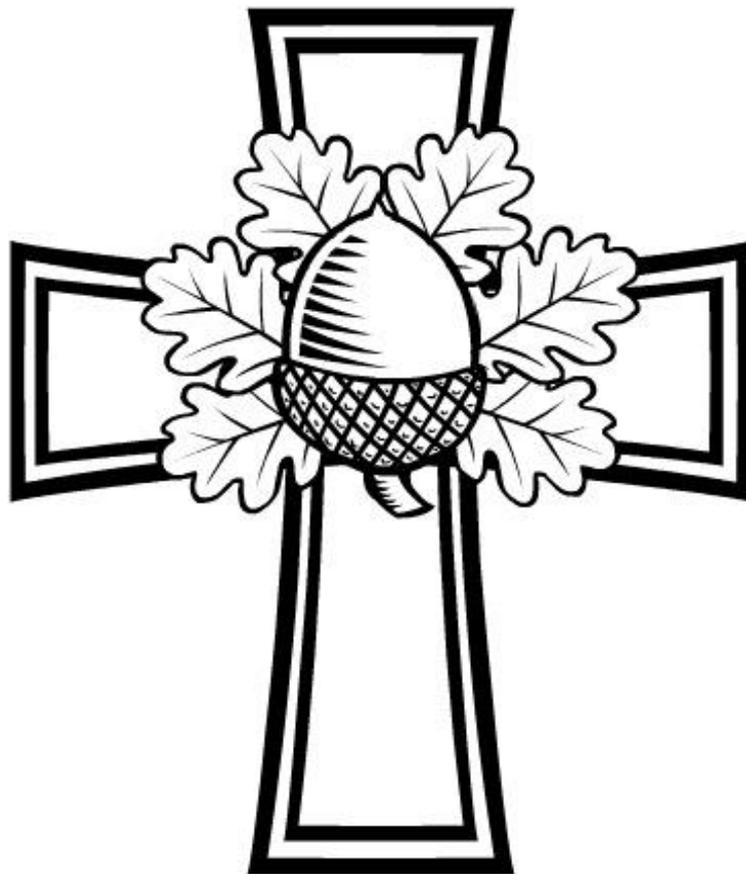


Mid-Wyedean Churches

The Church of England serving Coleford, Broadwell, Staunton,
Clearwell, Newland, and Redbrook and surrounding areas.

Annual Report 2013



Vicar: Revd Sarah Bick, 40 Boxbush Road, Coleford, GL16 8DN
Telephone 01594 835476 or email sarah@thebickerage.org.uk

Administrative information

The Licensed Staff Team:

Revd Sarah Bick	Vicar	01594 835476
Revd Alan Wearmouth	House for Duty	01594 832660
Revd Rob James	Self-Supporting Minister	

Readers:

Mrs Anne Harley & Mr Chris Howell.
(Pioneer reader in training: Mark Bick)

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
Margaret Winter	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
John Simmons	All Saints, Staunton
Pat Shuttleworth	St Saviours, Redbrook and All Saints, Newland

Benefice Auditor:

Robert Lewis of Wildin Accountants.

Deanery Synod reps:

Christine Young, David Atherley, Margaret Winter

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 have 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 may not be PCC members. Although this expires on 1st September 2014, it practically remains in place until the APCM in 2015, at which time a Parish policy may take its place, to be agreed by the PCC. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Mission and Ministry

Leadership

The year officially began in vacancy; though the appointment of Rev Sarah Bick, our former curate, as vicar had been made in November 2012, she was collated and installed at All Saints, Newland, on 11th March 2013.

Worship

Sunday services are normally held at Staunton, Newland and Coleford (currently in the Roman Catholic Church of St Margaret Mary, High Nash) at 9:30 weekly and at Broadwell, Clearwell and Redbrook at 11:00 weekly. During this year, we have continued to develop a programme of benefice services, where one service (therefore, a celebration of the Eucharist) is offered in the parish so that the whole parish community can gather together in worship, and in fellowship with one another. These have started to use special events in the Church's calendar (e.g. Palm Sunday) so that we can share in special services together, while continuing to provide opportunities for worship at Christmas and Easter that are easily accessible to the wider community. We hope to continue to develop this next year. During this year, the introduction of a monthly lay-led All Age worship service in Coleford, St John's congregation at St Margaret Mary RC Church hall has been a real encouragement. The dedicated work of Wendy Williams, Fred Meek and others has helped to make this a fruitful endeavour, which we hope will continue to grow and develop in the future.

