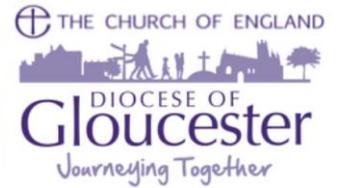




# The Mid-Wyedean Churches

serving Coleford, Broadwell, Clearwell, Newland,  
Redbrook, Staunton and surrounding areas.



The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of  
Mid-Wyedean Churches

## Annual Report 2015

Registered Charity No: 1132171

Vicar: Revd Sarah Bick, 40 Boxbush Road, Coleford, GL16 8DN  
Telephone 01594 835476 or email [vicar@mid-wyedeanchurches.org.uk](mailto:vicar@mid-wyedeanchurches.org.uk)

## Administrative information

### The Licensed Staff Team

Revd Sarah Bick	Vicar	01594 835476
Revd Alan Wearmouth	House for Duty	01594 832660

#### Readers:

Mrs Anne Harley

Mr Chris Howell

Mark Bick Pioneer reader, licensed September 2015

We are grateful for the support of retired Clergy Father Barry Coker

We also have five licensed Worship Leaders – Fred Meek, Doug Stevenson, Wendy Williams, Margaret Winter and Chris Young.

### Church Officers

#### Parish Wardens:

Mrs Penny Rayner (Also St John's, Coleford)

Mrs Bea Erskine (Also All Saints, Newland)

#### Assistant Wardens:

Doug Stephenson All Saints, Staunton

Sue Simmons

Richard Fordham St Saviour's, Redbrook

Sarah Codd The Good Shepherd, Broadwell

Daphne Baulcomb St Peter's, Clearwell

#### PCC Secretary

Alison Stuttard

#### Parish Treasurer:

Mrs Rosemary Ward

#### Finance Reps:

Terry Bovill St Johns, Coleford

Betty Weaver St Peters, Clearwell

David Hepburn The Good Shepherd, Broadwell

Alan Day

John Simmons All Saints, Staunton

Pat Shuttleworth St Saviours, Redbrook and All Saints, Newland

Independent Examiner: Robert Lewis of Wildin Accountants.

Deanery Synod reps: Christine Young, David Atherley, David Hepburn

## Structure, governance and management

The Parish of the Mid-Wyedean Churches is a Church of England parish serving the town of Coleford in the Forest of Dean and many of the surrounding villages. Under the Pastoral Scheme that created our United Parish, the name of the parish is "The Parish of The Mid-Wyedean Churches of All Saints Newland and Staunton, Good Shepherd, Broadwell, Saint John, Coleford, Saint Peter, Clearwell and Saint Saviour, Redbrook". It is part of the Diocese of Gloucester within the Church of England. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. In addition, until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 we had official provision made by Instrument of the Bishop of Gloucester ensuring that all congregations have representation on the PCC, with an assistant warden from each church ex-officio members of the PCC, and a Finance Committee representative from each church also, who may or not be PCC members. Although this expired on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014, the arrangement remains in place as policy of the PCC, to be reviewed annually. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

## Mission and Ministry

### Leadership

Rev Sarah Bick is incumbent of the parish. During the year, further progress has been made in developing collaborative leadership, both in style and structure.

Rev Alan Wearmouth, house for duty priest, takes a lead in Clearwell and Broadwell, and on co-ordinating weddings ministry. Mr Chris Howell co-ordinated funerals until his retirement in November 2015. Churchwardens and other officers are very active and hard-working! PCC and LCCs (Local Church Councils) all contribute to the vision and direction of the parish.

