

# Annual Report & Financial Statements for the Parish of Ashford Hill with Headley year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010



Rev Trish's Ordination July 2010



Harvest Weekend October 2010

**ASHFORD HILL WITH HEADLEY PCC**  
**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2010**

**Administrative information**

The parish of Ashford Hill with Headley is one of two parishes which together make up the United Benefice of Kingsclere and Ashford Hill with Headley, within the Diocese of Winchester, within the Church of England. The Incumbent is the Rev Lucy Thirtle. From July 2010 Rev. Trish Bancroft was appointed as curate.

Ashford Hill with Headley Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

There are two parish churches – St Peter’s Headley in Newbury Road, Headley and St Paul’s Ashford Hill. The correspondence address is The Vicarage, Fox’s Lane, Kingsclere, Newbury.

The membership of the PCC during 2010 was as follows.

Vicar	Rev. Lucy Thirtle
Churchwardens	David Chamings David Fowler (Vice-Chair)
Deanery Synod members	David Fowler 1 vacancy
Elected Members	Rachel Chamings (until APCM 2013) Susie Sainsbury (until APCM 2012) Georgina Selby (until APCM 2011) Mary Sneyd (until APCM 2011) Penny Stewart (until APCM 2013) Patrick Taylor (until APCM 2012) Evelyn Hiscock (until APCM 2013) Colin Scott-Malden (until APCM 2013)
Curate	Rev. Trish Bancroft (from July 2010)

## **Structure, governance and management**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. Members are elected for a 3 year term. All regular worshippers are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. Certain tasks are delegated to sub-Committees as follows (membership for 2010 only shown):

**Finance Committee** ( Membership: Patrick Taylor (chairman), Rev. Lucy Thirtle, Tom Sneyd (co-opted), Dave Chamings, David Fowler, Colin Scott-Malden )

**Music at Ashford Hill** (Suspended but Georgie Selby keeping PCC informed)

**Fete Committee** (Joint Organisers: Patrick Taylor, Georgie Selby, Dave Chamings)  
Committee: Simon Hiscock; Jeremy Loxton; Rev.Lucy; Maurice Lawrence.  
Full reports from these committees follow.

## **Objectives**

The Ashford Hill with Headley PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, Rev. Lucy Thirtle, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the parish churches and their churchyards.

## **Particular Highlights**

The Rev. Trish Bancroft who joined us in July as Curate for the purpose of her training has been a great asset to the life of the parish. As well as sharing preaching with the Vicar, she has entered into the affairs of the parish with ideas and enthusiasm, and played a full part in pastoral care, liaison with the school etc. We welcome her arrival and greatly value her contribution, but remain mindful that she is here primarily for her benefit and not ours, and the parish cannot unfortunately rely on this level of support in the longer term.

Another highlight of the year was the United Benefice Service of Confirmation and Baptism held on 28 November for which we welcomed the new Bishop of Basingstoke, the Rt. Rev. Peter Hancock as President. This was the first Confirmation service to be held in the parish in recent years and was a real cause for celebration with 2 adults and 3 teenagers confirmed and the 7 year old son of one of the confirmation candidates baptised.

## **Achievements and performance**

The full PCC met 6 times during the year, with an average 80% attendance.

The service pattern was amended in the light of experience and of the heating problems at St. Paul's.

The switch from having the all age service from 11.15am on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday following the Headley Communion service seems, on the whole, to have been a successful change. The service has had an encouraging level of attendance from the outset with the change meaning that those who had previously had to choose between Headley Communion and the All Age service no longer had to do so. As well as being well attended by a number of regular families with children, the non-Communion services are popular with a number of older couples without children who prefer the non-Communion format. Twice during the year the service included Holy Communion but took a more informal nature. Additionally in November the service was supplanted by the Benefice Confirmation service which was also a service with Holy Communion (see above).

For September the service was held in Headley rather than Ashford Hill following a request from the uniformed group leaders to have some all age services there, and the service was attended by members of the Beavers and Cubs who also contributed to a display on the notice board.

