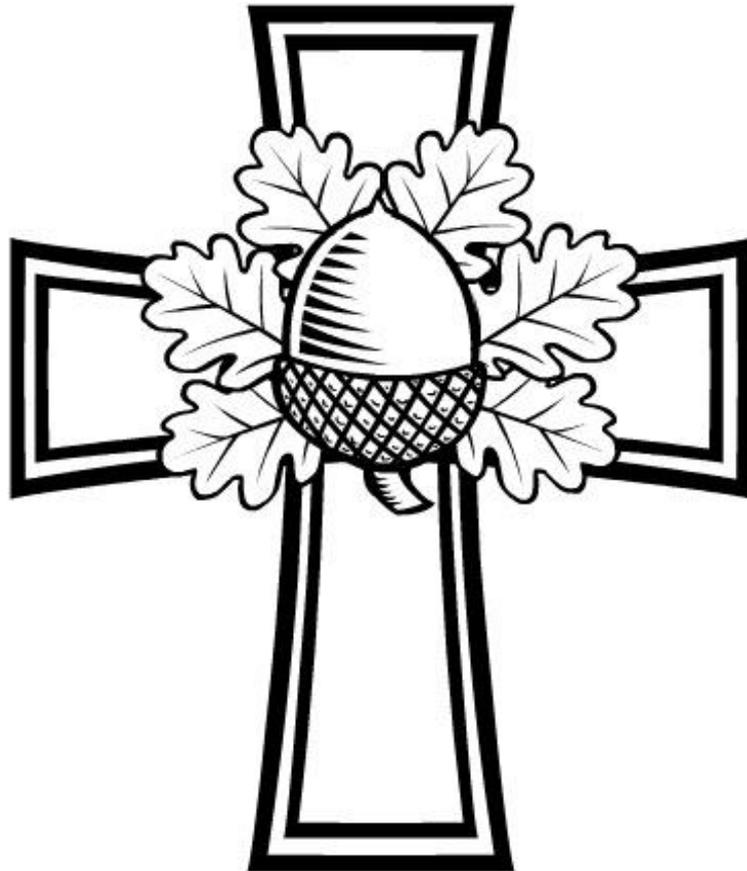


Mid-Wyedean Churches

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

Annual Report 2014



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

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

Independent Examiner: Robert Lewis of Wildin Accountants.

Deanery Synod reps: Christine Young, David Atherley, Margaret Winter (all re-elected in 2014)

Structure, governance and management

The Parish of the Mid-Wydean 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-Wydean 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.

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

During this year, the pattern of Sunday services has been reduced on most Sundays from six regular services to four. This has been done by amalgamating the congregations of Redbrook, Newland and Staunton (averaging 12-14 in total) into one congregation and alternating worship between Newland and Staunton.

Redbrook has not been abandoned though! Instead, the initiation, in September 2014, of a new 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.

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.

United Parish services, towards the end of the year, have now developed into a monthly event on the last Sunday of the month, and visiting each church - the pattern intended for 2015.

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.

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.

At Redbrook C of E school it is led each Monday 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 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.

Other Assemblies

Rev Alan Wearmouth now 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. A pattern has developed whereby she leads worship one week, and after assembly time coaches and enables a year 6 team to devise and to lead worship the following week.

Alan and Sarah contribute to Special occasion worship for the schools as appropriate.

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, Heather Lusty, of St John's congregation, has served as foundation governor at St John's Academy, though steps down from that role this year, after many years of faithful service. 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 were fewer funeral services in church across the parish this year - this seems to be the case across other local churches as well. Wedding numbers have increased again on last year. 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. It is still a hope for the future to include more consciously using the occasional offices as points of contact for growing the church, by keeping contact with families who use the church of life events, having annual services of celebration of baptism and of marriage (as we already have an equivalent for funerals in All Souls). The new service in Redbrook has added to our opportunities to invite baptism 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. Plans to grow a Pastoral team within the parish, have faltered, as it happens, due to pastoral needs within our regular congregation. It is still a hope to develop a team to contribute to this vital area of ministry.

Broadwell Cookery Club

Broadwell Cookery Club continued to meet on the first Monday of each month (except if it is a bank holiday) bringing together people with differing levels of skill to share an evening of exploration in the kitchen. Over the last 2 years we have explored diverse areas such as Italian cookery, cake decorating, Chinese and Indian cuisine and basic skills like making soup and pizzas. The programme is decided on by the participants, who then "buddy up" to share skills and try and make sense of the recipes. At the end of the evening we gather around the table to share our food and

our experiences of cooking it. Most of the food produced has been of an extremely high standard, which has surprised some of us who had little faith in our culinary skills when they started!



Penguins on Parade- Christmas cake decorating.

Discipleship

Deepening and strengthening Christian discipleship in the parish continued this year, with various opportunities for study and discussion

- A weekly book group for Lent and Easter, jointly with the Roman Catholics
- The Pilgrim course continued into the first part of the year.
- Monthly 'Hot Potato' discussion evenings with chips, began in January this year, 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 tax and charity, human sexuality, IVF, and women bishops as it was topical!

