

ST GILES CHURCH, CODICOTE ANNUAL REPORT 2007 - 2008

OUR VISION

The vision for St Giles Church Codicote is to build a church which is

Growing in faith
Loving and caring for one another
Outward looking
Worshipping out of an intimate relationship with Jesus

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our annual report for 2007 – 2008. What follows is a series of reports from groups and organisations within or affiliated to the church. From it you will be able to build up a picture of all that makes up the life of the church and also see the tremendous amount of work put in by so many to make St Giles the family that it is. My thanks to all for the part that they play.

Laurence Biggs
Vicar

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ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Wednesday 30th April 2008 at 7.45pm in the Parish Centre

A ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Opening Devotions
2. Appointment of Vestry Clerk Secretary of PCC
3. Apologies for absence
4. Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2007
5. Election of Church Wardens

B ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Apologies for absence

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2007
2. Matters arising – if any
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4. Report on proceedings of PCC In Book of Year
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11. Appointment of Sidesmen
12. Other written reports - Any questions In Book of Year
13. A O B – please let the Vicar have any items before the meeting.

“Looking forward” Vicar

Refreshments and time to chat together.

In an attempt to save paper and the environment, we are making the full accounts and the “Book of the Year” available on the church web site www.stgiles-church.org.uk.

If you need a paper copy of either of these, please contact Philippa Thompson, the church administrator on 821510.

THE PARISH OF ST GILES CODICOTE
MINUTES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
Wednesday 25th April 2007 at 7.45pm in the Parish Centre

A. ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. The Vicar led the opening devotions.

2. Appointment of Vestry Clerk. Miss Janet Williams was appointed.

3. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs C Connold, Mrs M Hood, Mr S Barber, Mr A Biggs and Mrs J Macfarlane.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2006. These were accepted as a correct record.

5. Election of Church Wardens. Mr Geoffrey Cummings was proposed by Mrs Sue Grant and seconded by Mrs Eileen Elliott. Mrs Elizabeth M.R. Barker was proposed by Mrs Bronwen Wild and seconded by Mrs Doreen Goodey. The meeting unanimously approved them. The Vicar thanked them for service given to the church during the previous year and declared them both elected.

B. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Apologies for absence – names are as listed above.

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2006 were accepted after correction.

Items 5 and 6: Mrs Susan Boardman acts for us as an Independent Examiner, not an Auditor.

2. Matters arising-none.

3. Report on changes on the Electoral Roll. Miss Pamela Kehoe reported that of the 130 members on the roll, 8 have moved away and 1 has died. There have been 17 new additions and the new total is 96-8 of who live outside the Parish. There has been 1 new application since and this will be considered at the next PCC meeting. The Vicar believes there may be others who have missed the deadline and may wish to be included. The Vicar thanked Miss Kehoe, recognising she had completed a larger task than was expected as the Roll had required total revision.

4. Report on the proceedings of the PCC. This is recorded in ‘Reflections on our church life 2006-2007’. There were no questions raised.

5. Financial statement of the PCC and adoption of accounts. Statement and accounts tabled. The Treasurer, Mr I Macfarlane, gave a full and clear presentation. The Treasurer and the Independent Examiner, Mrs S. Boardman, dealt with questions. Thanks are recorded to Ian for continuing as Treasurer, which involves much hard work and attention to detail.

6. Appointment of Independent Examiner. Mrs Susan Boardman has kindly agreed to continue as Independent Examiner. She was proposed by Mr I Macfarlane and seconded by Mr Tony Morgan. The meeting unanimously agreed to her appointment and applauded the chairman’s appreciation of her continued interest and work for the church.

7. Report on fabric, goods and ornaments. (Recorded in ‘Reflections 2006-2007’) There were no questions.

8. Report on proceedings of the Deanery Synod. (Recorded in ‘Reflections 2006-2007’) There were no questions.

9. Election of lay members to the Deanery Synod (1)

Mrs Selina Evans was nominated. Proposed by Mrs Alison Biggs, seconded by Mrs Gwen Matthews. She was declared elected by the chairman, there being no other nominations.

