

## **2013 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist's Church, Penshurst**

***Aims and responsibilities:*** The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for working with the Rector, the Rev. Tom Holme, to promote in the ecclesiastical parish the mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the chapel and churchyard at Poundsbridge.

***Objectives and activities:*** The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as wish to practice a Christian faith in the parish and to worship or seek solace or refuge at the church and chapel in its care. We have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to provide a benefit to members of the Penshurst and Poundsbridge communities through:

- providing pastoral care for those living in the village
- worship and prayer, learning about the gospel
- outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of St John the Baptist Church in sound condition.

***Achievements:*** This year we have followed our well-established pattern of Holy Communion or Sung Eucharist services each Sunday in the church, with additional weddings, funerals, baptisms, choral evensong services, services on festival days and carol services. 115 parishioners were recorded on the new Electoral Roll. Where members of the community are unable to visit the church, the Rector visits them at home. The church was also used for school services and for concerts and lectures.

We continued with preparations for the major repair and refurbishment works planned for St John the Baptist's Church, finally obtaining a Faculty in December 2013, although this did not cover the work which we hope to carry out in the Chancel, the subject of a protest by the Victorian Society that will be heard at a Consistory Court in the middle of 2014. We were delighted to receive a Heritage Lottery grant toward the the repair and interpretation components of the project and are grateful to all the other charitable trusts and individuals who have helped us to raise over £650,000.

The church was closed at the beginning of January 2014, when work started, and is expected to remain closed until early may 2014. During this period, services are being held at St. peter's Fordcombe, by kind arrangement with the Fordcombe PCC.

## ***Financial review:***

### Receipts and Expenditure

Receipts on Unrestricted Funds were £61,655, compared to expenditure of £60,062. It is encouraging that regular donations by PCC members have increased significantly, but they remain low as a proportion of the church's running costs compared to most other parishes in the Rochester diocese. We will continue to try to increase them, because at the moment the church's regular, Unrestricted Funds are not strong enough to pay for the full scope of repairs and improvements to the church building that will always be needed and which have had to be funded instead by the exceptional 'Saving Penshurst Church' appeal mounted over the last three years, unlikely to be repeatable for another generation. In anticipation of this reality, the PCC has started reserving £2,000 a year toward the cost of future repairs, held in the Diocese of Rochester's Repair Fund.

The number of weddings during 2013 was a quarter lower than in 2012, but the church's wedding income fell only slightly, as those being married in the church agreed to pay more than in 2012. The PCC is grateful to the bell-ringers and choir who help to make the church a popular place for weddings.

The church did not itself promote 2013's Penshurst Christmas Fair. Instead its organising committee was responsible for revenues and costs, splitting the surplus as in previous years between the church and the Pickering care Centre. As a result of this change, PCC's own Events receipts and expenditure were markedly reduced compared to 2012, as was its charitable donations.

A new financial approach to sharing the costs of the Rector and organist with St Peter's, Fordcombe was introduced, as a result of which there was no material sum outstanding between the two PCC's at the end of 2013 and therefore the previous years' accounts heading of 'Prior year Fordcombe receipts' is not required.

No Gift Aid tax recoveries were recorded in 2013, but a payment has been received early in 2014.

Receipts on Restricted Funds totalled £16,900, including a £15,000 interim grant from the Friends of Penshurst Church, while expenditure on preparatory works for the Saving Penshurst Church project started to accelerate and reached £26,396.

### Balance Sheet

Unrestricted Reserves finished the year at £67,599, some £10,000 lower than in 2012, mainly as a result of a large repayment to HMRC of previously over-claimed Gift Aid tax relief. The PCC's policy is that its Unrestricted Reserves should be maintained at a minimum of

six months' normal expenditure, or some £30,000. It has agreed to contribute approximately £20,000 from these reserves to works on the 'Saving Penshurst Church' project during 2014.

Restricted Reserves fell from £67,064 to £59,081, as expenditure on the 'Saving Penshurst Church' project outstripped new contributions. Permission has previously been received from the Charity Commission to derestrict use of the funds in the Arnold trust when required.

Risks: There are inevitably financial risks concerned with a project the size of the church building works. Some contingency is built into the cost estimates, but this will not cover the costs of defending the Consistory Court case brought by the Victorian Society. It is likely therefore that some finishing works will have to be deferred until further funds can be raised.

***Structure, governance and management:*** Administrative information: St John the Baptist's Church, Penshurst is part of the Diocese of Rochester. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity currently exempt from registration with the Charity Commission.

The method of appointing PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. Membership consists of the Rector, churchwarden, secretary, treasurer and two further elected representatives. PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC met four times during the year. During the year, a part-time administrator was engaged to carry out some book-keeping and other duties in support of the treasurer.

PCC members who served during 2013 were: Rev. Tom Holme (Rector), Mr Derek Dennard (churchwarden), Ms Karen Franklin (secretary), Mr David Lough (honorary treasurer), Mrs Sarah Wickens and Mr John Menard.