

From the Churchwarden

It has been a good year.

We continue to be an active church, with church attendance staying quite stable throughout the year. We have at least one service each Sunday, with a mixture of Eucharist, lay led and all age services. We have had some interesting visitors to come and speak to us, including an MAF representative and a stewardship advisor from Canterbury.

The home study group meets regularly, we have a weekly coffee call-in, and we continue to have a midweek service.

In these difficult financial times, we are so lucky to have such good fund raising events, including the fete, flower festival and concerts, that have raised much needed funds to ensure we can continue as a church. I would also like to thank the Friends of Biddenden Church, for organising events that raises money to help with the fabric of the church. Thank you to all the workers, bakers, flower arrangers, and buyers.

There are so many people that go towards ensuring a church remains alive , and I would like to thank everyone who does something in the church – the welcomers, magazine distributors, sacristans, bell ringers, choir, sides people, organist, PCC and everyone who helps.

We are lucky to have Alex and Catherine, and we thank them for their leadership, spiritual guidance and support, and care.

As usual, a big thank you to my family, that are always there with patience and support.

I believe that the church should be a welcoming and spiritual place, where everyone feels included and welcomed. I believe that we do that in Biddenden and I look forward to the next year.

Ann Courtness

Annual report and financial statements

All Saints Biddenden Parochial Church Council 2017.

Administrative Information

All Saints Church, Biddenden, situated in High Street, Biddenden, is a joint benefice with St. Michael the Archangel Smarden, and as of 1st February 2012 became formally part of a Group Ministry with the parishes of Bethersden, High Halden and Woodchurch, within the Diocese of Canterbury, Church of England.

All Saints Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the Incumbent, the Reverend Alexander Bienfait, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of All Saints Church, Biddenden.

Objectives and Activities

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

The PCC objectives and activities are guided by our Church plan. A major revision of this plan took place during 2014.

We want our Church first and foremost to be a community of Christian Action.

Our Vision

- We will grow a Church that is open to all
- We will develop and display confidence as Christians
- We will seek to serve the community

Our Mission

- To provide a warm welcome
- To support each other in our spiritual growth
- To be visible, capable and available as Christian helpers in our community
- To encourage the spiritual development of young people

PCC Membership:

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2017 to the date on which this report was approved are:

Incumbent:	Reverend Alex Bienfait.
Assistant Curate:	Reverend Catherine Wilson
Churchwarden:	Ann Courtness
Representative to Deanery Synod:	No appointment made in 2017.
PCC Members:	Paul Webster
	Peter Whitestone (to May 2017)
	Colin Steere
	Peter Cutts
	Joanna Winston (from May 2017)
	Julie Lupton (from May 2017)

During 2017, the PCC met on 7 occasions, and three times in conjunction with Smarden PCC. Attendance was 81%

PCC business - main topics covered:

Combined PCCs

- Benefice, Group Ministry and Deanery matters
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Preparation for Stewardship in 2018
- Preparation on the impact of GDPR data protection laws in 2018

Biddenden PCC

- Deanery matters
- Maintenance of church fabric
- Churchyard maintenance and improvement
- Health & Safety
- Mission Plan
- Worship patterns
- Pastoral care
- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
- Parish Safeguarding Policy
- Finance, Budgets,
- Charitable giving
- Fund-raising and social events
- Parish Magazine
- Neighbourhood Watch Surgeries
- John Mayne School
- Friends of All Saints Biddenden

Achievement and Performance 2017 (Demonstration of public benefit)

Our Ministry Team consists of the **Rev'd Alexander Bienfait**, Priest in Charge, and the **Rev'd Catherine Wilson**, part time stipendiary Assistant Curate (Appointed June 2014). Catherine does not live in the benefice, but commutes to the benefice from her home in Great Chart, Ashford. We continue to have the valued support and help of the **Rev'd Pearl Anderson**, retired priest living in Headcorn.

During the early part of 2017, February to April, Alex Bienfait was on Sabbatical for three months. Management of the church and services was handled by Catherine Wilson, Pearl Anderson and the Church warden.

Administration

The Benefice office operates from a 20m² timber cabin constructed in December 2014, in the front garden of Biddenden Rectory. Financed jointly by the Diocese and the Benefice, the cabin provides a work base for Catherine in the Benefice, as well as a work space for the part-time Benefice Administrator. The new office administrator, Tanya Ling, started in February 2017.

Our Church Plan (Mission Plan)

The PCC's main priorities for 2017, arising out of the Church Plan, were:

- *To continue to address the financial situation*
- *Develop the use of the "In Need fund"*
- *Increase the Opening of the Church*
- *The availability of spaces in the grave yard*
- *To investigate ways of making better use of the Tylden Patterson chapel*

Good progress is being made on most of the items. It is gratifying to see the improvement in our financial situation, one important factor being the establishment of the Friends of All Saints Biddenden, which itself was a target the previous year.

