

The Parish of Longcot with Fernham

Annual Vestry Meeting and
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
at 7:00pm on Wednesday 14th July 2021
via Zoom (online and by telephone)

Please contact the PCC Secretary for details of how to join the meeting:
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Annual Vestry Meeting 2021 - Agenda

1. Prayers
2. Election of the Clerk to the meeting
3. Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held on Wednesday 18th November 2020 via Zoom
4. Election of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2021 - Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Wednesday 18th November 2020 via Zoom
3. Electoral Roll
4. Election of Deanery Synod Representative (not required this year)
5. Election of PCC
6. Appointment of Independent Examiner
7. Secretary's Report
8. Financial Report
9. Churchwarden's Report
10. Incumbent's Report
11. Deanery Synod Report
12. Other Reports
13. Any other business

Minutes of the Annual Vestry and Parish Meetings of Longcot with Fernham PCC held at 7pm on Wednesday 18 November 2020 via Zoom

Present: Rev'd Norma FERGUSON (NF – Vicar, Chair), Rev'd Canon Paul Richardson (PR – Associate Vicar), Tom ARNOLD (TA), Dennis BLEASE (DB), Tony CRABTREE (TC), Chris GOTCH (CG), Keith REID (KR), Neil SUTHERLAND (NS), Amanda WEBB (AW), Richard FERGUSON (RF – Acting PCC Sec), Lucy LAIRD (LL – PCC Sec (desig)), Bob BIRTWHISTLE (BB – in attendance – Independent Examiner)

Opening prayer

NF opened the meeting with prayer.

Note: It was agreed that the meeting would be recorded for ease of note taking.

Vestry meeting

1. NF welcomed all to the meeting, especially Canon Paul Richardson in his first meeting as Associate Vicar; members of the PCC were invited to introduce themselves.
2. NF noted this was the APCM for 2019 and that should be the focus of the discussion. However, as DB had commented in his report, it would be disingenuous not to take events of 2020 into account when necessary to do so.
3. **Appointment of Clerk:** It was agreed that RF would act as Clerk for the vestry meeting and APCM, and that LL would minute the PCC meeting which followed.
4. **Minutes of previous vestry meeting on 17 April 2019** were approved. NF would sign in hard copy
5. **Re-election of Church Warden:** NF thanked DB for his hard work and championship of the needs of the churches; also NS & TA for their support in Fernham. She noted that DB had already stayed in post longer than his original intention, and asked all to think and pray about their calling to the PCC and more formal roles within the churches. The necessary paperwork having been completed electronically prior to the meeting, DB was re-elected unanimously. RF had received signed copy of DB's Church Warden declaration and would forward to the Deanery Lay Chair; PR would formally induct DB at the earliest opportunity to hold a service in St Mary's.

APCM

1. **Apologies for absence** had been received from Anna Gardiner and Heather Birtwhistle.
2. **Minutes of the April 2019 APCM** which had been circulated electronically were approved. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda. NF would sign in hard copy.
3. **The Electoral Roll** was declared as 20 (Fernham 4, Longcot 16).
 - a) It was noted that TA's name had been omitted in error from the roll initially circulated in the APCM Reports; RF had circulated a revised Roll including TA prior to the meeting.
 - b) An application had been received from CG to be enrolled, so as to allow him to be elected to the PCC. He will be added to the Electoral Roll immediately following the APCM; however church regulations require that an individual must *already* be on the Roll to be elected at an APCM. CG will therefore, subject to approval at the subsequent PCC meeting, be elected to the PCC. RF would circulate an updated Electoral Roll with the Minutes of the APCM.
4. **The Clergy Report** had been circulated within the APCM Report prior to the meeting. NF highlighted a number of points specifically relating to Longcot with Fernham:
 - The flower festival and what is becoming our traditional choral evensong to support it (and thereby enhance the collection). NS was asked to thank Lin Sutherland for providing flowers for services in St John
 - The concerts in church by the Clarinet collective and Torriano ensemble – music-making of the highest quality
 - The bellringers – we have ringers for every service and Lucy and Tony have also encouraged the schoolchildren to explore the tower (safely) and learn about the bells - an admirable form of 'succession planning'
 - The wonderful relationship with the school, who fill the church at Easter, Harvest and for the Leavers' service as well as coming into church for the occasional class visit. That relationship will continue with Paul as Governor. Favourite moment of the year was school Lighting the Candle group coming into church – one of them said the church smelled like his Grandma's house (flowers and polish). LtC are a small group of year 6s who learn how to plan and lead worship

through weekly meetings; we also led collective worship each week, supported by the Methodist church

- Both churches are always immaculate – NF recorded her sincere thanks to the cleaning group in Longcot, and to NS and TA in Fernham.
 - The excellent working relationships between the churches and their village trusts – NF expressed her gratitude to all concerned
 - A highlight was the completion of the Memorial Garden with interments of ashes and a very special Remembrance Sunday service
 - Covid has presented all sorts of challenges and will continue to do so. NF refrained from making any political comments on the closure of churches, but noted that this had made fundraising a challenge, and that this would remain an issue for 2021. We would need to work hard to encourage people back into church – however, this would happen with God’s help and also with the increased individual attention which Paul would be able to give the churches than has been possible during two years of vacancy
 - NF invited questions on the report however none were raised.
5. **Churchwarden’s reports** – these had been received from DB and NS, and circulated prior to the meeting within the consolidated APCM Report. NF invited any additional comments or questions.
- DB acknowledged the challenges associated with maintaining the pattern of services during the two years of Vacancy, and thanked NF and RF for their efforts during this period
 - Other very significant issues related to income generation and parish share under lockdown remained, and would continue to dominate our lives going forward
6. **PCC Secretary’s report** had been circulated within the APCM Report prior to the meeting. RF noted that:
- the report reflected the PCC membership as it was in 2019, not currently. It was noted that NS’s name had been omitted from the list of PCC members; RF would correct this and re-issue with the minutes.
 - the business conducted by the PCC in 2019 was largely routine – the major issues encountered more recently would be reflected in next year’s report
 - The updated PCC Safeguarding Policy would be presented for approval at the PCC meeting immediately following the APCM
7. NF expressed her thanks to all and in particular to TA and CG for supporting the PCC, and reminded all of the need to encourage others to consider joining the PCC, likening it as a journey to be undertaken together for mutual benefit.
8. **The Financial Report** The accounts to 31 December 2019, together with the Independent Examiner’s report had been circulated with the APCM Report prior to the meeting; KR invited any additional comments or questions, reminding the meeting that we were still looking at 2019 only.
- KR highlighted that £20,000 from Fernham’s accounts had now been invested, and the first, modest, interest payment received.
 - KR noted that it had been possible to maintain the actual figures to date closely with those forecast, reflecting careful husbanding of resources; it would however become progressively more challenging to maintain this.
9. NF thanked KR for the ‘amazing’ job he has done in keeping the PCC solvent during the challenging times we are living through. She acknowledged that KR had remained in post long after his intended retirement date, and reiterated her and the PCCs commitment to find a replacement.
10. KR also thanked BB for his involvement with, and meticulous auditing of, the accounts, and the confidence this gave to our congregations. At the same time, BB acknowledged the sustained improvidence in the standards of record-keeping

