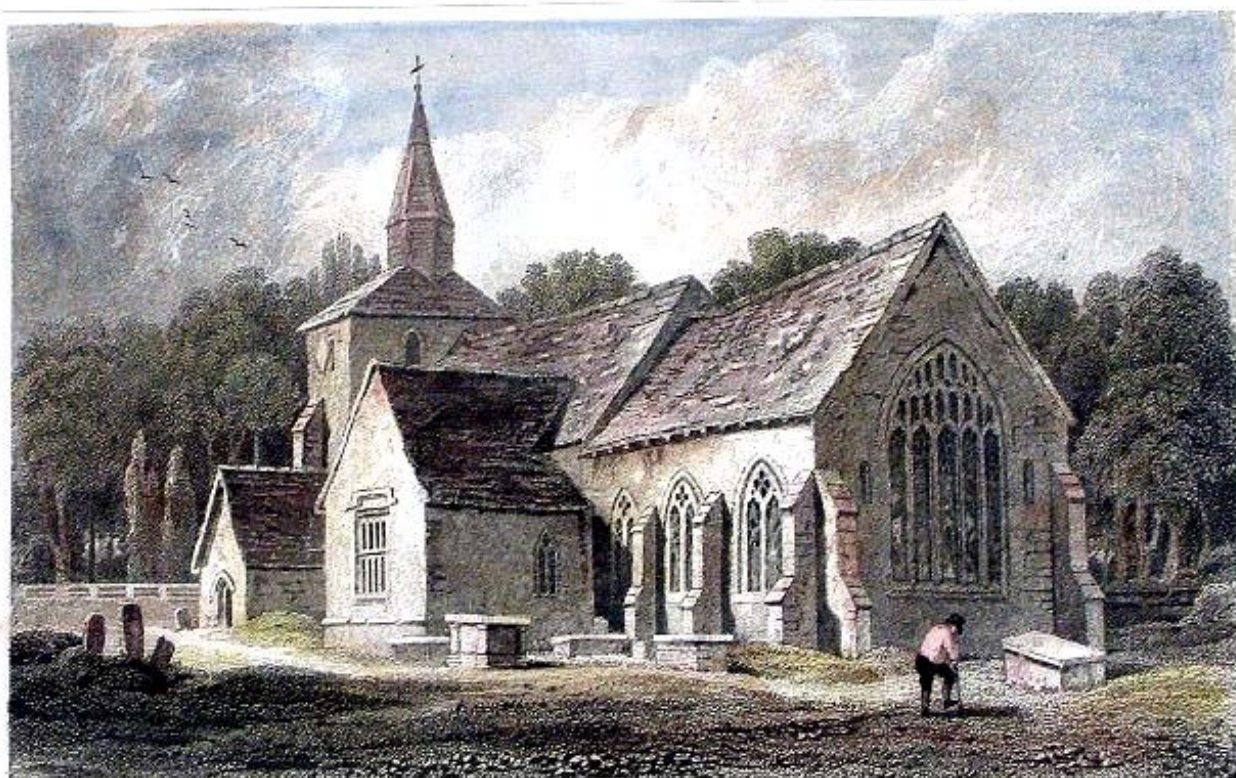




Agenda and Reports for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting



St Stephen's from the south-east

Held in the Church and online via Zoom
Sunday 4 October 2020 at 12 noon
postponed from April because of the Corona Covid-19 virus

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Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2020

Agenda

- 1 Prayers
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Minutes of meeting held on 24 April 2019
- 4 Election of Churchwardens
- 5 Election of church representatives on Deanery Synod
and on Christians Together in Canterbury
- 6 Election of PCC
- 7 Approval of Sidespersons and Senior Sidespersons
- 8 Discussion and approval of the following reports:
 - a The Electoral Roll
 - b The Activities of the PCC, its Committees and related Parochial Operations
 - c The Churchwardens' Report
 - d The Activities of the Deanery Synod
- 9 The Financial Statements for 2019
- 10 Appointment of the Independent Examiner of the Accounts
- 11 Questions and Announcements
- 12 Closing Remarks

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Wednesday 24 April 2019

The meeting commenced at 7.30 p.m. in the Church Hall. The Rev'd Kevin Maddy and 28 parishioners were present.

PRAYERS were led by the Rev'd Kevin Maddy.

APOLOGIES were received from Jean Baker, Peter and Mary Brown, Christiane Crabtree, David Horwood and Peter Toon.

THE MINUTES of the meeting on 22 April 2018 had been distributed. Rev'd Bill Hornsby proposed, and Barbara Jackson seconded that they be signed as a correct record, and this was agreed unanimously. They were duly signed by the Rev'd Kevin Maddy.

