

St Leonard's Church

Birdingbury

The Draycote Benefice of Churches

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



WHO'S WHO AT ST LEONARD'S

Rector Reverend Alison Massey 01788814912

Church Wardens

Dick Withington 01926632644

Karen Armbrister 01926632030

Other Members of the Parochial Church Council

Daphne Chippendale	Secretary and Treasurer
Peter Law	Deanery Synod Representative
Melanie Palmer	Rota Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer
Elizabeth Ellis	Minuting Secretary
Jenny Hawes	Pastoral Co-ordinator
Brian Lloyd	Buildings and Maintenance
Matthew Markham	

The PCC have met 5 times in the year:

4 regular business meetings, an annual meeting [APCM].

Bryan Tompkins	Organist
Aileen Withington/ Rachel Glanville	Editor, Church News
Eira Owen	Chairman, Altar Guild
Jackie Westcott	Care of linens and vestments
Andrew Armbrister	Independent Auditor

Grateful thanks to all those who love, care for and support St Leonard's.

ELECTORAL ROLL.

There are presently 44 registered on the church Electoral Roll. A revised roll is needed for 2018-22

Safeguarding

The PCC is wholly committed to the safeguarding of all parishioners, and has adopted the Diocese of Coventry Safeguarding Policy dated 1 November 2015, which is reviewed annually, alongside our

processes and practice, and our commitment confirmed. The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults)

We are also committed to the Diocesan policies for 'Safer Recruitment' and the 'Recruitment of ex-offenders'. Copies of the parish commitment to safeguarding and details of the Parish Safeguarding Officer, presently Karen Armbrister, are displayed in church.

The PCC remains committed to ensuring all appropriate roles are filled by those who have been DBS checked. All PCC members completed a basic level of safeguarding training in 2017. This training will be repeated every three years. The Rector and Parish Safeguarding Officer have attended further obligatory training during 2017.

There were no incidents recorded in the parish for the period 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017.

Karen Armbrister, Parish Safeguarding Officer,

St Leonard's, Birdingbury Parish.

Our Mission Statement

Birdingbury Parochial Church Council [PCC] has responsibility for promoting and delivering the mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, ecumenical and social. It is also responsible for the maintenance of St. Leonard's Church. It is a charity exempted from registration with the Charity Commission.

Our Aims

St. Leonard's exists to provide a point of Christian focus for worship and learning for the whole community. We look to encourage our church community to identify, develop and use their God given skills so that we can truly make a difference to people's lives in our wider village community.

We are committed to the aims of the Diocese of Coventry 'Worshipping God, Making New Disciples and Transforming Communities'. We are also committed to using the diocesan programme of '8 Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches' to help us to achieve this.



LOOKING BACK OVER 2017 AND AHEAD INTO 2018.....

We are blessed with The Revd Ali Massey as our incumbent. Her leadership and work with us is, in small but important ways, making a difference, as we seek to do God's work in our community and in the wider world. We look forward, with confidence, to the God given opportunities of working in our village and across the Draycote Benefice.

We have made a few changes to the content of our regular Sunday services and will endeavour to make sure they try and meet the diverse needs of our congregations, retaining tradition but trying newer things too. It is clear that the increased lay leadership we are experiencing closely mirrors the reality of the relationship between us and Revd Ali. We need to work with her as a team, sharing the challenges and joys of ministry. She is our part time priest (Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays) and our plans, now and in the future, need to reflect this important reality. These are challenging times for small rural parishes and we need to prayerfully think through what God's plan is for us all in the short and longer term. We must then work together to put those plans into action, reviewing this work at regular intervals.

The 8 Essential Qualities of Healthy Growing Churches

Coventry Diocese is committed to growth using the 8 Qualities as the primary working tool to achieve this. Our survey conducted four years ago. suggested strengths in the areas of 'Loving Relationships', 'Effective Structures' and 'Empowering Leadership' but weaknesses in our 'Passionate Spirituality' and 'Inspiring Worship'. The PCC remains committed to working on our weaknesses and using our strengths to achieve success.

Worshipping God

We are trying new ways of worship. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is a drop in/after school opportunity, once a half term in The Club for the primary age children and their parents in our village. This started in 2017 and has been favourably received by parents and children in the target group. Attendance so far has been around 9 or 10 with up to 4 parents. It will be reviewed during 2018.