Statistics for Biddenden Parish	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Baptisms	8	15	9	5	9	10	8
Weddings & Blessings	7	6	4	7	2	5	6
Funerals	19	11	5	10	16	13	9
Estimated Usual Sunday Attendance	37	45	44	44	44	43	39
Electoral roll	80	83	82	82	82	81	91

The service and rota planning team

A service and rota planning team formed of licensed ministers, representatives of the PCC and choir and the organist meets about four times year. The main task of the team is to plan and review the worship rota. The benefice aims to offer a range of worship to suit different ages and preferences for worship. The scope of worship at All Saints includes Sunday morning Parish Eucharist using Common Worship (CW), 8am Communion from the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and Lay-led Morning Worship (third Sunday of the month). Morning Worship ranges from the contemporary to the traditional, with BCP Mattins provided quarterly. BCP Evensong is offered on the third Sunday of the month.

The PCC regards it as fundamentally important to offer distinct ministry to families and children in Biddenden, in addition to 'Active Church' which takes place monthly in Smarden. Bi-monthly all-age services have continued to be offered throughout 2017, and have provided an alternative style of service which has attracted a few families to attend when they can.

Music and choir

Organist duties at All Saints and St Michael's continue to be shared between Bob Barnes and Mark Wilson, with Jane Whiteley as very proficient back-up on the few occasions when neither is available. We were saddened by the death of Andrew Littlewood during the year, leaving Tony Webb as the only regular member of the bass department. There are eight regular choir members over the two churches, with family members and others helping out during academic holidays and for special occasions. We try to field a full choir for the St Michael's service on the first and fourth Sundays each month, and for the evensong once per month at each church. As well as supporting most Common Worship services, we have been able to provide choir of at least six choristers for all weddings where a choir was requested. Choir practices take place weekly on most Friday evenings at 1900 in Biddenden, once a month in Smarden.

We would of course like to recruit more members, whether for regular Sunday worship or just for special occasions - new members are welcome at any rehearsal on Thursday evenings.

Bob Barnes

Sidespeople

The Sidespersons team is organised by Joanna Winston. Sidespeople provide the important initial welcome to people coming to church services, with two on duty each week. They undertake a small but significant number of duties which help with the smooth running of services. Their main duties are welcoming everyone into the Church, handing out hymn books and service sheets, carrying the elements to the altar during a service and counting attendees to aid the Clergy and Church Treasurer. This year our thanks go to the eight sidespeople who man our permanent rota, also to our one new recruit who steps in as and when required. These volunteers as well as those who help out at the larger services are much valued by the Church.

Joanna Winston (Sidesmen Co-ordinator)

Learning

The Home Study group has met twice a month throughout the year from 8 -10 pm on the second and fourth Wednesdays each month. There are now 14 regular members in the group. Early in 2017 they reflected on the previous Sunday's sermon; the Lent study programme followed a course based on the feature film *The Way*. Later in the year the group studied the book of Ephesians. Through our regular meetings in people's homes the aim has been to deepen our understanding of faith through joint study, discussion, prayer and fellowship. Once again there were two social events: a summer barbecue and a Christmas bring and share meal. This group welcomes newcomers from across the benefice.

Julie Lupton and Martin Giles

Children and Young People

The Church has close links with John Mayne School; Alex, Catherine and Julie Lupton were joined by Lindi Harman in taking the weekly 'Church' assemblies. The children come to church for special events and festivals, and is always a pleasure to welcome them, the staff, and the parents who support these events.

Active Church in the benefice has continued to meet each month on the third Sunday in Smarden, and has a regular core membership drawn from both parishes of approximately 8-10 families, as well as a number of more occasional attenders. We offer a range of activities for children of primary age, followed by a Bible story, singing and a prayer activity. The bi-monthly All-age services in Biddenden aim to provide a lively and interactive style of worship accessible to families with young children, and attract 3-5 families each time.

Catherine Wilson

Children and Vulnerable Adults' Protection

A report from our PCC disclosure officer Julie Lupton: This PCC takes seriously the responsibility to protect children and vulnerable adults. Diocesan guidelines on the protection of both are followed. The PCC adopts annually the Child and the Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and ensures it is prominently displayed in the church along with other statutory notices of important contact numbers. It has been noted that these should also appear on the church website and this will be done as soon as the new PCC has approved the updated version of the policies.

The Safeguarding Officer met with church wardens during 2017 to outline and discuss training requirements. Church wardens are expected to complete a two hour face to face safeguarding training, C2. The Biddenden Churchwarden completed this in November 2017.

The Diocese has now produced two online training courses, C0 and, more recently, C1. The people who are expected to undertake this training have been notified and once the training is

complete, the Safeguarding Officer updates the parish safeguarding training file. This file is kept electronically and is password protected.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks are carried out on everyone who is in a position of responsibility according to Diocesan guidelines. The diocese updates the PDO as to when checks need to be renewed. The renewal of all disclosures issued 5 years ago is now complete. In 2017 all checks started to be done online. The PDO received training in this and has since successfully processed applications for both Smarden and Biddenden. It is a simpler task and less time-consuming than the previous system. There are currently no outstanding disclosures to be processed.

