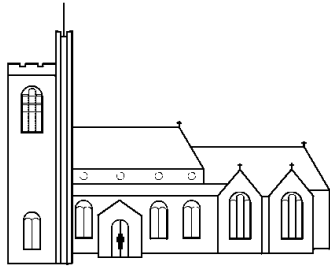
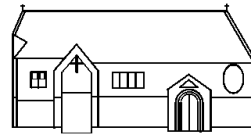


The Parish of
St Mary the Virgin, Welwyn,
with St Michael and All Angels,
Woolmer Green



St Mary's, Welwyn



St Michael's, Woolmer Green

Annual Parochial
Church Meeting
(APCM)

Wednesday 14 October 2020
in Church House
(and via Zoom)

Holy Communion – 7.15pm
Meeting Commences – 8.00pm

Contents

Notice of a Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens	3
Notice of Annual Parochial Church Meeting.....	3
Closing Prayers.....	3
Refreshments, followed by a talk.....	3
Primary Reports.....	4
Team Rector’s Report.....	4
PCC Secretary Report	4
Deanery Synod Report	4
Team Council Report.....	5
St Mary’s Fabric Report.....	5
St Mary’s Safeguarding Report.....	6
St Michael’s Church Report.....	6
Secondary Reports.....	7
Bible Discovery	7
Bible Breakfast Study	7
Bookstall.....	8
Community Café.....	8
Community Lunch	8
Church Fellowship	8
Church House	8
Fairtrade	9
Giving Action Group	10
Lent Courses	11
St Mary’s Bellringers.....	11
St Mary’s Evening Book Group.....	11
St Mary’s Flower Team.....	11
St Mary’s Handbell Ringers (‘The Arpeggios’)	12
St Mary’s Music	12
St Mary’s Parish Prayers.....	14
St Mary’s Theatre Group.....	14
St Mary’s Walking Group.....	14
St Mary’s Welcome Team	14
St Michael’s After School Club	15
Website and Social Media.....	15
APPENDIX 1 – Draft Minutes of the 2019 APCM	16

Notice of a Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens

A meeting of parishioners for the election of Churchwardens will be held on Wednesday 14 October 2020 at 8.00pm in Church House (and via Zoom).

AGENDA

1.	Opening prayer
2.	Minutes of the meeting held on the 3 April 2019
3.	Election of churchwardens

Notice of Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) held on Wednesday 14 October 2020 at 8.00pm following the meeting for the Election of Churchwardens at 8.00pm in Church House (and via Zoom).

Agenda

1.	Chairman's welcome and opening remarks
2.	Attendance List and Apologies for Absence
3.	Minutes of APCM held on 3 April 2019
4.	Matters arising

Elections

5.	Assistant Churchwardens for St Mary's and St Michael's
6.	Lay members to the Parochial Church Council
7.	Side persons
8.	Independent Examiner

Presentation of Annual Reports

9	Team Rector's Report
10.	PCC Report
11.	Deanery Synod Report
12.	Team Council Report
13.	St Mary's Fabric Report
14.	St Mary's Safeguarding Report
15.	St Michael's Church Report
16.	Other reports

17. Any other business

Closing Prayers

Refreshments, followed by a talk.

Notes relating to the 2020 Parochial Church Council

Candidates nominated for election to the Parochial Church Council must:

- 1* be on the Electoral Roll
- 2* be 16 years of age or upwards
- 3* have communicated at least three times in the past year

It is the practice in this Parish:

4* to obtain the express consent of the candidate

5* to complete a nomination form, signed by the proposer and seconder

Primary Reports

Team Rector's Report – *The Rev'd Dr David Munchin*

This will be read aloud; copies to be made available at the meeting.

PCC Secretary Report – *Daniel Holroyd-Thomas*

The PCC met six times, at bi-monthly intervals, from the date of the last APCM to March this year. The PCC has met to discuss issues which have arisen during the year, and approved nominations for school governor positions, amongst other things. I am standing down at this meeting, but please contact the designated email address if you have any questions relating to the PCC at pccsecretary@welwyn.org.uk.

Deanery Synod Report – *Vernonne Allan*

We are part of the Deanery of Welwyn Hatfield which includes 14 parishes.

Our Deanery Synod meets three times a year, in a different church each time. As a representative one has a good opportunity to see other churches and to meet up with clergy, readers and laity from other churches; all churches having at least one lay representative. It is also an opportunity to learn how the Church of England operates, from Parish to Deanery to Diocese and so on upwards.

Meetings took place on May 22 2019, 17 October 2019 and most recently on 12 February 2020. Kathryn Alford, my fellow lay representative for St Mary's Church has switched to the other side: during 2019-2020 Kathryn was our very able lay chair. However she was also in training for ordination during the year that this report covers. (Kathryn has since been ordained and joined St Etheldreda and St Luke's in Hatfield. We shall miss her at St Mary's.) Our Rural Dean is The Rev'd Jenny Fennell of St. Francis in Welwyn Garden.

