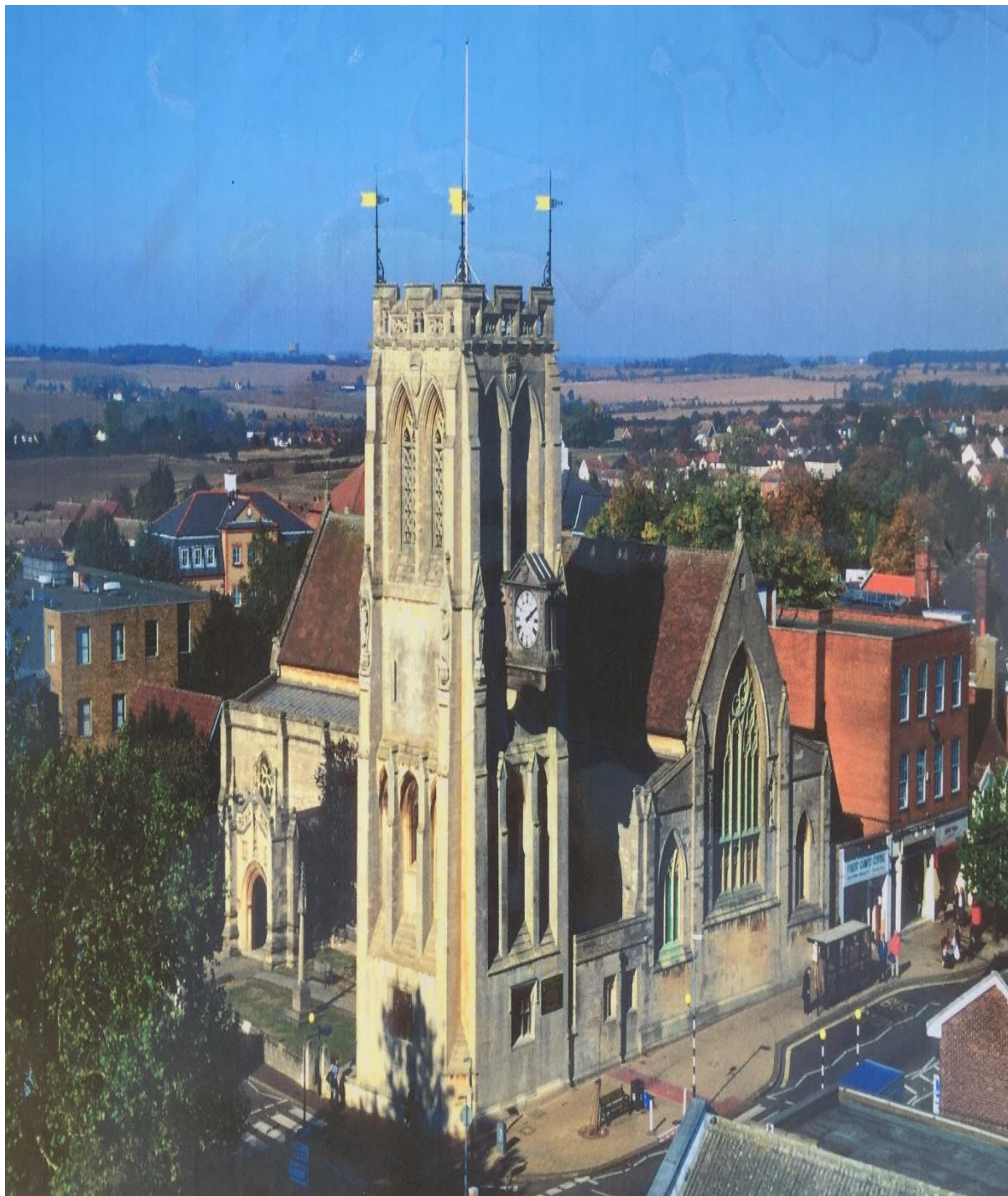


St John the Baptist Church, Epping



Annual report 2025

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AGENDA

Parish of St John the Baptist, Epping

ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

&

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

**to be held on Sunday 27th April 2025
immediately after the 9.20am service
in St John's Church, St John's Road, Epping**

Annual Vestry Meeting

1. Minutes of the 2024 Annual Vestry Meeting (for approval)
2. Election of Church Wardens.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the 2024 Annual Parochial Meeting (for approval).
 2. Electoral Roll Officer's Report.
 3. PCC report for the year 2024 – including Safeguarding report.
 4. Election of a lay member to the Deanery Synod (to fill a casual vacancy if required)
 5. Election of lay members of the PCC (to serve 2025 -2028).
 6. Presentation of the Independently Examined Financial Statements of the Council for the year ending 31st December 2024
 7. To appoint Community 360 to be the Independent Examiner for 2025
 8. The annual fabric report under section 50 of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018 – (the Churchwarden's report).
 9. Report on the Proceedings of Deanery Synod
 10. Questions on any matters relating to reports published on other areas of church life prior to the meeting
- (If possible questions to be submitted to the PCC Secretary at least 3 days before the meeting)
-

**MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING**

&

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

held on Sunday 12th May 2024 at 10.30am

in St John's Church, St John's Road, Epping

1. Opening Prayer was led by Jessica Bostock (associate priest)

Present:- Jessica Bostock, who also chaired the meeting, by agreement with all present, and thirty five members of the congregation.

2. Apologies for absence:- Margaret Fowler, Trevor Bedford, Sue Lane

ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

3. Appointment of two Churchwardens.

Appointment of Churchwardens:-

Two vacancies, one application received prior to the meeting.

i Marian Winters **proposed by** Jane Agnew **seconded by** Nick Agnew

Being duly nominated, it was resolved that Marian Winters be elected as Church Warden for one year.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2023 together with Reports from Organisations, Events, Activities and Groups as well as the last year's minutes, Electoral Roll Report, Deanery Synod Report and Churchwardens' Report previously circulated to the congregation by email and hard copy, were noted

Business reports:-

1. Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023

The minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting dated Sunday 15th May 2023, previously approved by the PCC, were agreed by those present.

2. Electoral Roll for 2024: Adoption and Report by Electoral Roll Officer

To note the Revised Electoral Roll now stands at 146 members, made up of 98 Residents, and 48 non resident members.

3. Annual report on the PCC

The annual report was noted. There were no comments, the report was approved.

4. Activities of the Parish

These had been published in the APCM Yearbook and were noted.

Jessica commented that the report highlights how much has happened in the life of the church, during the past year.

There were no further comments, the report was approved.

5. Financial statements for 2023

The accounts and Financial statements were noted.

There were no further comments, the report was approved.

Thanks were expressed to the Treasurer, Peter Byatt.

6. Annual Fabric report

This had been published in the APCM Yearbook and was noted.

The Church Warden had signed off the entries for St John's Terrier, Works, log book, and annual maintenance records for 2023.

There were no comments, the report was approved.

7. Deanery Synod report

This had been published in the APCM Yearbook and was noted. There had been one less meeting due to the resignation of the previous Area Dean, and the appointment of the new Area dean.

There were no comments, the report was approved.

8. Business Elections and Appointments:-

(a) Lay Representatives to the Parochial Church Council

4 vacancies for 3 years

1. Sue Lane **proposed by** Wayne Cunningham **seconded by** Sue Carter

2. Shereen Nimmo **proposed by** Rita Borg **seconded by** David Siebler

3. Vacancy

4. Vacancy

One year Jane Agnew **proposed by** Marian Winter **seconded by** Jo Waller

It was resolved that the following be elected for three years:-

Sue Lane and Shereen Nimmo

It was resolved that the following be elected for one year:-

Jane Agnew

(b) Lay Representatives to Churches Together in Epping & District (2 vacancies)

1. Kate Collins

2. Ros Scanlan

Both re elected

(c) Deanery Synod Representatives – no vacancies

9. Business Appointments:-

(a) The appointments of Sidespeople for 2024/5 are now agreed by the PCC

Jane Agnew, Nick Agnew, Jean Kibblewhite, Simon Bowers, Angela Peachey, Cathy Sowerby, David Kett, Gemma Somogyi, Wayne Cunningham, Sue Carter, Margaret Fowler, Karen Laing, Harriet Benson Zubis, Maria Surman, Johneen Gale, Marian Winters, Lucy Hau

(b) Independent Examiner of Accounts – Anthony Richardson

Proposed by David Siebler **Seconded by** Peter Byatt

It was agreed to reappoint Anthony Richardson.

10. Reports from organisations – attached in Yearbook

Business Miscellaneous

11. Heart of Epping, HOE

Roger Lowry addressed the meeting, and hoped that everyone was suitably informed of the latest developments. The planning application is now off to the planning officer for Epping Forest District Council. It could be tabled on May 29th. If approved, then the tender process begins, viability is assessed and solicitors are consulted. As it is a joint venture with the church, it will then be decided who does what.

The church retains the freehold of the land. We have control of the ground floor. The council will control the nine flats, which will be designated for key workers. The leasehold

will extend for 48 years, the length of time which will be needed to recoup the expenses, with the rent collected by EFDC. The leasehold then reverts to the church.

