



# Stretton Parish

THE UNITED PARISH OF ST LAURENCE,  
CHURCH STRETTON  
WITH  
ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, ALL STRETTON  
&  
ALL SAINTS, LITTLE STRETTON

## Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020/21

THE PARISH OF ST LAURENCE, CHURCH STRETTON,  
With ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, ALL STRETTON  
& ALL SAINTS', LITTLE STRETTON.

**Independent Examiner**

T Lunt MA FCCA MRPM  
Whittingham Riddell LLP, Chartered Accountants  
Ludlow

**Bankers**

CAF Bank  
25 Kings Hill Avenue  
West Malling

Barclays Bank  
Shrewsbury

**Architect:**

Lesley Lloyd Bsc BArch MSc Cons  
Broomyfields Farm House,  
Stanford Bridge,  
Worcestershire  
WR6 6SJ

**Churchwardens:**

Martin Benson & Marion Shuttleworth

**Assistant Warden – St Michael's**

Malcolm Forbes

**Assistant Warden – All Saints**

Christine Jones

**PCC Treasurer**

Graham Vince

**PCC Secretary**

Jo Aze

The Parish Office  
The Parish Centre  
Church Street  
Church Stretton  
SY6 6DQ

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020/21

### BACKGROUND

The Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, in promoting the Mission of the Church.

The PCC is also responsible for the care of the Church property and fabric. It is charged with framing an annual Budget.

### Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected in accordance with the Church Representation Rules under Synodical Government by those on the Electoral Roll at the time of the Annual Meeting. During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Clergy: (*ex-officio*)

#### **Rector:**

The Revd Steve Johnson

#### **Associate Minister:**

The Revd Christobel Hargraves

**Churchwardens:** (*ex-officio*)

Martin Benson

Marion Shuttleworth

#### **LEP Minister**

Hazel Allen

#### **Deanery Synod Representatives**

Janet Wilcoxon

Julie Lawton

Kimee Cleaton

Julian Hargreaves

Mike Edmunds

#### **PCC;**

##### **Elected for 3 year term expiring 2021**

Amanda Sanders (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

Jane Trew

Helen Rayner

##### **Elected for 3 year term expiring 2022**

Cathy Watson

Steve King

##### **Elected for 3 year term expiring 2023**

Graham Vince (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

Louise Jackson  
Malcolm Forbes  
Christine Jones

**Co-opted**

Romaine Thompson

**Finance Committee:**

Rector  
Marion Shuttleworth  
Martin Benson  
Jenny Church  
John Bennett  
Christine King  
Graham Vince

The PCC met 6 times during the year and the average attendance was 16.

**ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT**

**Church Electoral Roll Officer:** Jo Aze

The numbers on the Electoral roll are:

St Laurence's	217
St Michael's	34
All Saints	39

**Total on Roll**        **290**

The number on roll has reduced from 292 to 290

## RECTOR'S REPORT, *Steve Johnson*

It only been six months since our last APCM, yet the reports within this booklet are for the year.

As we look back on the last year or even 18 months, it's hard not to be overwhelmed by the enormity of the pandemic and how it has affected so much of each of our lives, as well as locally, nationally and globally. Even now as we look to restrictions lifting, we are so aware of the continuing impacts around the world as Covid continues to devastate nations. We continue to pray for those nations and pray for justice where vaccines are concerned.

Even with all the feelings of the last year, as we read these reports, it is encouraging to see how different groups across Stretton Parish have continued to support each other and the wider community. Since our last APCM we have had to close our doors again- twice. And I know from conversations that people struggled with these decisions and so did we as a leadership, but we didn't close the doors because we were scared or hiding, but out of our love and care for each and every member of our Parish.

This year has seen much work on our vision and overall organisation and governance, which then means that we can get on with the work that we are called to do as Christ's Church here on earth- Making Jesus Known.

So, as I look back on this past year, I have felt that God is preparing us for the years ahead. This year has been:

*A year of digging in.* One of the strands of our vision is 'walking with God', and this Lent many of us dug into 'Apprentice to Jesus' as we reflected on our discipleship. Part of our discipleship is 'keeping on', to keep walking with God when things seem tough. It is good to have so many homegroups across the Parish, which have stepped up and supported each other during this year, which is all part of us doing life together as apprentices.

*A year of learning new things.* For many of us I'm sure that has a lot to do with technology. We all grappled with online things, whether it was homegroup, prayer meetings, PCC/ ECC or committees. This year we ran our first Online Alpha and I recorded an assembly each week for St Lawrence Primary school. We also set the bar very high when it came to moving our services online or streaming. We owe a huge amount of gratitude to our online service editing team, who spend hours each week making sure there is a service there at 10am every Sunday. There are also lots of creative people with ideas that meant we were able to have special services for Remembrance, Christmas and Easter.

