

**Rev Stuart Carter - Annual Report for the year 2019**  
**(with additional comments for January to October of 2020)**

**Presented to Annual Parochial Meeting (18<sup>th</sup> October 2020)**

## **1. Church Governance and Leadership.**

Aspects of Church life and ministry continue to be addressed by the **PCC** at its regular meetings throughout the year. These also include progress towards St Clements Transforming Church Targets (displayed on our church noticeboard), the approval of parish policies (eg. Safeguarding) and reports/discussion about matters concerning the wider church in the Deanery and Diocese. The **Standing Committee** which consists of the churchwardens Gail Jeffery and Annette Somen, Treasurer Ann Davey, PCC Secretary Linda Pemberton and myself) meet to set the PCC agenda and to deal with urgent business. My thanks go to them for their support in aspects of church business and administration, and for the assistance Alison Haywood and Martin Scyner provide as Deputy Churchwardens.

The **Fabric Sub-Committee** has met regularly to discuss and organise maintenance, servicing and repair needs; and to organise working parties from time to time to keep the grounds and building in order. An Enhanced Quinquennial Inspection was carried out to give a more detailed assessment of the sustainability of the building. This was done to provide additional information to support discussion about potential building development work with regard to our community café and other community outreach/activities.

The **Social & Fundraising Committee** has worked with a range of volunteers to organise various fund-raising and community events, including the Summer and Christmas Fayres, Garden Party, Quiz nights, and other events supporting both Church and Oasis Community Café funds.

The **Oasis Community Café Planning Committee** has also continued to plan and oversee the general running and provision for the Café, relationships with customers and other partners, and progress towards the plans for a new building extension (*see separate Annual Report*).

The **Building Development Sub-committee** have been working together with the purpose of moving forward the development plans for the Community Café/Hub (*For further details, see below\*\**)

The **Worship and Ministry Leadership Team** during 2019 has consisted of the Vicar (Stuart), Lay Readers (Colin West, Margaret Hayes and Anne Daniels), Mission Apprentice (Ricki Sandiford), Children's work Coordinator (Wendy Carter), and Rev Margaret Robinson who has been supporting the Healing/Prayer Team and other pastoral work together with Colin. During the early part of the year we said Goodbye to Andi Thomas who has since moved to become a Pioneer Minister in Chelmsley Wood. (Margaret Robinson also left us in January 2020 to support the church near her home in Erdington.) The team continues to meet every six weeks or so to discuss, develop and pray for aspects of worship (leading, preaching, themes and services), pastoral issues, and priorities for teaching and discipleship. We have also met weekly on Wednesday mornings to pray and catch up on matters of pastoral concern.

Others have assisted with leadership in the context of our JSP small groups and other worship/nurture, especially with children's and families.

## **2. Worship**

During 2019 **attendance at Sunday services averaged 65** (55 adults and 10 children). Remaining the same as in 2018. The total number of our worshipping community (those who attend a service once a month or more either here at St Clements or at Jubilee Gardens) was estimated at 120 for the year 2019.

Other **Occasional Offices** conducted at or on behalf of St Clements during 2019.

Baptisms

Thanksgiving & Blessings	0
Confirmations	1
Weddings	0
Funerals (in Church)	1
Funerals (Crematoria)	17

**Thanks to all those who have helped with the organisation and leading of services throughout the year.** Our Lay Readers (Margaret Hayes, Colin West and Anne Daniels), Wendy Carter and Ricki Sandiford who has taken greater responsibility in “Pizza & Praise” and has also supported in preaching from time to time. Also Margaret Robinson who supported pastoral and prayer ministry in the parish and was been part of the Ministry and Worship Team for much of 2019. I am also grateful for Chris Bubb (our organist) and the other singers and musicians that have continued to support us in our regular worship. The help of others assisting with readings and Intercessions is also greatly appreciated (*others willing to help in this way are always welcome*).

Our **main 10.00am service** was well attended during the year. Seasonal services and “Messy Church” style services have been wonderful times with many children and families attending.

During 2019 due to falling numbers at “Pizza & Praise” it was decided to change the format to a **monthly “Messy Church” Service** for families with younger children (0-10s). This was organised for Saturday tea time and attracted several new families. The service included a meal for the families. Lynn McGuigan and Pat Whitehouse worked hard to prepare these for us with support from Amelia, one of our young people.

**Wednesday 10.00am Communion Services** continue with regular attendance averaging around 13 people.

**Jesus Shaped People:** Our regular weekly **JSP small groups** continued to meet, led by Anne Daniels, Wendy Carter, and Margaret Hayes along with their other leaders and hosts. During 2019 they followed a series on “Encountering God in Prayer” and then the JSP “Spirit Filled Church” course.

