

'To know God and share the wonder of His love'

St Gregory's Church Seaton

Annual Reports & Accounts

SEATON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
Registered Charity No: 1127403

for the year ending 31st December 2023



Coastal Benefice of Seaton & Beer

Vicar: Rev'd Justin Montague

The Church Office, Colyford Road, Seaton, Devon, EX12 2DF
(01297) 23656

SEATON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Administrative information

St Gregory's Church is situated off the Colyford Road, Seaton. It is part of The Coastal Mission Community with the parish of Beer, in the Diocese of Exeter within the Church of England. Correspondence may be addressed to The Church Office, The Church Centre, Colyford Road, Seaton, EX12 2DF. Telephone 01297 23656; email seatonchurch@hotmail.co.uk

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission: The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Gregory's Seaton - Reg Charity No: 1127403.

Background

Seaton Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church and the Church Centre. Responsibility for the maintenance of the churchyard has devolved upon East Devon District Council.

Governance

Members of the PCC are either ex officio, elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules, or co-opted by the PCC. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

During the year, the following served as members of the PCC:

Incumbent and Chairman	Revd. Justin Montague
Associate Priest	Revd. Alison Finch (till September 2023)
Local Pioneer Minister	Revd. Shuna George (from September 2023)
Churchwarden	1. Mr David Bruce (till April 2023) 2. Mr David House 3. Mr David Dickinson (from April 2023)
Deanery Synod Representatives	Mr Paul Barns
PCC Treasurer	Mrs Sharon Bruce (duties supported by Parish Finance Officer & PCC Finance Committee)
Secretary	Mrs Judi Brewer (non-member)

Other PCC Members

Mr David Bruce

Mr Peter Burrows

Mrs Ann Roberts

Mrs Mary Casey

Mr Michael Tabeart

Mr Bruce Roberts

(The PCC is allowed up to 12 elected members, including those holding other offices, such as Treasurer)

Assistant Clergy

The parish benefits from having the services of the Revd. Chris Thacker (retired), as well as support from other retired clergy for services and occasional offices, including the Revd. Barry Brewer, Revd. Karen Curnock, Revd. Nigel Freathy, Revd. Geoffrey Walsh and Revd Mary Harding.

The parish also benefits from the service of Mrs Sue Price, Reader Emeritus (from Aug 2023)

Church Activity Groups

A number of organisations and volunteer teams operate within the church family, including:

3-2-1 for Jesus

Anna Chaplaincy

Axe Valley Christians Against Poverty

Bell Ringers

Choir

Church Cleaners

Church Flower Arrangers

Discussion Groups (Lent onwards)

FREEdom Cafe

Friends of St Gregory's

Greg's Music Makers

Hand bell Ringers

Hospitality Team

Julian Group

'Knit & Natter'

Mothers' Union Group

Music Group

Table Tennis Club

We also have contact with a number of outside organisations through members of our church family, including:

Christian Aid

Christians Together in Seaton

Messy Church

Seaton Foodbank

Committees

The PCC meets in alternate months, six times a year. For certain aspects of the council's business, there are sub-committees which meet when necessary to formulate recommendations that are brought to the full PCC. All other matters are dealt with directly by the PCC.

Finance Sub-Committee - oversees the financial management of St Gregory's Church and encourages good financial stewardship. It comprises the Vicar, the Treasurer, Church Administrator, and three other members of the PCC and one other member of the Electoral Roll.

Fabric Sub-Committee -A Quinquennial Inspection report was received in November 2022. This related to the church and churchyard. Responsibility for maintenance and development of the church lies with the PCC. Responsibility for maintenance of the churchyard lies with East Devon District Council. Works arising from the QI report have been categorized according to the various permissions required to address them.

Health and Safety Sub-Committee - A health and safety policy is in place and regularly updated. Health and Safety has an agenda item at each PCC meeting. The committee is a minimum of the Health and Safety Officer and the Church Warden(s).

Friends of St Gregory's Sub-Committee (FOSG)

The mission of FOSG is to ensure the continued existence of the St Gregory's Grade 1 listed Church building as a feature of Seaton for the benefit of the whole community. It also provides financial support for the upkeep of the building to ensure the advancement of the Christian religion. 5 members are appointed annually under the auspices of the PCC.

Pastoral Team - undertakes to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is offered to members of the congregation and wider community. We provide home communion services and visits to individuals and local residential/nursing homes. The Pastoral Team primarily consists of the clergy, Lay Minister, Anna Chaplains and other associated laity.

Other working parties or sub-committees are set up for particular projects as and when necessary.

Safeguarding - The PCC places a high priority on its responsibilities towards children and vulnerable adults. It ensures that all those working with these groups undergo appropriate checks. Safeguarding has an agenda item at each PCC meeting. All volunteers, clergy and staff are required to complete Church specific Safeguarding Training appropriate to their role without exception, as per guidelines by the Diocese of Exeter Safeguarding Team. The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Church membership

The church electoral roll as reported at the 2022 Annual Parochial Church meeting (held in April 2023) stood at 79. A full range of services were held in 2023, with average attendances as follows: 8am BCP Eucharist (10), 11am Eucharist (58), 11am Morning Worship (54), 6.30pm BCP Evensong (17). In addition we hosted three United Benefice Eucharists (75), celebrated Easter Day (93), welcomed the town community for Remembrance (131), and during Advent and Christmas held an Advent Carols Service (64), a service of 9 Lessons & Carols (104) and a Christingle (161).

Review of the Year

February Meeting: thanks were expressed to the Rev Simon Hitchcock who had stepped down as a licensed member of the Mission Community. Thanks were also expressed to Stephen Page who had stepped down from the PCC and Finance Committee. Matters discussed:- purchasing a defibrillator, progress of the Anna Chaplaincy, Quinquennial inspections carried out, offer from Diocese for a Mission Community health check.

March meeting: the MC Health Check survey was announced to lead into a meeting with Diocesan facilitators, followed by a Vision day for both PCCs in June. Plans were made to have a simple presentation at the APCM about our financial situation to encourage more realistic giving. Contactless Giving Machine to be permanent. A Green Team was looking at ways to realise Net Zero. Plans being made for Coronation W/E, Mission Bus outreach, Flower Festival in May.

May meeting: Plans were discussed regarding obtaining a Defibrillator to be placed outside the Church centre; David Dickinson attended a Diocesan Safety Course; PCC were reminded of importance of undertaking Safeguarding training; Anna Chaplains taking HC to several Homes and first Anna's Place held in Beer; successful Flower Festival held.

July meeting: it was announced that Helen Knight had been appointed as the new Administrator and Helen Moulding the Finance Officer. The new MC website would soon be up and running, thanks especially to Kirstine House. Following the Vision Day the three areas earmarked for attention were Communication, Children & Families and Discipleship. Rev Ali Finch gave notice of her resignation as Associate Priest, although with a PTO she would continue to support Justin and continue her Anna chaplaincy work.

October meeting: a legacy payment was received towards the defibrillator costs. Sue Price retired from her LLM role and thanks were expressed (with a gift) at a special service. Sermons on stewardship were planned. Concerts arranged by David and Kirstine House raised £726 this year for church funds.

Rev Shuna George appointed as a Pioneer minister with special interest in outreach, children and families and would be introduced at a United Service.

November meeting: Discussions held with FoSG to clarify handling of their fundraising and agreed the money raised would cover this year's insurance. Budget for 2024 presented and hopes to pay greater percentage of Common Fund payments. After recent Stewardship Campaign regular planned giving had increased to £22,000. Sue Craker appointed as new MC Safeguarding Officer. Diocesan heating advisors visiting. Energy audits received. FoSG are planning a Nativity Crib Festival. Greg's Music Makers are planning their own Christingle followed by soup and rolls.

Charity Commission

The PCC has been registered as a charity with the Charity Commission since 07 January 2009. The Charity Trustees for 2023 were:

Mr David Bruce (wef 2023)

Mrs Sharon Bruce (wef 2023)

Revd Alison Finch (till September 2023) (Ex Officio)

Revd Shuna George Pritchard (from September 2023) (Ex Officio)

Mr David Dickinson (Ex Officio)
Mr David House (Ex Officio)
Mr Michael Tabeart (wet 2023)
Mr Ann Roberts (D. Synod)
Mr Bruce Roberts (D. Synod)
Mr Peter Burrows (wet 2021)
Mrs Mary Casey (wet 2022)
Mr Paul Barns (wet 2022)

Financial Review

The PCC determined to pay its Common Fund request in part for 2023 (70%) when it set the budget in 2022. The PCC were able to fulfil this.