throughout many years. BB's offer to remain as our Independent Examiner was unanimously and gratefully accepted and he was formally reappointed.

11. NF finally expressed her huge thanks to Keith for his growing skills as an accomplished fundraiser this year. Although much of this is for LVT, St Mary's is only one of the village organisations which will benefit from LVTs efforts.
12. **Deanery synod report.** RF made two observations:
 - Finance was already a significant part of Synod's business; it was inevitable that over the next year it would become overwhelmingly so, given the challenges experienced by many parishes in maintaining their finances, and the (to date) inflexible attitude of the Diocese.
 - Although still commercially sensitive there are indications that we may soon be able to make significant progress in the provision of a youth/schools chaplain for the Deanery. RF will advise further information as it becomes available. NF reassured the meeting that the Deanery was seeking independent funding for this, and it would not impact Parish Share.
13. **Longcot Churchyard & Wildlife Garden.** NF said that both churchyards were a joy, and acknowledged the huge amount of work necessary to achieve this, in particular to repair the 'wear and tear' on St John's as a result of hosting a preschool. Shirley's report also covers the flower arranging and cleaning rotas – both important ministries which we should not take for granted. She particularly mentioned Sylvia Bovington who, having run the cleaning rota for many years, has expressed a wish to stand down; she proposed writing a letter of appreciation to Sylvia, however DB had already done this.
14. **Tower captain's report.** TC made a few comments:
 - As with other reports, this addresses the period before lockdown, not the challenges following it
 - He had managed to arrange that the 'prayer bell' should ring at 6:00pm each evening in both Shrivensham and Longcot – an important element of the Month of Prayer for the nation requested by the Archbishops
 - The much valued financial contribution that the ringers are able to make thanks to donations they receive from visiting teams have sadly been largely impossible due to the current restrictions.
 - NF asked TC to pass on her thanks to the ringers for all they do for us.
15. **Election of PCC members and deanery synod representative**
 - RF had received nomination papers for all current PCC members: DB, KR, NS and AW. In view of this, NF proposed that the PCC be re-elected en bloc; this was unanimously agreed.
 - As previously minuted (Para 3(b)) RF had received an application from CG to be enrolled on the Electoral Roll, so as to allow him to be elected to the PCC. He will be added to the Electoral Roll immediately following the APCM, and will, subject to approval at the subsequent PCC meeting, be elected to the PCC.
 - RF agreed to continue as Deanery Synod representative.

There being no other business, NF closed the Meeting.

Reports to the APCM on Wednesday 14th July 2021

Secretary's Report

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio, co-opted or elected members at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with Church Representation Rules.

During the past year the following people have served on the PCC:

Revd Norma Fergusson (Vicar), Canon Paul Richardson (Associate Vicar)

Dennis Blease (Churchwarden), Keith Reid (Treasurer), Lucy Laird (Secretary), Richard Fergusson (Deanery Synod Representative & Licensed Lay Minister), Christopher Gotch, Amanda Webb, Tom Lill-Arnold, Neil Sutherland

The Electoral Roll stands at 20 (Fernham 4, Longcot 15), one fewer than in the previous year. Two people were removed from the roll and one new person added.

The PCC has met three times since the last APCM. At each meeting the financial situation was discussed, services for the year, safeguarding, fundraising and social events as well as maintenance issues.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). The Parish Safeguarding Policy was agreed at the PCC meeting held on Wednesday 18th November 2020 and will be reviewed annually at the first PCC meeting after the APCM. Mrs Lucy Laird is the Parish Safeguarding Officer. No safeguarding concerns have been raised since the last APCM.

The PCC approved the Data and Information Policy Statement and Data Privacy Notice at the PCC meeting held on Wednesday 18th November. These will be reviewed annually at the first PCC meeting after the APCM.

Lucy Laird

Treasurer's Report

This report covers January to September and should be read in conjunction with the financial statements for the year ending 31st December 2020 that follow.

1. Churchwardens' Current Account

2020 has been complicated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which has led to church closures in lockdown, a forecast collapse in income and the need to withdraw from the Diocesan Parish Share scheme to preserve the financial integrity of the joint parish. Surprisingly the covenant, collection and donation income for Longcot and Fernham up to 30 Sep 20 has been £4764 and £797, each about 5% higher than at the same time in 2019. These figures probably result from the fundraising drive that took place in early summer but it seems likely that collection and donation income for the remaining 3 months of the year will be lower than normally received during the Christmas period. There has also been a significant reduction in Diocesan fee income in the past 9 months although this will be corrected in the next 3 months with Diocesan fee income from 2 weddings.

Expenditure has decreased markedly due to the withholding of Parish Share from the Diocese from May and reduced utility costs due to church closure. Parish Share outgoings for Longcot have reduced by £2769 and £1187 for Fernham, increasing to £4437 and £1899 respectively by year end. All other Diocesan fees and payments have been met in full.

At 30 September the balances in the Longcot Churchwardens' Current Account were:

	1 Jan 20	30 Sep 20	31 Dec 20 forecast
Longcot	£2990	£4534	£4475
Fernham	£ -595	£-280.	£ 50

This confirms the policy of Parish Share withholding as, if Longcot Parish had continued to pay its Share from May, it would have exhausted its current account surplus by the end of 2020. It also suggests that Parish Share continues to be withheld in 2021 when the church will be closed for building work from June to December and income will reduce accordingly. At 31 Dec 19 the Longcot credit

balance stood at £2990.22. Fernham had a debit balance at £595 despite a £1002 payment from St Andrews to correct clergy expenses overpayments in recent years. This confirms the policy of Parish Share withholding as, if Longcot Parish had continued to pay its Share from May, it would have exhausted its current account surplus by the end of 2020. It also suggests that Parish Share continues to be withheld in 2021 when the church will be closed for building work from June to December and income will reduce accordingly. At 31 Dec 19 the Longcot credit balance stood at £2990.22. Fernham had a debit balance at £595 despite a £1002 payment from St Andrews to correct clergy expenses overpayments in recent years.

