

# **ST JAMES THE GREAT EAST MALLING**



**REPORTS FOR THE  
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING  
24TH APRIL 2017**

## **A Message from your Churchwardens**

We are pleased to issue this booklet of Annual Reports in advance of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on **Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 7.30pm** (please note the new time) here at St. James the Great, East Malling. Please take time to read the reports before the meeting. If you have any queries or comments there will be opportunity to raise them at the meeting.

This will be the first APCM conducted at East Malling by Rev. Nicholas Williams. We would like to thank everyone from the Parish and the wider Benefice who helped maintain worship and occasional offices during the interregnum. Particular thanks to all who helped to redecorate the Vicarage in preparation for the Williams family.

The PCC has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 relating to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The appropriate notice, duly signed, is displayed on the PCC notice board.

Finally, we would like to thank the PCC and the congregation for their support over the past year. We are privileged to serve this parish.

*David Chambers and Sue Payne, churchwardens 2016-17.*

The Parish of St. James the Great East Malling

Annual Vestry Meeting & Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017 7.30p.m. in the church

AGENDA

Annual Vestry Meeting

1. Presentation of Notice convening the meeting.
2. Minutes of Annual Vestry Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016
3. Vote of Thanks to Churchwardens
4. Election of Churchwardens 2017/18

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Presentation of Notice convening the meeting
2. Minutes of Annual Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016
3. Electoral Roll Report
4. Annual Reports of the PCC (available online)
5. Accounts for 2016
6. Election of Independent Examiner for 2018
7. Election of 2 representatives of the laity to the Deanery Synod for a term of 3 years
8. Election of 4 representatives of the laity to the PCC for a term of 3 years and 1 representative of the laity to the PCC for a term of 2 years
9. Election of Sidespersons
10. APCM 2018
11. Any Other Business

The first PCC meeting will be held immediately after the APCM to appoint the PCC Secretary and the PCC Treasurer and to adopt the proposed dates for PCC meetings 2017/18.

Next PCC meeting 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 7.30 p.m. in the church.

**Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting  
for the Parish of St. James the Great East Malling  
held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 in the church**

Present: Rev. Matthew Buchan (Rural Dean)(Chairman) and 28 members of the congregation.

**Y214** The Secretary produced the Legal Notice convening the meeting.

**Y215** The Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting 2015 were agreed and signed,  
proposed by Alan Bramley, seconded Janet Saunders.

**Y216** The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to David and Sue for their service to the church as churchwardens, especially over the last six months. As Rural Dean he was grateful to know they were capable and experienced wardens who were taking on the responsibility of caring for the church and the congregation during the interregnum.

**Y217** Election of Churchwardens

	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconder</u>
Mr. David Chambers	Mrs. P. Carpenter	Mrs. L. Bramley
Mrs. Susan Payne	Mrs. P. Ashbee	Mr. N. Ashbee

There being no other nominations, Mr. Chambers and Mrs. Payne were unanimously elected Churchwardens for the ensuing year.

Dated this .....day of .....2017

Chairman.....

**Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
for the Parish of St. James the Great East Malling  
held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 in the church.**

Present:- Rev. Matthew Buchan (Rural Dean) (Chairman) and 29 members of the congregation.

**Z644** The Secretary produced the Legal Notice convening the meeting.

**Z645** The Minutes of the APCM 2015 were agreed and signed, proposed Denise Hynard, seconded David Chambers

**Z646** The Electoral Roll Officer, Don Payne, reported that there were now 113 people on the Electoral Roll of whom 73 were resident in the Parish. The Chairman thanked Mr. Payne for his work in preparing the Electoral Roll.

**Z647** Annual Reports to the APCM were presented in a booklet which had been available to download from the parish website.

**Z648** Accounts for 2015

The Treasurer presented the examined accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 and gave a detailed explanation of both his statutory report and each set of accounts.

He explained that the Sequestration Account, shown on the final page of the report, did not form part of the PCC accounts but was a temporary Benefice account, used during the interregnum to pay expenses of visiting priests throughout the Benefice and the Vicarage running expenses. All three parishes contributed to the Account by way of fees from Weddings and Funerals.

The Churchwardens had approved the accounts on behalf of the PCC.

