

St Nicholas with St Mary,
Strood

ANNUAL REPORT
and
ACCOUNTS
For 2020

**St. Nicholas with St. Mary Strood
ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

Parochial Name: St. Nicholas with St. Mary, Strood
Postal Address: High Street, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4TR
Correspondence Address: The Vicar
18 Honeypot Close, Strood, Rochester, Kent
ME2 3DU

Parochial Church Council Members for 2020

<i>Rev. David Green</i>	<i>(Chairman)</i>
<i>Elaine Ford</i>	<i>(Church Warden)</i>
<i>Ken Reynolds</i>	<i>(Assistant Church Warden)</i>

<i>Margaret James</i>	<i>(From APCM 2018 for three years)</i>
<i>Robert Foxwell</i>	<i>(From APCM 2019 for three years)</i>
<i>Andrew Vince</i>	<i>(From APCM 2018 for three years)</i>
<i>Sarah Wilkinson</i>	<i>(From APCM 2018 for three years , Deanery Synod Representative from 2020)</i>

<i>Ube Casely-Hayford</i>	<i>(From APCM 2019 for three years)</i>
<i>Will Childs</i>	<i>(From APCM 2020 for two years, Deanery Synod representative from 2020)</i>

<i>Robert James</i>	<i>(From APCM 2020 for three years)</i>
<i>Sue Marrable</i>	<i>(From APCM 2020 for three years)</i>

<i>Jeff Whiteley</i>	<i>(stood down September 2020)</i>
<i>Andrew Living</i>	<i>(stood down September 2020)</i>

Number on Electoral Roll: 97
Independent Examiner: Mr G Viggers
Bankers: Barclays Bank, Strood
Registered charity no.: 1138948

AIMS AND PURPOSES

St Nicholas Church, Strood is a place of worship.

We at St. Nicholas with St. Mary seek to fulfil our calling as followers of Jesus Christ. Our primary object is the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The Parochial Church Council cooperates with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. We do this in many and varied ways, as the reports below will illustrate. In these ways we witness to the love of God shown to us in our lives and would draw others also into the life of discipleship. This witness is not simply a matter of words, but, includes practical service to one another and to the wider world, starting from the knowledge that all are loved by God and precious in His sight. We believe that this journey of faith is important for others to find. We also believe that Jesus is in our midst and therefore we seek to serve one another and the Jesus within and amongst us.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

We continue to develop a vision of 'welcome'.

In pursuance of this mission during the year we have:

1. Continued to look at the facilities of the church buildings and to move forward in improving them for future and current users.
2. Continued to make preparations for enabling the Worship area of the church be made more available for the onward mission of the church.
3. The smart screen has proved invaluable for groups using the vestry. It also continues to be important to families attending our 10.30am Service on Sundays, enabling them to have that option of seeing the service on the screen whilst their children play with the toys provided. This is part of our vision of opening up the church to all age-groups. The effects of the Covid 19 pandemic has greatly affected the use of this vestry and, indeed, all the halls.
4. During this pandemic we have maintained contact with the schools in the Parish via recorded assemblies and worship time, which will be a good preparation for when we finally are able to visit the schools. We have provided the schools with visual material that they can use in the classrooms.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

At the centre of our church life is the Sunday services. Unfortunately for most of the year we have not been able to meet for worship as a result of Covid 19 restrictions, although we did open the church for some time after the first lockdown. When we were in lockdown we were able to live-stream the Sunday Service from the church, as we had the forethought previously to install Wi-Fi in church and halls. We were also able during the year to have our own Sunday reflections and sermons put onto Youtube for the benefit of those with the technology. We set up an email group of over 70 people, who regularly received Digests from the Diocese and other links to material to help their spiritual life during the pandemic.

We were also active in keeping in touch with those who were not online. The weekly attendance below is based on the opening of the church between lockdowns. Baptisms have had to be postponed due to the restriction of numbers of those attending.

