

THE PARISH OF THE ITCHEN VALLEY

**Incorporating the Parish Churches of St Mary's Avington, St Mary's
Easton, St John's Itchen Abbas and St Swithun's Martyr Worthy**



ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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1. Administrative information

The Parish of the Itchen Valley is part of the Diocese of Winchester within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Itchen Valley Rectory, Chillandham Lane, Itchen Abbas, Winchester SO21 1AS.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Itchen Valley is a Registered Charity No: 1133110.

The Churches of the Parish are St Mary's at Avington, St Mary's at Easton, St John the Baptist's at Itchen Abbas and St Swithun's at Martyr Worthy.

Ministry team:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Rector | Reverend Andrew Micklefield (until April 2014) |
| Assistant Curates | Reverend Alex Pease Reverend Rebecca Fardell |
| Licensed Lay Ministers | Mr Tony Gaster Mr Gerry Stacey |

The post of Rector of the Itchen Valley was vacant from April 2014 until April 2015.

Churchwardens:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| St Mary's Avington | vacant |
| St Mary's Easton | Anna Burness, Sara Janssen |
| St John's Itchen Abbas | Charlotte Appleby, Chris Wilson |
| St Swithun's Martyr Worthy | Andrew Impey, Isobel Pinder |

Deanery Synod Representatives (elected in 2014 for 3 years):

Gerry Stacey (Martyr Worthy)
David Anderson (Easton)
Tony Gaster (Itchen Abbas)

There is one vacancy.

Elected members of the PCC:

Joanna Lang (Martyr Worthy), Nick Owen (Itchen Abbas), Sarah Shirley (Avington), Julie Taylor (Easton)

Alternates (alternates serve as deputies for the relevant PCC member in his or her absence):

Sarah Bullen (Avington), Gilly Greenwood (Martyr Worthy), Vanessa Rosewell (Easton)

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Hon Secretary: | Charlotte Appleby |
| Hon Treasurer | David Anderson |

2. Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the Parish of the Itchen Valley is the governing body for the Parish. At the 2014 APCM, the Parish Scheme on Governance under the Pastoral Measure 1983 was adopted, which replaced previous provisions for the constitution of governance in the Parish of the Itchen Valley. The Scheme is supported by a Policy Guidance document. Both documents are available on the parish website.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules and the Parish Scheme. The PCC met six times during 2014. As at the end of 2014, the PCC was supported by a Standing Committee, a Finance Committee and a Fund-raising Committee.

There are four District Church Councils (DCCs), one for each District centred on the Churches of the Parish. All the DCCs met regularly during 2014.

All regular Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC and DCC.

3. Aims and purposes

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector in promoting in the Ecclesiastical Parish and the area of the Itchen Valley the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

4. Objects and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our Churches and to become part of our Parish community. The Ministry Team and PCC all acknowledge the need to consider public benefit in planning activities and guidance on the advancement of religion.

5. Achievements and performance

The report from the Ministry team and the churchwardens' report set out some of the highlights of the parish's achievements and performance in 2014.

The average attendance at regular Sunday services throughout the parish during 2014 was approximately 10 at the 8am service, 50 at the 10am service and 15 at the 6pm service. These figures exclude the much higher numbers attending special services such as the Remembrance Service or patronal festival services. Attendance at services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day totalled 571, very similar to Christmas 2013, and 280 on Easter Day (241 in 2013). A well-attended Ecumenical Mass was celebrated by Canon Paul Townsend in St Swithun's Church in June. Rev Jan Brookshaw led a moving "Lights Out" service in St John's Itchen Abbas in August to commemorate the centenary of the start of World War I.

There were nine baptisms, eight weddings (or blessings) and ten funerals (or burials of ashes) during 2014. The 2014 deanery confirmation service was held at St Mary's Easton and five of the seven candidates were from the parish.

6. Electoral Roll

There are 217 names on the 2014 Electoral Roll for the Parish, of whom 17 live outside the parish. This is a decrease of 8 on 2013.

7. Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches

St Mary's Avington

Phase 1 to conserve the reredos was carried out (Phase 2 to be carried out and completed in March 2015). The two south windows were fitted with roller blinds to protect the woodwork and reredos from further sun damage. Four window lights mysteriously damaged were repaired. Electrical repairs to the heating were required. It was discovered that mice were responsible for chewing the wiring. The mice are being dealt with.

St Mary's Easton

After the heavy financial burden of the essential repair to the boundary wall two years ago, this last year has not seen much in the way of work at St Mary's. The South door is being repainted. The quinquennial inspection takes place in March 2015.

St John's Itchen Abbas

A number of relatively small items were dealt with in 2014: several roof tiles were replaced; doors to both vestries were repaired; the exterior floodlight with PIR sensor was replaced with an LED; and the holding tank alarm system was repaired. The boiler house was fireproofed, as required by the quinquennial inspection. The church wall was in the process of being repaired when the husband of the mason died and work has not yet recommenced. Owing to delays in receiving permission from the DAC the lighting in the church has not yet been upgraded. When this work has been carried out an electrical wiring certificate will be obtained.

St Swithun's Martyr Worthy

The reordering of the church was completed in 2014. New lighting was installed and the nave redecorated. The Friends of St Swithun's made a generous donation towards the cost of the lighting. Outstanding items from the 2012 quinquennial inspection were carried out, including repair of rainwater goods. Significant work was undertaken on the churchyard wall.

8. Report from the Ministry team

This year has given us much cause for thanksgiving as we have worked together to play our part in keeping parish life - and particularly our Sunday worship - continuing through the vacancy. Our tasks have been made infinitely easier by the support, help and prayers of the

churchwardens, PCC and wider parish for which we are extremely grateful. With the help of visiting clergy, we have been able to maintain our range of services during the vacancy. We are particularly grateful for the support of Revd Phil Collins (area dean), Revd Phil Dykes, Revd Katrina Dykes and Revd Jan Brookshaw. Not only have they led our Sunday worship but also been invaluable sources of wisdom and advice.

We are also enormously assisted by David Truslove, the director of music who has done much to enrich the musical life of our community. In addition to his support at services, his time and talents have enabled the success of our occasional choirs. The children from Itchen Abbas Primary School were a vital part of the success of the Christingle service and this was important as part of deepening our links with the school. The group which sang Fauré's Requiem did a splendid job under David's leadership and the service was a moving part of our Remembrance Sunday commemorations. We look forward to future outings of these choirs as they help us to worship God in the Itchen Valley and encourage the involvement of members of our community.

Although sadly one of the regular Bible study groups ceased meeting in the spring, the Monday Group and Mums' Home Group continue to study the Bible together, to pray for each other and to encourage one another. These are important parts of parish life and it would be good if more people felt able to join in so that they too could enjoy the fellowship and opportunity to grow in faith which these groups offer.

The Marriage Course and Alpha have been major features of parish life this year. Alex and Lucy Pease ran the Marriage Course at St John's Itchen Abbas between 21 January and 18 March 2014. After the first evening the course settled down to a regular attendance of 13 couples. 21 individuals gave voluntary support cooking, washing up and preparing the church - a massive contribution from the Parish.

The Alpha Course consisted of 8 evenings and one day from the end of September 2014 until the end of November. We used live speakers rather than the DVDs. 26 of us completed the course including six group leaders and Alex and Lucy Pease as course leaders. Of those, three who are not regular church goers attended and two came from outside the Valley. We had amazing cooperation of 9 cooks and washers up and again were very grateful for the support of all those who helped make the course a success.

