

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

Trustees' Annual Report for year ended 31 December 2018

## **Reference and Administrative Information**

St Matthew's Church and centre is situated at the corner of Aldridge Road and Birdbrook Road, in the Great Barr area of Birmingham. The office address is: St Matthew's Parish Office, Birdbrook Rd, Birmingham, B44 8RA.

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

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a body corporate (PCC powers measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006.) We are registered with the Charities Commission, registered charity no. 1164756.

Bankers: Barclays Bank plc, Perry Barr Branch, Corner of Birchfield Road and Aston Lane, Perry Barr, Birmingham.

Independent Examiner: Mr. Chris Lee, Wychbury Lee, South Staffs Freight Building, Lynn Lane, Shenstone, Staffs WS14 0ED.

The Parish is part of Handsworth Deanery, in the Church of England Diocese of Birmingham.

The PCC is responsible for working with the Incumbent to promote the whole mission of the Church - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical - in the Parish of Perry Beeches. This includes the life of the Parish Church of St Matthew, including the church centre complex comprising the large hall, lounge and family room, and grounds, and the general and restricted funds required for the operation of the church and centre, and for the mission of the Parish.

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected annually by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The ministers licensed to the Parish and churchwardens are members by virtue of their office. Deanery Synod representatives are elected at the APCM and hold office for three years. Other members of the PCC are elected at the APCM. Up to two additional members can be co-opted by the PCC.

The membership of the PCC in 2018 was as follows:

(\* =member resigning at Annual Meeting, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2018  
\*\* =new member appointed at the same Annual Meeting)

The Revd Adam Romanis	Ex officio	Vicar, <i>Chair</i>
Peter Conabeer	Ex officio	Licensed Lay Minister <i>Vice-Chair, Electoral Roll Officer</i>
David Gadd	Ex officio	<i>Churchwarden</i>
Rodney Williams *	Ex officio	<i>Churchwarden until May then elected member</i>
Tim Bartlett **	Ex officio	Elected member, then <i>Churchwarden from May</i>
Stephen Humphries	Ex-officio	<i>Deanery Synod Rep.</i>
Lesley Breakwell	Ex-officio	<i>Deanery Synod Rep.</i>
Ann Harrison	Ex-officio	<i>Deanery Synod Rep. Parish Administrator &amp; Treasurer</i>
Adrian Deverell	Elected	<i>PCC Secretary</i>
Judith Deverell	Elected	<i>Safeguarding Officer</i>
Vera Lawrence	Elected	
Paul Phipps	Elected	
Carolyn Phipps **	Elected	
Paul Jones	Elected	
Margaret Cox **	Elected	
John Hall	Elected	

**Electoral Roll** In April 2019, the new electoral roll has 65 names. 30 members did not re-enrol, and there were 17 new enrolments.

**Usual Sunday Attendance** Attendance on a normal Sunday was 45 adults (46 in 2017) and 6 children (5 in 2017).

**Worshipping Community** We have seen growth in the size of our total worshipping community: in 2015 there were 82 adults and 19 children; in 2016 there were 109 adults and 20 children; in 2017 there were 115 adults

and 34 children; in 2018 there were 173 adults and 42 children. So there is clear trend in that, whilst actual turnout on any particular Sunday has been diminishing, there is a developing “fringe” of people attending irregularly or infrequently.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The PCC makes all decisions corporately, except that the Standing Committee has delegated powers to make decisions between PCC meetings, subject to keeping the PCC fully informed.

The PCC is responsible for all parish finance, its management and control, including the appointment of the treasurer. The work of the PCC is supported by its committees, which meet between full meetings of the PCC. These are:

Standing Committee – Consisting of the Vicar, Churchwardens, Parish Treasurer, Lay Chairperson, PCC Secretary, and one other member of the PCC elected by the PCC. They have power to transact the business of the PCC between PCC meetings, reporting to the full PCC as appropriate.

Fabric and Finance Committee – Including the Parish Treasurer, the Churchwardens, the Vicar, other PCC members as appointed, to ensure adequate skills and representation and other invited members with appropriate knowledge and skills. They are responsible for the production of reports and recommendations for the PCC.

Marketing group – established after the PCC’s annual review in 2016. Includes the Vicar, another member of the PCC, the Clerk for Baptisms & Marriages, and other appointed members with appropriate knowledge and skills.

## **Objectives and Activities**

Mindful of its responsibility for the mission of the Church in Perry Beeches Parish, the PCC seeks to provide a welcoming spiritual home and community resource for all in the neighbourhood. We want to discover the heart of God’s love with all who seek. This is possible through Christ, who makes of us his Body in Baptism and Eucharist, but whose love and saving grace are not limited to the confines of the church building and institutional life. St Matthew’s bears witness to this through its on-site life, where the sacred space sits side-by-side with the hall which draws in many people from the wider community.

