

**Parish of Harpenden
Parishioners Meeting and APCM**

Monday 20 May 2024
at
All Saints' Church at 8.00pm





**Agenda for Parishioner's Meeting followed by APCM
Monday 20 May 2024
All Saints Church, 7.45 for 8pm**

CONNECT, BELONG, SHARE, GROW

Our mission is to build connections, encourage belonging, and share an appealing faith that grows a vibrant Christian community at every stage of life.

We are an inclusive church, called to be caring, loving and welcoming to all.

8.00pm Meeting of Parishioners to elect Church Wardens

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Election of Church Wardens
Re-elect Kevin Featherstone and Tim Linacre

8.10pm Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of APCM held on 22 May 2023
3. Election of Representatives to the PCC to fill the following vacancies:
St Mary's: one vacancy
St Nicholas: five vacancies
All Saints: one vacancy
4. To receive:
 - (a) Annual Finance Report and
 - (b) To approve Brendan Philip Chambers as Independent Financial Examiner
5. To receive reports on:
 - (a) The Deanery Synod
 - (b) Parochial Church Council
 - (c) Fabric, Goods and Ornaments
 - (d) Electoral Roll
 - (e) Safeguarding
 - (f) Chalice Assistants
6. Any other matter of parochial or general church interest:
 - (a) Reports from District Churches on highlights of 2023
 - (b) Rector's remarks
 - (c) Open discussion/questions on any other matter of parochial or general interest

Notes:

1 Nominations for Church Warden, and PCC vacancies may be made on the evening.



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PARISHIONERS and
MINUTES of the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING for the PARISH OF
HARPENDEN held on MONDAY 22 MAY 2023 at 8pm at ALL SAINTS' CHURCH
and by ZOOM**

The meeting was opened with a reading and a prayer.

The Rector explained that those following the meetings on ZOOM were able to observe proceedings, but not vote. However, they were able to ask questions.

MINUTES of the MEETING OF PARISHIONERS to elect CHURCH WARDENS

Churchwardens elected:

- 1) **Kevin Featherstone** (St Mary's)
Proposed by Henry Loweth
Seconded by Katharine Pearse

No abstentions or against.

- 2) **Tim Linacre** (St Nicholas)
Proposed by Tim Hill
Seconded by Penny Turnbull

No abstentions or against.

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING for the PARISH of HARPENDEN

Chair:

The Rector

Present:

Grace Barnes, Jean McIntosh, Rosemary Farmer, Tim Linacre, Kevin Featherstone,
Heather Richards, Revd. James Brown, Revd. Sally Goodson, Tony Gilbert,
Pauline Gilbert, Peter Mellor, Helen Mellor, Judith Card, Elizabeth Card, Helen Barber,
Sarah John, Anne-Marie Kramer, Katharine Pearse, Linda Oakes, Brenda Marshall,
Kirsteen Say, Anne MacDougall, Julie Aldridge, Loretta Ramswell, Liz Nichols,
Patricia Yates, Ann Bisbrown-Lee, Marie Price, Jenny Clark, Jenny Goulding,
Nick Goulding

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Revd Cath da Costa, Fred Pointon, Janet Pointon, Chris Powell, Ian Troughton,
Angela Troughton, Piers McGrandle, George Richards, Agneta Burton, Tim Halstead,
Jackie Agg, Helen Stamps, Rachel Threlfall, Vicky Platt, Fiona Gaskell,
David Bisbrown-Lee

2. CONFIRMATION of the MINUTES OF APCM HELD ON 23RD MAY 2022

Confirmed and no matters arising.

3. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PCC

St Mary's: One vacancy for which no nomination was forthcoming.

St Nicholas: Three vacancies

1. **Jackie Agg** (standing for 2nd term)
Proposed by Claire Petevinos
Seconded by Lucy Parr
2. **Piers McGrandle**
Proposed by Kevin Featherstone
Seconded by Tim Linacre
3. Nomination pending.

All Saints: One vacancy.

