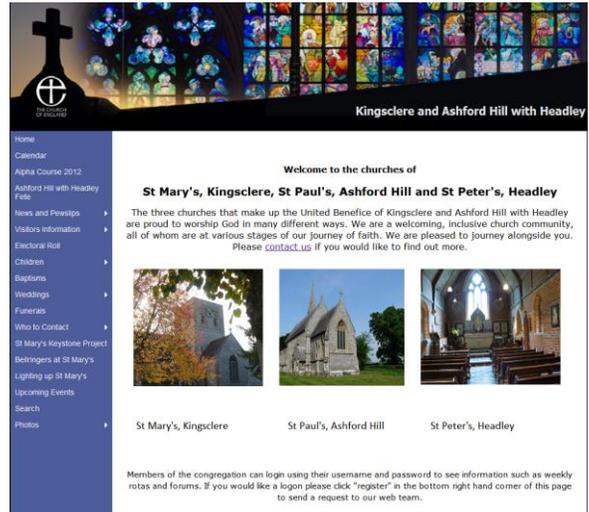


# Annual Report and Financial Statements for the parish of Ashford Hill with Headley

## For the year ended 31st December 2011



John & Bridget's Wedding



Our new Benefice Website



Royal Wedding Celebrations at St Paul's



Lois being baptised at her parents' wedding



Rev Trish's First Communion Service

**ASHFORD HILL WITH HEADLEY PCC**  
**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2011**

**Highlights of 2011**

We have much to celebrate as we look back on 2011 with popular new forms of worship, new events being held at the churches, and new people taking on various support roles.

Here's a quick summary:

- ❖ Café Church! This is café style worship – with participants seated around tables, sharing food and drink, with informal and natural fellowship arising through conversation as well as discussions on a spiritual theme. Two such services were held during the year and received excellent attendance and feedback.
- ❖ The Royal Wedding Street Party in April was a hugely enjoyable and memorable community event. St Paul's provided the perfect venue.
- ❖ Well-attended series of Big Questions evenings.
- ❖ A heating working group has been set up to address the need for a new heating solution for St Paul's.
- ❖ A fabric committee to ensure St Paul's is maintained and cared for was set up.
- ❖ New volunteers came forward to take on the following roles:
  - sacristan at St Paul's, helping to keep St Paul's churchyard tidy; the position of organist at St Paul's, magazine distribution, heading up the Fete committee; representing us on Deanery Synod; looking after the hangings and linen at St Peter's.
- ❖ We celebrated 5 years of the United Benefice of Kingsclere and Ashford Hill with Headley
- ❖ Rev Trish was ordained priest in July

Though financial challenges remain (see later) the parish is in good heart.

## 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. The curate, Rev. Trish Bancroft, served throughout the year and was ordained on 2 July.

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 2011 was as follows.

Vicar	Rev. Lucy Thirtle
Churchwardens	David Chamings David Fowler (Vice-Chair)
Deanery Synod members	Alison Goodyer 1 vacancy
Elected Members	Rachel Chamings (until APCM 2013) Andrea Fearon (until April 2014) Terry Richardson (until April 2014) Susie Sainsbury (until APCM 2012) Georgina Selby (until APCM 2014) 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

## 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 2011 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)
- **Fete Committee (for 2012 Fete):** Gemma Hughes; Dave Chamings; Simon Hiscock; Terry Richardson, Rev.Lucy.
- **Benefice Outreach Group** Rev Trish, Susie Sainsbury, Georgie Selby, Alison Goodyer, Andrea Fearon, David Goodfellow, Maggy Wallace, Hilary Best).

Full reports from these committees follow later in the report.

## **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.

## **Achievements and performance**

The full PCC met 6 times during the year, with an average 80% attendance. During the year, the PCC gave consideration to the following:

### **Worship**

The weekly cycle of worship on Sundays and at festivals continued with the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday 10.30 am service at Ashford Hill taking the form of more informal all age worship. This continued to attract good congregations, including a number of regular families with children and a number of older couples without children who prefer the non-Communion format. Twice during the year the service included Holy Communion but using a shorter more accessible service sheet. It was agreed that 8am services would continue to be held in St Peter's during the coldest winter months.