Reserves policy

It is the policy of the PCC to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds (if possible), which equates to approximately three months' unrestricted payments, to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time. In general, it is our policy to invest our funds balances with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund.

Public Benefit

The Trustees consider they have complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 and have paid due regard to the guidance published by the Charities Commission with regard to the_ public benefit which the charity provides throughout Britain. Our aims make it clear that the church is to be actively involved in the community in which it is situated. We provide a place of worship that is open for all to attend and clearly advertise our weekly worship services. We understand that to be an effective Christian witness our existence is not only for the benefit of the church attendees, but for the community as a whole.

We look forward to 2024 in faith and hope.

Signed:



Revd Justin Montague
Priest-in-Charge

SEATON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REPORTS

YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

Seaton Parochial Church Council
Receipts and Payments account
For the year ended 31st December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Fund	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Incoming Resources					
Voluntary Income					
Planned Giving	18,560		675	19,235	18,554
Collections, donations & other giving	15,178		9,830	25,008	18,470
Income Tax Recovered	4,899			4,899	5,278
Legacies	2,000			2,000	2,003
Activities for generating funds					
Magazine/Bookstall sales/Hall lettings	4,566			4,566	4,395
Income from Other Properties	843			843	835
Annual fete/events	1,967		1,756	3,723	1,582
Investment Income					
Dividends & Interest	4,247			4,247	4,739
Income from charitable activities					
Parochial Fees	5,176			5,176	7,725
Other Incoming resources					
Insurance claims	0			0	0
Gain on disposal of fixed asset	0			0	0
Loans received in year	0			0	0
Other	389		-12	377	3,253
Total Incoming resources	57,825	0	12,249	70,074	66,834
Resources Expended					
Church Activities					
Donations/Grants to charities	740		5,860	6,600	3,088
Mission & Evangelism	1,116		717	1,833	1,359
Parish Share	33,432			33,432	28,571
Clergy expenses	883			883	433
Church running expenses	4,948			4,948	6,600
Churchyard maintenance	0			0	0
Cost of raising funds	3,176		57	3,233	2,850
Support Costs	272		980	1,252	613
Administration costs	16,108		8,801	24,909	24,713
Accountancy fees	125			125	161
Other	3,565			3,565	4,864
Governance Costs	180		2,586	2,766	0
Major Expenditure					
Repairs to church buildings	0			0	0
Repairs to other property	0			0	0
Parochial Fees remitted	0			0	0
Total resources expended	64,545	0	19,001	83,546	73,252
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	(6,720)	0	(6,752)	(13,472)	(6,418)
Gain/(Loss) on Investment Assets			2,876	2,876	(9,262)
Loans repaid in Year	0			0	0
Transfer Between Funds	(113)	0	113	0	0
Balance due to DBF	(659)			(659)	(1,162)
Net Movements in funds	(7,492)	0	(3,763)	(11,255)	(16,842)
Accumulated funds at the start of the year	33,416	0	123,348	156,764	173,606
Accumulated funds at the end of the year	£25,924	£0	119,585	£145,509	£156,764

Seaton Parochial Church Council
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
As at 31st December 2023

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Investment Assets				
CBF Income Units	0	46,727	46,727	42,676
M&G Charifund Units	0	48,798	48,798	<u>49,972</u>
	<u>0</u>	<u>95,525</u>	<u>95,525</u>	<u>92,648</u>
Monetary Assets				
Lloyds Current Account	18,859	2,896	21,755	23,118
CAF Bank Current Account	7,065	17,428	24,493	33,821
CAF Bank Deposit Account	0	0	0	0
CBF Deposit May Smith	0	0	0	0
CBF Deposit Graves Fund	0	0	0	0
Shawbrook Savings Account	0	0	0	0
Friends of St Gregorys Church	0	3,736	3,736	<u>7,177</u>
	<u>25,924</u>	<u>24,060</u>	<u>49,984</u>	<u>64,116</u>
Accumulated funds at the end of the year			<u><u>145,509</u></u>	
Other Assets				
Gift Aid Claim	1,734		1,734	0
Beer PCC - Various	1,921		1,921	653
Invoices Outstanding	0		0	0
Liabilities				
Parochial Fees - EDBF	1,569		1,569	1,389
Parochial Fees - Beer PCC	807		807	914
Governance,	125		125	125
Gift Aid Refund to Friends of St Greg	0		0	71
Exeter Sans/Children's Society	0		0	128
Contingent Liabilities				
Donations to Charities	740		740	0
Parish Share	46,772		46,772	47,775

These accounts were approved by the Seaton Parochial Church Council on 3rd April 2024 and were signed on their behalf by :



Signature

03-04-2024

Seaton Parochial Church Council
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 December 2023

1. Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2008, together with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP 2005.

(b) Income

The accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.

2. Fixed Assets

No value is ascribed to the following:-

The Church of St Gregory and its contents
The Churchyard
The Vicarage
The Church Hall and contents

The reasons for this are as follows:-

The Church and Churchyard are "consecrated" property and the vicarage is a benefice property. These properties are regarded as "inalienable" and are excluded from PCC accounts in compliance with the Charities Act 2011.

The contents of the Church are also to be treated as inalienable assets, in accordance with the CGB guidance (para 5.4) and are also excluded.

The Church Hall is a leasehold property and is legally vested in the Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance Limited as Custodian Trustee. The lease is for a term of 1000 years running from 1826 and its terms would be breached if the use of the hall for Sunday school purposes were to cease. Although the hall is not consecrated property, it is a dedicated building, and so bound up with the worship, mission and ministry of the Church, that it is unthinkable that the Church could operate without it. It is therefore appropriate and legitimate to treat it for accounting purposes as an inalienable asset in the same way as consecrated property.

The values of the contents of the Hall are regarded as insufficiently material to include in the accounts.

3. Funds

Unrestricted Funds may be used by the PCC for any of its ordinary purposes. The movement in the funds are shown in the Receipts and Payments account.

Designated funds represent sums set aside, out of ordinary unrestricted funds, for specific designated purposes, but they can be transferred back into general funds at any time.

Restricted funds are those funds which must be spent on restricted purposes for which they were given. In this Financial Statement any Expendable Endowments are included in this category.

Also within the restricted funds is £2,384 which belongs to AVCAP and is solely for their use.

Seaton Parochial Church Council
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 December 2023 (continued)

The CBF Deposit May Smith Account, CBF Income Units and M&G Charifund units, for the residue of a bequest by May Smith in 1983. Any interest or dividends from these investments are unrestricted, the capital proceeds are designated as Expendable Endowments with use restricted "for the maintenance and upkeep and benefit in general of the Church and associated buildings and land"

The Graves Trust is held in one CBF deposit account and is designated as an Expendable Endowment, the interest being retained within the account. Its use is "for the upkeep of the Church generally" although the main aim is the upkeep of five specific graves.

Quoted investments are valued at bid prices at 31 December 2023.

4. Employees

In 2023 the PCC employed five persons part-time throughout the year - a Church Administrator, Finance Officer, a hall cleaner, an organist/ a choir master and an AVCAP administrator. The total remuneration of all employees in 2023 was £15,724.