### Worship

A highlight of this year was a broadcast Christmas Carol Service, recorded on 1<sup>st</sup> December, and broadcast on Christmas morning on BBC Radio Gloucestershire. A choir was formed to lead the singing, and we were accompanied by two bands: a brass band led by the Salvation Army band leader Kev White, with SA band members and other local brass players; and a guitar band led by Mark Bick. Not at the same time! *(Drawing from the evening by Shoo Rayner).*



### Regular worship

The pattern of Sunday services continues as last year with there being 4 services on most Sundays. The congregations of Redbrook, Newland and Staunton (averaging 12-14 in total) continue to worship as one congregation alternating worship between All Saints Church, Newland and All Saints Church, Staunton. Prayer ministry has been offered for the first time at the end of these joint services.

Redbrook continues to hold a family focused congregation once a month on a Sunday afternoon has led to overall growth seeing around 12 usual attendance from a total group of 19. The relationships developed through school contact has been important in this. Because of work needed to the roof at St Saviour's Redbrook, these monthly services stopped in October, with the plan to take these up again in 2016, or develop a new plan. Confirmation classes happened in Redbrook during the lack of a regular service.



*Labyrinth mown into the vicarage*

The Coleford congregation has continued to worship at St Margaret Mary RC Church; as well as the Eucharist services in the church, the monthly family service in the church hall has continued, under the leadership of Wendy Williams and Fred Meek. The United Parish Services, instigated at the end of 2014, are now held on the last Sunday of each month with all churches in the Parish being visited during the year. Worshipping together in greater numbers greatly encourages those who attend, and especially those from the smaller congregations, both because of the worship and the hospitality and socialising afterwards.

Logistics around parking, for example, can still perplex us; in the coming year, we will look at how we can be more coordinated and intentional about sharing transport. Some initial investigation about the possibility of using the school mini-buses has hit a possible insurance barrier. This will be pursued!

## Schools

**Open the Book** continues in the Parish.

At Clearwell C of E school it is led each Tuesday during term time by Chris Young.

At Redbrook C of E school it is led each Tuesday during term time by Rev Sarah Bick.

At St John's Academy C of E school it is led each Wednesday during term time by an ecumenical team. Being quite a large team, they act out the stories themselves or use year 5 children to read parts in the story rather than acting. They also add in some audio/visual elements. The children always look forward to Wednesday assemblies.

### Clearwell

I am the only OTB reader visiting this school. I go weekly to give an OTB assembly to the whole school in a classroom. There are 48 children aged between 4 – 11 years. I usually involve children as readers of various parts and narrate the story myself. I try to involve both classes. There is great enthusiasm and competition for parts and I am often lobbied when I am in the school at other times! When it is warmer in summer term we can go over to the Church for OTB and having more room can involve more pupils in acting parts. I keep to the script as we are expected to but as this is a Church School I finish the session with the Lord's Prayer (modern version) and all the children join in and learn it.  
Chris Young – OTB Leader.

There are also ecumenical teams leading Open the Book at Coalway and Ellwood county primary schools. The three Open the Book teams at our C of E schools also contribute to end of term celebration services.

## Other Assemblies

Rev Alan Wearmouth visits Clearwell School every Wednesday to lead worship, which is greatly appreciated by the school. Rev Sarah Bick visits St John's School every Thursday. Having established the idea of pupils developing and leading their own worship, that now continues in other worship times, and Sarah leads worship herself each Thursday. Alan and Sarah contribute to Special occasion worship for the schools as appropriate.

For the first time this year, the vicar was invited to Lakers School, the local comprehensive school to lead a Christmas assembly. She was very entertained by Dragon House singing the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' with each tutor group jumping up to sing their allocated lines!

### **Other school contact and collaboration**

Plans for the development of Redbrook Church for greater use by the school have progressed this year, but whilst the general idea has been approved, we have been waiting a long time for the Diocesan Chancellor/Registry to approve the detail of the licence agreement between the PCC and the Wye Forest Federation (the governing body of the school). We hope this will come to final fruition next year.

In partnership with the Salvation Army, and volunteers from across Coleford and District Churches Together, we hope next year to run/host the TLG Early Intervention project for one to one mentoring in Primary Schools. There is initial agreement from St John's Academy to be a partner in this project.