The speakers are always of an excellent calibre, any parishioners can attend the meetings and I'd encourage you to come when they start again.

There was disappointment at May 2019 Deanery Synod at Christ the King Haldens when our speaker, Rachel Brockie from The Children's Society failed to appear. Afterwards we were all most distressed to learn Rachel had suffered an horrific horse riding accident. This talk was rescheduled for May 2020, but of course could not take place due to Covid-19.

At the October's Deanery Synod the guest speaker was The Rev'd Andrew Gardner, newly appointed Team Vicar of St John's Hilltop. I was unable to attend due to having an operation. The minutes received proved that Andrew's talk on his vision for pioneer mission work in a mixed community attracted much discussion.

The most recent meeting in February, which fortunately I could attend, was at All Saints Datchworth Church. The Rev'd Philip Waller, whose work is with ordinands in the Diocese, spoke about vocation, introducing some current ordinands and discussing with them how they had recognised a sense of calling. It was a very moving meeting with interesting insights on vocation; sometimes it takes other people to give a nudge before people recognise that they are called.

Written reports were circulated by the representatives who attended Diocesan Synod and General Synod during the year.

Team Council Report – *The Rev'd Dr David Munchin*

The Team Council has met on three occasions in 2019: 13th February, 26th June, 25th September.

The Team Council consists of the Team Rector, five representatives of the Ministry Team, two lay representatives from each church.

The purposes and tasks of the Team Council are laid out in its constitution.

Matters discussed in these meeting included:

- Safeguarding (Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection) –
- Team events and activities (e.g. Summer Evensongs)

St Mary's Fabric Report – *Stuart Carr*

Organisation

The fabric group comprises two members – Stuart Carr (Chair) (until April 2020) and Peter Brattle. This gives us a good spread of expertise and if additional skills & manpower is required, individuals are asked on a specific project basis.

Stuart Carr stepped down during April 2020 and Stuart Jenkin has taken over responsibility for all fabric matters thereafter.

Church Architect

Ian Frearson of Freeland Rees Roberts has been the Church Architect for St Mary's and St Michael's churches since 2011 but FRR resigned from their role in March this year. This is due to their increased pressure of work and the inability to respond to our requirements relating to the church yard walls.

The selection of a new Architect is required as soon as possible.

Quinquennial Works

The last quinquennial inspection was carried out early in 2018 which identified some internal repairs and potential external improvements. The internal repairs have been partially addressed and further work needs to be addressed during this coming year.

St Mary's Church & Church House

During the last year general maintenance and improvement continues to be undertaken including:

Maintenance and repair of the churchyard floodlights continue on a regular basis to keep the Church fully lit. The fixed wiring testing has been completed and minor repairs completed.

Regular testing and certification of gas, electrical, lift and safety systems have been completed during the year. Repairs and improvements have been completed as recommended.

Additional handrails to the upper vestry and the ramp to the choir vestry have been agreed to ensure safe access for all. Details have been prepared, costs approved and a public notice displayed. The final faculty application needs to be made.

External gutters and rainwater goods have been cleaned.

Remedial works to the lead roof of the tower have been undertaken.

The kitchen extract fan failed and has been replaced.

The PCC decided that the upgrading of the path lighting to the south door was not an essential matter and that this should not proceed. In order to avoid trip hazards caused by the old and defective light fittings it was agreed that these should be permanently disconnected and removed. This work needs to be put in hand.

GSHP & Heating Installation

The PCC agreed that the existing old and obsolete gas boiler should be replaced. The work also requires modification to the underground gas main to comply with current regulations. Costs have been obtained and it is proposed to complete this work prior to the autumn ready for the new heating season.

Churchyard and Grounds

The condition of the Churchyard walls has been an ongoing issue since at least 2010 and the Parish Council has not had funds available to address the necessary repairs.

The east wall collapsed in February following a storm and the Parish Council is now addressing the issue. However, a new Church Architect urgently needs to be appointed in order to prepare the design and specification of the re-building works on behalf of the Parish Council.

The wall to the north east corner is very unstable and also requires urgent stabilization and partial re-building.

The condition of the wall along the Codicote Road boundary continues to deteriorate badly.

Ann Harper continues to keep the Memorial Garden in fine condition. Thank you.

St Michael's House

Maintenance and repairs have again been minimal this year. When Dominic departs in the summer of 2020 a refurbishment review will need to be undertaken. A new step and paved area outside the sitting room was constructed last summer which has made a significant improvement.

St Mary's Safeguarding Report – Susan Harris

Susan Harris continues to act as our safeguarding officer. If you wish to report a safeguarding concern you should contact her or the Rector. There were no safeguarding incidents reported in 2019/20.

St Michael's Church Report – Sue Keach

The church is well-maintained and in a good state of repair. The only major work this year has been the trimming of the churchyard trees. We removed the maximum growth allowed under the TPOs and this has lightened the front church yard considerably. The church is now visible from the road. The trees are now well shaped and we hope the reduction in foliage will allow a flow of air to the roof and perhaps reduce the build-up of moss on the tiles.