If you would like any more information relating to our policies please contact our Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer, Julie Lupton. Julie undertook C2 Safeguarding training in February 2017.

Julie Lupton

Collaboration: Other Churches and the Community

The Benefice of Biddenden and Smarden is part of a Group ministry which also includes the parishes of Bethersden, High Halden and Woodchurch. When there is a 5th Sunday in the month we hold a group service and encourage the congregations to worship together, visiting a different parish within the group each month.

In 2017, as in previous years, a Marriage Preparation Morning was organised to which all couples getting married in any of the Group churches are invited.

There has been an increased level of collaboration with Zion Baptist Church in Smarden this year, as we worked together on a number of events and services: a Light Party at Halloween, Remembrance Sunday, and an evening of carol singing with Cranbrook Silver Band.

Smarden and Biddenden churches are members of Churches Together in Tenterden and District, and contribute to the food collections taken to Ashford Foodbank.

Deanery

All Saints Biddenden is part of the Romney and Tenterden Deanery. Deanery Synod representatives vote at Deanery Synod meetings, and also vote to elect representatives to General Synod of the Church of England. Currently we do not have a Deanery Synod Representative.

There was only one meeting of the full Deanery Synod in 2017, the annual meeting in May. However the Deanery has organised many Deanery Forums and co-ordinated training for Safeguarding. It has also had meetings to monitor the financial situations in churches across the Deanery. Deanery forums included a Quiet Day on 8th July, an evening about Marriage and Gender led by Canon Nick Papadopoulos on 27th September, and a talk on God's Trees by Julian Evans on 10th October.

Fund-raising and Events

The church has an Events committee, which currently consists of Liz Rickwood, Jeannette Oatway, Gillian Burtenshaw, Sally Giles, Angie Joy and Julie Lupton.

It held three meetings in 2017, these meetings are held in order to ensure there is a reasonably well spaced out programme of events each year. While each separate event has its own organiser or team of organisers, the committee oversees the diary, supports the organisers if need be and offers feedback to the PCC on all Events.

In 2017 the following events contributed towards Church Funds and to the nominated charities.

- Candlemas supper (£117.10)
- Lent lunches (Raised £184.30 towards Lent offering for Mission Aviation Fellowship)
- Christian Aid week (£633.27 before Gift Aid)
- Flower Festival (£2,416.70)
- Fete (£1,294.70).
- The Tractorfest (BEST donated £1000 to church funds and £350 to the Flower Account)
- The Big Biddenden Breakfast (£741.32).
- The Gift stall/ shop raises funds for the church. As it's an unmanned stall and as we can't guarantee where people put their money, it's not possible to give an accurate figure for sales. The estimated profit after stocktaking and expenses is approximately £223. If there is anyone in the church who would like to take over the running of this venture, please do volunteer! (See separate report below)

In addition to the events noted above, there were also two evenings hosted by Alex and Stephanie Bienfait speaking about their experiences in Sri Lanka. A total of just over £2000 was raised to support the Anglican church in Sri Lanka with the social outreach work.

Julie Lupton (on behalf of the Events Committee)

Gift Stall Report

Julie Lupton has continued to look after the shop during 2017. A stocktake was completed in February 2018 and a set of accounts produced showing total sales in the year 2017 amounting to £276.25. The purchase of copies of Biddenden in Pictures and The Story of Biddenden from the History Society cost a total of £52.50 and were paid for by the PCC (fundraising costs). Total profit from sales was therefore £223.75.

Some stock moves very slowly. The 2017 Grand Sale had little effect and no new stock was purchased. New aprons are available at £17.50 each but they have been paid for by Julie Lupton currently and the profits will be donated in due course, once the outlay has been covered.

Julie Lupton

Thursday Coffee Call-in

Coffee Call-in takes place every Thursday morning throughout the year, 10:00 am to 11:15am, for tea, coffee, and chat. There is a core number of people that tend to come to this friendly group which is a social asset to the local community. There is a donation box for those who attend and there is a rota taking turns to manage the kitchen. All are welcome to our weekly coffee group.

Sally Giles

Homemakers

Homemakers is social group who meet each month, on the third Wednesday at 8pm in the Old Village Hall, apart from December, when we meet a week early. It's co-ordinated by Liz Rickwood. We usually have a speaker followed by tea, coffee and a chat. January started with our Annual Lunch at Ye Maydes followed by a games afternoon in February. Other talks were the Life of a Japanese Woman, Smallhythe Grounds Rejuvenation Project, The Hawaiian Dream, A Country Girl, Ponds in Biddenden and Volunteering in Namibia. We also had a very enjoyable evening visiting Little Mockbeggar Garden in June followed by home made cake and coffee. In July we had a barbecue at Barn Cottage and our AGM in December included a quiz and wine and nibbles. We hope to learn a little and meet together in friendship, with coffee and biscuits. New members are always very welcome and also guests.