1. **Tony Gilbert** (standing for 2nd term)
Proposed by Ben Fairhead
Seconded by Julie Aldridge

ALL ELECTED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE

4. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES to DEANERY SYNOD

6 Vacancies for which there were 5 nominations.

1. **Richard Hurst**
Proposed by Helen Champion
Seconded by Jenny Clark
2. **Ann Bisbrown-Lee**
Proposed by Patricia Yates
Seconded by Dorothy Hickson
3. **Ann Halstead**
Proposed by Giles Croot
Seconded by Marie Price
4. **Rosemary Farmer**
Proposed by Kevin Featherstone
Seconded by Judith Card
5. **Julie Aldridge**
Proposed by Elizabeth Nichols
Seconded by Loretta Ramswell

ALL ELECTED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE

5. TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL FINANCE REPORT

Presented by Tim Linacre, Head of Finance Committee

APCM report – Treasurer

Apologies for not being able to be here in person this evening.

The accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022 were circulated with the papers for this meeting.

We were expecting a difficult year in terms of our finances, and it was – but as a result of our DCCs and District churches working together with our finance team, we ended the year as well as could be expected – and importantly without compromising our mission as a parish. If you haven't already done so, may I encourage you to read pages 2-11 of our annual report, where we set out what we have achieved during the year.

Turning to our finances, our money is basically divided between 2 buckets – unrestricted and restricted funds.

1. Restricted funds are funds that can only be used for a specific purpose, either because the donor imposed a restriction or because we said we were raising money for a particular purpose. For example, money left in a legacy specifically for the upkeep of the organ at St Nicholas, or monies donated for specific charities we are supporting.
2. Unrestricted funds are divided again into designated and general funds. Designated funds have been set aside for a particular purpose – for example a legacy left for All Saints' Church where there is no specification as to how the money should be spent.

So that leaves the general unrestricted funds – the best way to think of this is that they represent our day-to-day income and expenditure. That is, what pays our service costs, heat and lighting, our Parish Share (including clergy stipends), our insurance and Parish Office costs etc. It is these general unrestricted funds that are in short supply – at the start of the year we only had £30k in this fund – hence the need for our Spring Appeal.

So, if we look at Page 13 and the Statement of Financial Activities, the day-to-day expenditure (or general unrestricted funds) is the first column, designated funds the second, and restricted funds the third.

In 2022 we made a small profit of just over £2,600 on general unrestricted funds – but a bit of context is needed here. We only made a surplus because we used some of our designated and restricted funds to cover certain expenditure and we deferred other expenditure to protect our day-to-day funds.

We made a net profit of designated funds of just over £33,000 and a loss on restricted funds of £8,000, giving a total increase in funds of £27,669.

For simplicity expenditure is rounded to the nearest £1,000 for the rest of this report.

General unrestricted funds

Focussing on our day-to-day income and expenditure first. The donations we received were £362k (up from £338k in 2021). Our donations come from our giving, both planned and non-planned, plus legacies. We were very fortunate to receive a number of smaller one-off donations towards the end of the year, perhaps in response to our Autumn update on our finances. In addition, with the numbers attending our Christmas services returning to near 2019 levels, our Christmas collection plate giving increased.

The income from the use of our church halls increased to £71k in 2022 (from £57k in 2021). It is great to see our church halls being used more again – making our facilities available to our local community is an important part of our church mission.

Overall, our general unrestricted income was £519k (up from £484k in 2021).

Turning to our expenditure, £516k was spent from general unrestricted funds to provide our Christian ministry from our three churches, an increase of £16k on the prior year. This increase was mainly as a result of increased energy prices.

Looking in more detail, expenditure on our clergy houses was up on the prior year while church upkeep was down. Both are really hard to predict/budget for, as it depends on what maintenance/repairs are required in the year. 2022 was a low repair year, the first 4 months of 2023 have not been.

Our contribution to the Diocesan Parish Share was £338k. The parish share is our contribution to the Diocese, to support the work of the Diocese. It is in two parts – firstly a stipend contribution and secondly a ministry support contribution. The amount that each parish in the diocese is asked to pay for the stipend contribution depends on the number of clergy in that parish. The ministry support contribution for each parish is calculated on a rather complex formula – broadly head count plus an 'ability to pay' share factor. Our Parish Share represents 65% of our expenditure.

Designated funds

Our designated funds income is broadly made up of legacies to our three District churches, donations from the Childwick Trust to St Nicholas Church plus the income from the St Nicholas Jubilee tea party.

Expenditure from designated funds includes the cost of the tea party and £800 donations to charity from the profits of the tea party. We also charged some expenditure during the year to designated funds, to protect our general unrestricted reserves (our day-to-day funds).