**The PCC** has met on 8 occasions during the year with an average attendance of 12 members per meeting. Major points of discussion have included:

**General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):** Due to the change to UK data privacy laws, GDPR came into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and Ann Harrison was appointed as the data compliance officer. Letters were sent to all regular and occasional members of the congregation along with users of the church, church hall and community rooms, requesting written consent to hold and process personal data.

**Stay and Play Group:** A decision for the church to take over the running of the stay and play group was made due to struggling finances, and this being a good way of developing the church's outreach to the wider community. This would enable the church to apply for grant funding to cover some of the running costs. Carolyn Phipps volunteered to support Diane Vale with the running of the group, which was re-named "Noah's Ark."

**Adoption of the C of E "Parish policy for responding to Domestic Abuse":** As part of the Church of England's commitment to raising awareness of domestic abuse and its impact, the C of E "Parish policy for responding to Domestic Abuse" was adopted following a request from the Diocesan office.

Other topics of discussion have included safeguarding, regular review of church income and expenditure, approval for the replacement of the church hall windows with double glazed units and recruitment of new chalice assistants. The "Leading your Church into Growth" course was attended in September by the Vicar, two PCC members, and two other parishioners.

The **Sunday Eucharist** is at the heart of our Parish life. This depends on the ministry of Parish Priest and Lay Reader, the serving team, chalice assistants, readers, welcomers, and coffee makers. In August, we bade

farewell to our talented organist Edward Lee who has served St Matthew's for 15 years. We have not been able to recruit a permanent replacement, but we are glad to have the services of two good organists who play alternate weeks. We make full use of *Common Worship* and other resources to adapt the Liturgy to reflect the seasons of the Church's year, and minister to God's people. Typically, each month there is a Baptism Liturgy (drawing in many visitors with the Baptism families) and a Children's Liturgy (child-centred Parish Eucharist).

**Prayer & Spiritual Development** A small, very committed group supports the daily Morning Prayer in church, with daily celebration of the Eucharist. The prayer life of the Parish is also enriched by monthly meetings of the Julian Group. Our Lent course was based on the TV drama serial "Broken" and three house groups met to watch the DVD and discuss the themes raised. This year's faith courses (in preparation for Confirmation) brought together children and adults in a very special way. In October, a group made a day Pilgrimage to Shrine of St Edward the Confessor. Following the "Leading your Church into Growth" course, a small group have begun regular prayer for growth.

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

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

attracting 20-50 young children with their parents and carers.

The council has complied with its duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

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

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

In 2018 there were 8 **Baptisms** of children, and 2 adult baptisms. (In 2017, 6 children and 5 adults). In May we had 7 adult candidates and 6 children **confirmed**.

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

Most **funerals** take place at Perry Barr Crematorium. In 2018 the Parish Priest conducted 16 funerals in total (20 in 2017) and 1 Wedding Service.

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

In addition to raising funds for St Matthew's own regular expenses, significant sums were also raised for the Crisis Centre (Lent offering), USPG (Monthly collection for Malawi), the Children's Society (via boxes), Christian Aid Week (door-to-door envelope collection), homelessness charities (Birmingham Christmas Shelter, Shelter, St. Basil's - Christmas service collections), the Junk Food

Project (harvest lunch), the Poppy Appeal, and Embrace the Middle East (donations to sponsored child scheme).

**The Hall, Lounge and Family Room** The former bar premises are now open every Friday lunchtime, as a café facility (with books available for sale, and other activities.) New UPVC windows were installed in the Hall in 2018, and a major refurbishment of the Church Centre toilets was completed, both courtesy of grants obtained from various charitable trusts. A new cooker was also purchased for the hall kitchen. The hall is well used for a wide variety of lettings including public sector (polling days), commercial lets (slimming groups, dance classes), and community groups (toddler group, bowls, Rainbows/ Brownies/ Guides, and monthly Hindu worship). Revised rents and some increased usage mean that the hall is once again covering its running costs.

**Church Fabric** Our grade 2 listed church building (Murray & Maguire, 1964) provides an exceptionally user-friendly space for prayer and worship. During 2018, the exterior plaque of the Risen Christ, on the street corner, was floodlit and a new notice case erected beside the car park entrance.

**Church cleaning, flower arranging and gardening** are carried out by volunteers. The Parish is very conscious of the value of all the volunteer hours that we depend on every day.

**Partnership with other Christians** St Matthew's participates fully in the life of the Diocese and Deanery, and enjoys a friendly informal partnership with the neighbouring Parish of St John, Perry Barr. There is also a developing ecumenical relationship with Beeches Evangelical Church and Perry Beeches Baptist Church.