### **Café Church**

In August, this service fell on the Bank Holiday weekend and an innovative Café-style service was held. Worship took place around tables laden with pastries and coffee, tea, and juice were served at intervals by the clergy. Meanwhile the congregation listened to readings from The Message and were given questions on the passages to discuss rather than having a formal sermon.

The format was repeated on Advent Sunday when Christingles were made as well as breakfast served. Both services attracted large numbers – the biggest challenge was having enough places and coffee pots for everyone!

### **Mission & 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.”

To further this aim, the Parish Liaison Committee with members drawn from church attenders as well as representatives of other community organisations (Rev Lucy, Georgie Selby, Graham Stewart, Ann Hoddinott, Richard Bayly, Alison Goodyer), enthusiastically started the task of bringing together representatives of various different village organisations 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 was held at Ashford Hill Church in April and was a great success. Some 300 adults and children attended over the course of the day which began with coffee and cakes being served; followed by broadcast on big screen of the ceremony, followed by a ‘bring and share’ lunch eaten at tables both inside and outside the church. Activities for children included face painting and games and the lunch was followed by a community sing-song and tug of war.

2011 also saw a repeat of the successful Harvest Weekend of crafts and flowers at Ashford Hill. Advantage of the well-decorated church was taken by holding a Grand Ball the following weekend. Thanks to Georgie Selby for organising both events so successfully.

We were also pleased to welcome at St Paul's the children, parents and staff of Ashford Hill School for Harvest, Christmas & Easter services, and on two occasions the Kingsclere Singers for concerts. It was lovely to see the church filled to capacity on all these occasions and reminds us that there is a need in the parish for a building of the size of St Pauls.

To prove that practically no use is out of bounds, St Paul's was also the venue for a successful jumble sale in November with proceeds split between church and shop (thanks to Terry Richardson) and St Peter's for a plant, bottle and cake sale in May (thanks to Rachel Chamings and Susie Sainsbury).

### **Being a welcoming community**

Thanks to the presence of Rev Trish living in the Vicarage, we have been able to keep St Paul's church open during daylight hours most days of the year. It is our hope to be able to continue this.

Monday morning coffee at St Paul's continued through the year, even in the coldest winter months. Rev Trish writes: This has been a great way to welcome people to the church; we often see new faces even if they are just passing through and we have our regulars. For many of us it's a great way to catch up with each other for a chat, but it has also been a forum for learning new things, with the help of Hazel O'Leary we have had our knitting skills renewed or newly started and Andrea Fearon has taught many of us the art of Christmas wreath making. We also ran a Lent Course in the church after coffee throughout Lent for those who wished to join us. It is an important part of the church's outreach, so many thanks to all who help and support it.

We were delighted to have 4 weddings in St Paul's Church in 2011 (including one combined wedding and baptism). All agree that the building 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. So we've enjoyed:

- tea and cakes after the Rogation-tide walk and before the closing worship;
- lunch on the day of celebration to mark the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the united benefice;
- mulled wine after the carol service,
- squash and biscuits after Christingle were served.
- A Harvest Supper was held after the evening service on 3 October.

The flexible and spacious interior makes St Paul's ideally suited for this kind of activity.

### **Sharing our faith**

During Lent, a very successful series of three evenings was held at Hill House by kind invitation of Sir Timothy and Lady Susie Sainsbury on each of which a delicious meal was enjoyed and the following three "Big Questions" were tackled:

- How does a God of love allow suffering?

- Is there a conflict between science and religion?
- How does Christianity regard other faiths?

Personal invitations were issued to many in the parish and all three were well attended and good feedback was received.

Following this initiative which was supported by people from both parishes, it was agreed to set up a Benefice Outreach Group to discuss what further initiatives might be appropriate. A report of the group follows.

### **Communication**

The PCC agreed to purchase the services of a company called Church Edit which provides a structure and template for churches to develop their own websites. Grateful thanks to Emma Rivers for creating and maintaining this excellent and useable benefice website ([www.clerewoodlands.org.uk](http://www.clerewoodlands.org.uk)).

