

**SEALE, PUTTENHAM & WANBOROUGH**

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**for the year ended**

**31 DECEMBER 2007**



*Ministry Team with Peter & Selma Thomas*

**St. Laurence Church, Seale**

**The Good Shepherd Church, Sands**

**St. John the Baptist Church, Puttenham**

**St. Bartholomew Church, Wanborough**

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## PARISH OF SEALE, PUTTENHAM & WANBOROUGH

### ANNUAL REPORT 2007

#### Introduction

In compliance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of Seale, Puttenham & Wanborough has prepared this report and the attached financial statements. The report summarises the activities and plans of the PCC, which now submits it for review by parishioners at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) to be held in Puttenham Church at 11.30 am on Sunday 20 April 2007.

#### Parochial Church Council

Members of the PCC are ex officio, elected by the APCM, or co-opted by the PCC according to the Church Representation Rules. During 2007, the following were members:

Priest-in-charge:	The Revd Ron Wood (Chairman)
Assistant Clergy:	The Revd Norman Evans
Reader:	Chris Tuckwell (also Diocesan Synod)
Churchwardens:	Seale: Mike Cloughley (Vice-Chairman)* Robin Felix (Vice-Chairman)** Sue Weir* Bridget Biddell**
	Puttenham: John Hewitson (Vice-Chairman) Sarah Webster
	Wanborough: Pauline Rodgers Anne Concanen (also Deanery Synod)
Elected Members:	Susie Felix (also Deanery Synod) Mike Randell (Treasurer) Marcus Bateman Ivan Fagent* Sarah Barker** Andrew Baxter Patrick Yamold (Secretary)

- until April 2007 \*\* from April 2007

As Rectory Office Co-ordinator, Jane Randell also attended PCC meetings.

## **Structure, Governance & Management.**

The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operates under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956. Currently the PCC is exempt from registering with the Charity Commission. There were 4 regular meetings of the PCC during 2007.

Under powers delegated by the PCC in 2004, many of the day-to-day management duties of maintaining the parish churches were delegated to three individual church sub-committees. These committees, composed of PCC and non-PCC members, met regularly during the year and written minutes of their proceedings were submitted to the PCC.

In September 2007, under agreed terms of reference, the PCC set up a Finance Committee to oversee the future coordination and management of parish-wide finance. This means that in future the PCC will be able to devote more time to discussing the mission of the church and other strategic issues affecting the life of the church in the parish. The five PCC appointed members were: John Hewitson (Chairman), Marcus Bateman, Bridget Biddell, Mike Randell and Patrick Yarnold. Mike Cloughley was subsequently co-opted to the Committee. The Committee met three times during the final quarter of 2007 concentrating on the preparation of the PCC budget for 2008 and formulating proposals to improve PCC financial procedures and control. Decisions taken by the Finance Committee are subject to approval by the PCC.

The PCC would particularly like to pay tribute to Dorothy Concanen who has now retired from the Wanborough Sub-committee after more than 40 years of faithful and invaluable service to the church.

## **Church Services & Membership**

The pattern of monthly services remained largely the same as in 2006 with a total number of 243 services being held of which 45 were special services (festivals, special events and united services). The corresponding figures for 2006 were 256 and 51. In addition, 20 baptisms, 11 weddings and 5 funeral services took place. The clergy also conducted 9 funeral services for parishioners at local crematoria.

Total attendance at all church services of 6853 was little changed from 2006, despite slightly fewer services being held. Relative to 2006, attendances at Seale & Sands rose by 8% and 17% whereas those at Puttenham & Wanborough fell by 9% and 13 %.

There were 155 members on the combined electoral rolls of the parish churches (186 in 2006) divided as follows: Seale & Sands (60) Puttenham (61) and Wanborough (34).

## **PCC Objectives**

Under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956 the role of the PCC is “to cooperate with the Minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.” The PCC has therefore continued to follow its agreed ABC mission adopted in 2004 of seeking to:

*“Attract new members into the church **B**ringing the churches closer together as a **C**hristian community that is inclusive and inspiring.”*

With regard to “attracting new members” the PCC noted that, whereas church attendance was relatively static, the figures were swelled enormously by attendance at special services. As in 2006 40% of annual attendance came from these services, such as Easter and Christmas, which accounted for less than 20% of all services held. With this in mind, a parish survey was conducted in 2007 to ascertain the attitudes to church activities and to try to find out what might be done to meet their wishes and expectations. This resulted in some initiatives e.g. monthly meetings were instituted for mothers and toddlers at Puttenham church, and for older parishioners at Sands church. In 2008 the PCC will continue trying to respond to the suggestions in the survey with particular emphasis on the needs of young people.

