This Annual Reports covers the five Parishes of Ampney Crucis, Ampney St Peter & Ampney St Mary, Down Ampney, Driffield and Harnhill; and Poulton, with its seven church buildings. Within the parishes we have two Church of England Primary Schools – at Ampney Crucis and Down Ampney, with which we have close links; and the Harnhill Christian Healing Centre is located within our area.

The parishes are located within the Diocese of Gloucester and in the Cirencester Deanery and are part of the South Cotswolds Team Ministry. We seek to serve God through worship, prayer and service within our communities and beyond.

The Diocese of Gloucester has developed a vision and strategy for its mission in which we take our place and this Annual Report is divided into themes coming from the Mission Statement. We recognize that we cannot do everything in our small villages and parishes, but we intend to fully participate in this vision where we can.

The South Cotswolds Team Ministry is supported by many people – lay and ordained, some ‘paid’ and most volunteers. We value the mix of talents, gifts and time that people give to the life of the church and the different expressions this has in different places and contexts.

Our Team Clergy are:

The Rev’d John Swanton Team Rector and covers The Ampneys, Driffield & Harnhill and Poulton
The Rev’d Helen Caine Curate at Fairford and The Meyseys
The Rev’d Jonathan Clark Curate at Lechlade
The Rev’d Andrew Cinnamond Team Vicar for Eastleach, Lechlade and Southrop
The Rev’d Tim Hastie-Smith Team Vicar for Barnsley, Bibury and Winson
The Rev’d Lynn Hayler Team Curate with responsibility for Kempsford and Whelford
The Rev’d Denise Hyde Associate Priest at Fairford and The Meyseys
The Rev’d John Partington Team Vicar for Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop and Quenington and also Castle Eaton
The Rev’d Caroline Symcox Team Vicar at Fairford and The Meyseys

Chris Saunders is the Team-wide Youth Worker

There is currently a vacancy for the post of Team Vicar (House for Duty) for Castle Eaton, Kempsford and Whelford.
The Ampney Parishes

Church Officers in 2017

**Ampney Crucis**
- Churchwarden: Vacant
- Hon Secretary: Eleanor Toby
- Hon Treasurer: Neil Holt
- Deanery Synod Representative: Peter Bullock
- Safeguarding Nominated Person: Barry Dent

**Ampney St Peter & St Mary**
- Churchwarden: Chris Copley
- Hon Secretary: Antonia Eliot
- Hon Treasurer: Michael Eliot
- Deanery Synod Representative: Gerry Cutts
- Safeguarding Nominated Person: Antonia Eliot

**Down Ampney**
- Churchwarden: Derek Skinner
- Hon Secretary: Adrienne Stokes
- Hon Treasurer: Pam Varey
- Deanery Synod Representative: Andrew Scarth
- Safeguarding Nominated Person: Derek Skinner

**Driffield and Harnhill**
- Churchwarden: James Lockhart (Harnhill)
- Hon Secretary: Sue Philips
- Hon Treasurer: John Cross
- Deanery Synod Representative: Vacant
- Safeguarding Nominated Person: Angharad Clark

**Poulton**
- Churchwarden: Rosie Arkwright
- Hon Secretary: Antonia Eliot
- Hon Treasurer: Michael Eliot
- Deanery Synod Representative: Lorna Knights
- Safeguarding Nominated Person: Antonia Eliot
Working as a Team Serving the South Cotswolds

Team Council

The Team Council met on a number of occasions during 2017. We recognize that there is work to be done to make the role of ‘the team’ more visible. We respect the independence of each parish as a legal and geographic entity, but realize there are things that small parishes can’t always do on their own and by working together we can share resources and experience.

Apportionment of Parish Share

Each parish is asked to make a contribution to the Diocesan funds to help cover the costs of clergy, their housing, training, pension etc and a small sum for diocesan central costs. There has been a sense that this sum is not as fairly spread across the parishes as might be expected. The Team Council has looked at this subject on a number of occasions during 2017 and has proposed some changes, which will be brought in gradually. This matter will be kept under review.

Clergy deployment

A key subject for the Team Council in 2017 was the deployment of clergy. It is understood that there is pressure to reduce the number of clergy across the diocese because of a combination of factors – reducing clergy numbers nationally, affordability and ‘fairness’ of geographic spread. The South Cotswolds Team Ministry was advised that it needed to reduce its number of clergy by one House-for-Duty post, which, in turn, required a change of responsibilities amongst the clergy for wider geographic areas.