### **Fulfilling our statutory responsibilities**

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- Health and Safety – the churchwardens continued to focus on identified risks, in particular ensuring adequate supervision of children during the Christingle service.
- Child Protection – Emma Rivers took over as the parish’s Child Protection Co-ordinator.
- Electoral roll – Rachel Chamings continued in her capacity as Electoral Roll Officer.

### **Stewardship of our resources**

#### **Buildings**

- Regular reports were received from the Churchwardens on the state of the buildings.
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- St Paul’s, Ashford Hill
- Short term arrangements were in place for heating. Kingsclere’s blow heaters and Propane cylinders were 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, and to this end a working group (Brian Watts, John Lewis, Colin Scott-Malden and led by Graham Stewart) was formed to investigate alternative solutions and to make a recommendation by the time of the APCM in 2012.
- A Fabric Committee was formed comprising Brad Murduck, Bob Lawrence, Philip Crisford and the churchwardens. They will arrange maintenance and repair tasks.
- A volunteer has been found to keep the graveyard in reasonable order. Thanks to Colin Growcock for a magnificent start in the November clearance.
- St Peter’s, Headley:
- No major repairs or developments to report. It remains a priority task to complete the lower half of the screen between the organ and the vestry.

#### **Finance**

- Regular reports were received from the Treasurer. The full financial report for the year appears at the end of this report.
- At first glance the £7,000 deficit of income to expenditure in 2010 has decreased to just under £2,000 in 2011. However, this does not reflect a real improvement in our attempt to break even, as we were ‘saved’ by a very substantial one-off donation in December.

- The key issue is that expenditure still exceeds income by several thousand pounds in spite of fund-raising activities and a push for regular giving. Our general reserves and cash in bank (our only funds not restricted to maintenance of the fabric) are only £10,000, and we must find ways of avoiding the annual erosion of these funds.
- On the positive side our regular giving from parishioners has held up during the tight economic conditions, but it has not grown. Our thanks go to Tom Sneyd for his tireless efforts to find new sources to replace those who have left the parish or died. We also wish to thank those who have organised our fund-raising activities, which have contributed essential profits:

Parish magazine: £1,000  
 Harvest Weekend: £1,110  
 Jumble Sale: £340  
 Plant and Bottle Sale: £755  
 Ball: £45

Our target for 2012 has to be to increase our income from regular giving as well as fund-raising, and it is hoped that the reestablishment of the Fete with re-constituted committee will help considerably with this.

We should be aware that the continuing push for funds will probably coincide in 2012 with a major appeal for funds for a new heating system for St Paul's, so we will need to redouble our efforts to secure support from individuals in the wider village.

- 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.
- Income through Gift Aid was, of course, affected by the tax changes from April.
- A modest amount of outward giving included an amount for the deanery's link diocese of Mityana, Uganda, given at the Harvest Services in the parish.

#### Reserves Policy

- It is PCC policy to maintain a Restricted Development and Fabric Fund which at the end of 2011 stood at £14,213, and a voluntarily Designated Floor Fund for St Paul's which stood at £11,230 to cover fabric repairs and emergency situations. St Peter's also benefits from its own restricted fabric fund of £19,728, thanks to the McSwiney bequest.
- It is our policy to invest our funds balances with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund.

*David Fowler*

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

##### **Fete Sub Committee**

Gemma Hughes; Dave Chamings; Simon Hiscock; Terry Richardson, Rev.Lucy.

The new sub-committee was constituted in the autumn under the leadership of Gemma Hughes. A date for 2012 fete was set for 28 April at Headley Recreation Ground. The plans are to repeat many of the popular attractions while also introducing new ones with better publicity to bring in people from further afield.

### **Benefice Outreach Group**

The aim of the group is to build on relationships that already exist between both parishes and the wider community. We are conscious of the many different skills that we as a benefice possess and we felt our parish outreach initiatives would benefit greatly by becoming joint initiatives. After the success of the Big Question evenings, we asked for feedback from those who attended and what other initiatives would be supported. Following on from that, we ran two more evenings entitled “Big Questions that Children Ask” which, in turn, led us to plan an Alpha course to run from early 2012.