Other development plans for next year include

- A regular prayer time for staff, governors and other adults to attend if they wish, at St John's School initially led by Sarah.
- A monthly school based family worship time at St John's. A team to be pulled together to develop this work.



### **Governors**

Rev Sarah Bick remains in the governor's role at St John's Academy, and for the Wye Forest Federation (Redbrook and St Briavel's schools) and Rev Alan Wearmouth remains in the delegated ex-officio position at Clearwell School. Sarah and Alan regularly visit their respective schools to lead assemblies and special services, to support head teachers and other staff and respond to pastoral needs.

Clearwell governing body also benefits from the inclusion of Daphne Baulcomb and Chris Young, both worshipping members at St Peter's, as foundation governors. Similarly, Sue Sparkes, of St John's congregation, serves as foundation governor at St John's Academy. Other foundation governor positions have been filled at the appointment of the PCC by members of other local churches, being unable to find volunteers from among our own number. The PCC is grateful to those who have taken up these positions.

## **Pastoral**

### **Weddings, baptisms and funerals – and confirmation!**

This aspect of the work of the church continues to be busy. There have been similar numbers of baptisms, an almost 50% increase in weddings from 23 to 32 (bringing us back up to usual numbers over the past few years) and similar numbers of funerals (59 cf. 56 in 2014). Baptisms are concentrated at The Good Shepherd and at St Peter's, as these services are at 11:00 rather than 9:30. This December, we held a Celebration of Marriage service at St Peter's Clearwell. It is a hope for the future to add a Celebration of Baptism to the calendar as well. A planned new event at St John's School (more below) will be an opportunity to invite baptism families to attend something to suit them on a monthly basis. On Advent Sunday, Richard and Emily Fordham, father and daughter from Redbrook, were confirmed by +Rachel at Newland – it was a wonderful occasion!

### **Home communions and visiting**

Home communions are continuing at Kingsmeade under Anne Harley's leadership. This is much appreciated by those who participate. A regular house group meets in Clearwell twice a month offering home communion during one of these meetings.

One person is training on the Diocesan Lay Pastoral minister course. We will explore the possibility of growing a pastoral team next year.

## **Other Mission**

### **Broadwell Cookery Club – Family Feast**

The cookery club morphed into 'Family Feast' this year. See below for a report from Anne Harley.

Mark Bick was licensed as a **Pioneer Reader** in September - though he is extremely keen to point out, and quite rightly, that he is not the only one responsible for mission in the parish! In fact, it more and more needs to become the main thrust of what we do, if the life of the church is to continue into the future - or to put it more fundamentally, if we are to help enable the Kingdom of God to come in our parish. With that in mind, much of what appears in the rest of this report we hope actually is part of our mission in this place, and not just 'maintenance'.

The parish continued to participate in the CPAS course, and out of that, and Mark Bick's licensing to the parish and his prior training objectives, a Mission Action Planning (MAP) group has been formed, and led by Mark which has been commissioned by the PCC to develop a Mission Action Plan for the parish. This work will continue on into 2016, during which year there should be a plan in place, and which can work to together and within our individual communities.

Some wonderful conversations have been had at the Coleford LCC meetings about our hopes and dreams for the future, and the possibility of re-establishing our presence in some way in the town. The idea of a shop front presence whilst we are still waiting on a church building has had a lot of enthusiastic backing. Church House has indicated support for this idea.

## Family Feast and Fun

Broadwell Cookery Club and the Salvation Army at the former Bird in Hand pub in Broadwell had 3 amazing afternoons of childrens activities, cooking together and feasting during the summer holidays.



With activities led by Richard Prescott and Emma Cornish, children from babies to teenagers enjoyed craft work and other activities while the parents got together in the kitchen to provide some lovely food.



Our first afternoon produced pasta bolognaise followed by rhubarb crumble and custard, which was devoured by participants and helpers alike. The children made placemats with healthy eating images, which were used to decorate the tables when we ate together.



