

# **Parochial Church Council of Ecclesiastical Parish of St Matthew, Perry Beeches, Birmingham**

Trustees' Annual Report for year ended 31 December 2020.

## **Reference and Administrative Information**

St Matthew's Church and centre is situated at the corner of Aldridge Road and Birdbrook Road, in the Great Barr area of Birmingham. The office address is: St Matthew's Parish Office, Birdbrook Rd, Birmingham, B44 8RA.

The incumbent was The Reverend Adam J. A. Romanis  
Address: St Matthew's Vicarage, 313 Beeches Rd, Birmingham, B42 2QR up until December 2020 and we are now in an interregnum.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a body corporate (PCC powers measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006.) We are registered with the Charities Commission, registered charity no. 1164756.

Bankers: Barclays Bank plc.

Independent Examiner: Mr. Chris Lee, Wychbury Lee, South Staffs Freight Building, Lynn Lane, Shenstone, Staffs WS14 0ED.

The Parish is part of Handsworth & Central Deanery, in the Church of England Diocese of Birmingham.

The PCC is responsible for working with the Incumbent to promote the whole mission of the Church - pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical - in the Parish of Perry Beeches. This includes the life of the Parish Church of St Matthew, including the church centre complex comprising the large hall, lounge and family room, and grounds, and the general and restricted funds required for the operation of the church and centre, and for the mission of the Parish.

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected annually by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The ministers licensed to the Parish and churchwardens are members by virtue of their office. Deanery Synod representatives are elected at the APCM and hold office for three years. Other members of the PCC are elected at the APCM. Up to two additional members can be co-opted by the PCC.

The membership of the PCC in 2020 was as follows:

The Revd Adam Romanis	Ex officio	Vicar, <i>Chair</i> until November 2020
Peter Conabeer	Ex officio	Licensed Lay Minister
Tim Bartlett	Ex-officio	<i>Churchwarden</i>
Janet Cook	Ex-officio	<i>Churchwarden.</i>
Rodney Williams		<i>Elected member Vice-Chair.</i>
Paul Phipps	Ex-officio	<i>Deanery Synod Rep.</i>
John Hope	Ex-officio	<i>Deanery Synod Rep.</i>
Ann Harrison	Ex-officio	<i>Deanery Synod Rep.</i>
		<i>Parish Administrator &amp; Treasurer</i>
		<i>Electoral Roll officer</i>
Adrian Deverell	Elected	<i>PCC Secretary</i>
Judith Deverell	Elected	<i>Safeguarding Officer</i>
Vera Lawrence	Elected	
David Gadd	Elected	
Carolyn Phipps	Elected	
John Hall	Elected	
Matthew Gallon	Elected	
Susan Kyte	Elected	

**Electoral Roll** In April 2021, there are 60 names.

**Usual Sunday Attendance** Due to Covid 19 the average Attendance on a Sunday in Church was 14 adults and 1 child and on the Sunday telephone phone in was 52 adults and 2 children.

**Worshipping Community,** We have seen some growth in the size of our total worshipping community: in 2015 there were 82 adults and 19 children; in 2016 there were 109 adults and 20 children; in 2017 there were 115 adults and 34 children; in 2018 there were 131 adults and 42 children and in 2019 there were 127

adults and 38 children. This year due to the pandemic many of our services were forced to be by phone in's. When we could we opened for private prayer in Church and some socially distanced services. So, during 2020 we have 125 Adults and 35 children.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The PCC makes all decisions corporately, except that the Standing Committee has delegated powers to make decisions between PCC meetings, subject to keeping the PCC fully informed.

The PCC is responsible for all parish finance, its management and control, including the appointment of the treasurer. The work of the PCC is supported by its committees, which meet between full meetings of the PCC. These are:

Standing Committee – Consisting of the Vicar, Churchwardens, Parish Treasurer, Lay Chairperson, PCC Secretary, and one other member of the PCC elected by the PCC. They have power to transact the business of the PCC between PCC meetings, reporting to the full PCC as appropriate.

Fabric and Finance Committee – Including the Parish Treasurer, the Churchwardens, the Vicar, other PCC members as appointed, to ensure adequate skills and representation and other invited members with appropriate knowledge and skills. They are responsible for the production of reports and recommendations for the PCC.

Church Growth group (formerly Marketing Group) – established after the PCC's annual review in 2016. Includes the Vicar, another member of the PCC, the Clerk for Baptisms & Marriages, and other appointed members with appropriate knowledge and skills.

