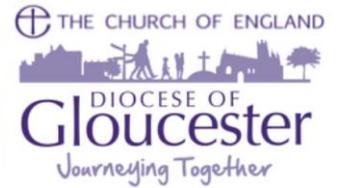




The Mid-Wyedean Churches

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



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

Annual Report 2016

Registered Charity No: 1132171

Vicar: Revd Sarah Bick, 40 Boxbush Road, Coleford, GL16 8DN
Telephone: 01594 835476 or email: vicar@mid-wyedeanchurches.org.uk
Parish Office: Church on the Street, 6a St John's Street, Coleford, GL16 8AR
Telephone: 01594 368849 or email: office.midwyedean@gmail.com

Administrative information

The Licensed Staff Team

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

Readers:

Mrs Anne Harley

Mark Bick Pioneer Reader

Mr Chris Howell Reader Emeritus

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

We also have five licensed Worship Leaders – Fred Meek, Wendy Williams, Margaret Winter, Chris Young & Bea Erskine.

Church Officers

Parish Wardens:

Mrs Penny Rayner	(Also St John's, Coleford)
Mrs Sarah Codd	(Also The Good Shepherd, Broadwell)

Assistant Wardens:

Bea Erskine	All Saints, Newland
Sue Simmons	All Saints, Staunton
Richard Fordham	St Saviour's, Redbrook
Charles White	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
Alan Day	The Good Shepherd, Broadwell
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, Alison Stuttard, Penny Rayner

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 1st 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 1st 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. This year we have been invited to participate in a Diocesan pilot programme of training for 'Effective Ministry in Every Parish' which would see a local minister for each church/community in the parish. The training is due to start in early 2017, with the new leaders commissioned in the first half of the year.

Rev Alan Wearmouth, house for duty priest, takes a lead in Clearwell and Broadwell, and on co-ordinating weddings ministry. 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

Regular worship

The recently established pattern of Sunday services continued in 2016 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.

By the end of the year, Redbrook continued to hold a family focused congregation once a month on a Sunday afternoon, getting back into the pattern after the work on the roof finished. This will be reviewed in 2017 when we intend to start a new pattern of regular worship throughout the whole parish. The relationships developed through school contact continues to be important in this, though the new regular congregation is gaining a life of its own.



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 continued this year, under the leadership of Wendy Williams and Fred Meek. Next year, now that the Saturday meeting at St John's Primary Academy 'The Mustard Tree' is more established, we anticipate the family service at St Margaret Mary changing as part of the planned changes to the rota overall. We are grateful to Wendy and Fred for their commitment to this ministry so far.

The United Parish Services are held on the last Sunday of each month with all churches in the Parish being visited during the year. Prayer ministry continues to be offered at the end of these joint services with people using the opportunity each time.

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.

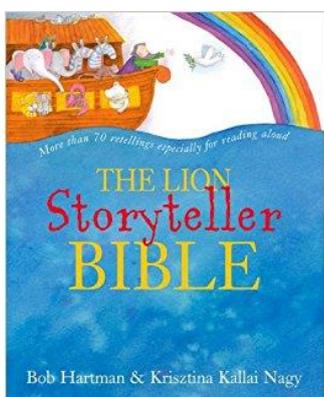
Logistics around parking, for example, can still perplex us; Lifts are offered to people who need them to ensure no one is excluded from joining in with this Parish worship.

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 week 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.

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.

Other school contact and collaboration

Plans for the development of Redbrook Church for greater use by the school have progressed this year, with the licence sharing agreement between the PCC and the Wye Forest Federation (the governing body of the school) finally getting through the necessary approval from the Diocesan Chancellor. The agreement as drafted will nearly be over before it has begun, however, and so a longer lasting set of terms will need to be agreed between school and church this year.

Our hopes to run/host the TLG Early Intervention project for one to one mentoring in Primary Schools in partnership with the Salvation Army, and with volunteers from across Coleford and District Churches Together, unfortunately has not transpired, because of struggling to arrange the training required through the TLG team. This is such a pity, as the volunteers were ready to go, and the schools, especially St John's Academy, were keen to be involved as a partners in this project. We have sought permission from the funder, the Cinnamon Network, to run a similar programme in house, rather than through TLG, however, at the end of the year, we are still waiting for a decision.