The building is in a conservation area, and the Diocese were very pleased with the aesthetics of the plans. There had been a mixed response to the plans by the public.

A question was raised regarding the trees on the site.

They are not preserved and will need to be removed. Equivalent species will be planted on the site.

Another question raised the issue of the lack of family accommodation.

It had been designated for key workers who struggle to find suitable, affordable properties. Other developments within the town have been designated for families.

A final question was raised regarding the activities which will take place on the ground floor, and parking arrangements.

Once planning consent has been given, the leases will make clear the different activities which will use the space, including the church space.

The original plans had parking spaces for 4 vehicles, but these were ruled out by the planning officer. A compromise of two spaces, one for staff and one for disability parking have been agreed. There will be bicycle storage spaces for 18 bicycles.

Roger was thanked for his presentation.

Chair's business

Jessica said how different the APCM was today from that of a year ago.

An application has been submitted for another advert for Team Rector, the church profile has been tweaked, and the interview panel of Steve Carter and Natalie Kelberman, have been busy behind the scenes, of what is basically a secret process.

Jessica was grateful for the support of the officers and the PCC; so much goes on behind the scenes. Her colleagues had also been grateful for the support they had received.

The choir, music, young people, coffee mornings are all signs of ministry, which comes in so many forms. The PCT team led by Jo, quietly get on with all that they do, and Geoff with his work on the weekly news sheet.

She thanked Jill, PCC secretary, for all her work keeping her and the PCC on track.

Diana and Steve, LLM's had taken on extra work with more preaching, and taking morning prayer. Emily is establishing her role in all the churches and the leadership team have been Jessica's rock.

She concluded that the church is not this building, but the people in it. The heart of Epping project is a vision of the future, we pray as it moves forward, that it will really excite and change the energy for the new Rector, with exciting prospects.

Ros Scanlan then expressed thanks to Jessica for all that she has done and is doing during the Interregnum, sentiments which those present all agreed.

12. Blessing was led by Jessica.

REPORT FROM THE TEAM RECTOR 2024

It would be fair to say, that if I had been asked a year ago, which annual report I found find myself writing for the APCM season in 2025, this would not have been one on the radar! However, it would have seemed good to both God and those who had been charged with the ministry of discernment during the recent vacancy, that there was a different journey to be travelled, and so here we are! It would be remiss not to offer my special thanks and appreciation to those who served as parish representatives, compiled the parish profile, and supported the discernment process in prayer and other practical ways. I am grateful for the seriousness with which each approached the tasks to which they had been appointed, and it made the direction that God by the Spirit was leading clear to see.

Thank you to everyone who made the service of Installation and Collation such a welcoming and positive experience; those who served refreshments, made the arrangements beforehand; and especially to Simon Winters who put together a joint choir from the Theydon Parishes and the Team churches – it feels like a real moment of transition for us all. In the service, we heard a reading from Matthew's Gospel, where Jesus teaches the disciples the value that there is in each created thing, and in every person, simply because God loves them and made them.

For example, Jesus said "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" Our beginning as disciples of Jesus, is found simply in being loved by God, and recognizing the extent of that love, seen in the strength of love which led Jesus to give his very life for the sake of the world. This is the only foundation which the church needs, and it is from our deep rootedness in that love together, that I pray various ministries may grow.

Since arriving in the Epping team, I have been struck by the number of people who give of the best of their time and talents, in order that church services take place; families are welcomed and people in the community can find a space to pray in times of joy and in times of sorrow and challenge. In particular, I would like to pay tribute to all who led and guided in the period of vacancy. I am especially grateful for Lisa, (our Team Administrator) and the small team of volunteers, who serve so faithfully in the challenging physical environment in St John's House, and I hope to be able to provide her with an improved space in which to work in the near future.

As some have heard me ask, I have been reflecting on the question what it means to be an Epping Anglican? Our leadership team, (comprised of our Licensed Lay Ministers, Diana Lowry, and Steve Snooks, Associate Priest, Rev'd Jessica Bostock, Authorised Pastoral Assistant and Pastoral Care Lead, Jo Waller and Children's and Families Worker, Emily Kirby) have been instrumental in helping my own thinking on this question, but more importantly have been faithfully doing that work to which they have been called, serving collaboratively across the three parishes – I am grateful to God for them all.

Over these first months I have sensed that our unity is to be found in our diversity. The Team is comprised of one rural country church, one church set in the midst of a village, and one town centre church, seeking to be lights for Jesus in each of the three parishes, each with their own blessings and challenges. The style of our worship maybe different in each place, but it is the one Lord, revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, each of us is seeking to encounter. As we look forward and in Christ, say "yes" to all that is to be, my

encouragement to us all is to pray the Team prayer daily – who knows where Jesus may lead us!:

*God of Unity, who is three persons in one,
help us to celebrate our different gifts and abilities;
and, sharing them,
grow nearer to each other and to you,
to the glory of your name and the building up of your kingdom.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord; Amen*

Church warden's report

Church Warden's Report June 2024

It has only been 5 weeks since I officially took over my post as Church Warden. I think in that time we have certainly achieved a lot, including the tidy up of the vestry, a new cleaner, 3 volunteers for coffee duties and the appointment of some Deputy Church Wardens who will be able to offer much needed help and support.

We also have a new volunteer to carry the cross and are pleased that Lee Adams is coming in to set up on Saturday evenings. We have even got the faculty through for the boiler which is wonderful news. Thank you to all who have come forward to help. Lastly, we are now waiting for the Bishop to appoint a Team Rector in 2-3 weeks' time. Thank you to Natalie and Steve for all the work involved in the appointment. **Marian Winters**

Church Warden's Report

Since our last PCC meeting, we have completed many tasks, for which we have the Fabric team and lots of volunteers to thank. Not forgetting Natalie, Steve and the other church's reps for all their work and for the wonderful choice for our Team Rector. I feel our churches will go forward in leaps and bounds once John is installed.

We have sorted and cleared out the Transfiguration chapel cupboard to make it a lot easier to get to the staging. We've also sorted and cleared out both garages, again to make it easier to get items out. We did find that we had carpet moths in the Transfiguration chapel but now seem to be clear of them.

It's also been suggested that we lock the Transfiguration chapel when the church is unattended and I have obtained a quote for this. Last winter, someone had clearly been sleeping inside the organ casing (and leaving empty bottles) and I recently found cigarette ends on the beams in the cupboard which poses a fire risk. I hope the PCC can discuss this at the meeting.

The cleaner has signed and dated her contract and we have copies of this.

Lastly, I must thank everyone for all the support I have received. **Marian Winters**

Church Warden's Report Jan 2025

Our church has been very busy over the last few months, firstly with John's installation. We welcomed John and his family to be our Team Rector and I think I can say everyone that was there was delighted with the service and gathering of all the churches. It was a lovely occasion.

Then we were straight into the Tree Festival where we had many people coming into the church, and it is nice to welcome them. My thanks go out to Cathy, Kate, Sue and all

the volunteers that helped before, during and after the event to put our church back together again.

After that we had all our Christmas services, thank you to Simon and the choir for all the wonderful music and to all the people that was on duty over this time. I must also thank John and Jessica for all their hard work.

Since our last PCC meeting we have completed many tasks, for which we have the Fabric team and lots of volunteers to thank. We have had the fire extinguishers and fire blankets checked and new extinguishers put into the boiler room.

The Transfiguration chapel has now got a lock on the door, a spare one has been put on the set of keys in the vestry. The lock on the outer door was broken and our thanks to Geoff Scanlan for repairing the lock and getting new keys which have now been given out to those that need them.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for your continued support during my time in office.

Marian Winters

CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT

In compliance of the Care of Churches & Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measures 1991 the churchwarden hereby confirms and submits the following to the PCC for the year 2024:

1. The Terrier, Inventory and Works Log Book have been maintained for the church year 2024.
2. Documents supporting any such matters referred to in those records are retained either in the Wardens Files or the Church Archives.
3. The separate Report of the Fabric Committee submitted for the year covers all activity undertaken including the Report of the Quinquennial Inspection.
4. The Churchwarden confirms that the contents of the above records are accurate.

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL of St John the Baptist church, Epping THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, EPPING ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2024

St John's Parochial Church Council, along with the Incumbent, has the responsibility for promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish of Epping, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The Parochial Church Council also has maintenance responsibilities for the church building (including St John's House) and properties which it owns (The Box on St John's Road which is rented out on a long term lease to the Open the Box Education Trust)

Membership of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Members of the PCC are either ex officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

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

Team Rector

Rev John Fry (from November 2024)

Team Vicar

Rev Olivia Maxfield Coote (until March 2024)

Associate Priest

Rev Jessica Bostock

Church Wardens

Marian Winters

Deanery Synod Representatives

Diana Lowry, Tim Valder-Hogg, Janet Whitehouse, Jill Brant

PCC Members

Nicholas Wold, Peter Byatt, Margaret Fowler, David Siebler, Jo Waller, Natalie Kelberman, Jane Agnew, Sheeren Nimmo, Maria Surman, Sue Lane, Steve Carter

In attendance

Simon Winters (Director of Music)

Parochial Church Council Meetings

In 2024 the PCC met on six occasions, including a meeting in the new Rectory in December. Copies of the minutes of PCC meetings were displayed on the noticeboard in St John's Church.