5. Separate funds held by church organisations

	Opening Balance	Receipts	Payments		Closing Balance	
			to Pee	to Other	2023	2022
					£	£
Church Flower Arranging	21.69	115.00	0.00	103.35	33.34	21.69
The Table Tennis Club	3.57	443.52	0.00	99.46	347.63	3.57
Handbell Ringers	279.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	279.38	279.38
Coffee Team	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Julian Group	0.00	52.00	0.00	52.00	0.00	0.00
Total funds not incorporated in the PCC accounts					660.35	304.64

6. Separate funds not included in Receipts and Payments account

	Opening Balance	Receipts	Payments		Closing Balance	
			to Pee	to Other	2023	2022
FREEdom Cafe	265.27	1,464.11	0 00	1,206.55	522.83	265.27

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO SEATON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
ST GREGORY'S CHURCH, SEATON - REG. CHARITY NO: 1127403**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charities Commissioners under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



WAYNE COOK FMAAT, CIMA Adv Dip MA, AATQB
Wayne's World of Accountancy
14 Mead Way
Seaton, Devon, EX12 2NR

DATED 13th Mar 2024

‘To know God and share the wonder of His love’

St Gregory’s Church, Seaton

Group Reports

SEATON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Registered Charity No: 1127403

for the year ending 31st December 2023



Coastal Benefice of Seaton & Beer

Vicar: Rev Justin Montague

The Church Office, The Church Centre, Colyford Road, Seaton, Devon, EX12 2DF

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INCUMBENT'S REPORT - 2023

Report from the Reverend Justin Montague, Priest-in-Charge

The Annual General Meeting (APCM) is a time for us all to look back and reflect on the year, giving thanks to God for all that has happened and also a time for us all to look to the future and what we would like to see happening in the coming year. As Priest-in-Charge, I am invited to share something of a review of the previous year and a prayer-shaped vision for the future. Throughout his earthly ministry Jesus took time aside in order to reflect and pray. There is great value in reflecting prayerfully on the way we work, minister and serve together as churches in the Coastal Mission Community, using it as a springboard for growth. It seems rather strange that I am writing a report in March 2024, for a meeting in April 2024 about the year 2023 and to keep that focus of reflection solely on the period of the last year. The church year for the APCM is the calendar year, in this case from January 2023 until December 2023. Of course we look forward too, at the opportunities and possibilities, praying where God might be leading us as his people on this beautiful part of our Island, on the East Devon coast.

This Incumbent's Report is my second in post, as I fast approach two years as the Priest-in-Charge of the Coastal Mission Community. As I write this, I have carefully considered the progress we have made together in many areas of our church life, with green shoots aplenty and that should really encourage us all, as well as areas for continual development and growth.

I mentioned last year in my report how my first twelve months had flown by; particularly when I peek into the vicarage study and still see boxes waiting to be unpacked. These last twelve months have been no different and I must duly confess church families, those boxes are still waiting for my attention. However, our cats would very much like the 'box towers' to remain as they are.

I would like to also reiterate my understanding to you of the office I hold as your Priest and incumbent. I believe I am responsible ultimately to God for the ministry that has been entrusted to me; that I am also accountable to His Church and to you all in the way I exercise my office. I consider my life as a Priest, a humbling experience and wear that responsibility on my heart and sleeve, each and every day, constantly reminding myself of the teaching of St Paul about ministerial leadership in his pastoral letters to many of the early churches he helped establish. It is a high calling indeed and with that comes high responsibility. I can reassure you brothers and sisters, your expectations of me are unlikely to be above my own expectations of myself, and yet I recognise the only way I can stay healthy, grow, and be the Priest God has called me to be, and that you desire me to be, is by keeping close to Jesus myself. I ask one thing of you and that is to pray for your clergy and of course, to pray for one another. Ministry is a gift and a trust for which every one of us must give account.

The life of every church is made up of many pieces. Not all of us see all the pieces, so we often get a narrow picture of what is happening in our parishes. I hope this report and those alongside it, enable you to see what wonderful places of worship St. Gregory's and St Michael's are, and maybe see the part where we fit into our communities. Let us also remember that the church is a family, and like any family we have highs and lows, joys and challenges but we have Jesus Christ as our head, our strength and foundation, and with him nothing is impossible.

So, what of the last year, 2023?

Farewells, retirements, and welcomes

In 2023, there were significant changes around our churches. We had the retirement of Keith Izzard (treasurer) and Gayle Chapple (churchwarden) in Beer and David Bruce (churchwarden) in Seaton, accumulating over 55 years of wholehearted service between them. David and Gayle still remain integral parts of the mission and ministry of our churches, providing generous support to our new churchwardens and a continued active presence in the parishes. In April we welcomed Dave Dickinson and Penny Grant as our new churchwardens in Seaton and Beer respectively. Each have brought their unique gifts to their office, demonstrated exceptional leadership with a calm authority and distinct care for people of our churches. Alongside our other churchwarden, David House in Seaton, the three have been a tremendous support to me as incumbent, in our oversight of the welfare of our churches.

In June 2023 we said goodbye to our Parish Administrator, Tracey Voysey who, after the conclusion of her own curacy in the Axe Valley Mission Community, began the next chapter of her ministry as a full-time incumbent in Honiton. Though this was not unexpected due to the impending conclusion of her curacy, it was a loss that would leave a significant gap in the day-to-day running of our churches. In my first 14 mths as the CMC incumbent, Tracey was a steady presence and a great support and encouragement. As well as being our parish administrator, Tracey also managed the financial affairs of Seaton PCC. She also took on the short-term management of Beer PCC finances following Keith's retirement. As a result, we had three vacant positions at the same time.

Seaton and Beer PCCs thoughtfully discussed our next steps regarding these vacancies and, after prayer and consultation, concluded to advertise for two positions, a parish administrator and a parish finance officer. Role descriptions and contracts were created and agreed by the PCCs. Both churchwardens Penny Grant and David House and I oversaw the recruitment process. We were absolutely delighted to appoint Helen Knight as parish administrator and Helen Moulding as parish finance officer in July 2023, the day after Tracey's departure. This was a most profound answer to our prayers, with Helen and Helen already active members of Seaton church. Both have brought so much to their respective roles through their experience, skills and unique gifts, slotting into the life of the mission community almost seamlessly and becoming integral parts of our new mission community team.

In October 2023, Lay Minister Sue Price officially retired with a special service led by Revd Canon Karen Curnock and the Archdeacon of Exeter, Andrew Beane. Sue Price has served our church families faithfully for many years, both publicly and privately, corporately and pastorally. Her ministry to the housebound and sick often goes unseen, but definitely not unrecognised. Sue has brought the love and presence of Christ to many individuals in their homes and residences, who have long been unable physically to attend the church in-person. She has further led a monthly Julian group, which many people attend and are spiritually nourished by through a contemplative mode of prayer. Sue has been given the well-deserved honorary title of Lay Minister Emeritus by the Archdeacon. Whilst this step represents a pivot in Sue's ministry, she continues to serve wholeheartedly, visiting people in their homes in Seaton and Beer, leading the Julian Group and Compline services and remains very much a part of the life of the church and an important member of the core team. May I take this opportunity to offer Sue our heartfelt thanks for her service.

Occasional Offices

The average age in our area of Devon is high. Seaton specifically has risen to 61yrs compared to 54 in 2011. We have 8 residential care homes, as well as multiple assisted living premises for older people in our parishes.

Early in my tenure we identified ministry to older people as a unique part of the context we are called to be Christ's church in Seaton and Beer. Therefore, funeral ministry is a significant part of our ministry, including end of life spiritual care, home visits and pastoral ministry to older people. At St Michael's Church for a local person's funeral, it is normally the case that we have 200+ people in attendance, something very unique to a village community like Beer.

In 2023, the ministry of our churches supported individuals, couples and families with well over 60 Funerals, including Burials of Ashes, 5 Weddings, a wedding blessing and a renewal of wedding vows service. This is an increase on the same time in 2022. Further, we had 6 baptisms, including one adult, as well as a confirmation candidate who was confirmed at Ottery St Mary parish church. This again is an increase on 2022.

Life-events are a vitally important part of our ministry and outreach, the value of which cannot be underestimated. For many people these events may be the first contact they have with the church, and our relationships with the families we come alongside are significant and witnesses to the God of love and hope we serve and share, whether in times of joy or times of sadness.

In March 2023, the Coastal Mission Community and Holyford Mission Community came together to host a joint Marriage Preparation Day. Fr Steven and I hosted 11 couples for a great day discussing the marriage service itself, preparation for the big day and a focussed session on communication in marriage. This was followed by a shared lunch and was a huge success.

Local Community and Outreach

We have a Church of England Primary school in Beer, where I am a governor and lead fortnightly assemblies, with Open-the-Book being delivered on alternate weeks. We welcomed Beer Primary School to the church for services at Easter, Year 6 leavers, Harvest and Christmas. An Ofsted inspection was carried out in November 2023 at the school with an overall 'Good' rating, with one area deemed 'Outstanding'. This was a most excellent conclusion and represents the exceptional culture of the school and the hard work of staff, pupils and governors.

There is great potential and opportunity to build on our established and growing relationships with the school as the village church. We aim to launch a new family service in 2024 in Beer and likewise an all-age service in Seaton. As governor at Beer Primary, I am a subject monitor for RE, PHSE and the school vision, periodically meeting the Headteacher and a pupil voice to review progress in these areas.