We have replaced the two oak posts which had rotted and the gates have been rehung and the 'furniture' cleaned. The gutters have been cleared twice and the rainwater goods inspected. Plans to hang Christmas lights in the church yard have been put on hold.

Routine safety tests have been done to the fire extinguisher and the small electrical apparatus .The registers , insurance policies, and the inventory we all checked by the Rural Dean and found to be in good order. The piano and the organ were tuned.

Coopers continue to maintain the church yard. It always looks very well cared for and we have even been complimented on its appearance this year. A welcome change from grumbles!

Secondary Reports

Bible Discovery – *Gay and Mike Carpenter*

Our aims at Bible Discovery are to enjoy exploring the Bible together in a warm and friendly fellowship, and to discover what its teaching has to say to us and our lives today.

We like to ask people to vote for what they'd like to study next, and for the summer term, 2019, they asked to get to know Abraham. The account of his life led to good discussions on faith and obedience, and challenged us to look at our own lives. For example, we explored the kind of society Abraham lived in, looking at the religion of the people then which involved child sacrifice to appease the gods. This gave us the background into Chapter 22 and the near-sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham's longed-for son. What was God saying when he told Abraham to do this? Once we investigated there were clues to God's intention in the text that we hadn't noticed before.

Next, people chose to study the life of King David, a life lived totally in a time of war. He was a warrior king and yet God called him "a man after my own heart." This led to a very fruitful exploration of his life in the light of God's words. How can an adulterer and a murderer be thought of like that? What was it that caused God's approval of him- and what does God approve and disapprove of in our lives?

Before we joined the Lent course in 2020, we had a few sessions, so we asked people to choose a Biblical character to present to their group. Choices included Mary's husband Joseph, Lydia, Anna, Benjamin, and Judas.

Then we joined the chosen topic for Lent: Ruth Valerio's book "Saying Yes to Life." This was an exploration of Genesis Chapter 1, and each act of creation was studied to appreciate it, to see God's intentions, and to see what we humans, asked to be God's stewards and take care of it, had done. There were good things, but unfortunately a lot of dreadful things, plundering the earth for what we wanted without a thought for the future. Then Ruth engaged us in seeing what we could do about it. This was empowering and helpful.

All this led us to plan a booklet which resulted in a beautiful collection of reflections on the course in poetry and prose, each offering illustrated. The last sessions of the course and the production of the booklet were completed after lockdown began. The virus didn't stop us!

Since then, we have learnt how to do Bible Discovery on Zoom, catering for people unable to join in by sending the relevant study to them and inviting a feedback discussion after the Zoom session to anyone wanting one. But we long for the time when we can once again welcome people into our home, provide coffee and chocolate biscuits, and exchange some news, laughter and hugs!

Bible Breakfast Study – *The Rev'd Dr David Munchin*

Every Wednesday morning a group meets in Church House from 8am – 9am with breakfast provided from Katie’s. We study the bible by looking at the three readings for the Sunday 10 days hence. We use a version of *lectio divina* before meandering off to whatever takes our fancy. All are welcome, breakfast is free, you can say what you want and get the drop on the Sunday preacher.

Bookstall – Pat Brooks

The bookstall has a wide range of reasonably priced greetings cards and cards with biblical texts suitable for most occasions. Due to low turnover in sales of adult books it has been decided to sell mainly children’s books useful as gifts for baptisms and other occasions and some books of local interest. Orders for Christian books and daily bible study notes (samples are available) can be placed by contacting Pat Brooks. All profits from the Bookstall go to church funds.

Community Café – Liz Hesketh

The café, which is a joint venture between the Welwyn Parish Plan Group and the PCC, had its 10th anniversary in November last year. It is looking forward eagerly to its next ten years! On an average Tuesday we serve tea, coffee, biscuits and teacakes to about 50 regular customers. They come for the refreshments of course but most of all they come to meet their friends and chat, the noise level can be quite something! When we set up the café we charged 50p for tea/coffee and a biscuit and £1 for tea/coffee and a teacake. We still charge the same and despite increased costs of supplies we make an annual surplus of about £1300. This is split between the PCC and the Parish Plan Group for their projects. From time to time we have a number of visitors attend to discuss issues of interest with the Cafe customers. PCSO often attends. We could not do this without the excellent facilities of Church House and most importantly a team of dedicated friendly volunteers. Unfortunately due to Health advice from the Government 17 March was the last session until further notice. We look forward to reopening as soon as we are able.

Community Lunch – Marjorie Lyon

We have had another year of interesting meetings. These have included talks about the Dead Sea scrolls, birds, the Salvation Army, spies, growing up in South Africa, and embroidery amongst others. A strawberry tea was enjoyed, the handbell ringers entertained us at Christmas and a lunch took place in January. Attendance continues to grow. The Salvation Army and CPRE were our charities chosen for support this year. We also gave £300 to St. Mary’s Church Restoration Fund. Our new programme starts in May.