*How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!*

(Psalm 133.1)

During the vacancy we believe that we have experienced the truth of Psalm 133: God blesses us when we live together in unity. It has been extremely encouraging, and the source of much rejoicing, that the parish has drawn closer together as we have thanked God for all that Andrew Micklefield enabled us to do in the Itchen Valley and prepared for the new rector to arrive. This unity has enabled us to achieve much as a parish over the past year as we have

sought to follow Jesus more faithfully and play our parts in God's mission to the Itchen Valley. It is now time for us to draw nearer to God and to each other as we welcome Amanda and look forward to what God has in store for us under her leadership as we seek to grow in faith and number.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Ephesians 3.20-21)

9. Churchwardens' report

For much of 2014, the parish was without a Rector. We thanked Andrew for his ministry in the Valley at the 2014 APCM and wished him and his family well for their return to Alton.

The churchwardens have worked closely with our curates and licensed lay ministers during the vacancy. We are extremely grateful for their hard work and dedication in ensuring that church services and parish activities continued as smoothly as possible during this time. We are grateful also for the support of our extended ministry team - Phil Collins, Phil and Katrina Dykes and Jan Brookshaw.

The process of appointing a new Rector has been a long one but we are delighted to welcome the Rev Amanda Denniss and her husband Oliver to the parish in April 2015.

The churchwardens are happy to report that 2014 was a successful and busy year in the life of the church, despite the challenges caused by the vacancy. For this we particularly thank our ministry team, but also the many people who volunteered to serve on committees, to organise activities and to help keep our churches in good condition. A particular highlight of the year was the ordination of Rebecca Fardell in June in Winchester Cathedral. We praise God for her ministry here.

We were pleased to be able to sustain a minimum of three church services each Sunday during 2014, spread across our four churches in a regular pattern of worship which our congregation appreciates. With a balance of traditional and more family-oriented services, we aim to offer worship across a broad spectrum and so maintain a wide appeal that is so important in a rural parish.

We are blessed with four beautiful and well-maintained churches and are very pleased that we are able to keep them open daily and to use them all for regular and festival worship and other events. Each church has a District Church Council which has delegated responsibility for the upkeep and general maintenance of the church. Two of the churches have vergers and one has a sacristan; their role is highly valued by the churchwardens as an important way of ensuring the smooth running of the church. There is a separate report on the fabric of the churches.

The churchwardens and PCC prepared a Parish Profile for use in the appointment process and

this provided an opportunity for the congregation and parish as a whole to review its priorities and vision for the future. Both the parish profile and the revised vision statement are available on the parish website. As a result of this work, we were well placed to make a positive contribution to the deanery's mission action plan, finalised in the autumn of 2014, which is part of Bishop Tim's aim of creating a "mission-shaped diocese".

We are grateful to Alex Pease for his work in ensuring that the parish website is kept up to date. The website is becoming an increasingly important way of communicating our message to the wider public and showcasing our events and activities.

The work of the parish is reflected in the wide range of activities which takes place. Notably, Alex Pease organised a Marriage Course which took place in the spring and an Alpha course which took place during the autumn. Our Director of Music, David Truslove, brought together an ad-hoc choir of parishioners and friends to perform on two special occasions: Stainer's Crucifixion on Good Friday and Faure's Requiem on Remembrance Sunday. Regular activities in 2014 included:

- the Ark, our Sunday School for children;
- Little Rainbows, a weekly playgroup for parents with babies and toddlers;
- Under the Cross, a group for teenagers;
- CAMEO, a short service and lunch held monthly for older members of the community;
- ecumenical Lent lunches;
- a study group which has been looking at the Epistles of St Paul;
- a Book Club, reading books with a Christian focus;
- a Prayer Group, which meets to pray for the community and all that we do;
- The Monday Group, which has recently been studying the Gospel of St John;
- a Mums' Bible Study group

With a focus on mission and outreach, and mindful of the importance of public benefit in the work of a charity, many of the activities of the parish are directed towards the wider community and beyond:

- in 2014 we supported a number of charities, including the Winchester Basics Bank and Winchester Night Shelter, both through monetary donations from special collections and through donations in kind;
- we fostered a link with the parish of St James Benwell in our partner diocese of Newcastle, which we have been supporting in prayer and through financial donations;
- our pastoral visitors and the Friendship Club support those in need, whether members of our congregation or not;
- we continued our links with local schools and playgroups, for example by making the church available for nativity plays and through visits from our curates.