2. Restoration Account

a. Longcot

The Longcot Restoration Account received only £3 of bank account interest as income to date in 2020 and incurred no expenditure. The credit balance of £3876 is adequate to deal with minor emergencies in 2020 but, with the bell tower roof overdue for comprehensive repair, it would be wise to obtain additional funds as quickly as possible to allow the repairs to be undertaken before winter 2020/21. The 2011 estimate for this work was about £4500 but it is likely to be closer to £8000 at 2020 prices.

b. Fernham

The Fernham Restoration Account income for 2020 to date was £2979 comprising a £1,000 bequest, £1,800 transfer in from the Fernham Friends Account, £161 in covenant and £18 interest income. Expenditure of £21,400 was the result primarily of a previously agreed £20,000 longer term investment made with CCLA.s Deposit (£5,000) and Investment (£15,000) funds to create an ongoing income. This was funded by an £20,000 transfer from Fernham's Restoration Account which included an £1,800 transfer from the Fernham Friends Account into the Restoration Account as mentioned above. The remaining £1,400 was spent on completion of memorial garden and churchyard wall repair work.

The credit balance on this account was £5,420 on 30 Sep 20 and is forecast to be reduced to some £4,800 by year end due to a £600 accumulated deficit and monthly insurance premiums for October, November and December.

3. Friends' Account

a. Longcot

The Longcot account has increased by £80 during the first 9 months of the year but the sole covenanted source of funds was cancelled in August. This account now has no income and it is forecast that this situation will not change by year end. There has been no expenditure during 2020 and the current credit balance is £1159.51 which is forecast to stay the same by year end.

b. Fernham

The Fernham Friends Account has received £1003 in income to date although a further £635 in Gift Aid income from HMRC that would normally accrue to this account was retained in the Fernham Current Account to balance a debit balance. £1800 was transferred to the Fernham Current Account to fund part of the £20,000 CCLA investment and the Fernham Friends Account now stands at £5151. It is expected to increase to £5352 by 31 Dec 20. There are proposals for spending in the remainder of 2020.

4. Forecast

The joint PCC has adequate credit balances which are sufficient to balance income and expenditure in 2021 as long as it continues to withhold Diocesan Parish Share. The repair of St Mary's bell tower roof may need some additional fundraising. Both churches are helped by the generous Gift Aided covenants and donations which have been made in their favour and the Gift Aid refunds. However there has been a decline of £600 in covenant income over recent years and it is again recommended

that both church communities publicise the benefits of gift-aiding covenants, collections and donations.

The Joint Parish had total cash, bank and investment fund assets of £42,860.43 on 30 Sep 20.

Keith Reid

Independent examiner's report to the PCC of St Mary's Longcot and St John's Fernham

This report on the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2020, which are set out on pages 1 and 2 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations for a PCC with expenditure less than £250,000.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. You consider that the audit requirements of the Church Accounting Regulations and section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act') do not apply.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under the Church Accounting Regulations and section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions of the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission and to be found in the Church guidance, 2013 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, **NO** matter has come to my attention:

- (1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare financial statements, which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulationshave not been met; or
- (2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

Signed: 

Date: 21.02.21

R J Birtwhistle BSc(Hons) CEng MIET MCQI (ret'd)
Yewcote
Kings Lane
Longcot
Faringdon
Oxon SN7 7SS

Observations & Notes

During this examination the following was noted:

- a) Following the observations recorded in respect of the 2016 & 2017 financial statements, improvements made have been maintained which provide clear record keeping and traceability of cash receipts and detailed expenditure records.
- b) The 2020 financial statement includes a new separate 'fund' reflecting the investments made by the PCC in CCLA CBF CoE Deposit & Investment Accounts. These balances should be continue to be addressed in all future financial statements.

LONGCOT & FERNHAM CHURCHWARDENS' FUND - END OF 2020 ACCOUNTS

	2019	2020		2019	2020
Receipts & Income - General			Payments and Transfers - General		
Gift Aided covenants	3670.00	3640.00	Parish share	9407.97	3165.04
Gift Aided collections	2003.30	1018.16	Clergy expenses	1031.46	619.16
Gift Aided donations	2080.16	1998.45	Church insurance	3117.74	3289.10
Non Gift Aided covenants	130.00	0.00	Charity donations	814.68	460.16
Non Gift Aided Church collection - Plate	£0.00	0.00	Longcot Utility bills	1137.94	790.31
Non Gift Aided Donations	4101.00	282.84	Transfers to Restoration and Friends Accounts	3629.53	0.00
Tax refund received	3020.69	2385.87	Transfer of AllChurches Trust grant to LVT paid to PCC	0.00	3000.00
Wedding and funeral fees	2883.00	3327.00	Rent, insurance and repair payments to Fernham VT	364.62	562.50
Transfers in from Restoration Accounts - Longcot	1148.60	0.00			
- Fernham	11093.14	22250.00	Sub-total	19503.94	11886.27
Transfer from Friends Account	3852.24	£0.00	Payments - Miscellaneous		
Sub-total	33982.13	34902.32	Statutory fire & elect inspections	59.70	395.70
Receipts and Income - Miscellaneous			Churchyard expenses	1219.12	130.00
Longcot with Fernham Parish share rebate	242.00	405.00	Fernham Memorial Garden project	13625.38	0.00
Longcot with Fernham PCC rent from Longcot PC	0.00	0.00	Annual D-CT fee	25.00	25.00
Fernham fund raising	73.00	0.00	Longcot & Fernham church fees to ODBF	£1,642.00	617.00
Longcot/Fernham Ride & Stride rebate	0.00	175.00	Benevolence photocopying expenses	979.30	189.55
St John's Insurance premium refund paid by FVT	0.00	621.90	Gift Aid envelopes	73.38	0.00
AllChurches and Rank Found'n grants to pay to LVT*	0.00	7000.00	Professional fees Quinquennial inspection	450.00	550.00
Sub-total	315.00	8201.90	Fernham church record book purchase	33.99	0.00
			Fernham churchyard wall repairs	2110.00	0.00
			Longcot 800 final transfer to Longcot Village Trust	662.11	0.00
			Purchase of Fernham CCLA investments	0.00	20000.00
			Repay FVT double payment of insurance contribution	0.00	310.95
			Fernham church signage - PCC contribution	0.00	40.80
			Longcot repay Shrivenham PCC collection in St Mary's	0.00	17.50
			Longcot & Fernham repay overpaid Parish Share rebate	0.00	72.00
			Sub-total	20879.98	22348.50
TOTAL	34297.13	43104.22	TOTAL	40383.92	34234.77