Monthly services at **Jubilee Gardens Residential and Day Centre for the Elderly** continued during 2019, though less regularly due to significant staff changes and other issues at the home. It remains a challenge to maintain consistency. We never know how many residents we will get on any given occasion.

### **3. Development of Church’s Vision, Ministry and Mission**

PCC has met throughout the year to conduct business on behalf of the Church, and to ensure that the church is in step with current responsibilities and policies required by the Church of England Birmingham. But, first and foremost, to support the life, worship and ministry of St Clements, and to further progress towards the Parish’s **Transforming Church Targets**.

#### **“Connecting and reconnecting with people in the parish”.**

Efforts continued throughout 2019 in building a more open and welcoming environment at St Clement, through the work of **Oasis Community Café** and **Coffee Lounge**, and a variety of other groups offering a welcome and support to local people.

These have included a new **Dementia Café “Forget-me-not”** and a group for **Parents of Children with Additional Needs** led by Jo Sandiford.

We have had some encouraging links with the Cars Area Group and the Café has attracted partnerships from some local agencies supporting vulnerable people.

The Kingfisher Food Bank continues to meet the needs of many families and individuals who struggle financially within our parish. The project is served by a team of volunteers from several local congregations, including our

own Martin Scyner and Sue Such. Many members of St Clements also regularly contribute food and toiletry items.

The regular **Bingo Club** on Fridays also continued to bring us into regular contact with folk in our neighbourhood. Members of the club have contributed through their own contributions in ways that have benefited the church and others, including Lucy and Mark Cavell's work with The Kenyan Children's Project. Les and Margaret Hayes have worked hard to facilitate this activity.

In April 2019, following the departure of Briony Thomas, our parents support group ("Me Time") came to an end. However, in June, "**Our Space**" was launched offering a similar format for local families and attracting many parents to come and enjoy a relaxing café based atmosphere with space to chat or join in with craft activities whilst children enjoyed a variety of play opportunities. Thanks to all those who worked so hard to set up every fortnight and make people welcome (especially leaders Jo Sandiford, Gail Jeffery and Wendy Carter and other helpers).

**Ricki continued his work as our Mission Apprentice.** During 2019, along with his training commitments, he has continued to visit and build friendships with local people on the Smiths Wood Estate, led a Prayer Walking Group and worked to develop ministry to men through a small Men's Support/Discipleship Group and other occasional Men's Social Events. He has also did some preliminary work towards establishing a new church community or Fresh Expression on the estate.

*(Ricki's work continues to develop in 2020 in his new role as Lay Church Planter)*

#### **"Develop more effective publicity and communication of information through printed and online media."**

The Church Website is regularly updated, and news and events are posted on the church's Facebook page. In addition, several articles have been written and published in our local newspaper the Coleshill Post.

#### **"Become more active in prayer and care."**

This target expresses the PCC's agreement that prayer should become more central to the life of St Clement's Church; recognising that our fellowship, ministry and caring should reflect our faith, dependency and commitment towards God.

JSP Groups have provided valuable fellowship and support for many in the congregation, and have also been helping to increase people's confidence in sharing and praying in response to one another's experiences and needs.

#### **The Healing/Prayer Team**

Colin West continues to exercise an important ministry in visiting the sick and homebound members of our church, and in administering home communion.

Members of the **Healing Prayer Team** were available at most services to pray for any who have a need for healing or encouragement. They also met regularly before the service to pray for the service and other concerns.

A **monthly prayer meeting** was established, though attendance has remained small for that.

#### **"To develop work with young people, children and families."**

Wendy Carter continues to serve as Children's Work Coordinator for the Parish.

#### **Sunday Service Provision:**

A number of folk regularly help to lead children's teaching and activities during the Sunday Worship. Thank you to Wendy Carter, Ann Davey, Gail Jeffries, Jenny Clowes, Jenny Sills, and Jenny Watts.

Jo Sandiford and Wendy Carter also worked to provide creche facilities for very young children and their parents during our services.

Monthly **Messy Church Services** (*see above*) have been encouraging, with a number of families coming as a result of other activities; in particular:

**"Our Space"** (*see above*)

**"Growing Patch" Parent and Toddler Group.** Jo Sandiford has worked hard to develop "Growing Patch" into a successful and popular group which has been oversubscribed throughout 2019.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Castle Bromwich Boys Brigade & Girls Association (BBGA):**

Leaders include: Wendy Carter, Paula Prior, Kim Mann Jenny Watts, Ian Cobden, Holly Harris and myself.

