



**St. Matthew's Church, Salford Priors**  
**2014/2015 Annual Report**  
**of the**  
**Parochial Church Council**  
**With financial reports for the year ended**  
**31 December 2014**

***Administrative Information***

St. Matthew's church is situated in the village of Salford Priors, Warwickshire. It is in the Diocese of Coventry within the Church of England and is part of the Heart of England Group of Parishes, which includes the parishes of Bidford on Avon, Binton, Exhall with Wixford and Temple Grafton.

The correspondence address is:

Mr Roger Huggins, Group Administrator,  
Birch House, Grange Lane, Harvington, WR11 8NL

The PCC is a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 until the date of this report was approved are:

<i>Chairman</i>	Revd Peter Walker
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Mr Roger Huggins
<i>Churchwardens</i>	Mr Peter Penney Mr Kevin Harrison
<i>Deanery Synod Rep</i>	Vacancy
<i>Elected Members</i>	Mrs Eira Willatts, (up to 1st Sept) Mr Andrew Dean Mr Andrew Clarke <i>Treasurer</i> Mrs Sheila Penney Mrs Kay Latham Mr Tim Jacques Mr Greg Hallett Mr Tim Berkley <i>Secretary</i> Mrs Joyce Lewis (up to APCM) Dr Stephen Foster Mrs Ruth Simmons (up to APCM)

***Structure, governance and management***

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

## ***Objectives and activities***

It shall be the duty of the incumbent and the parochial church council (PCC) to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish.

The functions of parochial church councils shall include—

- co-operation with the incumbent in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical ;
- the consideration and discussions of matters concerning the Church of England or any other matters of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the Church on any question;
- making known and putting into effect any provision made by the diocesan synod or the deanery synod, but without prejudice to the powers of the council on any particular matter;
- giving advice to the diocesan synod and the deanery synod on any matter referred to the council ;
- raising such matters as the council consider appropriate with the diocesan synod or deanery synod.

In the exercise of its functions the parochial church council shall take into consideration any expression of opinion by any parochial church meeting.

It also has maintenance responsibilities for St Matthew's Church and Churchyard.



## ***Rector's Report - Revd Peter Walker***

I want to pay tribute to all those people whose hard work, skill, and loving service, make possible the varied life of the church of St Matthew's, Salford Priors. From the worship leaders, Bible teachers and musicians to cleaners, flower arrangers and gardeners, there are sidespeople, lesson readers, and tea/coffee makers. And this is before I start to mention the Ministry Team, the PCC members, the treasurer and the churchwardens, the leaders and helpers with all our young people. There are people who meet to pray for our church, those who reach out in our name to our community, and one person who spends long hours with the photocopier! St Matthew's church depends on all these who offer practical help, together with the many who support the church financially through regular or occasional giving. In whatever way you help, thank you!

Looking forwards to the coming year, members of St Matthew's will be taking part in a survey process as part of the Natural Church Development (NCD) or Healthy Churches project. At the heart of the process is a detailed diagnostic tool, the NCD Church Survey. Surveys are completed by key people within the life of the church, and enable the leadership to assess the church's development and focus priorities for the year ahead.

Our diocese of Coventry has decided to make extensive use of the NCD surveys and Canon Martin Saxby has been promoting this as a tool for parishes to use. Following a presentation in January, St Matthew's PCC have decided to take part in this process. A group of people in the church will be asked to take part in the (anonymous) surveys, which will be analysed, and the results passed back to the PCC. The PCC will then meet with an external mentor who will help them formulate

an action plan to address the weakest areas of our church's life. The idea is then to redo the survey in a year or so's time and then revise their plan to address another area. Over the space of the suggested 3-year commitment, our church should become a little healthier!