In Seaton, there is a great opportunity to build on relationships between church and school, that have recently been re-established, after they were limited due to the pandemic and other factors.

Following the commissioning of our Anna Chaplains Mary Casey and Alison Finch, their ministry in providing spiritual care to older people in Seaton and Beer had a swift impact across our communities. The Anna Chaplains and Anna volunteers regularly visited almost every Residential Care Home in our parishes throughout 2023, providing services for residents, as well as one-to-one spiritual care.

Following a family move to Seaton, Revd Shuna George-Pritchard joined the Mission Community team in the Autumn to serve as a Local Pioneer Minister, focused primarily on community engagement and outreach. This included work with the church leadership team to develop and action the 3 targets for growth from the mission community survey and vision day. Shuna's impact has been immediate and positive. Throughout the autumn and the season of Advent in the ministry and outreach of the church, Shuna has been actively involved in children and families work and church services. Demonstrating her creative skills, Shuna produced excellent posters, cards and other literature for events and services throughout Advent and Christmas.

After relaunching in December 2022, the monthly Freedom Café with '321 for Jesus' has gone from strength to strength. Led by Helen Moulding and the core team, alongside a fantastic team of volunteers, it is an incredibly popular outreach and always busy. The kingdom principles on which it was founded and run, around generosity, hospitality, welcome and worship, is a privilege to observe.

Services and Worship

There are two main services each week in our churches, 9.30am Sundays in Beer and 11am in Seaton. There is an additional 8am BCP Holy Communion service on the 1st (Beer) and 4th Sundays (Seaton) respectively. On the second Wednesday of the month in Beer at 10am and the 4th Wednesday in Seaton there are also Holy Communion services. Whilst the average attendances in Beer have more or less remained the same in 2023, in Seaton there has been an increase in attendees. Churchwarden Penny began a contemplative prayer service at St Michael's at 10am on the 1st Wednesday of the month, which has been positively received and presents a great addition to our monthly services. Sue Price leads a monthly Compline service on the 3rd Wednesday at St Gregory's at 7pm.

During Advent and Christmas services across the mission community exceeded expectations. Attendees increased across all our traditional services, including Carol, Christingle & Crib services. We had 'Carols in the Barrel' in Beer (Carols in the Pub), as well as carols sung on the streets of the village. At St Gregory's

we hosted a special Tree of Light service for Seaton Hospice Care at Home for bereaved families - an emotive and moving event.

We live streamed our Sunday Services on Facebook through the respective Facebook church pages in 2023. In Seaton this was a more recent addition, whereas Beer having been streaming for a few years. This is one way we can open a window to the world and our communities and has assisted members of our own congregations who are unable to attend in person to connect with our worship. It is not complicated, but we do need to grow a local technical team to take it over, which is one of our parish aims. We hope to raise our social media presence and improve our connection and communications with our communities in this digital age.

In the last year a denominational church in Seaton sadly closed and the local Methodist Church minister departed to take on the incumbency in a new parish. Relationships between the different churches and leaders are excellent across our parishes and we are presented with opportunities to explore mission and ministry together. On Mothering Sunday, members of Beer Congregational Church joined us at St Michael's for a joint service of worship. During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Christians Together in Seaton held a united ecumenical service at St Gregory's Church.

In January 2023, I began a weekly prayer gathering each Tuesday 9-10am at St Gregory's church for all churches in the area. We specifically pray for the needs of the churches in Seaton and Beer and all are welcome to attend. Regular attendees represent most of the local churches in Seaton including Crossroads, St Gregory's, St Augustine's RC and the United Reformed Churches.

Other

In 2023 the Coastal Mission Community launched a brand new website and introduced the ChurchSuite management software into our administration.

To enable us to shape vision for the future, the PCCs ran a Mission Community Survey supported by the Diocesan Ministry and Mission team to gather feedback on people's perceptions of our churches. This was followed by a 'Next Steps' feedback session led by Jon Curtis from Exeter Diocese. This proved to be a valuable experience, highlighting areas we are doing well and areas for growth and improvement.

A vision day followed in the summer led by the Diocese Transitions minister Revd Mike Clark, at which we spent some time focussing upon those identified areas for growth from the survey. This was further supplemented by discussions during our PCC meetings. Finally, in November 2023, a group from the respective PCCs, alongside additional others, met together to identify opportunities and specific points of focus in our areas of growth for 2024.

Here is a summary of the year of prayerful discernment and significant discussions, identifying 1-2 things we desire to focus upon during 2024 in each of the areas of growth:

COASTAL MISSION COMMUNITY

Communicating the message

Making Disciples

Creating Community

COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE

Who we are and the Good News we have to share.

Signage and Welcome

(to include improving signs to show location of St Gregory's and welcome once inside church (display table, photos of leaders etc))

Tech Team

(to continue to develop website, other social media and means of contacting all members by e mail or physically, with up-to-date information.)

MAKING DISCIPLES

Growing as followers of Christ

Internally – more Lent Home Groups leading to more permanent groups.

Externally – 1 or 2 outreach Events (Christian speaker or musician)

CREATING COMMUNITY

Children and Families

Intergenerational (Greg's Music Makers and Anna Chaplaincy)

Soup for the Soul (Soup after Music Makers?)

Breakfast Worship (9.30am 3rd Sunday in Parish Centre)

Finances

Clearly the current cost of living crisis has had an impact on us all individually and as churches. One of the significant areas of concern has been the increases in energy prices, insurance and other administrative resources. The PCCs took the decision to implement Energy Audits provided by Inspired Efficiency, and further requested visits from the DAC, including specialist heating advisors to ensure we can plan effectively in the short-term and get the best information possible in our decisions for the long-term. Our energy costs are unsustainable, particularly in Beer, and represent substantial amounts of our total outgoings. Tough decisions need to be made, with both PCCs taking the initiative in seeking the professional advice made available by Exeter Diocese around energy usage in our buildings and other matters around repair and maintenance.

Both parishes have been committed to paying our Common Fund requests. In Seaton, the finance committee produced a 5yr financial plan, working towards sustainability and growth and projected increases in our Common Fund payments. In 2023, Beer PCC paid 100% of its request once more. Both PCCs are currently using reserves in our attempts to cover our annual payments.

In October 2023 I led a stewardship campaign, including a generosity sermon series. May I take this opportunity to say an open-hearted thank-you for your response. The generosity in giving to support the ministry and mission of St Gregory's and St Michael's for the glory of God and His kingdom in Seaton and Beer, is valued and appreciated.

The End

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our respective PCCs, sub committees and ministry teams for your service to our churches. Thank-you to our clergy for all you do in leading and sharing the Word of God in our churches, namely Revd Chris, Revd Ali, Revd Shuna, Revd Barry and LLM Sue Price. To our Anna Chaplain Mary Casey, Church officers Penny, David H and Dave D, Parish Administrator Helen K and Finance Officer Helen M. To our laity and volunteers, bell-ringers and cleaners, choristers and sidespersons, fabric, hospitality and outreach teams, Altar Guild and pastoral visitors. And to so many more who give of themselves for God and the building of His kingdom in Seaton and Beer – Thank-you.

Your support for me, and for the mission and ministry of the Coastal Mission Community has been wonderful. Together, we have made a difference. We are growing churches in areas where churches are not all growing. We have a great ministry team, that is newly established, of committed and gifted people who pull together. As two church families we have a visible growing bond that is inspiring, and I believe will lead to great things together. We need to remember that as churches we have been around for hundreds of years, yet the baton is ours today; we will one day hand it on faithfully to the next generation. May we continue to be generous and faithful in our time.

There are many saints within our church who quietly go about their kingdom service, visiting people around our parishes in their homes, serving, volunteering, caring and sharing. Many are individuals who have been members of our churches, but who are no longer able to physically attend for a variety of reasons. So, through their provision and presence, these individuals bring the church to people in their homes or residential living accommodation, either through Holy Communion, prayer or fellowship, with many of unnamed laity, who do this significant, yet often unseen ministry.

I am going to end this Incumbent's report as I did last year, as I believe it is great reminder about who we are as the church and why we exist. If any church were looking for a manifesto of what it means to be a Christian community, they need look no further than the early church, as described in Acts 2 and 4. This is something I described to our PCCs early on in my tenure, expounding further during one of my sermons at a United Service in 2022. The characteristics of that first church are timeless and present a solid and biblical foundation upon which we can grow inwards, grow upwards and grow outwards for God's Kingdom's sake.