10. Election of lay members to the PCC (5) Three candidates had been formally nominated: Mrs Doreen Goodey. Proposed: Mrs Bronwen Wild. Seconded: Miss Janet Williams. Mr Tony Morgan. Proposed: Mr Geoffrey Cummings. Seconded: Mr I Macfarlane. They were declared elected by the Chairman. Mr Paul Evenett. Proposed: Mrs Selina Evans. Mrs Philippa Thompson. Mr Evenett needs to be on the Electoral Roll for six months in order to qualify for election to the PCC. The chairman decided in the mean time he could be co-opted and considered for election in six months time.

11. Appointment of Sidesmen.

Mrs E Browne, Mr M Browne, Mrs M Cummings and Mrs J Males have resigned. The Chairman thanked them for their service. The meeting agreed to the addition of Mrs Audrey Rigby to the list.

12. Other written reports. (Recorded in “Reflection 2006-2007’) **These were recorded under the following headings: Music Ministry, Work with Children and Young People, Small Groups at St Giles, Mission, Affiliated Groups, Functional Structures, Formal Reports and Personal Testimonies.** There were no questions. The Chairman thanked leaders and organisers of the groups for their work during the year.

14. AOB – None was raised. The formal meeting was concluded.

A presentation by the Vicar was given. Refreshments and time to chat followed this. The evening concluded by sharing the Grace.

WORSHIP

At St Giles we have continued with a regular pattern of Sunday worship this year:

8.00am Said Holy Communion from the BCP on the first Sunday of the month, from Common Worship on other Sundays.

10.00am Family Service on the first Sunday of the month

Morning Worship on the third Sunday of the month – this is a more informal service without communion and with music led by the music group

Holy Communion on other Sundays with music led by the Senior Choir.

During the year we have introduced something we have called “God Stories” into most 10am services. This is an opportunity for everyone to share with the church family something of what God is doing in their lives – this includes challenges as well as things to give thanks for.

We have held 5 parade services during the year attended by the church Brownie pack as well as other uniformed organisations, which meet in the village. These have taken place on Mothering Sunday, July Family Service, Harvest, Christingle and Remembrance Sunday.

Prayer Ministry continues to be an important part of the life of the church, and continues to be available at the end of each 10am service, and at other times by request. Many are grateful for the opportunity to share something and have others pray for them.

All these services are led by a team of both lay and ordained people. We are grateful to all for the contribution they make, whether preaching, leading, reading the lesson, leading our prayers, transport and refreshments, screen and sound operators, sidesmen, music ministry etc.. Thank you very much for the part you play. A special mention here for Sandie Beck, our curate until the end of March when she retired early on ill health grounds. Thank you Sandie for all you have brought to our lives as a church; we will continue to pray for you in the challenging months ahead.

Our **Harvest Festival Service** and **Harvest Auction** at the Goat were well attended and enjoyed.

Our **Service of Thanksgiving for the lives of those who have died** continued at the new time of 3pm on a Sunday afternoon in November. The service is greatly appreciated by those who attend.

At Christmas a variety of special services took place – **Family Carols, Christingle, Carols by candlelight, Crib Service** and **Midnight Communion**, and **Christmas Day All Age Communion**. There was also our annual **Coffee and Mince Pies** morning in the Parish Centre.

At Easter we also held a variety of services. On **Maundy Thursday** we met as a church family for a Passover supper. **Good Friday** began with a service on the village green followed by a “group visit” to Giles Coffee Shop. In the evening we enjoyed a special service for Good Friday including readings, hymns and Taize music – many thanks to the senior choir for their contribution to a very moving service. On **Easter Sunday** we held an all age communion service to celebrate “Christ is Risen”.

MUSIC MINISTRY

Junior Choir

Thank yous and goodbyes were said in July to both Janet and Angela who had faithfully led the Junior Choir for many years. We thank them for their service.

September- A new beginning for me as I took over a group of lovely and lively choristers. Thank you to Selina, Alison and Andrew who helped in the early weeks before Bron decided to join us. The Christmas Services were fantastic, we used some of the songs that the children sang in the School Carol Service.

Since January we have entered a time of change, sadly losing some members of the group. We have now moved our rehearsal time and venue to Monday 3.30pm at Codicote School. We wish to thank Mrs Pollard for allowing us to use the school for our rehearsals and hope that this will be more convenient for us all, and make us more high profile within the school community.

