

The Parish of St. John the Baptist, Axbridge

Annual Report and Financial Statement
of the Parochial Church Council for the year
ended 31st December 2016



The Year in Brief

The Diocese has been developing its vision: *In response to God's immense love for us, we seek to be God's people, living and telling the story of Jesus.*

As part of this vision, which we fully support, we have begun a series on Sundays of encouraging people to make the connection between what they do in church, and what they do in daily life. *This Time Tomorrow* is a way of making space in a service to learn more about what some of our members are involved in and what pressures they experience. We hope that this will encourage us all in the story that **we** have to tell.

In our quest to be God's generous people, we have been continuing to work at our buildings and how they can be as accessible and welcoming as possible. The scheme to provide a level access into church continues through the development stages, and we trust that this year will see significant progress. We have been able to start work on modernising the Church Rooms and breathing new life into them.

2016 has been marked by a series of farewells. Three of our members, Cathy Miller, Dorothy Watkins and Michael Reed, have passed to glory. Each in their own ways have been a real gift to our community. Others have moved/are moving to different parts of the country—Pam and Dave Rogers to Leicestershire, Cynthia Reed to Shropshire, John and Sue Albone to Devon, and Martin and Christine Latham to Warwickshire. In a relatively smallish community these farewells have had a significant impact on our life.

My thanks to Judith and Liz, our Churchwardens, and to the Ministry Team for the wonderful work they have been doing, and to all the people who continue to make Church happen! Thank you for your generosity and support in all **you** do.
Tim Hawkings

Mission Statement

How about this for a statement of what our church is called to be...?

To know Christ better and to make him better known..



Music and Much More

At the end of 2016 Martin Latham retired as our organist and choirmaster. The Benefice Christmas Carol Service was an emotional occasion, with some splendid music and a presentation to Martin for his 49 years of dedication, enthusiasm and energy.

Martin and Christine have been at the heart of the life of Axbridge Church in so many ways. They have both in turn been churchwarden and served for years on the PCC. Martin has led the care of the church building, been a pillar of the administration of the parish, and has made a huge contribution to the liturgical life of our parish. Christine has been very much involved in the pastoral and family care over the years, particularly through Mothers' Union.

They have recently moved to Warwickshire, and we wish God's blessing on them in their new home, offering our love and gratitude.

Following their departure, we are very grateful to those, who have taken on new roles and responsibilities.

Working with Children

The biggest change in 2016 has been that Axbridge First School Academy joined The Wessex Learning Trust (a Multi Academy Trust of 8 schools in the Cheddar Valley). Our best wishes to the Headteacher, Mrs Lorna Richardson, who has returned from maternity leave, and thanks to Miss Hannah Coles, who has done a splendid job as Acting Head in her absence. We continue to welcome school into church once a month on a Friday morning. Anything from 45—80 parents come too, and a small group of people do a valuable job in welcoming them with a cup of coffee. Kevin Walke and Beth Samways, together with Tim, are our Foundation Governors.

The continuing success of Messy Church is entirely down to its tremendous team of helpers. It meets about seven times in the year on a Saturday afternoon and regularly attracts a good number of children, together with a parent or another adult.

We have been encouraged by new regular bi-monthly evening worship for young people, *Movement*, which takes place in Wedmore church. We have been glad to support this initiative.

2016 as seen in the statistics

	2016	2015	2014
Electoral Roll	100	99	94
8.00am	9	11	11
10.00am	65	59	57/63
6.30pm	30* excl Carols	37	38
Messy Church Children	24		35
Baptisms	13	4	6
Weddings	1	6	4

What has CRIG been up to?

In the past 12 months work on Church Rooms has included: the re-pointing of the north wall, the appointment of Steve Reading [Collier Reading – Wells] as Consultant Architect to work with us on future phases of improvement, and the newly-completed renovation of the kitchen and WC. Sedgemoor Conservation Officer is currently considering if an entrance into Church Rooms may be constructed from the Public Right of Way by creating a doorway immediately opposite the South Porch.

The design for a new access into St. Johns has been amended and so will be less expensive. This version has been submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee [DAC] and received its general support.

To date, actual and committed expenditure on CRIG related projects has been almost £25,000. Of this around 33% has come from the PCC's General Fund. The rest has been from grants [e.g. National Lottery, Allchurches Trust], together with local charitable donations from Axbridge Parochial Charities, Harvest Home, Progressive Supper, Cheddar Lions, Freemasons Lodge Wedmore, and personal donations.

The CRIG is also overseeing the creation of a new second office on the first floor.

A more detailed explanation of the CRIG's work, finances and plans is on display in the church.