Celebrate@4 - is our monthly, informal, all age worship that is held on the 4th Saturday monthly in one of our village halls. It started in Feb 2015, and we now have over 60 people on our books, some of whom attend every month, some less frequently. It's all age in that there are activities for the children and an opportunity for them to engage with the worship, but always a serious and focussed message for the adults to reflect on. Some contemporary music mixed with traditional using words on screen and videos helps to make a fun, informative session. It commences with refreshments from 3.45pm, the worship starts at 4pm and finishes by 4.45pm - so home in time for tea!

During the last year we have enjoyed special activities for Easter and Christmas, where a performance by 'The Pilgrim Puppets' was very well received. We also visited Bondon Farm for Harvest where over 50 people enjoyed our outside worship celebrating 'all things rural'. This year we are planning a picnic and the Puppets will be returning in February for another performance.

Why not come and give it a try? The welcome will be as warm as the tea! Participation by people from Birdingbury community has, to date, been minimal, and we hope that some of those who find it difficult to attend church on Sundays, might give it a try.

Our most popular regular service numerically is our monthly informal Morning Worship, which is occasionally lay led, and now uses technology with words on screen slide shows and occasional videos. The worship opportunities we offer over Advent and Christmas are overall the best supported. Of note in 2017 was the Sunday before Christmas service with a congregation of 106. It was good to work with the Birdingbury choir. We hope that they can commit to some events in 2018.

Raising the profile of other annual festivals such as Mothering Sunday, Lent, Easter and Harvest should be a priority to act upon. To some extent, average numbers are influenced by friends from other parts of the benefice coming to us in greater numbers. For the most part we, in Birdingbury, seem to be less interested in attending services in other parts of the benefice.

We believe it is important to take worship and festivals out into the community, where the wider community often feels more able and willing to join in. Events this year have included a Palm Sunday walk with donkeys, Harvest Supper in conjunction with The Club, and Remembrance at the war memorial with refreshments provided by the Club afterwards.

Transforming Communities

The PCC continue to support other village organisations by sitting on committees, attending meetings and offering practical help and involvement.

We try to support villagers old and new in time of need with cards, prayer, offers of food, lifts and visits. Since our last annual meeting we have already [?] delivered cards to households and individuals in our community.

This year, by popular demand we held our Church Fete in June outside The Club/Birbury. We were delighted with the support given to it by the village community. We raised £? for church funds. The 2018 fete will be on?

We have been grateful to Eira and Aileen for continuing their Church Cafe initiative which is always well received. They have treated us to a range of wonderful homemade foods.

Caring for God's Creation

A new and successful initiative in 2017 was our involvement in 'Cherishing Churchyards' week. We are indebted to Debbie Wright, Hedgehog Officer, for Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. This hedgehog project was enjoyable and several families from the village were involved. We hope to do something special again in 2018. By trying new things, we may have a better chance of meeting different needs and desires.

We are continuing to explore the opportunities afforded by Eco Church and hope to become better informed and more committed during 2108.

We continue to support the work of Rugby Foodbank and Hope 4 locally. Please continue to leave suitable 'in date' food and warm clothes/duvets in the box at the back of church. Members of our PCC and the wider church and village community give wonderful support to the Night Shelter work in Rugby town churches by cooking, serving supper and spending time with adults who may not have a bed to call their own in the darkest coldest months of the year. We have provided help on 4 occasions this year which is a wonderful achievement for a small village.

We always have a prayer board in church. If there is anything or anyone you would like us to pray for please leave a 'post it' message, which may be anonymous. There is always someone available to pray with you if you wish. Just contact Revd Ali or one of the church wardens.

Being Good Neighbours

We see this as one of our strengths and wish to maintain this good work into the future. 2017 has been a challenging year for some of our much-loved neighbours and our support for them will continue in 2018. This is a crucial part of our outreach work. If you feel you could support us with this in any way, we would appreciate your help. If you have any ideas about how we could do better, please do get in touch.

We host a monthly Coffee and Chat in the Birbury. This has provided a popular social outlet for those who want it.

In addition, we are working with our friends across the benefice for 3 years to support Global Care a Coventry Christian charity. We are committed to trying to raise a minimum of £1500 a year. It is St Leonard's 'turn' to do so in 2018. From the latter part of 2017 a group have been planning a Promises for Auction evening to be held on March 17th, 2018.

Also through Jenny Hawes, we have delivered 49 'caring' cards to Birdingbury residents.

Making New Disciples

We believe all worship has the potential to fulfil this objective. However, this may be particularly so for worship outside of the traditional Sunday patterns. As previously mentioned we are reaching out to children and families on other days and in other places.