Through the school I have recently attended training for the 'National Sing Up Strategy', this is a Government initiative reaching out to all community groups and encouraging them to develop links wherever possible. I am not sure what God has planned for us but things are changing and we ask for your prayers as we seek to serve Him.

Helen Ackerman

Music Group

The church Music Group is made up of piano and guitars, as well as singers, and regularly leads our worship on the first and third Sundays in the month, as well as contributing to our annual carol service. The group is always open to new members – the main requirement to be part of the group is a desire to worship God and musical ability. In a small village church we are very fortunate to be able to enjoy the variety of worship we have in terms of musical style and accompaniment.

Thank you all for your contribution.

Laurence Biggs

Senior Choir

The Senior Choir continue faithfully to sing at the 2nd, 4th and 5th Sunday Sung Communion services. Having lost one or two more members, we are nine strong, and benefited from the support of extra singers for the Carol service at Christmas.

Some of us attended a wonderful Choral Workshop in Saffron Walden in September which gave us great encouragement as well as enjoyment.

We also sang on Good Friday at a service of readings, hymns and Taize music.

Although we have different organists from week to week, we are tremendously fortunate in having Caroline Agarwala who also plays for our rehearsals on Friday evenings. I am always delighted to welcome new singers, so if you like singing and think you could commit to coming twice a month, we should love to see you. Tenors and Basses are particularly welcome!

Thank you to the choir for your hard work and dedication, and for contributing to the worship on Sunday mornings.

Philippa Thompson

Bell Ringers

2007 has been a year of major change and restructuring in the tower. The departure of Peter and Jane Harper, in a single stroke, effectively removed from the tower the ability to ring triples and major. Nevertheless, for the first half of the year we continued to ring a variety of plain minor methods, even for services, and the support of visiting ringers enabled us to sometimes ring surprise minor on practice nights. With the departure of Tom Whalley to University in the autumn the capability has become even more restricted and if it wasn't for the dogged support of our regular practice night visitors, Laurence Cooper and Mark Hall, the tower would be struggling. However, we are usually managing to ring 6 bells for services, which under the circumstances is a creditable achievement.

It has been an almost unprecedentedly good year for recruitment. Patrick Gibbons started at the beginning of the year and would now be capable of respectable rounds and called changes were it not for his hernia operation. When he starts ringing again he will be encouraged to master covering and then make the normal move into method ringing via the treble. Margaret Boreham started learning at the start of the year but unfortunately decided that bell ringing wasn't for her. More recently, Ruth and Duncan Eksteen have started and have just begun ringing rounds in a band. Let us hope that their integration is rapid and that their addition will stabilize the team a bit.

We were unable to organize an outing this year, and in reflection it probably wouldn't have been appropriate anyway but we did manage to host the April 2007 District Quarterly Meeting as usual. There were no peals or quarter peals rung by the band at all in 2007, but we were able to support the 3 Friday weddings that were the only weddings held during the year. Again, the circumstances I think that this is a fantastic achievement and shows a proper and correct commitment to service ringing as the priority.

The main social event of the year was the annual, and successful, tower meal, which was held this year at the Plume of Feathers, Tewin.

WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Holiday Club

Each Easter we hold a holiday club based at the school. It is a great opportunity for us to work together as a church team and give something to the younger people in the Parish who do not normally attend church. In 2008 (Olympic year) our theme was Champions challenge, in which we looked at the life of Jesus through a sport theme. We saw Jesus as Trainer, Team mate, Substitute and Winner – I'll leave you to work out the links! 45 children came along to the club – the challenge is how we build on this link!

Thank you to all for the hard work put in to make the club such a success.

Laurence .

Sunday School

Sunday school continues to flourish and our numbers have increased again this year. We regularly have 14 children and young people between the ages of 2 and 14. This provides some what of a challenge to try to teach such a varying age but we do have fun together.

We now usually use the scripture union material and split in to 2 groups during the time we have together. We always begin in one group with "news" which particularly the younger children enjoy. Then the older children have some time together which is more discussion based while the younger children enjoy activities around bible stories craft etc. Some weeks numbers of those attending mean that all the children stay in 1 big group which means we often have to adapt the material that has been prepared. We try to have a varied programme and where possible incorporate topical things, eg we recently talked about the last supper and various sorts of bread. We do also like to do a spot of cooking, watch out for our cakes at coffee time!