The second afternoon produced chicken Korma, aubergine and potato curry and chickpea and tomato curry, with all the trimming, nan bread, rice and popadoms. Pudding was a simple but delicious fruit salad served with ice cream. Each feast fed about 25 people, including the children, where even the youngest tucked into the curry.

Our third afternoon was designated "Pie Night", where our group of Mums and volunteers got inspired in the kitchen and produced a feast for

the eyes and the tummys with a giant steak and mushroom pie, and a butternut squash, sweet potato and bean pie for the vegetarians.

Funnily enough, it was the meat eaters who were going in for seconds of the Veggie pie, as it was so tasty. Combined with potatoes, cabbage and carrots, it formed a healthy and satisfying meal.

## Discipleship

Opportunities for Christian discipleship in the parish continued this year, with various opportunities for study and discussion. However, this remains a work in progress to consistently offer a variety of opportunities and grow a small group culture, both for discipleship and for the social and pastoral benefits that we know come from being part of a small group.

- Our Monthly 'Hot Potato' discussion evenings with chips, continued throughout 2015 meeting at the pub in Staunton. Topics on the whole not directly linked to Christianity, but where faith has something to say are discussed. Topics have included Do we need clergy? (we agreed that yes we did!!) should the church be dis-established? and Do we have a Christian duty to vote? We ended the year with a lovely Christmas Dinner!
- This year we did not hold our own Lent course but joined our fellow Christians at Christchurch for their Lent group. This was led by a different leader each week from all denominations and from a wide geographical area. It is hoped to repeat this experience next year. It has been a great encouragement in terms of different churches coming together as well as simply for individuals attending enjoying and benefitting from the talks, discussion and worship.
- Confirmation Classes were held weekly in Redbrook in the months leading up to the confirmation service. Fun was had, cake was eaten, and together we learned and grew in our faith.

## Social Group & Fund Raising

The Social group continues to meet regularly to organise and co-ordinate both social and fund raising events in the Parish.

2015 saw our second United Parish Flower Festival this time held at St Peter's Church, Clearwell. The theme was Wedding Anniversaries and the Church was bedecked in the most amazing arrangements.

Flower arrangers came together from across the parish and the wider area to help make a very successful weekend. There was a plant stall in the village and the local Photographic Society had a display in the village hall. Plans are already in hand for another United Parish Flower Festival in Staunton next year.

Jane MacBean opened her garden again for an open air united Parish Service which was followed by a bring and share lunch.

A monthly Coffee and Chat morning was started up this year for the congregations of St John's and our hosts from the Roman Catholic Church of St Margaret Mary although the wider community is very welcome to attend. We celebrated our Vicar Sarah's Bick's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday at the July one with Birthday cake and a rendition of 'Happy Birthday!

A Very successful Quiz evening was held in St Margaret Mary Hall with a ploughman's supper in October.

There are lots of plans for more social and fundraising activities for 2016. Regular income remains a challenge for us, even though church members give generously. We need to find different ways to raise funds.



## **Ecumenical links**

We value our connections with Christians of other denominations, both for Christian fellowship and for partnering in engagement with the wider community in mission and evangelism.

## **Coleford Churches Together**

The CCT group meets three or four times a year, to discuss plans for joint ventures, and to hear about each others' churches struggles and joys.

## **Worship and other shared events**

This year's prayer and worship events included morning prayers in the week of prayer for Christian Unity, the Women's World Day of Prayer, the usual Good Friday worship at the Clocktower, and an Advent Sunday service, as usual, though for the first time taking the form of a Toy Service which has been traditional for the local Salvation Army. Toys were brought to the service and given in offering, and later distributed to needy children throughout the Forest of Dean.

We also shared a 'Moveable Feast' on Ascension Day evening, moving between different member churches for the different courses of a wonderful meal.