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 and Estelle Robins.

'Being a small school we involve the teachers and children to present the Bible stories. We light a candle to show that worship has started and after the story we say a short prayer, finishing with the Lord's prayer. If we forget we are normally reminded by a child that we haven't said 'Jesus' prayer'!

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

'The children look forward each week to who will be asked to act out the story. The actors always perform well and the other children pay close attention and answer questions well, and ask good questions as well. Sometimes the teachers do too! We have a short time of

reflection, a prayer and the Lord's prayer, and then finish with a song the teacher has chosen. It always feels really special when the song fits what we've been learning about.'

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 and 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.

Governors

Since Rev Sarah Bick becoming vicar, she has taken on the governor role at St John's Academy, remains governor for the Wye Forest Federation (Redbrook and St Briavel's schools) and has delegated her ex-officio position at Clearwell School to Rev Alan Wearmouth. 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, Heather Lusty, of St John's congregation, has served 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

This aspect of the work of the church continues to be busy. However, there are fewer funeral services in church as a result of St John's closing; and both the 2013 superstition and our revising our approach to marriage by Common License have resulted in fewer weddings also. Baptisms are at around the same level, though concentrated at The Good Shepherd and at St Peter's, as these services are at 11:00 rather than 9:30. Plans for the future include more consciously using the occasional offices as points of contact for growing the church, by keeping contact with families who use the church for life events, having annual services of celebration of baptism and of marriage (as we already have an equivalent for funerals in All Souls). Also, by continuing to improve our All Age services, in quantity and quality, so that we have a suitable Sunday service to encourage families to attend.

Home communions and visiting

Home communions are continuing at Kingsmeade under Anne Harley's leadership. This is much appreciated by those who participate. However, at the Elms and the Coombs nursing homes, this has discontinued, a point that needs readdressing. It is a priority for the future to grow this part of our ministry. It is hoped that a team of volunteers may be identified to contribute to this work.

Discipleship

A new focus on deepening and strengthening Christian discipleship in the parish began this year with three new events:

- A twice monthly bible study, jointly with the Roman Catholics
- The Pilgrim course, used as a Confirmation Class, but open to all
- Monthly 'Hot Potato' discussion evenings with chips, advertised and planned for January 2014, at the pub in Staunton.

We hope that this will grow in strength and depth in the coming year.

Social Group & Fund Raising

The Social committee became the Social group during 2013.

Two Flower Festivals took place in the Benefice at All Saints, Staunton and St Peter's, Clearwell and were well supported. The Church of the Good Shepherd, Broadwell celebrated its 75th Anniversary with a series of events ranging from a cake give away, a fete, a concert and a Songs of Praise. Jane McBean kindly opened her garden after a Benefice service in Clearwell where a bring and share lunch was enjoyed by all.

A group of 40+ parishioners went on the Parish outing to Tredegar House in Newport – it was deemed a great success and it is hoped it will become an annual event. A Benefice Harvest Festival was held again this year followed by a Harvest Lunch at the Orepool Inn in Sling.

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

Ecumenical services have been held this year, including an open air Good Friday service, and sunrise Easter morning service and an Advent Sunday celebration.

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 is striking. 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 for the priest and congregation of St Margaret Mary RC Church, welcoming St John's congregation into their building to give us a place to worship. We were pleased to have a joint social event (Beetle Drive and supper) to get to know each other better in May. And for the joint bible study and compline evenings which began in November. We look forward to more such events, and for the relationship we have begun to grow.

