**Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements**

**The Parochial Church Council of**

**St Mary the Virgin, Hartfield**

**For the year ended 31 December 2020**

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St. Mary the Virgin, Hartfield

*Incumbent*: Rev’d Julie Sear

Independent examiner: Mrs Sophia Kavanagh, Beulah, Chuck Hatch, Hartfield, East Sussex, TN7 4EX

Bankers: HSBC, 105 Mount Pleasant, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1QP

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**Parochial Church Council of St. Mary the Virgin, Hartfield**

**Trustees Annual Report for 2020**

Structure, governance and management

The parish is a charity, but is excepted from registering with the Charity Commission within the

meaning of the Charities Act 2011.

During the year the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

*Ex Officio members*

Incumbent: The Rev’d Julie Sear (member of Diocesan Synod)

Wardens: Mrs Andrea McGlew

Mrs Linda Graham

*Elected Members* Mrs Tia Barham

Mrs Jen Black

Mr Ian Burns (Secretary)

Mr John Cope

Mrs Emma Fulham

Mr Rob McGlew

Mr Richard Rowberry

*Deanery Synod* Mrs Kathy Green

Mr Timothy Jackson (Treasurer and Diocesan Synod member)

Mrs Gill Philcox

Membership of the PCC is determined under the Church Representation Rules and consists of

certain ex-officio members (the incumbent/priest-in-charge, curate, lay readers licensed to

officiate in the church), the churchwardens and members of the Deanery, Diocesan or General

Synods and 7 members of the church who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

(APCM). Members are warmly encouraged to stand for election to the PCC and we try to ensure a

balance of skills and experience where possible.

Objectives and Activities

* In early 2013, the PCC adopted a formal Vision statement. The statement adopted was

**“Our Vision is to build a dynamic, vibrant church sharing Christ's**

**love with people of all ages in our 21st Century rural community.”**

This Vision has been regularly communicated to the congregation and to the wider

community in Hartfield and continues to be central to the activities of the congregation.

* Based on the mission statement, a Mission Action Plan (“MAP”) was reviewed in 2018.

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**2020 MAP Achievements and performance**

**January-March 2020**

2020 began with a determination to continue to build on the work with young people and their families as a priority area and a focus for activities. Several children who had been attending all age worship services with their parents for the past few years were now ready to move on to Big Breakfast, led by a dedicated team and using a new space, the mezzanine room in the belfry, while Sunday Discoverers for ages 5-9 continued to meet at the back of the church during services, supervised by parents and volunteers. The weekly HYPE open access youth club for ages 11+ on Monday evenings in the village hall, and ‘Hot Potato’ sessions in the church once a month continued with leadership from members of the congregation and was attended by a good turnout of young people who enjoyed cooking, games, craft, music and socialising.

A new, monthly, afternoon service, Together@4, aimed at teenagers, had been launched in October 2019 and also took place on the third Sundays in November 2019 and January 2020 with refreshments, guest speakers on suitable topics and worship songs. The service showed great promise.

Other areas identified in the 2018-19 MAP:

* Prayer in the life of the church: Small groups continued to meet on a weekly basis to study and pray, using material based on Dave Smith’s second book on Ephesians “Transformed Living”. A series of Lent Reflections was held in church until the announcement of lockdown in March. The monthly prayer breakfast continued to meet to pray for the needs of our church family and community.
* Pastoral care: Planning for a new afternoon café to take place at St Mary’s on alternate Thursdays had begun in the autumn of 2019 with involvement from the Parish Council and Action in Rural Sussex, who offered a certain amount of grant funding to purchase items such as tablecloths and aprons. It was hoped to draw in some of the parents before and after picking up children from the school, as well as elderly people living in and around Hartfield. The café was launched in January and started well, with good support from a team of bakers and waitresses.

**Late March-December 2020**

The last service to take place in the church building before lockdown was on Mothering Sunday (March 22nd) and was attended by only a few, but flowers were distributed to as many church members as possible.

Following the announcement by the Prime Minister of lockdown on Monday 23rd March, and the subsequent instructions from the Diocese, it was clear that we would not be able to hold services in the church for some time to come. The Rector immediately embraced the challenge of recording services that could be viewed online, and the first of these was made available on Sunday, March 29th. Online services continued to be available throughout the year alongside services in church when this was permitted.