With regard to “bringing the churches closer together” the PCC carried out a number of proposals designed to improve the integration of church finances, consistent with being a single, united parish. Further details on financial integration are set out in the Review of Finance later in this report.

A third objective, on which much more work needs to be done in 2008, is to put in place a comprehensive “Parish Stewardship” programme designed to bring income more into line with expenditure. The financial statements attached to this report show that, once again, PCC annual expenditure exceeded normal income by a large margin. The budget for 2008 is forecasting an even larger deficit. We must find ways to balance the books as soon as we can (See Review of Finance below)

## **Church Maintenance**

The Quinquennial Inspection carried out by the church architect in 2007 at Seale & Sands revealed the need for various repairs to both buildings. In Seale, a survey was then carried out of the extent of the repairs needed to the tower, including the clock faces and weather vane, and the repairs to the church timbers and electrical fittings. The PCC is grateful to the Friends of St Laurence who will be helping to fund some of this work. In Sands the PCC is indebted to Jackbarn Builders and others for their generous help with the decorating and woodwork repairs carried out inside the church. External decoration and repairs are currently underway.

The 2007 Quinquennial Inspection in Puttenham revealed significant cracking in the walls of the church tower. As a matter of urgency, extensive repairs were made, involving the replacement of stonework and other measures to prevent the spread of damp and improve ventilation. Further work will need to be carried out in 2008.

The major project in Wanborough in 2007 was the work undertaken to eliminate damp by installing an improved drainage system around the church. The costs of over £10,000 were met by grants and invaluable support from the Friends of Wanborough Church.

## **Choirs & Bells**

Once again the choirs at Seale and Puttenham, under the able leadership of Geoff Graham and Stephen Wright, have continued to uplift church services and to make a rich contribution to worship. The choir’s performance of Stainer’s Crucifixion on Good Friday was a particular highlight, as were the Advent and Christmas Carol services. We are fortunate to have two choirs of such calibre in the parish, but they are always looking for new voices to join them. The PCC pays tribute to Mary Egerton-Smith who has now moved out of the parish after completing more than 45 years dedicated service with Puttenham choir and in the wider community.

Both Seale and Puttenham tower bands have been active throughout the year, ringing for most Sunday morning services and festivals in both churches, and weddings. The bands are mutually supportive, frequently ringing in each tower. We are also pleased to welcome visiting ringers on occasions during the year. Both towers need new ringers. Seale struggled through 2007 although managing with the help of visitors. Another ringer will go off to university this year so recruiting new Seale ringers will be a priority for 2008. At Puttenham we were sorry to say goodbye to Mary Marriott who finally took retirement from the tower after an impressive 27 years. Jackie left for music college. On the other hand we were pleased to welcome Kim as another new recruit to the Puttenham band. Two peals are worthy of note. Kevin Green rang his first peal at Seale on 22 December taking 2h 37m; at Puttenham on 18 January 2008 a centenary peal (in 2h 46m) of the same methods as in 1908 commemorated the first peal on the bells.

## **Puttenham Church of England School**

Lesley Dingley completed her first year as Head Teacher and we are delighted to welcome her and her husband who now live in Puttenham. Anne Concanen continued as a Teacher Governor at the school, as

did Linda Muirhead, Alistair Clarke (replacing Ralph Johnson) Patrick Acheson-Gray and Rupert Perkins as PCC-appointed Governors. At the same time the PCC offers congratulations and thanks to Mrs. Hardiman for completing 25 years of service as School Secretary. The PCC continues to retain its strong links with the school, not least through the Rector's close involvement in its spiritual development.

Lesley Dingley writes:

“The school is continuing to progress. We have recently been awarded the bronze Eco-schools award and the Active Award for sports in school. However, we will not rest on our laurels.

Like Janus the Roman God, while ruminating on the past I too look forward to the future. We have many challenges ahead, but with the dedication and professionalism of the staff, the unstinting support of the parents and with guidance from our Governors, we are excited at the prospect.

On a personal note, I have taken strength from the community my husband and I have joined. The Church, School and Village Hall all stand at the heart of village life surrounded by a generous, caring and active community whose support I have had the privilege to enjoy. I shall strive to continue to deserve this.”

### **Seale Religious Education Fund**

This separate charity was established in 1999 when Seale School closed. The trustees are the Rector and churchwardens of the parish for the time being. The objects of the charity are to make provision for religious education within the parish. The fund (currently valued at approximately £13,000) is being used to meet Reader training fees for Marcus Bateman and Jutta Johnson. The trustees would welcome suggestions from parishioners for other uses that might be made of this fund.

### **Outward Giving**

Elsewhere in this report can be found details of charities supported directly or indirectly by the PCC and the church community. As in the past, the PCC has supported financially the Puttenham Church of England School.

