

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

Trustees' Annual Report for year ended 31 December 2019

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 is The Reverend Adam J. A. Romanis
Address: St Matthew's Vicarage, 313 Beeches Rd, Birmingham, B42 2QR

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 Deanery (now Handsworth & Central) 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 2019 was as follows:

(* =member resigning at Annual Meeting, 28th April 2019
** =new member appointed at the same Annual Meeting)

The Revd Adam Romanis	Ex officio	Vicar, <i>Chair</i>
Peter Conabeer	Ex officio	Licensed Lay Minister <i>Vice-Chair (until 28/4/19)</i> <i>Electoral Roll Officer (until 28/4/19)</i>
David Gadd *	Ex officio	<i>Churchwarden until 23/5/19)</i>
Tim Bartlett **	Ex officio	Elected member, then <i>Churchwarden 23/5/19</i>
Janet Cook	Ex officio	<i>Churchwarden from 23/5/19</i>
Rodney Williams		<i>Elected member</i> <i>Vice-Chair (from 28/4/19)</i>
Stephen Humphries	Ex-officio	<i>Deanery Synod Rep.</i>
Lesley Breakwell	Ex-officio	<i>Deanery Synod Rep.</i> <i>Resigned 20/2/19</i>
Ann Harrison	Ex-officio	<i>Deanery Synod Rep.</i> <i>Parish Administrator & Treasurer</i> <i>Electoral Roll officer from 28/4/19</i>
Adrian Deverell	Elected	<i>PCC Secretary</i>
Judith Deverell	Elected	<i>Safeguarding Officer</i>
Vera Lawrence	Elected	
Paul Phipps	Elected	
Carolyn Phipps *	Elected	
Paul Jones	Elected	<i>Resigned 20/2/19</i>
Margaret Cox	Elected	
John Hall	Elected	
Matthew Gallon **	Elected	
John Hope **	Elected	<i>Appointed to Deanery</i> <i>Synod by PCC March 2020</i>

Usual Sunday Attendance Attendance on a normal Sunday was 48 adults (45 in 2018) and 7 children (6 in 2018).

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. So this year whilst total worshipping community numbers have reduced very slightly, average Sunday attendance has increased by 8%.

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 has met on 9 occasions during the year with an average attendance of 12 members per meeting. Major points of discussion have included:

“Vision” Exercise: A representative from the Diocese office conducted an interactive session which focused on identifying individuals, groups and organisations within the parish who St Matthews reached out to and worked with, how we felt we were perceived by the local community and what were the qualities that identified us. From this, specific areas of focus were identified.

Children and Families worker: In view of the expanding numbers of children attending Sunday school and existing opportunities with the toddler group and teenagers, an application was successfully submitted for external charity funding to cover the salary of a full time Children and Families worker for 3 years.

Licensed Reader Ministry: Consideration and approval was given for Paul Phipps to be put forward as a candidate for training for the office of Reader. After an initial period of training, Paul would be able to share his responsibilities with Peter.

Setting priorities for the year: Priorities for the year included becoming more eco-friendly by increasing levels of recycling within the church centre, whilst identifying and focussing on other environmental issues and gaining better value for money by adopting best buying practice and introducing cost saving measures.

Other topics of discussion have included **safeguarding, monitoring of church income and expenditure and registration of the Friday café as a food premises.**

The **Sunday Eucharist** is at the heart of our Parish life. This depends 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 is a Children's Liturgy (child-centred Parish Eucharist). Baptisms take place either at the Sunday Eucharist or in a separate service at 12noon.

Prayer & Spiritual Development A small, very committed group supports the daily Morning Prayer in church, with daily celebration of the Eucharist. The prayer life of the Parish is also enriched by monthly meetings of the Julian Group. In our Lent course (jointly with the neighbouring parish of St John, Perry Barr) we studied and compared the Synoptic Gospels in a Quiet Morning, Study evenings, and a Study Morning. This year's confirmation group numbered 6 adults. (And the Handsworth Deanery Confirmation was held here on Corpus Christi.) In October, we made the day Pilgrimage to Shrine of St Edward the Confessor, jointly with St Michael's Boldmere (2 coaches).