## **Foodbank**

Members of our congregations are supporting this most worthwhile venture, on the management committee and as volunteers for the distribution centre and food collection. The level of need continues to grow. The next step may be to think of how to do our part in addressing the political issues that lead to such need.

## **Roman Catholic Church, Coleford - St Margaret Mary**

The PCC, of course, continues to be grateful to the priest and congregation of St Margaret Mary RC Church, for welcoming St John's congregation into their building to give us a place to worship. We have enjoyed some joint activities, and we look forward to more such events next year.

## **Buildings (Church Warden's Report)**

### **All Saints' Newland**

- Repairs to the Tower at development stage, application to HLF successful for stage one.
- Robert de Waking's head was recovered by the police and both the head and feet were reattached by the stonemasons from Gloucester Cathedral.
- The church was used during various successful events including 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Almshouses, outside performance of Twelfth Night and recording of BBC Radio Gloucester's carol service for Christmas Day.

### **All Saints' Staunton**

- Meeting was held with the Diocesan Chancellor in March following which it was agreed to replace heating for the whole church, the works started in December.
- Repairs required to the mullion surrounding the window on the south wall of the Red Chapel, yet to commence.
- Meetings were held concerning formation of a Friends group. Unfortunately, attendance at this meeting was extremely low from people beyond the regular congregation.

#### Good Shepherd Broadwell

- It was decided to move the font, which is yet to happen.
- Faults were found with the electrics and the fuse box which were upgraded. Outside light was fitted.
- Successful concert held in November, it is hoped to do more in the future.

#### St John's Coleford

- The closure process of St John's is ongoing and the congregation continues to hold services at St Margaret Mary Catholic Church.
- The period of consultation for the closure of St John's for public worship was started and finished with a meeting in December with the Church Commissioners, at which the decision was adjourned.
- The Quinquennial survey was carried out in December.
- The congregation continues to hold discussions about a presence in Coleford and what form it should take.
- Inventory day was held at St John's and categories of items were established.
- Monthly coffee mornings started in St Margaret Mary's Hall. A combined social event was held for both congregations.

#### St Peter's Clearwell

- The church clock was repaired but continued to have problems with the chiming mechanism.
- Splitalth was contacted again about slipping roof tiles.
- Faculty was applied for re proposed building works, and estimates.
- Service was held in December for wedding couples, it is hoped to make this a yearly event.
- Protective fencing was erected around the Cemetery Chapel.

#### St Saviour Redbrook

- Gutters were cleaned out.
- Roof repairs – funding successfully applied for under the LPOW roof repair scheme. Works due to commence in the new year, new floor on hold until roof finished.

We were successful in funding applications to GHCT (Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust) for four separate projects this year totalling £6,000. We are immensely grateful to them for their support.

We would like to pass on thanks to everyone involved with the church services, particularly to the ministry team, the readers and to all the helpers and music makers! Special thanks to all the assistant wardens.

Penny Rayner and Bea Erskine  
Churchwardens

## **Deanery Synod**

*A short report from Deanery Synod meetings in 2015 from Chris Young (Deanery Synod Rep).*

### **Tuesday 14th February at St Peter's, Newnham.**

- As there were many new reps the meeting started with introductions.
- Julie Ridgeway from the Diocesan Board of Finance talked about the Parish Share Scheme consultation.

### **Thursday 25th June at All Saints, Newland.**

- Elections to Diocesan Synod.
- 'Journeying Together' discussion. This was looking at Finance and Clergy numbers. Synod then divided into three groups based on postcodes to discuss ideas and solutions. Group leaders then fed back ideas to Synod. There was discussion about relying less on Clergy and types of training for lay ministry.

### **Tuesday 20th October at St Pauls, Parkend.**

- The main event was a talk on the Ministry Review Scheme for readers 'Sharing the Vision' by Revd David Runcorn, Warden of Readers.
- Under AOB a synod member brought up the subject of 'Healing' ministry.

