

Parish of Ashford Hill with Headley Diocese of Winchester



Karen & Stuart's Wedding November 2013



Confirmation Service May 2013

Annual Report for the year ended
31st December 2013

Highlights of the year

- Donkey-led Palm Sunday procession
- Two Ashford Hill candidates confirmed at Pentecost in Kingsclere
- Sunny and successful fete on Headley Common under leadership of new committee
- Reprise of concert with Martin & Hedley Thorne, Sean and Simon Baggs
- New signboards for both churches commissioned
- Record attendance at Christmas carol service

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. There is an Assistant Curate, Rev Trish Bancroft, licensed to the benefice for a limited period in a training capacity.

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 2013 was as follows.

Vicar	Rev. Lucy Thirtle
Churchwardens	Dave Chamings (until April 2013) Penny Stewart (Vice-Chair)
Deanery Synod members	Alison Goodyer Patrick Taylor
Elected Members (6)	Andrea Fearon (until April 2013) Rachel Chamings Susie Sainsbury Evelyn Hiscock Colin Scott-Malden David Fowler Dave Chamings (from April 2013)
Curate	Rev. Trish Bancroft
Secretary	Emma Rivers (non-voting member)

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. :

Officers of the PCC

Vice Chair: Penny Stewart

Treasurer: Colin Scott-Malden

Secretary: Emma Rivers – Benefice Administrator (non-voting)

Safeguarding Officer : Emma Rivers

Electoral Roll Officer: Rachel Chamings

Certain tasks are delegated to sub-Committees (membership for 2013 only shown)

Standing Committee (statutory sub-Committee which must include Vicar, Churchwardens and minimum two reps). PCC reps elected in April 2013: Colin Scott-Malden, Patrick Taylor and Dave Chamings. In view of the size of the PCC, this committee didn't meet in 2013.

Other sub-committees were:

- **Fete Committee** Karen Parker (Chair); Dave Chamings; Simon Hiscock; Andy & Di Tooley, Marina Field, Jem Loxton, Rev.Lucy.
- **Benefice Outreach Group (covering parish of Kingsclere also)** Rev Trish Bancroft, Susie Sainsbury (AHwH), Georgie Selby (AHwH), Alison Goodyer (AHwH); David Goodfellow (K), Emma Rivers (K), Maggy Wallace (K) Jane Freeman (K)
- **Finance Committee** (Membership: Patrick Taylor (chairman), Colin Scott-Malden (Treasurer), Rev. Lucy Thirtle, Dave Chamings, David Fowler (until May), Penny Stewart (from May), Tom Sneyd (co-opted),

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.

Annual report of PCC

The full PCC met 5 times during the year (plus one very short meeting following the Annual Meeting to appoint officers), with an average 74% attendance. Most of its business is reflected in the following report.

One additional piece of business was the amendment of the PCC membership of the Ashford Hill Educational Trust. Replacing the Vicar and two churchwardens as ex-officio members, it was agreed that from now on, the PCC would nominate 3 representatives to the Trust, one of whom must be either the Vicar or a Churchwarden and two of whom must be PCC members.

Worship

Worship continued according to the usual monthly pattern with additional services at festivals. Café Church services were held. Unfortunately numbers volunteering to help set up and prepare for this service are sometimes limited which raises a questionmark over whether these services can remain viable, particularly once Rev Trish is no longer 'on site'.

The timing of the 2nd Sunday service at Headley was reviewed during the year. Opinions on the PCC were evenly split between reverting to 9.30 and keeping at 10.30. It was therefore agreed to leave it at 10.30, which at least has the benefit of uniformity with the services on all other Sundays.

A Commemoration of the Departed service was held in St Paul's in November. This was well attended and the tea and cakes provided beforehand were appreciated and gave a useful opportunity for pastoral conversations.

In addition to other well attended festival services, this year saw unprecedented numbers at the candlelit Christmas Carol service. This was in part due to the increased size of the Kingsclere Singers who come to support this service and whose family and friends like to attend too. Nevertheless, the ambience of St Paul's when candlelit and decorated with its angels is very popular.