Other Fabric News

Thanks to the stewardship of Martin Latham over many years the fabric generally is in reasonable repair. During the past year Steve Skinner from Badgworth replaced crumbling plaster on sections of the walls of the Sanctuary and Lady Chapel and removed redundant cable clips in the SW corner of the Nave. These areas now need to be painted and further areas of plasterwork need attention in the coming year. Externally, Gerald Hellier de-spiked the railings round the 'gravel plot' outside the Church Rooms.

Mothers' Union

Looking back on my report for 2015 I said it had been quite a year in the life of Mothers' Union Worldwide. It was 100 years since the opening of Mary Sumner House and 4 of our group were able to attend the Open Day. BUT 2016 topped that experience when again 4 of our group attended Winchester Cathedral for the 140 years celebration of the Mothers' Union. It was amazing to see so many outside the Cathedral waiting for the 2nd service of the day. Yes the Cathedral was packed twice. It was good to see that our small Branch is part of a larger group across the world seeking to make a difference to family life by our presence and the campaigning that we undertake.

Our own challenge for 2016 was the 140 Acts of kindness which was taken on with great enthusiasm. Many of us attended the Diocesan 140 celebration in Taunton, Ellen Bailey carrying our Banner with poise and grace.

Mothers Union is consulted to take part in the many Family Bills that are going through Parliament. Together we presented 4500 signatures calling of the Government to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are exempt from charges for using statutory child maintenance service. There is a charge of £20 and the idea was to add another 20%. Soon after that came the 16 days of Activism against gender violence which I am pleased to say many members of the congregation took part in. There were other papers concerning family matters.

Mothers' Union has many unit coordinators. FAITH AND POLICY WATCH. (The campaigning) ACTION AND OUTREACH (which has many sub coordinators) We have been busy knitting for prem. baby units, "Beanie" hats for those arriving at Avonmouth Docks in the cold, puppets for Gaza, to name a few. LITERATURE AND MARKETING. Thank you to all those who are buying the cards which are well worth the money. 'AWAY FROM IT ALL' provides holiday for the needy. Please if you think we can help someone then let us know.

Fund raising from such a small Branch has been amazing. £185 for summer projects here and aboard. £175 for the Refuge centre and recently £510 for South Sudan. Thank you to those in the Congregation who responded.

I want to record the wonderful work that Christine Latham has been part of in the life of Axbridge MU, the Deanery and the Parenting project, and for the many years that she hosted the Teddy Bears picnic.

Our challenge for 2017 is Faith into Action.

Lastly I want to give thanks to my faithful helpers without whom I could not be Branch Leader.

Janet Angle

Regular Groups and important contacts as at April 2016

Church Wardens	Judith Strange and Liz Foster
<i>Catch this</i> Editor	Kevin Walke
Treasurer	Bob Foster
Gift Aid Secretary	Alison Walke
Secretary to the PCC	Margaret Hind
Bell Ringers	Roy Shallish
Messy Church	Peter Dixon
Meditation Group	Loraine Goddard
Choir	
Mothers' Union	Janet Angle
Come and Pray Group	Sue Day
Foundation Governors Axbridge C of E First School Academy: Beth Samways & Kevin Walke	
Church Safeguarding Officer	Margaret James

Christian Meditation

We have two Meditation Groups, which meet regularly to welcome people to share the teaching and practice of Christian Meditation through silence and friendship. These groups are open to any denomination, or none. Meditation is an ancient form of prayer. It goes beyond words, images, thoughts and feelings. It leads us into stillness, silence and simplicity, allowing us to rest in the presence of God. Even in our modern busy lives this is possible. The aim of Meditation in the Christian tradition is to allow God's mysterious and silent presence that is within us all to become the reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we are and do. For more information, please contact Loraine or Andy Goddard.

Health and Safety

The PCC has had a full health and safety review, following which it adopted a comprehensive Health and Safety Policy. In line with this, a 5-yearly electrical inspection has been completed by Hussey Electrical and annual maintenance of our fire extinguishers carried out by K&S Fire Protection.

Safeguarding

We take seriously the need to establish best practice and the highest standards with those who, through their church service, have any contact with children and vulnerable adults. Margaret James is our Safeguarding Officer on behalf of the PCC and brings her professional experience and wisdom to this important role. We are grateful too for those, who have had Disclosure Barring Service clearance to be involved in their church work.

Mission Support

We have continued to support four main charities through giving and prayer. Locally we help towards financing the post of Elizabeth Alden, the Christian leader in Kings of Wessex. The Church Housing Trust does great work in rebuilding broken lives and providing rehabilitation and resettling for homeless people of all ages across the country.