The idea of setting up a regular prayer time at St John's Academy was trialed, but unsuccessful. Finding a time that suited staff in particular was very difficult. The incumbent continues to pray for the school!

The Mustard Tree

However, the plans for a monthly family meeting at the school with crafts, other activities, games, stories, worship and a meal have taken off and is successful. There is a really strong team involved in planning and leading the sessions, and the participants are also engaging in being part of making it happen. Lisa Tootle, the school cook, prepares a meal for us on a



Friday for us to heat up on the Saturday, which is an invaluable saving on our preparation time. So far, seven families have joined us, if not every time. Now that it is more established, we plan to make invitations to our baptism families a standard part of baptism preparation.

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 small increase in numbers of baptisms from 33 to 37, a decrease again in weddings from 32 to 21 (with lots of bookings for 2017, however) and another small increase in numbers of funerals (62 cf. 59 in 2015). Baptisms are concentrated at The Good Shepherd and at St Peter's, as these services are at 11:00 rather than 9:30.

December 2016 saw our second annual Celebration of Marriage service at St Peter's Clearwell. Couples who had married at Clearwell were invited to come along to this lovely service along with members of our congregations. It remains a hope for the future to add a Celebration of Baptism to the calendar as well.

Home communions and visiting

All Together Now: A service of Home Communion at Tuffthorn Close Community Room. A home communion service is held on the second Thursday of each month (except for January and August) for residents and other people living locally who are unable to access Sunday morning services at any of our churches in the Parish.

Volunteers help to transport participants from the local area by car, and others who live near enough to walk are assisted to the hall if required.

The service follows the pattern of communion by extension with bible readings and prayers of intercession.

The service is followed by a time of fellowship over tea and cake, kindly provided by the volunteer helpers.

A regular house group meets in Clearwell twice a month offering home communion during one of these meetings.

A note from Sylvia who hosts the Clearwell group: *We meet in my house 1, Church Road, Clearwell, on the fourth Friday of every month at 11am where a reading from the previous Sunday is open for discussion. Chris Young has been very helpful in leading us. We are a small group but we hope more will join us. For me personally it has been a great opportunity to keep in touch with the church community as it can be very isolating when one is unable to attend*

One person completed her training on the Diocesan Lay Pastoral minister course and she is now helping with the All Together Now services. We began to explore the possibility of growing a pastoral team this year, under the leadership of one of our Lay Readers. However, her personal circumstances changed, as did the immediate availability of some of the key volunteers, so that didn't grow as we hoped it would this year. It remains a plan for 2017.

Other Mission

Our Mission Action Plan (MAP) in full is appended to this report. So here, a summary of both process and outcome.

Last year, a Mission Action Planning (MAP) group had been formed, and led by Mark Bick and was commissioned by the PCC to develop a MAP for the parish.

Keen that as much of what we do as possible is seen in the light of mission and the kingdom, rather than as maintenance or 'keeping the show on the road', the MAP group met several times in the early part of this year to imagine and envision what our priorities might be for the future. They asked each LCC to generate a community profile for the different areas in our parish, and from there to consider how we might respond to Community need, and to take opportunities there might be.

Meet and Eat was set up in response to a survey of the people of Staunton which indicated that a day time meeting would be helpful. It was decided that lunch would be good. The white horse was approached and it was agreed that a light lunch would be provided at the cost of £5. We meet at 12 each Wednesday and have lunch and chat about a wide variety of things. We seem to have different people join us each week!
Wendy Williams

In February, at the PCC away day, the following mission statement was generated:

Our mission statement:

Welcome

Friend and stranger, young and old, all are welcome here.

As followers of Jesus, our journey of faith is one of love, compassion and justice for all.

The MAP group went on to engage in the national and international research that is available about mission and church growth, and ultimately, through that, the community profiles and through discussion some common themes were noted and priorities reached.