* Note: 2020 balance includes £4000.00 grant paid for Longcot Village Trust (LVT) by Rank Foundation in December 2020 and which was transferred to LVT in January 2021.

Account Summary	2019	2020
Receipts	34297.13	43104.22
Payments	40383.92	34234.77
Balance of receipts less payments	-6086.79	8869.45
Bank balance at beginning of year	8482.12	2395.33
Bank balance at end of year	2395.33	11264.78
Add/Less non-presented credits & debits	0.00	0.00
Account balance at year end	2395.33	11264.78

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RJBillore
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LONGCOT & FERNHAM RESTORATION FUND - END OF 2020 ACCOUNTS

	2019	2020		2019	2020
Transfers from Longcot Churchwardens' Account	3000.00	0.00	Transfers to Churchwarden Account for:		
Longcot and Fernham bank and CCLA interest	70.96	135.63	Fernham transfer to Churchwarden Acc	11093.14	2250.00
Longcot & Fernham Gift Aid covenants	308.51	184.00	Longcot 800 (including balance transfer to LVT)	8.50	0.00
Gift Aid tax refund - Fernham	66.01	0.00	Longcot transfer to Churchwardens Acc (Longcot)	1140.00	0.00
Fernham Gift Aid Donations	0.00	33.82	Fernham Payment to CCLA - CoE Deposit Fund	0.00	5000.00
Fernham General Donations	0.00	1000.00	Fernham Payment to CCLA - CoE Investment Fund	0.00	15000.00
Transfer in from Friends Acc - Fernham	0.00	1800.00			
TOTAL	3445.48	3153.45	TOTAL	12241.74	22250.00
Less payments	12241.74	22250.00			
Balance of receipts less payments	-8796.26	-19096.55			
Bank balance at beginning of year	36509.79	27713.53			
Bank balance at year end	27713.53	8616.98			

LONGCOT & FERNHAM INVESTMENT FUNDS - (Note - All income paid directly by CCLA into the Longcot & Fernham Restoration Fund)

	2019	2020
CCLA CoE CBF Deposit Account - end of year balance	0.00	5000.00
CCLA CoE CBF Investment Account - end of year balance	0.00	15000.00
Investment balance at year end	0.00	20000.00

LONGCOT & FERNHAM FRIENDS FUND - END OF 2020 ACCOUNTS

	2019	2020		2019	2020
Receipts			Outgoings		
Gift Aid Covenants Longcot	220.00	130.00	Tx to Current Fernham Ac - Memorial Garden	3852.24	
Gift Aid Covenants Fernham	1454.00	1204.00	Tx to Fernham Restoration Account - CCLA Investment	0.00	1800.00
Gift Aid repayment Longcot & Fernham	563.52	0.00			
TOTAL	2237.52	1334.00	TOTAL	3852.24	1800.00
Less Payments	3852.24	1800.00			
Balance of receipts less payments	-1614.72	-466.00			
Bank balance at beginning of year	8642.33	7027.61			
Bank balance at year end	7027.61	6561.61			

LONGCOT AND FERNHAM PCC CONSOLIDATED FUNDS 2020

	2019	2020
Account & Investment Fund balances at year end		
Longcot Churchwardens' Account	2395.33	11264.78
Longcot Churchwardens' Restoration Acc	27713.53	8616.98
Fernham Investment Funds	0.00	20000.00
Friends of Longcot & Fernham Account	7027.61	6561.61
Cash	0.00	0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	37136.47	46443.37

* Note: 2020 Churchwardens Account balance of £11264.78 includes £4000.00 grant for Longcot Village Trust (LVT) by Rank Foundation in December 2020 and which was transferred to LVT in January 2021.

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RJBillore
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Churchwarden's Reports

1. The reports below follow the conventional routine with the focus being on 2020. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the delay to this year's APCM, we have decided to follow the pattern set last year and written the reports for 2020 as usual but included a final, brief sub-paragraph for each church covering a brief resumé of the first half of 2021. For completeness there will also be a couple of important 'Afternotes' that cover 2021.
2. **St Mary the Virgin, Longcot** (Prepared by DB)
 - a. **General**

The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced significantly the life of the church and the congregation throughout the year and its impact cannot be overstated. Although St Mary is well-supported by the local school and the many villagers who contribute across the spectrum of gardening, cleaning, and decorating the church with flowers, it is the financial contributions from the congregation during Sunday services that sustain our activities, especially in paying the 'parish share'. The closure of the church as part of the Government's approach to stem the tide of the pandemic has thus caused our financial situation to deteriorate sharply.
 - b. **COVID in 2020**

The impact of the pandemic was covered briefly at the end of the last APCM report in November 2020. Suffice it to say that closing the church for long periods of time and then limiting attendance when it was open, has disrupted our worshipping pattern as well as harming our finances. Although attempts have been made to encourage contactless payments and increasing standing orders/direct debits to make up for the absence of money in the plate and fundraising activities, these have been met with limited success. It is an issue we need to keep pressure on during 2021. From a relatively comfortable and stable financial situation at the end of 2019, the PCC is now close to insolvency and this required some difficult decisions to be made. It was decided that our finances were not robust enough to pay the 'parish share' for the entire year and thus we made only a part payment. The PCC did not take this decision lightly but in the full understanding that, as trustees, it needed to keep the church financially viable. Furthermore, the absence of regular in-person worship and singing in St Mary has robbed many of the congregation of the comfort and community cohesion that is so important in their lives. On-line worship has played a major role during the lockdowns and the ability of the Benefice to set up new ways of doing business is to be commended. Notwithstanding this obvious success, on-line worship is still not considered a panacea for communal worship with its singing and acts of close fellowship.
 - c. **Quinquennial Inspection (QI)**

A QI was completed in June 2020 by our new architect, Christian Randall. The last QI for St Mary was completed in May 2015. Much of the substantial work recommended in 2015 has either been completed, is in hand, or is included as part of the renovations envisaged by the creation of the 'community space'. The two outstanding issues from the 2020 QI are the repairs needed to the south wall and the bell tower roof.
(2021 Afternote: Fund raising for the bell tower is now underway.)
 - d. **Ornaments, Plate etc.**

The ornaments and plate of St Mary appear to be in good order. Photographs of the plate are now held by both the Churchwarden and the Secretary.