Andrew Cinnamond has taken pastoral responsibility for Eastleach and Southrop (in addition to Lechlade); Caroline Symcox has taken pastoral responsibility for The Meyseys (in addition to Fairford); and John Partington has taken pastoral responsibility for Castle Eaton with the expectation that he will also look after Kempsford (in addition to Coln St Aldwyns, Hatherop and Quenington) whilst a House for Duty priest is sought for Castle Eaton and Kempsford & Whelford.

Seeking a House-for-Duty Priest for the parishes of Castle Eaton and Kempsford with Whelford

The Rev’d Lynn Hayler, as part of her training experience, was asked to care for Kempsford & Whelford Parish, whilst we were actively seeking a House for Duty priest for this parish in 2017. The post was advertised twice and sadly we were not able to make an appointment. We know there are now relatively low numbers of people applying for House for Duty posts. We shall advertise again in 2018 and are making personal approaches to those who might be interested in such a post.

Marriage by Design Course

The Team holds two marriage preparation days each year for couples being married in the churches across the team. The course helps couples discuss between themselves issues such as – relationships, children, money, conflict resolution, expectations etc. It doesn’t deal with matters
to do with the wedding service! This course has been well received. We tend to hold it at the Royal Agricultural University’s Rural Skills and Innovation Centre at Harnhill.

Greek for Beginners

The Rev’d John Partington leads a Greek for Beginners class once a fortnight to help illuminate the Gospels. People of all abilities are welcome to attend.

5pm Evening Prayer each Wednesday

During the summer months, there was a service of Evening Prayer at different churches in the South Cotswolds on most Wednesday afternoons at 5pm. They were appreciated by those who were able to attend them.
• Developing diverse lay and ordained leaders from the communities we serve
• Piloting liberating models of leadership and ministry, especially in multi-parish benefices
• Creating learning networks for lay and ordained leaders

Nurturing Vocations

In 2017, Sarah Haslam from Poulton has lead prayers, preached and been a chalice assistant at some of our services. She has been doing so, in part, as an exploration of her vocation to ordained ministry. We wish her well as she continues this journey and support her in it.

PCCs working together

Conscious that in a small geographic area, there are quite a lot of churches, PCCs and work associated with them (and some inevitable duplication) there was some early consideration about merging Ampney Crucis PCC and Ampney St Peter & St Mary PCC into one. Detailed discussions will be held and decisions made in 2018.

Parish Giving Scheme

During the year, using resources provided by the Diocese, Poulton PCC launched a ‘Parish Giving Scheme’ to invite local people to support the church with a regular financial commitment. The response has been very encouraging. Ampney Crucis Parish has resolved to do the PGS scheme in spring 2018.

Ecclesiastical Working Together

Towards the end of the year, the Rector had discussions with ecumenical partners about working together in the villages and seeking a way to use the potential of some of the buildings we have in our care.

A future for Harnhill Church

The Driffield and Harnhill PCC have spent some time reflecting on the challenge of managing and financing the two Grade II* church buildings in a community of 168 people. A particular challenge is discerning the future use of the church of St Michael and All Angels, Harnhill. It needs a considerable capital sum invested in the building and is not really well used as a parish church. And yet, because of its close proximity to the Harnhill Christian Healing Centre, it is very well used for Compline (at 9pm each Tuesday and Thursday), for prayer, retreat and by visitors.

The PCC has resolved to seek to clearly establish the needs of the fabric of the building and obtain realistic cost estimates and then approach grant-making trusts to support its endeavours. The team at the Harnhill Centre will be helping and supporting this work.

As a first step, a ‘Conservation Report’ has been commissioned on the windows in the church to identify the scale of the work needed. Reports were also commissioned and completed on the timbers and belltower. There will be a lot to do in 2018 in terms of collating information and brave decision-making.
• Investing in our engagement with baptism families to spark an amazing adventure with Jesus Christ
• Placing schools at the heart of our mission with creative connections between churches and schools
• Encouraging new and courageous ways of worshipping, in different place which connect with more people
• Approaching the use, upkeep and future of our church buildings in bold and creative ways

**Word and Worship**

On the 3rd Sunday of each month we hold an informal service of Word and Worship at Poulton Church, which is a relaxed and more contemporary service; and is building up a regular congregation.