I want to commend this programme to you all (some of you will be asked to take part in the questionnaire). I believe that if we intentionally work at building a better church community then we are likely to see some progress. If we do not work at improving our churches, then it is most unlikely that we will see any improvement! Ask the members of your PCC for more information, or visit the website: [www.ncd-uk.com](http://www.ncd-uk.com)

### ***Staff***

Revd Peter Walker (Rector); Revd Ruth Walker (Associate Minister); Revd Dr Kevin Grumball (Assistant Curate) and Revd David Benskin (Assistant Curate). Victoria Reichel and Anthony Pilkington continue as our church cleaners. Andy Woodhouse has now relinquished his role of garden maintenance for the churchyard and we thank him for his service.

We are grateful to our volunteer Administrator, Roger Huggins, for his work in the service of St Matthew's and the whole Heart of England group of churches.

### ***Church Attendance***

At the Annual Meeting in April 2014 it was reported that there are 64 parishioners on the Church electoral roll, 41 of whom are not resident within the parish. The average weekly October attendance at St Matthew's was 51 which included Harvest Thanksgiving. Church attendance on a "normal" Sunday was about 47.

Both Salford Priors and Dunnington schools hold special festival services in church at Easter, Harvest and Christmas and Dunnington School holds a Leavers' Service at the end of the academic year in July. On these occasions the church is filled to overflowing with excited children, parents and grandparents.

### ***PCC***

The full PCC met 10 times during the year with an average attendance of 73%. Committees met between meetings and their deliberations were received by the full PCC and discussed as necessary.

### ***Elders - Roger Huggins***

The Elders team has now been replaced with a Ministry Team under the leadership of Greg Hallett and Roger Huggins. This team began work at the end of 2014 and have a membership of 10: Tim Jacques, Ali Berkley, Kay Latham, Julie Singlehurst, Fran Foster, Dom Hallett, Peter Penney together with Greg, Roger and Peter Walker. The MT are concentrating on vision and direction of the church and planning future ministry rather than a leadership role (which Greg and Roger are taking) and will be actively involved with carrying through the "8 Essential Qualities of a Healthy Growing Church" initiative which we have now signed up to with the diocese.

### ***Bell Ringers—Mike Davies***

I would like to thank the ringers who give up their time regularly to ring the church bells. We are a small number but try to ring regularly for church services and have been mostly successful, but find it difficult when people are away on holiday or ill. We missed Avis and Pam when they went for hip operations, but thankfully they both have recovered very well and are back in swing!!!

In addition to the Sunday services we have rung the bells for 5 weddings, having to refuse a 6<sup>th</sup> because it was on a Friday, and we found it difficult to obtain enough ringers.

The bells are used by outside ringers quite often, on 16 occasions in 2014. These ringers come from local areas as well as from all parts of the country.

We do find it difficult to recruit new ringers, which will become a problem in the future, but we will do our best to ring the bells whenever possible.

### ***Fabric Report—Churchwardens***

Following the PCC's decision in 2013 we applied for Planning Permission to create new toilet facilities in an extension to the porch. The proposals were met with considerable opposition both from within and outside the village and in recognition of this the application was withdrawn. Shortly after this decision the Planning authority informed us that the Planning Permission for the Rainbow Room had expired and demanded that we either remove the building or submit a new Planning Application. We made an application but this was refused. On appeal the refusal was overturned by the Planning Appeals Inspectorate who then granted us a Planning Permission until December 2017.

This led the PCC to look into the possibility of combining new toilet facilities and the space of the temporary building into one new permanent building attached to the South wall with access from the external door of the Church Room. Accordingly we sought the advice of the Diocesan Advisory Committee on the best solution. We are pleased to report that preliminary proposals were favourably considered and at the March meeting of the PCC it was decided to submit a Planning Application. It was also agreed that prior to this step the Salford Priors' community would be fully informed of the proposals and an "open day" would be advertised when details of our plans would be explained and questions answered. At the same time the PCC would put on display its proposals for changes to be made to the South Aisle of the church.

As most of you will have seen, a comprehensive restoration of the external stonework was completed. This work was undertaken within the approved cost. Whilst the scaffolding was in place advantage was taken to carry out other maintenance work including, re-gilding to both faces of the clock, cleaning out rainwater gutters and repairs to parts of the tiled roofs. The masonry contractors also dealt with the defective plastering in the Church Room and the North wall of the Nave.