The accounts had been examined and accepted by Mr. Richard Dunn.

The meeting approved the accounts.

David Chambers proposed the accounts be accepted, seconded by David Clarke, carried unanimously.

The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for his hard work, his clear presentation and good explanation of the accounts.

Pam Carpenter asked whether, in future, the accounts could be posted on the website before the APCM.

**Z649** Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2016

The PCC has elected to subject the financial statements to independent examination and, therefore, having made appropriate enquiries, propose Richard Dunn as independent examiner until the next APCM. Proposed Alan Bramley, seconded Lynda Tidbury carried unanimously.

**Z650** Elections to the PCC

Retiring members of the PCC were Denise Hynard, Michala Neaves, Michael Rogers and Scott Walker, all of whom were standing for re-election. Additionally David Welch had stepped down from the PCC, leaving a vacancy for a term of two years.

The following people were nominated

<u>nominee</u>	<u>proposer</u>	<u>seconder</u>
Denise Hynard	Anna Ashbee	Janet Saunders
Michala Neaves	Elaine Greenwood	Pat Ashbee
Scott Walker	David Brooman	David Chambers

Michael Rogers  
Richard Yates

Janet Saunders  
Jacqui Brooman

Linda Bramley  
David Brooman

There being no other nominations Mrs. Hynard, Mrs. Neaves, Mr. Walker and Mr. Rogers were elected for a term of three years and Mr. Yates for a term of two years.

#### **Z651** Election to the Deanery Synod

Helen Nicholls had stepped down as one of the Deanery Synod representatives, leaving a vacancy for one year. There were no nominations.

#### **Z652** Election of Sidespersons

The following persons were nominated and elected:

Maureen Banfield	Angus Bennison	Lisa Boorman
Linda Bramley	Suzette Budd	Christine Burchett
David Gill	Pat Gill	Allan Greenwood
Shaun Gurteen	Don Payne	Lorna Readman
Jean Spinks	Lynda Tidbury	David Welch
Richard Yates		

Proposed Alan Bramley, seconded Pam Carpenter, carried unanimously.

#### **Z653** Any Other Business

- a) APCM Alan Bramley suggested the parish adopt the practice of other local parishes of holding the APCM at the end of the service on a Sunday morning in April. Sue Payne explained this matter would be explored when a new incumbent was appointed. During an interregnum usual arrangements needed to be maintained.
- b) Choir Stalls David Gill enquired whether the choir stalls would be replaced in the future as there was still a sum held specifically for this. Alan Bramley explained this matter had been discussed and enquiries made as to design and cost, but that currently other matters had a higher priority. It might be a future project to be supported by the Friends of St. James.
- c) Defibrillator Shaun Gurteen reminded the meeting of the unfortunate incident at a recent East Malling Singers concert when a member of the choir had collapsed and had to be resuscitated by paramedics who had, fortunately, arrived very quickly. He suggested the PCC consider purchasing a defibrillator to be kept in the church for any such future emergency. Pam Carpenter seconded this suggestion. Sue Payne confirmed this matter was already being considered by the PCC and also East Malling Singers, with the possibility of a defibrillator being located in the village for access to all. David Brooman reminded the meeting that the Fire Service carried defibrillators and they should be requested on a 999 call.
- d) Statue of Our Lady Pam Carpenter enquired whether the statue was covered by church insurance. Michael Rogers replied that there was no receipt or record of the value of the figure. Pat Ashbee confirmed that the PCC had tried, as yet unsuccessfully, to find a replacement.
- e) David Chambers presented the Church Terrier, a record of the land owned by the church (from the French terre – land) for inspection. The church owns the church and the churchyard.
- f) David Chambers presented the Church Logbook, a diary of maintenance and work, and a detailed Inventory for inspection.
- g) Changes to the Log Book for 2015-16.
  1. Part of the approach path to the west door re-laid by replacing cobbles with Yorkstone slabs (Freddie Cumber) (Funded from part of Mary Wallace bequest)