During the period of Interegnum, meetings were chaired either by the Revd. Jessica Bostock, Revd John Fry in his capacity as Area Dean of Epping Forest and Ongar, or Marian Winters (Churchwarden), all supported by the Archdeacon of Barking. The PCC is grateful to Marian Winters for all that she has done over the last year, especially for her leadership until an appointment to the post of Team Rector was made at the end of the third appointment process.

We were fortunate to have Revd Jessica Bostock as Associate Priest in the Team during the period of vacancy and because of her presence and support of Team LLM's and visiting clergy Sunday services continued in the usual pattern.

In November, the Revd John Fry was collated by the Bishop of Bradwell and installed by the Archdeacon of Chelmsford as the new Team Rector. He will continue to serve as Area Dean of Epping Forest and Ongar, in addition to his role in the Epping District Team.

Nicholas Wold was appointed to continue to serve as the Parish Safeguarding Officer, and the PCC continues to have due regard to the House of Bishops guidance on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults. Safeguarding contact details are displayed inside and outside the parish church and on the parish section of the Team website and the St John's Epping page on "A Church Near You".

A new boiler was installed during the year following the damage caused by the flood in the boiler room which took place in 2023. The PCC spent a significant amount of time exploring the best options to restore heating to the church building and the Council were grateful that although the parish could have borne the cost through reserves, the Insurance company met the claim.

The Heart Of Epping project made slow progress. At the end of 2024, Epping Forest District Council's decided to withdraw from the partnership and the PCC will be exploring next steps in 2025. The PCC continues to be in an ongoing dispute with Utility Warehouse and the Treasurer and Finance committee continues to work to seek to have an appropriate unit rate applied to historic bills which the Council understands to have been incorrectly priced.

St John's has been able to pay its parish share in full for 2024, but the PCC are mindful of the need to have an increase in giving to meet the running costs of the church.

The year ended with the annual Christmas Tree Festival. This was Kate Collin and Cathy Sowerby's first year in charge, and the PCC are grateful to them for all they did to make the festival such a success. The Epping Christmas market was cancelled by the Town Council cancelled last minute because of the named storm, but the Festival in church went ahead in spite of the conditions. We were able to support two charities with donations, and the remaining funds went into St John's general funds

The PCC do not make decisions without due care, thought, prayer and consideration for the people represented by the members of the PCC and meetings follow the due process as set out in the Church Representation Rules

Sub committees

Finance Committee considers financial matters and makes recommendations to PCC. Natalie Kelberman, Jill Brant, Diana, Lowry, Marian Winters and Peter Byatt, were elected to serve on this committee which met several times in the year.

Fabric Committee leads the PCC's work to maintain and improve the church building and St John's House. Nick Wold and Peter Byatt served on this committee during the year and their activities are reported separately.

Standing Committee: has power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings. Marian Winters, Peter Byatt, Jo Waller were elected to serve as members alongside Jill Brant as Secretary, the clergy and the Churchwardens, meets as necessary.

Employees

The mission and ministry of St John's Epping is supported by Lisa Bazonni (p/t Team Administrator) and Emily Kirby (p/t Children's Youth and Families Worker). The Team Administrator is employed by the Epping District Team and the costs of her appointment are funded through the Team share payments made by St John's PCC. During 2024, the post of Children's, Youth, and Families worker was contracted out on an invoiced services basis.

St John's PCC also pays an honorarium to Simon Winters (p/t Director of Music) and pays for a cleaner to clean the church once a week.

Church Services

The regular pattern of services in 2024 was

Sunday

8.00a.m.	Holy Communion (BCP)	
	9.20am	6pm
First Sunday	Sung Communion	
Second Sunday	Upfront	Sung Evensong
Third Sunday	Sung Communion	
Fourth Sunday	Sung Communion	Praise and Prayer
Fifth Sunday	Team Service at St John's	

Groups for children were held in the Box and St John's house.

These were led by a team of volunteers under the supervision of Emily Kirby. On average 15 children attended these groups each week. Children were members of the church choir

and attended choir practice on a Tuesday and sung during the 9.20 service. Children in the choir are paid a small honorarium.

Church Attendance

As of April 2024, there were 100 people on the Church Electoral Register, average weekly attendance was 115 each Sunday. As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life.

Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. In 2024, 59 baptisms and 0 weddings were celebrated in St John's.

Three funerals were held in St John's, and the ministry team conducted funeral services at local crematoria during the year.

Charity Trustees

Name	Attendance meetings held 2024/5
John Fry Team Rector St John the Baptist <i>Ex officio</i> Chair	3 (one as area Dean)
Jessica Bostock <i>Ex officio</i>	4
Marian Winters Church Warden	4
Diana Lowry LLM <i>Ex officio</i> <i>Diocesan synod</i>	5
Tim Vander Hogg <i>Ex officio</i> <i>Diocesan synod</i>	6
Janet Whitehouse <i>Ex officio</i> <i>Deanery Synod</i>	5
Jill Brant <i>Ex officio</i> Deanery Synod PCC secretary	6
Nick Wold Safeguarding	5
Simon Winters <i>Ex officio</i> Director of Music	6
Peter Byatt Treasurer	5
Margaret Fowler	5
David Siebler	4
Jo Waller Pastoral assistant	6
Natalie Kelberman	6
Jane Agnew	6
Shereen Nimmo	2
Maria Surman	1
Sue Lane	6
Steve Carter	5

There were 6 full PCC meetings in total.

Members also attended committee meetings for Finance, Fabric, as well as Team churches, during the interregnum.

Safeguarding Annual Report

As expected 2024 continued as in a similar vein to previous years. No significant Safeguarding issues arose during the year that needed my attention.

It is because of the importance placed on Safeguarding that it is a standing agenda item at all of St John's PCC meetings. It is at these meetings where a report is provided on Safeguarding at St John's and where at the first PCC of the new PCC year the required re-adoption of Safekeeping policies and the appointment of the Parish Safeguarding Representation are actioned.

Once again, I thank everyone at St John's for the support I have received when considering Safeguarding matters notified to me and for the acceptance of actions I have needed to follow in resolving those issues. **Nick Wold Parish Safeguarding Officer**

REPORTS FROM ORGANISATIONS, EVENTS, ACTIVITIES AND GROUPS

Bell ringers

The Tower Captain Report – 2024

This report covers the period from 15th January 2024 (our last AGM) to the end of December 2024.

Review of Year

Sunday Ringing –

We have been able to ring on most Sundays this year and on several occasions, we have had sufficient ringers to have all 8 bells ringing. We have also welcomed some new ringers to the joys of a Sunday morning.

Practice nights –

Mondays were affected by the number of Bank Holidays in May, but we had excellent turnouts for our regular Practice nights with often over 18 people in the Ringing Chamber.

Recruitment –

Initiatives continue, and we have had a trickle of interest throughout the year with 5 persons directly approaching the Church to find out more about ringing. Kerry from a Facebook post, Julia via Horticultural show at Church, Henry via FB also (coming back after 2 years).

Welcome Pack

A welcome pack has been created for new ringers. This comprises of the Learning to Ring booklet, the Yellow Book about Ringing, “Parlez vous Bellais” – a guide to ringing language, a guide to the ringing year, Tower etiquette and a couple of other documents of interest.

It is suggested that a £5 donation be made to cover the cost of the booklets etc.

District training in early March 24 on Plain Hunt, held at Woodford St Marys. An interesting day with 2 members of our group attending.

A number of new ringers also attended the Essex Ringing course on Bell Handling in early April and found that to be very useful. They have all progressed extremely well. Some have also attended extra sessions put on at Willingale by Ian Kerwin, so our thanks to Ian for providing this extra tuition.

My special thanks to Jane Walters, Dave Knott and Vicky Richards for the training of our new ringers, and to the volunteers from Waltham Abbey and elsewhere who come along on our practice nights.

Social activities –

Great to see a return of a visit to a local hostelry after practice nights and we are grateful for the Hemnall Club for allowing us to call in to their premises after ringing.

- **Easter Week** tidy of Tower (thanks to all those that helped out) followed by a meal attended by 10 of us at Pizza Express
- **22th Jun 24** – Summer outing to Cambridge, where we rang at 4 different Towers all within walking distance in the centre of Cambridge. A super day out with great

ringing and very interesting towers. Huge thanks to Caroline Moores at WA for organising.



4th October 24

Winter outing to some South Essex/ Brentwood area Towers. This included ringing at the Glass Tower at Basildon. Quite an experience. Six Epping ringers went along with a number from Waltham Abbey. Many thanks to Vicky for arranging an excellent outing.