Wellbeing of all, in its widest sense, was a significant theme coming from many directions, including, of course, spiritual wellbeing. As part of our response to this, we want to be a welcoming and open community, we want people to know this about us (in other words, improve our outward communication), and we want to help people engage in an experience of prayer.

We also want to complement practical mission (such as the Foodbank) with advocacy and challenging the unjust structures of society.

The most clear and significant developments were the signing of a lease for a shop front premises in Coleford town centre in December, and the success of funding bids in order to appoint a parish co-ordinator who will work from the new premises. We are grateful to the Development Fund, Sylvanus Lysons and the Diocesan Pastoral fund for making these projects possible. Much building work and volunteer labour was needed at what is a fairly busy time anyway, and will have continued into 2017. The new post will also be recruited for in early 2017.

Our priorities for 2017 will be led by our MAP (see attached) and our commitments to our funders for these projects.

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 2016 meeting at the pub in Staunton. Under Rev Alan Wearmouth's excellent facilitation, we have got to know each other better, and learned to listen to different views, and people have grown in confidence in expressing what seem to be minority views



amongst those present. People have said they have changed their opinions on some of the topics discussed as a result.

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 again for their Lent group. This was led by a different leader each week from all denominations and from a wide geographical area.

The format of a talk, group discussion and worship, involving members of many different churches has been once again a successful and enjoyable addition to the local discipleship opportunities.

- A regular Thursday night bible study and prayer meeting started up this year, based in Coleford, though open to all. Hosting and leading were Edwina Bell and Alis Hawkins, and has been an enjoyable and valuable experience in guided meditation and silent prayer, alongside discussing scripture, usually the gospel of the previous Sunday.

Ideas for the future include the sense that other discipleship groups may grow out of a joint activity or purpose, rather than meeting based around our separate church community locations.

Social Group & Fund Raising

Fundraising Committee Report

This small committee, comprising representatives from all of our churches, has met regularly to organise events and activities designed to raise funds for the whole parish. We have tried to think of things which would appeal to a wide range of interests and to attract people from outside of our immediate congregations. Our target for 2016 was £6,000, a somewhat ambitious figure but, based on three large events (one of which was a flower festival, which, in the past has raised around £2,000) and several smaller ones, we thought not impossible. We aimed to have an event a month and our programme was as follows:

We started the year with a 'Beyond the Blues Concert' a lovely evening of song with wine and nibbles from our Pioneer Reader and his band. On Shrove Tuesday we had a delicious Pudding Evening. The Good Shepherd opened on Easter Monday for people to view the Easter Flowers. There was a fun Quiz Night in April & our ever popular Plant Sale and coffee & cakes in May. We had a Beetle Drive in June and in September there was a Music Evening at the Good Shepherd followed by a Pudding Evening in October.

In November we were fortunate enough to have two local authors, Shoo Rayner and Andrew Taylor to come and talk about their work. This was a new venture and was a lovely evening.

The first of our three 'Big' events was the Annual Parish Flower Festival in All Saints Church, Staunton in July with a theme of 'My Favourite Place'. There was a



huge variety of flower arrangements in the Church and the local art group had an exhibition in the village hall. Morning coffee, lunches and afternoon teas were also available provided by a team of ladies and gents from the parish!

Jane and Andrew MacBean kindly opened their gardens in August for a Garden Party. This was combined with a craft fair and although the weather was rather inclement it was a lovely afternoon for those people who braved the weather!



Our final event of the year was our inaugural Crib Festival. Local groups and schools were invited to make a display of their interpretation of the Nativity – we had lots of Christmas craft stalls and our Christmas Quiz sheet. The weekend culminated with a Crib celebration service where two of our Church Schools provided choirs to sing to us.

Attendance at some of the events was disappointing but positive feedback has been received from many people, so we are planning a similar programme for next year.

The total raised over the year was £3,600, somewhat short of our target £5,000 but still an increase on 2015.

We are grateful for the support and help from those who have attended, baked, personed a stall, brought plants, etc., but hope very much to be able to do better next year, through encouraging more people to sell tickets to others and/or publicise events by putting up a poster or telling friends, even if not attending themselves. We need to find ways of gaining the financial support of a wider base of people if we are to survive into the future.