So as I close my annual review once more, this time looking ahead to 2024, may I invite you to be praying about what it means for us to be:

A Belonging People

A Sharing People

A Growing People

A Worshipping People

A Serving People

A Giving People.

And 'May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God'. (Romans 15: 5-7).

Go well, God bless. **Revd.Justin**

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Our pattern of services has continued as in previous years with Sunday services of 8am BCP Eucharist, 11am CW Eucharist, 11am Morning Worship and BCP Evensongs. In addition there are United Benefice services held on a 5th Sunday, and regular weekday communion services and compline. We offer our grateful thanks to all those who have enabled this to happen, in particular the clergy team of Justin Montague, Alison Finch, and Chris Thacker, ably supported by Sue Price. Towards the end of the year we were delighted to welcome Revd. Shuna George- Pritchard to our Mission Community as newly designated "Local Pioneer Minister". We look forward to the blessings she will bring to us.

As well as our own regular services we were delighted to host an ecumenical service during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, many of the local community at the Remembrance Service in November, and a Tree of Light service with the Seaton Hospice at Home team in December. A kind donation of the magnificent Christmas tree was made in connection with the Tree of Light service.

A regular feature of our weekly pattern of prayer and worship has been 9am prayers in church on a Monday morning. During 2023 Revd Justin added to this by initiating a prayer meeting on a Tuesday, also at 9am, which is open to members of all the churches in the area. This is an excellent way in which we share our Christian life with others in the town.

Through the year Alison Finch and Mary Casey undertook ministry as Anna Chaplains, including developing Anna's Place in St Michael's Beer. This is a special 30 minute time of worship for older people, followed by refreshments, music and memories.

Our contactless machine [to enable financial gifts to be made by card] was given a permanent home in a wooden case specifically designed for it and made by members of the Beer Mens' Shed. It is now always ready for donations at the entrance to the church.

Following the success of the Flower Festival held in 2022 it was decided to repeat the event, and it proved a great occasion for outreach with community groups being involved and many new visitors to the church.

Grateful thanks to many volunteers who made this event possible, following the overall vision and direction of Sharon Bruce.

The PCC members have worked hard to support the various aspects of church life and it has been heartening to see the church continue its family feel, welcoming new members and encouraging existing members into resuming roles within our services and weekly activities. At the 2023 APCM David Bruce stepped down as Churchwarden. He has undertaken this role for several years and we are immensely grateful for the gentle way in which he has supported us all and, in particular, been our first welcoming face at the porch. We are delighted that he will continue to be our chief “welcomer”. David House was re-elected as Churchwarden and was joined at the APCM by Dave Dickinson. Dave has already contributed to the upkeep of the fabric of our church building [as well as singing in the choir] and his experience and level-headed approach will be valuable to us. Both Churchwardens would especially like to extend their grateful thanks to the welcoming team of sidespeople for their weekly presence at services. In addition there is now a long list of members of our congregation who assist in so many ways with services and events: from bell ringing, to cleaning, being part of the lay worship team, the coffee team, producing the magazine, serving, flower arranging, and general duties of upkeep among many other tasks. Thank you all for your time, effort and love in service to our church family.

We also extend our thanks to Tracey Voysey, our administrator up until June 2023, who dealt with matters spiritual and temporal with equal amounts of efficiency and diplomacy, and with plenty of good humour. We were sorry to receive Tracey's resignation in the middle of the year, but delighted that the reason for this was her taking on the post of incumbent at St. Paul's Honiton to cover a period of sabbatical. It was decided to divide her responsibilities within our parish into two areas: administration and finance. Both of these are shared with St. Michael's, Beer, and we were pleased to appoint two members of our own congregation to these roles: Helen Knight as administrator and Helen Moulding as Finance Officer. In some ways both felt they had jumped in at the deep end, but by the time we reached the end of the year they were undertaking all tasks as though they had been doing them for years. Towards the end of the year we were also delighted that Sue Craker has taken on the role of Safeguarding Officer. A morning's safeguarding training was arranged so that those involved in voluntary and leadership roles were further aware of their responsibilities in this area.

The care of the church fabric continues to be a major issue and following the Quinquennial inspection in 2022 further specialist advice has been sought, and we are now in a position to begin some of this. In addition we have had two energy audits during the year, to start our thinking about how to balance the need to keep our church warm with the Church of England commitment to being energy efficient, and working towards NetZero carbon emissions. A separate fabric report outlines the detail.

The coronation of King Charles III in May was a momentous event in our nation's history, and as a church we were pleased to celebrate with special prayers, the choir singing an anthem specially composed and which was sung in churches around the country, and a special toast with Prosecco during the after service coffee.

Freedom Café completed a successful year, after resuming its work at the end of 2022. Thanks to the team who run this, under the leadership of Helen Moulding.

Through the Spring and into the Summer we were able to begin the process of looking ahead for our Parish, starting with a survey of attitudes to the church [undertaken by members of the congregation and of the larger local community]; this was then followed up with a feedback evening led by Diocesan Outreach members, and finally a Vision Day. This was very much a Benefice event, with equal participation from St. Gregory's and St. Michael's. Many many ideas and thoughts were put forward, discussed and considered. They fall within three main areas: Communication / Developing Discipleship/Children and Families.

Led by sermons from Rev'd Justin we have also undertaken a Stewardship campaign, with a focus on a re-evaluation of our giving – both financial and of our time.

A special service was held at the start of October to recognise and give thanks for the lay ministry of Sue Price – for many years our Licensed Lay Minister [formerly known as “Reader”] – as Sue has decided to step down from this role. She is now referred to as Reader Emeritus! It was a pleasure to welcome Rev’d Canon Karen Curnock to preside at the service, and Archdeacon Andrew Beane to preach. A presentation was made to Sue at the end of the service [Dartington crystal vase], and in the Church Centre we enjoyed Prosecco and cake to round the occasion off.

Sadly, the Archdeacon of Exeter communicated to us that as a result of a serious incident at the end of the year, he had to instruct Rev Alison Finch to step back from her ministry within our Mission Community.

Having been put away in a drawer for nearly four years we were able to bring out our church Visitors’ book in April. During 2023 St. Gregory’s received visitors from Devon (Colyford, Sidmouth, Exmouth, South Brent), the rest of the UK (Petersfield, Milton Keynes, Leicester, Bournemouth), and much further afield (Switzerland, New Zealand, Australia, Vienna and the Bahamas). This reminds us all of how we are a worldwide family of believers.

Our “wandering warden”, David House, was pleased to complete his pilgrimage around the churches of the Honiton Deanery, all with an informative write up in the monthly magazine.

The year ended with Christmas services and celebrations including a Christingle service which saw the church full of families, and an engaging version of the Christmas story told jointly by Rev Shuna and Rev Justin. This, and the other Advent and Christmas services, was a great way to end 2023 and look forward to 2024.

David House and David Dickinson

CHARITIES COMMISSION OFFICER

There have been several changes to the PCC since the last report submitted to the Charities Commission. So the updates were reported to the Charities Commission in July 2023. The Annual Report and Accounts were filed with the Charity Commission on 1st August 2023 and thus our required compliance is up to date.

Wayne Cook

ELECTORAL ROLL

Report to be given at the APCM

Katie Mason

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2023

Our financial year started with £33416 in the General Fund. Total receipts into the unrestricted General Fund were £57825 and payments from this fund totalled £64545 resulting in a deficit for the year of £6720.

Income for the year through “Planned Giving” (Parish Giving Scheme, standing order and weekly envelopes) increased by around 4.5% and there was an increase in donations following the Stewardship campaign in Autumn 2023. Total income through giving including donations and church collections totalled £38.5k. Other income during the year included Hall lettings (£3.5k), Parochial Fees income of £5k (down from last year), Fundraising Events £1.9k, Dividends/Interest £4.2k and a legacy of £2k.

The Friends of St Gregory helped to raise funds and during the year gave approx. £5.8k towards insurance costs, repairs, fire equipment works and Energy Audit costs.

Our expenditure for the year totalled £64545 from the General Fund. In 2023 we paid 70% of the Common Fund request (£33.4k), an increase on the 60% paid in 2022. The contract for our Utility Bills came to an end in November 2023 and therefore utility costs will increase going forward.