During 2014 the seriously deteriorating roof of the toilet block was re-felted.

PAT (Portable Appliance Test) checks have been completed and replacement of external car park and footpath lighting is currently in hand.

It is with regret that Andy Woodhouse has had to retire from graveyard maintenance work but is continuing with emptying of the grave attenders' barrow.

We would take this opportunity of thanking Andy for all his help over the past few years.

### ***Worship Music Group - Kay Latham***

The last few months have been challenging for the Worship Group with Amy and Paul taking time out for very different reasons. However, as is often the case when the usual people are unavailable, an opportunity arises for others to become involved: Josh, Fran, Tim, Ali, Beth and Roger have all helped to lead worship with their singing. Greg has become a regular fixture behind the microphone, accompanying Julie, and Jordan continues to attend most weeks with Kieran and Matt both willing to help when they can.

Julie and I attended a Mission Worship conference last November where we heard seminars on how to ensure all styles of worship are included, where possible, in our services. These are wonderful talks given by musicians who have spent many years leading worship: Stuart Townend (who wrote 'In Christ Alone') to name just one of the many.

It has been wonderful involving the younger children with playing percussion instruments at our family services. There are definitely some potential future worship group members amongst them!

Looking forward, we would love to have more people involved in the music, whether singing or playing instruments and would welcome a conversation with anyone interested in joining us.

May I take this opportunity to say a big 'Thank you' to all the singers, musicians and those who help set up, put away equipment, adjust the sound levels, make suggestions for music and print the hymns and songs each week. Real team work.

### ***Cup Cake Café - Julie Hallett***

As you may know, we donate our cakes and time freely and St Matthew's Church pays the facility fee. We would like you to know that because of all your kind donations, £2010 has been given to local and overseas charities over the past three years. For example: Jayne Mottram took a donation of £100 when she visited women in need in India. Katie Latham took a donation of £100 to Durban in South Africa when she volunteered there for the 3 months last summer. Last Christmas we helped provide meals for the homeless and we have sent a donation to the local Youth Club.

Please see our board if you would like any more information or talk to one of the Team. As we are always looking to support local charities, please let us know any ideas you may have. Looking forward to another year of Cup Cake Cafes!

### ***Outreach via Sport - Greg Hallett***

2014 wasn't one of the best years from a 'success' point of view – but ultimately the winning or losing isn't why we set up and run the sports challenge events.

The spirit of community and friendship is at the heart of the outreach – Christians are 'normal', we can be very competitive and enjoy the thrill of winning just as much as anybody – the enjoyment of sport with friends with participants ranging

in age from 15 to 75 is what excites all of us. There is much more laughter than celebration! The year started well with victory in the badminton and the football, but since then we suffered a heavy defeat in the cricket and we also lost in the kayaking challenge on the Avon in Bidford and were soundly thrashed in the inaugural golf tournament held at Bidford Golf Club.

Amazingly after 8 years and 28 sports challenges the record is 12 wins apiece with 4 draws. I estimate that 150 different people have taken part and countless lasting friendships have been made. Long may it continue!

### ***Open the Book - Wendy Shaddick***

Last year we completed the stories of the bible, including 'Acts' so in September we started back at the beginning of the Old Testament. We have now been visiting schools for seven years, hence why we have completed a complete cycle of bible stories! Just before Easter we completed the story of Joseph so will start in September with the story of Moses.

I am grateful to my small but dedicated band of actors and actresses who turn out so regularly to perform to the children bible stories in a form that they enjoy and therefore remember. We would love more help and support in this valuable work.

### ***Community Group - Stephen Foster***

The group meets every Thursday at Salford Priors Memorial Hall. The first meeting of the Group was in June 2009 and Community Group meetings (as we now call them) have taken place each and every week, with a few breaks for holidays, ever since. The Group numbers have declined recently with the death of a founder member although we have started to see interest from new people in the village wanting to see what we're all about.