Numbers remained healthy throughout 2019.

The 'Company' section of Brigade (12 – 16s) continued to meet separately from the younger ones under the leadership of Stuart and Wendy with some extra help from Ricki and Jo Sandiford. Meanwhile the younger Brigade Group (5-11s) continued successfully under the leadership of Jenny Watts.

In October 2019 Stuart and Wendy accompanied eight of the older group to a Weekend Camp at Fort Rocky organised by British Youth for Christ where they enjoyed a variety of outdoor pursuits as well as other Christian activities and presentations.

### **Contact with Local Schools.**

Contact with the schools in the parish: Castle Bromwich Infant School, Castle Bromwich Junior School, Smiths Wood Primary Academy, and Park Hall Academy (secondary) has continued during 2019.

Assemblies, occasional lessons and school visits to St Clements Church have taken place.

Alison Haywood continues to serve as a governor at Castle Bromwich Juniors School, and myself at Smiths Wood Primary Academy.

### **"To support further development of Oasis Community Café as a core expression of St Clement's life and mission".**

Throughout 2019 Oasis Community Café and Coffee Lounge continued to draw in folk from the local community many of whom have found longstanding support and friendship as a result.

Having the Chapel open on a Monday has enabled a number of people to find space to offload or seek prayer or a 'listening ear' for issues they are facing in their lives.

Many thanks to the Planning Group and faithful volunteers that have worked hard to sustain the growth and development of this expression of St Clements life and mission. ***It is important that the Community Café is accepted and owned by the whole congregation as an integral part of St Clements Church life.***

The **Building Development Sub-committee** have been working together with the purpose of moving forward the development plans for the Community Café/Hub. This has included the drawing up of a **Feasibility Study** with the help of APEC Architects, looking at the vision of the church for the development of the work of the Community café and associated activities, and how we can be a church that welcomes, serves and works with our local community. This was funded by a £10,000 grant from the Lottery's "Awards for All" Fund. The result was an ambitious conceptual design for the development of our church building, along with an initial costing estimate of about a million pounds. By the end of 2019 funds for the building development had risen to almost £40,000 thanks to the generosity of donors and fundraising/contributions from Café activities.

***A separate Report and accounts for the Oasis Community Café are also available.*** Many thanks to Alf Haywood for his support in keeping the Café accounts up to date. The accounts for 2019 have been approved and audited with assistance from our treasure Ann Davey).

#### **4. Safeguarding**

The PCC reviews its Safeguarding Policies on an annual basis. The Annual Safeguarding Review took place on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

*(Note the most recent Safeguarding review for 2020 took place on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020)*

**Alison Haywood** was appointed as the **Parish Safe Guarding Coordinator** as well as the **Parish Identity Verifier** for the purposes of online Safeguarding checks.

**Wendy Carter** was appointed **Assistant Identity Verifier** and **Children's Safeguarding Advocate**.

**Colin West** was appointed as **Adult Safeguarding Advocate**.

**Rev Stuart Carter** was appointed as the **PCC Safeguarding Lead**.

#### **5. Building Maintenance & Lettings**

The Church rooms continued to be used regularly throughout 2019 by a range of groups including Dazzlers Dance classes, 4<sup>th</sup> Castle Bromwich Brownies, Castle Bromwich Ladies Club, Slimming World, and so on. As well as providing a steady source of income, it is good to see the church operating as a centre for community life in this way. Thanks to **Kathleen Ensor** for her work as our bookings secretary, and **Martin Scyner** who coordinated key holders to open and close for hall users.

**Thanks again to The Fabric Committee**, for their regular work in identifying, assessing and addressing maintenance and repair work throughout the year.

Thanks also to the "**Holy Dusters**" who regularly came in to clean the Church.

#### **6. Additional comments for January to October of 2020.**

There is no escaping the impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic on our Parish. It is the reason that Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting has been delayed until October 2020.

##### **Worship and Ministry:**

The National Lockdown led to the church building being closed completely for almost four months from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, with no groups able to meet. People were encouraged to continue in worship and services were pre-recorded and accessible on YouTube with links from Facebook and the church website. The ministry team and others were able to contribute sermons, readings and prayers by videoing themselves and sending them to me for inclusion. It was noticeable that quite a number of people who were not members of the church took the opportunity to watch online services from St Clements.

By following Church of England guidance and producing a Risk Assessment, we were able to open the church twice a week for individual prayer from 28<sup>th</sup> June.