At the end of the year there was a total of £25924 in our General Fund. Our General Fund reserves are depleting, and this is not sustainable. We must look at how we can change the balance between income and expenditure in a positive way moving forward.

Thank you to all those who give to our church so readily.

***Helen Moulding, Parish Finance Officer
Coastal Mission Community***

All Other Church Group Reports

ANNA CHAPLAIN

As an Anna Chaplain I volunteer in our local Mission Community, offering spiritual care and support to older people and their families, including people with dementia. After completing the training to become an Anna Chaplain I was commissioned at Exeter by Bishop Jackie in December 2022.

What is Spiritual care? My role as an Anna Chaplain is to listen to the stories of older people and help them make sense of their lives. For those who have a faith, it means helping them stay connected to their faith community. For those who don't have a faith, it's about listening and helping them explore the many questions of life. I am community based, going to wherever older people are – in their own homes, in care homes, or at groups and activities older people attend.

December 2022 – December 2023

This year I have made 145 visits to people living at home or in a care setting. Each visit lasts for at least an hour. Referrals for visits come from many sources, including Anna Chaplaincy national, regional, social services, carers, family and neighbours.

My visits and worship have taken me into homes of people living alone and mostly isolated. Care home lounges, dining rooms and corridors, and the private rooms of those living in our care homes.

I regularly visit six care homes in Seaton offering monthly dementia supportive worship, including an activity based on a bible reading. I am very grateful for the support of my two volunteers Jean and Mary who help me with the worship in the care homes. The worship is called Anna's place – my mobile church. The old white lace tablecloth, Bible, Candle, and wooden cross I made from driftwood off our beach, goes with me on all my visits to care homes. The symbols help the residents recognise when we gather together, we are church.

ANNA'S PLACE – St Michael's Beer. It has been a blessing to prepare and lead worship monthly at Beer with Anna's Place. This is evolving into something very different from my initial vision. A small group gathers each month in café style worship. We sing a couple of hymns, reflect on a bible story, share prayers and communion together. This is followed by refreshments and many a 'do you remember' story! My thanks to the ladies of Beer church for the refreshments and support each month.

In addition to the visits, there are many hours spent in preparation and administration. There is a responsibility to the people I visit, and to the volunteers, and with that accountability and safeguarding. My

training has enabled me to offer advocacy support, end of life care, time for the bereaved and funeral support.

Financially, Anna Chaplaincy has received three donations this year to help cover costs, and both Seaton and Beer PCC have budgeted to support this ministry, for which I am very grateful.

To find out more about Anna Chaplaincy national go to annachaplaincy.org.uk

LOCAL ANNA CHAPLAIN – **Mary Casey** email: caseymary119@gmail.com Mobile: 07805655335 A message can be left at the church office 01297 23656

AVCAP

Wow - such an exciting year! Busy times caring for people with complex needs. Our Outreach is sitting with people in need of Financial and Debt help and loving them with God's love.

During the Year, we have cared for about 20 people - some individuals and half of which are families with young children. All ages from 28 - 79 years old. All with different experiences from their childhood, changes of their health, ability to work, bereavement and changes in relationships.

CAP Head Office worked hard preparing sustainable Budgets for our Client Friends and also Options to complete their Journey Out of Debt. Locally, we support people; meeting with them, sharing a cuppa and lots of chats. We make telephone calls to organisations and accompany Client Friends to other meetings with Creditors, Honiton Jobcentre, Health visits etc. Several Client Friends have come along to our Church events and Worship at St Gregory's, Musbury Church, at Andrew's Church in Colyton, River Church in Axminster, Pippins and the Waffle Church family in Axminster. We pray with many face to face and indeed everyone is prayed for with our Monthly Prayer Lists prepared by Team Member Jill and circulated to many Church families. We also have people praying by way of a Whatsapp group and Sharon popping on messages.

During the Year, another 5 Client Friends became Debt Free, lifting some £25,000 from their worries. We continue to guide them all with learning to manage their Budgets which are still tight. Our care includes education and empowerment as often this has not happened and many have not had parents to help guide them.

In October 2022, following Justin's Worship and Talk, a Client friend came and spoke to Justin after the Service and like a miracle a new Befriender came forward. By May 2023, we had worked alongside and cared for this new Client Friend and helped them to complete the CAP Head Office process and their Journey Out of Debt. God is indeed creating miracles in this place at this time! Thanks be to God!!

In September, River Church family in Axminster hosted a Summer Celebration for our Client friends, Befrienders and Team members. River Church Worship and events are hosted at Weycroft Hall which is located just outside Axminster. It's a fabulous Mansion style home....like a National Trust Home, and sits in magnificent gardens. So the young ones had a Bouncy Castle to enjoy for the afternoon. They prepared a super feast of a meal which was served in a Hall fit for King Arthur and his Knights. We all felt like Kings and Queens...it was a super indulgence for our Client friends. We celebrated that several of our Client friends had completed their Journey Out of Debt by ringing a bell which CAP Head Office does every time someone goes Debt Free! It's joyous and brought a smile and a giggle as I rang my little bell so enthusiastically, the dinger fell off!!

In October, it was lovely to share with our two Coastal Churches in our United Service, some news about our AVCAP Outreach and the help we have given with God's grace and to again Ring a Bell in celebration.

We have received sponsorship and donations throughout the Year and also new Befrienders. One of our new Befrienders has helped with Admin work too and expressed an interest in becoming an Assistant

Manager. Thanks be to God for equipping us and guiding people to generously support us in all manner of ways.

Thanks to our Client friends for their courage in asking for help and then committing to the process.

Thanks to our Team members, Befrienders, Prayer Coordinator Jill and our Prayer Teams, our Church Families and Individual sponsors, those who have given donations and Seaton Town Council for their grant. Also thanks to the Waffle Houses of Axminster and Seaton and Pippins Community Centre of Axminster for offering their meeting rooms.

We have great connections with other local support organisations and our special thanks to the Foodbanks of Seaton and Axminster who have generously cared for our Client friends. Also to East Devon District Council for their financial support and also guidance with payment plans for the payment of Rent and Council Tax.

The need continues to be great and if you can help, please do - with prayers, becoming a Befriender and with becoming a Sponsor or giving a donation.

CAP - Their aims include : Transformed lives. Thriving churches. An end to UK poverty. We have several local Churches including St Gregory's who are in Partnership with CAP and other local Churches. Thanks Be To God for his Holy Spirit moving in the Axe Valley.

Sharon Bruce

BELL RINGERS

This has been a quiet year for weddings, and so far no notifications for this year.

The band has rung for service ringing and there have been few occasions where we have not managed to ring, albeit occasionally with reduced numbers and sometimes we have resorted to the Ellacombe chimes. I put a long splice in one of the bell ropes and it is now in position on number one bell and is OK. We have one spare new rope and have two to order.

Hand bells

The hand bells progress. Our new Ringers put up a creditable performance at the Carol Service and held their nerves well. They have come a long way since they started. Well done Ladies.

Bruce Roberts

CHOIR

The choir has continued to provide music for the whole range of services during 2023. Through the year a full choir consisted of nine singers, one more than in 2022. David House continues as organist and choirmaster.

We continue to provide a reflective anthem or short liturgical piece at the end of the distribution of communion – the music for these has been from a range of composers, and we also lead the congregation in singing the “Parish Mass” by Peter Jones. Monthly Evensong services are a feature of our work, with the music including sung responses, psalms and a setting of the Magnificat. During June 2023 we made a special feature of music and as well as singing music by Elgar and John Rutter we learned a new anthem, by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, to celebrate the coronation of Charles III. As well as this we provided a lead for an unaccompanied musical setting of the service of Compline, and were delighted to be joined by members of the Colyton Grammar School Chamber Choir for a service of Evensong. Special Carol services for Advent and Christmas were led by the choir, and included some additional singers. We have been able to join with the choir of St. Michael's Beer for several united benefice services – usually singing an anthem on these occasions. We look forward to continuing in our musical service of the parish

– please do contact me directly if you would like to know more about the music in our services, and particularly if you would like to join us as a singer.

David House

CHRISTIAN AID

We have hosted several events throughout 2023 and various Churches and Halls. Many thanks to those organising and serving, offering home-made delights of soup and desserts.

Several Lunches were offered during Lent, Harvest and Christmas time at the United Reformed Church Hall in Seaton. Good gatherings at all of them with delicious food and warm friendship. Thank you to the Church family of the United Reformed Church for the use of their Hall which is in a great location in the Town.