When considering our achievements and the mission of the church we would like to thank particularly The Rev Sue Vallente-Kerr, our Pioneer Minister, for her vision and active service, her initiative and technical help, and her spiritual wisdom; to Sue Marrable, our Parish Administrator, for her tireless and efficient work in maintaining and increasing the smooth running of the church, and for her technical expertise; to Ken Reynolds and Elaine Ford as once again being superb Church Wardens, with Ken also leading our music; to all the members of the PCC Standing Committee,

who have met on a weekly basis during this difficult time to make sure we are continuing to move forward into the future; and to our Financial Analyst, Sue Davis, who keeps us on track superbly with our finances and also continues to provide us with valuable advice in so many ways.

Average weekly attendance: 40

Baptisms: 4

Confirmations: 0

Reaffirmation of Faith: 0

Financial Review

During the year, PCC general income increased by £234,677 (2020 £318,745, 2019 £84,068) mostly due to a legacy of £263,000 a reduction in fees of £3,477, a decrease of hall rental income of £12,122 and a decrease in car park income of £5,581.

General expenditure increased by £47,931 (2020 £132,342, 2019 £84,611) mostly due to an increase in parish offer of £8,060, an increase in away giving of £1,795 and an increase in repairs of £42,277.

Total cash and balances held in bank accounts at the end of 2020 stood at £234,151 (2019 £40,157).

It is the policy of the PCC to spend reserves under its stewardship to deliver its vision for the future and the PCC continues to discuss the best ways to use its funds to meet God's purpose for the parish of Strood and the wider community.

Of the total cash resources of £234,151 at the end of 2020, £25,536 (2019 £22,665) was held in funds designated for the repair of the church, the installation of a lift to the upper hall and the music fund. £7,293 (2019 £4,068) was held in various restricted funds.

This year the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in significantly reducing income from hall rental, car park and fundraising events by 52% on 2019 levels. Fortunately, a large legacy has helped to cushion the impact of the pandemic.

We thank God that despite the difficult economic climate, St Nicholas is managing to make ends meet and has been able to make significant improvements to the church and grounds in recent years as a result of the reserves entrusted to it. We pray for guidance in directing resources to best serve His purpose.

Policy Statements

Liquidity

It is the policy of the PCC to generally maintain unrestricted funds, which are the free reserves of the charity, at a level which equates to approximately three months unrestricted expenditure. This provides sufficient funds to cover management, administration and support costs, and to respond to emergency expenditure and applications for grants that arise from time to time.

Risk Management

The church insurance is reviewed on a regular basis.

Cheques are signed by two signatories.

A child protection policy is in place.

Any potential hazards which come to the PCC's attention are dealt with as soon as possible.

Safeguarding

At the first meeting of a new PCC the House of Bishops' 'Promoting a Safer Church: Safeguarding Policy Statement' is read out and formally adopted by the PCC. A Parish Safeguarding Officer is appointed and details of those to contact if there are any concerns are displayed in church.

The PCC adopts the Safeguarding Policy of the Church of England.

AWAY GIVING

We gave to nine charities in 2020. They were as follows:

USPG, Poverty and Hope, The Children's Society, The Canterbury Oast House Trust, Mission Aviation Fellowship, Crisis, Medway Night Shelter, Demelza Hospice and Christian Aid.

2020 Due to the Pandemic the majority of groups were unable to meet after March.

BEREAVEMENT AND PASTORAL GROUP

This group meets six or seven times per year. Members of the group visit those people who have been bereaved during the year and invite them along to the annual Memorial Service, which takes place in March/April. The group also takes on the role of considering any in the congregation who particularly need pastoral help. The group met during the first few months of the year, but were not able to meet after Covid 19 emerged. The PCC Standing Committee, meeting on a weekly basis during the crisis, took over the pastoral roll of the group and liaises with the group members if needed. The visiting of bereaved relatives had to cease when the pandemic took hold.