Elizabeth Rickwood

Keeping the church open

From April to September the church operates a rota to steward and keep the church open 10:30 to about 3pm. In 2017 from Holy Week to mid September 673 visitors were welcomed, just slightly down from the previous year's figure of 682. As is usual this does not include the 871 people who came to the flower festival which was held for three days at the end of May.

Sixteen regular volunteers and sixteen reserves manned the rota in pairs, thus allowing us to open the church for one session on Monday and Saturdays, plus two sessions on all other weekdays. Grateful thanks for their commitment are extended to all our helpers. The number of visitors from abroad gradually decreases year on year. As most people choose not to sign the visitors book it is not possible to provide exact numbers. Levels of interest among visitors is very variable. We provide various aids for information - paddles in four languages, a comprehensive file of information and of course, the Welcomers' knowledge. However this coming season we aim to enhance the visitor experience in a number of ways, principally by installing a Welcomers' table in the foyer, carrying more enlightening and updated messages, including explanations such as why the church exists and how it is used. Publicity regarding opening hours will also widen. This year we expect fewer welcomers providing slighting extended opening times as more volunteers elect to work alone. We are grateful to Joanna Winston (Welcomers Co-ordinator).

Joanna Winston

Fabric Report:

During 2017 the Fabric team ensured the following annual inspections were carried out:

- Fire extinguishers. New notices were fixed by each extinguisher and a new extinguisher was purchased for the Bell Ringing Chamber.
- Organ tuning
- Clock service
- Gas boiler service
- Portable appliance testing
- Risk assessments prior to Events.
- New stepladders were purchased and the old ones discarded.

The following repairs were carried out:

- Replacement of timer switch on the floodlights.
- Broken hymn book shelf was repaired.
- Repairs were made to the wooden surround of the door into the kitchen.
- The ramps were covered in non-slip tape.
- The East end floodlight was repaired.
- A replacement star which is lightweight, collapsible and uses LED bulbs was constructed and erected during Advent.

The following matters are being investigated and were still on-going at the end of 2017.

- The crack in the eastern wall of the Tylden-Pattenson Chapel re-opened once more towards the end of 2017. The church architect, who has been monitoring the movement on a regular basis, expressed concern. Advice was sought from the consulting structural engineers Morton Partners and remedial work carried out by Cantuaria Stonemasons in early December 2017.
- The window at the east end of the Tylden Pattenson is badly warped as a result of movement. It is difficult to come up with a solution that takes into account the regular movement of that wall and so, currently, we are looking into covering the window with some form of Perspex sheeting that will keep out draughts.

- The architect has been trying to find a builder who can open up the roof above the Tylden Pattenson chapel to enable him to carry out an inspection of the condition of the beams. This work had not been carried out by the end of 2017.
- Following receipt of the 2016 Quinquennial inspection the PCC immediately approved the carrying out of work on the church roof replacing tiles and slates. This work, due to be carried out in 2016 was partially done in 2017. The repair to loose slates on the south side of the roof was not carried out as access proved too difficult. The architect agreed it was not a necessity as the roof remains water-tight. We carry out visual inspections of the roof on a regular basis.
- The Quinquennial report and Health and Safety reports highlighted the instability of the Lych Gate. In an attempt to make one big project, repairing the Lych Gate and sorting out drainage and the car parking area outside the Lych Gate, ongoing negotiations with the Parish Council and Kent County Council, have delayed progress. However, there were hopeful signs at the end of 2017 that some funding might be available and that this would enable plans to be drawn up by KCC to carry out resurfacing work on the land which is registered to KCC. It is hoped that all works will have been completed in time for the 2018 Remembrance celebrations.
- PCC approved work to be carried out on electrical system to ensure it is compliant with current regulations, as recommended by CES Electrical contractors, who did the 2016 full inspection. A full test was carried out on the emergency exit lighting too. (This work was carried out in early 2018).
- Brasses: Responsibility for the brasses was handed over to the church warden in 2017.

Mark Clixby carries out the Health and Safety inspection and his report is much appreciated as it helps us to put all the required checks into place with a system to monitor them.

Julie Lupton

Churchyard

We are very grateful to the generous team of our volunteers, co-ordinated by Chris Cox, giving their time and effort to keep the Churchyard in good order. Michael Palmer has again kindly cut the hedges to his usual high standard. The PCC was grateful to receive a donation from the village Community Fund of £500 toward the upkeep of the Churchyard. Ashford Council resurfaced the public footpath on the north side (which is their responsibility) and is a great improvement. Looking ahead, the team of mowers may need a replacement machine in 2018; the Alko mower is 11 years old and is faltering, but is being nursed.

The Churchyard remains open for burials. At the end of 2017 we had about 6 burial plots remaining. Discussions are taking place in PCC and with the Diocesan Registry about what options are available once the Churchyard is full.