Restricted funds

Our restricted income and expenditure almost all relates to money collected/raised for other charities. This included donations for British Humanitarian Aid, Ukrainian families living in Harpenden, Jeel and the Bishops Harvest Appeal plus income from Cornelia's coffee shop. In total we donated £14,398 to charities in 2022 – the charities we support are selected annually by the PCC, with input from the Giving Committee and each District church.

We also spent some of our restricted funds on repairs and improvements to our buildings during the year.

Summary

To summarise, while our accounts show a small surplus for 2022, we still have a structural deficit:

- we know that several projects did not progress during 2022, either because we could not find people to provide quotes/start the work or because we did not have volunteers to manage the projects.
- we also know that in 2 out of 3 district churches we are expecting significant increases in energy costs in 2023.
- we have used our reserves in 2022, to protect our low unrestricted fund reserves.

The first four months of 2023 have not been full of good news:

- we have required a new boiler at Tuffnell's Way.
- at both St Mary's and All Saints repairs to the roof have been required.
- our energy costs are much higher than last year.

It will take some time for the impact of our Spring Giving Appeal to feed through – we will report back in the early Autumn on this. We can see green shoots appearing – we are grateful to those who have been able to increase their giving, energy costs starting to improve (although this will take some time to flow through to us as we are on fixed rate contracts), several events/concerts have been held to raise money for the parish. But we are not out of the woods by any means – 2023 will be another tough year.

Please continue, if you are able, to give through planned giving as this allows us to plan and budget effectively as a parish. We use the Parish Giving Scheme which makes it very easy for individuals to set up giving with payment by direct debit. It also makes reclaiming Gift Aid (where appropriate) very efficient.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the Finance Committee for their continued hard work and commitment – Caroline Martin, Claire Petevinos, Maggie Geraghty, Jenny Clark, Jonathan Sinfield, Lindsey Venner, Scott Barber and our chair, Tim Linacre.

The Report having been presented, questions were invited (including on ZOOM), but none were raised. The Rector thanked Jackie for an excellent Report and Tim for his delivery on Jackie's behalf. He encouraged everyone to read through the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements if they had not already done so. Printed copies were available in the Parish Office if required.

Proposed that we duly receive the Annual Finance Report – passed unanimously.

6. TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON:

- (a) The Deanery Synod**
- (b) Parochial Church Council**
- (c) Fabric, Goods and Ornaments**
- (d) Electoral Roll**
- (e) Safeguarding**
- (f) Chalice Assistants**

The reports were not read out as the opportunity had been given to read the reports ahead of the meeting. No questions were raised and the proposal to receive the Reports as a whole was passed unanimously.

7. ANY OTHER MATTERS OF PAROCHIAL OR GENERAL CHURCH INTEREST:

(a) Reports from District Churches on highlights of 2022

The reports distributed ahead of the meeting highlighted the extensive work and activities of our three churches.

No questions were raised on the reports.

James shared with the meeting news of surveys which pointed to a significant decline in the number of volunteers across the UK. Fortunately, not so in our parish and he was grateful for the strong and effective support of our many volunteers.

The Rector said that he found it a pleasure to read these reports which show the gifts and talents supporting our ministry and mission, serving both one another and the wider community.

Two additional Chalice Assistants were to be added to the list at St Nicholas' - Ian Troughton and Nigel Major: thanks to Heather Richards for raising this.

(b) Rector's remarks

The Rector expressed thanks to his clergy colleagues, Sally, James and Cath, for all their encouragement and support. He and the parish were indeed blessed to have such gifted and dedicated persons.

He thanked the Readers for their ministry and local leadership; the Pastoral Care teams; Sara and Pauline in the Parish Office; Kevin and Tim for all their work as Church Wardens, much of it 'behind the scenes'; all members of the PCC for their time and energy and role as Trustees; and a special thanks to Heather Richards who steps down from the PCC after 6 years (but continues in many other roles); all Treasurers and their teams who serve us so well; all volunteers for our online services. Many thanks also to our Music Director, Marie Price, who provides a resource to the whole parish – the Rector reminded everyone that all were welcome at Evensong services and of the joy of hearing the choir perform at Evensong.

Reflections on Moving Forward

While the future remains financially challenging, the state of the Parish is in very good order. All three churches continue to be active in ministry and mission, enabling us to serve God and the community to the best of our ability. Our numbers are improving, and it was encouraging to enjoy full attendances at our Easter services.

Post COVID we are returning to our normal events. Holy Communion is being conducted in a safe and appropriate manner. Through online worship/Facebook, we are able to communicate with a wider community. We have good support to manage the technical side of these services, but more volunteers with the appropriate skills will be required in the future.