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

A Lent Course report

(Chris Howell)

FINDING A VOICE – a Lent course based on *The King's Speech*.

This Lent Course began at the St Margaret Mary Church Hall with the showing of the film "The King's Speech" (The story of King George VI, his impromptu ascension to the throne and the speech therapist – *Lionel Logue* - who helped the unsure monarch become worthy of it).

Each week, at a different venue within the benefice, sessions, led by Sarah, Alan or Rob, began with an extract from the film followed by a general '*start you thinking*' discussion on the subject and the theme, thus:

Week 1 – God's Opening Gambit – "The stuff of nightmares and the power of friendship."
Further discussion – 'Best actor in a supporting role'

Week 2 – Unafraid of Fear – "Chasing the dream or fulfilling the calling." Further discussion – 'The Prince who forgot who he was'

Week 3 – No Short Cuts – "Pressing forward and breaking through." Further discussion – 'The breakthrough moment'

Week 4 – The 'No Discouragement' Rule – "Poisonous words and profane responses."
Further discussion – 'Letting it out'

Week 5 – Faith in our voice – "Eloquence for evil and stammering for good." Further discussion 'A say in how the story ends'

This was a most interesting topic and is one which deserves further consideration or, dare I say, even a repeat. Members of the congregation were welcome to attend one or all of the sessions

although few managed the full series. I feel certain that if anyone was so interested, Sarah would be glad to loan the book, the DVD, or both.

I hope the author of the book will forgive me if I quote one of her prayers for Lent and invite everyone to read it and, if they feel so moved, repeat it prayerfully to God:

*Lord of my Lenten journey,
Who calls me, flawed and fearful as I am,
I acknowledge before you now my mixed feelings:
Wanting to be loved one minute
not being bothered the next;
wanting to move forward one day,
wanting to be undisturbed the next.
I bring before you now the fears, acknowledged and
unrecognised, that hold me back,
I invite your love to do its work,
Take me as I am. Do with me as you will.
Amen*

The guiding work for the course was the book 'FINDING A VOICE' by Hilary Brand (Published by Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd ISBN 978-0-232-52893-0) and, of course, the DVD.

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.



2014 saw the first United Parish Flower Festival held at All Saints, Newland. The theme was 'A Celebration of Textile Design' and incorporated the Beryl Dean Textiles which are held in the Church. There was a talk and presentation on the Conservation of the Beryl Dean textiles. Flower arrangers came together from across the parish to help make a very successful weekend. It is intended to continue with a united Parish Flower Festival in different churches over the coming years.

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

In August members of the social group joined other stalwarts and thwarted the efforts of Hurricane Bertha and were able to offer afternoon teas to the visitors of the National Garden Scheme open garden at Scatterford Farm.

In October the whole Parish came together to celebrate Alan's 25th anniversary of ordination in a lovely Harvest Service at the Good Shepherd where we were joined by many old friends. Alan and Lesley then hosted a lovely lunch at Broadwell Social club.

There were also various coffee mornings and bring and share lunches throughout the year.

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

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.

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 2014)

All Saints' Newland

- Application was made for emergency repairs needed to the tower.
- Servery units, kitchen and hot water all installed.
- Floodlights were repaired.
- Gutters and gulleys were leaking, now all cleared.
- Tavern Clock was restored, paid for by the Friends; our grateful thanks go to the Friends for their continued commitment and support.
- Successful Flower Festival held in July.
- Evergreen tree near Bells Cottages will need to be removed in due course.

All Saints' Staunton

- Investigation was carried out into the humidity problems, which should improve with the clearing of the gutters and the ditches around the church.
- The roof was inspected, and gutters and downpipes all cleared.
- Quote was obtained for clearing the ditches but work is still to be commenced.
- The re-ordering of the chancel is going ahead, however one objection is slowing down the commencement of the works.

Good Shepherd Broadwell

- Repairs were carried out to the roof, one of the downpipes and to a leak under the bell tower, and the gutters were cleared.
- The organ repairs were carried out with grateful thanks to a generous anonymous donor.

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.
- Despite much discussion between Diocese and District Council, and our own efforts to further progress, no significant developments have occurred concerning the Lawnstone House site, and so various discussions have taken place internally regarding other possible sites in Coleford for a new church.

St Peter's Clearwell

- Quinquennial survey was carried out in June.
- Funds (including money from the Flower Festival) have been raised for the restoration to the church clock which should be finished by Spring 2015.
- A new heating switch was installed.
- Plans for proposed installation of toilets are to be drawn up by Toby Falconer (Architect) and discussion regarding wheelchair access is ongoing.
- Splitlath have repaired slipped tiles on the roof, Toby has agreed that the snowguards need to be replaced.

St Saviour Redbrook

- Gutters were leaking and have been cleared.
- Some tiles were replaced on leaking roof, more needing to be done.
- Awaiting approval for replacement floor which is hoped to be done in the near future.