## **Summary of achievements or major events**

This has been another year of what feels like a lot of hard graft going into preparing the ground and sowing seeds, but with results of that hard work coming to fruition, we trust, some time in the future, God willing! There is in many aspects of parish life a sense of hope for the future, and we trust God for the growth.

- The parish continued to take part in a 2 year CPAS course for multi-parish benefices. Although this doesn't technically describe us, we experience all the same challenges and blessings! This has helped develop our vision for the parish, and in considering how to take this forward, and in conjunction with Mark Bick being licensed as a Pioneer Reader, we have established a Mission Action Planning (MAP) group.
- Some progress has occurred with regards to buildings work, but it has been slow going. However, we are better poised for significant progress next year.
- Chris Howell retired as a licensed Reader in the parish in November, though he will remain with us as part of the parish. We are immensely grateful to him for all of his work within the parish, on Sundays and particular, his tremendous contribution to funeral ministry. We did have a service of celebration for him, despite his objections, where the whole parish was able to express our heartfelt thanks. And we are so glad that he actually isn't leaving us, but remains part of that parish.
- The broadcast Carol service, which despite being hard work to prepare, was a great encouragement to the parish, an opportunity to involve others beyond our normal number, including members of other churches, and people who weren't regular church members at all, all enjoying the music making and fun.

## **Objectives for 2016**

The work of the MAP group, which is in progress, will most likely largely determine our priorities for the future, and so may supersede what follows. Otherwise, many of our objectives from this year, whilst some limited progress has been made, will likely remain our on-going focus for the year to come. We continue to work and hope for a new building for Coleford, or for an alternative model for ministry to emerge, including furthering the plans for a shop-front presence as at least an interim measure. And for those other plans for other church buildings that have grown out of a sense of mission or vocation to develop and make progress. As we have seen again this year, timing is not always within our control, and quite genuinely, the capacity of ministry team, PCC officers and church members alike, is limited.

So provisional objectives include:

- to strengthen further our discipleship offering to meet a variety of needs - working together with other churches where we can.
- To consider the issue of church presence in Coleford, and the possibility of a temporary solution, or a radically different approach
- To continue to deepen and greater integrate church and school life at St John's Academy. Including a monthly family event, one to one mentoring, weekly prayer meeting, and (possibly) summer lunch club.
- Deepen ecumenical connections and develop more shared projects, as needs arise.
- Develop the ministry of 'presence' of our buildings, encouraging tourists to become participants
- To formalise the relationship between the church and the school for use of the building at Redbrook; to gather a project group to look at further development of the building for this use.
- To crystallise a vision and plan for All Saints, Staunton that is shared and owned by local people
- Having produced plans to begin to raise funds for loos, servery and disabled access at Clearwell, supporting the hospitality of the Weddings ministry there, and increasing usability of the church for community engagement

## **Finance Committee Report**

Every congregation is entitled to have a representative on this Committee. Clergy, Churchwardens, Treasurer and Secretary are entitled to attend ex officio.

Membership through 2015 has been as follows: Revd. Alan Wearmouth (Chair); Revd. Sarah Bick (Vicar); Rosemary Ward (Treasurer); Alison Stuttard (Secretary); Bea Erskine and Penny Rayner (Churchwardens); David Hepburn (Good Shepherd) replaced by Alan Day during the year; John Simmons (All Saints, Staunton); Betty Weaver (St Peter, Clearwell). St John, Coleford are served by Terry Bovill as Assistant Treasurer and All Saints, Newland and St Saviour, Redbrook, by Pat Shuttleworth as Assistant Treasurer but neither attends meetings.

The Finance Committee has met regularly throughout the year. It has reviewed the five year financial plan, prepared a draft budget for 2016, supported the Treasurer in administering and guiding the Parish finances and addressed issues with financial implications arising between scheduled PCC meetings. All meetings have been minuted and duly reported to the PCC. Agenda space has been given for questions regarding these reports at every PCC meeting.