During the year the PCC decided in future that it would be appropriate to institute a uniform programme of charitable giving across all the parish churches on five or six Sunday services, replacing the previous system under which each church pursued a different policy towards its outward giving.

The PCC continues to maintain a strong link with Peter & Selma Thomas who are working to rehabilitate street children in Fortaleza under the aegis of YWAM (Youth with a Mission). During the year lent lunches were organised across the parish to raise funds for this project enabling the PCC to forward £1200 to YWAM. This helped to finance the building of more workshops at a restoration house on the outskirts of Fortaleza. The PCC would like to encourage young people in the parish to consider taking time, perhaps as part of a gap year, to act as volunteers on this project.

### **Godalming Deanery Synod**

The first of three meetings was held in February at Farncombe. The progress of our Deanery Mission Plan was discussed and a “Mission and Pastoral Committee” was set up to develop it. The main presentation was given by Canon Chris Rich on “The work of the Department of Social Responsibility”. The talk was about helping parishes as they respond to the needs of their communities.

In June the Synod had a “farewell” meeting to celebrate Rev. Norman Jones' five year term as Rural Dean. A service in St Bartholomew's Church, Haslemere, was followed by an informal gathering where thanks were said and a presentation made. The Revd John Fellows, was commissioned as the new Rural Dean by Bishop Christopher on 24 July in Compton church..

At the Synod in October at Milford reports were given by members of the General and Diocesan Synods, and time was spent considering the possible content of future meetings. Results of speaker's visits could involve follow up discussions and ideas for parish action.

## **Review of Finance**

The attached financial statements show once again that the PCC's regular expenditure exceeded its regular income, this year by £18,000, despite expenditure remaining within the approved budget. Some invested reserves had to be sold to fund this deficit. The deficit forecast for 2008 is of the order of £23,000 and would lead to a further erosion of reserves. The problem is that annual income is running at too low a level to meet normal parish expenditure, most of which is a fixed cost. e.g. parish share and ministry costs.

The PCC is fortunate to receive invaluable support from the three Friends organisations to maintain the fabric of the buildings. In addition, both Seale and Puttenham are well endowed with restricted funds bequeathed to these churches, but the funds can only be used for the purposes stipulated in the bequests. Any deficit in income against normal expenditure can only be funded out of unrestricted reserves. These reserves are dwindling at an alarming rate – down to a combined total of £83,773 at the end of 2007 – and will be exhausted in 4-5 years if no action is taken. Clearly, measures are needed to boost regular income and to arrest any further decline in the reserves. Actions that can be taken will have to be reviewed at the Annual Meeting.

On the matter of financial organisation, it will be recalled that when the united parish was established in 2004 the PCC decided, as a matter of expediency, that for the time being each parish church should remain responsible for managing its own finances through the three church subcommittees that were set up. Therefore, although the PCC accounts were aggregated parish-wide, separate books were kept for each parish church. Whilst this practice has been useful in smoothing the process of integration, it has placed a huge burden on the PCC Treasurer.

Now that the three churches have learnt to work closely as a united parish, the PCC has decided to cease the practice of keeping separate books for each church and to complete the process of financial integration. The decision involves the creation of a central pool of reserves drawn from the unrestricted reserves of the three parish churches. At the end of 2007 those unrestricted reserves (inclusive of cash) of £83,773 were made up as follows: £38,570 (Seale), £43,569 (Puttenham) and £1634 (Wanborough). With effect from 1 January 2008, these reserves will be treated as a single parish reserve and will be used across the whole parish to meet expenditure that cannot be funded out of parish-wide income or by other means. This means that the parish will now operate financially like any other single parish, using a centrally agreed budget and centrally held and managed reserves. In addition, each church subcommittee will continue to manage its restricted reserves and will remain accountable to the PCC for expenditure within the agreed budget for its church.

## **Rector's Remarks**

Every church leader wants to report that the past year has been a time of growth- numbers of people in church up, more weddings, more baptisms, as if worship on Sunday and services in church were the only measure of the churches' life and activity. But that isn't the case. For the record, we have seen growth, especially at our festival services. And I'm very pleased to be able to report it. More people coming to church makes it more fun. There is a greater sense of worship, and the singing is certainly better when the church is full. But that is only part of the picture.

The church buildings are a visible sign of the presence of the church in our villages, and they keep the wet off when we meet together for worship. But the real presence of the church in the parish is the people- not just those who go to church, but all those whose lives reflect God's love, compassion and goodness. And this is where real growth is happening. People meet to study the Bible, to discuss issues in the light of their Christian belief, and just to share a time of fellowship together with tea and cake. The

children in the playgroups are introduced to church. In school, they worship, pray, sing and learn about God. Through the Church, not just in the church buildings, the Gospel is being shared, and lived. It has been a good year.

*Rev 13 Feb 08*