During school holidays we try to give the regular leaders a well earned break so various other members of the congregation take a turn to be with the children. We are always keen to have some new faces to help out, do see me if you would be interested

I would like to thank the regular helpers, Jill, Margaret and Helen for the time they put in to Sunday school, I could not do it without them

Alison

WWJD?

WWJD? has undergone what seems like a total transformation in the last few months. All the young people at the top end of the group have moved on to university and work. Which left just one young man!!

However after some thought and prayer it was decided that the youngsters would join from year7 (1st year at secondary school). So we now have 13 regularly attending on a Sunday evening once a fortnight, aged between 11 and 16. All of them are very enthusiastic and will come to anything that is going on. We have joined with St Peters and Knebworth youth group on a couple of occasions. Most recently we went over to Knebworth for a Chocolate, Chips and Cocktails evening! We have also been as a group to Souls Survivor in Watford.

As the group continues to flourish and grow please remember them in your prayers, most especially for the weekend of June 27th when we are going camping at Phasels Wood near Watford. Two of the young people that used to be in WWJD are returning to help lead the weekend so please remember them also as they begin to take on leadership roles.

It is not easy for our young people to express their faith, so please pray for those of us who travel with them, that we might encourage them and show the love and joy of the Lord to them at all times.....especially when camping

Selina Evans

SMALL GROUPS AT ST GILES

Home Groups

I am often struck by the way the early church met together daily in people's homes. Our response to this is Home Groups, and I would love everyone to be a part of one. These groups meet each week, except the one that follows the first Sunday in the month, and we currently have 4 groups attended by 33 people. Various topics have been studied during the year – some based around books, some looking further at the sermon from Sunday morning and some video/DVD based.

Once each half term, all the homegroups (plus others) join together for Mid Week All Together. This year these meetings have varied considerably in content. Please do try to come to Mid Week All together meetings – we need to learn to love each other more and grow closer to each other – it is hard to do that just on Sundays, and these meetings give more time to actually relate to each other.

In the Spring Term we all met together each week to attend “Just10 Codicote”. This was a series of talks given by Canon J John on the 10 commandments, and I had lots of positive comments fed back to me.

I am currently reviewing the way our home groups and mid week meetings are structured and would welcome your prayers!

If you would be interested in joining a home group, please talk to me

Laurence Biggs

Intercessory Prayer

Intercessory prayer is an important part of our church life and we try to offer a variety of times to pray together. All are welcome on a Wednesday morning at 9.15am in Church when a group meets to pray – we are reading through the Psalms, and then praying for the needs of the world, the local church and community and individual needs. Every Sunday morning at 9.15am we meet for prayer in the Parish Centre for 15 minutes; this prayer time tends to focus on the morning service. Prayer also takes place within our home groups, we publish a monthly prayer bulletin to focus on prayer needs, and also have a prayer board in the church where people can post their prayer requests.

Prayer Ministry team

We have a small Prayer Ministry team who pray for others at Sunday services, and on other occasions when requested. Numbers coming for prayer have increased this year and we seem to pray for at least one person, often more, each Sunday. The team have continued to meet as a group to learn and pray together.

Please pray for this group as they make themselves available to pray for you. Please also pray for an increasing openness to the moving of the Holy Spirit among us all.

Laurence Biggs.

MISSION and OUTREACH

Mission involves the meeting of both spiritual and physical needs at home and overseas. Our part includes prayer, giving and going.

As a church we

- Tithe - give 10% of our income away (based on income of year before)
- Hold special projects at Easter, Harvest and Christmas focusing on our main partners
- Hold retiring collections to respond to emergency situations (e.g. Mozambique)
- Encourage all of our members to be involved in mission at home and abroad

It is our intention to build long term relationships with our main mission partners. These are Mercy Ships, Romania Care, The Living Room and TEAR Fund.

The Living room is a new partner in 2007 (replacing the Haven) which focuses on helping local people with addictions. Their web site is www.thelivingroom.me.uk.

TEAR Fund are also a new partner this year (replacing workplace ministry) and need no introduction!