The benefice Lent and Advent reflections gave an opportunity around the benefice for a quiet 30 minutes of 'making time for God' amidst the hurly-burly of the commercialisation of Easter and Christmas.

Around 20 people participated in a 'Pilgrim' faith development programme over the 5 weeks of Lent. These will be repeated in 2018 along with services of Compline in churches around the benefice, before Easter. Whilst these and other meetings and services are not always in Birdingbury, you are very welcome to join in. Venues and details are always published in 'Church News' in Birdsong. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who might like to host future courses in their home.

We also have a monthly eucharistic/informal worship in a variety of local village homes and The Birbury.

Many people in the village are supportive of St Leonard's and indeed, regularly attend, and enjoy, our services at Christmas and occasionally at other times, but they do not appear to want to worship at St Leonard's regularly. There are some residents who worship elsewhere, depending on their faith or preferred worship style. We would very much like to understand better the views of villagers about the importance of worship and the building of St Leonard's to them, which will help us when making strategic decisions about worship and our lovely church building.

Occasional Services 2017

Wedding

Laura Findlay

Funerals with burials or interring of ashes

Ray Wells

Thanksgiving

Doreen Johns

Our love and prayers go to the families and friends of all the above.

ADMINISTRATION AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE

The maintenance of the churchyard is undertaken by contractors. The grass seems to grow quicker each year! We are extremely grateful to those residents who made donations to meet the cost of employing contractors. We plan to continue this into 2018.

The Altar Guild members continue to provide beautiful floral arrangements for regular services and special occasions. We receive many favourable comments about the obvious love and care given to our church by everyone. Thanks to those who regularly give up their time to dust, vacuum, clean the new facilities and polish the brasses.

We remain vigilant regarding security. The building and its contents are protected by passive movement lights, automatic time lock and security camera.

Thankfully the church building is in a relatively good state of repair. The cracks in the apse have been monitored for some time by 'tell-tale' markers. Our last quinquennial building inspection was in 2015. We completed the most urgent work listed, this being the replacement of loose or broken roof tiles. Whilst the scaffolding was in place we took the opportunity to do further works that were not deemed to be essential.

We are pleased to now have a cloakroom and server unit. It makes us wonder how we ever managed to be without and how long it took make such a provision. This was funded from PCC reserves, thanks to the generous legacy of Elizabeth Kirk, our Lay Reader and friend. We can now meet more of the basic and expected needs of all, who for whatever reason pass through our church door.

St. Leonard's churchyard

The PCC accept Coventry Diocesan 'Guidelines and Rules for the care and management of churchyards' and to this end, apart from permissible memorials in the guidelines (at Remembrance and Christmas), relatives have been asked not to place artificial flowers and foliage on graves.

The Terrier, Inventory and Logbook are available for inspection at the APCM.

The Chancellor has ruled that a memorial stone installed during 2012/7, without permission, during 2017 without permission, is unacceptable and will be replaced by the stonemason, in a way that is compliant with the details of his decision. Less controversially another stone has been reset and relettered.

LICENCES AND AGREEMENTS - The P.C.C. is a party to the following licences and agreements:

The Recreation Field

A licence made the 28th of April 1980 between the parties -

The Coventry Diocesan Trustees

The Parochial Church Council

The Coventry Diocesan Board of Finance

The Parish Council

'For the purpose of the Parish Council to use the plot of land as a recreation field, the Parish Council to pay £1 per annum to each of the other three parties'.

The Allotment Field

There is a lease agreement between the Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council for the purpose of the plot of land, to be used as allotments by the Allotment Association.

For the period April 2103 to April 2015 rent for the plot was £85p.a. and from April 2015 to April 2018 £90p.a. The Parish Council pays this amount to the PCC. The next rent review by the two parties concerned therefore will be in 2018.

CHARITABLE GIVING

We aim to make charitable donations in support of our Christian mission to a level of a minimum of 10% of our unrestricted income*. This will be achieved through collections at special services, specific fundraising activities and may be enhanced from unrestricted income reserves.

During 2017 through special Collections and fundraising we gave

		£
Carols, choir and crib	The Children's Society	206.50
Leamington Hastings School	Service Shelter	122.01
Village Lunch	Hope 4U	165.17
Village/Church collection	Christian Aid	43.00
Poppy Wreath and donation	Royal British Legion	40.00
Harvest Supper	Rugby Food Bank	50.00
Church Café	Hope 4U	179.50
Church Café	Alzheimer's Society	63.00
To make 2016 up to 10%	Shelter	81.00
Total so		950.18