(2021 Afternote: The last inventory check was on 31 May 2021. The plate was then removed from St Mary for safe keeping in St Andrew's Church, whilst the building work was underway in St Mary.)

e. **Logbook & Terrier**

Both books are updated regularly.

f. **Churchyard, Cleaning & Flowers**

See separate report.

g. **Summer Concerts**

Fundraising during 2020 has proved particularly difficult. We were therefore particularly pleased that Vicky Medcalf and her highly professional musicians returned to Longcot over the summer of 2020 to give two widely acclaimed, and socially-distanced concerts on the Village Green. The funds raised for these concerts were passed to the Longcot Village Trust (LVT) as a contribution to building our community space within St Mary.

h. **The Continuing Impact of COVID in 2021**

The impact of COVID has continued throughout the early months of 2021 with the church closed for the first three months of the year. Our challenge in the aftermath of re-opening is, however, not just to be to encourage our regular congregation to return to communal worship but to attract younger families and new arrivals to the village. It is hoped that the creation of the community space within the church will aid that process of renewal. In the meantime, however, the closing of the church on 1 June 2021 for six months whilst the building work is undertaken has only served to interrupt communal life and our regular income stream.

3. **St John The Evangelist, Fernham** (Prepared by NS & TA).

a. **General**

The 30-year lease with the Fernham Village Trust (FVT) continues to work well, not least due to the goodwill on all sides. Annabelle's Nursery is thriving and the income is what keeps the Trust able to continue its work for the benefit of the Fernham community. While St John's does not have its own Churchwarden, the kind support from St Mary's Longcot's Churchwarden is much appreciated and there is support from individual villagers and FVT on a regular basis. The congregation has fallen to a critical level and there will need to be a concerted effort in 2021/2 to increase the worshipping numbers. Conversely, the services on Remembrance Sunday and for Christmas carols are well supported by the village, showing there is a willingness to worship but (on current evidence) not on Saturday mornings.

b. **QI**

Details of the Quinquennial Review and costings are recorded in the Church Logbook.

c. **Ornaments, Plate etc.**

The ornaments and plate of St John are relatively meagre but are well maintained. Photographs of the plate are now held by both the Churchwarden and the Secretary.

(2021 Afternote: The plate was held by the Churchwarden in St Mary but due to the renovations of the church in June 2021 it is now held in the safe at St Andrew's church.)

d. **Logbook & Terrier**

The Logbook and Terrier is now being regularly updated.

(2021 Afternote: An inventory check was completed on 18 June 2021.

e. **Churchyard**

The churchyard is well maintained by a group of volunteers mowing, strimming and tidying the grounds on a regular basis. The PCC is grateful for their time and energy.

f. COVID in 2021

The arrival of COVID-19 in March 2020 has led to the closure of the church for services and loss of almost all income. The overall impacts of COVID-19 can only be assessed at the end of the pandemic, but the loss of momentum cannot help the challenges with both congregational numbers and church income. With the closure of St Mary during building works and the lessening of COVID restrictions, regular worship returned to St John in June 2021.

Shrivenham & Ashbury Benefice Incumbent's Report

1. 2020 began in ways which now seem almost unthinkable: meetings and Bible study in people's homes, a funeral which filled St Andrew's, visits to the hairdresser... and, of course, the Benefice was still in vacancy. By early March, we were preparing Continuity Plans for the Benefice; by 10th we were directed to suspend the common cup, by 13th to suspend refreshments. Arrangements made at a planning meeting in Bloomfield's on the morning of 17th were overturned by the afternoon when we received the e-mail from the Bishop suspending public worship. I wrote to Lucy Laird: *I think David Ahern is going to contact you about something called zoom and to the wardens: we must follow the guidance and find a way to turn it into a positive [and] maintain a visible, loving, Christian presence in our communities.*
2. I could probably reduce the rest of this report to four words "covid" "cancelled" and "parish share" but that would be cheating. It would certainly be unfair to everyone who has worked so hard to support and sustain that visible loving presence during a year in which we ran out of synonyms for "unprecedented." So, thank you:
 - To Richard and Lucy for making it possible to record and livestream services and sermons. In the year since the first lockdown, we posted 102 sermons and other reflections, 231 services and 34 other events – enough for a post every day of the year (and we did manage to post something every day in Advent)
 - To Robin Cardwell for stepping into the breach and celebrating the first of many online communion services at incredibly short notice on Easter Day after I contracted covid
 - To the churchwardens for coping with the many and ever-changing regulations, guidance, risk assessments etc. I know it must sometimes have felt like Lewis Carroll's Red Queen: "you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!"
 - To the benefice choir for performing brilliantly at our Christmas services despite limited rehearsals and reduced numbers, as well as recording several pieces which could be played at services such as All Souls
 - To everyone who has led our midweek online services of morning prayer or participated in an online Sunday service – as well as being willing to lead services in church when that was possible
 - To the PCC members who have become adept at zoom meetings and online safeguarding training
 - To the treasurers for taking such good care of our finances in a year of considerably reduced income
 - To St John's Fernham for taking the wise but difficult decision to close the church for services during the year in order to protect the children and staff at Annabelle's Nursery
 - To the congregations for coping with the many changes to published rotas, for supporting our socially distanced services whenever possible and for maintaining their giving. I should also add a special thank you and welcome to our new online congregation