We hosted Stainer's 'Crucifixion' Service in the Seaton Methodist Church with beautiful music and another Music Event in September in St Gregory's Church.

Thanks to our loyal supporters who give generously, raising some £2000. These much needed funds are used by Christian Aid to provide essential items to those experiencing Wars and Crisis situations of Extreme Weather, and also to educate and empower Women to develop their own businesses to feed and care for their families.

Praise to God for equipping us to share his love for others locally and internationally.

Sharon Bruce

CHURCH CLEANING

I would like to thank the members of our two cleaning teams who regularly give their time to maintain a clean and welcoming atmosphere for all who use and visit our lovely church. Also special thanks to the other church members who have provided additional help cleaning difficult to access areas that required attention.

Julie Ballard

CHURCH FLOWERS

We are very grateful to all those who continue to help make our church look beautiful with flowers. If anyone is interested in joining this small group of people, please let me know.

John Anning

FABRIC COMMITTEE

The Fabric Team have worked to formulate a plan that addresses the issues raised in the December 2022 QI report. Working Parties have taken place on a regular basis dealing with numerous items throughout the year both in the form of group working parties and individual volunteers doing jobs as and when required.

We have focused on the priority items and we have taken advice from the Church Buildings Council, our architect and various specialists. This has involved detailed meetings and discussions. The DAC have stipulated after much correspondence that the guttering replacement/repairs must be Cast iron, as a result a specification will be written for a quote to be obtained. Electrical quotations for LED lighting both in the Church and the Church Centre have been recently requested and a specialist quotation has been obtained for wall repairs as highlighted by the QI report. Further quotes will be requested for the Timber work repairs which are necessary. We will be making some amendments in the form of an additional thermostat and valve to the existing boiler and heating system but overall the existing system will remain in place.

We will decide on the order of works, assess what we can afford and then explore the possibility of grants.

As mentioned previously I am sure you will appreciate this is a lengthy process but it is essential to approach in the right order as often one decision directly has an effect on another.

David Mason On behalf of the Fabric Committee

FREEDOM CAFÉ

FREEdom Café opens in the Church Centre on the 3rd Saturday of each month (except August) to offer free food and drink to the community. It is run by a Core Team assisted by volunteers who assist with jobs such as cake making, waiting tables and washing up.

FUNDING: The cafe remains able to fully fund itself through the generous donations in our prayer baskets each month. Running costs are around £80 per month. This amount covers the purchase of our food and provisions as well as training volunteers for food hygiene certificates. Allowance is also made for equipment repairs and servicing of the dishwasher. Funds in excess of running costs are donated back to local charities on a regular basis.

Total donations received during 2023 were £1460 and running costs were £805.

During the year, the Core Team approved charity donations totalling £400 - £50 to the Stroke Association and £50 to the Rainbow Project in Plymouth (both in memory of our dear Core Team member Ange who sadly passed away in July 2023). £150 was donated to Seaton Foodbank and £150 was donated to St Petrock's Homelessness charity in Exeter.

The Core Team approved purchase of new tablecloths to be purchased in January 2024 to replace the original ones which had "yellowed" over lockdown. The team will also be looking at the purchase of new polo shirts to replace those bought over 10 years ago and then making further donations to charities early in 2024.

OUR YEAR:

The year got off to a steady start after FREEdom café reopening in December 2022. Visitor numbers have increased steadily during the year and although they are still a fair bit lower than before the shutdown during COVID, the donations received in our prayer baskets in the latter part of the year were at a similar level to 2019. In the early part of the year, the café was very quiet for the first hour and then everyone seemed to arrive at once! Things have been much steadier in the latter part of the year with the increase in numbers spread across the opening times. The volunteer team were extremely saddened by the passing of Core Team member Ange in July but continued to run the café that month in the belief that Ange would have wanted us to continue our work.

We have been able to welcome new visitors and volunteers to FREEdom Café during this year, many of whom have stayed for 321 for Jesus. There is a real buzz in the Church Centre during the morning and many people have commented on this.

Thank you to Revd Justin for his support with FREEdom Café both in setting up the hall and making the time to chat to our visitors and volunteers. The Core Team are extremely grateful to all their volunteers and supporters without whom the café couldn't run.

Helen Moulding (Finance/Secretary) Nessa Rutherford, Jean Hoskin, Emma Lloyd-Davis, Wayne Cook, Gloria Polley– Freedom CAFÉ Core team January 2024

3.2.1 FOR JESUS

After re-opening in December 2022, this was our first full year post covid. This is what the format for **3.2.1 for Jesus** looks like:

3.2.1 for Jesus, 15 minutes of simple uncomplicated Celtic style Christian worship, some **'FOOD FOR THOUGHT'**. Freedom CAFÉ. feeds the body, and we hope **3.2.1 for Jesus** helps to feed the soul. We welcome you!!

We begin our worship at 1.45pm in the church centre on the third Saturday of each month, excluding August. It is usually lay led by members of the **Freedom CAFÉ** core team, with others present taking part either with a reading, a prayer, or lighting the candles. **3.2.1 for Jesus** gives us an opportunity to give thanks and praise to our Lord for his hospitality at **Freedom CAFÉ** and the wider community.

We have three minutes of music (this varies according to the worship each month), two readings, generally a reading from the Gospel, and possibly a poem. We also say our **Freedom CAFÉ** thanksgiving prayer, and end with a Celtic Christian Blessing said together.

Our greatest joy has been seeing people from our community (who do not attend any church) staying for the worship, and coming back! For some this is their first 'taste' of our Lord and their only church. We deliberately close the café at 1.30pm and make an announcement that **3.2.1 for Jesus** will begin at 1.45pm, this re-enforces our message there is 'no catch' for receiving freely at **Freedom CAFÉ..**

We have had a very positive response to our re-opening and have averaged 34 people attending each month. In fact only 2 months have been below 30 and December saw a record number of 44 people attend. Reverend Justin led the first worship back in January and thank you to him for leading this and assisting throughout the year.

Wayne would like to say thank you to those who have prayed and supported him in the preparation and leading of this ministry with **3.2.1 for Jesus**.

Wayne Cook (Core team) February 2024

THE FRIENDS OF ST GREGORY'S

The Friends of St Gregory's Church hosted two events in 2023, a Summer Bazaar in August and a combined Nativity Crib Festival and Christmas Fayre in December. The Bazaar raised £1,125 and the Christmas event £480. Both events were well supported and the Friends were very grateful to those who offered help, those who donated items for the stalls, loaned Nativity Cribbs and to everyone who came along on the day.

In the past year the Friends have also received regular and one-off donations of £705, that have been very generously given. All funds raised by The Friends go towards the upkeep and maintenance costs of our Church building. In 2023, the Friends funds have been able to cover the costs of the following: Fire extinguisher works, electrics for the contactless device, a new St George's flag, roofing repairs, an energy report for the Church and the Church Centre and insurance costs for the Church.

The events hosted by the Friends are not only to raise funds for the maintenance of our Grade 1 listed Parish Church for the benefit of the whole community of Seaton, but also to bring people together, from both our Church family and the wider community.

Katie Mason

GENERAL FUND-RAISING

We have hosted various events during 2023 including 9 Coffee Mornings and Table Top Sales on the 1st Saturday monthly, in the Church Centre. Many thanks to those organising and serving and to all those who come along and support. Special thanks to Lesley, our Master Baker, for her delicious lemon drizzle cakes, Victoria Sponges and other delights. Thank you to Jessica and Jasmine for their smiles and help.

In addition, we hosted another Flower Festival in the Church with the Theme of the King's Coronation. Many beautiful displays and creations were on show in the Church sharing an appreciation of the Royal colours, history and heritage. Great thanks to our Creative designers and their hard work. A great collaboration as some of the designers were from our Community and some from our Church family. All ages created displays including the very young ones of Seaton Brownies and Greg's Music Makers. Thank you to the strong foundation of our first Flower Festival put in place by our Shirley.

Thank you for the generous donations totalling some £2,000 which have been essential to help us have funds towards our running costs and Outreach costs.

Our events share our beautiful Church buildings and facilities with our Community. People coming in can feel God's love and feel the Music, Songs, Prayers and Worship that have taken place over centuries and also appreciate the rich history and heritage of our Grade 1 listed Church. Thanks be to God for blessing us, inspiring us and strengthening us with our

GREG'S MUSIC MAKERS

We have such fun each Thursday during Term-time, caring for local young families, with music, friendship, and delicious home-made cake by our Master Baker, Lesley. The session runs from 10am to 11.30am.