## **Financial Review**

We rely on St Martin's Trust to pay our administrator and our organist, and on other grant-making bodies for significant maintenance and improvements. The PCC is immensely grateful for this support, which ensures that there is secure provision for some large and important items in our budget. The accounts bear witness to the generosity of our members, particularly through the Parish Giving Scheme and other planned giving. As well as raising the funds for our regular running expenses, we raise significant amounts for other charities, supporting Christian work at home and overseas. It is a matter of concern that this year we were not able to meet in full our Common Fund assessment. There was a shortfall of £3700. As a net beneficiary of the Common Fund arrangements, St Matthew's acknowledges the need to address this, through promoting the Parish Giving Scheme, seeking increased use of our excellent community facilities (boosting rental income), and continued fundraising efforts. The Diocese's current "People and Places" review is going to have a profound effect on patterns of ministry provision. In order to play our part, we need to do all we can to continue to meet our commitment to local work, and to the wider Church.

## **Vicar's Remarks**

If anything, the challenges identified last year have become more acute. This is evidenced by the attendance and membership statistics, which show that fringe growth is accelerating, whilst the core membership is only just holding its own. Financially, things are feeling tighter. We need to rejoice in the abundance of God's kingdom, whilst not ignoring the challenge of managing the resources which seem in short supply. The Lord is presenting us with more and more people who are seeking him. May they and we all learn more of him, as we journey on together.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL** *Jayne Hogan*

Janet Cook and I are continuing to uphold the Ethos and values bestowed on the Sunday School by Martin Wall and Sheila Rooke.

On the register at this present time are seventeen children, some of these attend on a regular basis and others attend spasmodically, but all are welcomed into our fold. The idea of a register is a new one and we are going to give prizes for the most attendance to encourage this positive way forward.

Father Adam, Janet and myself meet regularly to discuss matters arising about Sunday School and to devise a timetable of lessons based on the readings in Church.

Our regular way of working is to take the children into the family room at the beginning of the service, and after registration they take it in turn to read our special Sunday School prayer. We then have two circle time activities which are based on vocabulary and items used in Church. The story then follows and then activities based on the story. We then come back into Church for the last part of the service. They enjoy being the ones who take up our feast to be blessed and after going up for a blessing themselves, they like having their feast of biscuits and squash. At the end of the Church service children enjoy showing their achievements to the congregation.

The age of our children go from very young to early teens, so we need to make sure their needs are catered for. Some Children choose to stay in Church for the main service with the congregation which is their right, and we actively encourage this as part of their

spiritual growth and three of our girls are on the rota as boat servers.

We have some parents who kindly help with Sunday School, but it would be much appreciated by Janet and myself if some members of the congregation would be willing to complete a disclosure and barring service form in order to participate with Sunday School. We need at least two people who are checked to be able to take the children into the family room, so this would be especially helpful when one of us is off ill or on holiday.

Finally, Sue Kyte, Rosemary Williams, Janet and myself attended the growing with God conference on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March. There we meet other practitioners and were able to gain new ideas and approaches regarding working with young children in our Church setting.

## **JULIAN GROUP**

*Anne Gadd*

A few of us have been meeting on the first Monday in month for silent prayer over the past year.

I would like to thank the people who have been very supportive of this group and have come along to each meeting.

It is open to all and we would welcome more people to come along on the first Monday in the month at 1.30pm for silent prayer and listen to readings from Julian of Norwich. We share friendship tea and cakes after the prayers.

Try it! You may enjoy it, we all feel very relaxed afterwards, it is a time of quiet retreat, and sharing.

## **SERVERS**    *Rodney Williams*

St Matthew's is fortunate to enjoy the benefits of a loyal and totally committed group of Servers who do their best always to ensure their availability for all main church services and many other occasions when required.

Servers are effectively lay assistants who support the Vicar in the delivery of Services. They ensure candles are lit before a service and that the church bell is rung, they carry the cross and candles into church at the start of a Service, they fetch and carry during the Service and at the end clear away the silver and other items that have been used. This they all do as part of their Christian commitment to St Matthew's Church.

At the present time we are low on numbers and would welcome anyone who feels they would like to join our existing group of Servers. Training would be given and when they felt ready they would be introduced into the Servers Rota to serve alongside more experienced servers who would provide whatever support or advice was required.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about serving please have a word with any of the current servers or Father Adam. They will be warmly welcomed into the group.

## **MUSIC**

### ***Fr Adam***

It was indeed a blow to lose our talented and long-serving organist in August of last year. After fifteen years, Edward Lee had to relinquish this role owing the demands of his job in the health service. We are grateful to him, and wish him well, and he has been back at Christmas and Easter to play for some of our most important services, which has been very welcome.

We have so far been unable to recruit a permanent replacement, in spite of advertising widely and offering (thanks to St Martin's Trust) proper remuneration.