- To Paul Richardson for being brave enough to join us in the middle of a pandemic (with a socially distanced service of installation on 3 November). These have not been ideal circumstances for getting to know people, but things should improve as restrictions, God willing, continue to ease. You and Katriona have coped with all the challenges with immense grace and good humour. We will have a proper celebration soon!
3. The prolonged closure of churches, though necessary for public health, caused sadness and some anger to many. I understand and am sorry for this. I do understand that online worship and restrictions upon receiving the sacraments mean that even the current services are not the same and look forward to the day when life is not so much “back to normal” as “back to better.”
 4. As indicated at the start of this report, payment of parish share to the Diocese (£75,207 for the benefice as a whole) was extremely difficult this year and I make no apology for repeating my thanks to our treasurers and donors. Overall, we were able to pay more than 50% of share without running down our reserves beyond a level which was prudent. Other bills still had to be paid. It seems unlikely that, financially, 2021 will be any less difficult and there may well be some difficult decisions ahead. We will keep you informed of developments.
 5. That said, the benefice has been blessed in many ways during 2020. Though we were not untouched by the pandemic, we have not been defined it – except perhaps in the way that so many people have come together to help neighbours and strangers in a variety of creative ways: sewing masks, collecting groceries, finding new ways of keeping in touch. Our schools have been amazing, too. All have been open throughout the pandemic for children who are vulnerable or in the families of key workers and we have been happy to support them with online collective worship, Open the Book stories and end of term services.
 6. Although it may have felt like it at times, not everything was cancelled in 2020. We were able to have some services in our churches and we were delighted to help four couples celebrate their marriages. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who decided to postpone their services and we look forward to catching up with them to arrange new dates in 2021. We also had one baptism during the year and, again, we look forward to arranging new dates with other families.
 7. Sadly, we had 26 funerals or interments of ashes. I know how hard it was for families not to be able to have the services they would have wished: everyone was affected by the regulations for covid secure services. I know that some may wish to have memorial services when the legal limits on attendance have been abolished, but that seems likely to be in mid-summer at the earliest. Meanwhile it has been important to provide opportunities for families to watch services online and to gather for services such as All Souls; our thoughts and prayers continue to be with all those who have lost loved ones.
 8. Richard and I marked Palm Sunday by walking through Shrivenham village with the palms, but since then our outdoor services have been braver – and amazingly well attended. These included VJ Day, Remembrance Sunday and a number of Christmas services. The weather was kinder for the crib and carol services than for Christingle, but they were all a joy and the tea lights along the path to St Andrew’s for midnight mass were much admired. Another Christmas highlight was being asked to host the Cooperative Funeral Society’s online memorial service in St Andrew’s. Fortunately, the benefice choir were (just!) able to rehearse and perform; the results were stunning and much appreciated by the many people who watched. We were also able to use some of the recordings during our own services.
 9. One of the things we are looking forward to in 2021 is to make use of the new kitchen and toilet facilities in St Mary’s Ashbury and St Andrew’s. The ability to offer refreshments after services, for meetings or to visitors is an important aspect of the

hospitality of God which this benefice seeks to mirror. Ashbury was at least able to provide tea following the World Day of Prayer service in March (just before the first lockdown). Ashbury also has a new underfloor heating system for which we were very grateful during our few winter services. St Andrew's awaits its first big event but was blessed by Bishop Colin on one of his last visits to the Deanery before retiring as Bishop of Dorchester. No one could have been more supportive of the Benefice during the long vacancy than he was. As we look forward to greeting his successor, Gavin, we wish Colin a long and happy retirement.

10. Despite all the problems, fundraising for St Mary's Longcot has continued apace and work will start on their new facilities in June 2021. Inevitably, most of our regular fundraising activities have been limited but we are grateful to all those who have increased their regular giving, made one-off donations or supported online events such as Ashbury's wine tasting (who knew?) and hugely successful auction of promises. A brief respite in the summer saw two very successful fundraising events: the annual Open Gardens in Shrivenham in July and concerts by the Clarinet Collective on Longcot village green in September.
11. Obviously, there are still going to be difficult times ahead but I am confident that, with the experience of the last year behind us and, of course, with God's help, we will be able to cope with whatever lies ahead.
12. Given that we did so much as a Benefice in 2020 it seemed only right to look at things from a benefice perspective. However, there are some things which relate specifically to St Mary's and St John's which I ought to mention here.
 - When the churches were able to reopen after the first lockdown, one of the main considerations was safety and the maintenance of social distancing. Thanks to Dennis, the solution in St Mary's was inspired and actually enhanced the beauty of the interior. Guests at the two weddings we were able to hold last year were amazed and impressed. We also held services outside to mark VJ Day, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas and, thanks to our ringers, the bells rang out across Longcot whenever possible.
 - The impact of covid on church finances was dramatic and although I am so grateful to all members of the PCC, I must mention Keith in particular for his stewardship of our funds – in particular his foresight in identifying the problems and his courage in recommending that the PCC to make only a partial payment of parish share in order to maintain viability. The Area Dean, Jason St John Nicolle, was invited to attend a PCC meeting. There was an honest, but typically good humoured and constructive, discussion of our concerns which Jason found helpful as background to subsequent discussions at deanery and Diocesan level. Notwithstanding the stress of simply paying the bills, we (mainly Keith!) managed to continue fundraising for the refurbishment in St Mary's and by the time you read this the building work will be well under way.
 - Attendance at St John's has been falling over the last couple of years and the move to a monthly family service at the end of 2019 was an attempt to see if something on the pattern of Bourton St James might be more successful. Unfortunately, until the pandemic, this did not seem to be working and we were considering special services, with the choir, to try and encourage attendance as well as canvassing opinions around the village. We will need to think prayerfully about the best way to address this in 2021.
 - In November we welcomed Canon Paul Richardson and his wife Katriona to the benefice. As Associate Vicar his role has a particular responsibility for Longcot and Fernham and his experience is already proving a great asset to both churches as well as to the benefice as a whole.
 - Finally, this report would not be complete without mentioning The Rev'd Frank Parkinson who formally retired from leading services during the year. It is

impossible to overstate the affection and respect in which Frank is held by both the church and school communities and I know that Bishop Colin also wrote to thank Frank for his immense contribution to the benefice.

