

**St Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Almondsbury, BS32 4DT**

**Annual Report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council  
and the activities of the parish generally for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.**

**Correspondence address:** The Vicarage, 3 Sundays Hill, Almondsbury, BS32 4DS

PCC Members:

Rev Philip Rowe	Tim Jefferis (Chair & Churchwarden)	Pam van Rossum (Churchwarden)	
Rev Ruan Crew	Margaret Roberts (Lay Minister)	Paul van Rossum (Lay	
Minister & Treasurer)	Jackie Jones (Lay Minister)	Michael Kirby	Alison Rowe
	Bob Sharp	John Ingle	Sue Hewson
	Liz Tierney	Damian Watts	David
Thomas	Celia Madle (Secretary)		

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The Parish of St Mary's, Almondsbury, is part of the Benefice of Almondsbury and Olveston with Aust, of which the Reverend Philip W Rowe is Incumbent.

The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure. The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules and is from those on the Electoral Roll of the Parish. The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission (registration number 1131407).

**Vicar's Introduction.**

It is my pleasure to introduce the Annual Report and Accounts of Almondsbury PCC.

The primary objective of all PCCs is the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we seek to do this by our Vision Statement of 'Creating a community of wholeness, with Christ at the centre' and our Mission Statement 'To know God, to build up each other as Christians, and to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord to our neighbours'.

The way we will achieve this is to use our gifts in the service of Christ and others. I am grateful for all those who have been doing this faithfully over the last year, often with a spirit of sacrifice and sometimes only seen by God. This has been a good year when God has blest our work. I am confident that we will continue to be a Church where we encourage each other to be and to do all that God calls us to.

This spirit in St Mary's has been shown in the way we have adapted to the new pattern of Sunday services. This diversification of style of worship which has brought new folk to worship regularly in the Church building has depended on the generosity of spirit of the congregation. In particular I have been heartened how the evitable teething problems were met with tolerance and understanding. Over the forthcoming year the PCC will be considering how God is calling us to continue to build Christ's Kingdom here.

So I thank each one of you for your prayers and work in the mission of God through St Mary's. Without these volunteers we would be hugely diminished and their dedication is a crucial part of our life. I look forward very much to continuing, through God's grace, to serve with you in the years ahead.

With my prayers,

*Philip*

The Worship and Mission Team have sought to support Philip in his role as Church Leader as we all seek to fulfil St Mary's mission statement: *To know God, build each other up as Christians and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord to our neighbours.*

The W&M team encompasses 12 members of the congregation from each of the 3 services and it is in a good position to be able to represent the whole worshipping community. We have met 6 times throughout the year to discuss services, teaching, outreach, prayer activities, missionary support and outward giving and staffing.

## Services

The year has seen a new arrangement of services as Philip and the team have tried to find the best solution to meeting the needs of the whole church which included bringing the Breakfast Club into the main community of the church and providing the same style of service at the given time each week hence ensuring continuity.

There were concerns about finding enough priests, time to prepare and clear up after a service, providing an appropriate time for those with young families and providing a social space.

The arrangement of services below takes affect from March and will be reviewed again in June. It has been encouraging that the letters sent in, regarding the pattern of services have shown a generosity of spirit which wished the new All Age service well and acknowledged the difficulty in working out a pattern of delivery to suit everyone.

The letters indicated good support for each of the three styles of worship and an appreciation of the consistent delivery of each service each week at a regular time. They recognised that it was good to have a broad range and to accommodate the different styles of worship. The service pattern is therefore:

8am Holy Communion which is well supported with a regular and committed congregation who value greatly this quiet meditative service.

9.15am (formerly 9am) Choral which is benefiting from a greater continuity of priests (David Bone attends on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday) and a committed choir.

10.45am (formerly 10.30am) All Age which is bedding down with an established core of families and singles and with people of all ages. There is a variety of different inputs, new songs being taught and a variety of styles in the teaching.

Sunday	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
8am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion (BCP)
9. 15 am Choral	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Communion
10.45 am	All-age	All-age Holy Communion	All-age	All-age	All-age

## Teaching and outreach

**Alpha** concluded well and a **Christianity Explored course** is available at present. This will stop for the Lent groups. There are 5 **Lent groups** running on behalf of Almondsbury and another 8 running across Severnside, for 5 weeks. They will either study a course, put together by Ruan, 'Can we trust the Bible?' or the York Course 'Rich inheritance'. St Mary's Olveston are also putting on Lent related films. The **book for the term** 'Lent for Everyone- Matthew' by Tom Wright, which involves reading a chapter of Matthew each weekday during Lent will be promoted in the services. Two books are made available for sale each term and have sold well, particularly 'Unlocking the Bible' by David Pawson. There was also a bookstall from Wesley Owen at the Toy and Gift Service.

