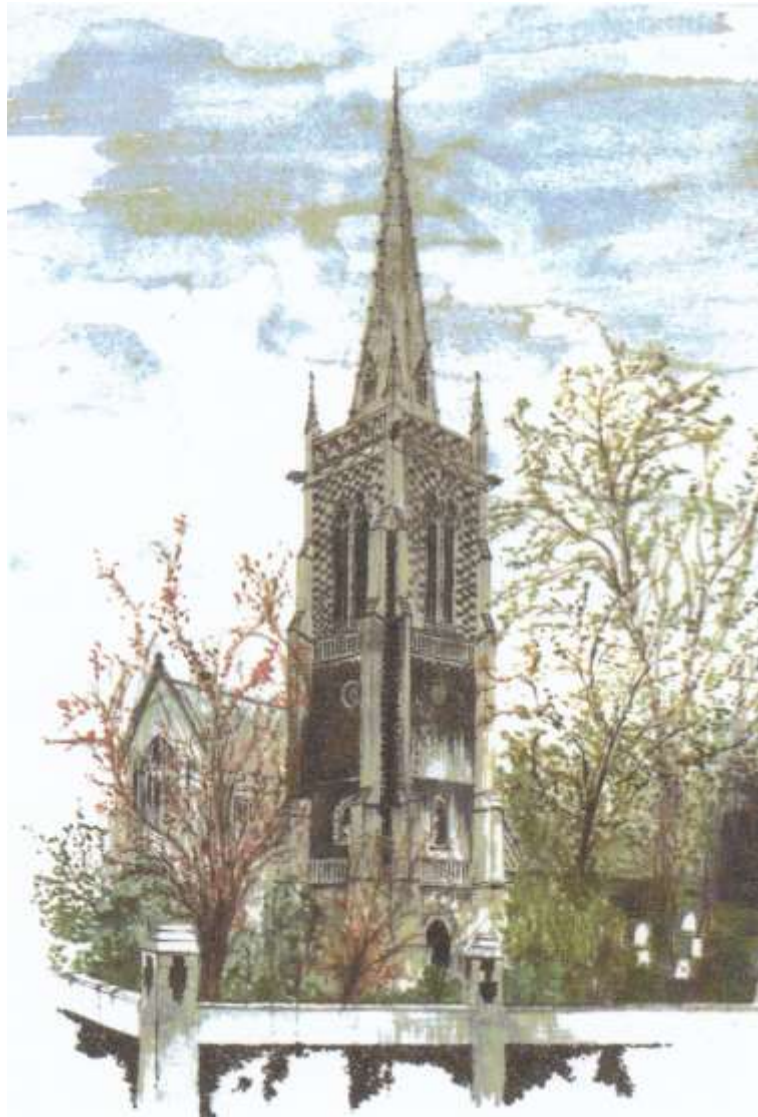


St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich

The Town and Civic Church of Ipswich



Annual Church Reports 2018/19

www.stmaryletower.org.uk

St Mary-le-Tower Ipswich
Annual Reports of Activities 2018/19

The financial statements of St Mary-le-Tower are published separately.

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WORSHIP, WELCOME & PASTORAL CARE

Regular Sunday Services

SMLT continues to offer four services every Sunday during term time: Holy Communion; Choral Matins; Parish Eucharist and Choral Evensong. All but one of these services are Choral services with the SMLT Choir.

The 8am Holy Communion service usually has an attendance of up to 10 people, but on occasion more, which is really encouraging. We usually have up to 10 people regularly attending the 9.30am Choral Matins in addition to the choir, and sometimes more than this. This is a lovely service with wonderful choral music and it would be great to see more people at this service.

The 10.30am Parish Eucharist is the busiest of our Sunday services, is well supported and regularly has a congregation of between 50 and 65 people in addition to a choir of between 25 and 40 members. The 10.30 Welcome Team continues to work tirelessly to offer a warm welcome to everyone, especially those people who may be new to SMLT.

Even though the choir has grown in number, attendance at this service overall has been gradually reducing, due both to illness preventing people from regular attendance, and also sadly some long term SMLT members passing away. We are hopeful that the Inspiring Ipswich Learning Community will assist us in finding new ways of attracting new members to our congregation.

Two or three times a term this service is styled as an All-age Eucharist using the Nave altar, with the music being led by the choristers and Soprano Choral Scholars. This service is particularly well attended by choir families.

Choral Evensong continues to regularly attract a congregation of 10 people in addition to the choir, and sometimes more. During the summer this service is held at 6.30pm, however during the Winter time the service time was changed to 5pm which seems to have been a success. The Choir has grown at Matins and Evensong numbers and generally much out numbers the congregation.

Katrina Robertson (Churchwarden)

Festival Services

There were some real high points during the year especially in regard to choral services. The choir particularly excelled on Good Friday, Easter Day, Advent Sunday and Christmas and instead of the Orchestral Mass in early July there was a new Festival of Liturgy and Music. SMLT hosted again the Mayor's civic service which was delayed this year until January 2019.

Midweek Services

Choral Evensong at 6.30pm on Mondays and Tuesdays take place during term time and have become an established part of the pattern of worship at SMLT. Choristers read the NT lesson, increasing the sense in these services of chorister ownership. They are also proving to be good “training” services. Increasingly also these services have often been lay led, by Mary Baldry, and they are popular with some choir parents.

Choral Compline was offered on Friday evenings at 8.30pm more regularly during 2018, but from May 2019 it has been decided to offer this once a month on the first Friday of the month.

Prayers for Light and Peace have continued to take place through 2018 on Mondays at 12 noon, led regularly by Elders, Hilary and Cathy, and often attended by the Vicar, and supported by a very small regular congregation. In view of the persistently low attendance, this service has been discontinued from Easter 2019, and we hope that this will give space for something new to grow.

Charles Jenkin (Vicar)

Wednesday Communion

Our Wednesday 1030 Holy Communion service is regularly attended by up to 15 people, it is a really nice group of people and they enjoy refreshments afterwards in Church House. We have been advertising this service more regularly on the noticeboard and A-Board and have welcomed a few newcomers since then to this service.