Buildings (Church Warden's Report 2013)

All Saints' Newland

- Following the Tower Survey report an application is being made to HLF to fund urgent repairs.
- The toilets and servery units are all in place.
- An evergreen tree near Bells Cottages is dying and needs to be removed.
- John Williams has provided a quote for replacing the outside lights that are not working, and when the ground is dry the work will be carried out. He has also fixed two inside lights.
- The lead on the Lady Chapel roof has been repaired by Splitlath.

All Saints' Staunton

- The Quinquennial survey was carried out.
- Following a visit by the DAC the damp and heating were seen to be priorities for the building. Also initial ideas concerning re-ordering of the church, including addition of toilets and vestry.
- A French drain is needed around the church because of the severe damp.
- Quote was accepted for inspection of the roof, clearing gutters and downpipes.

Good Shepherd Broadwell

- The pews in the church have been removed and replaced with chairs.
- The path around the side of the church has been completed.
- Roof repairs to the vestry have been carried out and the lintel above the rear door has been replaced.
- A banner was made by Coalway School to commemorate the 75th Anniversary.

St John's Coleford

- A reminder of key events in 2012: The on-going future of St John's building was in question, clearly no decision made, but it was known that a decision would need to be reached regarding the future use of the building. A steering group was formed, including congregation and PCC members, Rev Sarah Bick (curate at that time) as well as Natalie Hill, buildings officer for the Diocese of Gloucester, Rev Philippa Brunt, Area Dean, and Rev Jackie Searle, Archdeacon of Gloucester. Specific information was sought regarding the costs of repairing the building, using the Quinquennial inspection prepared by the architect and the services of a Quantity Surveyor to cost all the necessary works. The cost simply to repair the building, factoring in nothing to improve it, came to £1.8M. Public consultation about the future of the building was held in December 2012 at St John's School.
- Following this, there was careful and thorough discussion and consideration of the options, costs, possible ways of raising funds, different ways of making the building viable or useable in some form. However, a way forward for the building to continue as a church in our care was not seen as viable.
- The PCC voted in March 2013 to ask the Diocese to begin the closure process. Votes: in favour 15, against 0, abstentions 2.
- The formal decision to withdraw from the St John's building was accepted by the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, and the official process of the Church of England for closure was begun, and is still in progress.
- The congregation continue to hold services in St Margaret Mary Roman Catholic church.
- 2 plans from the appointed architects have been presented to the council for a new church building on the Lawnstone House site; Ben Preece-Smith from the Diocese has been in discussion with the council, no decision has been made to date.

St Peter's Clearwell

- Roof tiles slipping continue to be a problem, Splitlath have repaired as necessary.
- Boundary wall repairs have been carried out, Alan has contacted the contractor as they were not done with lime mortar.
- Estimates for repairs to the church clock were obtained; an application for grants has been done and fund-raising is ongoing.

St Saviour Redbrook

- The Quinquennial report has been completed, there are a number of repairs needing attention. The roof is leaking and gutters are overflowing, contractors have been contacted.
- Plans to use the church nave as an assembly hall for the school are progressing.

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 2013 from Chris Young (Deanery Synod Rep).

19th February meeting:

- Plans for the farewell to Bishop John
- Mark Bick reported on plans for 'Mission Shaped Ministry' courses
- Report on the plans for a Deanery Discovery Day at Viney Hill on 16th November

4th June

- A report from Natalie Hill about the Deanery Buildings report. Last year Natalie spent 10 days visiting all Church and Church related buildings in our Deanery. We can expect a full written report in the future. Natalie reported on the current situation, future opportunities and on Churches at risk. In summary she said that there was a huge amount of good practice in a beautiful part of the country.

8th October

- Final plans for the Deanery Discovery Day
- Plan for 19th October Prayer breakfast with Christians together in Cinderford
- Andrew Braddock and Pauline Godfrey gave a presentation on patterns of Ministry
- Ben Preece Smith gave a presentation based on Parish share and explained how the cost of a priest is made up.