The **Christmas meal** at Carpinio Lounge on 25th November was a success and it also gave us an opportunity to say goodbye to Teresa Sayers who was moving away from the area. We all wish her well and hope that she continues to ring in Norwich!

- Waltham Abbey also hosted their **Christmas meal** on 11th December at the Merry Fiddlers in Coopersale which was attended by a number of ringers from Epping.

Tower Open Day – 18th May

Fabulous weather encouraged people to come along and view Epping from on high, so we had steady flow of visitors all day, numbering around 100. Some £266 was raised overall, of which £200 was allocated to the Bell fund. Thanks to all who helped on the day, especially those who helped volunteer from the Church.

Themed months – We had a number of topics - good ringing, ringing up and down, plain hunt, competition ringing, practicing for installation of the new Rector for St John's Church. We will be looking to continue the themed months going forward and would welcome suggestions!

Visiting Ringers - We were visited by three bands during the year, all of whom enjoyed ringing the Epping Bells. (2nd April, 5th June and 20th July).

Ringling For Peace – 80th Anniversary of D Day Landings 6th June 24– We rang the bells in commemoration of this event in early evening, with Sam, Andrea, Josh, Teresa, Jill and Ian attending.

Complaint - Sep 24

A complaint was made to the Parish Office in September and the complainant was not satisfied with the response and made a formal complaint to the Environmental Enforcement Office at EFDC. A discussion was had with the relevant Council Officer with

the result that the complaint was dismissed with no further action being taken by the Council. The sound of the bells was regarded as “all part of the environment”.

Finances –

Steepleage from the visiting ringers and other donations amounted to £45

New ropes were required for the treble and seventh, this is expected to cost in the region of £500. The Church Treasurer agreed to the cost and Dave Knott liaised with the Rope manufacturers and installed the new ropes.

We also applied for a grant from The Essex Association Training and Recruitment fund to allow us to expand the simulator from one bell to 6 bells. We received £156 which when matched from our own bell fund enabled us to purchase the necessary equipment. Thanks to Dave for setting this in the belfry. This will enable us to offer wider training initiatives across other days without annoying the neighbours.

Whilst we do not maintain our own account for finance, we do liaise with the Church Treasurer and run a separate spreadsheet to monitor the situation. After allowing for the expenses mentioned for new ropes and the simulator costs, we currently have a balance of £1,294.05 plus £140 in cash, in the bell fund. Petty cash is at £27.61

Weddings – We were not asked to ring at any Weddings at Epping this year.

District Practice - hosted on 18 November 24, an excellent turnout with support from West Ham, Hornchurch and Woodford amongst others. The bells were given a good work out with Stedman Triples and Surprise Minor (no, me neither) being rung and the bells rung down in peal.

District Competition –

Hosted at Leytonstone on 21st Sep 24, there were 6 teams that entered the Called Changes competition and Epping were awarded fifth place, a good result given the experience of our ringing team and the acknowledged difficulties of the bells at Leytonstone, which none of the team had rung before. Thanks to Heather Rayner who stepped in at the last minute to help out as one of our team was unable to attend. Well done to all.

Remembrance Sunday.

Muffled bells were rung for the morning service and after the afternoon ceremony at the war memorial. Thanks to all those that rang, especially some of our newer ringers. We continue to receive very positive feedback from the local community for ringing on such occasions.

Collation and Installation of John Fry as Team Rector of the Epping Parishes

We were delighted to be asked to ring in celebration of the installation of John on 26th November. The event was a success and our congratulations to John on his new post. Thank you to those ringers that gave up time on a Tuesday night to join in the ringing. This was registered on Bellboard and a Certificate recognising the ringing for the occasion is displayed in the Ringing Chamber.



Christmas Tree Festival –

This took place between 6th to 8th December 24 and as usual we entered the competition with our theme being “Bells” (as it always is!).

Thanks to Jill and Andrea for help in adorning the tree with our existing bell themed decorations, but unlike last year, we didn’t win the Best Adult Church Organisation Category, so much to do next year.

We were also asked to ring for the Christmas Market during the Saturday afternoon (7 Dec) but sadly were unable to get a band together for the times suggested to us by the organisers. As it turned out, the Christmas Market was cancelled by the Town Council due to the inclement weather resulting from Storm Darragh. I am hopeful that we will be asked again next year and that we will have a more acceptable time to ring.

Finally, we were able to ring on Christmas Eve prior to the Midnight Service, with all 8 bells being rung. Thank you to all those that took part, the bells did sound lovely.

My thanks to all who have taken part and contributed to keeping ringing going in Epping. It is greatly appreciated by the town, as evidenced by all the many positive comments on various Social Media platforms.

Ian Apps Tower Captain.

The New Bereavement Journey 2024

We started this year’s course on 4th February and have three participants. This is the second time that we have run this version of the course and so far it has been well received and encourages conversations. Bereavement is hard but we hope that meeting together to watch the films, eat home-made cake and share experiences will continue to be as helpful for this group as it has been for previous groups. We aim to run the course annually in the early part of the year.

Diana Lowry

Children and Families worker

Sunday Children Groups

These groups take place every 1st, 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month during our 9:20 service. We have three groups; Little Lambs (ages 0-4), Sunday School (ages 5-7) and Go Gen (ages 7-11). As each group caters to a different age, there are different approaches to how the sessions are taught, but the overall goal is the same - to teach the lessons and love of Jesus. This is done in a variety of ways - song, dance, craft, reading scripture, prayer, asking the children their perspective of a passage and encouraging them to think about how it can be applied to our lives. We use a platform called ‘Roots’ which follows the lectionary and provides engaging resources and ideas for leaders to deliver the sessions. One of the benefits of using this platform for session planning is that the theme children

learn about in groups is usually also the theme that parents/grandparents/carers are learning about in church, which helps to foster further discussion at another point.

I would like to thank all that are involved in the Sunday children's provisions at St John's. Without you, we wouldn't be able to offer this important provision and it's so encouraging to see that we are welcoming more children to our groups and more leaders to the team.

Emily Kirby

Youth Group

Rev'd Jessica and I run a Youth Group once a month in St John's House. We have a few faithful members and we enjoy meeting with them and supporting them. We hope that this continues to grow and be fruitful to those that join us.

Emily Kirby

Church Mice

Church Mice is held every Thursday (during term time) in the Church. It runs from 10am to 11.30 am and is attended by children from 0-5 years of age, along with their adults. The sessions are free of charge, with no registration needed and a 'just turn up when you can' policy. All are welcome.

This year we offered extra sessions during the summer holidays, which were much appreciated, and we were able to minister to over 200 children and adults.

The sessions begin with an informal time of worship with singing, instruments and dancing to toddler activity songs. We have added songs to our repertoire with a new favourite being 'Shine', where we shine from the inside out, so the world can see Jesus living in us. We love praising God by clapping, stamping and shouting REALLY loud, climbing mountains, driving cars, swimming to the bottom of the ocean and sleeping, knowing that God is with us wherever we are, and being Gods Children having fun.

We finish our time of worship with our church mice prayer and if numbers are not too big, we listen to a bible story. This is followed by refreshments, play and getting messy at our craft and provides the opportunity for the adults to enjoy a time of fellowship with tea and coffee.

Our numbers have been pretty solid throughout the year with an average of 35 children and a similar number of adults attending weekly. We are blessed to see friendships develop between the children and the space giving the adults time to meet, share and chat with one another.

We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated team of volunteers, so a big Thank you to Emily, Sara, Ros, Yvonne, Janet and Pam, we would not be able to run this important ministry without you.

If you feel God may be calling you to this ministry or to set up the Church prior to the session, we'd love to hear from you.

Kate Collin

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN EPPING AND DISTRICT (CTED)

Over the past year CTED have met on 4 occasions and held the AGM in September, where all were welcome to attend.

The following events have been organised over the past year.

- Each Saturday during Lent, 6 churches in Epping, including St John's, offered a simple lunch for a voluntary donation, going to a range of charities.
- Walk of Witness on Good Friday, for all ages, to bless our community with the message of hope and new life in Jesus was well attended, with over 100 people joining in.
- Easter screening of 'The Passion of Christ'
- Approximately 40 people attended the Pentecost picnic on Stonnards Hill, to mark Pentecost Sunday, with games, quiz, activities and craft, helping people to connect with the meaning of Pentecost. A team of people from St John's, Epping Restore and Life Church, were involved in planning this event.
- Ahead of the General Election members of CTED organised and hosted a Hustings Event at Epping Hall. The event was well attended with over 100 people and all local candidates were present to answer questions sent in by members of the public.
- Scripture Union books 'It's your move' were successfully distributed to all year 6 pupils in all the primary schools in the Epping and District areas.

Future Event Planning:

- St John's Lent Lunch is being held from 12.30pm – 2pm on Saturday 29th March. Details of all lent lunches will be displayed on the board.
- Walk of Witness on Friday 18th April at 10.45 – further details soon.