VESTRY MEETING. Mr Stephen Barker and Miss Shirley Hagger had been duly proposed and seconded and were unanimously accepted as the churchwardens for the coming year.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL 2019–2020:

Peter Toon and Sally Waters as our Readers were *ex officio* members of the PCC. Christiane Crabtree and Philip Knight, having been elected in 2017 for a 3-year term as our representatives on Deanery Synod, finishing in 2020, were still *ex officio* members of the PCC. Eight other people had been duly nominated and seconded before the meeting to serve on the council and were unanimously voted into office:

Mrs Jean Baker	Mr Peter Brown	Miss Enid Dixon
Mrs Angela Doe	Mrs Barbara Jackson	Miss Alex Knight
Mr Robert Mathews	Mr James Taylor	

The Rev'd Kevin Maddy expressed his thanks to the previous year's PCC for their hard work.

SIDESPERSIONS. Almost all who had helped last year were willing to continue—
(Senior Sidespersons marked with an asterisk):

* Peter Brown	* Christiane Crabtree	* Graham Jackson
* Brian Kennett	* Libby Nichols	
Rosie & Jeremy Barford	Angela Doe	Rhiannon Evans
Rita Kennett	Alex Knight	Rita Lockwood
Robert Mathews		

These were approved unanimously. Kevin thanked those doing this job, and particularly Derek Butler who was stepping down after many years.

ELECTORAL ROLL. This was stated by Enid Dixon's report to be 90, and this report was approved.

REPORTS ON THE WORK OF THE PCC AND OTHER GROUPS.

These had been distributed beforehand, and the meeting accepted them unanimously without comments or questions.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT. This was received and approved by the meeting with no questions. Kevin thanked all who had written reports for their hard work in the various aspects of church life.

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT. This was also received and approved by the meeting. Kevin added that there was a review of the Parish Share underway, with a team coming to the deaneries to talk to treasurers and others. This was a very complicated matter and would take up to three years. The largest portion of the share went on parish clergy, but there were a lot of parishes which could not afford to pay their share, like us. Dr Harry Cragg asked whether information from the Synod was reported back to the parishes, and was told that reports were regularly given to the PCC. Any reported difficulties about the arrangements for the next Lambeth Conference were not a deanery matter in any case.

FINANCE. The Treasurer, Miss Alexandra Knight, gave a PowerPoint presentation of the financial position of the church, enlarging on the printed statement distributed earlier. She said that there was a deficit in the Unrestricted Funds for the year of over £23,000. There were more people now unable to sign a Gift Aid declaration, which was costing us money, and expenses were up by 4 per cent, largely because of the Parish Share. The hall income had increased, and the money received from the new magazine before it had ceased had been up on last year.

The Share was £65,381: a huge increase of 6 per cent, but we had paid it in full. For 2019 it was due to rise by 3 per cent again.

On the Restricted Funds, the work on the Quinquennial Inspection had started, and more was planned. In this area the funds looked healthier.

For next year the Quinquennial work would continue, including the windows, which would be spread over several years. There was work planned on the pulpit, and toilets were under consideration, as well as a projector and screen for the church.

Of the £80,068 received from the sale of the Tyler Hill land almost half had gone already, but it was hoped that the projects being planned would result in something tangible from this money, with our being able to increase external use of the church. We should then have about £10,000 left.

As for what we should do next about funding, Alex said it was difficult to ask people for money when we had cash in the bank. Perhaps we should have a new stewardship campaign; the money would be running out by the end of 2020.

Kevin thanked Alex for her report, to applause from the meeting.

The Independent Examiner of the accounts, Peter Barton, was said to be happy to continue, and he was unanimously reappointed by the meeting.

NOTICES:

Kevin said that the Communications Committee was being revived, to publicise our activities.

A choir had been booked for next year to perform for nothing in order to raise money for the church, and there was to be a book launch in July.

Shirley Hagger reported on the Flower Arrangers. She said that there were problems with the Easter lilies, which now needed to be ordered well in advance. As for funding the flowers, Alex Knight said that the church could pay for them when receipts were produced, which was preferable to having a separate flower fund.

QUESTIONS:

Canon Norman Woods asked about a link with Madagascar, which Blean already had. He asked if there were any possibility of our two parishes working together on this. Kevin said he hoped the Bishop of Madagascar would visit us during the Lambeth Conference, and it may be preferable to have links with a different parish than Blean's. Kevin added that as Area Dean he had approached other clergy about their views on grouping together some of the parishes. We had tried with Blean, and probably people in both churches would be glad to have a closer link, but this had to be done at Deanery level, and depended on the future deployment of clergy. Norman mentioned that the King's School link with Madagascar had depended on Rev'd Fred Arvidsson, who had left the school, and was probably now in abeyance.

Mrs Libby Nicholls asked if she could be regularly updated with information about deaths, for the prayer rota and the Book of Remembrance. Kevin said that the organisation of the paperwork for the graveyard was being updated by a new team of volunteers, and that Martin Clifford was working on the Book of Remembrance.

Mrs Patsy Woods expressed her thanks for the information on the church on the website.

Robert Mathews reported on the magazine, saying that the printers had gone into receivership. Their business model had been to provide the magazine free, deriving their income from the advertising. There was no shortage of printers in Canterbury, but they all charged more than the church could afford, and we needed someone to manage the advertising.

The Meeting was closed at 8.47 p.m. with the Grace.