2. Pointing of stonework and removal of vegetation at various places around the church and along the churchyard south and west boundary walls. (Freddie Cumber)
3. Re-setting and sealing of brickwork in the drainage channel along the south side of the chancel. (Freddie Cumber)
4. Moss removed from south porch roof and tiles replaced. (Freddie Cumber)
5. Heating boilers serviced and leaking isolation valves replaced with gate valves on two pumps (Godfrey Cheesman) 6.5.15
6. Gas safety inspection carried out (Godfrey Cheesman) 6.5.15
7. Fire extinguishers serviced 18.6.15
8. Electrical safety inspection (Graeme Bramley) 7.5.15
9. Portable electric appliances PAT tested 9.7.15
10. Sound system induction loop extended into the chancel
11. Fractured section of cast-iron downpipe replaced at west end of the north side of the nave. (Freddie Cumber)
12. Replacement external notice board fitted on church wall adjacent to west door. 24.6.15 (Old board rotted) Thanks to the Friends of St. James
13. Selected churchyard trees trimmed (2 Yew and Cupressus, Malus and Prunus along churchyard north boundary) with Borough Council approval, as final phase of 3-stage management plan. Thanks to the Friends of St. James.
14. Premises Licence obtained to allow provision of alcoholic refreshment at events in church. (Martin Guyton)
15. Inventory changes:-  
**Additions:** Nil

**Deletions:** Plaster statue of Our Lady (broken in accident)

h) Church Archives David Chambers reminded the meeting that he kept items, both historic and recent, relating to church and village life and he would be grateful for any such items. He drew attention to a photograph which he had been given recently showing the church from Church Walk, pointing out the differences between then and now. There was no vestry, the original clock was in place, the small Norman window on the west wall and the gate across the path to the church.

i) Acknowledgements

David Chambers particularly thanked everyone who had helped the churchwardens by supporting them in any way, especially performing their rostered duties and also for their tolerance. He was grateful to Sue Payne for typing minutes and reports and converting emails and electronic communications into hard copy and for her support as fellow churchwarden.

He knew there was a superb Ministry Leadership Team within the church and he was extremely indebted to Fr. Derek Carpenter and Alan Bramley, our Lay Reader. Since Fr. Jim's retirement Fr. Derek had taken so many services, both at East Malling and in the wider Benefice. He was a very active 'retired priest'. David also thanked Pam Carpenter for supporting Dr. Derek in his ministry.

David expressed his gratitude to Alan Bramley for the amount of work he had done in the parish and thanked Linda Bramley for supporting Alan in this.

David thanked Fr. Matthew Buchan for giving up his time to attend and chair the APCM.

## **Z654 Conclusion**

The Chairman added his thanks to the many people who were keeping things going, especially to a very active Honorary Assistant Priest (Canon Derek Carpenter). He thanked everyone for attending

the meeting and for their patience. Regarding the replacement of the vicar he advised it was most important to wait to find the right person to appoint.

There being no other business the meeting closed with prayers and the Grace.

Date of 1<sup>st</sup> PCC meeting Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at 7.30 p.m. in the Church.

Dated this .....day of .....2017

.....Chairman

Annual Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church  
(Grounds and Buildings Committee) March 2016 – February 2017

The care of the building, its contents and the churchyard is undertaken by the Grounds and Buildings Committee which met six times during the period of this report, on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 5<sup>th</sup> July, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 3<sup>rd</sup> January, and 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

### 1. Building

(i) Roof Further rainwater leaks occurred, unsurprisingly, on several occasions while the result of a second application for a repair grant from the Listed Places of Worship Repair Fund was awaited. This was again unsuccessful so a back-up plan for temporary patch repairs using Liquid Applied Plastic (a polyester and mesh system) was carried out, with Diocesan approval. Areas of the nave, north aisle and vestry roofs were treated and the work completed just before the torrential downpours of early November. The results so far have been encouraging.

(ii) West Doorway Ironwork repairs to improve the security of the west doors were completed, thanks to Richard Leek. A new bolt incorporates a mouse decoration which reflects the Robert Thompson trademark mice on our altar furniture.

(iii) Glass doors The latest design for the proposed installation of glass inner doors at the west entrance, incorporating a porch and storage cupboards and generally acceptable to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) has required additional structural modifications such as steel framing to support the weight of the glass.