**Team Youth Worker**

Chris Saunders, the Team Youth Worker is making more connections with year 6 pupils in our church schools at Ampney Crucis and Down Ampney, as they prepare for secondary school.

**Ampney Crucis**

With completion of major works to Ampney Crucis Church in 2016, some repairs were undertaken to the pew platforms in the transepts during 2017. The flexible space created at the back of the church has been well used – particularly for Baptisms and serving refreshments. During the year, we had a successful Taize Service using this space in an informal way.

We also launched an appeal to fund the overhaul and restore the Victorian organ in the church and we were fortunate to have a good response to this appeal from grant-making trusts. We are confident that we shall be able to do the works in autumn 2018 ready for the Christmas Services.

**Open the Book**

Down Ampney has had an Open the Book team visiting the school fortnightly to dramatize stories from the Bible at Collective Worship. In autumn 2017, we created a small team (of 3 people) who are now doing ‘Open the Book’ at Ampney Crucis CofE School fortnightly. It is great fun being part of the OTB teams – and we can always do with more participants.

**Ampney St Peter**

In autumn 2017, we had the heating system at Ampney St Peter Church overhauled and re-commissioned. We hope (following a few teething problems!) that we shall have a warm(ish) church in cold weather!

**Loos**

In order for us to better use some of our church buildings, we need a loo! Both Down Ampney and Poulton PCCs are actively exploring the possibility, practicalities and costs of doing so.
ANNUAL REPORT looking at 2017
in the Parishes of Ampney Crucis : Ampney St Peter & St Mary
Down Ampney : Driffield & Harnhill : Poulton

• Being advocates for human flourishing, through initiatives which combat injustice, environmental destruction, exclusion and social isolation
• Using sport, music and art to build relationships and share the Christian faith
• Connecting with new housing developments in innovative ways
• Investing in people and programmes, which excite young people to explore and grow in faith

A new Stained-Glass Window for Poulton

Permission had been given for the installation of a new stained-glass window in memory of the late Jim Nunn, a faithful churchman in this village. Graham Dowding and his team created two wonderful windows depicting the history and life of the village and containing features that were close to Jim’s heart. We celebrated the installation of the new stained-glass window at Poulton with a special service and lunch party – to which many were invited and came.

New Housing Developments

There are very few new housing developments in these parishes. However, there are new homes planned for Down Ampney and the local church will be involved in welcoming new residents once built. We already provide a ‘welcome pack’ to new residents in the village.

Vaughan Williams Festival

Early planning for a Vaughan Williams Festival on the bank holiday weekend August 2018, centered on All Saints’ Church, Down Ampney.

Down Ampney New Burial Ground

The site identified by the civil Parish Council adjacent to the churchyard received change of use planning permission in the summer of 2017. The PCC is now seeking grant-funding to undertake the necessary works to make the site seemly as an extension to the churchyard.

Community Payback Team

The Community Payback Team from Gloucestershire Probation Service have continued to assist with various practical tasks in Down Ampney and Harnhill Churchyards. Whilst we recognize that this work is indeed payback to the community, we make sure everyone is thanked for their work and are pleased to be able hospitality and respect for people as individuals.

Restoration of the Ampney Crucis Organ

Following advice from the Diocesan Organ Advisor and formal reports on the instrument, the PCC agreed that the organ should be restored. During 2017 fund-raising has been pursued with vigour and we have been fortunate to secure over £30,000 of the £40,000 required – mostly from grant-making trusts and local donations. We hope to secure additional funds in early 2018 and will be able to do the works in the summer 2018.
Enabling people to discover new depths to prayer and spiritual growth, individually and together
• Nurturing confident disciples to live our their faith seven days a week
• Sharing our stories in new and different ways, including through digital media

Stir-up Sunday

On the afternoon of Sunday 26th November a Christmas Cake Making event was held at Poulton Village Hall on Stir-up Sunday. Some 20 people gathered with mixing bowls, ingredients and wooden spoons to make a Christmas Cake with expert advice and guidance. Prayers were said over each cake mixture and those who would be eating the cake were thought about.

Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of thy good works, may be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. – So reads the Collect for the Sunday next before Advent.

Advent Prayer Trees in Down Ampney and Poulton Church

During Advent, two special prayer trees were placed in Down Ampney and Poulton churches for people to place cards with prayer requests or for names of loved ones who have died who we hold in our hearts.