3 people are on the Diocesan course **Exploring Christianity** and one on the **Growing Leaders** course. 5 people will be confirmed at the end of March in Shirehampton and currently attend a

**Confirmation class** at the Vicarage on Sundays. Philip will resume home visits rather than a group meeting, for **Baptism preparation** and hopes to link these with the 5th Sunday AA service for baptism and also to continue to offer an alternative 12.30 ceremony.

29 people, including 5 children are going to **Lee Abbey**, 11- 13 March.

**Oasis**, led by Jan Cooper, which operates across Severnside, is developing well. It is involving children and mums who do not necessarily attend Sunday church. **Oasis pram** 7-15 children, **Oasis +** 28-50 children, **Oasis extra** and **onward** 10-18 children.

There will be an **Easter Experience** all day on 5, 6, 7 April It is hoped to leave it up in the Church for the following week.

### **Prayer activities**

It is recognised that many pray privately and consistently. Some also contribute prayers in the services and attend the weekly prayer meeting held on Tuesdays at 4.45pm. A couple of Prayer and Reflection services have been held in the 6.30 slot which encouraged personal and corporate prayer in a less threatening environment than a prayer meeting. A Prayer group is being established to offer individual prayer after services or when requested. Prayer for the Suffering church continues. There is also a successful **prayer triplet** running.

### **Missionary support and outward giving**

The Charity Bazaar supported Tear Fund (Pakistan flood appeal), Alzheimer's Society, Bristol Community Family Trust and Hartcliffe and Withywood teenage pregnancy project. The Christingle Services supported the Children's Society. Giving Services were held for the Royal Bristol Legion and Tearfund. Gifts from the Toys and Gift Service were sent to the Christmas appeal of the Sisters of the church in St Paul's and also nearly 50 tins of biscuits. Tony Kite also organises a regular collection for the Five Loaves and Two Fishes project.

*Pam van Rossum*

## **Buildings Report**

### **The Church and Churchyard, the Church Rooms and 14 Church Road**

The revised Pattern of Services introduced in September 2010 has required some adaptation to meet the needs of age-related teaching. An Archdeacon's 'Permission for temporary reordering' was obtained on 29 July 2010 to form two carpeted areas, in the southwest and south east corners of the Nave. A decision whether or not to continue with these will be needed in 2011.

The Sound System has been improved by new high level Speakers, funded by H R Stephens Bequest. A Faculty to enhance the lighting in the Chancel and the Porch has been obtained, and it is hoped this work will be done shortly. Like wise a Faculty to replace the present rush seated chairs in the Chancel with chairs more appropriate to regular use is being applied for.

Assessing the work necessary to repair the damage to the internal plaster and other decorations caused by the water penetration before the roof repairs continues. Relative Humidity and temperature have been monitored, with a period of more stable temperature during the very cold weather. The advice of our Architect is being sought, and as mentioned in the Financial Report our Reserves Policy has been strengthened to meet the inevitable expenditure.

Our Surveyor has agreed a number of small items to be carried out by the Contractor to conclude the Roof Contract, and the Final Retention will be released when these have been done.

The Lectern has been polished and re-laquered, funded by an anonymous donor.

Churchyard grass cutting continues to be carried out by John Bennett on contract terms, as does volunteer work on the churchyard and part of the gardens of the Church Rooms which is much appreciated.

The Church Rooms are in good order.

14 Church Road continues to be occupied by the village shop, and negotiations have been concluded for a new lease of up to 7 years from 20 February 2011.

Health & Safety Policy has been revised in accordance with new guidelines. There has been one minor accident. Provision of toilets suitable for disabled persons remains an unsolved issue, but is still under review.

We thank all those who take part in cleaning and maintaining our built environment.

*Pam van Rossum and Tim Jefferis*  
Churchwardens

*Michael Kirby*  
for the Finance & Building Team

### **Financial Review**

The Roof and Fabric Appeal was successfully concluded during 2010 and the final £7,350 needed was raised by Easter. In round figures a total of £133,500 was raised by the appeal; £69,750 from grants and £63,750 from donations and fund raising activities. A huge thank you to all who contributed. Full details are given in Note 9 of the accounts.

Excluding the Roof Appeal, total income in 2010 was £111,000 and total expenditure was £111,930, producing an overall deficit for the year of £930, which was funded from reserves.

The annual charity bazaar raised £1,852 after expenses. To this was added a donation of £144 from Northavon Singers and the total proceeds shared between Tearfund, Alzheimer's Society, Bristol Community Family Trust and the Hartcliffe and Withywood Teenage Parents Project. Each Charity received £463.