THE ELECTORAL ROLL FOR THE YEAR 2019

At the time of writing we have 86 persons on the Electoral Roll. We welcome one new person to the Roll: Mark Samuel (a member of the Choir).

Those we have sadly lost during the past year: Joy Ely, Anne Kemsley and Paul Ratcliff: May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Brenda Davies and Cathy McNab have moved away—Brenda to be nearer family in Yorkshire and Cathy and family have relocated to New Zealand.

Enid Dixon



ANNUAL REPORTS

Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

Much of the deliberations of the PCC in 2019 concerned the church and hall buildings and property, finance and the churchyard.

A long-standing concern has been the lack of toilets in the church, which is not only a matter for worshippers, but could affect the hiring of the church for outside events. A complication is that this affects hall lettings too, as the use of the hall toilets by, for example, concert-goers, would possibly impinge upon the safety of children or vulnerable people hiring the hall, meaning that the two events could not overlap. Many possible solutions were considered: building rooms outside against the church in several possible locations, and rearranging the whole choir/clergy vestry area, or even the Manwood Chapel. As the floor levels vary, ramps might be needed, the back pews might need removing or the font relocating. Endless pros and cons and head-scratching, which will resume after services begin to return to normal.

The various options for the screen and projector in the church were much discussed, but both have been installed and are being used.

Much time was devoted to the churchyard, liaison with the Council about its maintenance, and considering how to improve the area. Peter Toon particularly spent much time considering options and encouraging people, both within the church community and outside, to take some part in the work. A new agreement was reached with the Council about how different areas should be mown and maintained. A survey of graves and of interments of ashes was also undertaken by Jeremy Barford and Martin Clifford, and the Book of Remembrance was updated. During 2020 improvements to the old area for interment of ashes, near the west door of the church, as well as cutting back several of the Irish yews have been planned, and a notice-board is being designed to go near the gate, giving information about the churchyard.

The meetings in 2020 (technically outside the range of these reports) have been concerned mainly with reacting to the Covid-19 virus, and providing services, either online or in the church as far as possible. Work on making the churchyard a more welcoming place was able to continue to some extent, with several people giving generously of their time.

Indeed, many people throughout the church community have contributed much in prayer, money, skills and time to the different aspects of the church's life, and the PCC extends its grateful thanks to all of them.



From the St Francis window
in the nave

Robert Mathews, PCC Secretary

Acorn Café

The Acorn Café on Wednesday mornings continued to be a happy meeting place both for members of the church and for the community around us during 2019. We have a rota of eight people who in turn prepare and run the mornings. We thank them for their hard work. We do need some more helpers so offers of help are welcome. Attendance continues to be between 25 and 30 people each week. Proceeds from the morning go to church funds. There is a group of people who week by week bring cakes or produce which people buy, the proceeds from the stall going to the church funds through the Acorn Project. During the year there have been 2 charity coffee mornings—on 24 April we supported the work of L'Arche and raised £400.35. The charity event held on 23 October raised £402.35 for the Macmillan Cancer Support. Both these are worthwhile charities. The money raised during the Acorn Café in Christian Aid Week in May was donated to Christian Aid.

Jenny and Libby

All4One

This took place 8 times. The themes were Candlemas, Noah's Ark, Animal Sunday, Harvest, All Saints, and Advent.

The services were taken by Kevin, Shirley and Sally. Each service began with a prayer and ended with the Grace and was followed by afternoon tea provided by Libby and Margaret. There was a small but regular group who attended.

Shirley Hagger

Bellringing

It has been a good and busy year for bellringing at St Stephen's. We rang on a total of 163 occasions.

Sunday morning service ringing is generally well attended with an average of 10 people there to ring. Sunday evening ringing continues to alternate between general ringing on the 2nd and 4th Sundays and quarter peal attempts on the 1st, 3rd and 5th. On the general ringing evening service weeks there is an average of 6 people attending to ring. With the quarter peals we endeavour to ring a varied range of methods to cater for all standards of ringing. Out of 31 quarter peal attempts we were successful with 25.

It should be noted that we rely on ringers coming from St Dunstan's to assist us at service ringing. In particular this enables us to ring all 8 bells on Sunday mornings.

Monday evening practices are well attended with an average of 13 people present. We attract ringers from across the Canterbury District as St Stephen's is one of the few 8 bell towers in the immediate area.

During 2019 we rang for a small number of weddings. We continue to hold Holiday Practices on Wednesdays during all school holidays. This gives the opportunity for additional practice for the ringers and is especially helpful to those either learning to ring or advancing their knowledge of bellringing methods. It also gives the opportunity for visitors to come up and see what bellringing involves and perhaps decide to learn. We even have passers-by coming up to see what is going on.

St Stephen's ringers support the activities of the Kent County Association of Change Ringers (KCACR), particularly the Canterbury District. The Association holds monthly meetings across the District. Additionally there are two annual competitions. The method striking competition was held in May at Holy Cross, Goodnestone. St Stephen's entered a band and although we did not win we put in a very creditable performance and came 2nd out of 5 teams. The call-change competition was held in September at St Laurence Godmersham. Although the St Stephen's band that entered did not retain the trophy we came a very creditable joint 3rd out of 10 teams who entered.