Church Fellowship – Marjorie Lyon

At our last AGM the title of the Fellowship was changed from The Church Women’s Fellowship to The Church Fellowship. We had a general vote and only 4 people objected. So the title was changed. We now have men attending the meetings each month and some occasional attendees. We continue to rely upon the £1 from each person attending a meeting, which seems adequate funding. We support two charities each year. The local guest Speakers receive a gift or a donation to their charity. The membership is growing due to the efforts of the committee, especially the programme Secretary. We always have a very varied and interesting selection of Speakers each year, many of them from local organisations.

Church House – Stuart Westley

1. Current guidance concerning the use of Village Halls, into which category Church House falls, indicates that such premises may continue to be used by not more than 30 people provided social distancing is maintained and risk is responsibly assessed and mitigated. The latter responsibility lies with users. The current policy therefore is that Church House is available for use if the user groups so wish.

2. Having been unused for almost six months, there has been some activity within Church House during the last two weeks. While recognising that the situation may change, possibly at short notice, we should expect the use gradually to increase in the weeks ahead. Recently we have seen resumption of coffee and tea after the 0930 Service, Fairtrade operated on Saturday 12 September and two groups met in Church House during the week 7 – 11 September.
3. With things currently changing almost on a daily basis it is important that we have prompt, clear communication concerning the use of Church House, otherwise there is a risk of double booking and, possibly, of users being unable to access the building. We have that clear communication now, but it is important that all involved appreciate the need for it. The Church Secretary, while not responsible for bookings, receives most of the communication and thus needs to be in the picture. As soon as things are more settled, we need to have an easily accessible record of which groups use Church House when. Creation of such a record is currently in progress.
4. From 2 September we reverted to the pre-lockdown cleaning arrangement in Church House. John Webber cleans for an hour and a half on Monday and Friday mornings. His wife, Rose, has been engaged to clean the Church thoroughly every Friday morning until the end of this year. I am responsible for ordering all supplies for Church House, including cleaning materials.
5. There have been quite a number of enquiries recently concerning external hire of Church House, though none has yet materialised. This is an area where we might anticipate development in the weeks ahead. The current policy is that PCC encourages external use of Church House by responsible individuals or groups, both in order to play a role within the community and to provide income which will defray cost. The need to generate income has increased during this year. I suggest that the opportunity for additional external letting should be welcomed but only on the basis that it is done responsibly and is well managed, with existing regular use by groups within the Church community taking priority. The point above about communication of bookings is directly relevant and the need for all users to accept responsibility for risk assessment is paramount.
6. There has been no suggestion that arrangements for locking the Church, Church House or the gates revert to what operated pre-lockdown. Consideration of a return to the previous arrangement, or something similar, would seem to be some way off.

Fairtrade – *Maggie Varco*

We continued to run the fairtrade café and stall in Church House on Saturday mornings, thanks to our team of volunteers who make this happen each week. The drop-in café is a popular meeting place, and offers a warm welcome to newcomers to the church.

Our supplier of all things fairtrade, Traidcraft plc, had announced at the end of 2018 that they would have to cease trading due to poor financial results, caused by a combination of the retail slump, the fall of the £ after the Brexit vote and poor sales through their new website, due to technical issues. However, we were delighted that they were able to put together a rescue plan, which although unfortunately involved cost cutting and staff redundancies, meant that they were able to recommence trading at the beginning of the year, and we were able to continue our fairtrade stall.

Our sales were lower than in previous years due to the reduced range of goods offered in the Spring catalogue, but we were nevertheless very pleased with a turnover of £7,700 and a surplus of £1,032 which

was sent as a donation to Traidcraft's sister charity, Traidcraft Exchange, to support people to trade their way out of poverty.

Giving Action Group – *Geoff Cummings*

The role of GAG is twofold:-

A) **stewardship**: to look at strategies to motivate people to give to the church.

B) **charitable**: to facilitate charitable giving by St Mary's to achieve a target equivalent to at least 15% of planned and plate giving on a rolling 3 year average.

Giving to St Mary's

During the year we produced two leaflets, copies of which were distributed to the congregation with the remainder being available in church for anyone who did not receive a copy or has joined our congregation recently. Both leaflets are intended to draw attention to the church's need of income, sufficient to cover its regular expenses and those which crop up from time to time and involve drawing from reserves.

One leaflet covered the need for regular giving, preferably by monthly standing order or direct debit and also for the level of giving to be reviewed regularly by each member of the congregation. It should be a simple message to get across, that each year, costs increase and if our income does not also increase, we will soon fall into the red! However, this always seems to be one of the most difficult messages on which to get a response.

The other leaflet concerned legacies: giving to the church from your estate when you die by including instructions in your will or making a codicil. Legacies are hugely important to the future work and wellbeing of our church. In 2019 we received legacies totalling £27971

During the year a special appeal was launched in order to fund the cost of vital repairs to the organ. This produced a wonderful total during the year of £10896. Many thanks to all who organised that appeal and to those who contributed to it

Charitable Giving by St Mary's

In total, St Mary's donated £14,580 to 17 different charities. Normally, the Giving Action Group does not decide how much goes to each charity nor, to a large extent, which causes are supported. The exceptions are the special collections at Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival and Christmas where GAG selects a charity that seems relevant to the particular service or season and this is publicised in advance. Anyone can suggest a charity for consideration.