Chris Cox

Bell Ringers

Biddenden tower prides itself on being a friendly tower to all ringers from total beginners to the very advanced. There is also a good social side with a Christmas meal and other events, with thanks to Derek and hospitality by Linda and Martin. Also with thanks to Corrie, there is a social media presence, and an excellent uniform. Ringing Master is Chris Cooper who makes the journey from from Ashford. Brian Bennewith is Vice-captain.

Through the efforts of our Ringing master most ringers are capable of ringing plain hunt, with some learning grandsire. Over the past year the numbers ringing at All Saints has increased to the point that the tower is now able to ring on some Sundays with eight bells. Recently three new ringers were welcomed. The tower is currently ringing with between 12 and 14 ringers on a Thursday

practice night, supplemented with ringers from other towers. The tower now also has a uniform top. A hand ringing box will be installed in the ringing room in 2018.

Peter Courtness, Tower Captain

Church flowers

Coordinator of the Church Flower arranging team, Jeanette Oatway writes: Flowers are hugely important to worship, and during the year this has been reflected in the commitment of our very small team of arrangers who do a sterling job ensuring that all the personal dedications are fulfilled and the “high feasts and festivals” recognised with the most stunning arrangements. The future of providing this service to the church is dependent on getting more volunteers. At the present time we can’t take on additional flower dedications until we can attract more people to our flower arranging team.

The Flower Festival, held at the end of May 2017, was a huge success: the theme was reflected in over thirty five displays and clearly illustrated the skill and commitment of our very talented arrangers. Nearly 1,000 people attended over the three days. The festival was a success financially and has become a highlight on the calendar in the village and surrounding areas. The festival team were supported by a band of volunteers who provided refreshments, manned the tower and welcomed people into the church, without their support we would be unable to continue with these activities, so thank you to everyone for a sterling job well done. Sadly we were not able to have a plant stall, but there are hopes that this will return in 2018.

Jeanette Oatway

Magazine

The PCC publishes a magazine, and the editor Paul Webster writes: The magazine has continued in its aim of serving the church and the village community, and acting as a link between the two. It remains the case that we, as the village church, are privileged to be the publisher of Biddenden’s main channel of communication. As ever, I would like to thank all those who contribute written and photographic items. It is a great strength that every issue contains so much which is sent in by residents of the village. Please keep them coming. We now have some colour pages inside the magazine and these are great for photos.

The deadline for contributions is always 13th of the month, but I greatly appreciate it if items can be sent in before then, because of the need to allocate space and plan the layout.

The circulation seems to have stayed roughly as before. In the eight months in which readers pay for the magazine, we sell around 450 copies, reaching over a third of Biddenden’s households, while the quarterly free circulation will continue to rise as new homes are built. We currently send out around 1250 copies in those months.

The magazine does well financially. Biddenden Parish Council currently pays in full the printing bills for the quarterly issues, and we have a healthy advertising income. We limit the space given over to advertisements, so that they do not dominate.

As in previous years, I would like to thank my wife Anne, who spends many hours administering the advertising, “bagging up” magazines and delivering some of them. I would also like to thank Simon Burgess, who has been doing a great job on the administration, Judith Wright for helping to organise the distribution and Gillian Burtenshaw, who calmly and efficiently carries out a giant task every quarter. Many thanks also to the small army of people who deliver the magazines and collect subscription money.

Please keep the contributions coming. The deadline is 13th of each month. As I asked last year: is there someone here who would like to take over the cookery column or compile quizzes?

Paul Webster

Website

The church webmaster, Stephanie Boucher writes: The church website continues to attract between 10 and 20 visitors per day. The Notices and Services page are the most used, followed by Funerals and Weddings. Also popular are Events, Who's Who and Diary. The website continues to be a joint effort, as several people have the ability to make updates. These have been simplified since the repurposing of the Events page to Alex's Sabbatical, for his use as a travel blog during his time in Sri Lanka. Perhaps a long-term decision needs to be made about how that page continues to be used. Other than that, it seems that the regular users have got the hang of the website and I hardly need to do anything to it these days. Pats on backs all round.

Stephanie Boucher

Health and Safety

A report prepared by Mark Clixby – PCC Health and Safety officer.

Overview: 2017 has been another busy year for the church and it is good to see a number of the requested actions being implemented from previous years. It should be noted that Health and Safety guidelines and requirements continually change and the church and PCC should be minded to keep up to date with current good practice. I believe there is still some outstanding work to be completed to make sure the Fire Risk Assessments are up to date and relevant for the church and PCC.

Accidents: I am aware of two reported accidents related to the church. Both occurred on the movable access ramp that can be placed in the entrance to the church porch. Anti-slip tape had been put onto the ramp before these occurred and on inspection I am comfortable these accidents were not caused by the ramp. However, we will be fitting some extra slightly more visible tape to the ramp edges. This has been ordered and will be fitted as soon as possible.