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. The usual Advent service, which in recent years has been a Toy Service, didn't take place this year, through personal circumstances of the usual organisers.

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. We ended the year with a joint carol service where we were also joined by children, staff and parents from St John's Academy.

Buildings (Church Warden's Report)

All Saints' Newland

- The HLF application was accepted and repair works to the tower has commenced. Thanks to Edwina for all her help. Faculty needed for phase 3 of the re-ordering (meeting room above the toilets and repairs to west window).
- QI started, and will be finished early '17 while scaffolding up.
- The Friends organised a 'clearing churchyard' day and did a great job, clearing years' worth of rubbish.

All Saints' Staunton

- New heating system installed. De-humidifier working well, the church is much drier.
- The clock had been mended, but is now requiring repair again.
- Grass-cutting has been reduced to monthly.
- Successful Flower Festival was held in the church in July with refreshments in the Village Hall.
- A plaster fall from the ceiling of the Red Chapel was repaired.
- Lights have been installed along the path, and interior bulbs have been replaced with LED bulbs.

Good Shepherd Broadwell

- The font has not been moved. Spare chairs are being stored in the font area. The pews have been moved to create a prayer area at the rear of the church.
- A light outside the church has been installed.
- A key safe has been fitted by the side door for easy access.
- A time clock for the heating has been installed

St John's Coleford

- New family worship started at St John's School, 'Mustard Tree'.
- The Church Commissioners meeting on 1st June decided to close St John's church for Public Worship. There was no appeal launched.
- The Diocese has taken responsibility for the church contents and fabric, the contents were sorted, some items have been removed and taken to other churches in the Parish, other items subject to faculty have remained in St John's.
- A closure service was held outside St John's from which there was a lot of positive feedback. A special edition of the magazine with the history of the closure was produced and was well received.
- The old Dean Forest Hospice Shop was identified as a possible Parish Shop location and was leased and funding was applied for to help with the interior work that needs doing. A Christian Bookshop will share the space.

St Peter's Clearwell

- The yew trees around the church were all trimmed, permission had been obtained from FODCC planning office.
- The clock was repaired.
- A grant funding application was put together for the internal reordering.
- Tiles were still slipping off the roof, the builder is investigating
- The second wedding celebration service took place in December.
- Toby and Alan had a meeting at the Cemetery Chapel, the cross and surrounding stonework were deemed to be unsafe, application was made to the Diocese to remove the clock to make the surrounding area safe. Two trees need to be cut down, permission was required for removal.

St Saviour Redbrook

- The roof and the floor were both completed. Funds were received towards the roof project from parents at the school and school fund-raising.
- The licence agreement with the school finally came into force, and so the school is now paying rent to share the space with the parish.

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 Sarah Codd
Churchwardens

Deanery Synod

A short report from Deanery Synod meetings in 2016 from Alison Stuttard (Deanery Synod Rep).

February 25th 2016 @ St Luke's, Tutshill

- Chris Maclay introduced himself as the new Area Dean and expressed his wish that the churches in the deanery should work closely and share resources and ideas. Thanks were given to Philippa Brunt for all her work as Area Dean.
- Ruth Julius spoke about the work of Breathe. This is an organisation which runs youth groups based on Biblical teaching and Christian Values in Bream and surrounding areas

Thursday 21st June at St James Bream.

- Duncan Munroe from the Diocesan Development Fund gave a presentation on the background work of the fund and the opportunities for parishes.
- A meeting was held prior to Deanery Synod with Churchwardens and Treasurers where Parish Share was the main topic. There was positive feedback from the meeting. Most parishes are paying the sum they have committed to but there is a shortfall of 27,000.

