one was on show in the hall. The group have been busy during the year with knitting needles this year as well as sewing needles. Just before Christmas we heard about the Community Knitvity Project at All Saints Parish Church, Kings Heath and many of us helped with knitted green squares to decorate the 'Big Knitted Tree', a tree made entirely of knitted squares and covered in knitted decorations -17 ft tall and covered with 4500 'leaves'. We have also knitted vests for babies in Ethiopia and Syria.

Carol Austin

PCC Financial Responsibilities

In relation to the financial statements, Charity law requires the PCC to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of the PCC's affairs and of its financial activities for that year. In preparing the financial statements, the PCC are required to:

- a) Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- b) Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- c) State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- d) Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the PCC will continue.

The PCC are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the PCC and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act of 1993. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the PCC and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Risk Management

The PCC keep under review the major strategic and operational risks which they face to ensure that systems have been established and all necessary steps have been undertaken to minimise these risks.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the PCC to maintain the general fund, which represents its free reserves, at least at a level which approximately equates to six months unrestricted fund expenditure at current levels. The PCC believes that such a level of reserves is needed to ensure that their ongoing commitments can be met.

Building Repairs

The Quinquennial Inspection of St George's building by Christopher Thomas, Church Architect, reported in September 2014, that works amounting to £29,500 required immediate attention, and works that should be addressed within 18 months totalled £915,000. A further £135,000 of works was identified for attention within 5 years.