On finances the issue of a structural deficit has caught up with us. We face the challenge to protect and grow our regular giving. My thanks to the PCC and all those who helped to launch the Spring Appeal. We will monitor the outcome over the Summer and will update parishioners in the Autumn. However, we do not anticipate any need for drastic decisions in 2023.

Finally, my thanks for the excellent work of each of our churches and DCCs for meeting the achievements and performance targets as set by the objectives listed on page 3 of the Trustees' Report.

Together, we pursue our mission and ministry with the help of a good and gracious God - to whom we grow closer through prayer and worship.

(c) Open discussion/questions

Jenny Goulding thanked the Rector for his leadership, ministry and faithful service. Endorsed by Kevin Featherstone and thanks extended to all members of the clergy.

Loretta Ramswell asked the Rector about our finances and whether we had a 'Plan B'.

In answer, the Rector said that towards the end of 2023 we will be looking at setting the 2024 budget and we would review our position at that time. Possible consequences were mentioned in the Appeal, but nothing was 'set in stone'. Tim Linacre referred to a few 'green shoots' as a result of the Appeal, but it was too soon to reach any conclusions. Planning, as always, will start well before a situation becomes critical, giving enough time to consider all our options.

The meeting closed at 9.02pm with a prayer and The Grace

2023 REPORTS

WHEATHAMPSTEAD DEANERY SYNOD 2023

Deanery Synod meets regularly throughout the year to discuss a variety of topics of relevance to the Deanery within the Diocese of St Albans.

During the year a discussion and presentation by each parish took place of things that had gone well at Christmas, a new thing which had been done and something which was challenging for each parish at this time. Presentations were made at meetings during the year by the Diocesan Net Zero Advisor on how the church can face and prepare for this challenge and by the Diocesan giving advisor. These are in addition to discussions of Deanery business and updates on work going on in the Diocese, Deanery and Parishes within the Deanery.

St Nicholas volunteered through their representatives to take part in an ongoing diocesan wide Listening exercise proposed by the Racial justice Action group. Our parish representatives ran a 'Listening exercise' with the Parents of Choristers in our St Nicholas Church choir. The aim of this was to explore promoting diversity and inclusion within our congregations.

There have also been deanery events arranged which include a Deanery Advent Day retreat held at St Marys, Deanery Evensong, and in May a Deanery Ascension day service will be held as usual, and a Deanery Prayer walk will take place at All Saints Church.

Ann Halstead April 2024

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2023

PCC OFFICERS

Kevin Featherstone and Tim Linacre were elected Parish Wardens

Sara Harvey was co-opted as PCC Secretary

Jackie Agg was appointed Parish Treasurer

Ro Marriott was appointed Electoral Roll Officer

Michelle McCulloch was co-opted as Parish Safeguarding Officer

Michael Swain was appointed Minute Secretary

APPOINTMENT OF PCC GOVERNORS AT ST NICHOLAS CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Henry Loweth

Charlotte McCrossin

Marie Price

GRAVE TRUSTS

Resolutions to release Grave Trusts at the Diocese approved, with funds to be used for upkeep of churchyard at St Nicholas'.

GIVING APPEAL

Positive response to the Giving Appeal with presentations by PCC members in all three churches.

MISSION

Church Weekend at Home at All Saints’ in the autumn was a very positive event. All three churches have reached out to local schools and other parts of the community and relationships were now flourishing. Reports on Children, Family and Youth Mission and St Nicholas’ Choir had been prepared by Revd Cath Rindl and Marie Price. Following on from a presentation at PCC, ongoing work resulting from that, continues to make progress. Anna Chaplaincy for older people role approved within the Parish, and support given for Hilary Pask to undertake the necessary training to become our Parish representative.

DISTRICT NEWS

Approval for Car Park licence agreement for allocated parking spaces for local firm of solicitors Perrin Myddleton at All Saints’ to raise funds.

Archdeacon’s letter received for works to Rothamsted window and Garden of Remembrance at St Nicholas’.
Quinquennial inspection undertaken at St Mary’s.