Other fundraising activities and collections during the year have included the Plant Stall run by Peter Atkey which raised £801 for St Peter's Hospice, the Harvest Service collection raised £125 for Tearfund, the Remembrance Sunday Collection raised £571 for the Royal British Legion and the Christingle collections raised £672 for the Children's Society.

The church is fortunate to benefit from two small endowment funds: the Consolidated Churchyard Fund and the Frost and Miles Fund, which is used to support activity for children and youth. The capital for both funds is invested in a fixed income security fund with Central Board of Finance. The capital value of both funds increased slightly during the year to £9,462 for the Churchyard Fund and £9,322 for Frost and Miles. The income from these funds and any earmarked donations are held within restricted funds.

Under the PCC's Reserves Policy the General Reserves Fund receives 1/3 of each year's gross rental income from the Old School House (14 Church Road), a contribution of £3,800 in 2010. During the year the cost of repairs to the Church Rooms totalling £3,486 was charged to the General Reserves Fund. At the end of the year the balance carried forward was £10,424.

*Paul van Rossum*  
Treasurer

### **Pastoral Care Report**

The team now comprises of 7 members all of whom are fully qualified to deal with safeguarding adults issues according to the Diocesan guidelines. Our quarterly meetings with Philip for updates and sharing information also include some learning input, currently discussing a recent publication called "Growing a Caring Church" which gives practical guidelines for pastoral care.

Gifts in the form of fruit baskets for men and planted flower baskets for ladies were delivered to 30 clients before Christmas. All were well received and some letters of thanks returned.

Thank you to Church members who watch out and care for neighbours continually. Keep us informed of worries that we may be able to assist you with. A problem shared really does halve the burden.

*Jill Kirby*

### **Safeguarding Promoting a Safe Church**

**The PCC has the responsibility of promoting a safe church community for children, young people and adults.**

St Mary's Church continues to follow the guidelines as set out by the Bristol Diocese on Safeguarding within the church community.

We are very fortunate to have so many leaders and helpers involved with children, young people and adults within Church groups and the wider community. All are appointed according to guidelines approved by the PCC. The guidelines are part of two policies relating to the appointment of helpers and the management of their roles and the groups and activities.

1. **Safe and Sound Child Protection Policy.** The focus of this policy is the safeguarding of children and young people within the church, providing safe environments for meetings and an awareness of issues that may harm a child.

All new volunteers wishing to work with children's and young people's groups follow the internal vetting procedure, which now requires an interview, in addition to obtaining CRB clearance. Grateful thanks to Pam van Rossum and Margaret Roberts for assisting in the interview process. All existing volunteers are required to re-apply for CRB clearance every 5 years.

Following the introduction of the All-Age Service and the setting up of children's groups within that service it has been necessary to ensure that each group is supervised by 2 CRB checked adults. Fortunately more volunteers have been successfully recruited and we are most grateful for their commitment.

2. **Promoting a Safe Church.** This policy addresses the responsibilities we have towards the pastoral care of adults, especially those who are vulnerable. This applies to the Pastoral Assistants Team members in Almondsbury and the Support Group in Olveston. All members of the teams have undergone internal vetting and CRB clearance.

Both the above policies are displayed in the church porch.

The Nominated Persons who have the role of implementing the policies for the PCC are Sue Hewson for Almondsbury and Sylvia Clements for Olveston and Aust. We have strong support from Philip and Susan Bridgewater for which we are so grateful.

Sylvia Clements and Sue Hewson both attended the Safer Recruitment training in November 2010 led by the Bristol Diocese Adult Safeguarding Officer and the Child Protection Officer.

We are extremely grateful to all the volunteers who have undergone the internal vetting process and CRB checking, willingly and with such good grace. Without their commitment to Safeguarding and Child Protection we would not be able to continue to declare ourselves as a **Safeguarding Church** and uphold the good practice that has been established.

*Sue Hewson*

### **Almondsbury Choir Report**

The main development of the choral services during the past year has been the discontinuation of an Evening service in favour of a morning service at 9.00am, to be changed in March 2011 to 9.15am. The choir has risen to these changes magnificently although it has to be acknowledged that such an early hour is not as conducive as it might be to singing.

The choir continues to perform an anthem at each choral service and to present music from all ages from the earliest centuries to the 21<sup>st</sup>. Practices are of course required to maintain this. Thursday practice nights are to be regarded as sacrosanct and I am pleased to say this is generally respected. Hymns and anthems (as well as organ voluntaries) are chosen well in advance and aim to reflect the themes set in the lectionary for the day.

There are clear opportunities for the further recruitment of choir members to keep this valuable choral tradition moving forward. Voices are welcome in all parts, but especially altos, tenors and basses. I would like to invite anyone who is thinking of joining to have a word with me directly.

Each week the All Age Service – now at 10.45am – caters for a lighter musical offering and more volunteers to join the music group at this service would also be welcome.