Katrina Robertson (Churchwarden)

Clergy & Elders

From early 2018, Revd Jeanette Gosney, Bishop’s Ministry Officer, joined the staff of SMLT as Associate Priest and St Lawrence Preacher. She leads worship and/or preaches at SMLT about once a month. More recently Jeanette has been much more regular at SMLT during the Vicar’s study leave, for which many thanks to Jeanette and indeed to Bishop Martin for releasing her for this.

Canon Roger Pallant continues an active retired ministry at the Tower, regularly taking Sunday and Wednesday services, and also taking Home Communions. Many thanks to Roger too.

Elders have a major role in the Sunday 10.30 service, assisting in leading the service, offering intercessions and leading the Welcome team. SMLT Elders also undertake a considerable amount of regular pastoral visiting and Home Communions. Many thanks to Richard Hanley, Hilary Norman and Cathy Moss for all their faithful work.

Charles Jenkin (Vicar)

Pastoral Visiting

Pastoral Visiting is undertaken by the Clergy and the Elders together with other members of the congregation; to both those in hospital or at home. We have approximately thirty people on the Pastoral Visiting List, who are members of the congregation, or their families and friends, many of whom are no longer able to with us in Church.

Canon Charles and Canon Roger currently take Home Communion regularly to five members. The Elders also take Communion to others in their homes. Some of our visits are only occasional and others are more frequent, usually fortnightly or monthly.

Contact is usually maintained between visits with short telephone calls. We endeavour to support all whom we visit, to provide a friendly face and to assure them that they are not forgotten. Those who are acutely ill, or chronically sick are remembered at the Monday Midday Prayers for Light and Peace.

Hilary Norman (Elder)

Verger Duties and Church Cleaning

We have been now without the services of a full time Verger since October 2016, and a group of excellent volunteers now assist with Verger duties. The Sunday services preparation team, working on Saturday and Sunday mornings, has grown in number and confidence, and many thanks to Hilary Norman, Ruth Longhurst, Sonia Docherty, Ian Molloy and Alan Cocker and Martin Ellingham for this work.

Sally Graham, Cathy Moss and Katrina Robertson assist in preparing for Wednesday Communion services for which many thanks. The assistance of these individuals is a great help and we give thanks for all these volunteers who do such a great job in preparing for services and lending a hand at busy times or at short notice.

The SMLT Caretaker, Irina Rodacan, works mornings from 9.30am (Mon-Fri, 16 hours per week). She is responsible for opening the Church in the morning, cleaning the Church, Church House and Tower House.

Katrina Robertson (Churchwarden)

Sanctuary Servers & Communion Assistants

Many thanks to Ian Molloy and Ruth Longhurst who are the regular servers on Sundays at 8am. Ruth has also joined the regular 10.30am team of Sanctuary Servers, with Chris Fisk and Leonie Smith. For a long time Bob Tostevin has been the regular server at the Wednesday 10.30am Communions; however ill health prevented Bob from being present except for a few times in 2018. We thank Bob very much for his faithful service over many years. Ian and Ruth also serve at the

monthly Sunday evening Communion service. The very regular commitment of all these people is very much appreciated.

Charles Jenkin (Vicar)

Sunday Welcome & Refreshments

Katrina Robertson, Churchwarden, manages the Sunday Welcome rota for the 10.30 service. The 8am Communion and 9.30 Matins welcome rotas are self-managed by the Sidespeople who regularly attend those services for which many thanks. There is at present no Evening Service Welcome rota and any volunteers would be much appreciated.

The Welcome Team at all services work very hard to ensure that all attending our services receive a warm welcome and are provided with hymn books, service sheets. They respond to queries, arrange people to do take up the Bread and Wine, take the collection, count money etc. We give thanks for all of our Volunteers who so kindly and generously give their time to welcome people to our Church; it is such an important part of our Church Ministry.

A particular thank you also goes to all of those who also volunteer to assist at the additional services and various other events throughout the year. We do still struggle to get sufficient volunteers for our additional special services, and it would be great if more people were willing to assist in this way. If you would be interested in being on the Welcome Team then please speak to Katrina Robertson.

In 2018 Sonia Docherty took on the responsibility for the Sunday refreshment (coffee) rota. The refreshment Team provide the tea/coffee with a welcoming smile to all which always makes for a warm, friendly and sociable atmosphere following our 1030 service. The Team could always do with more volunteers to serve refreshments, please speak to Sonia Docherty if you think that you could assist in this way. This is a very good way for new members of the 10.30 congregation to get to know others.

Katrina Robertson (Churchwarden)

Children's Groups

We have 48 children associated with the Tower, with whom we keep in touch through birthday cards. Some are regular attenders, others may come very occasionally. Included in this number, at the time of writing, are 14 boy choristers, 17 girl choristers, 7 choral scholars and 1 organ scholar and one server. As most of our regular children sing in the choir we have a very small Sunday School group. We can provide a crèche if necessary.

We run Monday and Tuesday Clubs for the choristers during choir practice. This includes faith and craft activities usually based on the following Sunday's reading.

At the weekday Evening Prayer they read their own Bible reading based on the next Sunday's Gospel. They also offer one of the prayers. This has been very successful and they are all very keen to give the reading or prayer.

The Sunday group which meets during the Parish Communion at 10.30am rejoins the main service at the Offertory, and at the end of the service they share what they have been doing with the congregation.

We have had several all-age services during the year including a Crib Service on the Sunday before Christmas. During these services the children participate by reading the Epistle, singing in the choir, serving, and there is an all-age talk. We launched our Advent Appeal for the Children Society during the Christmas Tree Festival at a Christingle Service and at Epiphany we collected vouchers for the Lighthouse Women's Aid.

We met on Easter Saturday to make the Easter Garden, followed by refreshments and an Easter egg hunt. On Easter Sunday we collected Easter Eggs for Lighthouse Women's Aid. At the Christmas Tree Festival the choristers made "chorister" decorations to decorate their Christmas Tree.

Our mission is to share the stories and the messages of the Bible and to help the children to understand what God and Jesus can mean to them in their own lives and for their families and friends. We believe that children learn best when enjoying themselves. We hope that they will realise that they are important to God and that we are interested in them as people. As well as contemplative moments of prayer and thoughtfulness, we also use craft activities, active games, messy play, storytelling and drama. We aim to have FUN.