MEETING DATES – 2024/25

| Standing Committee | PCC meetings |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 3 June 2024 | 17 June 2024 - St Mary’s |
| 9 September 2024 | 23 September 2024 - St Nicholas’ |
| 11 November 2024 | 25 November 2024 - All Saints |
| 6 January 2025 | 20 January 2025 - St Mary’s |
| 3 March 2025 | 17 March 2025 - St Nicholas’ |
| 7 April 2025 | 28 April 2025 - St Mary’s |
| APCM: | 19 May 2025 - All Saints |

Sara Harvey, PCC Secretary

REPORT OF THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCHES OF THE PARISH

(under Section 5 of the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991)

In August and September, we had the Archdeacon's Inspection for all three churches. The report was very complimentary.

All Saints' Church

- A parking scheme was established in association with Perrin Myddelton, a local firm of solicitors.
- Action has been taken to replace several cracked paving slabs at the front of the church.
- Some work has also been done to fill in the worst of various potholes in the near car park.
- We have identified the need to replace a total of 15 small, single-glazed windows in the church as well as other parts of the building. A Faculty will be sought, and a contractor has been identified.
- We have also identified a number of parts of the building requiring closer examination to establish whether or not there are any damp issues that need to be addressed. The locations in question are above the toilet by the church entrance, the windows near the hall stage, the ceiling tiles above the stage, the flat roof and the kitchen. A Faculty will be sought as and when required.
- In addition, we have established the need to install a small ramp to facilitate unimpeded step-free access to the fire exit in the worship area. A Faculty will be obtained shortly.
- A brand-new sign has been erected close to the road to publicise church services, activities and contact details.
- The heating system has attracted further attention, and we have a list of contractors to approach with a view to putting together a series of options to find a more radical, longer-term solution.
- We have undertaken a number of activities as part of our Land Management Plan in pursuit of the ECO Church Silver Award, which has been achieved. These include the building of a 'bug hotel' and the creation of a 'dead hedge'.
- Approval has been given for the redecoration of the former choir vestry in order to create more comfortable accommodation for volunteers and clients of the Harpenden Money Advice Centre. HMAC propose to carry out this work themselves.

St Mary's Church

- A French drain was installed to alleviate a damp issue.
- Repairs were made to the Hall roof and the Vestry window.
- A bicycle rack was installed outside the Church.
- A toilet was replaced.
- The camera inside the Church was fitted permanently.
- The blinds in the Hall were replaced along with a new curtain rack.
- A new sign and camera were placed in the carpark.
- A Silver Eco award plaque was mounted.

St Nicholas' Church

- After a freak hailstorm in May, we had a significant leak into the church. The hail stones had blocked the North roof gutters which then overflowed into the nave, causing large puddles in the church but thankfully missing the Video Desk, piano and all electrics. The gutters had been recently cleaned which prevented a worse problem.
- A wave of water also came down Kirkwick Avenue and under the bell tower door ruining the carpet which was replaced.

- The perennial problems of moss and pigeons, together with climate change making rainfall heavier are a problem for the North Aisle roof and long gully. We have taken advice and will in early 2024 remove all the moss from the roofs and treat them so the moss shouldn't grow for a few years. This seems to have been successful to date; (it was tested on Maundy Thursday 2024 and held). Our valuable video/sound system and grand piano are close to where the gutter normally leaks, so longer term prevention, is important.
- Brickwork repairs in the bell tower and around the office entrance were completed.
- The lighting in the Hall was replaced to more efficient bulbs.

Kevin Featherstone and Tim Linacre Parish Wardens

PARISH OF HARPENDEN ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT FOR APCM 20 MAY 2024

Parish of Harpenden Electoral Roll

Report for APCM 20th May 2024

Our total for 2024 is 601, up by 5 from 596 in 2023 - 17 additions and 12 who have come off the roll since the last revision in April 2023. The 17 additions are 11 St Nicholas', 5 All Saints' and 1 for St Mary's.

The details are as follows:

| | St Nicholas' | St Mary's | All Saints | Total |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| Total 2023 | 392 (+3) | 111 (-1) | 98 (+3) | 601 (+5) |

The table below shows the changes to the Electoral Roll over the last five years, since the last revision.

| Church | April 2024 | April 2023 | April 2022 | April 2021 | Oct 2020 | April 2019 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| All Saints' | 98 | 95 | 75 | 77 | 79 | 77 |
| St Mary's | 111 | 112 | 114 | 117 | 117 | 118 |
| St Nicholas' | 392 | 389 | 388 | 399 | 393 | 389 |
| Total | 601 | 596 | 577 | 593 | 589 | 584 |

I would like to thank my fellow Electoral Role Officers, Loretta Ramswell and Kate Nesbitt for ably assisting me in my duties. Also, I'd like to thank Sara and Pauline in the Parish Office for additional checks and emails throughout the year.