*Rev Trish*

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

The Parish Magazine still seems to thrive. Revenue from our advertisers was just over £6000 in 2011 and our printing costs of £5000 means there is an approximate profit for the Churches of £1000. Our printers do an excellent job and are very fair with their prices to us for which we are very grateful. We hear some favourable comments from time to time from both readers and advertisers which is always pleasing and to date no complaints. Suggestions are sometimes made for additional articles, but sadly unless someone with knowledge on a particular subject comes forward and is willing to write articles we cannot oblige. Another suggestion has been that the adverts should always be placed at the beginning, middle or end of the magazine and on coloured paper. However, we have already considered this in the past and decided it would not be a good idea. The reasons being:- (a) all our advertisers know that they will be rotated and never always be at the front, middle or end of the magazine; (b) putting the advertisement all together would mean that unless people were looking for a particular ad they would just gloss over the coloured pages and some of our advertisers might leave us on this account (c) it is useful to have an advertisement to make up a full page of print and finally (d) coloured paper would increase the costs.

We must also thank our very willing band of voluntary distributors who take on the monthly task of delivering the magazine because without their help the parishioners would not receive their copy.

Finally if anyone would like to write articles we would be delighted to receive them. If anyone wishes to advertise the annual cost for a full A5 page is £175, for half a page £100 and for a third of a page £75.

*Sandra & Michael Everitt*

### **Blessed Blossoms (Flower arrangers)**

During 2011 Blessed Blossoms again achieved some amazing things, including

- Decorating the church for weddings.
- 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.

Thanks to everyone who has given of their time and worked so hard.

*Georgie Selby*

### **Whitchurch Deanery** (Deanery Synod member: Alison Goodyer)

The Deanery continues to be an important link between diocese and parishes, with a focus on shared training, cross-fertilisation and interchange of ideas 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.

During 2011, the Deanery Synod received a presentation from the group, including students from Testbourne Secondary School, which visited Mityana in October 2010. It was a lively presentation accompanied by colourful and informative photos of the visit. Noone remains unmoved at the huge contrasts between our own lifestyle and that of our neighbours in Uganda. The link with Mityana continues to be a focus for the deanery under the energetic encouragement of Rev Dodie Marsden.

The Synod also debated two important items of national Church business which had been passed down for discussion by General Synod. The first concerned the legislation enabling women to be bishops while making provision for those opposed to this development. Synod was more or less unanimous in supporting the legislation as it stood without amendment.

The second concerned a decision whether the Church of England should sign up (or not) to the Anglican Covenant. This was something that few people were informed about before the papers circulated in advance of the Synod meeting and its complexity meant that there were few strong opinions shared in debate. A large numbers of members, both lay and ordained abstained in the vote. (The diocesan synod recently voted in favour of signing up to the Covenant)

The Deanery Pastoral Committee (Standing Cttee) began to think about how it could best be prepared to deal with any possible reduction (planned or unplanned) to the number of stipendiary clergy

*Rev Lucy*

### **Neighbourcare Group**

The Group is now Kingsclere, Ashford Hill and Headley Care Group. It exists mainly to provide transport for medical appointments for those who have no ready alternative. However applications by residents of Ashford Hill with Headley for other forms of help such as shopping will be met if possible. The service has been little used in the past year but should not be forgotten. The contact, as shown in the Magazine is Mary Sneyd 01635 291230. Back up is provided by Roger Dobbs 01635 268318 and the Kingsclere Group 07960 644804.

### **Music at Ashford Hill**

There is currently no formally constituted committee and the only concerts are those which have approached us to use the church as a venue. The PCC is still hopeful that someone may come forward to revive Music at Ashford Hill, making use of the church's excellent acoustics.

### **And finally ...**

Rev. Trish Bancroft who joined us in 2010 as Curate for the purpose of her training was ordained priest in July and has continued to be a great asset to the life of the parish. As well as sharing the task of leading worship and preaching with the Vicar, she has supported the affairs of the parish with ideas and enthusiasm, and played a full part in pastoral care, liaison with the school etc. We 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.

**Thanks**

The Vicar and Churchwardens would like to thank the many volunteers who contribute to the life of the parish in so many different ways – too numerous to mention.

*Rev. Lucy Thirtle, Vicar  
David Fowler & David Chamings, Churchwardens*