Our commitment continues to

Mercy Ships, web site www.MercyShips.org.uk and
Romania Care, web site www.RomaniaCare.com.

More information on all our mission partners can also be found at the back of church.

Laurence Biggs

Tearfund

The church has supported the work of Tear Fund on a regular basis in the past. More recently we have elected to use it to direct contributions from individuals to emergency appeals as they have arisen. In July 07, the mission sub committee of the PCC recommended, in addition to the emergency appeals, we should again support it on a regular basis. The PCC agreed an annual donation of £500 is made. Tear Fund produces an excellent magazine and prayer diary. The prayer diary is displayed on the notice at the back of the church and a copy of the Spring Magazine is available on the table. It is well looking into! If you would like to receive a personal copy please ask

Janet Williams.

Giles Coffee Shop

One word-brilliant! The Coffee Shop has now been running for 18 months and has been very successful. It is a wonderful meeting place for young Mums with their babies and children, and an excellent opportunity for others to chat, drinking Cappucino coffee or Latte, not forgetting delicious home made cake and tea cakes!

It is proving a real community effort and thanks to all our volunteers for their hard work. If you have not yet managed to attend on a Friday morning, you will be made to feel very welcome if you come—and our coffee is a force to be reckoned with!

Hilary Spurdle

Holiday Club

See section on work with children and young people

Just 10

In the spring of 2008 we ran a course called Just 10 on the big screen in church. Canon J John took us through the 10 commandments, taking a positive slant and applying them to life in the 21st Century. In spite of the cool temperature in church, it was good to see a number of visitors. At the end of each evening we adjourned to the warmth of the Parish Centre for refreshments and chat. The talks were excellent and much enjoyed by those who came – giving a challenge each evening to Christians and non Christians alike.

Laurence

Oasis

It hardly seems possible that we are writing this report again. In many ways Oasis continues as it did last year, to serve Mums and young children with tea, coffee and cake. The numbers have remained steady through out the year with some new faces arriving and some old faces moving on to the playground. It is beginning to feel like a time of change at Oasis, so please pray for the leaders as they explore the ideas for the future of the group.

The Oasis Christmas service is now well established, it takes place just before the children break up from school. We read the Christmas story and the children build the crib, it looks chaotic but it is always a very joyful occasion and for many the beginning of Christmas.

Selina and Alison

AFFILIATED GROUPS

Brownies

Report not available at time of “going to press”

Codicote Church of England Primary School

Our school continues to value the role it plays within the wider St. Giles Community. Existing strong links have been further enhanced through the work of staff, children, parents and governors. The school continues to provide a ‘home’ for the St. Giles Holiday Easter Club, and the Light Party in October, and publicise the events to school families through the distribution of leaflets, and articles in the Newsletter. This term, the St. Giles Junior Choir has been holding their weekly practices in school, and we have been able to provide a room for a pupil preparing for confirmation.

Laurence is a regular visitor to school:

- as a governor – both as Chair of the Personnel Committee, and as a member of the wider governing body
- to lead assemblies with Alison
- to work alongside teachers in classrooms.

His most recent visit was to lead a Passover Meal with the Year 4 children as part of their RE project.

The children also visit St. Giles regularly as part of their work in a number of different curriculum areas. These have included: History, RE and PSHE. A highlight for the Year 1 children was a visit to the St. Giles Coffee Shop, as part of their work on ‘Money’.

Regular services are held at St. Giles throughout the year. The children lead the services, with Laurence, for Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Year 6 Leavers. The latter has become a particularly significant event for the children, to celebrate their time at school, and to pray for them as they move on to the next stage in their lives.

An article about the life and work of the school is written monthly for The Parish Magazine by the Headteacher. A number of people respond to the articles, and we have been fortunate in receiving letters, emails and visits from people who have, or have had, a connection with the school. A number of people responded to the invitation to join the Birthday Celebrations, and the Codicote History Society mounted an excellent exhibition. The Headteacher also takes part in the 'Nine lessons and Carols' Service at Christmas.

At Codicote School we believe that both the School, and St. Giles benefit from sharing Christian values, and by continuing to work in close partnership, seek to further develop these within the Codicote Community.