Summary of achievements or major events

- New vicar appointed
- The difficult matter of the closure of St John's
- Plans for a new church building in Coleford and closeness of relationships amongst the Coleford congregation both developing, with a great sense of hope for the future
- Plans for mission-focussed reordering of all other buildings
- The celebration of The Good Shepherd's 75th anniversary, and as a focus for future plans
- The burgeoning discipleship groups, including 5 confirmation candidates

Objectives for 2014

- Initial reordering plans at Redbrook and Staunton completed, other progressing to the next stage
- A greater and owned sense of 'vocation' for each church
- Work with children, young people and families growing and developing
- Some development of a 'Pastoral' team
- Enriching the worship of the parish through, for example, the development of United Parish services
- We hope there will be news of the site for a new church building!

Finances - Mid-Wyedean Churches Financial Report 2013

This is the first of a new (recommended) style of report which will now become the standard. This particular report is compromised by the twin facts that the Treasurership changed half-way through the year and also that we moved from a book-based to a computerised (using the Diocesan recommended model) system of accounting during the year. The latter fact meant that some six months' worth of transactions was entered manually onto the computer and several of these transactions were not able to be assigned with confidence to the correct headings within the new system.

We now have a modern, detailed and reliable system of accounting being administered by a Treasurer who is at home with that system and it is therefore expected that subsequent reports will be totally clear without needing to refer to the income and expenditure sheet

which is also supplied with this report. Genuine appreciation is due to Wendy Lawrence, who acted as Treasurer for many years and ran a complex book based system very effectively and also to Rosemary Ward, who has taken over the new computerised system with great enthusiasm and efficiency.

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £83,300 (all figures to the nearest hundred pounds) of which £33,900 was income from Parochial Fees. Approximately half of the Parochial Fees income is paid out in wages and Diocesan fees. The combined income from the Parish Giving Scheme and associated Gift Aid and from other collections was £40,900. (These items will be reported separately in the future.)

Apart from the fact that our income from the Parish Giving Scheme is inadequate to meet even our promised Parish Share of £32,000 (which is less than half of our requested Parish Share) the most significant item of expenditure is the amount of £43,200 which is the total cost of maintaining all our Churches, Churchyards and services. We are fortunate that where major expenditure is identified as a pressing need All Saints Staunton has substantial restricted funds available and All Saints Staunton, All Saints Newland and St Peter Clearwell are all Grade One listed churches and therefore are more likely to attract grant funding. However, in order to meet urgent repair costs around the Parish the previously designated funds attached to St John's have been depleted. (These were also used to make up the shortfall in promised Parish Share referred to earlier, although this did not actually happen until 2014.)

The net result for the year was an excess of payments over receipts of £12,700 on unrestricted funds. The impact of the closure of St John's Church for worship is difficult to quantify with savings on maintenance being offset by a reduction in the numbers and amount of giving from that congregation.

The final element of this report is an indication of our policy on the holding of reserves. The basic policy has been in development over the past three years or so by the Finance Committee, reporting to the PCC. It is likely to be the case that by next year's report this will be a simple statement but we are not quite there yet. It is intended that the Parish should hold one current account (currently the Co-Op account), one or more deposit account(s) for all restricted funds and one or more deposit account(s) for designated funds as is prudent given the guarantee limits upon deposits. The restricted fund accounts are likely to be with the CCLA. Unrestricted reserves would not be expected to be allowed to grow to a figure above £25,000 (approximately three months' unrestricted payments) but this figure is extremely unlikely to be approached at the moment. The policy regarding restricted reserves is to be decided upon during 2014 but in principle these are to be used for the maintenance and growth of the individual Churches to which their use is restricted.

As an indication of where our regular income is derived the following is a statement of regular monthly giving (excluding annual and quarterly payments):

£5 to 9.99 – 2
10 to 19.99 – 3
20 to 29.99 – 10
30 – 39.99 – 3
40 – 49.99 – 4
50 – 59.99 – 1
60 – 69.99 – 2
80 – 89.99 – 2
100 – 109.99 – 3
300+ - 1

This shows both that we have only 31 people in the Parish Giving Scheme (plus any quarterly or annual members) and that only 13 people are able to give £10 a week or more. Others do give generously, but the Parish Giving Scheme is by far and away the most efficient, straightforward (for the Treasurer) and simply useful (because of cash flow) method of giving. Please consider joining.