During the year the choir said farewell to Mike Guppy who retired after many years as a chorister in various choirs – the last 26 years in Almondsbury. We are grateful for his contribution and loyalty as a much valued bass and wish him well in his retirement. His continued writings for the Lich Gate are also much appreciated.

The organ, although limited in some of the repertoire it can cope with, is a stalwart of an instrument and has served well for over 100 years. It had a few problems earlier this year, due to the cold weather, but is now fit and well again and hopefully will continue to adorn our services.



It is important that I formally thank the choir for the work they do so willingly during the year, which makes considerable demands upon their time and for which they are unpaid volunteers. The services would be severely diminished without them.

*David Chandler*  
*Director of Music*

### **Social and Community Team Report**

Now that the roof fund raising is complete we as a group have been able to focus on different events.

A bring and share lunch was held in July in the vicarage garden to welcome our new curate Ruan Crew and his family after his ordination in Bristol Cathedral. The Hog Roast and Barn Dance was again held in July at Easter Compton farm; it was a wonderful occasion with barn dancing, inflatables and a hog roast. Thanks must go to Mike Keig, Liz Tierney and Nicky Tregenza who organised it. Sadly however it made a small loss so won't be repeated this year.

The Mothers Union kindly arranged a traditional harvest supper in the old school hall which was enjoyed by 60 members of the congregation. They were able to donate the profit to the MU Uganda fund. The Annual Charity Bazaar in November arranged by Pam Van Rossum and Celia Madle raised a sizeable amount for four chosen charities. It is always a popular village event.

The folk singer Reg Meuross held a concert in the Old School Hall just before Christmas and it was attended by 60 people. The proceeds were split between the church fabric fund and the Charlie Froud Foundation. Charlie's Dad spoke of how the money will help to rebuild a permanent base for the air rescue service in the Wicklow mountains where Charlie and three members of the Booz family died in 2009.

The team also provided mince pies and mulled wine after the annual Carol Service in December. We are now also in possession of 50 wine glasses bought for such occasions. Burns Night has now become an established feature in the village calendar. The Robin Reece jazz band provided a wonderful repertoire of popular music. 90 people were fed Haggis, tatties and neeps and over £300 was raised by raffling various items including two quilts made by Margaret Roberts and Ann Boyce.

A bring and share lunch was held in January and was attended by 50 members of the All Age congregation. We are very grateful to Jill Kirby and her team of cooks who catered for the Alpha course each week during the autumn term. Almondsbury provided the breakfast and lunch for the marriage preparation course held in February.

Filter coffee is now provided after the services on Sunday mornings. There is a rota of volunteers and everyone is most welcome to help. Cafe Almondsbury continues to grow and is open every Monday in term time between 9.00am and 11.30am. A warm welcome awaits all who come in for refreshments.

All these events depend on the goodwill of volunteers, and I would like to thank Barry and Chris Coltham, Graham Jefferys, Liz Tierney, and numerous others who have given their support in different ways.

*Alison Rowe*

### **Report on Bristol West Deanery Synod**

Bristol West Deanery covers Clifton & Abbots Leigh, Hotwells, Westbury Park, Henleaze, Westbury on Trym, Henbury, Stoke Bishop, Sea Mills, Shirehampton, Lawrence Weston, Avonmouth, Pilning & Severn Beach, Aust, Olveston, Elberton, Littleton, Almondsbury & Alveston.

Synod met 3 times in 2010, sharing reports of encouraging parish initiatives, such as the Sea Mills Community Café £100,000 project, reordering at Olveston, the purchase of new premises by Severn Beach Community, Henbury Community Action Day and the 'Emmanuel' church plant in Henleaze.

Leadership development and income generation are continuing concerns. 'Exploring Christianity' is a course available to all with the incumbent's consent, and can lead to more formal leadership training. It is good to know that more SSMS, OLMs and LLMs are in training in the Diocese– an increase of 114 non-stipendiary staff – to offset the potential loss of 20 Stipendiary Clergy by 2015.

13 Stipendiary posts are allocated to the Deanery by the Diocese. The Rev Berj Topalian is not to be replaced in the Pilning group of churches, so that the Rev Philip Rowe and Rev David Pole are the only stipendiary clergy for the 7 parishes and 9 churches in Severnside.

The Link with the dioceses of Kitgum, Nebbi and Gulu in Uganda continues.

*Sue Hewson, Michael Kirby and Margaret Roberts*

### **Thanks**

The PCC employs David Chandler as Organist and Choirmaster and Susan Bridgewater as Personal Assistant to the Vicar (on a shared basis with Olveston). All other routine activities are undertaken by volunteers and the Council places on record its appreciation of these volunteers who give their time and skills to the church and community.

### **Adoption**

This report was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011 for presentation to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011.