The choice of charity for other sums is largely decided by those running the event, be it through sponsorship, profit from a coffee morning, meal or talk or a sale of goods.

Full details of giving by St Mary's during 2019 are attached and are also displayed on the notice board in New Church House

The 3 year rolling average of giving to charities against income is 15.17% if Gift Aid is excluded from both income and the sums given away. The figure is 16.85% if Gift Aid is excluded only from income.

Thanks

Giving to St Mary's is not just about money; the giving of time and talents is also vital. A thank you was issued during the year and is, again here whether for that which goes largely unnoticed or that which is more obvious.

Lent Courses – *The Rev'd Dr David Munchin*

Our Lent groups in 2019 used a home grown course called 'Bible stories you thought you knew', and met in several locations across the team for five sessions during the Lent season.

St Mary's Bellringers – *John Williams*

St Mary's Ringing Band rings regularly before Sunday Services from 9.00 - 9.30am (every Sunday) and 6.00 - 6.30pm (2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays) when enough Ringers are available. The Band practises on Tuesdays from 7.45 to 9.00pm. We are usually able to ring all 8 bells for services. In addition, the band rings 6 bells for weddings when booked and 8 for special services when requested - if possible, depending on availability. The band also maintains the clock, winding it once a week, and hoist and lower flags on the Tower when required.

John Williams is now the Tower Secretary (again!), following the retirement of Mary Gregory for health reasons. We currently have 14 regular ringers, however only 4 are Church members so St. Mary's owes a debt of gratitude to all the band for turning out for Sunday and special service ringing so reliably – unlike so many towers where service ringing is occasional, not regular.

Chris Coxell from Codicote Tower often attends our practises on Tuesdays, helping out with teaching, and by arrangement the whole band practices at Codicote once every month or two. Two or three of the band often help out at practices at Datchworth on Thursday evenings. It takes quite a while to become a competent ringer so it needs determination, but we do have an enjoyable time on the way. Please consider whether you could do it and would enjoy the gentle aerobic exercise (and the not so healthy – but optional - social activity after practice). We should welcome another learner, especially as several of us are in our 70s!

For more information contact John Williams, on 01438 715679 or email bells@welwyn.org.uk. It's one person on each rope, so to ring all our 8 bells we need 8 ringers. It goes without saying that if you have rung in the past and are not currently part of a band that rings on Sundays, you would be very welcome at St Mary's Welwyn.

St Mary's Evening Book Group – *Wendy Lawrence*

The St Mary's Reading Group meets at 8pm on the second Thursday of each month to discuss a book chosen by agreement. We have read a wide variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction. We meet in each other's homes and we always have an interesting and thought-provoking evening. The group is open to all members of St Mary's.

St Mary's Flower Team – *Jenny Wiseman*

We have a team of flower arrangers who take pleasure in the joy of enhancing worship with beautiful flower arrangements. Altar pedestal arrangements were provided throughout the year (except during Lent and Advent). These arrangements were often sponsored in memory of a loved one and were acknowledged in the relevant Sunday's service booklet.

The team get together to decorate the church for Easter, Harvest and Christmas and it is encouraging that so many wish to be involved. We have had new offers of help for these festivals from people who are not confident enough to do the main altar pedestal. Special thanks go to Alice Burnapp who “supervised” the team for the Christmas flower arrangements while I was away. Alice’s creativity and imagination were evident for the Remembrance Sunday poppy displays. So many remarked how beautifully moving these were.

At Easter our displays included 65 arum lilies which had been given in memory of loved ones. It is always a special privilege to be involved with this.

St Mary’s offers a church wedding flower service and during 2019, we were asked to do flowers for 7 weddings. It is a huge amount of work and often physical effort to get everything into church. Still, it is very satisfying, and the surplus we made goes into church funds as we do not charge for our time. It is always a pleasure talking to brides and their families about what they require, and we’ve received many messages of thanks and appreciation following their big day.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire volunteer flower team for giving their creativity, artistic flair, time and skills to St Mary’s Church. .

There is an open invitation for anyone to join the flower team. No previous experience is necessary – just the joy of arranging flowers in our church.

St Mary’s Handbell Ringers (‘The Arpeggios’) – *Jacky Johnston*

We were reduced to a very depleted team of ringers for several of the Carol Services in 2019, having enjoyed quite a good year of ringing around the district up until then. However, we have now welcomed several new members, so look forward to a happier few months to come. Included in our 2020 programme is an Open Practice and Drop-in Taster Session on handbells in St. Mary’s Church on the Thursday evening of Welwyn Festival Week. All welcome!

For information on The Arpeggios, please contact Pauline Anderson (01438 716783) or Jacky Johnston (01438 714078).