## **Objectives and Activities**

Mindful of its responsibility for the mission of the Church in Perry Beeches Parish, the PCC seeks to provide a welcoming spiritual home and community resource for all in the neighbourhood. We want to discover the heart of God's love with all who seek. This is

possible through Christ, who makes of us his Body in Baptism and Eucharist, but whose love and saving grace are not limited to the confines of the church building and institutional life. St Matthew's bears witness to this through its on-site life, where the sacred space sits side-by-side with the hall which draws in many people from the wider community.

The PCC met on 8 occasions during the year with an average attendance of 11 members per meeting.

Major points of discussion have included:

**Where do we want to be in 2025?** Following the people and places review, it was felt important that we retained a full-time vicar. In order to achieve this, we should aim to recruit 10 new parishioners per year until 2025 and ongoing recruitment was required in areas including the choir, servers and welcomers. The appointment of either a permanent organist or director of music should be a priority.

**Children and Families Worker:** The recruitment and appointment of Rosalind Hardy was successfully completed with the post being split equally between the benefices of St. Matthew's and Lozells and Newtown. A management committee was needed, and a line manager nominated in order to set targets and objectives.

**Church Finances:** New accounting software had been purchased which would enable the monthly accounts to be produced in the same format as the annual accounts, with both systems running in parallel for 2020. Following a difficult year due to the COVID pandemic, church finances remained strong due to the on-line church giving scheme, but hall income had fallen as a result of lockdown restrictions reducing the number of group and commercial lettings.

**Interregnum:** Following Father Adams' departure in November, the church entered a period of interregnum. As the church received financial support from the St. Martin's Trust, the vacancy would be nationally advertised and it was hoped a replacement would be appointed quickly, given the strong desire for the church to move forward.

Other topics of discussion have included the appointment of Father Douglas Machiridza as full time Area Dean of the new deanery of Handsworth and Central, setting up telephone church services due

to COVID restrictions, the election of deanery synod members for a new 3-year term and safeguarding matters.

**Before the Pandemic, The, Sunday Eucharist** was at the heart of our Parish life. This depended on the ministry of Parish Priest and Lay Reader, the serving team, chalice assistants, readers, welcomers, and coffee makers. We have still not been able to recruit a permanent organist, but we are glad to have the services of two good organists who play alternate weeks. We make full use of *Common Worship* and other resources to adapt the Liturgy to reflect the seasons of the Church's year, and minister to God's people. Each month there was a Children's Liturgy (child-centred Parish Eucharist). Baptisms took place either at the Sunday Eucharist or in a separate service at 12noon. During the pandemic we had phone in services, first daily and then when we were able to open the Church, 4 times a week. We have also had the Church open for private prayer 4 days a week and since the departure of Father Adam twice a week for Said Communion.

**Prayer & Spiritual Development** A small, very committed group supported the daily Morning Prayer in church, with daily celebration of the Eucharist. The prayer life of the Parish was also enriched by monthly meetings of the Julian Group. We were of course not able to have lent courses in 2020, or to continue with the Julian Group and no confirmations took place although we had several people who were looking to be confirmed last year.

Our team of **Lay Pastoral Assistants** meet regularly with the Vicar to review pastoral care and Lay Pastoral Assistants regularly visited the housebound with Holy Communion, and provide ministry to the bereaved, and this will continue as soon as it is possible to do so.

Paul Phipps was put forward as a candidate for training for the office of **Lay Reader**. This he completed in September 2020 and is now a valued member of our team along with Peter Conabeer who has been a lay reader at St. Matthew's for many years.

The Parish made provision for children of different ages through Sunday School and other activities alongside the main service. The Sunday School, in particular, was seeing significant growth

both in numbers and regularity of attendance until we had to stop in March 2020. “Messy Church” sessions which took place roughly every two months, before the pandemic were well established as regular outreach events, attracting 20-50 young children with their parents and carers. Along with the Benefices of Lozells & Newtown we appointed a Children and Families Worker in September 2020 and although her work has been limited because of the pandemic she had a group meeting in October and Zoom meetings with the Children and families as well as delivering advent materials to the families.

The council has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to House of Bishop’s guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

During 2020 we could only deliver our thrice yearly **invitation/ programme cards to every house** in the Parish at Christmas.

We had well established links with two local primary **schools**, Glenmead and Greenholm. Both coming regularly to church for Christmas and Easter services. As well as Beeches Infants and Arena Academy Year 7 coming for occasional services. We also had occasional contact with other primary, secondary, and special schools, and would hope to carry this on with our Children’s and Families worker when she is able to do so.