David Longe works as a Mission Partner in Jerusalem. He is the Bishop's Chaplain in a Diocese that covers much of the Middle East including Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. We hold the church there in our prayers at a turbulent period in their history.

We also support our sister parish of Lugwalo in a remote part of Zambia. Communication with the parish has never been easy, but we have been glad to help them to build an agricultural training centre, which we pray will give the opportunity to develop new skills.

Come and Pray

Prayer is the heartbeat of the Christian life, and we offer our thanks to all, who quietly get on with this unseen but vital part of Axbridge Church. On most Thursday evenings a small group of people meet to pray for the needs of our Church Family. We also have a Prayer Chain for urgent prayer requests.

Church Website

Thank you to Andy Goddard who continues to maintain our website. Please help him to ensure that the information it offers is kept up to date.

The Parochial Church Council

The Trustees of Axbridge Church are the Parochial Church Council (PCC), which has the responsibility of co-operating with the Clergy, in promoting the activities of the Church in the parish.

PCC Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

As at 23rd April 2017 the PCC consists of:

Ex Officio:

Clergy: Revd Tim Hawkings - Rector

Reader: Mrs Sue Latimer

Churchwardens: * Mrs Judith Strange
* Mrs Liz Foster

Member of General Synod & Diocesan Synod:
Mr Tim Hind

Representatives on Axbridge Deanery Synod

* Mr Paul Passey

* Mrs Margaret Hind

Elected Members:

Mr Bob Foster

* Mrs Stephanie Gall

Mr Malcolm Owen

Mr Peter Smith

* Mrs Alison Walke

Mr Brian Winder

Mr Peter Yusen

Vacancy

* posts due for election at this year's Annual Meeting

Financial Statement in figures and words

Receipts	2016	2015
Collections and Donations*	£61,047	£49,675
Tax recovered on Gift Aid	£8,120	£12,415
Social and Fund Raising	£7,330	£4,818
Other Income	£8,147	£10,859
Transfer from restricted Funds	£0	£0
Total Receipts	£84,644	£77,767

Payments	2016	2015
Parish Share	£36,048	£35,630
Other ordinary expenditure	£27,580	£18,235
Donations	£4,215	£5,523
Transfer to Restricted Funds	£2,000	£13,500
Building repair/ replacement	£6,297	£3,281
Total Payments	£76,140	£76,169

Excess of Receipts over Payments	£8,504	£1,598
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Bank current and deposit accounts 1 st January	£25,498	£15,738
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Bank current and deposit accounts 31 st December	£34,124	£25,498
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Restricted Funds held at year end	£24,935	£22,822
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As in previous years the church accounts for 2016 are summarised in the Tables above. Copies of the full versions prepared for independent examination and for issue to the Diocese are held by the Treasurer for anyone who wishes to scrutinise the accounts more thoroughly.

In this, my first report to the APCM, I can report that the church's financial resources over 2016 have risen from £48K to £59K. The valuable support of those who regularly give to the church and the benefits of the Gift Aid mechanism, have been supplemented this year by the work of two of our sub-committees. Paul Passey's CRIG secured grants and donations to support the Access and Church Rooms projects. The Social Committee have also increased our resources

by organising the Church Fete, Christmas Fayre, coffee mornings and the quiz night.

As of the date of the APCM, all outstanding 2016 debts have been collected and all charitable donations and other defined liabilities have been paid apart from (a) the remaining payments relating to the increase in the parish share, (b) the remaining payments for provision of temporary church music/organist and (c) the final payment for the kitchen renovation in the church rooms.

Receipts were up by £7K on the 2015 figure, but when the CRIG grants are excluded from this calculation, we see a drop since the fund raising increase does not quite compensate for the lower level of tax-reclaimed. The total of payments made in 2016 is equal to the total for 2015, although there have been higher costs associated with building repairs and other running costs. This is because a much smaller transfer was made into the deposit accounts in 2016.

Our attention can now be directed towards focused fund raising efforts which God-willing, will allow us to further increase our resources to enable us to meet our commitments and liabilities in 2017 and beyond.

May I express our gratitude to all our generous donors, to those involved in fund raising and to those who ensured that spending was again held under careful control. I would particularly like to thank Elwyn James for helping me to understand the church accounting systems, Alison Walke and Brian Winder for continuing efforts on the Gift Aid recording and the submissions to HMRC and to Brian for the banking of the weekly collections. I also wish to express my gratitude, and that of the PCC, to Francis Rabbitts for independently examining these accounts so meticulously.

Bob Foster
PCC Treasurer

Bank accounts are held at:
Nat West Bank, Wells & The Central Board of Finance of the Church of England

Independent Examiner

Mr F Rabbitts