The Group have built relationships where they support and encourage one another and provides a sense of belonging and identity. Members are journeying together weekly in search of truth and meaning in a society where meaning seems hard to find and represents a group with a will to help those outside in need. This is another "fresh expression" of church. It works towards establishing a new community or congregation especially for those who have never been involved in church (un-churched) or once were, but left for whatever reason (de-churched), and is a fresh expression of church in the making. The Group attended the recent Christmas Carol service at St. Matthews.

### ***Pastoral Care Team—Peter Penney***

Members of the Pastoral Care Team have been quietly making and keeping contact with folks in the community who have differing needs.

#### **What are we aiming to provide?**

- To come alongside people to support them through difficult times with acts of fellowship and love.
- To respond to people's specific needs.
- To seek God's guidance and discernment so that we can listen, care and support people in need.
- To work as a team with trust and confidentiality, and do not attempt to offer

what we cannot honour.

- To be the bridge between those we visit and Jesus and seek to be Jesus to them.

If you know of anyone who would welcome a visit by one of the Team, who could offer confidential listening support, encouragement or befriending, please let me know on 01386 40170

### ***Youth Work:***

#### ***'JAM'—Ruth Simmons & Lisa Fisher***

Over the past year JAM has continued to meet once a month in the Rainbow Room. We have enjoyed spending time together, learning new things, having fun, making things, and spending time in worship and prayer. The number of children attending each session has averaged 4 and the age range of the children has been between 4 and 10 years old. The topics and themes we have covered this year include David and Goliath, Daniel and the Lion's Den, Light of the world, Love, Lent, Easter, New Life and Christmas.

We are very fortunate to have the continued assistance of a couple of the 'Kick Off' teenagers. We very much appreciate their help and the younger children really do look up to the older teenagers and enjoy spending time in their company. Plans for the year ahead include investigating the possibility of splitting the children up into groups based on age. This would enable us to provide different activities and learning opportunities for both the younger and older children within a JAM session. This idea has come from the children themselves so we will be looking into the feasibility of implementing this suggestion in the near future.

#### ***'Kick Off'—Ali Berkley & Alex Clarke***

Kick Off has continued to meet once a month on Sunday mornings in the Rainbow Room. We have a combination of chat, Bible Study permeated with quizzes and usually a lot of cake or chocolates! Alex Clarke and I have been joint leaders assisted by Dom Hallett.

Discussions are underway at the moment to consider Sunday evening meetings and also meeting more often than once monthly.

Our teens enjoy KO once they got over the shock of getting up before mid-day! Alex and I love being part of their group and feel privileged to share some of their thoughts and happiness as well as some of their angst with them.

#### ***'Fresh Exression'—Stephen & Fran Foster***

This is a monthly event for the youth of Salford Priors held once a month on a Sunday evening which is aimed at building relationships with the youth of the village. The latest pop music videos are projected on the screen at the Memorial Hall, with occasional live music from Jordan Hallett. Games include giant chess, table football and air hockey. There is a chill out zone with bean bags and dimmed lighting and we provide free food and drink. Each session we project a faith video, with a scriptural message, currently from USA Youth ministries. The event has now been running for 18 months; the behaviour of the youth attending has improved and there is now a lovely calm atmosphere. The hope is that over time,

the youth will begin to engage in discussions about the scriptural messages that they hear or about other issues. There are young people from the village who attend the cupcake cafe who are already looking forward to the day when they are old enough to attend Fresh Expression. This will hopefully provide a stepping stone on their journey of faith within the St. Matthew's family.

### ***Marriage Preparation—Greg & Julie Hallett***

We led another 4 week course in February preparing couples for marriage. 8 couples attended 1 or more sessions covering topics that include 'communication & conflict' and 'companionship, children & sex'.

The course is low key and although there is only a very small amount of content that is specifically about Christianity and faith, all of the underlying essence of Jesus teaching and our God given human nature are evident throughout.

At an exciting time in peoples relationships, having made one of the most important decisions in their lives, it is a privilege to be able to talk and share with them as they explore techniques and principles to help them towards their future together and to uphold the promises they are about to make. For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death they do part.