*A year in which we mourn.* Many of us will have known someone who died this year and for most we haven't been able to gather to pay our respects, with limited numbers at services. We have also seen so much cancelled, whether that be weddings, special events, the list could go on. We grieve for all we have lost this year.

Yet, within all these challenges, despite all the restrictions in place, God has continued to be at work in us and amongst us. I don't know why we are surprised, but it has given me great joy to see and hear all that God continues to do. It has been *a year of the faithfulness of God*, who has continued to work out his purposes.

But now is the time for us to regroup, to enjoy being back together as the family of God here in the Strettons. There is also time to rebuild and discover where God is calling us. As I said last time, this is where we review all our ministries alongside our vision and approach a time to prune. I am sure that we all say we like change and its refreshing, but as we know, when that change affects us- it is inevitably difficult to work through.

The reality is that, as we rebuild and reopen, we also need people to step up and serve. We have had people say that they are ready for a rest and don't wish to continue the role they have done pre-pandemic and rightly so. We have lots of people who have done the same ministry for many years and so now is the time for them to have time out and for new people to volunteer. The reality is that if we don't have people to help, then activities will be unable to go ahead. We are also looking at new ministry areas and the same stepping up applies, we will need people to lead and help.... At this exciting point in our life together, we need people who are willing to serve in the Parish and beyond.

As we begin again, I sense that Isaiah 43:19, is important for us all.

" See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

I am making a way in the wilderness

and streams in the wasteland."

We have been through what has felt like a wilderness and wasteland over these past 18 months, but God is faithful and continues to work and do new things. So now is the time to really dig into our vision, to walk, serve and grow.

### **CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT, *Martin Benson and Marion Shuttleworth***

None of us, a year ago, could have imagined that the changes to our church life which began in March 2020, would have lasted so long. We give thanks for our Rector, Steve, and the ministry team for leading us through this year of unprecedented challenges.

As God's people, we have been able to worship in different ways through our online services, in our homes with printed resources and in our buildings within the constraints which the pandemic has brought. Family Zoom and Homegroups using Zoom or conference phone calls, have presented challenges but also opportunities, whilst Zoom Coffee and prayer meetings have enabled members from our three churches and our different congregations to come together and build our fellowship across the whole parish.

The pandemic has caused many difficulties to our wider community. We have shown our love for our neighbours through the expansion of the Foodbank and the Making Memories project, seeking to provide for their physical needs as well as offering to walk alongside them. A digital version of our usual Carols and Tea service was delivered with some Christmas gifts to our local residential homes, to extend our care and show God's love. The Blessing Project last summer, led by Romaine, raised our profile and brought an opportunity for reflection to those passing through St Laurence's churchyard, with many meaningful conversations taking place.

It has undoubtedly been a difficult year, a time of testing and trial. As wardens we are so grateful for the understanding of our congregations and thank God for those who have stepped up to help in so many practical ways to help us Make Jesus Known.

As we look to restarting our in-church worship and opening the Parish Centre to the community, we ask for your prayers and God's guidance. We hold both Steve and Chris and the Ministry Team in our prayers and, together, we look forward with great anticipation to where God will lead us.

*Martin and Marion*

After eight years on the PCC, serving first as Treasurer and then Churchwarden, Martin Benson is stepping down at this year's APCM. Alongside Barbara Oakley, Martin steered the parish through the vacancy and appointment of our Rector, Steve and has been a steadfast support and encourager for both Steve and his fellow churchwarden. His steady hand has been much in evidence throughout this unprecedented year. Thank you Martin!

*Marion*

### **ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH, ALL STRETTON, *Hazel Allen***

Before the last Lockdown we were able to stay open for services with restricted numbers on Sunday mornings. On Christmas Day we held a Communion Service. During Lockdown pastoral work continued over the telephone and with garden visits. Worship across the parish was available on Youtube with members of St Michael's participating in some services. ECC meetings were on zoom. We are looking forward to reopening at Pentecost, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021 to share in Worship together once again.

#### **Growing Community**

Opportunities were limited during this period. Availability of services was advertised in the village, on Contact, Next Door and the Church notice board. The message of Christmas was shared with every home in the village through our Christmas card. There was a Nativity scene in the village and posters and floral displays in and around the church. At Easter there were Easter gardens, roadside banner and flowers in the porch. Both these occasions attracted visitors.

#### **Walking with God**

As with the rest of the parish, quite a number in the congregation read the 'Apprentice to Jesus' book as a Lent study and it led to personal challenges and fruitful conversations. Some continued their Bible study home group on zoom.