Liz Pollard

FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURES

Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod meets regularly moving around different venues, which enables people to see different churches and parish rooms. The evening generally follow a similar format for each meeting. Usually the incumbent of the parish will give a parish profile detailing activities that take place, the nature of the parish and something of what the parish would like to achieve in the future. There is then a question and answer session.

After this a guest speaker will address the meeting, at our last meeting a local Reader who is also a teacher spoke very informatively about education, trends in education and the difficulties that teachers in secondary education face. She also gave us ideas and suggestions as to how the church can be involved in the local secondary school. The most important of which is to pray for our schools, the Heads, the teachers and the pupils. There then follows Vision for Action reports and the Rural Deans report and of course no meeting is complete without Any Other Business.

Although the meetings are not always easy to get to (they often seem clash with something else), it is always good to hear what other parishes are doing and to get ideas from other places and to chat with different people.

Selina Evans

Flower Arrangers

Our good band of arrangers have again filled the church with beautiful flowers over the past year. They all are very talented and are very enthusiastic but some as yet do not have the confidence to do the pedestal. I'm sure that everyone of them could do it and be very happy with the finished arrangement.

The Flower Club in Welwyn is a place to see the experts at work. The club meets on the first Wednesday of each month and there is always a demonstrator who shows you how the real thing is done! If you would be interested in coming, please let me know.

A PLEA – We are always looking for more helpers and would encourage anyone who would like to have a go. It may seem very daunting at first but I for one have got a lot of pleasure dealing with flowers and it is lovely being able to experiment with arrangements you wouldn't do at home. So why not give me a ring and we can have a chat about it.

If anyone would like to remember a special anniversary by helping towards the cost of flowers on a particular Sunday, or would just like to give a donation to help with the cost of flowers each week, please talk to me or Ian Macfarlane.

Margaret Connold (820637)

Parish Magazine

The magazine has continued in the same format with ten issues annually (July/August and December/January being combined). About four hundred copies are circulated in the village each month. The average number of pages per issue is twenty-four. The 'magazine year' runs from April to March, at which time advertising subscriptions from the local services and businesses are renewed. The price for the forthcoming year remains at 40p per copy. Thank you to the Parish Council for their financial support, and to all contributors for finding time to write for the magazine, and we are especially pleased that the School contributes so regularly. We would also like to thank the delivers for all their time and effort.

Jan Macfarlane

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care continues within the Parish and occasionally outside the Parish when Parishioners are hospitalised. It is important that contact is made with those who have a need that the church can help with. So please continue to inform one of the ministers if you know of a need you think the church is able assist.

Caring is usually carried out with only those involved aware of a particular situation, so specifically there is not a lot to report, but I do know that the assistance given is greatly appreciated. All of us have a pastoral ministry in one way or another and one way of caring is just to be available to help friends or neighbours when a need arises. Often we do or say things to others which help and encourage them without us being aware of the help we give. So please to continue to look out and bless each other in this particular way.

Colin Beck

PCC

The PCC has met on 5 occasions this year for business .There have been 4 meetings primarily for prayer to which all members of the church have been invited.

Mr Tony Morgan and Mrs Doreen Goodey were welcomed as newly elected members and Mr Paul Evenett co-opted. Mrs Philippa Thompson is now the lay Vice-chairman. The Rev. Sandie Beck agreed to serve on the Standing Committee.

All meetings have been well attended and lively discussions held over a wide range of business topics. These have included the update of the church sound system, a policy on legacies to the church, fire safety -legislation and a policy, extension of the Garden of Remembrance, further restoration work on the church building and boundary walls and the on-going problem of secure storage for mowers and other churchyard gardening equipment. Tony Morgan is initiating a means of identifying incoming families to the village and assembling a welcome pack.

The meeting has received regular reports from the sub-committees – Finance, Worship and Mission, and Fabric, to whom tasks have been delegated for detailed work.

The meetings for prayer are appreciated and remind us of whom we serve and on whom we rely. Please join us if you can.

Janet Williams

FORMAL REPORTS

Churchwardens' Report

CHURCH WARDENS' REPORT ON THE CHURCH FABRIC AND CHURCHYARD – APRIL 2008

Under the CARE OF CHURCHES MEASURE we are required to report to the PCC on the condition of the Fabric of the Church Building and ask for your approval for this Report to be presented to the next APCM.