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."**

Pursuing this aim falls in part to the Benefice Outreach Group, whose activities the PCC were glad to support during the year. See later report.

Early in the year, St Paul's was used for a short course led by members of the Outreach Group. Three concerts were held in St Paul's – Kingsclere Singers in May; Newbury Spring Festival one in May; in October we welcomed back former organist, Martin Thorne, his son Hedley and his nephews Simon & Sean Baggs for a reprise of a concert given by the same performers (minus Hedley) 23 years ago.

During the year, 3 baptisms, 5 weddings and 4 funerals were held in the two parish churches.

St Paul's was also used for a small wedding fair showcasing the various businesses forming the West Berkshire Wedding Community consortium.

As usual, we were pleased to welcome the children, staff and parents of Ashford Hill School for their Harvest, Christmas and Easter services.

Toward the end of the year it was agreed that we needed to draw attention to our two buildings by replacing existing rotting wooden sign boards with new smarter ones. Expenditure and design were approved and the first two were erected in time for Christmas with the second two awaiting faculty permission. Gemma Hughes had raised some helpful funds for these with sponsorship for running the London Marathon.

Report of the Benefice Outreach Group

A number of successful initiatives contributed to this year's Outreach programme. In the Spring a benefice-wide group, led by Maggy Wallace and Georgie Selby, met at Ashford Hill Church to study an Emmaus Course on *God the Father – of creation, of Jesus, of the Kingdom, of the Holy Spirit*. This provided the opportunity to explore a range of issues relating to faith and the Bible. In the autumn the Rev Trish and Maggy Wallace led an unusual course called 'Frontline' exploring some of the ways in which we can share our faith outside of 'formal' church settings. Susie and Tim Sainsbury kindly hosted this event. Café Church has also carried on at Ashford Hill Church throughout the year. The possibility of running Messy Church was also being researched.

Lay Ministry

Penny Stewart continued to hold singlehandedly the role of Churchwarden. (See her report further down). With two buildings and one in need of substantial work and ongoing maintenance, this situation is unsustainable for the long term. A churchwarden for the Ashford Hill end of the parish is urgently sought.

We were delighted to welcome Vanessa Martin as our new regular organist at Ashford Hill Church. Vanessa not only plays for services but has organ lessons at the church and practices several times a week. She has been a great asset to our 4th Sunday worship and contributed greatly to the sense of St Paul's being used during the week and her presence and musical accompaniment much appreciated by those sharing the building whether for daily prayer or to keep it clean. We were grateful for Evelyn Hiscock's continuing faithful service as organist at Headley as well as now taking responsibility for changing altar frontal and looking after the linen.

It was good to be able to augment the intercessions rota this year with Ali Goodyer and Dave Chamings joining Susie Sainsbury on a rota.

We were grateful to Jane Loveless for stepping up to coordinate the flower rota at Ashford Hill. Thanks to her, St Paul's has been decorated with flowers for all its services and looked especially splendid at festivals. Judy Merton continues with this role at Headley. Thanks to her and her team.

We continued to be grateful to Colin Grocock for his ongoing work in tidying and improving St Paul's Churchyard in a voluntary capacity. Also to Brad Murduck for

keeping the clock wound as well as attending to a number of other maintenance jobs around St Paul's. The present unsafe state of the staircase in the tower as highlighted in the quinquennial needs attention.

Towards the end of the year, the PCC supported Ali Goodyer's nomination as a Communion assistant since we were still struggling to have enough people to cover services. Existing Communion assistants, sidesmen, intercessors, readers continued faithful service through the year.

Stewardship of our resources

Buildings

- Regular reports were received from the Churchwardens on the state of the buildings.