In November we hosted two groups of year 6 pupils from St Stephen's Junior School to learn about the bells and bellringing. We gave them a tour of the ringing chamber and belfry where they saw a bell ring full-circle. We also gave them a demonstration of change-ringing. The children were able to ask lots of questions and on leaving they went away with a quiz to complete in class. We initiated this so the children could learn something about an activity going on in their community, the history involved and that it may spark some interest in learning to ring. We hope to repeat this later as and when possible.

We have had a number of recruits start during the year and are hoping they will continue. We aim to

recruit more ringers during the coming year. Unfortunately we had to say goodbye to our youngest ringer Arran at the end of 2019, as his family have moved to New Zealand to resettle. Arran was becoming a real asset to our band and he will be missed. However on wishing him and his family well we hope he will continue to ring on his local tower in Wellington.

We held our annual meal on a Monday night in February. We have decided, after a trial last year, to hold this annual event in the New Year rather than pre-Christmas. We enjoyed a very nice meal and evening at 'The Evenhill' in Littlebourne.

MAINTENANCE. The bells are generally in good working order. The ringers keep a regular check on the bells and fittings and carry out an annual clean, service and inspection of the basic fittings. There is a slight issue with some of the ropes rubbing against the openings through the ceiling (bosses) causing pieces of the sally (the fluffy woolly section of the rope) to fray. However our belief is that this is more to do with poor bell handling by some ringers resulting in ropes becoming too slack and thus catching against the bosses. This we can help reduce by advice and guidance. Additionally there have been some minor repairs to the tail-end of the ropes through wear and tear.

Jane Huxley (Tower Captain), Adam Redgwell (Tower Secretary)

Christians Together in Canterbury

The main activities of CTC during the year were on the one hand the preparations and plans for Easter, the Good Friday Open Air Service with the Walk of Witness and on the other the organisation of the prayer weeks. For the Week of Prayer of Christian Unity the Unity Service on 18 January 2020 was arranged at the Cathedral with the theme 'Unusual Kindness'. The Bishop of Dover gave the address. But apart from these main events there were many concerns, and plans and much was achieved. The Baptist Church opened a Hub café in partnership with Lily's Bistro which even during the Lockdown managed to deliver food to people in need. The Baptist Church has also appointed a Parish Nurse. St. Martin's and St. Paul's have worked together with All Saints' in various ways. The Street Pastors' finances are more stable and they have a new administrator. The CTC moderator Simon Redman reported progress for Healing on the Streets. CTC provided Welcome Packs for Howe Green, with the help of St. Paul's Church and the Salvation Army, and much help from volunteers.

Canterbury Welcomes Refugees had bought a house sponsored by CTC and supported by wide fundraising and was able to welcome a Syrian family. This family is now well established and has the support of six teachers to teach English. But there are continuing needs.

Another big concern is always the work of Connecting Canterbury. David Hartwell keeps CTC informed about the hubs of All Saints' and St. Dunstan's which had to close in March. But support for many families and for the Food Bank continued and is continuing. Lyndall Bywater, the secretary of CTC, keeps churches informed of events and need for support.

Christiane Crabtree



Church Hall

It started off as a reasonable year for the hall but with Covid-19 and the lockdown all bookings ceased, the hall cleaner was furloughed and the hall received no income.

With the easing of lockdown and after careful thought it was decided to reopen the hall. We must thank Peter Brown for his sterling efforts and producing a Covid-19 Risk Assessment.

This was distributed to all the hall's regular hirers. They have all decided that they will not be returning until next year (2021). Either this is because the guidance for their group is such that they cannot return;

or the limits on numbers preclude them from running their group with their usual membership; or their ages make them vulnerable until there is a vaccine, such as the Over 50s.

The local Residents' Associations had thought they would use the hall for their committee meetings but that proved impossible with the introduction of the Government's 'Rule of 6'.

However, where possible, and Government guidelines permitting, bookings are being slotted in, up until Christmas, in the slots that have been currently vacated by the hall's regular hirers.

It is hoped this may earn the hall a little income in the meantime.

Bookings are being accepted where organisations have supplied a risk assessment and/or where necessary provided evidence of the Government guidance that allows them to function (or the guidance of any association to which they are affiliated) providing they do not exceed the hall capacity for Covid-19.

Enid Dixon

Friends of St Stephen's

The Soup Lunch in January was most successful, was well attended and once again we received many compliments regarding the range and quality of our homemade soups and desserts. We as a committee are well supported each year by our volunteer cooks, much appreciated by all.

In July we were invited to support and provide interval refreshments for a book launch in church. The author Dr Martin Shaw, a renowned storyteller also in his field, is regarded as one of the most outstanding new teachers of the mythic imagination who enthralled the audience with thought-provoking tales. It was a most interesting evening.

September brought the Salvation Army to church and the Friends were again invited to support and provide interval fruit juice. A lively enjoyable time was had by all.