Full copies of the roll are available for viewing, on request, please contact your ER representative or the Parish Office if you need to access a copy.

I would ask the APCM to approve the revised Electoral Roll for 2024.

Note – next year, 2025, is a full revision year.

Ro Marriott Parish Electoral Roll Officer

SAFEGUARDING

The parish has many volunteers working in various roles across the parish, all of whom provide valuable support and service in the busy life of the parish.

The PCC has adopted the Promoting a Safer Church Policy Statement of the Church of England. The Policy Statement promotes a safer safeguarding environment and culture. The parish pays due regard to the House of Bishops guidance in relation to safeguarding.

In practice, the parish follows Safer Recruitment guidance (including carrying out DBS checks) where relevant to parish roles and has in place relevant risk assessments and Best Practice Guidelines for working with Young People and Vulnerable Adults, as provided by the Diocese. The parish has committed to respond appropriately and proportionately, in accordance with the Policy Statement and guidance, to any safeguarding allegations and to work closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and / or relevant statutory agencies when necessary.

The Policy Statement is reviewed regularly and promoted in our churches (look for the blue posters and guidelines which provide relevant contact details. Please take time to read them).

The Church of England runs an online Safeguarding training programme for parish volunteers. Safeguarding officers undertake additional training. Training is compulsory for many parish volunteer roles. Our volunteers at church have been asked to complete training where they are obliged to do so. This includes PCC members. The parish safeguarding team respectfully requests that all relevant volunteers complete training as soon as possible when asked to do so.

Thank you to all our volunteers who offer their time and skills in support of our parish community and help us in our Diocesan and parish commitment to safeguard all God's people.

Michelle McCulloch Parish Safeguarding Officer April 2024



CHALICE ASSISTANTS FOR THE PARISH OF HARPENDEN TO BE APPROVED

| All Saints' | St Mary's | St Nicholas' |
|--|---|---|
| Judith Card Elizabeth Card Ben Fairhead Derek Hotchkiss Elizabeth Lovell Helen Manuel Roy Mutlow Liz Nichols Harriet Parks Goetz Richter Peter Timms Rita Venus | Helen Champion Jacqueline Clayton Jean Dill Nina Featherstone Kevin Featherstone Louise Fraser Brenda Gilbert Olive Hayward Dilys Hemmin Jill Horn Jenny Jones Maureen Lamburn Rosemary Marriott Hilary Pask Fred Pointon Lynn Whitwam | Andrea Stranders Anne-Marie Kramer Chris Powell Geoff Payne Georgie Love Gordon McCulloch Gus Scrace Helen Stamps Hilary Hunter Jackie Murray Jane Johnson Kirstine Henriksen Lucy Parr Maggie Geraghty Michelle McCulloch (Reserve) Nigel Major Rachael de los Reyes-Churchill Richard Randall Rob Fielder Roger Monson Rosemary McNamara Shelagh Collingwood Sue Hoblely Sue Inglis Suzanne Rose Tim Halstead Tim Linacre Zoe Pulver |

DISTRICT WARDENS REPORTS

St Nicholas'

The clergy team have continued to be amazing, providing well considered leadership, worship and an outstanding level of care and support to our congregation. We are incredibly grateful to them for their endless patience, thoughtfulness and commitment in developing the congregation with their good humoured and well targeted teachings, and their encouragement to build connections with our surrounding community.

A newcomers' tea was hosted in the hall in February. Following this a Quiz evening in March was very successful, raising £760 shared between the parish and The Samaritans Luton Branch.

Easter 2023 services were well attended, and the Easter Garden once again saw the installation of the large cross. The small crosses for decoration proved to be very popular and provided an eye-catching display for those walking by, helping to engage people and spread the message of Easter. On Easter Saturday Cath organised an Eggsperience, a fun morning of children's craft, games and Easter Garden making, which was very much enjoyed by those who attended.

We were delighted to be able to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III in May 2023. The coronation liturgy was used on the Sunday, and this was followed by a Tea Party; a great community spirited event to mark the crowning of the King and a good opportunity to build meaningful connections with our community. £1,500 was raised, shared equally between Toilet Twinning, St Albans & Hertsmere Women's Refuge & the parish.

Cath da Costa was priested on 30 June at St Mary's, Hitchin and presided at her first Holy Communion service on 2 July. Later in July we all had a wonderful day when Cath and Tony married at St Nicholas; an extremely joyous event well attended by family and congregations from both churches.