St. Paul's, Ashford Hill

- The most significant work during the year was the lopping of the tall trees dividing the car park from the churchyard. This work, though expensive, proved to have been a wise decision when the unprecedented stormy winter of 2103/2014 followed.
- The outside doors to flower vestry and north porch were repainted in bright red. Again thanks to Colin Grocock for this service voluntarily undertaken.
- June Hiscock repaired and redesigned the Velcro panels on the baptism and wedding banners

St. Peter's, Headley

- A new bench in memory of Leslie Lewis was installed in the new section of the burial ground.
- The partition between the organ and vestry having been completed in 2012, discussions were had this year with regard to how this might be decorated – it was felt that something was needed to make it rather less plain. After discussion June Hiscock was asked to design a banner of St Peter to complement the banners of SS Peter and Paul in Ashford Hill church.
- We were grateful to Chris Lawrence for his continued work in keeping the churchyard looking neat and tidy.

Finance

- Regular reports were received from the Treasurer. The full financial report for the year appears at the end of this report.
- Once again we were grateful for the contribution made to income from the proceeds of the Parish Magazine. Our thanks go to Sandra & Michael Everitt for their hard work in producing a professional looking magazine with ever-increased content and loyal advertisers.

Reserves Policy

- It is PCC policy to maintain a Restricted Development and Fabric Fund which at the end of 2013 stood at £14,420 and a voluntarily Designated Floor Fund for St. Paul's which stood at £11394 to cover fabric repairs and emergency situations. There is also an unrestricted amount of £5,709, giving a combined total of £31,524.
- St. Peter's also benefits from its own restricted fabric fund of £16,120 thanks to the McSwiney bequest. This compares with £16,028 last year.
- It is our policy to invest our funds balances with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund.
- Our thanks go to Colin Scott-Malden for his excellent work on treasury activities.

Benefice Matters

The parish continues to enjoy good relations and collaborative relationships with the parish of Kingsclere. The Outreach group is a joint initiative with equal contributions from both parishes.

The churchwardens of both parishes meet regularly with the incumbent which keeps good lines of communication open and insight into the respective joys and challenges of each parish.

The Confirmation service had candidates from both parishes and was a joyful joint celebration.

This year, two Open Meetings were held for members of both parishes on the topical subjects of Equal Marriage and Assisted Dying.

There continues to be a fair bit of 'border crossing' for services, particularly on 4th Sundays.

Reports from Sub-Committees or other officers

Fete Sub Committee

Karen Parker had bravely agreed to take on the chairmanship of the Fete organising committee. With other new members recruited to the committee, her team organised a tremendously enjoyable and successful Fete on Headley Common in June, helped it has to be said by the glorious sunny weather. The hog roast and barn dance in the evening was an added attraction and helped boost funds. We were delighted that Karen was persuaded to take it on again for 2014 and arrangements were already being put in hand by the end of the year.

Rev Lucy Thirtle

Parish Magazine

The Magazine continues to flourish with ever more adverts and articles. Generally speaking we hear good reports from the readers. We hope this continues and thus provides a monetary contribution for the local churches. Thanks must go to all those involved - the printers, the volunteer distributors and of course, our valued advertisers and article contributors.

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. Mary Sneyd continues to ensure that the interests of Ashford Hill and Headley are kept in mind.

Whitchurch Deanery Synod Report

Whitchurch Deanery Synod met three times during 2013. Reports on Deanery finance, which included the Parish Share updates, were given at each meeting. The Synod also shared matters for praise from the parishes. Reports on meetings of Diocesan Synod were also included.

Throughout the year Synod was given reports on our link with Mityana. Most schools in the Deanery are now linked with a school in Mityana. A visit which included pupils from Testbourne School and adults to help with finishing off teachers' accommodation had been made.

In February the Synod had a visit from the Diocesan Youth and Children's Advisors.

In June the Revd Dodie Marsden reported in more length on the recent visit to Mityana. This was the 10th year of visiting and 14 trips had been made; she also gave a report on the setting up of the Mityana Trust.

The meeting in November included the outcome of the Diocesan conference and the strategic principles were introduced:

- Growing authentic disciples
- Re-imagining the Church
- Being agents of social transformation and
- Belonging together in Christ, practicing sacrificial living and good stewardship of all that God has entrusted us;

Elections for the next triennium of the Synod will take place at APCMs this year.

Pauline Wooster, Secretary to Synod

This report was adopted by the PCC at its meeting on 11 March 2014

Signed:

Lucy Thirle

(Chair)