Sue Adair (Children's Leader)

MUSIC AT ST MARY-LE-TOWER

Musicians

Christopher Borrett, Director of Music, continues to provide very able and inspiring leadership of the choir and other music of SMLT, and we are fortunate to have such an outstanding and hardworking Director of Music. William Baldry, Organist and Assistant Director of Music, continues also to provide a very high standard of organ playing and support for Chris. Altogether, Chris and William make for a very strong and energetic music team and the continuing growth in choir numbers and standards has been significant and noticeable. Lis Rollinson continues as the main choir assistant; in 2017/18 she was joined by Taylor London in caring for the girl choristers; and in 2018/19 Matthew Heyburn followed Taylor in that role. Both Taylor and Matthew were also our Senior Music Scholars for the year.

Charles Jenkin (Vicar)

The Choir

After Holy Week 2018, the choir embarked on a CD recording; the first for quite some years. The repertoire chosen was that of the Advent Vigil service consisting of hymns, anthems, prayers and readings, including the first recording of 'Adam lay ybounden' by Ben Parry. It was a wonderful week with the choir reaching new heights throughout the process. I was most grateful to all those from the congregation who turned up to record the hymns with the choir.

At the beginning of the summer term (2018) Choral Evensong was introduced on Mondays and Tuesdays instead of Choral Evening Prayers. Now that the soprano choral scholars (aged 14-18) have flown the girl chorister nest and have their own section, it was important to give the three soprano lines equal opportunities to sing the services. Given the fluidity of the liturgical calendar, it was conceivable that due to scheduling a chorister section may only sing one service of Evensong a month. However by introducing midweek Choral Evensongs, it allows both chorister sections to benefit from the frequent repetition; keeping the musical intricacies at their fingertips.

Next on the horizon was our Festival of Liturgy and Music. This year it included the Tower Chamber Choir's performance of Brahms' Requiem as well as the choir singing works by Britten, Walton, Vaughan Williams and Peeters.

On 15th July we commemorated the centenary of the end of World War 1 with a liturgy of music, readings and prayers. The service included Tippett's Spirituals from A Child of Our Time and Tavener's Svyati – for choir and solo cello.

At the end of term, we said goodbye to a number of our choral scholars. Taylor London took up her place at the Royal Northern College of Music. Simon Lockyer is currently a choral scholarship at Hereford Cathedral. Annabel Munday and Patrick Joyce are studying at Warwick University. Jonathan Kajoba has been awarded a sixth-form acting scholarship at Harrow, and Adam Scoggins has been awarded a place at Liverpool University.

The beginning of the new academic year was daunting on paper and was somewhat of a baptism of fire! The first full weekend back was our Patronal Festival. The second weekend back we welcomed the Friends of Cathedral Music who generously presented a cheque for £15,000 endowing one girl and one boy chorister. And alongside preparing music for these two major events, we rehearsed for a concert performance in the Roman River Festival in Colchester in late September. The concert was of entirely unaccompanied music which, though challenging, was a great success. I feel it is important to capitalise on opportunities such as this, to further St Mary-le-Tower's profile in the area and give the choir

important and high-profile goals, from which the extra efforts and improved standards can filter back into our regular routines.

This term we have also welcomed our new organ scholar, Adam Chillingworth, who joins us from St John's College Cambridge. We are also delighted to welcome back Matthew Heyburn who has just finished his Masters, in composition, at Cardiff university. Matt is our Senior Music Scholar and also a Choir assistant. He has also agreed to stay with us for the coming academic year, which is excellent news.

The big news last autumn was the appointment of pop-singer Ed Sheeran as our Choral Foundation's patron. I hope that in due course a collaboration between him and the choir will come about. I am glad of the profile it has given us and the interest of potential choristers that the announcement has also provided. I am most grateful for the efforts of the Choral Foundation for bringing this wonderful news to fruition.

The CD recorded in April was released last November. I have been told that sales are going well, especially before Christmas. It has been gratifying to receive so many positive comments about the CD. Hopefully there will be similar opportunities in the future.

The beginning of December brought with it the Christmas Tree Festival in which the choir sang for the opening ceremony, the very popular Christingle Service and the Advent Vigil. The vigil was a very special occasion and was well attended. The choir were at their very best and it was pleasing to hear the progress the choir has made.

I would like specially to thank all those who helped with the Christmas Tree Festival this year. As one of the focuses of the fundraising, the Music Department are profoundly grateful for all the effort and success which has occurred. Thank you very much.

Shortly afterwards was our annual performance of Messiah. This year the choristers performed the soprano arias (except Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion – which was be sung by the tenor). The audience was very appreciative, and it was a very special occasion shared with our guest singers and visiting instrumentalists alike.

At Christmas the choir sang for the Ipswich and Suffolk Club carol service, as well as the East Anglian Daily Times and Ipswich Star Carol Service, our own Choir Lunchtime Carol Concert, the Crib Service, Nine Lessons and Carols, and of course on Christmas Day.

Since the New Year we have had a large number of new choristers join the choir, so much so that Lis seems to be constantly sewing cassocks. We are delighted that

our chorister sections number over 30 young voices. We have also welcomed a number of voices to the lower parts. The choir is in rude health!

As always, a huge thank you to William, Matthew, Lis, Donna and the ladies of the Sunday school who look after the musical aspiration of the department, the choristers, choral scholars, choir members, parents (and me!) so well.

Christopher Borrett (Director of Music)

Organ and Piano

The sound of the organ has been much improved in recent years as a result both of mechanical repairs and voicing adjustments. The improvements by Bishop & Son is clearly noticeable and has been well worth the money spent under the organist's watchful eye.

Inevitably for such a well-used instrument, the organ continued to have several faults and reliability problems during 2018. A fault occurred, relating to the wiring of the Gt./Ped. toe pistons, during the recording sessions for choir's latest CD which had to be urgently rectified. In May, another wind leak occurred on a poor-quality piece of flexible trunking, this was replaced with a much more robust plastic conduit solution. Another piece of trunking providing wind to the Swell oboe rank became disconnected and had to re-attached more securely to prevent this happening again.

In August, tin tuning slides were fitted to all the pipes of the Gt.III rank mixture to avoid further deterioration of these pipes from cone tuning. As ever, numerous problems with the key contacts, key springs, pedal contacts, 'rocking tab' contacts, as well as other sundry issues occurred and were fixed. The organ was tuned five times during the year.

The piano continues to be as dependable as ever, and was tuned three times during the year by Graham Cooke.