Safety Inspections: The H&S inspection report from January was presented to the PCC for discussion and action. There were a number of items that needed dealing with:-

- There are the normal annual checks and updates needed for the fire equipment and PAT testing - see inspection for dates
- I recommend that a book is kept to record the checking of the fire equipment (should be checked visually each week), 2 fire escapes (should be opened and checked) and the checking of the emergency lighting (should be done monthly) Book needs to show date, name of person checking and any actions required. Completed actions to be signed off. This book should be readily available.
- First Aid boxes to be replaced as contents out of date
- COSHH reports need reviewing and updating
- Risk Assessments.
 - The Fire Risk Assessment needs completing and signing off and a copy to the H&S officer for filing - PCC to complete
 - Complete a generic RA for the regular church activities such as tower, churchyard, kitchen.
 - Complete specific RA's for events such as the Fete and Flower Festival
- Storage – area at base of tower and Tylden Patterson Chapel should be tidied. Nothing stored above head height
- Lych Gate. This should be monitored for further deterioration at the timber bases.
- The two wooden access ramps into the church provide good anti-slip, but would benefit from clearer markings as they are dark. Proper yellow/black anti-slip tape can be purchased

online. Although it is unlikely this contributed to the accident in 2017, it would help make the ramps easier to see.

Mark Clixby

2017 Trustees Annual Report and Accounts

Financial Review

2017 has been a relatively good year for the finances of All Saints Biddenden. The Church's cash account balance started the year at £18,032 and on 31st December stood at £17,138 – a small cash deficit. That said, for the first time in over five years, total recorded receipts have more-or-less kept up with total payments.

Through 2017, total receipts into the Church's cash accounts were £68,854. Of these, £14,129 represents restricted or designated funds. £5,629 was recovered as Gift Aid from taxpayer donations. By comparison, total receipts in 2016 were £82,196, but these had been augmented with a transfer of £15,000 from the Church's investment account.

Planned giving and collections amounted to around £24,500, similar to 2016, and represented the core of the Church's income. In addition, notable and much appreciated donations in 2017 included (i) £4,356 from the Friends of All Saints Biddenden, to cover the church insurance premiums for the year, (ii) £1,191 from the Parish Council to cover printing costs of the four free editions of the parish magazine, (iii) a further £500 from the Parish Council for churchyard upkeep, and (iv) £1,350 from Tractorfest.

Valiant efforts by all involved in fundraising activities resulted in gross receipts of £6,971. These are valuable funds for the Church and is an admirable achievement given that there were fewer events in 2017 than in previous years.

Total payments in 2017 were £68,465, being around £1,000 less than in 2016. As usual, the largest outgoing was the Parish Quota, at £37,741 (a 2% increase on 2016). Church running costs were slightly higher in 2017 by around £1,400 than in 2016. Offsetting these higher costs, mission giving and donation were less by around £900 from last year, while fundraising expenses and parish magazine printing costs were less by around £2,700 than in 2016. Around £12,640 of 2017 payments were made from restricted funds.

In conclusion, although 2017 has been financially encouraging, any complacency now could be premature. Whereas church payments can be predicted with some confidence, church receipts are usually very uncertain and a similar result cannot be guaranteed for 2018. We have been very fortunate with donations in 2017. However, they cannot necessarily be relied upon. The Church urgently needs more planned giving and to this end, a Stewardship campaign in 2018 is being prepared.

Reserves Policy

It is the current PCC policy to try and maintain a balance of unrestricted funds equivalent to around three months of unrestricted payments. This is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet potential emergencies. The average for a three-month period of unrestricted payments in 2017 has been around £14,000, while the PCC cash balance of unrestricted funds at year-end was around £7,900. However, in a future emergency, the Church could draw on its unrestricted investment assets, currently worth around £43,800.

Peter Cutts, Treasurer

Independent Examiner's Report

To the Parochial Church Council, All Saints Church, Biddenden, Kent.

This report on the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31st December, 2017 which are set out in this document, is in respect of the examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act")

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and examiner

The PCC members are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC members consider that an audit, as set out in section 144 (2) of the Act, is not required for this year but that an independent examination is carried out.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under the charity law but is eligible for independent examination, it has been my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. The examination has included a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It has also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and sought where necessary, explanations from you, as Trustees, concerning any such matters. As this has not been an audit, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view'; the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Report

Following examination of the accounts, I can confirm the following:

- Accounting records confirm the requirement for independent examination, rather than audit
- Following analytical review, I have obtained an understanding of the PCC's organisation, accounting system, activities and nature of its assets, liabilities, incoming resources and application of resources for planning purposes
- Accounting records are in accordance with sections 130 and 133 of the Act
- Financial statements follow applicable rules on form and content
- No particular matters have come to my attention

Thus, from the information supplied to me, these accounts, prima facie, represent an appropriate view of Income and Expenditure of the All Saints Church, Biddenden, for the year ended 31st December, 2017.

David Spry Esq.,
Little Crampton Farm,
High Halden,
Kent, TN26 3HR



Date: 23rd March, 2018.