Church Repair Programme

The latest phase of major repairs to the Church building was completed in November, having commenced at the end of May. The principal areas of repair were the tower roof, the lead gully between the south aisle and the clerestory, stone work around the clerestory windows and the re-tiling of the north side of the south aisle. A more detailed list of the repairs will be retained in the Church logbook.

Church accounts carried no surplus to fund this work which cost in the order of £90,000 and we are grateful to English Heritage, the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust, the National Churches Trust, Wren Landfill Agency, the Allchurches Trust and the Francis Coales Charitable Foundation for grants given to support our work during this time. We must also thank the Trustees of the Friends of St Giles and all of those who in turn support Friends of St Giles for their continued financial help. We are also grateful for the excellent guidance given to us by our Church architect, Mr Barry Roberts, whose liaison with the builders, on our behalf, helped minimise the time that we needed to spend on a project where our technical knowledge is extremely limited. Barry has taken over as Church architect from the late Bruno Hooker and the PCC has agreed that he should carry out a Quinquennial Inspection of the building during 2008, two years earlier than due, in order that his recommendations on the state of the Fabric and the routine maintenance can be known and acted upon by the PCC.

Church Interior

It has become increasingly apparent that the interior walls of the Church need repainting. In some areas the existing paintwork is peeling badly and in other areas it is powdering. There have been instances when members of the congregation have reported the onset of dandruff during the 10 o'clock service! The cost is likely to be considerable because of the need for safety procedures including some form of scaffold. With our recent commitments the PCC has quite reasonably postponed redecoration during the last year.

The interior walls are also now extremely dirty and this shows clearly against the white paint. It would have made no sense to clean the walls prior to or during the building project last year but the state of the interior is now beginning to look tired and neglected. The PCC will need to consider this in the current year. Given the considerations of access and safety in reaching the upper parts of the walls, the question of cleaning and decoration will need treating as one.

The Church floor is also in need of a good clean, something that has also been delayed during the building project. Advice has been sought on methods and materials and this will be available to the PCC shortly for their consideration during the coming year.

Churchyard Perimeter Wall

Substantial repairs to the ancient flint wall beside Bury Lane were found to be necessary, as reported last year. There has been a considerable amount of interest from the village and anxiety that we would remove substantial sections of the damaged wall in order to avoid the costs of rebuilding. However, the PCC decided against replacing part of the wall with a wooden fence and having seen the finished work, we have received much favourable comment. The cost was around £10,000. We are grateful for a contribution from the Parish Council towards this.

New Mower Shed

During the year, for the second time in 5 years our somewhat ancient mower shed was broken into and two mowers and a strimmer were stolen. Although the equipment was covered by insurance, the PCC saw no point in immediately repurchasing new mowers without a secure place to keep them. The PCC decided that the existing mower shed which contains a good deal of crumbling brickwork was not only insufficiently secure but also represented a danger to those going inside, owing to the badly bowed interior wall.

Replacement of a shed on the same site would, it was indicated to us, cost as much as £5,000-£10,000 and after much consideration the PCC decided on an alternative: a secure metal container to be positioned close to the Parish Centre. However, a problem has arisen with this proposal as it requires planning permission from the local authority. The matter is now under further consideration by the PCC.

As a result of not having mowers from early June, the Church's normal mowing rota could not function and our costs on Churchyard maintenance increased as a result of having to pay additional contractor's costs.

Despite the difficulties experienced during the year, we were able to keep the Churchyard in fairly good order throughout all areas.

Plant survey in the Churchyard

Giving the grass some relief from constant mowing or from the nibbling of our woolly residents can reveal a rich variety of plant life much of which does not get a chance to prosper in ground that, unlike a Churchyard has not been left undisturbed for a hundred years or more. A survey has been conducted and presented to the Church by The Wildlife Trust and The Parish Environmental Action Plan have offered to produce a notice board or lectern of the style used elsewhere in the village, in the apple orchard and the green, for instance, to provide visitors with information on the plant life that can be found within the Churchyard. This will be subject to agreement by the PCC and the Diocesan Office.