2014 was an excellent year for fund-raising, as is reported in detail in the Financial Statement. Such events not only make a significant contribution to our financial position but also provide a social dimension to our life as a parish. Many are put on jointly with other

organisations and may raise money for several charities as well as church funds. We are very grateful for the energy and enthusiasm of fund-raising teams which makes this possible. Events in 2014 included the Martyr Worthy Plant Sale, Glynde Easton, the Easton Duck Race, a Midsummer Mad Hatters' Tea Party, Southwood Players' performance of Relative Values, the Easton fete, a Grand China Sale in Avington, Avington's festival of flowers which included the parish harvest tea party, and the first of the 2014/15 Martyr Worthy Lectures.

The churchwardens thank all those who contribute in many different ways to the work and smooth running of the parish. Three of the churchwardens, Sara Janssen, Isobel Pinder and Chris Wilson, are retiring at the 2015 Annual Meeting of Parishioners and express their gratitude to all those who have supported them during their terms of office. In turn, the parish is grateful for their many years of service.

10. Deanery Synod report

Deanery Mission Action Plan

A meeting was held on 2 July at which representatives of all parishes were invited to Old Alresford Place to hear about dMAP and take part in discussions. Following this a draft plan was developed and sent to PCCs for discussion and comment.

Amanda Grant and Barbara Griffiths developed three strategic priorities from the replies received:

- Strategic priority 1. To engage with potential new members, to create a nurturing and welcoming environment for newcomers; to make membership of church a positive and engaging experience.
- Strategic priority 2. To engage with the local community and the missing generations (not always the under 35s); to review communications (communications officer?); to broaden our appeal to the local community.
- Strategic priority 3. Social Transformation - to share our good fortune - partnership with less prosperous places - to work in an optimistic way in promotion of Christian opportunities made known to us through mission partners.

The Alresford dMAP document was presented to Synod, proposed by Phil Collins and seconded by Roger Parsons and approved by all.

Deanery Mission Advisor

The new Rector of the Itchen Valley will be appointed as Deanery Mission Adviser (one day per week) with the specific responsibility of using the dMAP document as a base from which to work [role now titled Alresford Deanery Discipleship Adviser]. The adviser will be asked to encourage spiritual growth, Christian confidence and Deanery identity, and to enable training and learning locally and with the involvement of the Diocesan School of Mission.

Lango

Fund raising has continued and receipts paid into the bank account but not forwarded to Lango. Attempts have been made by both mail and email to obtain details of how recent donations have been used but have failed to produce a response. Consequently it was decided to hold on to current funds until we have received further communication from Lango.

Women in the Episcopate

We were asked to inform our Diocesan Synod representatives of our view on the latest General Synod proposition for women to the Episcopate and the amended canon which names flying bishops to administer those that cannot accept women bishops. On a show of hands there was unanimous agreement to this proposal.

Diocesan Share Working party

A group was appointed by Diocesan Synod to devise a more transparent method of allocating parish share. The proposed method is based on the number in the worshipping community and the perception of the PCC as to their ability to pay.

The proposed changes and final allocations were distributed to each parish for approval. Various questions arose; on the whole it was felt that the proposal was transparent although there was some concern over ability to pay and some of the changes were phased over two years due to the target share changing significantly from 2014.

11. Health and Safety report

John Bouldin stood down as the PCC's health and safety representative at the 2014 APCM. David Parker has taken on the role of health and safety co-ordinator, working with the PCC and the DCC health and safety representatives. With David's advice and support, the process of revising current health and safety policies and risk assessments was set in train in 2014.

There were no reportable incidents in 2014.

12. Safeguarding report

There have been no issues relating to safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults over the past year. We have 22 volunteers who have had Disclosure and Barring Service checks and all activities likely to raise concerns are carried out in accordance with the PCC's Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults policies, copies of which are available from the Safeguarding Officer. The PCC reaffirms its position to follow the guidelines of the Diocese in these respects.