The estimated cost is now extremely high and the PCC considers that such expenditure is difficult to justify. The project has, therefore, been postponed.

(iv) South porch A loose tie beam in the roof timbers, identified in the Quinquennial Architectural Report (2013), was inspected by a structural engineer who declared it to be safe from falling and that no remedial work was required.

The lock on the external doors was replaced by a more secure deadlock in line with our insurance company's recommendation.

(v) Windows On 23<sup>rd</sup> August the church was visited by Prof. N. Morgan and an assistant researcher to record the pre-1700 stained glass, in preparation for the eventual publication, by the British Academy, of the Kent County volume of *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*. It was surprising to learn that, in his opinion, the 15<sup>th</sup> Century coloured glass in the north aisle rated among the ten best examples in Kent.

During October, plain glass in the central window of the north aisle was damaged in an attempted break-in. An 18"x12" panel of diamond leadwork was neatly broken out. (See also Item 7(i)).

In the light of both these events it is proposed that all the north low-level windows be protected by metal grids, similar to those already installed on the south windows.

(vi) Minor works The shelf in the cleaners' wall cupboard in the chancel was replaced, thanks to Michael Latham.

A new lock was fitted to the inside of the outer sacristy door, thanks to Shaun Gurteen.

(vii) Incumbents' honour board Details for Rev. Brown were amended and those for Rev. Williams added, thanks to the Friends of St. James.

### 2. Heating

A pipe leak on a north aisle radiator which had previously required repair on several occasions, recurred yet again. The problem has now been resolved by inserting a flexible joint. During this work an air-release valve in the sacristy was found to be seized and was replaced.

### 3. Sound System

All microphone signal receivers have now been located to the recess above the east pillar of the south aisle, requiring an additional cable to be routed over the easternmost arcade arch. The microphones, receivers and connectors have also been colour-coded to simplify identification.

An adjustable goose-neck microphone holder has been provided for the lectern, thanks to Ros Connors, and has greatly assisted users and listeners.

#### 4. Health & Safety

(i) Protocols Documents describing Emergency procedures, Normal Operating procedures and Safety Policy were reviewed and approved by the PCC on 9<sup>th</sup> May.

Safety record cards for use in confirming that church zones were clear of people in the event of an emergency, were located at key positions around the building and an emergency evacuation was practised, by the PCC, on 15<sup>th</sup> November.

(ii) Electrical The tower clock motor was rewired on 18<sup>th</sup> August.

All moveable electrical appliances were PAT tested on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2017 when all the equipment was found to be satisfactory.

(iii) Fire extinguishers These were serviced on 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

(iv) Gas The annual safety inspection was carried out on 21<sup>st</sup> June and a new certificate issued.

#### 5. Parish Room

Discussion of various details of construction has continued with planners and the DAC. Slow progress is being made. Details are provided in the Apple Tree Room report elsewhere in this APCM booklet.

#### 6 Churchyard

(i) General A working party took place on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2016. We thank Mr. Haffenden for providing a skip for the rubbish and we also thank the Parish Council for arranging grass cutting throughout the year.

(ii) Parish Name Board Information on the free-standing board was updated on 22<sup>nd</sup> December to show Rev. Williams as our new vicar.

(iii) Water supply The standpipe tap required replacement as a result of internal wear.

(iv) Memorials The railings surrounding the Perfect family's tomb were refurbished, at the expense of the family.

(v) Incidents Thefts of flowers and plants from graves continued from time to time. If this should affect you, please notify our local Police Community Support Officer directly.

#### 7. Other Incidents

(i) An attempted break-in occurred between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October when an 18"x12" section of leaded glass was cut out of the middle window in the north aisle. No entry was gained, probably due to disturbance or awareness of alarms. The event was reported to the police and a crime reference number obtained. (See also Item 1(v))

(ii) It is also sad to report that at other times various items have disappeared from the church including cash, keys and an obsolete video camera. A purse was also taken from a bag during a non-church event in the building. Please, therefore, be vigilant.

It is important that church stewards interact with visitors, while those working in church at other times, with their attention diverted or occupied in out-of-sight areas, should ensure that the outer doors are locked.

#### Acknowledgements

I thank everyone who has helped to care for the church and grounds in their many and various ways.