#### **Serving the Strettons and beyond**

The reverse Advent Calendar operated again in 2020 with items being put on the church porch and daily stored away. There was an extremely generous response from church members and people in the village with items for the Ark.

#### **Stretton Hall. – Gillian**

From June onwards services were led via zoom. David Willetts, who usually plays the piano has given the Scripture reading. Zoom has enabled the monthly service of fellowship and worship to be maintained.

In August 2020 we joined in the Blessing project and residents and staff appreciated the gifts and cards from the parish. In October we had a Harvest Festival service. The Carols and Teas special service was another opportunity to share together with the parish. We had a Zoom afternoon tea with mince pies and stolen.

As part of the January service, at the request of the Activities Co-ordinator, we included a 'remembrance' for those who had recently passed away at the home.

We look forward to having our services at Stretton Hall, once conditions allow. We may even have an outdoor service in the summer months, weather permitting!

## **FINANCE REPORT – SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT**

### **PASTORAL CARE ACROSS THE PARISH, *Barbara Oakley***

As for many other aspects of life in Stretton Parish, pastoral care has been somewhat different during the past year.

The pastoral care team have continued to keep in touch with those they would normally visit, this has been done through phone calls, cards through the door etc; they are looking forward to the time when they can start to visit in person again. In addition, some members of the team have been in phone contact with members of the St Laurence's church family who are not part of a small group; the occasional phone call has been much appreciated.

The work of the pastoral care team is only a small part of the overall pastoral care in the parish. During the last year, when we as a church family have not been able to meet together face to face, home groups have played a valuable part in making sure that people's pastoral needs are met. Many of us have missed the opportunity to meet over coffee on a Sunday morning. Normally, these occasions provide an opportunity for us to 'look out for one another', picking up on pastoral needs and supporting one another through friendship and prayer. Without this structure, it is often within the context of a small group that these little concerns are picked up and acted on.

At the start of the year, a number of people in the church family offered practical help, such as shopping for people who were shielding. The need for this kind of help has been small, but a few individuals have really appreciated the regular support and friendship they have been given by someone calling to do shopping on a regular basis; lifts to medical appointments have also been much appreciated.

At All Saints and St Michael's pastoral care is largely carried out by those who live in the villages. Living in much smaller communities makes it easier to pick up on pastoral needs as and when they arise.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all those who have faithfully responded to the pastoral needs of the church family, and indeed the local community during this challenging year. On reflection, I think that means most of us! One of the characteristics of this year, has been the incredible way that people really have look after one another. So, let's thank God for one another!

### **CONDOVER DEANERY SYNOD, *Janet Wilcoxon***

**Representatives:** Kimee Cleaton, Mike Edmunds, Julian Hargreaves, Julie Lawton and Janet Wilcoxon (Lay Co-chair).

The Synod forms part of the governance of the C of E and normally meets 3-4 times per year for the mutual support and encouragement of the churches in the area and to reach out with the gospel to all within the parishes and beyond. Due to the regulations operating in lockdown the Synod has only been able to meet once over the past year and as this was by Zoom not all representatives were able to participate. The meeting was held on 2nd February 2021. The Rural Dean welcomed the synod members and led a service for Candlemas.

Parish representatives then reported back on how the various churches have coped since lockdown first occurred. Most had been able to have services using some form of modern technology, some had felt able to resume physical socially distanced services when allowed, others had remained closed throughout although there was at least one church offering services in each benefice. Other activities had also taken place in accordance with the regulations ie. Messy Church, Alpha and Advent courses and more were planned for the near future.

The Rev Sam Mann had been licensed as vicar to the Apedale Group of Parishes in September 2020 and the Revds Clare and Mark Sanders were licensed via Zoom on 9th February as Interim Ministers to the Craven Arms Benefice for a period of 2 years.

Please pray for our Rural Dean, Rev Geoff Garrett in his busy and important role, for myself as I seek to support him and the lay members of the deanery and for all the synod members both clergy and laity serving on General Synod and also the Hereford Diocesan Synod/Board of Finance.

### **SAFEGUARDING, *Chrissie Pepler – 01694 771888***

In October last year, whilst the pandemic was pre-occupying our minds, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the Anglican church was published. Sadly, this told how the church over many years has failed to protect those under its care, respond to allegations of abuse and provide adequate safeguarding policies and practice. Necessarily things have to change. We will be seeing those changes emerge over a period of time and this will mean that at a local level we have to play our part. We know, for example, that there will be new guidelines on safer recruitment of volunteers coming out in 2021 that we will need to implement and there will be other things that we may need to change as a result of the recommendations of this report. Alongside this, the Diocese of Hereford Safeguarding Team have said that there will be an audit of Parish Safeguarding in 2021. We hope that we can see this as a learning time and it can show us where we may need to improve things.