Tuesday 20th October at St Steven's, Cinderford

- Rachel Howie, Director of Education in the Diocese of Gloucester gave a presentation discussing the work of the Diocesan Board of Education and the Academies Trust. She reminded synod that the Church is the single biggest provider of Education in England. She asked PCCs to ensure that schools are on the PCC agenda as a regular item. She also asked PCCs to share with her any ideas they may have that help them connect with their schools.
- Steve Grindrod stood down as Lay Chair. A vote of thanks was given to him for all the work that he has done and he was presented with a card and a gift.
- Chris Witham was Elected as the new lay chair.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding officer is Mark Bick who can be contacted on 01594 836418 or at <mailto:mark@markbick.co.uk>. The deputy officer is the incumbent, Rev Sarah Bick who can be contacted on 01594 835476 or at vicar@mid-wyedeanchurches.co.uk. The Diocesan safeguarding team can always be directly contacted as well. There were no incidents directly within the responsibility of the parish this year, though we were approached as a source of

advice by someone with some concerns and contacted the Diocese Safeguarding Team to check with them. Two people have completed safeguarding training and 1 of person has had renewed DBS checks. A safeguarding briefing and discussion was undertaken with the Mustard Tree team before that work started. An overall review and update of our policy and records is overdue. It has been delayed due to lack of time and not given priority as we had been involved in very little work that involves risks. This will now be given priority as it needs to include the new work based at the Church on the Street.

Summary of achievements or major events

Some real progress is now being made in terms of our vision and mission for the future. However, this is only being achieved through the grants we have received from the Diocese, the Development Fund and Sylvanus Lysons. Making this work sustainable for the future will take considerable time, and remains our challenge to rise to.

Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee has met regularly through the year as mandated by the PCC. It has dealt with decisions falling within its remit between PCC meetings when a response is required sooner than the next PCC meeting. It has revisited the financial policy of the Parish and its five year projections. It has kept a watch on the budget as set at the beginning of the year and begun work on the 2018 budget to inform decision making and address priorities identified by the MAP process and PCC decisions. The Committee, which includes financial representatives from each worshipping community as well as the Churchwardens and Clergy, assists the treasurer in fulfilling her duties and ensures financial openness and probity. I am very grateful for the attendance and support of all members of the Committee and can commend its work to the Parish.

Reverend Alan Wearmouth - Chair of the Finance Committee.

Appendix 1

Mission Action Plan

Who is this document for?

- For people who are engaged with the churches of the parish, who share a Christian faith and want to contribute to carrying out the mission of the church in this area.
- To explain and share what we want to do to those who might offer partnership or support: other church leaders and organisations, in the Diocese & in other churches, other people and organisations in our local community who may share aims with us as a church.

What is it for?

- To help us get a shared understanding of our purpose as a church
- To help us work together, agree priorities and make best use the resources we have (people, time, money, buildings etc.).

What difference will it make?

- Enable us to grow as a church, in faith, in outworking of our faith and in numbers, across all our congregations. We expect this to include growing new worshipping communities, and engaging in new areas of service.

How has the plan been developed?

- Through the Mission Action Planning Group, PCC standing committee and others looking at various mainstream materials on mission, healthy churches and church growth; sharing and praying together and beginning to explore the needs and opportunities in each of our local communities.
- It is based on a shared understanding that the church is followers of Jesus, gathering together in each of our communities, and part of the whole body of Christ. We are called to love God and love our neighbour, to be in relationship with God and draw others into relationship too. We do this through worship, prayer and mission.

We seek to:

- proclaim the good news of the kingdom;
- teach, nurture and baptise new believers;
- respond to human need by loving service;
- transform unjust structures in society;
- to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth.

(The "5 Marks of Mission Agreed by the international Anglican Communion in 1990 & still current)

Our mission statement:

Welcome

Friend and stranger, young and old, all are welcome here.

As followers of Jesus, our journey of faith is one of love, compassion and justice for all.