Although the switch means slightly fewer services of Holy Communion at Ashford Hill, there have been few complaints and, in general, attendance is significantly higher for the all age service. The service is now very much part of the parish life rather than a 'bolt-on'.

It was agreed to hold three evening services. It was also agreed that 8am services due to be held in St. Paul's during the coldest winter months should instead be held at St. Peter's to save on heating costs – and to make the services less physically challenging.

One further change, reflecting the diminishing attendance at Christmas Eve midnight Eucharists, was to hold this service at St. Peter's. Indeed there was a full church and the change was welcomed and noted for the future.

During 2010, the PCC gave consideration to the following:

### **Outreach**

Following the Mission Audit exercise in 2007 we defined our mission to this parish, which is made up of multiple small settlements and scattered dwellings, as being “to extend the role of the church – people and buildings – as an agent for community gathering and activity and finding ways to use increased contact with the community for sharing with people of every age the joys and benefits of faith.”

Activities included extending our financial support for Headley with Ashford Hill Community Shop, community carol singing, setting up Monday morning coffee at St. Paul's (see below for report), and a repeat of the successful Harvest Weekend of crafts and flowers at Ashford Hill.

Towards the end of the year we set up a new sub-committee (now known as the Parish Liaison Committee) with members drawn from church attendees as well as representatives of other community organisations, specifically with the task of coordinating all the different community activity in the villages and looking for new possibilities for using the church buildings as community venues. The very first initiative

to come out of this committee was the idea of a Royal Wedding Street Party which is to be held at Ashford Hill Church in April 2011.

As far as the St. Paul's coffee morning is concerned, Rev. Trish Bancroft writes: "We started opening the Church for coffee at the beginning of the new school term in September and serve coffee and cakes every Monday in term time at 9am. We have a small team who are there rain or shine to welcome new people, to clear away and most importantly to come up with creative ideas. We had a wonderful wreath-making workshop just before Christmas, led by Andrea Fearon, and since then we have had a "knit-in" which our expert knitter, Hazel O'Leary helped us with. We had knitters at all levels, but it was especially fun watching the beginners, me included. People now bring their knitting every week. However, the coffee mornings are not exclusively for women, and we have men joining us on a regular basis, but without their knitting! Hopefully we can think up some more manly pursuits!"

St. Paul's was also used as in previous years by Ashford Hill School for seasonal services, by the Kingsclere Singers for concerts and was made available to Kingsclere Keystone Project for a Barn Dance.

### **Being a welcoming community**

- It remains our aim to keep the churches open during the day. Since the arrival in July of our curate, Rev Trish Bancroft, who lives in the St Paul's Vicarage, this has been possible at Ashford Hill. However, the difficulty of finding a way of locking the vestry meant this has not yet been possible at Headley.
- We were delighted to have 7 weddings in St Paul's Church during the year – a record number in recent years. All agree that St Paul's is a beautiful and special venue for a wedding, and this is an area of ministry which we would like to develop and which offers some potential for outreach.
- We continued to exploit opportunities for adding a social element to special services and events. Mulled wine after the carol service, and squash and biscuits after Christingle were served. A Seder meal was held on Maundy Thursday at St. Paul's. A Harvest Supper was held after the evening service on 3 October, attended by the new Bishop of Basingstoke. The flexible and spacious interior makes St Paul's ideally suited for this kind of activity.

### **Fulfilling our statutory responsibilities**

- Health and Safety – the churchwardens continued to focus on identified risks, in particular ensuring adequate supervision of children during the Christingle service.
- Child Protection – Sarah Karsten continued in her capacity as the parish's Child Protection Co-ordinator until moving abroad, and she was replaced by Mrs. Emma Rivers (who performs the same role for Kingsclere) and is the Benefice Administrator. However, at present we have no activities in which church members have responsibility for children without parents present.
- Electoral roll – Rachel Chamings continued in her capacity as Electoral Roll Officer.