*David Chambers,  
February 2017*

## **The Apple Tree Room**

The Project Team is now at the stage of going out to tender to potential contractors, which will give us a current view on the costs involved. This follows another year of detailed responses to yet more questions from the DAC, with quite remarkable levels of perseverance being demonstrated by the team and our architect, Glenn Ball.

In terms of fundraising, we had an excellent year in 2016, holding a range of events which were well supported by regular members of the congregation, the wider East Malling community, as well as friends from further afield. The programme included various concerts, a quiz night, the Lenten Promise and stalls at events such as the East Malling Picnic in the Park, and the CAMRA Beer Festival at East Malling Research.

Thank you to all who continue to support this important mission, and a particular thank you to all on the project team and fundraising team for their time and energy.

*Anna Ashbee*

## **Worship & Mission Committee**

The Worship & Mission sub-committee of the PCC has not met officially during the interregnum, although we have met on an informal basis if required.

Our main brief has been to make sure there is a welcoming team for Baptism services which have continued throughout the year. My thanks go to the members of the committee and others who volunteer for this valuable ministry, welcoming families into the church for an important occasion.

All of our usual services during the interregnum took place with wonderful support from our local retired clergy.

It was a great joy to welcome Father Nick Williams as the new incumbent to our Benefice at a special service on 16<sup>th</sup> November at St John the Baptist, Watlington. We look forward to working with him over the coming months and years.

*Alan Bramley*

## **Circle of Prayer**

The Prayer Circle is made up of members of the congregation who will pray for your personal request daily.

As we are given a name to pray for, we pass it on by telephone to the next person so it becomes a chain of people praying for the same persons daily.

We endeavour to have all the prayer partners praying at the same time, but because of peoples circumstances this sometimes is not possible, but it is still reassuring that we do have in the church community someone who is praying for somebody each and every day.

If you wish to add someone to our prayer list please ring Michael or Jenny 01732 841204. And if you wish to share the particular reason needed for prayer we can pray for that particular condition, but this is optional, a name is sometimes all that is needed.

The Lord Said; *“Come to Me All Who Are Heavy Laden, And I Will Give You Rest”* Matthew 12:28

*Michael and Jenny Latham*

## **Benefice Mothers' Union**

### **Mothers' Union Benefice of East Malling, Watlingbury & Teston**

- Our branch currently has 19 members, on average we have around 10-12 members at our monthly meetings.
- We have been knitting squares for blankets to pass on to needy people both in the UK and abroad and knitting for premature babies
- We have requested funding for one family under the Rochester Diocese AFIA (Away From It All) scheme for 2017

We have had a number of interesting meetings some with speakers on a variety of topics:

2016

- Feb: Lunch at our Treasurer's house with bring & buy and raffle
- Mar: Rosemary Kempzell spoke on "being an MU President"
- May: Lunch in the tearooms and a guided tour of Aylesford Priory
- July: Susan Brooker came to talk to us at our annual garden party and fund raising event
- Sept: Eucharist Service followed by coffee
- Oct: A talk on Domestic Abuse from "Choices"/North Kent Women's Aid
- Nov: A talk on the Bethlehem Carol Sheet from "Embrace the Middle East" charity
- Dec: "Make a Christmas Table Decoration" demonstration & activity

2017

- Jan: New Year's lunch at the North Pole Pub, Teston

My thanks go to Audrey Allen (Committee member) & Liz Allen (Treasurer) for helping to plan and run our Benefice Branch of Mothers' Union. Also to all those who tirelessly help with opening up the churches and providing refreshments at our meetings.

*Frances Selman*  
*Secretary*

## **Deanery Synod**

The Deanery Synod meet 3 times a year.

The officers of the Malling Deanery Synod are:

Rural Dean	Rev'd Matthew Buchan
Lay Chair	Barry Fisher
Deputy Lay Chair	Michael Richardson
Secretary	Sheena Stewart
Treasurer	Martin Gillespie

These meetings are a great way to meet up with representatives from the parishes within the Malling Deanery to compare how we approach issues and challenges and see what we can learn from each other.