We have had a break from many of our activities because of the virus. As we start planning what we do as we come out of the latest lockdown we want to ensure that any activities that involve volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults are up to date with their DBS check and safeguarding training (the training needs to be updated every three years). Our thanks go to Margaret Benson for all the detailed work she does to

ensure that the DBS process runs as smoothly as possible. We also welcome Julie Lawton to work with us as the 'champion' and lead on safeguarding on the PCC. Julie brings a wealth of experience from her background in schools that will help us as we move forward. We hope that all those of you who volunteer for so many different roles will understand and support any changes that will need to be made in the months ahead and we thank you for your cooperation and the work that you have done over the last challenging year.

## **STRETTON BLESSING PROJECT (SUMMER 2020), *Romaine Thompson***

### **What did we do?**

We displayed a number of banners around Stretton Parish which together spelled out the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6: 24-26 and we signposted interested/curious observers to the UK Blessing, a song recorded on YouTube under the strapline, "Churches sing 'the Blessing' over the UK".

We also created an art installation in the churchyard at St Laurence using bespoke wooden letters spelling out the word, "Strettons". And we invited the community to contribute to artwork which was displayed on the letters around the themes of 'sadness', 'thankfulness' and 'hope'.

All of this was done in the context of our journeying together as a community through the Covid pandemic and sharing in its struggles.

### **What was the impact?**

The banners created a visibility for our churches which in turn generated conversation, some of it enthusiastically supportive and some not, but all of it valuable, I believe, in the overall mission of the church.

The art installation was warmly received by many of those using the St Laurence's churchyard as a thoroughfare whether local residents, day visitors or those coming to stay in our town for a short break. Most read and engaged with the reflections either out of curiosity or a sense of shared struggle and wanting in some way to 'mark that moment'.

I think this project paves the way for more by way of community outreach over the Summer period each year to residents and visitors alike.



## **CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG FAMILIES WORK, *Sarah Robinson***

The Childrens and Young Families work continued in a different way this year.

There has been no Parents and Toddlers but we plan to start up on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2021.(we are looking for helpers if you are interested please speak to me). I made some Advent Activity Bags which I delivered at the beginning of December. This gave me a brief opportunity to meet some of them face to face (socially distanced, of course!)

School clubs and 'Open the Book' have stopped for now. Steve has led online and in-school assemblies, with Rochelle helping at Christmas

Kidzone met for a few weeks, meeting in two bubble groups in the Parish Centre led by Sally and Sarah which worked well. During the latest lockdown we started meeting on a Family zoom on Sundays and will continue until May 16<sup>th</sup>, the week before Pentecost Sunday (May 23<sup>rd</sup>) when all ages gather as a Church Family to celebrate the Holy Spirit. From then on we look forward to starting back in our two bubbles groups again, beginning May 30<sup>th</sup>.

Messy church has continued in a different way by sending out bags of exciting goodies that explore a Bible story, and is followed up with a Messy church Zoom gathering nine days later. While the numbers have fluctuated, we have been encouraged by a strong commitment shown by the people attending regularly. Thanks to those involved in the preparation of craft resources etc, especially Sally Clilverd. We took part in a discipleship project in which we were asked to plan a year exploring social action within our Messy Church. The Church Army carried out the project which has now been published. Here is the link to watch the short video and, if you'd like to, read the report which is useful for us to learn from. <https://youtu.be/IDhU5Q8TiMc>

I have regularly kept in touch with families via email and Facebook trying to be an encouragement during difficult days especially while children were being homeschooled. It has been difficult to balance; not wanting to overload them with resources with just being there for them. I am grateful for your prayers throughout.

## **YOUTH WORK, *Sally Clilverd***

As we started the year in lockdown, youth work was feeling very quiet. The youth were all having very different demands placed on them and it felt right for Pink Dinosaur Club to have a break, so we didn't meet between March and September. Then in September we decided to start meeting weekly via Zoom and since that time Rochelle, or Manney, have been leading the group with me, so huge thanks to you both for your time and love for the young people . We have 6 regular attendees and have become adept at playing games over Zoom, as well as having good discussions and lots of fun. One of things I have discovered is that young people have to become better listeners over Zoom, as talking over each other really doesn't work; so, there are some definite pluses!! Unfortunately sharing snacks over Zoom really don't work, but we do get to see what some eat for their dinner! Since Christmas we have looked at a Wellbeing Course and we have all learnt a lot about ourselves as we thought through the six different areas of Wellbeing. Please pray for these young people as they continue their life journey's that each one of them would grow closer in their walk with Jesus and they would become as able to talk about their Spiritual journey and faith as eloquently as they do the other areas of their life.