The church opened again on July 19th. A small team carried out an intensive risk assessment and instructions regarding the wearing of masks, social distancing and hand sanitising were published as guidance for those feeling able to return to worshipping in church. Places needed to be booked in advance by sending an email to a dedicated email address. The team organised seating arrangements and welcoming. Services in church with these arrangements in place continued until the second lockdown in November.

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Services throughout November were online only, but the church was open for private prayer on Sundays at 9:30am and on Wednesdays at 10:30am. Popular services such as Remembrance Day and Advent Carols could not take place, but online versions were beautifully put together and a great blessing. An online Advent Calendar was also much appreciated.

The work put in to this online ministry by the Rector and her husband (who is employed as the Rector’s Assistant) has become a vital part of the spiritual life of our congregation, particularly for those members who are self-isolating.

The Church opened again in December, and services resumed much as before, with the addition of live music led by a small socially distanced choir and pianist. We were also able to hold services

in church at midnight on Christmas Eve and at 9:30am on Christmas morning.

A group met in the church for private prayer on Wednesday mornings up until the end of November. A member of the PCC has also kept faithfully in touch with small group members by email throughout the pandemic, sending a weekly inspirational message with Bible verses for the coming week. This has been a real blessing for all the recipients.

One really positive outcome of the pandemic has been the involvement of a number of people, not all church members, who have wanted to make a contribution to the community. In December they met in church, socially distanced, to assemble over 100 gift bags which were distributed to people throughout the parish. More substantial hampers were also given to some of our struggling families. These were all very much appreciated, and we have received many messages of thanks from the recipients. A further distribution of gift bags is planned for the spring.

**January -March 2021**

With the help of the Youth worker from Frant, the Rector set up Connect@6 to enable some of our young people to link up by zoom on Monday evenings. The hope is to develop this group into Forest Church.

**St Mary the Virgin School**

During the Pandemic the church and school have kept up strong links with Collective Worship and Festivals. Rev Julie filmed the school for the Christmas Service and has kept up regular weekly links with the staff and pupils.

**Church attendance**

There are 102 (2020: 104) parishioners on the church electoral roll, 17% (2020: 17%) of whom

are not resident within the parish. The average weekly attendance, counted during October, was

37 (2018: 50) adults and 9 (2018:16) under 16 years of age. In 2019, the typical size of a Sunday

congregation was somewhat less than that in 2018. However the numbers attending increased

significantly at the time of major festivals. In addition, during school term time there is normally

a weekly school service in the church with a typical attendance of 100 children and 10 adults.

**Review of the year**

* The full PCC met only once – via Zoom (2019: five times) during the year due to the pandemic, with an 85% attendance (2019: 80%). The Standing Committee met more frequently and a report of their deliberations was reported to the full PCC by email and discussed where necessary.
* With our normal pattern of services on hold because of the pandemic, the Rector and PCC

worked hard to ensure that an online service was available every Sunday and that the church was open for either a socially distanced service for those who booked in advance, or for private prayer during lockdown.

* The teams which were set up in 2019 to carry out all the various tasks that need to be covered at Sunday morning services were not able to function during the majority of 2020. Team leaders did however remain in contact with their team members and encouraged them to stay in touch with one another and with the wider community and to ensure that any needs were met, and that all were aware of the online services

Although we were unable to continue to offer hospitality at the new Church Street Community Cafe after lockdown, shortly before Christmas we were able to deliver bags of goodies to the elderly with a card and prepare some hampers for struggling families.

* Plans to create a children's area and storage for chairs and kneelers in the south west corner of the nave have had to go on hold for the time being.
* The Lychgate Cottage has remained occupied throughout the year, providing a useful source of income at a time when congregational giving was reduced.

**Deanery and Diocesan Synod**

Three members of the PCC and the incumbent sit on the Deanery Synod. In addition, one member

of the PCC and the incumbent also sit on the Diocesan Synod. As a result the PCC has important

links to other parishes in the deanery, to the diocese and the wider structure of Church.

**Financial Review**

The total receipts received by the Hartfield PCC were £81,052 (2019: £137,817) and are detailed in the Financial Statements. There was a major fund-raising programme in 2018 to implement the Heart For The Community Project; the final income and expenditure related to this scheme are reflected in the 2020 Financial Statements and amounted to less than £5,000. Thank you to all that have given to the church in the past year.