Some principles of how we want to work:

- a) Prayer and reflection need to underpin all that we do - Starting with listening, to God, to each other and to our communities. Then reflecting and discussing together, then action, then crucially continuing to reflect, pray and learn.
- b) Understanding that church is the people and helping the wider community to understand that.
- c) Working at the level of individual communities – places where we have buildings, but also communities such as Sling where there is no building.
People who live, work or worship in these communities know them best, and are best placed to identify the local needs. PCC and LCC's and "staff" members will have a significant role in offering leadership, support, encouragement and discernment and also helping put together teams, which may cross various boundaries or existing groupings.
- d) We want to offer peace, shelter and love to all those who seek it, making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of individuals and the community as a whole.
- e) We do want to grow! It is a bit scary saying that, as we may fail, but the evidence is that churches that say that they want to grow are more likely to grow!
- f) Valuing the contribution of everyone. We will only be able to carry out our mission as church communities if everyone is contributing. It does not matter how young or old, whether from a church background or not, we need to help people discover the contribution that God wants them to make, the gifts that they have and how they can be used, what brings them joy. We then need to improve our support and equipping of people to work out that calling.
- g) Working collaboratively with others - We seek to work with individuals and organisations that have a similar focus to our own, whether they are other members of the Christian community, or secular organisations and individuals. Many of the needs and priorities that we identify will be beyond the capabilities of individuals, or indeed of the parish itself, but we may be able to assist, support or move forward projects either already in existence, or in planning.
- h) Being visible in our communities as members of the church. We are called to be salt and light in the world around us. (*Gospel of St. Matthew chapter 5: 13-16*). Our church buildings are

already a visible presence in the community, but often our people are not. Many of our congregation members engage in voluntary or paid work, which is of huge benefit to the community. We need to recognise this to be part of the "work of the church"

i) Sometimes we might need to do less but do it better – (see 7 marks of a health church, above).

Our priorities for the next 3 years:

OUTCOME 1:

Everyone in our congregations able to discover, value and exercise their gifts, calling & "joy", including provision of any necessary training and support.

This will include releasing some people who have been stuck in roles that do not fit, discovering those who have been overlooked, or undervalued, ensuring that our clergy and other leaders have time to prioritise the things that will be most fruitful, and enabling everyone to work to their strengths. This outcome is essential to increasing the pace at which things are turned around and to making that change sustainable. It will not happen to sufficient scale unless time is released through outcome 2.

HOW ACHIEVED? –Through:

- a) Taking tasks that would be more efficiently done by others away from the clergy and one or two other key people, to give them time to strategically focus on mission, developing deeper, supportive relationships with a small group of leaders, provide spiritual leadership & nurture within and beyond existing congregations, build teams to take responsibility for specific new developments, and provide training, both within the parish and beyond. Build partnerships: with other churches, with civic leaders and with other parts of our local communities.
- b) An on-going process of leaders spending time with people throughout all the congregations, listening, praying, understanding and drawing out gifts and vocation, training, supporting and sending on external courses where needed. Accepting that in some situations things will not be done because there is not the right person to do them.
- c) Reviewing to ensure that paid tasks line up with the actual gaps and priority needs.
- d) Developing team and/or peer support systems, including prayer & care for well-being.

OUTCOME 2:

Better and more efficient administration and communication. *This has already been identified as an area of weakness and therefore a priority gap and need. Functional structures are a key quality characteristic of healthy churches.*

HOW ACHIEVED? – Through:

- a) Taking on a coordinator and administrator (see role and job description for details).

- b) Building a team around this person through process b) of outcome one.
- c) A critical examination of key tasks related to church buildings (monitoring, planning, faculties, fundraising and supervision of works), look at long term, efficient & sustainable ways to manage these tasks. These are likely to include paid specialist input, plus practical training & support for volunteers.
- d) Taking a multi platform approach to communication, led by the new coordinator, using volunteers. Further integrating written, online and face-to-face communication and making full use of the expanding leadership team.

OUTCOME 3:

Engaging children and families, via our church schools and other community links. Growing disciples both within existing congregations and through new all age congregations and other initiatives.