I have also been part of a committee looking at ways to develop youth work and potentially a community youth club in Church Stretton. In the near future 2 youth workers will be starting a 12 week project to encounter young people in our community and talk with them. This will hopefully lead to a weekly youth club starting shortly after this time.

I haven't been able to visit the secondary school for the entire year due to restrictions and would very much value your prayers as to the way forward for future work with the pupils. May God inspire new ventures and new doorways to open as we seek to make closer ties to make Jesus known in this area of our community. If, as you read this, you feel God prompting you to consider working with young people please do talk to me or phone me to have a discussion.

### **STRETTONS FOOD BANK, *Graham Vince***

The demand for Food Bank services has risen dramatically during the last year and currently we're giving out around 70 large shopping bags of longer life food per week plus fresh fruit and vegetables, toiletries, household cleaning products etc. The Food Bank operates entirely from the Parish Centre due to the volume of food being given out and we're grateful for the food being given to us and the money being donated to buy all the extra food that is needed. The clients come from the local homeless hostels, referrals from local government support services, and self-referrals from people in the local community who don't have sufficient income or benefits to feed themselves or their children. The general opinion amongst other Food Banks is that the demand will continue long after the pandemic restrictions have been eased, as the full economic effect is felt by people and businesses which are currently being supported by the government.

### **ECO CHURCH, *Isabel Carter, Chris Jones, Hazel Allen***

The Diocese has hosted two very successful Eco Church online workshops and given that nearly half of the planning team at present comes from our parish, we can take some credit for these! The first in November had Andy Atkins, CEO of A Rocha as the main speaker and he was inspirational about the role of the Church in highlighting the need for urgent action on climate change. Isabel spoke about the children's work in St Laurence's while Mike Bourke covered the study groups looking at lifestyle changes in All Saints. The second workshop in March focused on churchyards and our main speaker was Harriet Carty from Caring for God's Acre. Romaine spoke on the Blessings project using the churchyard.

Following the really positive decision from Synod last year for the Cof E to reach Zero Carbon by 2030, all our churches are now asked to report back on carbon consumption – through Church and buildings heating, lighting and travel in particular. Rather than a burden, it's good to view this as the Church nationally helping to lead the way forward in caring for God's creation.

Our next focus is to mark a new activity led by Caring for God's Acre and A Rocha – 'Churches count on Nature' – a way of encouraging people to appreciate and record the wildlife in their churchyards. This is planned for mid June and we hope to encourage people and families to come and participate - in Covid-safe ways. All three of our

Churchyards are special places which nurture biodiversity and we are very grateful to all the people who maintain and manage them sensitively. And we hope as a Parish to mark Climate Sunday later in the year – something all UK churches are asked to do in the build up to the hosting of the UN Climate Summit in Glasgow this November.

*St Laurence's:* St Laurence's reached Silver award after some very focused work by the Eco Church group looking into various levels of church life from recycled toilet paper to ethical investment.

*All Saints:* The Bronze award and plaque have been received. We have already completed two of the items towards Silver, with three to go.

*St Michael's:* We officially became an ECO church in November 2020. The survey revealed that we are already at bronze award for buildings, community engagement and care of our land; and silver for worship and teaching. We have been unable to engage with the 'Lifestyle' section due to present Covid restrictions.

A comprehensive survey of the flora in the church garden was undertaken by Sue Forster, revealing 22 tree species, 3 ferns, 16 grass species and 114 other plants and shrubs.

### **MOTHERS' UNION, *Jenny Heath & Di Coles***

As with all other Groups, we have unfortunately not been able to hold our monthly meetings since February 2020 but the work of the Mothers' Union which supports 4 million members in 83 countries worldwide continues and we have helped as much as possible with financial support both as a group and individually for their various appeals for help. We are in regular contact with our President in Hereford both by email and Zoom, and we enjoy having news from our Australian link branch in Hervey Bay, Australia.

Locally we have kept in contact with our 24 members by email, telephone and occasional "door-step" chats. Birthday, Christmas and Easter cards were sent to all plus two Newsletters. Large boxes of "goodies" were kindly donated to the Refuge by our members at Christmas and Easter (including a large amount of Easter Eggs!) for both their use and their outreach groups, for which they are always very grateful. During the year several members have supported the care homes and Shrewsbury Hospital with various knitted and craft items – so our work has continued "behind the scenes". Sadly our leader for the past 5 years, Margaret Stratton, decided to step down in January – our thanks to Margaret for all her help and leadership – we will miss her.