Churches Together Meeting Dates 2025

Tuesday 29th April 2025 at 7.30pm in The Box

Tuesday 16th September 2025 at 7.30pm in The Box – **Annual General Meeting**

Kate Collin and Ros Scanlan

Craft Group Report

This continues to run on 4th Wednesday of the month in church. We have survived the cold winter and have had new people pop in from time to time. While we can offer help with various crafts most people bring knitting as this is portable and we can talk while knitting (Knit and Natter!). New people are always welcome.

Diana Lowry

Deanery Synod Reports

Deanery of Epping Forest and Ongar

1. Deanery Synod on 13th June 2024 at St Michael's Loughton

Getting to know our new Area Bishop and Archdeacon

Following our Deanery's move to the Archdeaconry of Chelmsford and the Bradwell Episcopal Area, the Ven Jonathan Croucher and Rt Rev'd Adam Atkinson came to introduce themselves and to welcome our Deanery with open arms!

Both shared their stories (see Appendix).

They have come to walk alongside.

At the Retreat House, there is a motto 'drink deeply, live abundantly'. That summarises what they wish for us to do together.

Presentation by Rev'd Sandra Eldridge – **Diocesan Environmental Officer**

Sandra's presentation was entitled: "and another year for being green" from *Wind in the Willows*

Sandra has been in post since September 2022. Much of her time is spent on communication.

Firstly, how central the environment is to our faith, and theology. Secondly, how urgent it is that we do something, all the science says this. At the recent World Environment Day, it was said that we have just 18 months for decisions to be made by our leaders in the world to get on to a path that is not leading towards serious consequences from climate change. It is no longer that it is an issue, it's the context that we are living in. Thirdly, what can we do about it?

She is a part-time volunteer but is happy to be contacted by churches with any queries.

There is a monthly diocesan newsletter, and a growing amount of information on the Diocesan [website](#). There is also the 'Greening the Church' Facebook group (which has 800 members) and some sermon videos.

The other main issue that takes up much of Sandra's time is supporting the Diocese's journey in cutting carbon emissions as the most pressing task. In 2022, General Synod approved a route map to carbon net zero by 2030, meaning that all the buildings (churches, schools, vicarages, offices, cathedrals etc) are net zero by 2030. This is a massive task. A leaflet has been provided called '[A practical path to Net Zero](#)' for churches to consider what they can do to move towards net zero.

There are also webinars on the C. of E. website and funding is coming on stream. The Energy Footprint Tool is a way for churches to monitor how well they are doing on the journey to net zero. Churches are asked to complete this every year so that the trajectory can be monitored.

As a Diocese, the centrally provided resources have been used to formulate the Diocesan Net Zero Action Plan and a number of churches are now embarking on a mission to reduce their carbon emissions. One way to do this is to address heating; gas and oil boilers are likely to be the main source of carbon emissions. Some churches, just a few, have installed solar panels. A Net Zero Carbon Officer has been appointed in the Diocese recently, which will help the Environmental Team's capacity.

Sandra shared details of the [Eco Church](#) scheme and the story of the one church in the Diocese which has achieved Gold status; 26% of the Diocese's churches have achieved Bronze, about 14% have Silver and just one has Gold, [St John's Moulsham](#). The questions cover building, land, worship and teaching, global and local collaboration, and lifestyles, it's a little daunting, but Bronze is quite achievable.

The Energy Footprint Tool is a start, reducing emissions can also save money. C.of E. is now running funding schemes, some of which depend on the results of the EFT or completing it in the first place.

Those with high emissions are eligible for free energy audits, advice, and £3,000 grant. This scheme is running centrally, she mentioned that St Mary's Loughton and Waltham Abbey are eligible.

• ***It was asked how open the DAC would be towards environmentally friendly improvements.***

The DAC do understand that this is something that needs to be taken on board, but more specific advisors are needed on the committee to push this through.

• ***The grant of £3,000 – what is the process to apply?*** This is only available for churches which have been identified as having high emissions. However there is another scheme 'Quick Wins', details of which will be issued by the Diocese shortly. The new Net Zero officer can also help. There are many pilot schemes in place nationally, but the funds available will be less than what is needed.

• It was asked if the ***Eco Church awards need renewing***, to keep us in good habits. They do not, however whilst Bronze is fairly easy to achieve with just a few people on board, Silver will need more people to 'up their game'. Gold is inspected.

• Rev'd Peter Smith ***raised the issue of heating bills***; they are high for the churches, and also for his 400 year old, Grade 1 listed Rectory in which he is required to reside, and take up a high percentage of a clerical stipend. Can the Diocese help in any way? Sandra advised that there is often work that can be done to vicarages that cannot be done to churches, but this usually needs to take place during vacancies as it is hugely disruptive. Good insulation is required to get the best from heat pumps. The capacity of the Property Team also needs to be increased.

One of the things that is an important part of Sandra's role is raising awareness of the way in which climate change is already affecting local communities. There was a report in February about the significant risk to Epping Forest and no doubt people may know of local cases. The current weather this spring has affected farming, for example. Churches are encouraged to get involved in the 'season of creation' in September/October. Last year's theme was climate justice, the unfairness of climate change on poorer communities globally. Locally too, the poor and vulnerable are the least able to cope.

More needs to be done and churches can have a prophetic input. The theme for this year's [Season of Creation](#) is to hope and act with creation (Romans 8). The World Environment Day theme was 'restoring nature'. We live in one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. On 22 June, there will be a demonstration in London (preceded by a service in a Mayfair church) to say that we need the next Government to step up and do more about the environment, climate change, and nature depletion. There are questions available to ask potential candidates.

Since last spring, Sandra's team have been trying to build a team of advocates across the Diocese to encourage churches on their path to net zero and to build networks. Please speak to John if you are interested, get involved in Church, and complete the Energy Footprint Tool.

Why are we doing this? Sandra recounted her story, having been convinced in the 1970s by reading

Small Is Beautiful by E F Schumacher. After many decades, five or six years ago she realised that people are waking up to this, but not everyone. In 2019, she met a group of Christians who told her that they didn't think Christians should do anything about the environment because all that mattered was where you go when you die. She felt the Lord saying to her that she needed to do something to make people more aware of the

environmental crisis within the church. She left her post in a university in 2022 to take up her current role. Sandra encouraged us to start talking about this in our churches wherever we find ourselves, whether this is our passion or not, as this is the context in which we are living, not just an issue.

Appendix

Bishop Adam's story

The Bishop began by sharing his journey to faith, focussing on four moments with God. At age 8, he was overwhelmed with guilt after his headteacher called in a scary sounding policeman as he had stolen a 2p badge from Warwick Castle Museum. He carried this guilt until at age 13, he heard an evangelist talking about how Jesus can free us from guilt. That was a 'yes' from him, his first expression of a response to the gospel. Later he joined the Army, trying to live as a Christian but in his own strength in an unhealthy lifestyle.

Following that, he went to college at Birmingham and met up with an old school friend who had become a Christian during his first year. He said 'come and see', and took Adam to his church. He encountered the power of the Holy Spirit there as the means by which he could live freely for God rather than in his own strength and striving.

A few years later, he married Heather, and they have three children, the youngest of whom is 26, who spent two years in hospital being 'extensively re plumbed', and very unwell.

They went from being the group leaders at church to being held by this beautiful group of people. Rather than being the leaders, they were the ones subject to their kindness. They joined this community in Oxford, an experience of having the topsoil of life eroded away yet finding they had landed on the rock, Jesus. His adult faith had grown, the intimacy, encounter and knowing who God is was found in that time of suffering.

As to the 4th encounter, we are all in the process of growing up into Christ. He became the vicar of a church in Bethnal Green, and he used to come to this area as they visited Top Golf in Chigwell. The church was of the mindset 'we're all going to die and we don't want "them" to close us when we're gone', and they wished to see children in the church again. (Adam admitted he was now part of the "them"!). The church had an Anglo-Catholic heritage and at the Thursday evening Eucharist (attended by just four people), there was such an intimacy with God. He encountered so many people who worshipped God differently but loved Jesus more than he did. We want the presence of Jesus and the ways that the church has given us this is in Scripture, by His Spirit, and also in the Sacraments. And someone said, we can have it all!

He shared the verse 'see what great love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God, for that is what we are!' Look up! It is abundance! As our Bishop, he would love to join with us in exploring that.

The Lord gave Adam two commissions as our Bishop: to be a person of prayer and to join in with the prayer of God's people (please invite him to your prayer meetings as a brother in Christ). And peacemaking – 'for there the Lord commands a blessing, even life for evermore'. (Psalm 133). Dwelling in unity together is something that he wishes for us.

Archdeacon Jonathan's story

Jonathan always said that of all the roles in the church, 'I will never be an Archdeacon' and yet here we are...!

He grew up in Essex, having gone to school in Southend. His parents still live at Rawreth. He studied economics and law at university. He went to a fabulous church in Rayleigh, a HTB plant. Ex- Archdeacon Peter Taylor of Harlow had been his vicar there. He was an inspirational model of being a vicar that he looks back on. He spoke at his wedding in

Westcliffe, having met his wife Yvette during their schooldays doing *HMS Pinafore*, when the boys were imported to the girls school. He became a lawyer.