HOW ACHIEVED? – Through:

- a) Growing a sustainable congregation in Redbrook, all age, linked into the life of this dynamic village, focused on serving spiritual needs, fuzzy edged – people, of all faiths and none, welcome to come and explore, building on the existing small core. Building a leadership team.
- b) Building on monthly “Mustard Tree” sessions (began in May 2016) at St. John’s primary school in Coleford, continuing to develop the leadership team and build a new congregation linking with children and parents. Associated volunteer mentoring project for referred children at the school, linking with the school Family Support Worker
- c) Exploring how links between Clearwell C of E School and the church can be further developed building on existing regular assemblies, “Open The Book” and positive relationship with the school.
- d) Finding ways to encourage and support teachers and TAs at all 3 C of E primaries in spiritual growth and understanding e.g. through hosting INSET day.
- e) Consider how engagement could be developed in Broadwell, Sling and Staunton.

OUTCOME 4:

Working towards effective ministry in each community of our Parish, growing out of outcomes 1, 2 and 3. This will include: local leadership & participation in worship, discipleship, pastoral ministry, places of spiritual encounter and prayer, other service and mission within the communities.

HOW ACHIEVED?

- a) Engagement in piloting Diocesan Local Minister Course.

- b) On-going development of local community profiles: Engagement, listening and prayer with communities and consequent local led initiatives (e.g. lunch to be preceded by morning prayer, in the pub in Staunton, all planned, and to be led, by people living in the village)
- c) Opening a "shop front" building in Coleford (probably rented) to be the Parish office, point of contact, meeting, prayer and pastoral space, used ecumenically (There are no other churches with suitable town centre space in Coleford). This is part of the St. John's worshipping community working out how to be church without a church building as well as serving the whole Parish.
- d) Setting up coordinated pastoral ministry, led by a parish level team, including Diocesan Pastoral Assistant training.
- e) Increased house groups and locally led worship, increased engagement in prayer.
- f) Developing inspiring worship across all the churches including special celebrations, and a greater variety of style, purpose and targeting e.g. civic services, healing services, ecumenical collaborations, annual celebrations for marriage and baptism.
- g) Improving use of buildings as places of spiritual encounter, for locals, visitors and tourists (all the churches are open during the day except Redbrook on school days). Encouraging and facilitating prayer in these special spaces & publicising their availability.

OUTCOME 5 :

Further outcomes explored, identified and prioritised. Some may emerge quite quickly and need quick response. Existing outcomes reviewed and adjusted as needed. *Through our MAP process a number of ideas have emerged which at this point in time need further consideration. This is the life of the church - on-going growth and development will be a sign of health.*

HOW ACHIEVED?

- a) New proposed areas of focus will emerge at local community and parish level.

Possibilities include:

- Work with teenagers and young adults – e.g. ecumenical youth café at Coleford Rec., open mic. nights at Broadwell or Redbrook.
- Ministry/mission in unreached communities including Sling, almost certainly in partnership with other churches.
- Piloting Happiness Lab and exploring other evangelism programmes/training
- Children's play area in Staunton church
- Christian presence at various festivals and events such as Redbrook "Live on the Wye" or Coleford Music Festival.
- Becoming a place of training, learning and nurturing of vocation including going out to others, and welcoming others to learn (a curate?)
- Going out to support/train/encourage other churches/parishes in the things that we have learnt.

b) The Mission Action Planning group to:

- Help develop & evaluate new ideas, working alongside originators, bringing other people in, bringing to clergy, relevant team leaders & PCC/Standing Committee for prayerful consideration & discernment
- Ensure that we review and learn as we go along in each area of activity.
- Develop and set up a group of "critical friends" to help us in this task.

APPENDICES

Documents

There are other documents from the Mission Action Planning process including:

- Introductory PowerPoint presentations,
- Further info on our understanding of Mission, Healthy Churches and Church Growth
- A document under development on how we propose to measure progress with the Mission Action Plan

All available from Mark.

Links and references – Do explore for you, or ask Mark, Ann Harley or others who have read these things.