Covid rules permitting, we are hoping to resume our meetings in the Parish Centre in July when new members will be very welcome – details will be in Contact nearer the time.

### **REPORT ON THE FABRIC OF ST LAURENCE'S CHURCH AND THE PARISH CENTRE, *Martin Benson & Marion Shuttleworth***

#### **St Laurence's Church**

**West Window & Tower repairs:** The work on the west window and repairs to the tower have been completed. With the removal of the scaffolding we are all able to appreciate how good the repaired window now looks.

**Heating:** In December it appeared that the underfloor heating was not effective; the external engineers made some adjustments to restart the circulation pumps. However,

there remain some issues with the outdated control unit and its online interface. Mark Tocknell is pursuing possible replacements.

**Trees in the Churchyard:** Following receipt of a letter from a neighbour with concerns about the large Douglas Fir tree, a professional survey was commissioned of all the trees in the churchyard. The opinion of the arboriculturalist is that the tree is far enough away from the boundary and the church building to have space to develop and is a prominent specimen and local landmark. The report has assured us that the fir presents no danger and recommends no work, other than perhaps some trimming of the canopy back from the building.

**Replacement bench:** Mark has installed a replacement bench on the south side of the church, given in memory of Rob Roseveare, a former member of our congregation, by his family.

**Box Tomb:** A tomb in the south-east corner of the churchyard has collapsed. It has been fenced off by a stonemason who has also provided a quote for its repair. A faculty application for the repair has been made; the Chancellor in London has made some observations related to finding the owner of the memorial (i.e. descendants of this burial of 1833). Consequently, a notice has been placed in the Shropshire Star but as yet no-one claiming to be the owner has been identified.

**General Maintenance:** The external water tap, which was worn, has been repaired.

The annual Tower clock service by Smiths was undertaken in January 2021.

The monthly maintenance programme is yet to recommence after the restrictions of the past year.

**Quinquennial:** Our next Quinquennial Inspection is due this year, and will be carried out by our Inspecting Architect, Lesley Lloyd. A date for this has yet to be arranged.

### **Parish Centre**

The blown glass window units have been replaced by Mark Tocknell and Robert Rayner. The upstairs rooms have been remodelled by Robert, creating a bigger office space to incorporate a hot desk facility. Following the closure of the Ludlow Diocesan Office, we have been able to acquire some of their surplus desks and other office furniture from the Diocese, at no cost to us, for which we are most grateful. A new acoustic wall has now been installed between the Youth & Children's rooms. Several volunteers have helped with the redecoration of the upstairs rooms, particularly: Mike and Isabel Carter, Margaret Benson, Amanda Sanders, Lorraine McCrohan, Helen Rayner and Claire Tocknell; Mark Tocknell has laid new carpet tiles.

**Replacement External Doors:** To improve security of the Parish Centre and provide improved safety for staff working within, all the external doors have been replaced with aluminium framed doors. A remote electronic release is being installed by Robert Rayner and Steve Aze to enable the front door to be opened from within the Parish Office.

**Parish Office Door:** A new bespoke door will soon be installed to provide greater security for staff working in the Parish Centre. Both door projects are being managed by Graham Shuttleworth, on behalf of the PCC.

Burglary: Unfortunately, the Parish Centre was recently broken into. The new side and rear doors withstood attempts to force them open, but access was achieved through the kitchen window. The Parish Office door was forced open and a small quantity of cash stolen. Plans are in place to replace the windows to the rear of the building and to the Parish Office to make them more secure. Other security measures are being considered.

The Churchwardens are grateful to all who help with the maintenance of St Laurence's Church and the Parish Centre, especially Mark and Robert, and to Mike Carter for caring for our churchyard. Mark is now stepping down from overall management responsibility for the two buildings, although he will continue to undertake general maintenance works as required. The church leadership is deeply grateful to him for all that he has done in managing our buildings over a number of years.

Our thanks also go to Amanda Sanders who, after a number of years of handling our Faculty applications, is stepping down from this important role.

### **FABRIC REPORT FROM ALL SAINTS, *Chris Jones***

Due to Covid restrictions, the church has not been able to be open for Sunday worship for nearly a year and we are looking forward very much to being able to worship together as a community very soon.

During this last year, a number of matters have been discussed by the Committee and these are summarised below.