In October, Jeremy and Rosie Barford once again provided the Knowledge and Nosh quiz questions and answers. The Friends provided the Nosh and the evening was one of lively whispered discussion followed by laughter and louder discussion once the answers were announced. It was great fun and a wonderful success. Thanks of course go to our quizmaster and assistant.

At this present time the programme of events for 2020 is in the planning stage, the Soup Lunch having already taken place. We are all of course living in difficult circumstances so we shall plan accordingly when we are able. A planned concert has already been cancelled.

We are a hardworking, committed group and we extend a warm invitation to any like-minded people to join us on the committee or as a helping hand.

Christine Venner, Secretary of the Friends of St. Stephen's

Mothers' Union



In January of this year I took over as branch leader of our St Stephen's MU following the six years that Rosie Barford had been the leader. I must thank her for her great leadership and encouragement for the MU and hope I can continue in the same way. We are a small group with 17 members but unfortunately not everyone is able to come along to meetings. However, as the basis of the MU is Prayer, they can do their bit by praying for the work and leadership of this great worldwide organisation.

We have had a variety of meetings over the year. Following our Annual Meeting in February we had our Lent Service followed in April by a talk by the new Canterbury and Ashford Archdeaconry President, Mrs Rita Pengelly, along with her husband Simon, on their visit to the Refugee camp in Uganda, where thousands of South Sudanese women and children fled due to the unrest. This was a very moving talk and there was a small collection at the end to send out to the MU members to assist in their work to make life a little better. In May we visited the Enchanted Gardens at Seasalter for our outing which was a very pleasant and informative occasion with a talk by the owner about the work they did to keep the gardens organic. This was followed by a very enjoyable tea! The next month we met and talked about the problems of modern day slavery, followed by our annual Supper and Compline in July where other branches were invited to join us. This is

always a very rewarding evening and the Compline at the end of the supper is always received well. We held a coffee morning for the Summer of Hope Appeal and raised some £150 to send to Mary Sumner House. We had our annual Fish 'n' Chip supper at Tankerton a week later and although not so many members joined us it was, nevertheless, a very enjoyable occasion. We then had someone from the Blean parish come and talk about their visit to Madagascar and the links they had made with the MU out there and their hope to continue with this. Shirley Hagger, a branch member, came along with some of the artefacts she had accumulated on her many travels and told us some interesting stories about her travels. November saw us planning our programme for 2020 and in December Sue Palmer, daughter of the late Pat Lennox, formerly our Branch Leader, came and showed us how to make small boxes from old Christmas cards which was very challenging but very rewarding when it all came together. We look forward to another successful year in 2020 and I thank everyone for their love and support during this year.

Margaret Horwood

Music

St Stephen's Church Choir sang for the Sunday Sung Eucharist and Choral Evensongs throughout 2019 (except during August). As well as these services, they sang for a number of special festival days, carol services at Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, and a service of readings and music for Passiontide. Members of the choir work tirelessly at rehearsals each week to prepare music of the highest standard to enhance our worship. There are not many churches who are able to support their services with such a rich musical tradition and I am passionate that we should maintain this at St Stephen's. We are also very fortunate to have a fine pipe organ to accompany our services following its rebuild five years ago.



During 2019 the choir also sang services in Canterbury Cathedral—both Evensongs and Diocesan Confirmation services. We returned to Chelmsford Cathedral for the weekend after Easter where we were warmly received, as we were when we visited Chester Cathedral in the summer. Shortly before lockdown, we sang Choral Evensong in Rochester Cathedral, but unfortunately our trips to Winchester and Exeter this year had to be cancelled due to Covid-19; hopefully we will be able to reschedule these once the pandemic is over and it's safe to travel in groups again.

Throughout lockdown, members of the choir have continued to provide music for our services, singing virtual pieces where each chorister records their own part in their own home, sends it to me, and I piece them all together, alongside the use of archive recordings from our trips over the past couple of years. This has enabled St Stephen's to remain very much a choral parish during the lockdown.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in singing with us, especially as things hopefully begin to get back to normal, then do encourage them to come and find out more about being in our choir.

Stephen Barker, Organist and Choirmaster

Nutkins Toddler Group

The Nutkins Toddler Group continues to be run under the umbrella of the Mothers' Union which means they are covered by the MU insurance and I continue to oversee it. Things have changed since last year in that Tara James has stood down and the Leader and Carlie Tebbutt has taken over together with Charmaine Thomson and Sophie Bryant. Numbers fluctuate, but this is a nucleus of loyal members and it is a very worthwhile group providing safe play time and friendly faces for the children and their mums to enjoy on a Friday morning. However, the group was extremely lucky because in September the local Labour Councillor, Mel Dawkins, showed an interest in the group as something much needed for young mums and offered to make a donation towards providing more equipment and resources out of the new allowance councillors had been given this year. In October the group received a donation of £400 and this was used to provide new equipment, decent posters and flyers publicising the group and polo shirts for the leaders as their uniform. The leaders manage to have, on the last meeting of the year, a little grotto which is set up in the cupboard at the back of the hall and Father Christmas came to visit. All the children met him and were given a present and some chocolate together with a card. Having received this

wonderful donation, it was decided that the group would be re-launched in January 2020 when Mel would be invited to come along and see how the money she had donated had been spent. More news on this at the next APCM!