One of the great things about Peter Taylor for us to hold onto is that he was someone who would always give people a go. Back in the day when the 'new choruses' were coming out, they were allowed to lead the worship as teenagers and he was encouraged to preach. There was something in that where Peter would effectively say 'you are welcome here'. To whom do we say 'you are welcome' not just by our words but by whom we see at the front, who is invited to read, pray, preach...

Jonathan did feel a slight call to ordination then and after university, people would say 'why don't you get ordained?' Like many ordained people, there were a long list of reasons, not least wishing to experience something of life before ordination. He wished to qualify as a solicitor in the City and then move to a leafy village, as a village lawyer, then becoming ordained. However, he ended up spending 20 years at the law firm, specialising in employment law, becoming a partner in 2000, and he was feeling that whilst he loved his job, he still felt the call to ordination. A few years later, still struggling with the decision of whether to enter full-time training, he trained as a self supporting minister at St Augustine's. During this time, he carried on working and they had four children (all under 3 at one point, twins in the middle). He had a strong sense that God was calling him to non-stipendiary ministry and insisted at the selection process that he was going for permanent non stipendiary ministry, even though the DDO said no one does that any more in case you change your mind.

However, he insisted... he was ordained and suddenly felt a call to parish ministry! He then became Chief Operating Officer of a big law firm in the City and one day he just felt he had to leave as he couldn't hear what God was saying. He resigned, yet his firm gave him three months off to figure out what he wanted to do. He went to Ireland, sitting on a windy wet hill waiting for a sign, which didn't come. He decided to forget about it for two years, but when he turned on his PC back at the office, he realised God was calling him to parish ministry. He told the Bishop, who pointed out he was a permanent SSM. It took a long time to resolve the issues but he left some 3½ years later and became vicar at Gypsy Hill in South London, a fabulous place, a parish of high deprivation between two richer areas of Dulwich and Crystal Palace (and he transferred his allegiance from West Ham!).

He was passionate about being a vicar that welcomed and involved people but as an ex-lawyer he thought he'd attract the middle class, but they didn't come. They worked closely with the local people, working on food projects etc.

During Covid, they were joined by someone from HTB. It was a very diverse church in theology, history of churchmanship. On their Mission Action Plan they spoke about their diversity. The lady had a vision that there was a bulldozer coming through the church, opening it up to all nations, even though they already had 31 nationalities in the church. However, six months later, six Iranian asylum seekers went to the church and thankfully the welcomer that day spoke Farsi. Within six months, there were 50 Iranian asylum seekers coming to visit, and they spoke about what welcome was in that context, as an international fellowship. They wanted to explore what a welcoming church was to that community that was joining them. Over the last 2-3 years, post Covid, when they were trying to get the congregation back, he realised that they were thinking of the Iranians as 'other'. It was a challenge; who is the 'other'? They worked hard at engaging the Iranian fellowship into the Sunday morning congregation.

They managed to sing 'how great is our God' in Farsi and English. They tried to work out what it meant to include them and obtained funding for a curate to the Farsi community.

The unexpectedness of God's call – we want absolute certainty and clarity, even whilst knowing that frequently we have no idea where we're going, even when we wish to be strong and leading, God can change the direction and we need to trust Him. Thinking of Moses leading the people through the wilderness, He has something for them in the journey, and we need to include all, listening and seeking to follow God, knowing that He will deliver on His promises even though we so often fail.

2. Deanery Synod meeting 16th October 2024 at St Laurence's, Blackmore **Presentation on the Parish Share** by Canon Michaela Southworth, – Diocesan Secretary

Michaela has been in post as Chief Executive and Diocesan Secretary for 3½ years, running in the 'back office' of the Diocese on behalf of Bishop Guli, the Bishops and Archdeacons. This covers such items as maintaining stipends, vicarages, training, safeguarding, the faculty system and parish share.

Money is always a somewhat difficult subject. Michaela aimed to give a whistle stop tour of giving in the Church of England and what it pays for at parish, diocese, national, and theological colleges level. And a look at the Diocesan budget, how parish share works and what help is available. She quoted Rev'd Rob Merchant, "Nothing reveals the state of the heart like talking about money". Apart from the practicalities, it is part of our discipleship and response to God. Sometimes the parish share scheme can be challenging...

Giving and what it pays for

People's donations (giving and Gift Aid) faithfully given go towards the parish churches, which are their own charities. In return, the people receive their clergy, various services, and their church (gas bills etc). This also includes an element of training future clergy and retirement costs.

The parishes pay directly for the building (if they have one) and their staff costs.

The Diocese is an ecclesiastical body, a charity, a company, and it's all of us! However, for these purposes, 'Diocese' refers to the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF).

The DBF asks parishes for some of the donations received from the congregations, ie the parish share (also known as the family purse or common purse etc), which pays for:

1. Stipends (a statutory legal requirement)
2. Pension contributions
3. Vicarages
4. Training
5. Services to parishes (eg faculties, communications, safeguarding, Diocesan Office).

The National Church Institutions (NCIs) are the Archbishops, Lambeth etc, TEIs are colleges (Theological Education Institutions).

Votes 1-5 is the system that covers what the national church requires from the dioceses; to cover training ordinands, CHARM is a system for housing retired clergy in need.

In return, a grant from the Church Commissioners is distributed via the Archbishop of Canterbury to the dioceses as funds for LinC (3 Lowest Income Communities) and SMIBB4 (Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board);

- helping to be missional

- setting up new worshipping communities
- focussing on children and young people, diverse and a mixed ecology church.

We are fortunate to have this funding to apply for, and Michaela applies for all that she can.

Diocesan Budget and Expenditure

Diocesan Budget 2025 £'m Income 20.7 Expenditure (21.7) Deficit (1.0)

The deficit is smaller than it has been in the past and is not the worst of all the dioceses. Although it cannot be balanced at the moment, it is sustainable through reserves, although challenging, for a few years.

To balance the budget, our income needs to increase (communities growing and coming to faith) or bringing costs down, which is difficult. It is acknowledged how difficult these decisions are such as the trajectory of reducing clergy posts to 215 FTEs (ie stipendiaries, HfD, SSMs etc). Since 2016, it had been acknowledged that there were insufficient ordinands coming through, but since then it has become an economic reality. That plan comes to an end in 2025, at which point we should have achieved the 215 FTE figure.

However, despite the figure quoted, we would like to have as many clergy as we can afford, and to this end need parish share to be paid at a minimum of 93%. Our deanery share stands at 91% paid and is one of the better ones, for which Michaela thanked us. Payment of the parish share is essential to sustain parish ministry.

Diocesan Expenditure

Current ministry – clergy stipends, vicarage maintenance, clergy pensions, in service training and DBS checking.

Future ministry – ordinands and curates, TEI contributions, stipends and housing for curates

Services to parishes – safeguarding, archdeacons' stipends and housing, faculty system

Other – back office, NCI contribution (retirement housing, mission etc).

This doesn't add up! The blue and orange segments together are more than the parish share request.

Diocesan Income

100% - Parish Share 40.4% - Mutual Support Fund 9% - held for shortfall

Full share is never received but the Diocese is working on the basis of 85/86% share being received in 2025. It is hoped that this will rise to 93%, whether by income up (God willing) or costs coming down (need must).

Other income is received from the MSF, consisting of funding scraped together from various sources, such as LinC, Diocesan Endowment Fund, other funds, and vacancy savings. Vacancy relief is no longer apparent as an immediate discount but discounted over the years. There is also income from parochial fees, vicarage rents. £1m is held back for shortfall and a discount on parish share.

Figures seen in £m, the figures do not feel real, but dividing costs by posts and expressed as PM1, PM2 etc on the budget sheets, the cost of having a stipendiary vicar is £96k each. PM1 also includes employer's National Insurance, pension, and in service training. PM2 includes council tax, water rates, and building insurance (paid this way for tax reasons). The remainder is retained for repairs and maintenance, such as updating a property during a vacancy. Some vicarages are cheaper to maintain than others.

PM3 – it is a lot to train the next vicar! Are enough being trained? This needs to be forecast for when vacancies will arise, so posts and potential retirees are analysed. If they should go to another diocese after training, the receiving diocese needs to contribute. Also, it would be unfair for someone to leave secular employment and complete their training but

not have a post available at the end of their curacy. There are too few going forward for ordination and too few in the pipeline at the moment. Do encourage vocations!

PS1 – this covers archdeacons, safeguarding, faculties, the DAC, some chaplaincies (the place where they serve may not cover all the costs).

PS2 – half of this is national church, half is the Comms team etc at the Diocese who are necessary to making sure it all happens.

Parish Share

Michaela explained how the current system came to be, having replaced the old scheme where the formula had been open to changes that had become 'baked in' with special deals etc. It was unfair and not transparent.