William Baldry (Organist & Ass^t DoM)

Lunchtime Concerts

The 2018 Summer Recital Series started well, with an eclectic range of instruments and styles. The feedback has been very positive, especially the accordionist and the organ recitals. There were many treats last summer including string players, pianists, singers and baroque instrumentalists to name but a few. We are very fortunate to be able to host such an eclectic recital series in our church, and for it to be so well attended.

The Winter Concert Series went well, with a wonderful mixture of music from the Music Scholars at Framlingham College, organ and song recitals and saxophone ensembles.

For the first time in, 2018, most of the Lunchtime Concerts were sponsored by local businesses and some individuals. This is a very welcome development indeed, bringing in new income to support the work of the Music Department. Many thanks to Ian Lord and Liz Harsant for their efforts in this regard. It is yet another indication of how the profile of SMLT music is rising in Ipswich and East Suffolk.

I am also hugely grateful for the indispensable efforts of the welcome team and front of house including the indefatigable café helpers, who put themselves out week after week. I look forward to this season's Summer Recitals Series, starting on 7 May.

Christopher Borrett (Director of Music)

The Choral Foundation for St Mary-le-Tower

The trustees of The Choral Foundation met four times in 2018 and had a busy and productive year. The Foundation was particularly pleased to receive a grant of £15k from The Friends of Cathedral Music endowing two choristerships, which was presented at a special service in September.

Much work was undertaken, principally by out-going Chairman, Jonathan Hunt, on a new brochure which has been well received and is a useful tool for both enhancing the profile of The Foundation and helping to raise funds. The announcement of Ed Sheeran as patron in September made national news and the trustees look forward to a close relationship in the coming years.

In May, three new trustees joined The Foundation, Philip Shaw, Ian Lord and Lucinda de la Rue. In November Philip was appointed Chairman in succession to Jonathan Hunt who stepped down as a trustee in December 2018 as did Camila Haycock. Also at their November meeting the trustees set up an investment sub-committee, which is to be advised by Stephen Barter, who was also appointed a trustee.

The Choral Foundation Messiah Concert in December 2018 was a real success with choristers singing the soprano arias splendidly. In September 2018 The Foundation's assets were £59,685.70.

Richard Hanley, Secretary and Trustee

MISSION & OUTREACH

Open Church

Due to continuing antisocial behaviour and other issues in church and the churchyard it became clear that when church was open people should always work in pairs for health and safety reasons. Unfortunately, we simply do not have

sufficient numbers of Volunteers/pairs to enable the church to stay open at the moment, so it was decided to put the Monday and Saturday Welcome on hold. The matter will be reviewed when CCTV is installed at church which should be in the coming months, but it is a real shame that we are not able to keep our town centre church open for visitors on a regular basis at present.

Katrina Roberts (Churchwarden)

Churchyard Care

The churchyard continues to provide a visual amenity much enjoyed by members of the church and the wider community. We continue to receive many donations of plants and shrubs from members of the congregation and other well-wishers and these have been most welcome. Additionally, the Borough Council have donated and planted four beautiful trees to replace those lost in the recent past to disease.

Our two council helpers Mike and Graham continue to give us tremendous help and support for which we are very grateful indeed. We also owe a great debt of gratitude to Katrina Robertson and Alan Cocker who watered the new trees throughout the arid summer of 2018, ensuring the trees' survival.

The gardening team continue to work hard throughout the year and are rewarded by the many compliments given by people passing by or using the churchyard. Special thanks are due to June Malloy who gardens every Wednesday morning year-round come rain or shine.

Anti-social behaviour, the consumption of alcohol and drug use continues to be of concern at various times but the Vicar and churchwardens have made strong representations to the police, the Crime Commissioner and local councillors to voice their concerns over this growing issue.

The team garden the churchyard on Wednesday mornings and any help would be most welcome. Please think of joining us, if only occasionally. Requests for help to tidy the churchyard for Holy Week and again in the autumn for leaf clearing have met with a disappointing response. It would be good if we could have some additional help at these busy times in the coming year.

Sally Graham

Christ Church & St Mary-Le-Tower Lunch Club

The Friday lunches continues to flourish on the 3rd Friday of each from January to June with a summer break, resuming again in October, and ending with Christmas lunch in December. Guests from each church arrive at 11.30am for coffee and catch up with members from both churches before lunch at 12.30pm.

Numbers have been between 30 and 36 at each lunch. The cost of lunches has remained at £3.50 for the two-course meal with tea or coffee. Regretfully the 2019 price has had to be increased to £4.00 (£4.50 for Christmas lunch).

I would like to thank Chikondi and her team of helpers who have produced very excellent meals over the last year. Despite rising food costs we still make enough to pay for gas and electricity. My thanks go also to Mrs Phyl Fisk for her continued support in issuing invitations.

We would welcome more church members to join us. If you are retired, single or on our own, have a word with Phyl Fisk who issues invitations, Cathy Moss (Lay Elder) or myself.

Peter Gotts

Grand Christmas Tree Festival 2018

The 9th Annual Christmas Tree Festival welcomed just over 5,500 visitors in 2018, another new record. A whole range of people enjoyed the spectacle, including children from several local schools visiting as groups. The pop up Festival Café was as popular as ever, selling a range of freshly filled rolls, delicious soups, home-made cakes and a selection of hot and cold drinks.

We were joined by 118 participants who decorated trees in a multitude of ways to the delight of our visitors. 26 pillar trees were sponsored along with the large tree that stands in front of the organ in the north aisle, and considerable support was also received from local businesses in the form of advertising in our glossy festival programme. Thanks are due to all our participants and sponsors for their support of the Festival.

This year, money raised from the Festival went to support Talitha Koum, Suffolk Law Centre and Music at St Mary-le-Tower. The total raised was £6,779.

St Mary-le-Tower could not succeed in offering the town of Ipswich such a keystone Festival without lots of volunteer help. Particular thanks to Charles our Vicar, Donna Joyce (Volunteer Administrator) and Keith Faull who together with Jo Jones form the planning group. Thanks also to Festival Team Leaders namely, Sally Graham (festival café), Vicky Faull (children's activities), Mike Graham (cash handling) and Ian Molloy (cleaning /watering).

Thanks also to the Music Department for their skills and support and the Bell Ringers whose ringing added significantly to the ambience of the festival during the morning of the Saturday of the festival.