It was agreed that all churches should have a file at the back with a copy of the LCC and PCC minutes in.

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 2014 from Chris Young (Deanery Synod Rep).

Deanery Synod Report 2014

Each meeting was hosted by a different Church in the Deanery by invitation.

Each session had the usual reports on correspondence, Treasurer's report, Diocesan Synod, and the pastoral group which reports on planning and results of initiatives like the Diocesan Discovery Day and Prayer Breakfast.

February 14th 2014 – St James, Bream

- The treasurer explained the difference between restricted and designated funds and gave a presentation of parish share explaining that there is planning for new arrangements for 2016. He explained how important it was to support the clergy in parishes.
- The Dean of Gloucester Cathedral, Stephen Lake, gave a power-point presentation on work at the cathedral and future plans. There are no plans for admission fees.
- There was feedback about the Deanery Discovery Day and lessons learned for next year

10th June 2014 – St John's, Cinderford

- The new Bishop of Tewksbury gave a slide show on 'Journeying Together' emphasising mission and evangelism.
- Discussion groups considered the proposal from the Mid-Wyedean Churches about legal rights to marry in Churches. This was generally supported.

9th October 2014 – Holy Jesus, Lydbrook

- There was a slide show of Gerald Story's placement in Tanganyika
- There was a group discussion on the prayer week and Deanery Discovery Day
- In principal the Mid-Wyedean proposal will be passed to Diocesan Synod

Summary of achievements or major events

In many ways, this has been a year of consolidation after a considerable time of change. There have been some frustrating hold-ups in some of the building development plans, largely over obtaining appropriate permissions and being turned down for very competitive funding. We have continued to 'wait' regarding the hopes for a new church building in Coleford - meaning a lot of hard work has been going on, but very little progress made!

- The parish was invited 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! We hope this will help develop our vision for the parish over the next few years.
- Rev Rob James left us during this year for a parish of his own (they grow up so fast!). He is now the incumbent of Newham, Blakeney and Awre.
- Fundraising ideas and strategy started to be developed by a small group, and a stewardship month was held.
- A new congregation has been formed in Redbrook, focusing on families and building on relationships formed through working with the school. This is a great encouragement and we pray for its developing strength and depth.
- Alan celebrated his 25 years of being ordained priest. We held a special service at the Good Shepherd, which was also our harvest service and culmination of our stewardship month. Alan graciously shared his special event with these other concerns, but connecting 25 years of service to the church and the community with the ideas of giving and of receiving blessing was not too much of a stretch!
- We have begun to work harder at advertising our events and presence, including this Christmas having banners up around the town advertising our services.

Objectives for 2015

So we continue to work and hope for a new building for Coleford, or for an alternative model for ministry to emerge. 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 this year, timing is not always within our control!

- to strengthen our discipleship offering to meet a variety of needs
- To consider the issue of church presence in Coleford, and the possibility of a temporary solution, or a radically different approach
- 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
- To produce plans and 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
- Hopefully, follow the promptings of the Spirit!

Finances - Mid-Wyedean Churches Financial Report 2014

The computerised accounting system for the Parish is now in full use and is being developed with the aim of introducing greater transparency, easier access for all and a more detailed explanation of income and expenditure. I refer the PCC to the balance sheet presented elsewhere.

The Finance Committee, comprising the following members, has met regularly throughout 2014. (Revd. Alan Wearmouth (Chair), Revd. Sarah Bick (Vicar), Rosemary Ward (Treasurer), Alison Stuttard (Secretary), David Hepburn (Broadwell), Betty Weaver (Clearwell), John Simmons (Staunton) plus Pat Shuttleworth (Newland & Redbrook) and Terry Bovill (Coleford), although the latter two do not attend meetings – but their help is greatly appreciated as they act as local Assistant Treasurers.) The Churchwardens, Bea Erskine and Penny Rayner, also attend whenever possible.

The main items covered by the Committee have included the presentation of a Finance Policy to the PCC; the setting of fees for 2015; the preparation of a budget for 2015 following a study of the previous year's budget forecast; dealing with financial decisions between PCC meetings; supporting work being done to obtain Faculties for work at Clearwell, Redbrook and Staunton; considering and making recommendations upon fund-raising and mission opportunities within the Parish and furthering the prudential and accurate recording and ordering of Parish accounts. Every meeting has been minuted and presented to the PCC along with proposals for PCC approval where appropriate. Uncertainty over the future of Church in Coleford and lack of unanimity over the best way ahead to deal with the heating situation at Staunton have presented difficulties.

In a nutshell financial times remain hard for the Parish. Many people give faithfully and generously, most particularly through the Parish Giving Scheme – it would be wonderful if everybody who wishes to support the Church could see their way forward to joining this excellent, efficient and time-saving scheme. The Finance Committee retains its aim to see us meeting our full Parish Share apportionment out of regular income. Finance is simply one aspect of equipping ourselves for Ministry and for Mission and thus is a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

Alan Wearmouth. March 2015.