Margaret Horwood

Pastoral Group

GROUP MEMBERS: Margaret Horwood (convener); Mary Brown, Aileen Gardham, Libby Nichols, Enid Dixon, Dr Peter Toon, Sally Waters, Shirley Hagger and the Rev'd Kevin Maddy

During the year we lost Brenda Davies when she moved north to be nearer her family. However, we welcomed Sally Waters, our other Reader to the group and she is settling in well.

The We'll Meet Again Club continue to meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Tessa Ivory continues to help Margaret whenever she can and provides a Quiz some months that members thoroughly enjoy doing together and then follow this with a good old fashioned chat which they find most enjoyable and quite informative and entertaining at the same time. Tea and cakes are served, which again are well received.

The Prayer Chain has been updated and continues to provide emergency and much needed prayer for those in need. We have lost Brenda Davies, Ann Kemsley, and Sue Alexander from the group during the year but are pleased to report that we have had Christiane Crabtree, Shirley Hagger and Sally Waters join our group in recent months. Margaret Horwood oversees its work along with Libby Nichols and anyone who would like prayers offered either for themselves or on behalf of someone else should contact either one. If anyone would like to be part of this important ministry, please speak to either Margaret or Libby.

The Community Lunches. These continue to flourish with new names being added during the course of the year. Members are made very welcome by the children, and Sam Gaiger, the school cook, has continued providing excellent meals. The children are very enthusiastic in their welcome and in the serving of the meals, and the school choir entertains us all magnificently. We had a wonderful Christmas lunch where the participants enjoyed a small glass of sherry and a full Christmas lunch. The children were very welcoming and enthusiastic as usual and this year we had carols from the school choir as well as some songs sung by the children in the Acorn Nursery which was very endearing. We hope these lunches continue to be held as it is an outreach to some people who are not members of the church but like being part of the community.

Anniversary Cards have continued to be sent to those who have been baptised in our church as well as cards for other occasions, for which we are extremely grateful to a member who does this on behalf of the parish.

Members continue either to visit or to telephone parishioners who are unwell or housebound to make sure they are kept in touch with the parish life, and the numbers have increased quite a lot over the last year.

Margaret Horwood (Convener)

Property

SCREEN AND PROJECTOR. The screen and projector were installed in September 2019 after a prolonged wait for the faculty.

Unfortunately, there have been few opportunities to use the screen since the new year but there is no doubt it will be a great asset when the schools and other groups, as well as the weekly service, return to normal.

BASE TO PULPIT. The PCC received a generous donation to bring the historic pulpit back into use for sermons, readings and talks. It is currently stored out of use in the north transept because it does not sit stably on the floor and preachers and readers feel uncomfortable using it; this instability can only be overcome by replacing the existing base and steps.

The faculty was approved in February 2020, and the pulpit was collected by the specialist joiner on Friday 25 September and taken to his workshop near Ashford. The alterations to the base and steps are expected to take about three weeks to complete.



One of the lions' heads on the pulpit



The north transept window of St George, as it was.

INSTALLATION OF NEW HIGH-LEVEL LIGHTS. Two new high-level lights were replaced at the west end of the church, and two in the chancel, the new lights being LED, thereby saving considerably on the cost of energy of those they replaced.

VANDALISED WINDOW. The left-hand window of three on the east side of the north transept was vandalised in February 2020 and the PCC applied for two faculties, one to board over the window and the second for the repair. The contract for the repair has been placed with the Cathedral Studio and the work will start late October. The cost for the work will be paid by Ecclesiastical Insurance.

EXTERNAL STONEMASONRY. Part of the 2016 quinquennial inspection of the church was a recommendation for external stonework repairs for which a faculty was applied for and approved. A contract has been placed with a local stonemason and the work has started, to be completed before the end of October.

TOILETS. Discussions with the DAC regarding the possibility of installing toilets in the church have stopped because of the pandemic but hopefully will resume sometime next year, funding permitting!

EVERYDAY MAINTENANCE. The main boilers have been serviced regularly and a new contract has been agreed with SSE for a cheaper rate for our electricity, which now comes from renewable energy sources. The fire extinguishers were serviced, and the electrical portable equipment tested.

CHURCH HALL. The hall, kitchen and toilets have been thoroughly cleaned and the walls redecorated. The gas heaters were serviced during October, the portable equipment tested and the fire extinguishers serviced.

Peter Brown

Theology Group

St Stephen's Theology Group continued to flourish in 2019–2020, with talks on Virtue Ethics and Hinduism before our summer break in 2019. Following that break we had talks on John Ruskin, Climate Change, Care, and Caravaggio. We also covered important issues such as climate change in a talk given by Bishop Richard, social care, and prayer. Unfortunately, Covid 19 meant we were unable to complete the season but all cancelled talks have been re-scheduled and for the near future our meetings will be held on Zoom.