## **Stewardship of our resources**

### Buildings

- Regular reports were received by the Churchwardens on the state of the buildings.
- Ashford Hill: The focus in 2010 was on the electrics, audio systems and heating. An electrician willing to take on the task was found, and he conducted a full survey of the electrical systems and prepared a plan. Various repairs were made and some changes made to ensure compliance with current guidelines. A 5 year certificate was received. One of the outcomes of the survey was that the electric underfloor heating was not worth repairing, as condensation problems would lead to shorting again quite quickly.
- Short term arrangements were agreed for heating in the light of the above. Kingsclere very kindly offered to lend us blow heaters and Propane cylinders were hired. This has proved to be very effective in short bursts, although there are some concerns about the impact of condensation on the fabric and in particular the organ. It remains the intention to explore and cost longer term solutions.
- An audio engineer was hired to inspect and advise on the sound systems. As a result the neck microphone now works, we have a facility to link any equipment to the wireless amplification system, and we have purchased two 'loop' sets for the hard of hearing.
- Following the theft of the 10 foot or so of copper lightning conductor a metal cover has been screwed to the wall, making it relatively difficult to repeat the theft.
  
- Headley:
- The choir pews at St Peter's (one by organ, one at the back by door) were removed in order to create a little more space at the front for displays, children's performance etc and at the back for the use of wheelchair users and for families at baptisms.
- The organ was replaced by a new keyboard, thanks to a donation from The Headley Trust.
- The paths have been gravelled.
- A focussed spring cleaning and sorting operation has cleared the church of long-stored clutter.
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### Finance

- Regular reports were received from the Treasurer. The full financial report for the year appears at the end of this report. In summary, 2010 was another difficult year, with ongoing expenses exceeding income by an uncomfortable margin. The deficit, excluding major repair work funded from reserves put aside for that purpose, for the second year running, came to around £7,000. This level of deficit cannot be sustained as the general reserves will not cover even two more years at this level.
- Income from planned giving was up by £4,000 and from collections up by a further £500, all of which is highly commendable, and in no small part due to Tom Sneyd's valuable work as Parish Giving Officer.
- The issue for the PCC once again is in ensuring we meet all our regular expenses from income. Yet it is difficult to see where expenses could be reduced, given that

regular maintenance of the fabric and the facilities and services cannot be ignored, and the parish share is likely to increase further. It remains the fact that just to stand still we have to continue to grow our income, however hard the times. The Finance Committee will be putting its focus on this in 2011, including the instigation of more formal fund-raising and giving processes.

- Our thanks go to the fete team for another profitable venture, producing a sum of £3,000. It should be noted that the fete will not be repeated in the usual format in 2011 and alternative fundraising opportunities will be required (see separate fete report).
- Our thanks go to Colin Scott-Malden for his excellent work on treasury activities and to Sandra and Mike Everitt for their efforts in producing the magazine, and in particular for doing so profitably when costs are rising and raising additional income is so difficult.
- Income from interest on deposits has remained below expectations.
- No outward giving has been made in 2010.

#### Reserves Policy

- It is PCC policy to maintain a Restricted Development and Fabric Fund which at the end of 2010 stood at £22,584, and a Designated Floor Fund for St. Paul's which stood at £11,158 to cover repairs and emergency situations.
- It is our policy to invest our funds balances with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund.

### **Reports from Sub-Committees or other officers**

#### **Fete Sub Committee**

This year's Ashford Hill with Headley Church Fete was held, for the first time in recent years and on a trial basis, in St Paul's Churchyard. Despite some initial reservations, all agreed this was a successful venue and it was a fun-filled day, enjoyed by all, which made another vital financial contribution of £3,000 to the Church funds. This was a successful outcome in view of the fact that the need to hold it on a different weekend to usual meant that it clashed with other events. The PCC would once again like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the organisers and committee, the many stallholders, helpers, sponsors and contributors who ensure the fete's continued success.

This year the fete was organised by three PCC members: Patrick Taylor, Georgie Selby and Dave Chamings, backed by a committee structure. This is probably not as effective as having one overall supremo, but finding someone willing to fulfil this role remains a problem. Hence the decision to give the somewhat tired format a rest and seek new ways of raising funds for 2011. The PCC is open to suggestions, which may be added to the plans already being formulated, so please do let us have your ideas.