Monthly Eucharists was celebrated at Edith Pope House (sheltered housing for the elderly) and Communion at home was offered to the housebound.

In 2020 because of the pandemic there were only 2 **Baptisms** of children, (In 2019, 15 children and 1 adult). The offer of Baptism in a separate, Baptism-only service, has been appreciated by families.

An evening **healing** Eucharist took place once a month.

Most **funerals** take place at Perry Barr Crematorium. In 2020 17 Funerals and 1 wedding took place. In 2019 the Parish Priest conducted 16 funerals in total

The **Christmas Fayre** which remains our main fundraising event of the year could not take place in 2020. We did however have a highly successful online fund raising campaign instead of the fair.

We had lockdown online funding to raise funds for St Matthew's own regular expenses and although we did not have a lent offering, we did have online giving for our quarterly charity collections to USPG and Embrace the Middle East.

**The Hall, Lounge and Family Room** continued to open on a Friday lunchtime (until lockdown forced it to close), as a café facility (with books available for sale, and other activities.) The hall was well used for a wide variety of lettings including public sector (polling days), commercial lets (slimming groups, dance classes), and community groups (toddler group, bowls, Rainbows/ Brownies/ Guides, and monthly Hindu worship). Lockdown obviously caused the ceasing of all these groups for a time, but some came back to us in the Summer before being forced to close again and some are returning as soon as legislation allows. We have also been able to accommodate a few new groups. One these being the Young at Heart group who distribute food to the needy and a music group and a band. It is hoped that when all groups are up and running that the hall is once again covering its running costs.

**Church Fabric** Our grade 2 listed church building (Murray & Maguire, 1964) provides an exceptionally user-friendly space for prayer and worship.

**Church cleaning, flower arranging, and gardening** are carried out by volunteers. The Parish is very conscious of the value of all the volunteer hours that we depend on every day.

**Partnership with other Christians** St Matthew's participates fully in the life of the Diocese and Deanery. Our Parish enjoys a friendly informal partnership with the neighbouring Parish of St John, Perry Barr. There is also an established ecumenical relationship with

Beeches Evangelical Church and Perry Beeches Baptist Church, with occasional joint services and pulpit exchanges. We also share our Children and Families Worker with the Benefices of Lozells & Newtown.

### **Financial Review**

2020 financial review reflects the last 12 months when we have been in lockdowns and restricted movements.

We rely on St Martin's Trust to pay our administrator, our organist, and our Children and Families worker.

St. Matthew's regular charities, Malawi and Embrace the Middle East have still been supported this year through our online giving scheme, albeit with reduced contribution.

Our common fund payment in 2020 was £22,800 (some £2,578 short of our requested total of £25,378) This would have been met had we been able to have our usual Christmas Fair which usually raises approximately £3,000.

We must acknowledge the generosity of our congregation during the pandemic as many of them contribute to the Church via the Parish Giving scheme, standing orders and envelope contributions, as well as plate/bucket donations when services were allowed in Church.

Hall hire was hit rather badly in 2020, as groups had to shut down during the lockdowns and could only meet when they were allowed to do so.

Hopefully 2021. We will see a return to our groups using the hall again and this will boost our hall income once again.

### **Church wardens Remarks**

2020 was a difficult year for all and at St. Matthew's this was made especially difficult by our vicar Father Adam Romanis leaving us to take up a position in York.

Our finances have not done too badly considering that people have not been able to worship in Church, either because of lockdown or

because they have not felt safe to come out. We must thank all who have been able, for their financial support during this difficult time.

The importance of the phone in's can not be underestimated especially during the lockdowns when there were no services in Church. They were a lifeline when no other contact with Church could be made. We are most grateful to the team who have kept this going even after Father Adam left.

A newsletter is emailed to approximately 40 people and this has been especially appreciated during the pandemic and our popular web site and Facebook pages also keep people informed as to what is going on in the Church.

When we could we offered private prayer and said services in Church and these were a great comfort to all who have attended, and especially for those who were not confident with technology. We must again thank all the priests who have come along and led our services.

We are very grateful that we were able to welcome a New Children and Families Worker and a new Lay Reader to our team.

Unfortunately, a lot of the work with young people has had to be suspended but it is hoped that this will be restarted as soon as possible.

Although we could not continue our thrice-yearly distribution of invitation cards to every house in the Parish we did manage to do so for Christmas.

We were also able to take the opportunity of the hall not been used to improve the insulation of the roof.

There will be many more challenges in the time ahead not least with getting people back into the actual Church building, but it is hoped that with prayer this will be a time of new starts for all.