Dr Philip Knight



Churchwardens' Report

2019 continued to be a busy year at St Stephen's.

Worship was central to what we did, and our regular pattern of Sunday worship continued as in previous years, with 8 a.m. Holy Communion, 10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist and 6 p.m. Choral Evensong each week, and on the first Sunday of each month our All4One service at 4 p.m. During the week, regular services were the Wednesday morning Holy Communion, Thursday Morning Prayer, and a quiet meditation hour on a Tuesday. Kevin's work with Archbishop's School continued with school Eucharists, and seasonal services for pupils from St Stephen's Infant and Junior Schools; this is an important way that we were able to welcome those who are not regular members of our congregation into St Stephen's.

St Stephen's was used by several community groups during the year, continuing to develop our outreach in this area, and 2019 included performances by the University of Kent English Department and from the Canterbury Shakespeare Festival. Over the summer months St Stephen's was opened daily to allow people from the local community (and beyond) to visit to spend a moment in quiet reflection and prayer, or to discover some of the history of our parish church.

Social events that take the ministry of St Stephen's beyond the walls of the church continued in 2019, notably teas and soup lunches held in the Church Hall, the Community Lunches held in conjunction with St Stephen's Junior School. 'We'll Meet Again' has a small, regular group who enjoy quizzes, chats and tea.

Whilst this is a report on 2019, with this year's APCM having been delayed from the usual April date, and with Covid-19 having such an impact on our lives, it would seem odd not to mention the impact that this has had on St Stephen's and our worship and fellowship together in 2020. Following government instructions in March and subsequent rulings from the Archbishops, our church building was forced to close. However, the Churchwardens are proud that as a parish, we maintained our Sunday Eucharist and Evensong services throughout lockdown, as well as a number of special services for Holy Week, Easter and Ascension, gradually reintroducing services when we have been allowed so that we have got to the point of live-streaming our services from Church on a Sunday for those who are still unable to join us. This has also seen us gaining some congregation from further afield, and Choral Evensong has reached a wide audience via Facebook and YouTube. Obviously all of our social events have had to stop temporarily, but once there is no longer a risk to people's health from the virus we are sure that we will revisit old ways and introduce new ways of socialising as a parish and community.

There are many people who work behind the scenes at St Stephen's to make our worship and other events run smoothly: those who read and lead the intercessors, servers, choristers, Holy Dusters, flower arrangers, those who lead Seekers, members of PCC and sub-committees—especially Peter Brown who chairs the Property Committee ensuring that St Stephen's building is kept in good repair, and those who provide refreshments after services—the risk of trying to list everyone is the likelihood of forgetting someone, so apologies to anyone who may have been missed. We give particular thanks to Kevin, Priest in Charge of St Stephen's, Sally and Peter, our licensed Readers, who lead our worship, carefully preparing sermons and the liturgy, and retired clergy who help out in the parish, in particular Bill Hornsby and Norman Woods.

Stephen Barker and Shirley Hagger, Churchwardens



ANNUAL REPORT of the Priest-in-Charge, 2019–2020

I would like to take the opportunity at the beginning of my report to thank all those who have so magnificently served St Stephen's over the last year and nine months and for all the support given to me by so many people. It has been an honour to carry on serving this community and to share with you the burden of ministry in the parish.

The situation with the Parish Church remained fairly unchanged in 2019, with our average Sunday numbers up one to 64. Although we had more people at our Christmas Services in 2019 than in the previous year (201/153), our Easter numbers were sharply down last year (83/140). There were sixteen baptisms in 2019, eight weddings, and eleven funerals taken by St Stephen's clergy (of which five were in church). Sadly, we lost Ann Kemsley from our family last year and we commend her to God's peace. The All4One Service, so successful in 2018, managed to keep going and serves those who find our choral Services too long. We were also very fortunate in having bumper numbers of school children through the church, especially at Harvest and Christmas, and in the lead-up to Christmas we had 784 people through the doors who would not usually come to church. As you will see from the other reports, our parish has a very active life and we are fortunate to have so many volunteers serving the various activities, clubs and societies that meet in the parish. Last year saw the resignation of Michael Liddicoat as headteacher at the Archbishop's School and the school was placed under county administration.



We could not have possibly known how different 2020 was going to be and, as our Annual Meeting has been delayed until October, it is only right that I cover some of this year in my report. We had only just begun to get going with our plans for this year when the arrival of the pandemic sent us into lockdown. From the end of March until the beginning of August we were not able to hold services in church and our weekly worship went online. Lent, Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost were all celebrated entirely online, and we are grateful to Steve Barker for enabling that to happen through his technological gifts as well as his musical skills. From August we were able to meet in church again, first of all with only one Service at

9.30 a.m. without a choir, but then in September with a choir at the 9.30 a.m. and Evensong Services. At the moment we seem to be getting around 30 people regularly for the 9.30 a.m. Service and 12 for Evensong, but we know a lot more are watching our Services online as we livestream them. One of the challenges for us once the pandemic is over will be to enable those who have not been with us, especially those who have not been with us online either, to return to worship and fellowship with us. The biggest challenge is how we make contact with the people in our parish who have no regular contact with us. With no chance of our schools being able to use the church for the rest of this year, how can we find an opportunity to reach out to all those families who would normally come through our doors?