God bless you and your families in 2021
Norma



Deanery Synod Report

1. Vale of White Horse Deanery Synod met four times in 2020: on 11th February (in Uffington), and on 17th June, 1st October and exceptionally 1st December (all virtually via Zoom). The main strands of business through the year were:
2. **Personal Discipleship Plan (PDP)**
Introduced by the Revd Dr David Heywood, Dep. Dir. of Mission for the Oxford Diocese, at the February meeting. This is “a life changing process that hundreds of people have already embarked on”, designed to equip people for life in today’s world, and give them the confidence to live out the Life of Jesus Monday to Saturday, not just Sunday. A mentoring course for those wishing to help was planned for March, but this and any further developments were largely put on hold due to lockdown.
3. **Mission Action Plan (MAP)**
At the start of the year, work on the MAP was ongoing with 4 areas of focus detailed below. All activities, and particularly those in sub-para. c, were significantly stalled for much of the year by the effects of lockdown.
 - **Vocations.** The purpose of this group had been agreed as ‘to explore how best the Deanery could offer whatever support was necessary to assist all members of our congregations to discern and express their unique personal gifts and to validate their sense of calling’. The group should in addition be ready to respond to input from other MAP subgroups.
 - **Schools Worker.** This was focused primarily on secondary school children, and centred on a developing relationship with Faringdon Community College (now Faringdon Learning Trust). As well as activities within the school community, the intention was to establish a schools worker based in FCC on a more permanent basis, subject to the establishment of sustainable funding, and a trust to manage the project. In December, a proposal to engage a consultant one day per week for a year. This was unanimously agreed, along with a proposal to use unallocated money in the Mission fund to part fund this.
 - **Redressing the age/gender/fitness bias of our congregations.** The activities of this group have been almost entirely overtaken by changes in ways of working enforced by the pandemic, and are no longer of relevance.

- **Ministry to those unable to attend church.** This group had addressed the question of how best to minister to those unable to attend church due to age or frailty –concluding that there was no easy answer. The group had captured a significant body of information detailing best practice in activities already available within the Deanery, and which could be offered more widely, in the areas of services in and out of church, pastoral care and others. The work of this group was largely overtaken by the constraints of COVID lockdown restrictions, which radically changed the way ministry could be offered to all parts of the community.
4. Towards the end of the year, work began on drafting a new Mission Action Plan, based on a revised template provided by the Diocese, for presentation at the Feb 2021 meeting.
 5. **Finance**
From June onwards, the challenges of paying Parish Share with churches closed to congregations came to dominate Deanery finances. At the June meeting several Benefices / parishes stated that they would be forced to suspend regular payments of share; a significant deficit in overall payment of share was predicted. The Deanery achieved the required 50% payment by 31st July, and received the 1% rebate; the further 3% rebate for full payment by 31 December appeared unlikely. In the final analysis, the Deanery achieved 92.5% of Parish share paid, a total of £297,822 against an apportionment of £321,992, with a shortfall of some £24K.
 6. Both the Deanery and the Diocese are appreciative of the difficulties faced by parishes in continuing to make share payments, and are extremely grateful for what has been achieved. The situation in 2021 was expected to be little better. Synod agreed that each Benefice would attempt to have paid 50% by the end of July, in order to receive the 1% rebate, at which point the situation would be reviewed.
 7. **Personnel**
The following changes in personnel took place during the year:
 - Bishop Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester, retired in October 2020; his replacement has been chosen, and will be consecrated, subject to COVID restrictions, in spring 2021.
 - With the licensing of Rev'd Canon Paul Richardson as Associate Vicar in Shrivenham and Ashbury in November, as well as a House for Duty Priest in the Badbury Group, the Deanery ended the year with a full complement of clergy.
 - Jane Venables stepped down as Deanery Secretary and John Seedell announced his intention to step down as Deanery Treasurer, though has kindly agreed to remain in post until early 2021, by which time it is hoped a replacement may be found.
 - Sarah Howell has agreed to become Assistant Lay Chair and has acted as minutes secretary pending a new appointment. A volunteer is being sought as Deanery Administrator.

Richard Fergusson

Longcot Church Wildlife Garden

Co-ordinators: Shirley Dalton-Morris and Jan Evins
Mike & Emma Ablitt, Robert Baker, Rex Belcher,
Charles Bovington, Simon & Robert Dalton-Morris,
Alec Richings, Paul Wolton.

This is the 20th year the Churchyard Wildlife gardening group has been in existence and what a memorable year we are all living through! The Covid-19 pandemic and the



Gardeners in the early days!

government imposed restrictions have meant we missed work parties in April and May but individual volunteers really stepped up to keep the churchyard looking good. Since June monthly work parties have resumed, suitably socially-distanced, and we have enjoyed the companionship and being outdoors. In fact the churchyard is looking in good shape this year thanks also to regular grass cutting by Rex and Paul and strimming by Robert Baker..

In March we replaced the bench in the Memorial Garden which finally collapsed last winter despite years of loving maintenance by Charles. Robert Baker kindly found a replacement bench and the memorial plates to Jeff Wytchell were transferred.

Other tasks have included some ivy removal both from the church walls and the north perimeter wall and Robert D-M has widened the East-West path again.



It has been a strange 20th anniversary with little chance to celebrate but it is interesting to look back to notes of when we started in 2000. Under Judy Stretton's leadership we had Aims and Objectives, Management Plans, Risk Assessments, and a schedule of wildlife surveys all in place. Now we are more informal but have tried to follow at least the spirit of those guidelines, realising that we have something very special in the small area we are privileged to look after and which we know is greatly appreciated by the village.

Twenty years ago few people thought about biodiversity and climate change and our ideas for a wildlife garden came in for some criticism.

We had to do a certain amount of persuasion of the benefits of uncut grass, stinging nettles and flowerbeds left with seed heads all winter. Although our churchyard is not an ideal wildlife area being small, walled and bounded on all sides by roads so that there are no natural green corridors, we have tried to do our bit for the environment. Our aim was always to keep the churchyard looking attractive for people and a place for nature to thrive, and it still is. Hopefully we have taken the village with us as it is even more important today to maintain the churchyard with a light hand, with areas of wild and undisturbed habitat where as many species as we can attract can live. Our passion for the work has not dimmed, even if some of us are feeling the effects of the passing of time!.



The churchyard has been much appreciated this year of Covid restrictions with many people enjoying the beautiful peaceful space. Church gardening has been done by a very few people this year because of lockdowns and an increasingly elderly group of volunteers. Help from new residents has been good but realistically Robert Baker has undertaken a large amount of the upkeep by himself including maintenance of the equipment. We are very grateful to him and to Paul and Rex who are such reliable mowers in the season, and all other volunteers who have kept the churchyard looking so good.