Morning Praise hosted a very enjoyable Harvest Festival picnic for the whole church in October. A musical event with Ukrainian musicians was held in October, with £1,300 raised from donations going to Ukrainian charities. We were privileged to host such talented musicians.

The traditional Christmas Fayre was held in December, with choirs from St Hilda's and The Academy schools, members of Harpenden Concert Band and our church choir all performing. Thanks to all the stall holders, just over £2,500 was raised, split £850 to each of Vineyard (including the Foodbank), Médecins Sans Frontières and the parish.

Members of Harpenden Concert Band played carols on the Cornelia's lawn each Saturday morning during Advent. Soup and Carols continued to be a festive treat for those who attended; over 300 people attended the Christingle service; more people attended Nine Lessons and Carols than in the prior year; nearly 700 joined us at both crib services; and Midnight Mass & Christmas Day services were very well attended.

The church was dusted and hoovered in Lent and pre-Advent by a very enthusiastic team of volunteers. Teamwork Spring and Advent cleans seem to be a good format going forward.

Cornelia's Café continues to provide an excellent environment for parishioners to meet and to welcome newcomers to the church. The café continues to open three mornings a week, and once a week on Wednesday afternoons. The Cornelia's committee was very pleased to approve donations totalling £7,000 during the year.

The community continued to demonstrate their compassion for those in need by the continuation of the 6 monthly collection of second-hand goods for British Humanitarian Aid. BHA has been helping the community

of Chernihiv, Ukraine for over 20 years and the Harpenden community has been contributing almost since the beginning.

We continue to ensure that the church building and surrounding grounds are properly maintained.

Heavy rain continues to cause leaks in the North Aisle Roof, we have taken advice and in early 2024 will remove all the moss from the roofs and treat them so the moss should not grow for a few years. We will keep reviewing the gutter and cleaning it at least once a year.

The lighting in the hall was replaced to more efficient bulbs.

Our church continues to provide fellowship, uniting us in shared worship and a compelling range of activities centred around our love of God and our support for each other. Our church choir, led by Marie Price, continues to go from strength to strength, providing beautiful music to enrich our worship. None of this could happen without the dedication of so many people working as a team, so we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who works so hard to support our activities, to enable St Nicholas to fulfil its mission. Full details can be found in the St Nicholas ADCM Report

Vicky Platt and Rachael Threlfall

District Wardens

April 2024

All Saints'

2023 saw modest but encouraging increases in the numbers of those on the Electoral Roll as well as those fitting the wider definition of All Saints' 'worshipping community', which broadly comprises those who tend to come to Services around once a month or so. Such signs of growth can also be seen in attendance levels at various Services, including special Services at Christmas and Easter.

While many of our activities at such times of year are longstanding, new opportunities for worship are also establishing themselves. 'Beer and carols', for example, took place for the first time at the Marquis of Granby, where there was standing room only. Some even take place outdoors, such as the increasingly popular Fire Pit Carols, which include toasting marshmallows; and Prayer Walks through nearby Batford Springs Nature Reserve, which this year took place not only during Lent, but also Summer and Autumn. Other weekday activities such as Busy Bunnies and Tea Cake and Chat have also re-established themselves this year. In addition, we have taken some activities out into the community, including Willow Court Residential Care Home and Lea Springs Independent Living Centre, whose residents appreciate the opportunity to sing some of their favourite hymns and songs and chat afterwards with their visitors.

The past year has also seen a number of social activities (one of our Mission Action Planning MAP goals). Some, such as Maundy Thursday Supper, Harvest Festival, All Saints' Day Lunch and the annual Quiz, have become regular features of the calendar. Others, notably celebration of the King's Coronation, were one-off events. Special mention, however, should be made of the 'Church Weekend at Home', which comprised a variety of different activities, including study sessions around a particular theme, as well as a treasure trail and a barn dance, for example. We were glad that many people were able to come along to at least some of them and would like to organise an event along similar lines (either home or away) every couple of years.

Our church building continues to provide a valuable resource for the community, and we are pleased to be able to offer a meeting place to a wide range of local charities and community groups. Hall usage continues to grow, while the number of available slots on the calendar reduces. Particular mention should be made of the Harpenden Child Contact Centre and the Harpenden Money Advice Centre ('HCCC' and 'HMAC')

respectively), both of which were founded at All Saints' well over a decade ago and continue to flourish, thanks to the dedication of strong groups of volunteers.