Jo Jones (Planning group leader)

The 'Inspiring Ipswich' Deanery 'Growing in God' Project

Inspiring Ipswich is the name that is being given to a 7 year project to turn around the decline of church membership in Ipswich deanery. And unlike previous drives to do this, this time the Church of England is putting in serious development resources locally, over £3 million, to fund the leadership and organisation needed. At last the scale of the task has been recognised, and clergy and laity are not just being told to work harder with fewer people. These posts are already being established, and the most high profile of these is the new Archdeacon of Ipswich, The Ven Rhiannon King, who will be with us at SMLT on Sunday 12th May 2019 at the 10.30 service.

There are significant targets for this work. The project aims to reach a situation in which 10% of the population is being touched by the Church of England's service to the wider community (like with Tower House); and 5% is actively involved in growing their Christian discipleship, their intentional following of Jesus, in some way. To achieve this, the project will support the planting of a significant number of new congregations, either as part of existing churches, or as separate entities, as there is considerable evidence that growth happens more dynamically in smaller church units.

However it is recognised and strongly affirmed as well that all this will not happen without the strengthening of existing congregations. And so the deanery has established two 'Learning Communities' who will work over the next two years to strengthen the ability of every church in Ipswich to grow new disciples for Jesus. The team from SMLT comprises, Cathy Moss, Eunice Forsyth, Jo Jones, Sonia Docherty, and Vicky Moss, together with Canon Charles. There is room for one more, and it would be good to balance the team with another male or young person.

The first session of our Learning Community took place as a day conference on Saturday 6th April, and each church has taken away some actions to work on. Our partner churches in this Learning Community are St Mary Stoke St Francis with St Peter (SWITM), St Mathew All Saints with Triangle (SMAST), St Thomas, St Mary Whitton, St Bartholomew, and St Augustine. In September a second conference will take place and we will reflect together and learn together from the experience of the initial activities, and formulate our next steps.

For SMLT, our team has decided on a process of interviews and surveys to ask people about where they see God at work in the life of SMLT. The thinking behind this is that in becoming more aware and more focused on where we see God at work in our church life and in our service to the wider community, not only will we see more clearly where God is calling us to join in more with his mission, but we will actually become more faithful disciples of Jesus ourselves.

Tower House Community Engagement Project

Tower House is a Community Engagement project for St Mary-le-Tower, with two main aims, firstly to provide a supportive community centre for charities and community groups within the heart of the town, and secondly to provide importance facilities for the life of our church, particularly a new song school for our music department.

Since the departure of the café in 2017, a lot of work has been done to scope the way forward for the project, and many thanks indeed to Professor Julia Hausermann who led this process through to June 2018. Through her work much has been clarified, and since April an Interim Management Group (IMG) has been working to carry various recommendations forward.

In particular Julia's work has established four main foci for the project: communal space for activities, office space for letting, choral music facilities, and space for a heritage focus. The last of these is seen now as one of the keys to refurbishment funding, along with activities giving clear community benefits.

Based on Julia's recommendations the PCC appointed a Business Development Manager for Tower House, Sue Rudland, who started in October 2018 working 12 hours a week, usually on Mondays and Wednesdays. Sue is working to establish a clear business plan going forward for the project, and is highly experienced in developing businesses, working with clients, and in marketing.

A significant aim for this plan is to be able to appoint an operational manager for Tower House, so that the Vicar can be released from this responsibility and be able to focus more on both project and church development issues. At present, although the operational budget for Tower House is breaking even, there is insufficient income to employ an operational manager. The Business Development Manager is being funded from the project's development budget.

The members of the IMG from April 2018 are Charles Jenkin, Jo Jones, Sonia Docherty, Mark Hollingsworth, Donna Joyce, Humphry Adair, Chris Borrett and Russell Hall. More recently Sue Rudland, Kay Mcelhinney and Richard Cook have joined the committee. Kay is the chairperson of Got to Read, which was the first licensee in Tower House in 2015. Richard has recently joined SMLT congregation, has project management experience, and has now agreed to be chair of the IMG. Many thanks to all on the IMG for their work and particularly Jo Jones who took the chair while the Vicar was on study leave.

In terms of recent updates, we expect Listed Building Consent to be granted soon for most of the changes to the building. This includes various new toilet facilities, a passenger lift, re-ordering some spaces on the first floor of the north wing to create the Song School, and providing a kitchen in the south wing. We understand that

the rules of applying for Heritage Lottery Funding changed from the beginning of 2019, which mean that Community and Social outcomes need to be more rigorously specified and evidenced.

Amongst new arrivals in Tower House, Suffolk Refugee Support is delivering regular English Language classes on Monday-Wednesday mornings. Ipswich Ripple Food Co-op is operating fortnightly on Saturdays, selling vegetarian and organic wholefoods, locally or ethically sourced, and they also have a fair-trade café, so why not pop in! A new licensee is Magpie, who are a group of artists, now inhabiting two of the first floor offices.

Charles Jenkin (Vicar)

ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNICATION

Parish Office and Administration

The Parish Office (1st floor, 17 Tower Street) is staffed by the Administrator (from 10am all day, and the Vicar, Director of Music and Senior Music Scholar work there regularly. It is a very busy hub of activity administering to the Parish and also providing a shared resource for the administration of Tower House. The office provides a pleasant working space, and the central location contributes to the efficiency of administration and access to church staff.

The role of the Administrator continues to get more busy and varied, with the number of licensees almost to capacity in Tower House, the increased use of its meeting rooms, and the renewed vigour for the Tower House project looking forward, with the significant contributions of a new, highly skilled Business Development Manager and enthusiastic Interim Management Group. This year too has seen an increased requirement to support the administration of the church due to having only a single (but immensely productive) churchwarden.

Websites and Online Publicity

The SMLT website (stmaryletower.org.uk) continues to function well and has proved a useful tool in attracting organisations to us by giving a well balanced, organised and professional image. A second website (ipswichtreefestival.org.uk) and the festival Facebook page provide publicity and a point of reference for the annual Grand Christmas tree Festival. It is planned that in 2019 a third website will be released for the Tower House Community, to provide an online presence for the project. A Twitter account is maintained for the music at the Tower and 3 facebook pages are active online for SMLT, the Tree Festival and Tower House.