The planned giving through the Parish Giving Scheme including Gift Aid recovered decreased by

9.0% over 2019 to £28,209 (2019: £30,995).

Planned giving through banker’s orders increased by 2.7% over 2019 to £7,115 (2019: £6,930).

Our unrestricted total voluntary receipts increased by 2.6% over 2019 to £66,868 (2019:

£65,147).

Income relating to the Heart For The Community Projected amounted to £4,448 (2019: £17,794).

Other sources of finance were investment income of £8,581 (2019: £15,159) and £1,368 (2019:

£2,040) from church activities.

Total expenditure on the Heart For the Community Project in 2020 was £4,325 (2019:

£62,579).

The largest unrestricted expenditure of the PCC was £35,699 (2019: £33,659) paid to the

Diocese. The Diocesan Parish Share covers the stipend and pension costs of the clergy, the

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housing costs of the Rector, and also a sum for diocesan central costs, clergy training and a

contribution to national church funds. It should be noted that the United Benefice is meeting

104% (2019: 102%) of the diocesan parish contribution as set by the Deanery and this covers all

the costs allocated to this church by the diocese. St Mary’s meets 50% of the United Benefice’s

parish contribution. It is also important to note that nearly 80% of the total paid relates directly

to the costs of this parish, the remainder being the shared costs of the Christian family throughout the whole Church of England.

During 2019 the PCC’s expenditure to support children’s, youth and family work was £3,887

(2019: £4,169).

In 2020, St Mary’s donated £3,721 (2019: £5,245 primarily to Toilet Twinning) to those in need within the parish due to the impact of Covid-19.

**Risk Management**

The PCC consider that the principal risks and uncertainties are:

The major new risk was the impact of Covid-19, in terms of caring for the local community and the members of the congregation, the acts of worship and the impact on the PCC’s income. Steps were taken together with the civil parish council and volunteers to help support those in need as a result of the pandemic. Services took place on-line and when allowed in church with appropriate risk mitigation measures. The PCC was also able to help people within the community sue to donations that the PCC received for this purpose.

The need to fund unexpected costs associated with the church's listed buildings such as those arising from the failure of the church's heating system in January 2018.

An unexpected fall in income, particularly given the dependence of the church on a limited number of major regular donors which impacted receipts in 2019 and continues to do so.

How to provide facilities for children's and youth activities associated with the

church.

The requirement to find volunteers and staff with the appropriate skills, time and

commitment to support the ministry of the congregation.

Due to the nature of the St Mary's vision, there is an above average interaction with vulnerable people.

Organisations outside the control of Hartfield PCC could have a direct and material impact on

St Mary the Virgin, Hartfield. Two primary examples of such bodies are Holy Trinity, Coleman's

Hatch, which is the other church in the joint benefice and St Mary the Virgin Church of England

Aided Primary School.

The PCC seeks to manage these risks and uncertainties by regularly reviewing its MAP and its plans for the use of the church buildings. In 2019, the Standing Committee has also begun to develop a ten year plan for the parish which in due course it was intended to present to the PCC for discussion. However this was put on hold in 2020 due to the exception circumstances arising from the pandemic.

The church maintains its properties to a high standard and carries out the priority items of a

quinquennial review in a timely manner.

There is a continuing programme which emphasises God's generosity to the congregation and the

need for the congregation to respond to that generosity in their own giving through time, talents and money. The PCC also proactively seeks grants to support its activities. With regard to finding

volunteers, the Standing Committee has put in place succession planning and training programmes

within the congregation.

Due to the above average exposure to vulnerable people, St Mary's follows diocesan guidance on

these matters, the PCC receives and discusses regular reports and utilises the specialist skills and

knowledge of people within the congregation.

**Reserves Policy**

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on the general unrestricted funds (excluding property),

which equates to £20,000 as contingency against unforeseen situations. The closing balance on

the General Fund Monetary Assets was £7,663 (31 December 2019: £12,798).

In total, there are Monetary Assets and Investments at valuation of £93,140 (31 December 2019: £82,765).

It is PCC policy to invest funds balances with the CBF Church of England deposit fund and other

CBF Church of England funds managed by CCLA.

**Approved** by the PCC and signed on their behalf by

Reverend Julie Sear, PCC Chairman:

?? April 2021

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