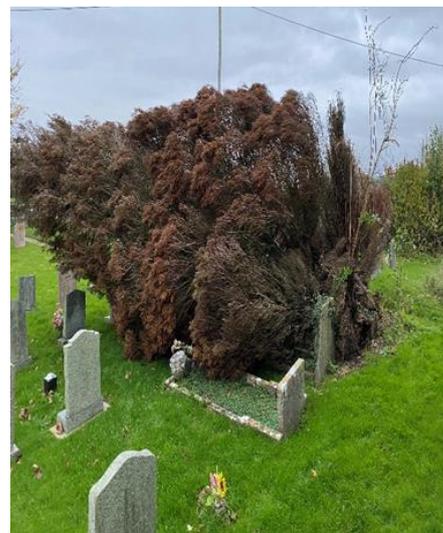


A socially distanced coffee break in August.

A wet autumn meant that Bernie Cooper was unable to cut the meadow and Robert undertook the mammoth task of strimming and raking the whole area over the winter months.

In November the dead conifer on the Fernham Road path fell after a storm - fortunately no one was about and none of the graves were damaged. Will Stone a Longcot tree surgeon kindly agreed to cut it up and volunteers with the help of Alan Rich and his tractor cleared the waste away to be burnt. The site revealed two gravestones which had fallen and an old wooden head board.

In November Robert, Shirley and Jan met with the Vicar Rev Norma Fergusson and Deputy Vicar Rev Canon Paul Richardson to discuss various aspects of the churchyard management to reduce the amount of work. The two composting areas will become a single bin each end so that they can be cleared easily with a grab lorry. The hay and leaf bins are to be removed and the areas left to grow wild. Some gravestones to be raised up. Robert has removed ivy from much of the perimeter wall which has revealed the poor state of several areas with a new major fall by the Fernham Road.



Longcot Church Cleaning

Co-ordinator: Sylvia Bovington
Heather Birtwhistle, Charles Bovington, Shirley Dalton-Morris,
Lynn Griffiths,
Di Harris, Maureen McBain

Reduced monthly cleaning in the re-organised layout continued under the Churchward's guidance as the church was closed except for private worship on Wednesdays.

Sylvia stood down as co-ordinator from December 2020 and she and her husband Charles are retiring after more than 20 years' service. We thank them for so many hours of cleaning, brass polishing and organising the rota. They set a very high standard of cleaning for the rest of us to aspire to and over the years have also paid for two vacuum cleaners for the church. We will miss them and wish them well.



A rainbow tribute to the NHS.

Longcot Church Flowers

Co-ordinator: Shirley Dalton-Morris
Heather Birtwhistle, Lynn Griffiths, Di Harris, Rosemary Stallard,
Ann and Nicola Thickpenny, Anne Wolton

The flower arrangers kept in touch and ensured there have always been flowers in church for private worship on Wednesdays. It has been a joy for a few of us to help with two weddings this year when both couples decorated the church for their small services. In September Louise and Jonathan Cooke were married and bought local flowers from Sevenhampton which we helped them arrange.

In December Victoria and Will Stone provided a splendid Christmas tree and flowers for their wedding, and these beautiful decorations were enjoyed for the Christmas services.



Shirley Dalton-Morris

Tower Captain's Report

2019/20 was a good year for ringing whereas 2020/21 has been disastrous owing to the pandemic. For a long period, churches were closed and "real" ringing ceased too. Not only couldn't the bells be rung, but regular inspection and maintenance was hindered with some unfortunate consequences. An on-line change ringing facility had just been created which kept some ringers' brains active but did nothing for the physical skills.

Church bell ringing is moderately physical and is done in the confined space of medieval towers with little or no ventilation. Longcot ringing room actually has excellent ventilation but the CCCBR/CofE guidelines gave little room for local interpretation. The ringing of one bell was allowed for short periods last year and this was an opportunity for the tower to make a noise and for one ringer to regain a little familiarity and muscle tone.

There has been widespread loss of ringers over the pandemic and virtually no recruitment in an activity which requires months of 1:1 teaching and has a big drop-out rate. We don't know when 1:1 teaching can happen again.

Of course, there was the great news that the church was to gain kitchen and toilets and the ringing room was to have a flatter floor, gain about 4" of space with the removal of the radiator behind the ringer of the 4th and a drip rail to stop rain coming in under the W door. However, this was tempered by the news that ringing would cease for six months from an unknown date in 2021, just at the time that Longcot bells would probably be providing a valuable "ringing recovery" opportunity for the Benefice and the wider Deanery. It probably means that we will permanently lose most of our regular "peal band" visitors and the income they generate.

We much enjoyed contributing to the Flower Festival in May 2021.

Actual Ringing

Since the rules relaxation in mid-May 2021 we have rung for all Sunday services despite the covid challenges familiar to all organisers. Before that, we were delighted to host the Diocese young ringers' event on 25th April for ten young people under the extra relaxations allowed for them. I also took my mini ring which enabled them to double the length of their event by ringing outside after their allotted time inside had expired.

We are pleased to have been able to mark a few special occasions including Remembrance and, most recently, hopefully, the special NHS 73rd anniversary ring on 5th July with the agreement of the builders.

A special mention goes to the Cooper family from Longcot where Ruth & Sam taught their parents to chime so they could make a lovely sound on four bells with one "bubble". The Watson family from Faringdon have also made a major contribution with a family "bubble" of three ringers. With Ruth & Sam on 3 & 4 plus the Watsons on 6, 7 & 8, there was excellent ringing on five bells when the guidelines permitted.

Training

Nil. However, we hope that we will eventually be able to resume regular Friday afternoon "silent" practice and the "normal" evening practice. There will be no leavers' service this Summer so we won't be able to welcome the year six children to chime for their service or possibly recruit some of them!

Prayer Space

We were pleased to contribute to Prayer Space at Ashbury and Shrivenham this year (2021) with the practical opportunities offered by my portable mini-ring. We look forward to the next one at Longcot.

Maintenance

We still keep the bells in good order and there have been no significant issues after 23 years of ringing since restoration and augmentation. Unfortunately, our regular patching of the roof was hampered by the pandemic and more damp came through than I would have liked. There is now a plan for a major repair. The jackdaws have also had more access than I would have liked but they have now been excluded again.

Tony Crabtree