The main discussions of our meetings have been:

### **Diocesan Funding, Parish Offers**

Under the new way that Parishes give money to the Diocese it would seem that most parishes are not offering what they had been asked to.

There have been discussions and exchange of ideas on how to encourage giving to the Diocese when most churches are struggling to keep themselves afloat.

### **Church Growth**

A presentation and discussions about how to encourage growth in the church membership and attendance.

This has been an ongoing discussion and at the last meeting, Claire Boxall from the Diocesan Offices gave us a talk on a new initiative that she is heading called 'Our Conversation; Our Future'. It calls us to ask given questions which we have to answer about how we do things, leading to conversations and proposals for a way forward. Everyone present at the meeting was given a booklet and links to on-line resources to take back to their parishes.

Our next meeting will be on 18<sup>th</sup> July at the new St Benedict's Centre at West Malling Abbey.

*Alan Bramley*

### **Children's Church**

Sunday School continues to provide worship opportunities to the young people in our church, both regular participants and visiting families (who are of course always very welcome!). The children have made some beautiful craft activities, both individually and as a group, and enjoy singing, role play and discussion as part of the regular Sunday School programme. Sadly, Scott Walker and Liz Guyton both stepped down from the Sunday School rota this year, and I would like to thank both for their contribution. Particular thanks must go to Liz, who has been a popular and dedicated Sunday School teacher for many years – we will miss you! However, we are excited to welcome Susie Canham as a new Sunday School teacher. Thank you to Susie, Becky Prince and all the crèche helpers for their work over the year.

As well as the weekly Sunday School, we also held yet another successful Good Friday Project in 2016. We had a great turnout of children aged 5-11, who came to church for a morning of songs, Easter themed craft, and the odd Easter egg! Thank you to all who participated, running the craft stalls, making refreshments and generally making the project such a popular event. For many of the children who attend, this is one of the few times in a year that they come to church, so it's great that we're able to welcome them in this way.

Finally, thank you to all who have supported the Baby & Toddler group this year – in particular Nick Ashbee, Alan Bramley and Sarah Johnson for leading the musical activities with such energy, and Tom and Mary Hicks and Maureen Banfield for providing refreshments. It is a popular session each week, with songs and actions, story time and 'show and tell' – all done with great enthusiasm from the children (and adults!).

*Anna Ashbee*

## Choir – 2016 -2017

The last year has been a busy one for us all, mostly doing the things we do best, leading the Services week by week! However we take part in many other events during the year, and these are mentioned here!

- In the early spring, with members of the other Benefice choirs, we practised and performed Handel's Lenten Cantata. This is a mixture of parts of Messiah and a less well known work "The Passion of Christ". It was all very satisfactory to learn & perform and we were blessed in our "Home- Grown" soloists who all sang superbly! We give huge thanks to Joan Ratcliffe for all her help during rehearsals and for playing the organ on the day!
- We are currently rehearsing Stainer's "Crucifixion", a great favourite of us all, which we will be performing on Palm Sunday!
- We helped on one Sunday afternoon in the Summer, during Afternoon Teas, by singing and encouraging all who were present, to choose and sing favourite hymns! This proved a very popular activity with all who took part! We sang 36 hymns in 1 ¾ hours and raised £58.20 for the Choir Fund. Many thanks to all who came & took part, Choir & visitors alike!
- We enjoyed all our usual carol singing evenings and thank Alan & Linda for entertaining us royally after we'd been singing in Bradbourne Fields. We were delighted that we raised £349 for The Children's Society, to add to the Christmas Collections for that Charity.
- We have been delighted to welcome two new Junior members to the Choir this year, Constance Ashbee & Sophie Walker. They have now been admitted to the Choir, having done some months of basic training, and are already making a valuable contribution to our singing!
- We are very proud of two Adult members of the Choir, Denise Hynard, & Shirley Gurteen, who, after months of very hard work, took and passed (very well!) their RSCM Bronze Award tests in the autumn! Congratulations to them both! They are now looking forward to taking the next level in the autumn of this year! Lucy is also working towards her Silver Award.
- Sadly we weren't able to get to the Diocesan Choirs Festival this year, due to a clash of dates, but we hope for better luck in 2017.
- Some of us sang at the Deanery Harvest Festival at West Peckham Church, which was an enjoyable occasion for those involved.
- We've sung at quite a number of Weddings and a few Funerals during the year, and the singing has been much appreciated, even if we don't get asked to perform anthems as much as in the past!