We could always do with a higher publicity profile for St Mary-le-Tower and there is always more that would be well worth doing. The role of Publicity Officer (with the exception of our websites and Facebook pages) continues to be one of the duties of

the current Senior Music Scholar, and it is hoped this will continue to be a natural part of the Music Scholar's duties. May our profile improve in 2019!

Donna Joyce (Administrator: Church and Tower House)

Inspire Parish Magazine

Inspire is the quarterly magazine of St. Mary le Tower. It is now in its 12th year, and is distributed to our congregation, visitors and to those members associated with the Tower including those who have moved away. We try to include a mixed range of topics — contact information, music news, book reviews, puzzles, recipes, a children's page, news of the parish and the wider church and interesting articles submitted by readers. Hopefully there is something for everyone.

Sue Adair (Editor)

CHURCH GROUPS

Catering & Social Events

As always, the caterers have been very active in the past year and so have the many accomplished cooks and bakers amongst the congregation. Events where we prepare and sell food and drink are a very important source of income for SMLT as well as being important social occasions when our different congregations come together with each other and with members of the public.

The Harvest Lunch took the form of a bring-and-share buffet which was held once again in Tower House to demonstrate all the potential that the building has to offer for our future use. As always, the main highlight of the lunch was the delicious array of home-made puddings and salads that you brought along.

The Christmas Tree Festival is very demanding in both volunteer time and in the provision of baked goods. An increased number of people volunteered in the café and though it was hard work, I hope that most people thought it was fun too. The quality and variety of baked goods made by the congregation for this event is exceptional and receives much praise from our visitors – thank you. Events such as the Open Day held in October were also supported by further donations of lovely baked goods.

The Easter Morning Sunrise service is another event growing in popularity and after the service Jo Jones, Mary Baldry and Donna Joyce provided a fabulous breakfast of sausage or bacon rolls, croissants, toast, jams, marmalades, fruit juices, hot drinks and mini Easter eggs. A real dawn feast...and all served with a smile.

Finally, thanks are due to two other important teams of people and those are the dedicated people who organise Sunday morning coffee year round and those who support the work of the music department by providing and serving fresh rolls and

drinks at the Tuesday Concerts. We are indebted to you for your continued support with these.

Regulations regarding the safe handling of food are important as we owe each other and our guests a duty of care. This year we have made significant strides in adhering to these regulations for which I thank you all in particular, with reference to food allergens. We ask for your continuing co-operation for all events, large and small, in following the allergen guidelines. Several recent, high profile cases of the untimely deaths of young people due to allergic reaction to food, have resulted in the Food Standards Agency looking again at how to protect the public and further and more stringent demands will be made on all of us who provide food in the public arena.

In March the Food Standards Agency inspected the food handling areas at the back of church and in Church House. They also scrutinised evidence of our protocols in the safe handling of food including reviewing allergen safeguards. It was very rewarding to be given another 5 Star rating but there is no room for complacency. Their main recommendation was that in the interest of safety, especially as our facilities are used by multiple users, we should make all areas NUT FREE to avoid any cross contamination. Thank you for all you do.

Sally Graham.

Belfry

The bells have been rung regularly for Sunday morning services and Monday evening practices throughout the year. More often than not, all 12 bells are able to rung due to healthy attendances on both Sunday mornings and Monday evenings. Additional ringing for evensong (3rd Sunday) and additional services has taken place, particularly over the Christmas season. On the first Sunday of every month, the SMLT band keep up the tradition of making the short journey down the road to ring at St Lawrence after the conclusion of service ringing at SMLT.

Our band remains healthy in numbers, and the new recruits we gained in 2017 continue to progress well and represent an encouraging future for ringing at SMLT. During 2018 two of our more experienced ringers left Ipswich to take up overseas teaching jobs in Slovakia. Happily though, we gained two experienced ringers who moved in to the country from Nottinghamshire to offset the loss.

SMLT continues to enjoy success in the local striking competitions, winning the district and guild 6 bell competitions. This year, SMLT won the regional 12 bell striking competition held at Saffron Walden for the first time. This latter success has spurred an appetite within the band to enter the 2020 National 12 Bell striking competition, which if achieved, would see Ipswich compete on the national stage for the first time in over 10 years.

Mechanically, the bells remain in excellent working order due to the significant efforts put in by the steeple keeper and the tower secretary to maintain them. Sadly, these efforts could not prevent another breakage in the clapper of the 11th bell just before Christmas, which forced the seasonal ringing to be limited to the light front 8 set of bells. A replacement clapper – of a new design to its predecessor – was received and fitted early in the new year.

David Potts (Tower Captain & Ringing Master)

Sanctuary Guild

Sue Adair has continued to lead and encourage our team of Flower Arrangers. We thank them for all the lovely flower arrangements throughout the year: especially for the major festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter. We are at present looking out for new folk to join the group and share the task. You will be warmly welcomed. Funds are available to offset the cost of flowers.

We held our Summer Coffee Morning and Book Sale in the Church in July: when good company and delicious cakes were enjoyed by members and friends of St. Mary-le-Tower's congregation and casual passers by. The Autumn Lunch, held in November, provided the opportunity to enjoy a hot meal and plenty of conversation. Keith Jones was our Guest Speaker, when he gave us an inspiring talk about St. Terese of Lisieux.

During the year care has been taken to look after our Altar Frontals, and Priest's regalia. Our special thanks go to Sally Graham who week by week helps to launder and care for our Altar linen.

Hilary Norman

Ladies in Fellowship Together (LIFT)

We continue to meet on the 4th Thursday of most months. We started 2018 with a bring-and-share supper at the Vicarage - actually it was more like a banquet! Our other meetings have included reminiscences about our favourite books, our annual summer BBQ kindly hosted by Mary Baldry and family and making decorations at Sally Graham's for our tree in the Grand Christmas Tree Festival.

All in all we have had some wonderful and enjoyable evenings in fellowship together.

Pins & Needles

Pins & Needles celebrated its first anniversary on 2nd February 2019. Set up with the purposes of:

- providing a presence during SMLT opening hours
- alleviating loneliness
- welcoming the wider Ipswich community into SMLT.

These aims have been met and we will continue to pursue these outcomes. While the object of the group is to come together to pursue crafts, the users tell me how much they look forward to the companionship provided by the sessions. This is borne out by the repeated attendance of between 6 and 11 users of our bi-monthly meetings, with at least 5 coming from outside of the SMLT congregation. Since hosting a tree at the Christmas Tree Festival the numbers are growing, and no-one will ever be turned away. It has been a joy and a privilege to set up and run this group and I thank everyone for their continued support in this endeavour.