Annual report and financial statements
All Saints Biddenden PCC 2017

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Financial Statements for Year Ending 31 December 2017

Statement of Receipts and Payments

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Total 2017 £	Total 2016 £
RECEIPTS						
Voluntary Receipts :						
Planned giving		16,619	4,000	-	20,619	21,423
Collections at services		3,924	-	-	3,924	3,659
All other giving	8a	2,020	6,860	-	8,881	7,233
Gift Aid Recovered		4,478	1,068	84	5,629	4,805
		27,041	11,928	84	39,053	37,120
Fundraising activities	8b	6,971	-	-	6,971	10,601
Investment income	8c	1,425	-	-	1,425	16,924
Church activities	8d	19,288	613	1,505	21,405	17,549
Total receipts		54,725	12,540	1,589	68,854	82,196
PAYMENTS						
Church activities :						
Parish Share and fees	9a	38,516	2,000	-	40,516	39,093
Clergy and staffing costs	9b	7,271	-	-	7,271	7,500
Church running expenses	9c	3,662	9,962	-	13,623	12,225
Mission giving and donation	9d	1,014	680	-	1,694	2,568
		50,463	12,642	-	63,105	61,386
Cost of generating funds	9e	5,361	-	-	5,361	8,092
Total Payments		55,824	12,642	-	68,465	69,478
Excess of Receipts over Payments		(1,099)	(101)	1,589	389	12,718
Adjustments						
Cheques recorded in 2016 but cashed in 2017		(393)	-	-	(393)	(825)
Cheques recorded in 2017 but cashed in 2018		44	-	-	44	393
Receipts from 2017 but banked in 2018		(934)	-	-	(934)	-
		(1,283)	-	-	(1,283)	(432)
Excess of receipts over payments - adjusted		(2,382)	(101)	1,589	(895)	12,286
Cash in bank and at hand at 01 January		10,274	7,758	-	18,032	5,747
Cash in bank and at hand at 31 December		7,892	7,657	1,589	17,138	18,032

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Total 2017 £	Total 2016 £
Cash funds						
Bank current account balance		6,223	7,657	1,589	15,468	16,102
Flower account balance		1,669	-	-	1,669	1,930
Other		-	-	-	-	-
		7,892	7,657	1,589	17,138	18,032
Other Monetary Assets						
Gift Aid recoverable	5	807	-	-	807	1,299
Other		-	-	-	-	-
		807	-	-	807	1,299
Investment Assets						
PCC General Investment Fund		2,110	-	-	2,110	1,930
Mrs Agate Memorial Fund		41,685	-	-	41,685	38,118
		43,795	-	-	43,795	40,048
Assets retained for Church use						
Churchyard upkeep equipment	6	825	-	-	825	1,250
Other		-	-	-	-	-
		825	-	-	825	1,250
Liabilities						
		-	-	-	-	-
Total Net Assets		53,319	7,657	1,589	62,565	60,629

Notes

1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared, with the exception of some minor adjustments, in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, using the Receipts and Payments basis, and is the method recommended by the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance (CBDF) for accounts of this type.
2. The format of these accounts follows, as far as possible, recent guidance from CBDF. The Receipts and Payments statement presented here is a simple record of monies received and payments made in calendar year 2017 and a reconciliation to bank account statements. It is not an accounting profit and loss statement. Similarly, the Statement of Assets and Liabilities is not a true accounting balance sheet.
3. The Financial Statements presented here reflect movements in (i) the All Saints PCC General Fund bank account, (ii) the Flower Account and (iii) the CCLA Investment Fund account. For these 2017 accounts, the Flower Account transactions have been fully incorporated into the Receipts and Payments statement, which was not the case for the 2016 accounts.
4. Given Note 3 above, the 2017 Receipts and Payments statement presented here will not reconcile with accounts for 2016 (submitted last year - April 2017) because the Flower Account numbers were not incorporated in the 2016 Receipts & Payments statement.

5. Gift Aid recoverable represents outstanding claims for tax-payer donations made in November and December 2017.
6. Churchyard upkeep equipment comprises primarily mowers and brush cutters. These have been depreciated at an assumed 20% per annum.
7. Movements in restricted and designated funds during 2017 are summarised in the tables below:

Restricted Funds	Bal. b/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Bal. c/fwd
	£	£	£	£
Church Fabric & Upkeep	2,397	1,000	2,085	1,312
Churchyard Upkeep	-	500	500	-
Insurance	-	4,356	4,340	16
Benefice and Choir	1,143	205	25	1,323
Tower and Bells	(2)	1,048	-	1,046
In Need!	2,290	-	-	2,290
Church Quota	-	2,000	2,000	-
Utilities	-	1,000	1,000	-
Floodlighting	-	200	200	-
Flower Account	1,930	1,551	1,812	1,669
MAF	-	680	680	-
Total	7,758	12,540	12,642	7,657

Designated Funds	Bal. b/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Bal. c/fwd
	£	£	£	£
Sri Lanka Appeal	-	1,589	-	1,589

The Churchyard Upkeep receipt represents a donation from the Parish Council.