As always, my grateful thanks go to Sue for her help and support throughout the year, also to Pat who keeps our robes in order and helps at junior choir practice when necessary, and to Denise also, who sits in at junior practice as needed. Above all, a HUGE thank you to the Choir for all they do to enhance our worship at St James week in and week out during the year!

*Belinda Hunter*

### Events Committee

Throughout the summer the afternoon teas proved very popular, probably due to an art show, craft & books sale, recorder consort and especially a puppet show. As all the funds raised at Afternoon Teas were for the church it was particularly pleasing. Teas will be taking place as usual, possibly with different themes. Watch this space. This year the church will be organising a Summer Fayre on 10<sup>th</sup> June, which we hope will be successful. The events committee are very grateful to others members of the congregation who are co-opted to help with setting up and clearing up after functions, especially the Christmas market.

*Jacqui Brooman*

## **Flower Arrangers**

We continue to be 13 ladies in number, although external factors mean that we are not always operating with a full complement. However we consistently provide flowers in the church, attending to this weekly, with the exception of Lent and Advent. In addition we are occasionally asked to provide a memorial display; a donation is given towards the cost of flowers. We are also on hand should wedding flowers be requested, for which the couple are asked to pay a nominated sum. 2016 has seen fewer requests for this service. We do receive a small sum for providing this service so unfortunately this has impacted on our funds. This does limit what we can provide. Our arrangers do bear the cost of some flowers, which is voluntary. We form three teams and work on a rota basis, which rotas are set twice yearly with an informal meeting at a member's house; this also gives us chance to get together. The only other time we meet as a group are the four festivals of Easter, Pentecost, Harvest and Christmas when we all gather to decorate the church with floral displays; there is little time for socialising on these occasions. We would like to thank members of the congregation for their generous donations towards the cost of flowers at Easter and Christmas.

This year once again we have supported the Flower Festival organised by The Friends of St. James. This was a big undertaking for us and we divided into two groups to cover two of the ten displays depicting the story of Noah and his Ark – 'Take into the boat a male and female of every kind ....' and '..... and all kinds of food ....'. Our displays were retained at the request of a wedding party and formed part of the church decoration for their wedding the following weekend.

We would welcome anyone interested in joining our group. Our member Elaine Welch can be contacted on 01622 719648 for those who would like a memorial display.

*Barbara Trimmer*

## **Bell Ringers**

Since our last report in April 2016 we have rung for 12 weddings, been visited by a band of ringers from Shenfield, Essex and, on the same day, ringers on a walking outing from Hastings.

Blacklands Beavers and the East Malling Brownies visited the church, on both occasions they explored the church and went up to the ringing chamber and the braver ones made it to see the bells. They all had a try at chiming the bells.

Ringers from Mereworth church practised here before going to the King and Queen for their Christmas meal.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017 26 ringers from the Maidstone District (and 2 from Hampshire) met for a 2 hour District Ringing practice very ably led by Ringing Master Terry Barnard. Ringing was for all abilities, learners to more experienced, and several villagers listened out and commented favourably in the ensuing days. The visitors were grateful for the hot drinks and cakes provided, especially as it was snowing outside.

A peal of 5040 changes of Surprise Minor (7 methods) was rung on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016 by ringers from the District. This took 2 hrs 53 mins.

A quarter peal of 1260 changes of Single Oxford Bob Minor was rung in 42 minutes on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016 by local ringers, organised by Darren Elphick of Aylesford.

There have been two special rings to welcome Rev. Nicholas Williams to the parish, the first being a quarter peal of 1320 changes of Plain Bob Doubles rung by regular ringers at East Malling on 29<sup>th</sup> December 2016, and the second a peal of 5040 changes of Minor (4 methods) rung on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in 2 hrs 46 mins.

We rang all 6 bells at midnight on 31<sup>st</sup>Dec/1<sup>st</sup> Jan to welcome in 2017.