- Gloucester Diocese Mission Action Planning, advice and information.
<http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/church-outreach/mission-action-plans/>
- Vision 2016 - The Diocese of Gloucester's renewed vision document.
<http://www.vision2016.org.uk>
- From Anecdote to Evidence – Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011- 2013.
<http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/FromAnecdoteToEvidence1.0.pdf> ** *Among many other things, this research shows that having a mission action plan does help growth as long as it developed, adopted and acted on by the whole church.* ***
- Moving on with Mission, Mission Action Planning Tool, Diocese of Sheffield 2014
<http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/maptool>
- Practical materials on faith sharing and evangelism – by Paul Griffiths who lives in the Forest of Dean. <http://www.theuglyducklingcompany.com>
- Our local pioneer ministry hub for visits to see what people are doing etc.
<http://thepioneerhub.org.uk>

- Fresh expressions online materials, includes videos. Good for browsing – a rich resource.
<http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/home> <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/guide>
- <http://course.missionshapedministry.org> - *course materials only accessible to registered teachers and students. Mark can provide copies. See separate list of units.*

Books (Mark and Sarah have copies of all of these available for loan)

- *How to do Mission Action Planning – A vision-centred approach*, Mike Chew and Mark Ireland. SPCK 2009
- *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* Christian A. Schwarz, Churchsmart Resources 1996
- *The Healthy Churches' Handbook* Robert Warren – Church House Publishing
- *Mission-Shaped Church* - Graham Cray and others, 2004 CHP (available free online)
- *Mission-Shaped and Rural*, Sally Gaze CHP 2006
(plus various others in "mission-shaped" series)
- Grove booklets <http://grovebooks.co.uk> Great short booklets on a wide variety of mission and ministry subjects - usually about 25 pages and cost £3.95, also available as eBooks

Community profiles – some prompts

The basics:

Population, age profile, where do they work, go to school, shop etc. (see below).

Geography – what are the main places it connects with, how does this shape the community

Schools and workplaces

Gathering places - Pubs, clubs, halls, sports facilities etc. who uses them?

Organisations –

The church – how many people attend, age profile, where do they live? The history of the church, other churches in the community,

Photos, maps, video etc. may communicate more to other people in the group and be more fun than loads of words (e.g. video of tent Marquee being taken down the main road in Redbrook! – ask Claire Fordham).

Broader and deeper

Your own perceptions and intuition are relevant, meeting and listening to people is central.

The stories and perceptions in the community;

Any obvious preconceptions of the church from the community, or conversely, of the community from members of the church?

What networks are there? How do they work? Are there key "Gatekeepers"?

What sub-cultures are there within the community?

How do the population relate to the Richter & Francis categories? – de-churched (open/closed); non-churched? (see separate explanatory notes)

What relationships do we have with other churches in the community and beyond? Do we know of people who go further afield to church, do we know why?

What contacts do congregation members have? What is the geographic/social distribution of their relationships and contacts;

Listening to God for guidance, wisdom and revelation - right from the start.

Questions specific to your own church

Which aspects of mission and ministry are already being undertaken?

Which of these might God want us to grow in the future?

Are there things we want to start – or stop?

Population (Sarah's estimates)

Staunton – 230, Redbrook – 350, Newland – 130, Clearwell - 320,

Sling – 800, Ellwood – 200?

Coleford, Milkwall, Coalway, Broadwell and Mile End. – 8,500

There is also a Mission "Spotlight" document for the whole Parish compiled by the C of E National Statistics office mapping 2011 census data with Parish boundaries and parish data submitted to them. Available from Mark.

Some help to evaluate a new initiative idea

Having identified a need in the community that church members feel they could meet, it is worth asking some questions to help flesh out the idea.

1. What is the need, and how has it been identified?

2. How does this fit in with the objectives of the Mission Action Plan:-
 - ***(Remember, your initiative does not have to match all of these, but must reflect at least one aspect)***

3. What are you going to do?

4. Who is going to be involved in the initiative?

5. Do they have any special skills/training/experience that will be useful?

6. Are there any outside organisations that are doing similar things?

7. What resources are you going to need?
(Think about things like money, premises, books, materials etc.)

8. What help do you think you will need?
(Think about clergy/reader support, training, DBA checks, supervision etc.)

9. Where and when and how are you going to start?

10. What next?

When you have formulated your plan, get in touch with a member of the Mission Action Group, or your PCC representative to take the initiative to the next stage.