Amanda Kneller

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Membership of the PCC 2018/19:

Officers and Members

Revd. Canon Charles Jenkin	Vicar & Chairman
Mrs Katrina Robertson	Churchwarden
Mr Mark Hollingsworth	Hon. Treasurer

Deanery Synod Representatives

Mrs Sue Adair
Dr Russell Hall
Mrs Cathy Moss

Elected PCC Members

Mrs Mary Baldry	Mr James Cutting
Mrs Sonia Docherty	Mrs Eunice Forsyth
Mrs Sally Graham	Mr Richard Hanley
Mrs Rowena Harland	Mrs Jo Jones
Ms Jo Kidby	Mrs Ruth Longhurst
Mr Ian Lord	Mrs Hilary Norman.

The PCC met 5 times during the year, with a mix of evening and Saturday morning meetings, to discuss and make decision about the mission and life of SMLT. The PCC held one additional E-meeting, and also held an Awayday to consider priorities for the Tower House Community Engagement Project. Many thanks to Jo Mays for acting as Minutes Secretary for much of the year.

Electoral Roll Report

In accordance with the Church Representation Rules, a new Church Electoral Roll was prepared and completed in April this year. A renewal of the roll must take place every six years, and was previously completed in 2013. Every Church member named on the previous electoral roll was informed (where reasonably practicable

to do so) that the new roll was being prepared, and that he/she must apply for enrolment in order to be included.

A copy of the new roll was published and displayed in the church porch between 14th and 30th April 2019 – the requisite amount of time.

At the beginning of 2018 there were 177 on the roll. Since the revision last year, a number of members have moved, sadly died, or declined to complete an application form. There have been 23 new applications for addition to the electoral roll, which combined with updated applications from existing members, leaves us with a total of 135.

Carolyn Heyburn

Safeguarding Report

Steady progress has been made this year with online and face to face training. At present 40 people have completed the C0 course; 7 C1; 1 C2 and 3 C3. At the time of writing a further 9 people will complete C2 training at a special session organised to take place in Tower House in March 2019. A couple of safeguarding issues have been raised over the course of the year, one of which required advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding lead. The welfare of choristers and choral scholars is paramount and proper procedures and protocols are followed.

Richard Hanley, Parish Safeguarding Officer

Health and Safety Report

During 2018 the West door entrance was levelled to make it easier for wheelchair and mobility scooter usage. The paving in the churchyard was pressure washed a number of times to make it less slippery. There were no Health and Safety incidents reported.

Mary Baldry (H & S Officer)

BUILDINGS & CONTENTS

Church Fabric

(i) Donations Box. Sadly, our Donations Box was broken into, despite it being incredibly heavy and made with the most toughened glass available, it was dragged out into the churchyard and a small some money was stolen and damaged. An offender admitted to the theft and was sentenced to a number of weeks imprisonment. Phillip Watkins, Cabinet Maker repaired the box and we have taken advice from our Architect Ashley Courtney on how we may secure the Donations box to the ground once funds permit in future.

(ii) Plasterwork Repairs to Chancel Est Wall. As reported at the 2018 APCM, we received authorisation from the DAC to undertake the work to the plasterwork on

the East Wall in April 2018. The project is going to cost approximately £35,000 - £40,000 and the work was planned for early 2019, however our Treasurer advised that unless we secure grant funding for at least 50% of the cost we would not be able to bear the cost of this project. We are now in the process of trying to obtain funding.

(iii) CCTV. In June/July 2018 we received quotations from 3 Companies for the installation of CCTV. Following a detailed supplier selection exercise, two suppliers were selected by us to go forward to the next stage. Between October 2018 and March 2019, we then worked with the two suppliers to refine their proposals further to suit our needs. Both Companies also quoted for installation of CCTV for the Organist which will be far better than the current system, and they have also quoted for two external cameras which will hopefully give coverage to particular problem areas of the churchyard.

At the April 2019 Meeting the PCC voted to appoint Co-Op Secure Response to supply and install our new CCTV system. Following this PCC decision, a full Faculty application has now been made to the DAC. We hope to obtain some grant funding to assist with this project and we also hope to see a reduction in our insurance premiums.

(iv) Churchyard Benches. We did have five benches in the churchyard, but sadly two of them have now been vandalised beyond repair. This leaves us with three benches, one of which is not in good condition due to it being moved around and man-handled carelessly out of hours. The most recent development is that we are regularly coming to church and have to go searching in the town centre vicinity to find our benches which have been lifted over the churchyard fence. In April 2019 we received permission from the DAC to fix the benches to the flagstones and this will hopefully deter at least some unwelcome behaviour.

(v) Bike Sheds. We received authorisation to remove the bike sheds from the church yard as this was an area which attracted frequent antisocial behaviour and deposits of drug paraphernalia. The removal of the sheds was funded by an anonymous donor. The compost bin was also removed for the same reason. This removal has made a great improvement to this area of the churchyard and the area has been reseeded with grass.

(vi) Lighting in the churchyard. The new Easy Hotel are still planning to install new lighting in Oak Lane behind the hotel. They have agreed to optimise the lighting in Oak Lane to better illuminate the much darker parts of our churchyard which are on the way to Church House. They are also planning CCTV for Oak Lane, which is also attracts antisocial behaviour at all time of the day and night. These two things will be of great benefit to us and the hotel as it will hopefully help to deter at least some antisocial behaviour / loitering and will make the whole area feel safer.

Easy Hotel were due to be installing the lights / CCTV in February 2019 but their project is on hold at the moment and we are awaiting an update on likely installation date.

(vii) Stone Cross on East Roof above the East Window. In February 2019 one quarter of a large stone cross broke and fell in strong winds. Steeplejacks attended and decided that the remaining parts of the cross were unsafe so they took down the rest of the cross. The PCC voted in April 2019 to replace the cross and our Insurers, Ecclesiastical have confirmed that they will cover the cost of this, although the PCC will need to pay the £1000 excess.