On a more sombre note I have to report that Alan Phipps, from West Malling and a regular ringer and supporter at East Malling, passed away suddenly on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2016 whilst on a tennis holiday in Corfu.

He was 67 years old. As well as ringing and tennis, he was also a keen cyclist and a Magistrate and rang peals for both the KCACR and the Magistrates Association. He is sorely missed.

Another of our regular supporting ringers, Geoff Searle of Mereworth, recently had a replacement hip operation, and then heart surgery. We will be pleased to welcome him back when he is fit enough to climb the stairs.

I am delighted to report that our two learners are making good progress and hopefully Barry Allen and Liam Corette will soon be regular Sunday ringers for us.

Thank you to all our regular ringers: Andrew and Katy Millgate, Terry and Joy Barnard, Albert and Joan Gordon, Don and Catherine Payne, Robin Hughes, Emma Tilston, Barry Evans and Geoff Searle.

April 2017

*Sue Payne, Tower Captain*

### **The Friends of St James**

The Friends committee has continued to work very hard during the year.

I'm delighted to say that Father Nick has agreed to be our President.

Our current committee is:

President	Rev Nick Williams
Chairman	Alan Bramley
Vice Chairman	Suzette Budd
Secretary	Jean Spinks
Treasurer	Shaun Gurteen
PCC rep	Alan Bramley
Church Warden (Ex Officio)	Sue Payne or David Chambers
Elected Members	Jacquie Brooman, Michael Latham, Clive Spinks, and Richard Leek.
Co-opted Members	Audrey Allen

A big thank you to all those who have served on the committee over the year.

Mary-Anne Cochran has recently moved away and so has retired from the committee and I thank her for her contribution to The Friends over the years. I'm pleased to report that Audrey Allen, a member of The Friends has recently agreed to be co-opted onto the committee.

Sadly, three members have died in recent months – Louisa Rook, David Charlesworth and Graham Stuart. Graham had been a founding member of The Friends and had served both as Treasurer and Auditor. The total membership is currently 147, comprising 18 Singles, 40 Family, 72 Concessionary and 17 Life members.

We continue with our very successful coffee mornings on the first Saturday of each month as these are very popular and many people who are Friends but not necessarily regular church attendees come along and enjoy the morning.

Our fund raising plans for 2017 include a Valentine's Dance on 11<sup>th</sup> February,(as I write this has just happened and was very successful, raising about £1400 after gift aid.) a Quiz Night on 21<sup>st</sup> April,

Afternoon Tea in the Garden on 21<sup>st</sup> May and our ever popular Starters and Puds evening on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Watch for the adverts.

The main project that The Friends are funding remains the installation of the glass doors. This has been frustratingly slow, but some progress has been made in getting the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) on side with our proposals which have now had to include a small porch and new cupboards either side of the entrance.

Although it is not our intention to hang on to funds unnecessarily we haven't made any major donations for projects until we have detailed and firm costs for the provision of the doors. The Friends have recently paid for the changes to the board listing current and past Vicars of St James to include Father Nick and add James Brown's middle name.

*Alan Bramley, Chairman*

### **Church Opening**

2016 saw another successful year of Church opening, during our interregnum.

People from all parts of the UK and Europe visited our Church for many reasons. Some wanted to admire the building. Others wanted to explore the history of the building or trace records of past family members using our extensive record of baptisms, marriages and burials. One family that comes to mind were really please to find the headstone of a family member buried under 2 inches of soil, thanks to our graveyard map. Also there were those who wanted to pray and seek the calm solitude we offer for personal reflection.

There were 97 visitors this year, (127 Last year). We had visitors from Poland, Australia, Netherlands, Portugal, Canada, France as well many from UK. In addition there were many casual visitors, parishioners, flower arrangers, etc., who just come and go without leaving any details.

I must give my thanks to the team of 23 sitters who man the Church on a Tuesday and Thursday. They do our Church community a great service by keeping the building safe during opening hours and offering a warm welcome to all who enter. We have again lost a few sitters this year who for various reasons have had to stop, however our numbers allow me to allocate a maximum of two sittings per month. New sitters are always welcome to join the team.

Once again can I thank our group of sitters for their efforts during 2016 and I look forward to another good year in 2017.

*Shaun Gurteen*