COFFEE SHOP

This took place in the lower hall of the church every Saturday morning, 10.00am – 12.00noon until the first Lockdown in March 2020. Due to the restrictions it was unable to be held for the rest of 2020.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORK

See Fresh Expressions.

CHIT CHAT GROUP

This informal group met monthly on a Tuesday afternoon but was unable to do so after the first Lockdown in March 2020.

DEANERY SYNOD

There were two meetings of the Strood Deanery Synod in 2020. The first took place at All Saints Church, All Hallows on 10th March, where the main item on the agenda was a presentation from The Rev Stephen Gwilt, giving an update on all that was happening in the Parish, including building reordering plans. The second meeting took place by Zoom on 25th November, during the week in which Bishop Simon was visiting Strood Deanery. The main item on the agenda was a talk by Bishop Simon on the subject of 'Church in a Post-Pandemic World.'

DROP-IN CENTRE

The Strood Drop-in Centre continued to fulfil a great need in our community up till the first Lockdown in March 2020. Due to restrictions it was not possible to operate Drop-in for the rest of the year. During the year the Leader /Coordinator resigned due to moving out of the area.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Number of people living within the parish	52
Number of people living outside the parish	45
Number of women	69
Number of men	28
 Total	 97

FABRIC REPORT

If 2019 was a relatively quiet year, then 2020 could be described as silence. The pandemic has brought a halt to many of our church services and activities. However, we have managed to make progress in several projects in the church. For the reordering of the church, we have met with architects, contractors and consultants on various matters and plans are now moving forward. There are still some issues to be finalised as we wish to include updated technology. During the year, we took the opportunity to replace the unpredictable and inefficient church boiler. Later in the year we also replaced the lower hall boiler with a more powerful unit which has enabled us to provide a new heating system for the upper hall.

Discussions on the architectural lighting project for the church continued and were finally agreed with the work starting in February 2021 for completion around Easter.

We have also managed to finalise the plans for a fire alarm system. After a few delays, this work should also take place in early 2021.

FRESH EXPRESSIONS

The last year has certainly been a challenge for us all , however, the pandemic has opened up opportunities for us to be a little more creative in our Outreach using social media and Zoom combining with people from the Parish of Frindsbury.

We have held monthly Zoom meetings gathering families of all ages together virtually for 40 mins of games, activities, stories and prayer. In the in-between times “worship bags” have been produced and Covid safely delivered with activities for families to engage with before the next meeting.

We have also been able to hold special festival events such as a Christingle and Crib service.

Contact with schools has also had to change and clergy have been recording assemblies for the schools within the Parish to use and send out to pupils studying at home. Special assemblies on festivals and wellbeing have also been produced.

During the Christmas Period we worked with the Parish of Frindsbury in providing food hampers for those families most in need in Strood. We were able to support 50 families thanks to the generosity of the congregations here and St Gabriel’s Church Kings Hill . Several families who have struggled in the pandemic have been supported. This has been an amazing act of Christian witness that those families are extremely grateful for.

HALL GROUP

The Church has two halls and the Swain vestry for the use of both the congregation and outside groups, for social and fund-raising events. After March 2020 the majority of groups were unable to meet due to the restrictions. Only the Playgroup, AA and GA groups were able to continue on a regular basis after the first Lockdown. The Home Schooling

group met, when it was able to, following guidance for schools. Foodbank was able to continue until the end of April but then moved it’s operation to a telephone and home delivery service.

The Upper Hall is used by the Playgroup on five mornings and four afternoons a week. In the evenings and weekends the hall is used by the Rainbows, Gambler’s Anonymous group, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Groups using the Lower Hall in the day have included a Home-Schooling group, Medway Foodbank, Drop-in Centre, Young at Heart Club and a Computer class for disabled people. In the evenings the groups included Alcoholics

Anonymous, Strood Fellowship, a Karate group, Strood Gardening Club, Friends of Medway Archives, and an Art group. A Coffee Shop is held every Saturday morning. The hall is also used as one of the venues for the Medway Night Shelter during its first phase in January-February.