One consequence of not mowing the grass adjacent to the builder's scaffold around the Church tower because of safety issues was that we had a wonderful display of harebells, not seen in too many habitats in this area. Having seen their abundance through a fairly large area between the tower and the Garden of Remembrance, we now plan to stop mowing this area after the beginning of June in order to permit flowering in subsequent years.

We would ask for your approval to place this Report before the next APCM.

Margaret Barker/Geoff Cummings

Child Protection

The responsibility for the promotion, maintenance and monitoring of both the Policy and Guidelines rests with the PCC. It will be reviewed annually by the PCC with the designated Child Care Officer, who is responsible to the PCC.

A folder which contains all the relevant information concerning Child Protection is kept at the back of the Church and can be referred to at any time. We have a grand selection of people of all ages who 'fill out' the forms, and I offer my personal thanks to them for completing the job both willingly and cheerfully! At St Giles, to date, 44 people have been CRB cleared. Two applications are being processed at the moment.

In my opinion, this is an excellent number which shows how committed our congregation is to working with the young people of St Giles. Details of the various activities carried out throughout the year may be found elsewhere in this document and, without the CRB clearance, many of those activities just would not happen.

Bron Wild

FINANCIAL STATEMENT for year to 31 December 2007

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2007 £	2006 £
INCOME				
Incoming resources from donors <i>Planned giving, collections, tax back ...</i>	45,887	-	45,887	43,664
Other voluntary incoming resources <i>Grants, legacies etc...</i>	1,775	91,113	92,888	13,003
Incoming resources from operating activities				
- to further the Council's objects <i>Giles Coffee shop, fees, parish magazine sales ...</i>	8,273	-	8,273	5,762
- to generate funds <i>Parish centre letting, magazine advertising income ...</i>	10,280	-	10,280	6,085
Income from investment	1,092	161	1,253	605
Other incoming resources <i>Insurance claim</i>	399	-	399	-
TOTAL INCOME	<u>67,705</u>	<u>91,274</u>	<u>158,980</u>	<u>69,119</u>
EXPENDITURE				
Grants <i>Mission giving ...</i>	7,815	-	7,815	4,369
Activities directly relating to work of church <i>Parish share, costs of running the church ...</i>	49,058	96,791	145,849	56,729
Support costs directly relating to work of church <i>Giles coffee shop ...</i>	1,971	-	1,971	1,141
Church management and administration	861	-	861	2,159
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>59,705</u>	<u>96,791</u>	<u>156,496</u>	<u>64,398</u>
Net income/(expenditure)	8,000	-5,516	2,484	4,721

Notes

In 2006 and even more so in 2007 we have relied heavily on income from letting the Parish Centre to Chrysalis school. The school are expected to move to their own premises towards the end of 2008 and this will leave a huge gap in our income.

In recent years, we have benefitted from a Pastoral Support Grant (£5000 in 2007). There is no guarantee that this will be available in years to come.

The majority of the restricted income and expenditure was tied up with the building work and work on the churchyard. Figures for 2006 do not separate out restricted and unrestricted.

BALANCE SHEET at 31 December 2007

	2007 £	2006 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible fixed assets <i>Land, building, church equipment</i>	154,339	151,959
Investment assets	6,279	8,197
	<u>160,618</u>	<u>160,156</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors <i>Income tax and VAT recoverable + sundry debtors and payments</i>	23,626	1,551
Short term deposits	16,090	19,353
Cash at bank and in hand	3,471	2,720
	<u>43,187</u>	<u>23,624</u>
LIABILITIES: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		
Sundry creditors and accruals	<u>-18,481</u>	<u>-1,303</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>24,705</u>	<u>22,322</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>185,323</u>	<u>182,478</u>
FUNDS		
Unrestricted	26,927	20,743
Restricted	158,397	161,735
	<u>185,323</u>	<u>182,478</u>

The annual accounts were approved by the PCC on the 13 April 2008 and signed on its behalf by the Chairman, The Revd Laurence Biggs.

The accounts were subject to an independent examination as required under the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and s 43 of the Charities Act 1993 and signed by the Independent Examiner, S Boardman FCA, on the 13 April 2008.

NOTE:

These figures, whilst extracted from the accounts, may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Church. For further information the full annual accounts, the independent examiner's report on those accounts and the PCC's Annual Report should be consulted; copies of these can be obtained from the PCC Secretary.