#### Removal of pews & replacement with chairs

Back in September 2020 the Committee agreed to propose to the PCC & the wider local community that the existing pews were all suffering from woodworm and these should be replaced by chairs as part of a full refurbishment programme. This recommendation was supported both by the church members and the local community and, subsequently by PCC. A Faculty Application, incorporating a recommended chair, has now been submitted to the Hereford Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) whose approval is required before the chairs can be bought, and their response is awaited.

#### Woodworm & vermin treatment

Rentokil have treated the church interior for woodworm, replacing some of the skirting boards. They have also undertaken a treatment programme to deal with vermin which have caused some damage to the building exterior.

#### Carpets

Whilst the above works are being undertaken, it has been agreed to replace the current carpet with one of a similar type, but incorporating a breathable underlay which is preferable for the wooden floor.

#### External work

We hope to repaint the church exterior over the next month or two.

#### Gardening

A big thank you to Mike & Liz Bourke and Chris Davis for their faithful work in keeping our church grounds tidy throughout the year.

#### Banners

Thanks to the Banner Group for making the wonderful Red Altar Frontal, Burse and Veil.

### **FABRIC REPORT FROM ST MICHAELS, *Hazel Allen***

The building has been visited regularly.

The electric water heater has recently been serviced and we are waiting a costing for a replacement wall heater in the vestry. As the weather improves the gutter around the chancel area will need clearing.

The garden has been regularly maintained.

### **WORLD MISSION GROUP, *Romaine Thompson***

**What have we done?** We have continued to support our mission partners by praying for them regularly in our mission intercessions and by our giving. Our mission tithe for the 2020 financial year will be distributed to our mission partners over the next couple of weeks. And we have also given on other special occasions such as at Christmas to both Valleys of Hope and Chocolate Box.

During the year we said 'goodbye' to two longstanding members of the group, Janet Wilcoxon and Isabel Carter: we are very grateful for all of the work which they have done so faithfully over many years.

**What next?** After a careful review we have paused our current partnership programme and we are now prayerfully exploring how our mission partner programme might look going forward. A couple of our existing partnerships have changed in any event due to differing circumstances on the part of our partners - the Patons (CMS) are returning to the UK some time over the Summer of this year and Deb Battersby (Chocolate Box) has moved on to another mission post with the Salvation Army.

We expect to be able to share some recommendations for the future with the PCC before the end of this calendar year. In the meantime we continue to pray in our intercessions each week on a mission theme and existing relationships between individuals continue in some cases.

We are to be joined by Pat Gregory from All Saints and we hope to have representation from St Michael's in due course. We'll be changing our name as and when these additions happen to better reflect the Stretton Parish perspective as a whole.

### **CHURCH STRETTON BELLRINGERS, *E Anne Hone, Tower Captain***

The tower has been largely quiet over the last few months, but I have remained in contact with the members and all are keen to return as soon as we can. We have rung with limited numbers when permitted by covid restrictions and tolled for various occasions, notably the death of Prince Philip. The prolonged lack of use has not been good for the ropes and I look forward to the acquisition of a new set when furlough has disappeared. We have managed to keep the clock running thanks to my loyal helpers and hope for a better year ahead.

## MINUTES

### THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

1.	<b>Opening Prayers</b> The Rector opened in prayer and read from 1 Thessalonians 5.
2.	<b>Elections of Churchwardens</b> The nominees were Martin Benson and Marion Shuttleworth. They were duly elected. The Rector swore in the churchwardens on behalf of the archdeacon. Barbara Oakley was thanked for the eight and a half years she has served as churchwarden. She was presented with a gift as a token of our appreciation. Barbara thanked Martin Benson and Mark Tocknell for being fellow churchwardens and allowing her to care for the people while they looked after the buildings.

### THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Adrian Cullis, Hazel Allen, Gillian Taylor, Sally Clilverd, Malcolm Loft, Helen Loft.
2.	<b>Elections</b> <b>a) Members for the PCC.</b> There were four nominations, received from Louise Jackson, Graham Vince, Malcolm Forbes, and Christine Jones. They were duly elected to the PCC. Thank to Pat Gregory and Alison Phillips who have stood down. <b>b) Members for the Deanery Synod.</b> There were five nominations received, from Janet Wilcoxon, Julie Lawton, Kimee Cleaton, Julian Hargreaves and Mike Edmunds. They were duly elected.
3.	<b>Prayer of Commissioning for Churchwardens and the new PCC</b> The Rector led in prayer.
4.	<b>Approval of Minutes</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2019 were approved.
5.	<b>Matters Arising</b> None
6.	<b>Vision for the Parish</b> The Rector set out the vision for the Parish. In the first few months of the Rector's time in post, he spent a lot of time with the Ministry Team looking at where we have been, and where we might be going.