Meanwhile, we have the services of Catherine Wainwright and Neil Crawford, who are happy to play alternate weeks. Both travel significant distances to St Matthew's, and we are grateful for the trouble they take, and to have the good standard of music that they provide.

Our choir misses having weekly practices, but have not wavered in their dedication to supporting and enriching our worship.

New choir members always welcome! Speak to any member of the choir about what it entails, or ask the Vicar.

## **FRIENDLY FRIDAY CAFÉ**

*David & Anne Gadd*

The cafe is going really well. We have people come along each week they enjoy having something to eat and drink, whilst sharing friendship.

We keep our prices affordable to all, but still make a small profit.

Our aim is not so much to make a profit but to be here for people who like to come along to make friends.

We keep a good stock control so there is very little waste.

We go to the Birmingham Junk Food project every three weeks to get some of the food and also pick up some food to support messy church, Sunday breakfast etc when we can. The Junk Food Project is a charitable organisation which has a group of volunteer people who collect unwanted food from the supermarkets, and run cafes for people, on a pay what you think it is worth basic. They also have food for people such as us who run a church cafe and we also pay what we think it is worth .

They do a fantastic job and all the staff are voluntary. The costs of running this warehouse are in the region of three hundred pounds per week. If they did not do this job all the food would go to land fill, such a wicked waste.

We look forward to the next twelve months to see how we might grow.

## **CRAFT GROUP**

*Anne Gadd*

We meet together for crafting and friendship. We make things for the Christmas Fair, or do your own crafting things. We learn from each other as we all have different skills.

If people want to come along they do not have to do any crafts if they choose not to but come along for tea and chatter.

There always some cakes, biscuits , and tea available.

Bring your own lunch. It is a very relaxing day. Everyone is welcome to come along we start at 10.30 am end at 4.00pm, but you can come and go as you please. Next meeting will be on the Sunday news sheet.

## **FLOWER ARRANGERS**     *Eileen Eveson*

Our present flower team consists of Lorna Wild and myself as longstanding members, and Julie Hope who joined us in early 2018. Sadly, Linda Dewell has not been able to help recently but many thanks are due to her for her valuable contribution over the past five years.

Flowers have been arranged in church as usual for each Sunday of the year except in the Lent and Advent periods. There were special displays at Easter and Christmas and gifts of daffodils on Mothering Sunday.

Once again, we have been very grateful for donations in memory of relatives and friends from members of the congregation.

## **BOWLS**

*Anne Gadd*

We meet each Thursday afternoon for a game of bowls and friendship. We enjoy the game and a lot of banter goes on. We are not in a league as we want to keep it simple and enjoy the game whether we lose or win, although we all would like to win.

Quite often when we have had our tea break at half time, the losing team overtake the winning team, 'has someone put something in the tea' I wonder

We all go out for Christmas meal each year which we all enjoy.

## **BROOKLYN HALL LETTINGS** *Ann Harrison*

Brooklyn Hall is let on a regular basis with Monday to Friday groups who use the hall, such as Slimming World, Noah's Ark Stay and Play, Short mat bowls, ELB Danceworks (which is a children's and teenagers dance class , Zumba, Rainbows, Brownies and Girl Guides.

Saturday and Sundays are reserved for children's and adult party hire, community group hire and social evenings.

2018 saw most of the Hall's income come from commercial lettings, which was £10,880. Community income was £3,700 and Hall party income totalled £3,300. The total income for 2018 was £17,800 compared with a total income for 2017 of £16,850.

There is no call for Saturday evening adult parties since the closure of the Dove Bar but family gatherings and children's parties are the mainstay of the Hall lets.

There are still certain time slots during the week that are available for hire and we are always accessible for future hire enquiries.

The Brooklyn Hall has undergone some small refurbishment over the past couple of years with new central heating being installed (courtesy of the generosity of St. Matthew's congregation), and new UPVC windows. The windows were installed over the Christmas and New Year period and we were able to do this with grants obtained by Janet Cook.

There is a new oven in the kitchen, which replaced the old oven, and we are hoping to be able to carry out further insulation works to the hall ceiling, pending the receipt of further grants.

## **NOAH'S ARK STAY & PLAY**

***Fr Adam***

This previously independent group came under the auspices of PCC in September. We are grateful to Cate Bennett of *Thrive Birmingham* for her support in reviewing the situation and planning for the future. We are grateful to Carolyn Phipps, who acted as a support to the group and PCC link person during the transition. And we are grateful to the group leader, Diane Vale and to her husband Dave for his support. Diane ensures that the group runs smoothly every Wednesday and Friday (in term time). There are signs of growth, both in numbers and regular attendance. Finances are building up (the group pays a regular contribution to hall expenses, and is building up a small fund of its own.) I (the Vicar) visit increasingly regularly for a short song or story session at the end of their morning.