St Mary’s Music – *Linden Innes-Hopkins*

Choir Report

The choir continues to lead the musical aspects of services at St Mary’s with skill and faithfulness. Without the commitment of its individual members and without the willingness of those members to work together as a team, a choir is unable to function well. Sometimes an anthem or a hymn may appear on the Music List that is not especially loved by one or more choir members but it may be much loved by others or, indeed, have been chosen because of a strong connection to the Sunday theme. Singing in a choir definitely does involve charity!

Our music making, like that of many other choirs (large and small), has been disrupted by Covid-19. Prior to the March lockdown, the normal pattern of services at St Mary’s saw the choir singing an anthem at the Parish Eucharist each Sunday as well as leading the singing of the hymns and the regularly sung parts of the service. Over the Christmas season, the choir sang at three fine Carol Services: Advent, Christmas and Candlemas. Each one of these services saw the introduction of new music (new to the choir, although not necessarily contemporary) to sit alongside the ‘old favourites’. Attendance at the Christmas Carol Service was very high; it is a privilege and delight to sing to a packed church.

Even though singing with a large congregation present brings a thrill of its own, many choristers continue to enjoy singing the ancient office of Evensong. It is a pity that so few now attend this service - a service which is sung predominantly by the choir - of quiet at the close of day, offering an opportunity for both reflection and for being transported by beautiful music.

Since churches were able to open for worship (but not for singing), some choir members and a few 'others' have been recording two hymns each week for the Sunday morning service. We had no experts in our midst but Stephen Jupp and Nikki Lewis have taught themselves to use a multi-track editing software, and Linden Innes-Hopkins has undertaken to lay down both an original organ track and a 'piano plus voice' track each week; the latter is sent out to the singers, who then record themselves (two devices are required!) singing their part. The individual tracks are layered over the original organ track, edited, - timing discrepancies can be 'resolved', rather magically... - often several times to achieve a really good result, and finally submitted.

While, like many church choirs, St Mary's Choir has seen much stability in its membership over the years, singers do sometimes reach a point when they feel it is time to retire. We were sad to say goodbye to Joan Gould, a member for many years, who retired in January.

Linden would like to thank all the choir members for their continued support. Thanks to Rita McNeill for organising processing and such-like and for assisting in posting the weekly Reflections during lockdown. Thanks to Geoff Leddra for managing the address list. Thanks to Rowena MacDonald, whose work as Librarian is invaluable and whose memory for the music stock is, quite frankly, phenomenal! Thanks to John Swift for his wisdom, to Chris and Joyce Lund for organising the choir party (I wonder when there will be another one...) and, most especially to Michelle Boylan for her role as Assistant Director of Music, taking the choir or accompanying as necessary. Finally, thank you to the clergy for their support and encouragement, and to the wider congregation for their appreciation and acknowledgement of the choir's contribution to worship at St Mary's. While the choir members are, indeed, skilled and committed, they really do also value the appreciation of their 'audience'.

Welwyn Tune Report

Welwyn Tune has continued to flourish and is now taking part in services more regularly. Singers from the group often bolster the adults for weddings as well as singing at Sunday morning services when they are present - currently about once a month. In March, several members took part in the RSCM Young Voices Festival at Christchurch, Southgate. They rehearsed in the afternoon, had a welcome break for tea and then sang Evensong with choristers from several other churches...most of which were dedicated to St Mary!

The past year has seen the group grow in size, with several new members. We have been delighted to welcome Evie, Kitty, Alice, Abbiegale, Melissa and Zach, and hope they will enjoy being part of the St Mary's community. There are many things to learn for our young choristers, things that adults may take for granted. For instance, they need to learn to be punctual for practices and services, they have to learn how to find a hymn in a hymn book (hymn number versus page number!), and put their robes on correctly. And this is all before learning to stand correctly, sing in tune and process into and out of church. After some debate and with the new Welwyn Tuners only having been part of the group for a matter of weeks, it was decided that the 'newbies' should carry electronic candles rather than real ones at the Christmas Carol Service.

The RSCM Chorister Training Scheme is a graded and useful guide for the development of choristers. A number of our more senior singers have gained their 'next level' ribbons this year and are gaining in confidence in leading the younger singers in a variety of ways. About once a month, we spend part of our practice on developing skills through the chorister Training Scheme.

Welwyn Tune is directed by Linden Innes-Hopkins, ably assisted each week by Jo Fozzard and, on an occasional basis, by Susan Wray. Jo's and Susan's help are much appreciated. In addition, thank you from the

'lead team' to all the parents who bring their children along each week to sing. Without their doing this each week, Welwyn Tune would not be the thriving youth choir that it is!

St Mary's Parish Prayers – *Wendy Lawrence*

Prayer underpins the life of the parish. There is an informal prayer meeting in the St Nicholas chapel every Saturday morning, from 9 – 9:30, led by the clergy. Everyone is welcome to attend. We pray for the parish and the churches in the team, and also for individual concerns and topical issues. Prayer requests can be given to members of the clergy, or attached to the prayer board by the entrance to the St Nicholas Chapel.