In 2021-2, there had been a consultation, and an examination of other dioceses' schemes, essentially there were three models – voluntary offer, "here's the cost, please pay it", or a negotiated system. 520 people representing nearly 300 parishes also gave input. The proposed scheme was presented to Diocesan Synod in July 2022 and the new scheme came into effect in 2023. It is acknowledged that this had been painful for some with the increases. There had deliberately been no transition period, although we are in a period of adjustment as the shortfall is dealt with. There are leaflets etc on the website for the congregations, with detailed information if required. The old system was eventually inexplicable, but the new one can be explained.

There are three stages to determining parish share.

Stage 1 is the formula, the cost of the stipend, house etc x no of vicars. There is an element of deprivation allowance as per the census information, as well as a geographical element for dispersed communities. It is acknowledged that any formula would be wrong in some way, eg "you don't know our circumstances".

We are currently at Stage 2, where the deaneries need to respond to the Diocese. They are free to reallocate between the parishes as long as they reach the same total. Any parish is able to contribute more so long as their PCC agrees. It is meant to be open and transparent. At the end of November, the Deans tell the Diocese what has been agreed, and the payments begin in January.

Formula (at Deanery level)

As mentioned earlier, the cost per vicar is approx. £96k. This is based on where the priest serves, for example married clergy share a vicarage (a cost saving!), the clergy may be shared with another parish.

Parish Support and Other Costs are based on the size of the congregation, which may necessitate more contact than a smaller parish, but there may be more contributions. The 'Chris Copus' formula uses figures for Sunday attendance, average weekly attendance, and the Electoral Roll.

Everyone contributes 20% towards the MSF and receives something back from the MSF as a discount. The average parish share request per vicar is £71,020, which is less than the vicar's cost. The discounts for deprivation are up to 80%, and 20% for geographic reasons.

Our deanery is average.

For our Deanery, we currently have almost 15 stipendiaries, 17.5 houses and 16.75 trainees (to replace retirees or those moving on), and parish support etc.

This Deanery will cost approx. £1.5m and the share request is £1.1m so the contribution covered by mutual support is £311k.

However, should this not be achievable, we have to face that we cannot keep spending more than we have. We cannot rely on receiving £311k each year to cover our costs, what we can raise is what we have to spend. God willing, we will be able to raise enough, or

else we have to decide whether to train fewer curates, have fewer stipendiary clergy, fewer safeguarding staff... it could be anything. Bishop Guli is clear that the place for that discernment is in the parishes and deaneries as the people of God in that place.

If the parish share is unaffordable, what can we do? Make sure the congregations know why it is important and that it pays for priests, be honest about the budgets and what can be cut, invite participation on committees etc. It is challenging for our Deanery as well as others.

Michaela thanked our Deanery for paying 91% last year, meaning that more clergy here is sustainable. However, we all know that we cannot spend more than we have. It could be that this is a time of pruning rather than the growth we long for. We need to discern what to do with the resources God has given us in the Deanery.

What help is available?

There is a grant available via the Mission Opportunity Fund for missional work across parish boundaries, this is available to deaneries. The National Church funding (SMMIB) is aimed at becoming a younger, more diverse, mixed ecology church.

Question Time

Are our costs benchmarked against other dioceses?

It is difficult to compare our diocesan costs with other dioceses; we have fewer central costs per parish as it is a large diocese. For some time, a saving had been made by not having a Finance Director, but having one brought in total return accounting resulting in additional income. What is a false economy vs a good spend? The costs are benchmarked, larger dioceses tend to have lower costs per parish.

We have heard about those who can't pay, but what about those who won't pay?

And where does the Ephesian Fund fit in?

Michaela acknowledged that people hold deeply held convictions. Parish share can be paid through the Ephesian Fund or Good Stewards Trust. There are conversations ongoing with these parishes. Some are withholding or paying for the vicarage only, amongst other reasons. There are many issues but unity is important, as is fairness. Bishop's Council are minded that if there is no contribution, then there would be an issue in placing a curate there. Should they be part of a SMMIB bid? In the longer term, it would be hard to justify licensing a stipendiary priest there. A hard conversation.

Regarding the Ephesian Fund, the monies are received and as the figures show, all that is paid in parish share does not even cover the cost of the clergy, so it is not going elsewhere.

Last Synod, we had a presentation on NetZero/Eco church, with the 2030 target. The PCCs are responsible for the church buildings, the Diocese for the vicarages. Where is the flow of money to come from to achieve this goal? Can we afford carbon neutral?

It is acknowledged that carbon neutrality is very expensive. Parishes need to apply for all the available grants. There are some pilots going ahead in some vicarages to see costs vs outcome, to aspire to carbon neutral by 2030 but despite what General Synod Says, Michaela said we cannot be compelled to do this if it would mean fewer stipendiary priests. There is an element of the budget going towards this. Hopefully progress will be made and there would be an effect on clergy wellbeing not putting up with cold and draughty vicarages.

Is the number of years' service vs training balancing out?

The Diocese looks at headcount, how many ordained people are serving, therefore how many to train between now and their retirement. There is a difference between headcount and FTE numbers.

It is noted that parish share remains the same during an interregnum, but why do parishes need to pay the costs of the house during the vacancy?

If there is a long vacancy (over two years), the share will reduce. The Diocese does not want vacancies to last that long as often congregations may go elsewhere. If the vicarage is likely to be empty for at least a year, the Diocese do attempt to rent them out, although some councils do make it difficult. However, the house still needs to be maintained, and hopefully the rental income will help with these costs as well as going into the MSF to fund parish discounts.

How is the number and distribution of stipends decided and how does it work if a parish wishes to contribute more?

The Diocese is coming to the end of the period of transition in 2025 and the Archdeacons need to decide what to do from then onwards. We have as many stipendiaries as we can afford so this is a conversation between the Area Deans and the Archdeacons around fairness and balance. There has to be local discernment and it is a work in progress.

Why is the cost of ministry not the same across the board and why is there the same charge per vicarage?

The main difference in ministry cost is having a vicar and whether he/she has a stipend and house. Some parishes share vicars. Larger congregations will have a higher parish support cost.

It has been commented that the system is complex; is there any way to refine its simplicity?

There is a tension between fairness and simplicity; this was covered in the consultation. Whilst the system is not perfect, hopefully the explanation this evening has helped. Mutual support is complicated!

On the Charities Commission website, it looks like the Diocese has a £2m profit. This is not helpful...

Michaela explained that this evening's presentation refers to the general account. In charity accounting, there are four types of money: general, designated, restricted, and endowment. Restricted would be monies given for church schools and education, endowment includes the benefice houses which the Diocese does not own, the liability puts these on the balance sheet and the stipends endowment fund.

What does it cost to train a (potential) member of clergy?

A lot depends on the training route used, and whether curacy or self-supporting. The TEIs are struggling; there are fewer ordinands wishing to train. Nationally the Ministry Division is working with colleges to see how many are needed and whether the balance is right between residential/in situ or other ways. A lot depends on the family circumstances. Residential is a better experience for some but the most expensive, then it depends on if the curate needs a stipend and house or is self-supporting. We currently have 36 stipendiary curates.

Spreading the resources and having the number of clergy that we can afford has a problem in that spreading clergy more thinly results not only in burnout, but a parish sees so little of their priest that they think what's the point; it's a downwards spiral. The people that are left spend all their time and energy keeping the lights on that they don't have the capacity for mission. There are difficult decisions to make to move away from a strategy with a proven track record of failure.

Michaela acknowledged that the impact on clergy wellbeing is real and present, as well as the impact on missional energy.

However, for the last ten years, we have had more stipendiary ministry than we have been able to afford but it has not resulted in missional growth. If we could raise more income

then it would be great to have more vicars, but the funds have to come from somewhere. There is hope in SMMIB bids, what is God calling us to? Let's ask for the national funding. Parish share is what is keeping vicars in parishes – tell the congregations.

The St John's representatives to Deanery Synod are **Jill Brant, Tim Vander-Hogg and Janet Whitehouse.**

Diocesan Synod

Report 15. 06. 2024

We met on the feast day of Evelyn Underhill who founded our Retreat House at Pleshey, and worship was based around this.

Synod started with the presidential address from Bishop Guli. She reminded us of our role in the General Election, particularly prayer and participating and was pleased to note that several churches were hosting hustings. She also urged us to encourage people to vote as this is a sign of hope in the future. There continue to be meetings about the use of LLF and also for supporting those who feel uneasy about the process and the prayers for same sex blessing services.

The diocese has over 600 church buildings to maintain and this continues to be a challenge. There is a fund for mission from the central church and deaneries in the Barking area are looking at how this can be rolled out, looking for further funding across the other deaneries in the diocese by the end of 2025.

Finally Bishop Guli reflected on her visit to the Holy Land recently which highlighted the massive problems there. She called us to all strive for peace in our communities, churches and home life and to seek to always show integrity.

The Net Carbon Zero by 2030 policy was discussed. This is on track at present but only because of considerable efforts by various people. Several churches have received the Bronze Eco awards (including St John's and St Alban's) and Epping Upland is working towards Silver status. The diocese has a Carbon Zero officer who can advise on green issues such as solar panels, which might be a consideration for St John's. There was a conversation about drug blister packs, which are very difficult to recycle and are not necessary for everyone.