As well as maximising use of the hall, an unexpected opportunity arose during the year to generate a regular income from our car park. This stemmed from an enquiry by a local firm of solicitors, who were willing to pay for some of their staff to park during the daytime on weekdays. A six-month trial proved successful, and we are now about to finalise a longer-term agreement.

Looking after the church grounds is also important and reflected in another of our ('MAP') goals. Work has been undertaken during the year to develop an overall Land Management Plan. This has a number of facets and has involved various activities, ranging from creating a 'bug hotel' to laying a 'dead hedge' along one edge of the church site, both of which are attractive to wildlife. All of this has been done as part of our efforts to achieve the ECO Church Silver Award, which we have since received. Hosting a 'Repair Fayre' to refurbish and re-use broken electrical items is another initiative we have taken recently to demonstrate All Saints' commitment to caring for our environment.

As always, there have been various repairs and maintenance tasks to carry out over the year to our building and grounds, most of which have been fairly modest. However, the potential for significant expenditure remains, notably to replace some single-glazed windows, and in relation to the roof, where several areas are likely to require closer investigation over the course of the summer, to see if there are any problems demanding attention. Similarly, we can anticipate the possibility of incurring major expense on our antiquated heating system and/or our potholed car park, at some point in the not-too-distant future.

Our thanks go to all our many members whose quiet, and often low-profile, efforts of many different kinds help to make all of the above possible.

Ben Fairhead and Tony Gilbert

District Wardens

May 2024

St Mary's

2023 has once again been a busy year for this very special church community. When people come here, they feel the warm welcome, the kindness and friendship, and the hospitality we offer.

Our Mission, as a parish, is to build connections, encourage belonging and share an appealing faith that grows a vibrant Christian community at every stage of life. We are an inclusive church called to be caring, loving and welcoming to all.

The core message of our Mission Action Plan is that we have four services in one church: Sunday at 9.30am, Simply Worship on Sundays at 4.30pm, Tuesday at 10am and Sunday communion service at 11am. We recognise each as an important part of a whole. As always, these services are enthusiastically led by Sally, Nick, Jenny, Hilary, Nina and Richard. Our Tuesday 10 am congregation is thriving and Simply Worship and Sunday morning numbers are stable. Of note, attendance at our Easter and Christmas services was back to pre-Covid numbers.

It is great to be able to report that social events have resumed to full strength this year. These include our Tuesday Afternoon Group - an important outreach to members of our community and our Little Lunch club - new chefs and drivers were welcomed to ensure a sufficient team of helpers is available each month. In addition, we had a quiz in March and bring and share lunch in September. We also hosted quiet days for the Deanery and our Mothers Union.

Our outreach activities have continued including our much-appreciated visits to Homedell House for our monthly service of communion and our 3 Songs of Praise services followed by tea. In addition, we continue to support the local food bank and held a very successful annual fete with our scouting partners.

In August we had a successful Archdeacon's Inspection and Quinquennial Review.

St Marys Eco Church project has continued as a major focus of our Mission Action Plan. We gained our Silver award in June 2023. We have continued our efforts in recycling, litter picking, and use of Eco-friendly cleaning products where possible. We focussed on developing a wildflower meadow and a bug church in the summer and carried our surveys of birds and wildflowers.

Our Christmas Choir, under the leadership of Jenny Goulding, gave us a really lovely Carol service. In addition, we led a mini-Christmas service for the nursery, which was also well attended. We held a new Simply Nativity service in December and moved our Christingle service into January. It was good to welcome Cubs from the 9th Harpenden scout group to church on 2 evenings close to Harvest, and Year 2 from Wood End school who came to visit during Advent, to learn more about Christmas.

We must make a special mention of Lindsey Venner who has just stepped down as our Treasurer, a role that she has held for 14 years. We thank Lindsey for her outstanding service in this role. We will miss her careful accounting, practical solutions and sensitive handling of all things financial. We wish Lindsey well for her relocation to Dorset and we are lucky to be able to welcome Clare Lovegrove who has agreed to take on this role.

Our wonderful building requires considerable care and maintenance, and we are so lucky to have many people (too many to name) who volunteer tirelessly to carry out work and roles both inside and outside the church. We acknowledge wholeheartedly the work they do. Thank you to you all.

Lynn Whitwam and Jacqueline Clayton

District Wardens

April 2024