The Insurance receipt represents a donation from Friends of All Saints Biddenden.

The Tower and Bells fund was incorrectly stated in the 2016 accounts. To correct this, an adjustment amount of £748 has been added to the 2017 receipts for this fund.

The Flower Account has been fully incorporated in this summary of restricted funds. For this reason, and for the adjustment to the Tower and Bells fund, the opening balances for the restricted funds shown here will not reconcile with the closing balances in the 2016 accounts.

MAF is Mission Aviation Fellowship, the chosen charity for 2017.

8. Further break-down of Receipts:

RECEIPTS	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Total 2017 £	Total 2016 £
a) All other giving					
Sundry Donations	788	5,469	-	6,257	4,017
Flower Account	-	1,391	-	1,391	1,777
General Fund	967	-	-	967	1,126
Preservation Fund	265	-	-	265	312
	2,020	6,860	-	8,881	7,233
b) Fundraising activities					
Candlemas Supper	117	-	-	117	400
Flower Festival	3,151	-	-	3,151	4,777
Church Fete	1,342	-	-	1,342	1,366
Ride and Stride	380	-	-	380	-
Big Breakfast	981	-	-	981	579
Tractorfest Donation	1,000	-	-	1,000	1,000
Other	-	-	-	-	2,478
	6,971	-	-	6,971	10,601
c) Investment income					
Transfer from investment funds	-	-	-	-	15,000
Dividends from investment funds	1,425	-	-	1,425	1,924
	1,425	-	-	1,425	16,924
d) Church activities					
Book Stall	265	-	-	265	401
Parish Magazine	8,821	-	-	8,821	8,632
Weddings / Funerals / Memorials	8,827	-	-	8,827	7,052
Charity Appeals	870	613	1,505	2,988	760
Votive Candles	50	-	-	50	58
Floodlighting	455	-	-	455	646
	19,288	613	1,505	21,405	17,549

9. Further break-down of Payments:

PAYMENTS	Unrestricted	Restricted	Designated	Total	Total
	Funds	Funds	Funds	2017	2016
	£	£	£	£	£
a) Parish Share					
Diocesan quota	35,741	2,000	-	37,741	37,089
CDBF Statutory Fees	2,775	-	-	2,775	2,004
	38,516	2,000	-	40,516	39,093
b) Clergy and staffing costs					
Benefice Joint Account Contribution	7,200	-	-	7,200	7,500
Admin. / Support Costs	71	-	-	71	-
	7,271	-	-	7,271	7,500
c) Church running expenses					
Flower Account	-	1,812	-	1,812	944
Cleaning Costs	180	-	-	180	704
Church Upkeep	712	2,085	-	2,797	1,641
Insurance	-	4,340	-	4,340	4,227
Utilities	1,440	1,200	-	2,640	3,209
Services Upkeep	1,119	25	-	1,144	725
Churchyard Upkeep	211	500	-	711	776
	3,662	9,962	-	13,623	12,225
d) Mission giving and donation					
Royal British Legion - collection	226	-	-	226	212
The Children's Society	272	-	-	272	229
CDBF - Bishops Advent Appeal	312	-	-	312	210
Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)	-	680	-	680	-
Friends of Kent Churches	205	-	-	205	-
Other	-	-	-	-	1,916
	1,014	680	-	1,694	2,568
e) Cost of generating funds					
Parish Magazine Costs	3,874	-	-	3,874	5,238
Fundraising & Church Admin.	1,487	-	-	1,487	2,811
Bookstall / Gen. Trading	-	-	-	-	42
	5,361	-	-	5,361	8,092

Peter Cutts, Treasurer

Friends of All Saints Biddenden

The Friends of All Saints Biddenden (FAB) is a charity separate from the PCC, but which the PCC gave encouragement to be established. Its aims are to raise funds to help maintain our ancient grade-one-listed church. In 2017 the Charity was chaired by Colin Daly. The Charity has been effectively in operation for about 18 months now and during 2017 we held two great events which were very popular, great fun and raised considerable amounts of money.

The first was the evening with Joanna Lumley, when a sell-out crowd came to hear Joanna talk with great charm about her early life and career. She mingled freely with the audience, answered questions and posed for lots of selfies. The fact that it took place was mainly due to the initiative of Mary Spry, a life-long friend of Joanna's. Numerous people helped to make it a success and Biddenden Vineyards generously donated many gallons of their best wine and apple juice. The event raised several thousand pounds. Lots more cash came together at the jazz and curry night that we held on a lovely summer's evening outdoors at Randolphs Farm, by the kind invitation of FAB chairman Colin Daly. Again there were many willing helpers and the delicious curry was provided for free by the Raja of Kent restaurant. A big thank you to everyone who has supported FAB in any way so far!

Paul Webster