It is beautiful to watch them grow in confidence as a group, making new friends and learning more about each other, their history, upbringing and their likes and dislikes all of which are better understood and worked through by love, communication, honour and respect. We look forward to running this course very much each year.

### ***Small Groups***

Four **Homegroups** continue to meet in various homes, usually twice a month during the year, for Bible study, prayer and mutual support as well as social events. In the past year they have studied Romans chapter 8 in detail and some have now moved on to look at the Parables of Jesus. They also read the lessons, lead prayers and provide and serve refreshments at our main Sunday morning services. Our thanks to the leaders and hosts of these groups which form an important part of our fellowship. Unfortunately the **Ladies' Fellowship** has closed due to dwindling numbers.

### ***Prayer & Retreats***

The life of our church continues to be underpinned with prayer, and Thursday mornings and Friday evenings have seen regular weekly prayer sessions attended by a faithful few. Following a short survey of the congregation (which is to be repeated soon to encourage a wider response) we may add a further prayer session sometime during the week and also try a regular, probably monthly, Sunday evening service of more reflective worship and prayer.

A group of 27 attended Spring Harvest in Skegness and enjoyed inspirational teaching and worship and others also went to Lindisfarne again for a week of prayer, reflection and fellowship.

Many of our ladies again attended the two day 'Colour' conference hosted by Hillsong church at the Wembley Arena and also a "Philia" ladies day at Chipping Campden Baptist church in May.



## ***Communication***

“Heartbeat” magazine has continued to be published monthly, ably edited by Neil Smart of St Laurence’s Bidford. Tim Jacques has been our “local reporter” collating information from St Matthew’s and the village to include in the magazine.

Our website, maintained by the Administrator, is still the place to go for all the up to date information on St Matthew’s. The Heart of England Group website includes items for the whole group of churches: [www.heartparishes.org.uk](http://www.heartparishes.org.uk)

## ***Treasurer’s Report—Andy Clarke***

The year ended 2014 showed an improvement over 2013 on operating figures, this was due in the main to a gift aid return amounting to £11,149. (2013 & 2014)

In addition to this planned giving was up from £22k to £26.4k following a successful Stewardship campaign part way through the year, indications would suggest some migration from loose plate collections so it’s not entirely clear what the full year affect will be in 2015.

Other highlights were a saving of around £2k on our electric bill following efforts to reduce and monitor our usage and research is ongoing to source a more competitive tariff.

We also benefited from a one of transfer of £2.5k from the Bell Ringers fund and responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the bells has now transferred to the PCC.

The PCC commissioned the exterior re-ordering of the Church which has now been completed and has come in slightly under the original £80k budget, £68k of designated funds were used for this purpose in 2014.

Finances continue to be a challenge for St Mathews PCC even though we are only showing a small loss for 2014. Some of the benefits such as the gift aid will not yield the same return in 2015 and the current projections show a loss of around £3k for 2015 so cost controls are still critical.

In August of 2014 the accounts for St Mathews were transferred to bespoke software developed for Churches and Charities. The benefit of this software means that we can provide better reporting with more detailed information far easier than the previous system, it also means that the accounts can be backed up on to a number of different PC’s in case of a computer failure.

I would like to acknowledge the work that my predecessor Andy Dean did in setting up this system and to take the opportunity to formally thank him for his continued help and support.

## ***Thank yous!***

We would like to record our grateful thanks to our Churchwardens, Peter Penney and Kevin Harrison, for their work in the parish and on Sunday mornings. On Sundays they have been ably assisted by the group of Sidespersons who warmly welcome folk as they arrive for services and give out the various items for worship. Anyone else who would like to join in this important ministry would be very welcome. We thank Andy Clarke, our Treasurer who has taken on the role this year and has been gaining knowledge and experience as he works with Andy Dean and Greg Hallett to understand and manage our finances.

Thanks also to those who work behind the scenes: to Mike Davies who manages the daily church security; to those who lay out the altar and worship space for services and clear up afterwards; and to those who provide and arrange flowers, clean brasses and generally keep the church looking lovely.