### **Music at Ashford Hill in 2010**

There is currently no formally constituted committee.

However, two concerts were put on in 2010, both by Kingsclere Singers, thanks to the efforts of Georgie Selby, Brian Watts and Hazel O'Leary.

The PCC is still hopeful that someone may come forward to revive Music at Ashford Hill, making use of the church's excellent acoustics.

### **Parish Magazine – Report from the Editors**

From what we hear from the village grapevine many parishioners still continue to enjoy reading the monthly Parish magazine. As editors we are very grateful to our regular, reliable advertisers, article contributors and distributors, as without their support there would be a much slimmed down magazine and it may not reach all the homes in the parish as it does now. We currently have 560 copies printed each month and would wish to thank Advance Printing for all their help and assistance in producing it. Sadly, like most things the price of production has increased due to rising costs of paper and ink, and the average monthly cost is now between £450 and £470 depending on its size. In 2010 we lost some advertisers and gained some new ones, although we maintained charges to the same level as 2009. The number of advertisers is approximately constant around the 60 mark. We are pleased to report that the magazine continues to generate money for the church and made approximately £700 in 2010.

*Sandra & Michael Everitt*

### **Neighbourcare Group**

In June 2010 the Group was amalgamated with that of Kingsclere, now named Kingsclere, Ashford Hill and Headley Care Group. The change was agreed by all those involved. The reasons were that:

Even a small group receives many papers and questionnaires, and

The demand for the service remained very small, and

Mary Sneyd has moved to Kingsclere.

Mary can ensure that the interests of Ashford Hill and Headley do not suffer. The small sum in the bank account was transferred to the new group and the relevant authorities were informed. Users in Ashford Hill and Headley should see no change in the service. The contact, as shown in the magazine, has not changed:

Mary Sneyd 01635 291230.

Back-up is provided by Roger Dobbs 01635 268318 and the Kingsclere group 07960 644804.

*Mary Sneyd*

### **Blessed Blossoms (flower arrangements)**

During 2010 Blessed Blossoms again achieved some amazing things, including

- Decorating the church for weddings and doing bride and bridesmaid bouquets and button holes for the men.
- Participating in a day flower workshop
- Arranging the flowers for services and festivals
- Decorating St. Paul's for the Harvest and Flower Weekend, which has quickly become a popular and prestigious event.
- Decorating the church for the Confirmation service.

Thanks to everyone who has given of their time and worked so hard. If you would like to join the arrangers or use their services, please contact Georgie Selby at The Ship Inn.

### **Whitchurch Deanery** (Deanery Synod member: David Fowler)

During the year Whitchurch Deanery contracted once again, this time from 7 to 6 benefices, consisting of 20 parishes. Future forecasts suggest that over the next few years even further reductions in stipendiary clergy will mean further contraction and a re-formed Deanery Pastoral Committee is beginning to explore how best this could happen.

The link with Mityana in Uganda continues to be a focus for the deanery under the energetic encouragement of Rev Dodie Marsden.

The Diocese has confirmed the role of the deanery as a necessary link between diocese and parishes, with a focus on shared training, cross-fertilisation and interchange of ideas (e.g. on mission audit outcomes and initiatives), and on collaborative ventures such as Mityana. The deanery (and not the diocese) is now responsible for allocating individual Parish Share contributions to the parishes. Unfortunately this occurs at a time when the diocesan budget is itself under extreme pressure. In spite of quite drastic cuts at diocesan level, the PCC needs to anticipate a further increase in the parish share with the risk that a levy may have to be raised in addition to the standard share in order to help any parish unable to fulfill its obligations.

*David Fowler, Synod Rep*

### **Thanks from Vicar and PCC**

The Vicar and Churchwardens would like to thank the many volunteers who contribute to the upkeep of the churches, the flower arranging, clock winding, cleaning, after-service coffees, event catering, magazine distribution, website, churchyard clearers etc, as well as enabling weekly worship.

*Rev. Lucy Thirtle, Vicar*