Of course, 2019 saw the arrival of our new Bishop, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, and we were very fortunate to have her with us shortly after she was consecrated. She is now encouraging us to think about what we need to learn from the experience of the pandemic we are still going through. These are going to be challenging times for the church, particularly in terms of finance and outreach, and we need to think about how best we can reach out with the Christian message to the whole of our parish. We need to build new relationships with our schools, especially as we have new heads at both Archbishop's and St Stephen's Juniors. It would be remiss of me not to mention the retirement of Stuart Pywell as headteacher of St Stephen's Junior School, and our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family as he moves into a new phase of life. Our thoughts and prayers are with Sarah and Laura as they take up the challenge of headship, and also with David Elliott our newly appointed head at Archbishop's. We have new opportunities to build relationships across the parish and I will be asking us to think about our vision and our possibilities over the coming year.

I will end by saying a particular thank-you to our leadership team: to the constant support and service of our Wardens Steve and Shirley; for Peter Brown's expertise and personal support as my lay co-chair; and for the work of Peter and Sally our Readers. Peter has worked very hard, with support from others, on improving our churchyard and we are already beginning to reap the benefits of that work. Sally works quietly in the background to offer pastoral support, and she has been a useful link into the wider community of Canterbury. Finally, may I say a very big thank-you to Robert, our PCC Secretary, for keeping us well-organised and to Alex, our Treasurer, for ensuring our finances are in good order. May God continue to bless the work of this parish and its people, and may he fill us with vision and energy to face the challenges of our times.



Ethelbert, King of Kent,
who welcomed Augustine.
North transept window



Deanery Synod

Over the past year Deanery Synod has worked together collaboratively and creatively to produce a Deanery Mission Plan which is both visionary and practical.

This began in June at All Saints' Church where Rev Phil Grieg led us in a fascinating activity 'Communion by Numbers'. At each stage of our worship we asked questions about how faith informs the practical mission of our individual churches and how we can act together. In groups we considered what we can say about the Deanery in terms of:

Isn't it good that ..., Isn't a pity that..., Wouldn't it be good if ...

In order to follow this up we had two autumn meetings. In September at **St Paul's** the focus was on the very practical issues of financing ministry and mission. We were joined by Deanery Treasurers, Julian Hills, the Diocesan Secretary and Archdeacon Jo. John Morrison, our Deanery Treasurer, advised us that for the moment we will continue to apportion the total parish share the Deanery contributes to the Diocese by using the current formula.

We met at a King's School chapel in November to review and expand the results of both these meetings and make any additions to the priorities we had identified in the context of three main questions:

What is our purpose/reason for being a Deanery?

What do you believe God is calling us to be as a Deanery within the next five years?

Can you list three priority goals?

Responses were helpfully put together in word clouds by Phil Grieg.

The February meeting at St Mary Bredin. Phil and our new Area Dean, Mark, who was commissioned at this meeting, had worked together with the Deanery Mission and Ministry Committee to produce a draft Mission Plan for this meeting. Again we met in groups and on this occasion made individual responses to the draft plan, looking at these headings:

Communications, Mission, Working Together, Partnerships, Ministry, Deanery Structure.

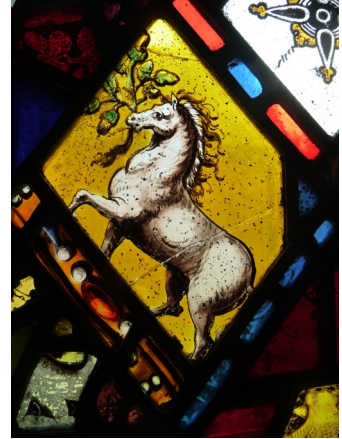
So we look to the future with optimism, thanking Rev Kevin Maddy for his tenure as Area Dean and welcoming Rev Mark Griffin, Rev Phil Grieg as Assistant Area Dean and Rev Jo Richards working as a team. Thanks also go to Liz Morrison and Janet Bentley for their enthusiasm as Lay Chairs and John Morrison and Harry Macdonald for sterling work as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

The new Mission Plan will bring us together in a variety of groupings which we have in common across our parishes: church wardens, treasurers, messy church leaders, etc. Hopefully we will all find ourselves stimulated and better equipped for sharing Good News by sharing the faith and resources which make up our diverse and creative Deanery.

Remember, Deanery Synod elections take place at your APCM. In July there will be elections to General Synod and your reps will be voting. Synods are exciting places to be as the life of our national church and our parishes moves forward in worship and service to the communities around us. **Your Synods need you!**

PS. I wrote this before lockdown ready for APCMs in the spring. Life has changed in many ways but our Deanery vision remains. Watch this space!

Rosemary Walters



From a window in the porch



A view of the church from the south.

Notice how few trees there were in the churchyard then!

This photo and that on the front are used by permission of Derek Butler.