Our team of **Lay Pastoral Assistants** meets regularly with the Vicar to review pastoral care. Lay Pastoral Assistants regularly visit the housebound with Holy Communion, and provide ministry to the bereaved.

The Parish makes provision for **children** of different ages through Sunday School and other activities alongside the main service. Sunday School, in particular, has seen significant growth both in numbers and regularity of attendance. "Messy Church" sessions, roughly every two

months, are well established as regular outreach events, attracting 20-50 young children with their parents and carers.

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.

We have continued the thrice-yearly distribution of attractive **invitation/ programme cards to every house** in the Parish at Christmas, Easter, and in the autumn.

We have well established links with two local primary **schools**, Glenmead and Greenholm. Both come to church for services before Christmas and Easter. At Christmas, Beeches Infants and Arena Academy Year 7 also came for services. We also have occasional contact with other primary, secondary and special schools, with the Vicar visiting the schools to take assemblies, and curriculum-linked visits to the church.

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

In 2019 there were 15 **Baptisms** of children, and 1 adult baptism. (In 2018, 8 children and 2 adults). The offer of Baptism in a separate, Baptism-only service, has been appreciated by families.

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

Most **funerals** take place at Perry Barr Crematorium. In 2019 the Parish Priest conducted 16 funerals in total (16 in 2018) and 1 Wedding Service.

The **Christmas Fayre** remains our main fundraising event of the year by far, and once again the hard work was rewarded.

In addition to raising funds for St Matthew's own regular expenses, significant sums were also raised for the The Birmingham Junk Food Project (Lent offering), USPG (Monthly collection for Malawi), the Children's Society (via boxes), Christian Aid Week (congregation's donations and fundraising events).

The Hall, Lounge and Family Room The former bar premises continues to open every Friday lunchtime, as a café facility (with books available for sale, and other activities.) The hall is 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). Revised rents and some increased usage mean 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. During 2019, repairs were carried out to the bell, the 5-year electrical check of the whole premises was completed, the church centre corridor was painted, and welcome signage erected by the church porch and car park entrances to the building.

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.

During 2019 the Deanery of Handsworth was united with Birmingham Central Deanery, to form a single new Deanery of "Handsworth and Central." 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.

Financial Review

We rely on St Martin's Trust to pay our administrator and our organist, and on other grant-making bodies for significant maintenance and improvements. The PCC is immensely grateful for this support, which ensures that there is secure provision for some large and important items in our budget.

The accounts bear witness to the generosity of our members, particularly through the Parish Giving Scheme (we have felt the benefit of the first full year of this) and other planned giving. As well as raising the funds for our regular running expenses, we raise significant amounts for other charities, supporting Christian work at home and overseas.

It is a matter of concern that this year we were not able to meet in full our Common Fund assessment. There was a shortfall of £3,700. (The sum we paid was actually very close to our lower assessment for 2020.) As a net beneficiary of the Common Fund arrangements, St Matthew's acknowledges the need to address this, through promoting the Parish Giving Scheme, seeking increased use of our excellent community facilities (boosting rental income), and continued fundraising efforts.

The Diocese's current "People and Places" review is going to have a profound effect on patterns of ministry

provision. In order to play our part, we need to do all we can to continue to meet our commitment to local work, and to the wider Church.

Vicar's Remarks

In our finances, there is no room for complacency, though 2019 was a year in which St Matthew's worshipping community continued to work hard and fruitfully. The PCC has made progress in receiving and reviewing regular financial reports. Well done to all concerned.

More important is the growth in numbers of people. The increase of 8% in usual Sunday attendance is an answer to prayer. This is due to the commitment of the established faithful worshipping community, and to the perseverance of enquirers and newcomers who have not only come through the door, but kept on coming. This is clear evidence of the call of God to each and every one, and the response of faith gladly made.

Of great importance is the sense of momentum generated by our children's work (Messy Church and Sunday School), the Friday café, the use of the hall by so many from the wider community, and the thrice-yearly distribution of invitation cards to every house in the Parish. These are a huge effort, and all help to "put St Matthew's on the map."

There is much here on which to build, despite the challenges of our times. We will continue faithful, remembering our dependence on the Lord. St Matthew's is our church, but more importantly, it is the Lord's.