(viii) Choirstall Lighting. In 2018 the DAC granted SMLT a period of experimentation to trial some new choir lighting which will be much brighter with greater coverage and improved sight line between the Director of Music, the choir and Organist. The Vicar has done a lot of work in preparation for this and the congregation have donated money very generously to fund this project. The trial lighting will be installed this year and if it is successful then we would eventually be looking to submit a Faculty application to remove the existing choirstall lamp stands, which have given great service for many decades and replace these permanently with the new lights.

(ix) Church Boiler. In March 2019 we were having several problems with our heating and the church was very cold. The problem has now been remedied with the installation of a new pilot light assembly.

(x) Churchyard Pest Control. During 2018 we were having several issues with rats frequently being seen in the Churchyard at all times of the day. We secured a contract with East Anglian Pest Control who worked hard to tackle the problem and it seems that almost all of the rats have now gone. Our Caretaker and our Local Council workers are litter picking daily to try to keep on top of the litter which really attracts the rats into the churchyard.

(xi) Kitchen area at the back of church. The wooden kitchen surfaces at the back of church have been sanded down and resealed using special sealant for surfaces which are used in food preparation. Thanks to Ian Molloy and Katrina for carrying out this work.

(xii) The wooden floor at the back of church. The wooden floors at the back of church have been renovated and resealed with specialist sealant which nourishes the wood and seals it with a hard layer. Thanks to Ian Molloy and Katrina for carrying out this work.

Church Treasures

New Candle Sticks: Barbara Norman very kindly donated a pair of beautiful silver candle sticks in memory of Iris Barrell, who you will all remember was a Lay Elder of

SMLT for very many years. The new candlesticks were designed and made by the same silversmith to match the silver Ciborium which was introduced to SMLT a few years ago. We give thanks for the gift of these candle sticks which will be used in church for many years to come, particularly on the Nave Altar and in the Lady Chapel.

Church House

The skylight above the song school continues to leak on occasion and we are looking at various solutions to remedy this. Due to regular and heavy usage, the ground floor needs redecoration, including the kitchen area. The current Tenants are leaving on 30th April 2019 and our Agent 'Rents' have been instructed to advertise for new Tenants.

Katrina Robertson (Churchwarden)

WIDER CHURCH

Town Centre Churches Group

The Town Centre Churches Group comprising St Mary-at-Elms, Museum Street Methodists, St Mary-le-Tower, Christ Church Tacket Street and St Pancras RC church continue to share some activities. A joint service was held in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Joint Study Courses were held in Lent and Advent, A Walk of Witness was held on Good Friday, and Christ Church and SMLT continue to share a joint service on Palm Sunday.

Charles Jenkin (Vicar)

Deanery Synod Report

There have been three meetings since our last report. Your representatives have been Sue Adair, Cathy Moss and myself. The principle business has been the submission of the bid to the Church Commissioners for funds to develop the Church in Ipswich, and its progress. The bid was successful and the Diocese has been allocated a total £4.95m of funding across the diocese.

In June 2018 ways were outlined how the Growing in God strategy might be achieved. These included:

- Refreshing existing congregations.
- Fresh expressions of Church.
- New congregations.
- Support of clergy and lay ministries.
- The planting of new churches.

In February 2019 the meeting was augmented by visitors from the parishes. Bishop Martin thanked those involved in the successful bid for funds and introduced

Rhiannon King, the new Archdeacon of Ipswich designate, who has been appointed to facilitate the work. There is also a new Archdeacon for Rural Mission. In addition we met Captain Payne who has joined SWITM from the Church Army.

There was more information about the “Learning Communities” that will support parish teams. These people are being appointed and will meet regularly over two years, learning from each other and helping parishes support the vision of the Diocese.

In February we also heard that a Deanery financial team has been established to help parishes with the Centenary share. The group will facilitate collaborative working between parishes and will arrange discussion between clergy, treasurers and PCCs to obtain commitment over payment levels. 88% of the previous target has been paid. Three parishes paid more than was asked for and four have committed to do so in 2019.

Russell Hall (Deanery Synod Representative)

Diocesan Synod Report

Each Synod opened within act of worship.

February Synod

The Bishop announced that a new Dean of the Cathedral had been appointed. He said that the Lent Appeal would focus on local communities. A presentation about the economy of Suffolk was given by Mark Pendlington, Chair of Flourish. The Diocesan Environment Officer presented the proposed Environment policy involving Eco church. The motion was passed unanimously. Gavin Stone introduced five updates to the Promoting a Safer Church safeguarding policy.

Then Eight Growing in God support workshops were offered - members were able to participate in three. An update of the continuing support work in Kagera was given and a video shown.

June Synod

This was the last Synod of the triennium and the Bishop thanked everyone for their work and commitment to Synod.

The Church Commissioners have made available some strategic development funds for dioceses focused on mission. Application for this was submitted in April for £5million over 6 years. There are two dimensions to the application, urban (Ipswich Deanery) and rural. Group discussions took place.

The Diocesan Director of Education gave her annual report. The Secretary of the DAC gave his annual report. The DAC discussed 233 items of business during the

year - a 25% increase on the previous year. The vast majority of repairs need the approval of the Archdeacon rather than a full faculty.

It was recommended by the Taylor Review that each Diocese should have a Community Support Advisor to help parishes make their church buildings more community usable. Suffolk has been chosen as one of the pilots. As pilot the Diocese funding by Historic England for a support officer will provide funding for a Support Officer and a Community Support Adviser.

Synod approved the 2019 Budget. A report was given by two deaneries who have piloted a new process for deanery planning. These focused on mission and growth to enable us to make better use of our resources. This Synod concluded with a Eucharist.

October Synod

Synod was preceded by separate meetings of the Houses of Laity and Clergy. This was the first synod of the new triennium and Bishop Martin welcomed all the new members.

William Kendal, High Sheriff of Suffolk 2016/17 provided a picture of Suffolk covering aspects such as economy, deprivation levels and the number of volunteers. Members were asked to consider what the church could do to respond to the state of Suffolk and what Synod sees as its priorities. From the collated responses, a prioritised list will be developed and brought back to Synod for further discussion.

Bishop Mike gave an overview of the proposed Bishop's Mission Order, a legal structure which is needed to support the "Fresh Expressions" structure. The BMO is part of the application for Strategic Development Funds. There was a report of July's General Synod. A presentation of the 2017 Financial Statements was given. The meeting concluded with a Eucharist.

Sue Adair (Diocesan Synod Representative)