**Public worship** was resumed on 26<sup>th</sup> July on a Wednesday and Sunday mornings, with social distancing, limited numbers and hygiene measures in place. Numbers are currently limited to 30 people per service. Many have remained cautious of the virus and continued to watch from home on a Sunday with the 10am service being live-streamed on YouTube. People have not taken up the option of an 11.15am service despite the 10.00am

service often filling up. Some consideration is being given to changing service times to make two services accessible to more people.

**Child friendly services** have been difficult to provide in church because of restricted movement and the unpredictability of small children. Messy Church had to stop when the Church was closed. However, we are experimenting with a new **Table Based Family Worship** service which we hope will be a monthly event.

### **Church Mission and Activities:**

The Covid Pandemic has meant that most of the church's seasonal and social activities have been unable to take place.

Despite some easing of lockdown, many of our regular activities at St Clements have been unable to reopen yet.

The **Oasis Community Café** and associated groups such as "**Our Space**", **Forget-me-not Dementia Café**, and the **Autism Support Group** have been unable to meet. "**Growing Patch**" Parent and Toddlers is not yet able to reopen.

**Brigade** has also yet to restart and although an online version may have been possible the technical experience and confidence has not been enough to enable that to happen. Kim, a longstanding leader who has served faithfully for many years, has now retired, Our thanks and appreciation go to her for all she has done. This leaves us with less leaders than before, making it difficult to cover face-to-face meetings.

We still face significant challenges in our hospitality and outreach as a church, and it has been heart breaking to lose so many of what have been regular contacts.

*However we have had some encouragements.*

People have benefitted from sharing news, encouragement and prayer requests over the St Clements **WhatsApp Group**. Others have been faithful in keeping in touch with others by phone and text.

Two of our **JSP Groups** have been meeting again, albeit in smaller numbers, and people have appreciated the opportunity to meet for support, Bible study and prayer. The **Men's Group** has also been able to meet from time to time.

**Ricki Sandiford has now begun his new role as Lay Church Planter** on the Smiths Wood Estate, and is in the process of building a team and making/remaking contact with people on the estate, whilst exploring possibilities for a venue for the establishment of a new worshipping community there.

### **Oasis Community Café/Building Development:**

There is considerable **rethinking and re-envisioning** going on about the future of the Community Café and the Building Development Plans that were being pursued before the Covid Pandemic.

This review includes a recognition that we **need to recapture the original vision**, returning from the frenetic activity of the Friday Café, with volunteers struggling to get food out to large numbers, to a more person centred way of operating, so that the focus can be more on friendship and relationship building.

With plans to turn the building into a larger space for the community now running counter to the social distancing demanded by the Covid 19 situation (which is likely to persist for some time) **we are considering how we might use the funds already available to us (about £40,000) to create a kitchen and café within the current footprint of the church.** The hope is that we may be able to accomplish this during the time when the

café is unable to function, so that we can complete the work and restart sometime in the first half of 2021. Consultations with architects are currently underway.

### **Resourcing the life and mission of the Church:**

The Church is facing some real financial challenges for the coming months and year.

Hall lettings were non-existent for six months and remain at a low ebb. A couple of pre-school groups and Slimming World are running again with changes in place. But other groups are unable to meet due to government regulations or other restrictions.

Our main fundraising events have been unable to take place. Summer and Christmas Fayres (they would together normally raise about £2,000), as well as the garden party, quizzes and other events that would have normally taken place.

Congregational giving has also dropped significantly during this time.

Added to this there have been some expensive bills for maintenance and repair during the years to date. The projector needed replacement and it looks like that we will have to replace some heaters in the main church hall.

Our Common Fund contribution is likely to be half that of last year, which if repeated across the Diocese will lead to some great challenges for the whole of the Church of England, Birmingham.

This is a time for us to be prayerful and generous, as well as dependant upon God for his faithfulness and provision. It's an opportunity for us to refresh our understanding of our discipleship and faith as part of every aspect of our lives, both spiritually and practically. I would want us to encourage one another in facing these challenges together in fellowship with God who is able to provide all we need if we are faithful.

Finally:

It is impossible to thank everyone who has played a part in supporting the St Clement's ministry and mission – so many have helped in numerous ways. In these recent months many have also offered care and support in ways that are unseen – phone calls and acts of kindness to friends and neighbours, contributions to the Kingfisher Food Bank (which has continued to function throughout the lockdown), and no doubt many other examples.

Whatever awaits us in the coming months there is still joy and peace to be found in serving God, one another, and those around us. Of all people we have a hope and a purpose that cannot be taken away. We follow a Saviour whose love has overcome sin and death, and who calls us to follow him in bringing glory to God and good news and blessing to others.

“Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13;20-21)

All God's blessings,



(Rev Stuart Carter)