Then Covid came along and the churches were locked for the first time in 800 years. The Archbishop has posed the question "What kind of Church will emerge from this time?"

So we reflected on where God wants us to go as parish and asked the questions "What are the three churches here for?" "Are we a social club or are we the body of Christ?" Our emphasis now is on us being one Parish, and we no longer refer to St Michael's and All Saints as the "daughter churches".

We have added the wording "Making Jesus Known" to our logo, which sums up our purpose as a parish. There are three ways we are enabled to do this: by our dependence upon the Holy Spirit, prayer and the Scriptures. We bring all our gifts and skills as individuals together to the church to Make Jesus Known. We all have a part to play. We will be focusing on these three areas: growing, serving and walking:

1. Growing community – we seek to be a visible presence in the Strettons community, building relationships with those who live and work here and offering everyone the opportunity to belong and to believe. We call this Intentional mission. Eg Blessing Project, Alpha online, carols and teas.
2. Walking with God – helping each other to become faithful followers of Jesus, seeking to live out our faith amidst the challenges of our daily lives. We call this Intentional discipleship eg Sunday worship, homegroups,
3. Serving the Strettons and beyond – seeking to love our neighbours by walking alongside them through the ups and downs of life and looking out for their needs. We must ask ourselves "Who is my neighbour?" We call this Intentional service. Eg Food Bank.

This vision is our plumb line for all our activities and will be used to look at which areas of ministry we continue, lay down or pick up. We need to learn to communicate this vision better so everyone can share the vision. Our vision and ministry areas will be the focus our PCC meetings and there will also be a lead person for each area.

Over the next few weeks and months we will be praying and asking God what is he saying to us as individuals, churches and a parish.

We will be looking at our finances and our structures in the light of the vision.

## **7. Finance**

The treasurer presented the report for the financial year which is the twelve months ending 31 December 2019:

St Laurence's general income was £158,781 which was an increase on 2018.. Expenditure for St Laurence's was £158,230 which was a modest increase compared to 2018.

The general income and expenditure for the 3 churches is as follows:

St Laurence's shows a surplus of £551,

St Michael's shows a surplus of £2,439

All Saints shows a surplus of £1,656.

Income and expenditure for the nine months to the end of September 2020:

St Laurence's General Fund shows a deficit of £5,435 due in part to the fact that there has been no income from hire of the Parish Centre since March.

All Saints show a deficit of £1,361. This year there was no "Teas to Please" event so the income is less than it would normally be.

St Michael's show a surplus of £761.

The treasurer gave his estimates of the general fund deficits for 2020: Estimates for St Laurence's a deficit of £9.5k.

All Saints, a deficit of £2k.

St Michael's, a deficit of £2k.

These deficits can be covered from unrestricted reserves but any deficits of the year will reduce our reserves and therefore the monies available for any unexpected expenditure. Any contributions towards these deficits would be gratefully received.

The auditors have written that they have no concerns in connection with the examination of the accounts.

Proposal of acceptance of the accounts: Proposed by Graham Vince, seconded by Cathy Watson, all in favour.

Proposed reappointment of Whittingham Riddell as the independent examiners: Proposed by Graham Vince, seconded by Janet Wilcoxon, all in favour.

The treasurer ended by thanking John Bennett, treasurer of All Saints, assisted by Chris Jones, and Jenny Church, treasurer at St Michael's. He also thanked members of the finance team, Peter Hammersley, Tony Peck and Graham Heath and the sidespeople, churchwardens and auditors.

The Rector offered thanks to Graham on behalf for everyone, for all his hard work as treasurer.

## **8. Safeguarding**

Chrissie Pepler introduced herself as the parish safeguarding officer. If anyone has any concerns, they should be addressed to her, the Rector or the churchwardens. There has been an independent enquiry into child sexual abuse. The full report recognises the way things have been done in the past have not been good and there have been many victims of abuse perpetrated by people within the church at all levels. Some changes have been made, but there will be more changes which

will be absolutely necessary. All incumbants will have to do more training, safeguarding training will be in more depth, there will be further changes regarding recruitment of volunteers. It is all our responsibility to take safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children seriously.  
The Rector thanked Chrissie for all she is doing.

**9. Questions /Matters to be referred to the PCC.**

**None**

The Rector thanked everyone who has stepped up to help during Covid, we are very grateful.

Thank you to those who keep praying. We had our first Parish prayer meeting last month on Zoom and the next one is on Wednesday meeting at 8pm, please join in. Helen Rayner has been working with the children for 20 years and is now stepping down. She was thanked and presented with a card from the children and parents and some gifts.

The next APCM will be in April next year.

**10. Closing Prayer**

Chris Hargraves led in prayer.