Linda is our Family Worker leading the Music and supporting the Families. Great encouragement and support is offered during the chatter and over a cuppa, during the Play-time. Thanks to Linda for her skills and gifts. We welcome all from our Church family to join us for a cuppa and chat - between 10.45am and 11.30am.

Our Team has included Mary Scott, Patricia, Katie, Amanda and Paul, Shuna and Sharon. It's been fabulous having extra helpers able to give support when some of us are away. With caring for between 25 and up to 50 children and adults each session, it's becoming necessary to have 3 of us each Thursday where before we have managed with 2 of us. Thanks for the energy and commitment of our volunteers.

It's an incredible Outreach to families with young ones, many of whom are babies and toddlers up to 4 years. We gave out posies to celebrate Greg's Mothering. We gathered at Easter with an Easter Egg Hunt and Christmas time in the Church with making Christingles. We did this in the Lady Chapel with the sun shining through the beautiful windows. Thanks to Shuna for organising and leading this. At Christmas, thank you to those from our Church family that came along and shared in this joyous Greg's Christingle Gathering. God loves the little children and indeed we feel his love like honey being poured out over all of us.

We welcome new ideas for events so please chat to Justin or our Churchwardens.

Sharon Bruce

HONITON DEANERY SYNOD

The Honiton Deanery Synod is a group of representatives, both lay members and clergy, from all the parishes in the Honiton Deanery, which includes Beer and Seaton. Lay representatives are elected by their parishes every 3 years at the APCM, with 2 places per parish. Bruce and Ann Roberts were the elected representatives for the first part of 2023 and on their retirement, Paul Barns was elected as Deanery Synod rep at the July meeting of the PCC.

The Synod provides a link between the parishes in this area and between them and the Diocese of Exeter, through meetings at which we worship and share news, views and information about events in the Deanery and the Church of England more widely.

Ann and Bruce Roberts attended a meeting at the beginning of the year where the meeting focused on looking after our planet and steps that could be taken in our churches and churchyards to work towards Net Zero. No further meetings took place during 2023 due to the lack of a Deanery Synod secretary. It was hoped to rectify this matter during 2024.

Paul Barns

HOSPITALITY

Many thanks to the loyal and devoted Teams who serve offering refreshments each Sunday after Church in the Church centre. It's lovely to gather together and chat over a cuppa. Where 2 or 3 are gathered, so God is there with us.

We have been blessed with new volunteers coming forward to strengthen the Teams. Thank you. Thank you for all the donations of refreshments and funds.

Sharon Bruce

JULIAN MEETINGS

The Julian Meetings continue to meet at the home of Revd. Chris Thacker at No 2, Case Gardens, Seaton at 7.20 for 7.30pm on the second Monday of each month. We continue to have a regular attendance of 6 – 8 people who value the chance to develop our practice of contemplative prayer together. After a brief relaxation, we have a short spiritual reading followed by half an hour of silent prayer. We conclude the quiet time with the collect for the week, the Lord's prayer, and the Grace. Staying for tea/coffee/hot chocolate is optional for fellowship afterwards. The leadership is shared between me, Chris and any willing volunteer! We find it can help us to concentrate on silent prayer in a supportive group. If anyone would like to come along for a 'taster' do just come or contact me or Chris for more information either in church or our details are on the back of the magazine.

We ask for a small donation to cover the cost of membership of the National organization and the cost of a periodic newsletter and magazine which I get a 'hard' copy of and can send a copy by email to members. Our donations amounted to £52. We paid £12 for the subscription and gave £40 as a donation to help with the cost of administration and the newsletter. We therefore had a balance of £0 at the end of the year. The organisation is run by volunteers. The Julian Website explains more about our meetings and is well worth a browse at

www.thejulianmeetings.net

With blessings from Julian of Norwich

Sue Price

MOTHERS' UNION

A small number of us continue to meet regularly as a Diocesan Members Group on the second Wednesday of each month. We have prayers, refreshments and afterwards a "knit and natter", all of which is enjoyed by those who attend. We continue to contribute knitted items to various charities, and would welcome anyone, even if non members, to join us.

Julie Ballard

PASTORAL CARE

Since the pandemic pastoral care visits have been steadily increasing. Revd. Justin now does a lot of pastoral visits along with those needed for weddings, baptisms, and funerals.

Anna chaplaincy has been growing. Last year Revd. Ali and Mary Casey gradually increased their visiting and ministry and this year Mary continues to develop her role in this work and will do her own report on the work.

I continue to do several regular home visits to take Holy Communion to the housebound on 6 days a month for 13 people at the moment and drive to bring a couple of people to church one on a Sunday and one to our monthly midweek service. It would be good to have some volunteer drivers to help with transport.

Justin is in the process of developing a Pastoral Care team and I think (and maybe hope!) that in future he will lead reporting on this vital part of church ministry. If you are interested in helping with this work in some way, please see Justin.

If you notice that someone is not attending church, please help us by 'flagging this up' so that we don't miss a pastoral need. In the first instance, notify Justin directly or via the church office. When he is away Revds. Chris, Shuna, Mary or I will visit as deemed appropriate.

Like our Christian journeys this remains a 'work in progress'.

Sue Price

RNIB USED STAMPS

So far, we have collected over 2 kg worth of stamps and raised a separate £17 by selling off some of the more specialised items. However, we did very well over the Christmas period with collecting just over a half kilo of stamps plus we had a donation of a large bag of USA stamps.

Postcards have proved to be popular especially older versions, so please keep them coming.

It takes 1 kg of used stamps to raise £20 so please do save them from your cards/post to help this cause with something that you might perhaps throw away. We will also take new stamps, old postcards, stamp albums and we will always collect.

Please help the Royal National Institute of Blind People and place the items in the box or contact me.

Stephen Page 07792 914121 *spage147@btinternet.com*

SEATON FOODBANK

We have continued to get a steady stream of contributions coming into our storage area and like previous years both Easter and Christmas proved to be a very busy time

We are eternally grateful for all those contributions we get whether they are left in the various supermarket bins or just dropped in when we are open. However, because of the increasing numbers, we are having to purchase additional food on a weekly basis.

In terms of numbers -

In 2022 we gave out 18512 meals to 950 adults and children

In 2023 we gave out 21789 meals to 1125 adults and children

This is an 18% increase year on year.

These numbers will only increase again this year, but we are being helped by various Food community groups operating in both Seaton and Beer.

We are continuing to give out meat vouchers from Normans and veggie vouchers from Little Gems and our thanks go out to these local shops for their help and assistance. Thanks also to Pebbles who continue to help us support our homeless clients with hot meals and for their successful Christmas event.

Again, similar to last year, we were able to give out Advent Calendars and leaflets and all our clients in December received a Christmas Hamper to brighten their lives and like last year we will also be giving out Real Easter Eggs to the children.

At the beginning of December, we had a huge FareShare collection from Tesco; our thanks go out to Jordon and Rhoda and all the staff of Tesco who helped our volunteers enormously.

Our client referrals are generated by several Voucher Partners including the East Devon District Council's various departments, Citizens Advice, local churches, children's groups including schools, GP surgeries, social workers and district Nurses which have amounted to over thirty-five different sources in the past year.

Unlike other food community groups, we try to ensure that our clients are receiving help and guidance to remove them from the Food Crisis situation they find themselves in when coming to our door.

We have at present a terrific group of volunteers, but we are still desperately in need of additional Duty Managers, owing to one recently retiring and we have a change of Chairperson, after six years, with Julie Dunon taking over in the spring from Stephen Page.

As a member of the CTIS (Christians Together In Seaton) group we are looking for help and guidance from their organisation. Certainly, if you know of anyone who is an organised person used to making key decisions then we would desperately like to meet them, explain what's involved in the role and introduce them to our Foodbank organisation.

foodbankseaton@gmail.com 07598 927997

Stephen Page on behalf of Seaton Foodbank Team

TABLE TENNIS CLUB

The table tennis club continues to meet most Fridays in the church centre, from 10 – 12 noon, with 7-14 per session. Cost is £1 per session towards refreshments and for the use of the Centre. **Jo Bull** (01297 20347 or jobull311@btinternet.com) **Carol Gosling** and **Paul Barns**.