Cake

Our ladies group – CAKE – continues to meet each week on a Thursday exploring faith and life and being a group where friendship and support can be found.

Harnhill Christian Healing Centre

We value our relationship and friendship with the team at the Harnhill Christian Healing Centre. They warmly welcome members of our congregations for lunch on Fridays. They lead services of Compline at 9pm at Harnhill Church each Tuesday and Thursday; and a service
Youth Worker Annual Report for 2017 – The Ampneys

2017 was another year of considerable change within the SCT Youth and Children’s provision. Having previously lost our interns, there was a conscious plan to maximize the use of my time as the only paid employee. Thus, there was an active plan to cut back on some of the 1-1 support at Farmors School in order to free up time to lend greater support to the primary schools.

Primary Schools
I have concentrated on consolidating an established link with Fairford Primary, running a weekly lunchtime club for the y6’s in order to build relationships and journey with them as they approach the move to secondary school. In consultation with staff, I have tailored the sessions to include the relevant issues for pupils (e.g. ‘it’s ok to make mistakes’) as well as introducing bible themes and challenging pupils to consider these wider questions of faith, identity and meaning. Since autumn 2017 I have also started y6 lunchtime clubs at Kempsford and Ampney Crucis with a very good level of (optional) attendance and engagement (about 70%).

In addition I have taken Collective Worship around the team to support clergy and school with my main focus to date on Ampney Crucis, Bibury and a Kempsford Prayer Day. Again I was invited to all 9 primary schools to deliver a class assembly on transition for y6’s as well as giving out the Scripture Union booklet ‘It’s Your Move’.

Secondary School
I have continued to support pupils at Farmors via mentoring and well as 2 lunchtime clubs. Numbers and enthusiasm have been very positive this year and I am currently meeting with around 40 to 50 young people weekly between the clubs combined. One aim is to introduce some of the more interested pupils to external church activities and I was pleased that 4 girls attended the full day’s programme of the revamped Barn Service.

Other youth provision
We have built a genuine community of support through the Thirst (youth Bible study/discussion group) on a Wednesday evening 6.30pm-8pm in Quenington. The young people often tell us that they can really ‘be themselves’ and aren’t afraid to explore their faith and asking searching questions. This year our annual Barn Service was extended to a fuller programme (of games through the afternoon) followed by the traditional BBQ and service. Again we had good attendance and response to the day. Sadly our youth felt they couldn’t commit to a regular Sunday evening for our Snap services so we have incorporated within the Wednesday programme as a monthly special. The youth themselves are planning and leading and now feel confident enough to start inviting supporters with 17 attendees at our first in February.

Our Fairford Youth Club continues to draw young people from a far wider area than just the town (including Down Ampney). Leadership is currently stable and numbers settled at around 20. A real highlight was to take the older ones (about 10 of them), in conjunction with Thirst members, back to Macaroni Woods for a reflective weekend of friendship and considering spiritual issues where the youth asked our panel spiritually-related questions for 2 hours!

Kempsford Youth Club is at a time of transition with a current reassessment before new launch. I am participating in the process by advising, training and equipping volunteers and plan to be part of the club’s running where possible.

The Grid remains the only secondary school-aged discussion group across the SCT, ably led by Kate Cinnamond with support from volunteers and myself. Once again a highlight of the year was a trip to London to Re:boot, a day of high quality talks on apologetics to give our youth plenty to consider!
Summer events had two high points with a substantially expanded group of 12 attending Soul Survivor at the new venue of Stafford. With a mix of community living, lively worship, teaching and interesting seminars our spirits were rarely dampened despite a full week of rain! Plans are advancing for SS18 though there is a potential clash with Lechlade Holiday Club which both youth and leaders are keen to support.

Secondly a third mission trip to Romania last summer maintained the strong links with Cristi and his team. With two of our party suffering last minute illness and injury our combined team of 8 (half British, half Romanian) was really stretched in providing the teaching, craft and games for the holiday club we ran in the south of the country for the first time. However, God provided for our needs as attendees doubled from 50 to 100 through the week. Plans are moving swiftly towards a return in 2018 with dates confirmed (31 July- 5 August) and several new faces keen to participate.

We have seen children and young people grow in faith and confidence. Let us continue to pray for them and the many challenges they face, knowing we can point them to the One who can more than satisfy!

Chris Saunders