The Swain Vestry is used by an IT help session, the Luxor group, Chit Chat Club, Floral Art group, Compassionate Friends and Yoga classes. It is also used for Christian Meditation, PCC meetings, occasional committee meetings, and by the Choir on Sundays.

Karate group and the Computer group stopped using the hall during 2020 but a group supporting adults with Autism and another Art group were due to begin sessions.

HOME GROUPS

Homegroup at 42 Jersey Road

The homegroup meets on the second Monday of each month at 8.00pm to study a particular book of the Bible. We met in January and February in 2020, but had to cease meeting from March, due to the pandemic.

Christian Meditation Group

Christian Meditation is a form of contemplative prayer and the aim is to allow God's mysterious and silent presence within us to become more and more not only a reality but the reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we do, everything we are. We come to this through the saying of a mantra, or prayer word, 'maranatha', an Aramaic word and a very early Christian prayer. The meaning of the word is 'Come, Lord'. There is an introductory reading, followed by meditation for thirty minutes. The group met, on Friday mornings, until March 2020. The group has kept in contact since then via material supplied by the World Community for Christian Meditation.

MAGAZINE GROUP

The magazine editorial group, comprising of five people, met once during the year, to discuss the magazine. We continued to produce the magazine, posting it to people when hand delivery was not possible.

MUSIC REPORT

After the first few weeks of 2020, our services have been very much restricted and the contribution of the choir has similarly been very limited. While the church was open for services, the choir led the singing of the hymns as congregational singing was not allowed. We did manage to have a service of readings and carols, again with choir singing the carols. During one period of church closure some of the choir sang for the streamed services but as we were forced to limit the number of people involved in the streaming, music was limited to organ accompaniment only.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank June Cornwell and Di Leonard for their valued long service to the choir. June has moved into a care home and Di will be moving near to her family in Sittingbourne. Hopefully, we will be able to resume a more normal pattern of services with choral and congregational singing later in 2021. I am sure we are all waiting for that time.

Ken Reynolds

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The full Council has met twice physically and once by Zoom during 2020. The APCM was unable to be held until September. The Standing Committee met weekly via Zoom and the rest of the PCC were consulted when necessary via email. At the start of 2020 there were three ex-officio members of the Council and twelve elected members. Average attendance at meetings was 80%. Sue Vallente-Kerr, the Pioneer Minister, attended two meetings.

At the first meeting after the APCM, in October 2020, Sue Marrable was appointed as Secretary to the PCC. Ube Casely-Hayford was also appointed as Safeguarding Officer and The PCC accepted the Safeguarding Statements of the Church of England.

Rev David Green, Jeff Whiteley, Elaine Ford, David Acott, Ken Reynolds, Sarah Wilkinson, Sue Marrable and Sue Davis (Financial Advisor) were appointed to form the Standing Committee.

Financial reports prepared by Sue Davis, our financial advisor, were considered and approved at each meeting.

SOCIAL AND GENERAL FUND-RAISING GROUP

Aims:

To provide the social links within our Church and to extend these to the local community.

To encourage and involve the congregation to be part of fund-raising events of our Church.

Objectives:

SOCIAL

To try to target all ages within our Church and community.

FUNDRAISING

To use a variety of events to encourage wide participation and interest.

In 2020 we held a jumble sale, boot fair and book sale before restrictions ruled out such events.

During Lent Smarties tubes were given out to be returned filled with money at Easter, these helped support our charities. They were returned when attendance at church was possible.

STANDING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Aims:

To meet prior to each PCC meeting and to think through the Agenda for that meeting, making any necessary recommendations to the PCC. The Committee also makes interim decisions for the PCC when that is appropriate.

To work with the Accounts Adviser, who prepares the accounts for us and gives us advice as to our financial position.