St Mary's Theatre Group – *Sue Knowles*

The theatre club have enjoyed another year of memorable performances. We have seen Swan Lake ballet, Les Miserables, 9 to 5 musical, The Red Shoes ballet, The King and I and have other shows booked for the oncoming year. We have 25 people attending these performances, all driven in a Mercedes coach to and from Milton Keynes theatre. I advertise these trips in the magazine and there is always a poster up in the church porch. I add 50p on to each ticket purchased and this year the money raised has gone to the organ restoration .

I would like to thank everyone who supports this Club and look forward to organising many more trips.

St Mary's Walking Group – *Joy and Robin Whitten*

The group now has some 60 members of whom we usually have about 25 walking each month. We welcome newcomers and the walks offer a great opportunity to meet people.

On the third Monday of each month, we meet at a local pub, walk some four to five miles, and return to the pub for lunch. The walks are led by volunteers who help us to enjoy the wide variety of lovely countryside around Welwyn. It is a very enjoyable way to have some exercise and a friendly chat. If you are interested and live in or around Welwyn or have a connection with our church, do contact us.

Contact Joy or Robin Whitten 01438 716036.

St Mary's Welcome Team – *Jenny Wiseman*

Making people feel welcome is at the heart of reaching out to new people and a new generation as well as nurturing those who are already part of the church family.

Although we do have a Welcome Team, the ministry of Welcome should be a priority for us all. We should be continually asking ourselves: are we open and welcoming to newcomers? Are we aware of the possible anxieties of people when entering somewhere new to them? Do we think "welcome" is only our concern at the "9:30"? Is our attitude to newcomers – they are welcome to join our "club" as long as they stick to the club rules? Or is our priority an awareness of making a connection with a new person and understanding that they will be offering their own unique and God-given self to our church.

We have come to realise that the pattern of worship has changed and continues to change for many people. We are seeing fewer families with children at the 9:30, but the numbers of Key Stage I&II children and their mums and dads are consistently high for the Craftea, held fortnightly in term-time. The people, many of whom are families, who attend the 40 Minutes may not come every month. But they do return.

We are so very fortunate that our Church and Church House are at the heart of our community, used by so many people as a haven and a place to meet others. At all events and at every opportunity, we all have the responsibility of being sensitive to those on their own, those who may need a kind listening ear, those who would appreciate knowing about the various activities, those we should be introducing to others.

Don't feel daunted by approaching someone you don't know. The words you use could be along the lines of "Hello, I don't think we've met before. My name is". Also, don't worry if you've forgotten a name the next time you meet them. We all do this! We may only get the one chance of demonstrating the value we place on each and every individual.

St Michael's After School Club – *The Rev'd Dominic Holroyd-Thomas*

The St Michael's After School Club meets in St Michael's Church on a Wednesday from 3.15pm-4.15pm.

We currently have about 5 children attending the club regularly, were we seek to create a safe and friendly space for children to engage with one another and to explore Christian themes through craft and fellowship. The group meets following collective worship at St Michael's School which the Curate or another member of the Ministry Team leads.

I would like to express a special thank you to all the volunteers who continue to ensure the club can meet. With the absence of two regular helpers during part of the last year, this help has been even more appreciated.

Website and Social Media – *Su Blanch*

The St Mary's website (www.welwyn.org.uk) has between 500 and 1000 visits per month, with the peak month being December, when people may be checking out information about Christmas services.

The site is changed to reflect the season and events that are going on currently and is truly something that we can all get involved with. If you have ideas about what else ought to be included, or content to add, send to webmaster@welwyn.org.uk. Websites work best when they are current and part of how we operate.

Our facebook page "St Mary's Church, Welwyn" also provides immediate content and communication out to our congregation and the community. It's a great way to communicate and it would be fab if we could all take a look at it regularly and share it with our own networks.

We're a very small team that work on this: our leader, Jane Carr, has stepped down from the group and so we've become even smaller! Speaking for myself, I'm really quite inexperienced and I make it up as I go along. So if anyone wants to have a go and join us they'd be very welcome.

APPENDIX 1 – Draft Minutes of the 2019 APCM

Minutes: Election of Churchwardens and Annual Parochial Church Meeting (St Mary’s Welwyn with St Michael’s Woolmer Green)

Meeting: Wednesday 3rd April 2019 in Church House at 8.00pm







	Names
Attendees	David Munchin [DM] , Vernonne Allan [VA], Beth Bates, Su Blanch [SB], Gill Blewett [GBI], Simon Blewett, Pat Brooks, Debbie Coupland [DC], Geoff Cummings [GC], Jackie Davis [JD], Joyce Davis, Peter Davis, Shoena Eggington [SE], Jo Fozzard, Mary Gregory, Ann Harper, Daniel Holroyd-Thomas [DaHT], Dominic Holroyd-Thomas [DoHT], Linden Innes-Hopkins, Sue Keach [SK], Wendy Lawrence [WL], Fiona Macdonald, Rowena Macdonald, Joan Shelley [JS], Daphne Skinner, Joan Webb, Stuart Westley [SW], and Jenny Wiseman. 28 attendees
Apologies	Kathryn Alford [KA], Jane Bacon, Gina Beck [GB], Don Bell [DB], Jane Carr [JC], Stuart Carr [SC], Colin Hull [CH], Usha Hull [UH], Diane Jenkin [DJ], Jean Perriman [JP], Jasmine Marson, Robin Marson, Sheila Edmonson.
Minute taker	Daniel Holroyd-Thomas [DaHT].





Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens

NO.	AGENDA ITEM	NOTES	ACTION POINTS
1	Opening Prayer	The meeting was opened with a prayer.	N/A for information. Complete ✓
2	Review of Minutes from Previous Meeting (18th April 2018) To be approved and signed.	-----	Approved and signed as an accurate record. To be communicated ✉
3	Election of Churchwardens	The existing churchwardens, Diane Jenkin, Stuart Westley (St Mary’s) and Sue Keach (St Michael’s), were nominated and seconded. DM thanked the churchwardens for their continued ministry.	The nominations of Susan Keach, Stuart Westley and Diane Jenkin were unanimously approved. Complete ✓

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

NO.	AGENDA ITEM	NOTES	ACTION POINTS
1	Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks	-----	N/A for information. Complete ✓
2	Attendance and Apologies for Absence	-----	N/A for information. To be communicated ✉
3	Review of Minutes from Previous APCM (18 th April 2018) To be approved and signed.	-----	Approved and signed as an accurate record. Complete ✓
4	Matters Arising	-----	-----
5	Assistant Churchwardens for St Mary's and St Michael's	John Farrow was duly elected.	John Farrow was unanimously elected. Complete ✓
6	Lay Members to the Parochial Church Council	DM extended a thank you to DC and GBI for all their work over the last three years, as they step down at the meeting. Emmanuel Odiachi, and Stuart Carr were proposed, seconded, and duly elected.	Emmanuel Odiachi and Stuart Carr were unanimously elected. Complete ✓
7	Sidespeople	Ann Harper (St Mary's) and Margaret Patterson (St Michael's) were proposed and duly elected.	Ann Harper and Margaret Patterson were unanimously elected. Complete ✓
8	Independent Examiner	The PCC's current independent examiner, Peter McKay at Nicholson Chartered Accountants was elected as the examiner for the next year. DM reported that DB is happy with Nicholson.	Nicholson Chartered Accountants was re-approved as Independent Examiner of the parish. Complete ✓

9	Financial Affairs of the Parish	<p>DM reported that all of the accounts are now audited, correct and approved by the Trustees (PCC). Both income and expenditure were down; expenditure specifically was less in 2018 than 2017. The general accounts showed that the parish is around £1500 down. In terms of free reserve (the amount of cash available), there is £77000 in the bank. DM added that charities are required to have a certain amount in reserve, approximately 40% of annual income, as a responsible 'rainy-day' fund.</p> <p>A big thank-you was extended to DB for his continued wonderful work for the accounts of the parish.</p>	<p>N/A for information.</p> <p>To be communicated </p>
10	PCC Report	<p>The PCC report was distributed in the compiled booklet before the meeting.</p>	<p>N/A for information.</p> <p>To be communicated </p>
11	Electoral Roll Report	<p>The six-year electoral roll revision was completed on 20th March. There are 263 people on the new roll (split between 218 at St Mary's and 45 at St Michael's). In terms of totals, this compares to 305 members on the electoral roll in 2018. There have been 77 deletions.</p> <p>At the time of the meeting, and since the completion of the roll, there had already been a half-dozen or so additions.</p> <p>Jenny Wiseman expressed her thanks to JC, which was corroborated by those present.</p>	<p>N/A for information.</p> <p>To be communicated </p>
12	Deanery Synod Report	<p>DM confirmed that KA is the Lay Chair of Deanery Synod.</p>	<p>N/A for information.</p> <p>To be communicated </p>
13	Team Council Report	<p>-----</p>	<p>N/A for information.</p> <p>To be communicated </p>
14	St Mary's Fabric Report	<p>VA expressed the PCC's thanks to SC for all his work with the fabric of the buildings.</p>	<p>N/A for information.</p> <p>To be communicated </p>

15	St Mary's Safeguarding Report	DM reported that there had been no incidents since the last PCC, and clarified that, if there ever was an incident, it would be noted here.	N/A for information. To be communicated 
16	St Michael's Church Report	A thank you was extended to SK for all the work she does for St Michael's.	N/A for information. To be communicated 
17	Team Rector's Report	<i>See Appendix 1: Team Rector's APCM Report</i>	N/A for information. To be communicated 
18	Secondary Reports	It was noted that the bell ringers appear in the document twice. This has been retrospectively amended.	N/A for information. To be communicated 
19	Any Other Business	-----	-----
20	Conclusion and Grace Including refreshments; followed by a talk.	Following the close of the formal meeting, Jo Fozzard gave an informative talk about the work of the Whitechapel Mission.	N/A; for information. To be communicated 