The Standing Committee has met weekly via Zoom during 2020 since the first Lockdown in March.

STROOD FELLOWSHIP

The Strood Fellowship met monthly until March 2020.

WORSHIP GROUP

The Worship Group met regularly throughout the year. Its aim is to be a forum for discussion on every aspect of worship in our church. This includes consideration of the services we provide now, reviewing those which have taken place since the group last met and also looking ahead, putting forward ideas for the future. The group is useful also in discussing any feedback about services from the congregation. From March, the Standing Committee of the PCC, meeting on a weekly basis, has taken over the agenda of this group in adapting the provision of worship to this continually changing environment dominated by Covid 19.

Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of St Nicholas with St Mary, Strood

This Report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2020, which are set out in this annual report, is in respect of an examination carried out under Regulation 3(3) of the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider the audit requirement of Regulation 3(3) of section 144(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the Regulations.

Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 edition, issued by the Finance Division of the Archbishops' Council. That examination includes review of the accounting record kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations, have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Date: 21 April 2021

Mr Gordon Viggers ACA
74 Woodstock Road
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME10 4HN

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST NICHOLAS WITH ST MARY, STROOD

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2020 £	TOTAL FUNDS 2019 £
Incoming resources							
<i>Voluntary income</i>	2a	289,377	0	2,727	0	292,104	31,485
<i>Activities for generating funds</i>	2b	22,578	0	0	0	22,578	45,695
<i>Income from investments</i>	2c	2,053	58	748	0	2,859	2,808
<i>Church activities</i>	2d	1,399	0	0	0	1,399	4,868
<i>Other income</i>	2e	3,338	431	0	0	3,769	0
Total		318,745	489	3,475	0	322,709	84,856
Resources expended							
<i>Church activities</i>	3a	132,427	527	250	0	133,204	84,605
<i>Raising funds</i>	3b	115	0	0	0	115	449
<i>Other resources expended</i>	3c	0	0	0	0	0	312
Total		132,542	527	250	0	133,319	85,366
<i>Gains/(losses) on investment assets</i>	6		4,051		2,265	6,316	14,468
Net income/(expenditure)		186,203	4,013	3,225	2,265	195,706	13,958
Transfers between funds - transfers in		0	3,340	0	0	3,340	3,340
Transfers between funds - transfers out		(3,340)	0	0	0	(3,340)	(3,340)
<i>Gains/(losses) on revaluation of fixed assets</i>		0	0	0	0	0	0
Other recognised gains/losses		0	0	0	0	0	0
Net movement in funds		182,863	7,353	3,225	2,265	195,706	13,958
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward at 1 January 2020		20,107	81,775	4,068	32,901	138,851	124,893
Total funds carried forward at 31 December 2020		202,970	89,128	7,293	35,166	334,557	138,851

Gordon Viggers FCA
74 Woodstock Road
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME10 4HN
Tel: 01795 477774
Email: gordon.viggers@yahoo.co.uk

21 April 2021

Dear Sue

St Nicholas with St Mary, Strood – Year ended 31 December 2020

I am pleased to confirm that I have now completed my work in connection with the independent examination of the PCC Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020.

I have no comments to raise on the accounts themselves but, as noted during the examination in relation to the significant balance on bank current account, I would recommend that consideration be given to utilizing investment/deposit opportunities to optimize income and reduce credit exposure below the £85,000 limit on the protection of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Finally, I enclose a note of my fees for your kind attention in due course.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Viggers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gordon Viggers

Gordon Viggers FCA
74 Woodstock Road
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME10 4HN
Tel: 01795 477774
Email: gordon.viggers@yahoo.co.uk

To the PCC
St Nicholas with St Mary
High Street
Strood
Kent

INVOICE

Dated 21 April 2021

Fee for carrying out an independent examination of the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Total Due.....£600.00

Please make cheque payable to LJ Viggers
Or by bank transfer to:

Sort Code: 11-07-02
Account Number: 00429971