The financial situation of the diocese has improved greatly from 3 years ago when we were in deep financial trouble: we are even hoping for a small surplus in 2025. The Parish Share needs to be paid above 90% in the next 5 years to maintain this situation. The improvement in finances partly due to reduction in stipendiary posts: if Parish Share reaches over 90% there should not need to be any further reduction in paid clergy. We do get some funding from the central Church but this is usually for new/different posts.

Diana Lowry & Tim Vander Hogg

REPORT OF THE FABRIC COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES 2024

This report presents some of the activities and actions undertaken by the Fabric Committee with regard to the maintenance and improvement of the Church building and St John's House throughout 2024. Various meetings have taken place during 2024 to discuss and plan these activities and actions.

The main areas of works and planning have included the Stained Glass Window Protection, new Boiler Heating Installation and the new Automatic Glass Entrance doors. Other works have been undertaken and some of these are also mentioned below.

St John's Church

Transfiguration Chapel Stained Glass Window Protection

The beautiful Transfiguration Chapel-stained glass window remains unprotected. The views of our insurers, Ecclesiastical, have been sought and confirmation has been received in writing that window guard protection is not a requirement of our Parish Plus policy and therefore no further action is required in respect of this window unless PCC deem otherwise. I have given the PCC Secretary a copy of their email so that any future enquiries concerning this matter can be dealt with appropriately,

Boiler Heating Installation

In response to the 2023 boiler room flood and subsequent damage to the old boiler a new system was installed and commissioned in August 2024. The Fabric Committee oversaw the installation of this new, energy-efficient heating system which includes an element of future proofing to the system. This upgrade not only improves comfort during services but also reduces the church's carbon footprint. Most of the cost of this installation and associated works were covered by our insurers for which we are very grateful.

New Automatic Glass Entrance Doors

Planning has been ongoing and quotes are currently being waited on. This action has been carried out with some difficulty as quotations are difficult to obtain from builder companies some of whom do not reply to our requests for costings.

Re lamping of high level spots and other lights

The replacement of the high level spots and lamps is scheduled to be undertaken as soon as possible in early 2025.

2022 Quinquennial Report

The 2022 Quinquennial Report continues to receive the Fabric Committee's attention and will continue to do so during 2025 to ensure that the required elements of it are addressed.

Other works and areas of maintenance receiving attention

Other areas which continue to receive the attention of the Fabric Committee include the ongoing Utility Warehouse dispute as well as the planning of the Deep Clean Saturdays. Various small areas of maintenance work undertaken include plaster repairs, painting of the exterior down pipes, woodworm treatment of congregation chairs, renewal and/or refixing of floor blocks throughout the Church as well as the provision of an electric hand drier in the toilet area.

Numerous other minor works have been undertaken by the Fabric Committee and Volunteers during the Maintenance Saturdays with more urgent needs and repairs undertaken during the week..

Planning continues to be undertaken by the Fabric Committee at its meetings with future Church projects including possible refurbishment of the toilet area and the electrification of the clock being considered.

St John's House **Dormer Roof Repairs**

The Fabric Committee identified several areas on St John's House dormer roofs that require urgent attention due to leaks and weathering. Quotations for the required works are being sought and the quotes will be considered once three quotes have been received. It is envisaged the reinforcement of the roof structure to prevent future damage may also be required.

Interior Refurbishment

The interior of St John's House will need some attention to make good the decoration etc. This may include repainting, repairing fixtures, and updating the furnishings to create a more welcoming and functional environment for staff and visitors.

The parquet flooring in the Sid Miller room will need attention during this year.

In addition, the central heating system is requiring more and more attention and may well require works carried out to it to return it to efficient working during 2025.

Garden and Grounds Maintenance

The gardens and grounds surrounding St John's House continue to need be maintained with special emphasis on the rear garden (which has received total clearance of the overgrown shrubs etc), Remembrance Garden and front garden. These areas rapidly become overgrown and the Fabric Committee thank those volunteers who help us to maintain the gardens in an effort to keep them neat and tidy.

Conclusion

This report provides an overview of the workings of the Fabric Committee during 2024 but does not necessarily detail every job the Fabric Committee has planned, undertaken or organised to be undertaken.

The Fabric Committee remains committed to the preservation and enhancement of both the Church building and St John's House. Through careful planning and execution of these projects, we aim to ensure that these properties continue to serve our community effectively and stand as proud testaments to our heritage.

I extend my gratitude to all those who have supported these efforts and look forward to continued collaboration in maintaining and improving our beloved buildings and grounds.

Nicholas Wold

Chair, Fabric Committee St John the Baptist Church January 2025

Flower Guild at St John's Church

St John' Church Flower Guild Annual Report 2024/5



Serving on the Flower Guild is a personal and meaningful way for interested parishioners to glorify God by giving their time and creativity to decorate His house for congregational worship. We give thanks to God that throughout the year our small guild was able to arrange and water vibrant arrangements for the nave and Lady chapel, giving us many opportunities to greet, answer questions, and on-request support, those visiting and seeking comfort in God's house.

St John's worship space was transformed for the Easter and Christmas festivals, as well as the November induction service of our new Team Rector. The guild also supported the life of our Church family and wider community: in the preparation of 80 hand-tied Mothering Sunday posies; assisting the Church Warden with the Easter Garden; arranging at the Lambourne End Church flower festival; and fundraising £635 at the Christmas Tree festival stall of hand-made table decorations and wreaths.

This behind-the-scenes ministry was made possible thanks to God's provision of generous congregational donations and the dedication and donations of an ever-diminishing group of creative volunteers. We celebrate and give thanks for Eileen Kelly, who in her 90's retired this year from the guild after more than 20 years of faithful service; for Sue and Karl Lane who are moving to be nearer to family, your support has been immeasurable, our blessings go with you.

The remaining six guild members: Sara McLean (Guild Leader); Angela Peachey (Keyholder); Pauline Barlow; Marion Joslin; Karen Laing; and Ruth Scott, are eager to share our knowledge, skills and artistry with new members to secure this ministry for the future. A desire to learn, and a heart for creatively taking an active part in your Church family is all that is needed. Please speak to Sara about getting involved.

Sara McLean, Guild Leader

HEART OF EPPING UPDATE - January 8th 2025

In our most recent discussions with some new officers from EFDC, we have encountered a significant setback. The basis on which the Council had been prepared to proceed had always included an approximate 50 – year Lease-back arrangement. Given their current finances and new administrative uncertainties, and possibly difficulties relating to Qualis (their development company), the Council now find this period cannot be feasible – they talked about 100 years! After explaining to them that such a period would be unlikely to meet our needs and gain support, and some negotiations, we have to report that the collaborative project with EFDC is no longer a viable option.

A meeting was held this morning with myself, Nick Wold, Peter Byatt, and the Rev'd John Fry to consider alternative ways forward. There are many issues and constraints to consider, but we know that a version of the project remains essential for the appropriate development and future of the work of the Church in our community. Thus we intend to bring forward a recommendation to the PCC in the near future.

With sadness and apologies for the disappointment this news will inevitably bring to many.

Roger Lowry

Monday Morning Market Coffee

Thanks to our amazing band of volunteers, this has been able to continue to run every Monday Morning (except Bank Holidays). The Team is committed in serving our community and arrive at 9.15 to set up, then serve refreshments, lend a listening ear, and clear up afterwards.

We serve Tea, Coffee and biscuits and provide an accessible space in the Church for anyone to pop in and revive themselves with refreshments and a chance to sit down and catch up with old and new friends. We are open between 10am and midday, come rain or shine.

We have been pleased to welcome several more volunteers onto the rota, meaning that most weeks, we have three people serving, allowing for some flexibility, and being on duty once every five weeks.

Most weeks we are delighted to serve around 25 plus people, most of whom regularly turn up, there are others who turn up occasionally and still others who are just passing through and see the sign outside. It is lovely to meet, talk and minister to our Monday morning congregation and be able to offer this to our community.

The refreshments are provided free of charge with a donations plate for anyone who wishes to give (no pressure), averaging @£25 each week. All donations go to the Church funds.

If you're around on a Monday Morning, please pop in, we'd love to see you.

Kate Collin

Mothers' Union Annual report – Epping Branch

What is Mothers' Union? Mothers' Union is a Christian charity that has supported families worldwide for nearly 150 years. Founded by Mary Sumner in 1876, it has grown into an international movement with over 4 million members in 83 countries.



Guided by faith, our members work at the grassroots level to combat poverty, inequality, and injustice. Through parenting, literacy, and community development programmes, we bring hope and practical support to millions.

In the UK, Mothers' Union consists of a central charity in London and local branches linked to parishes and dioceses.

The Epping branch Mothers' Union We are a diverse, active group dedicated to supporting family life, empowering women, and tackling gender inequality and gender-based violence. We also promote equity and women's participation in our communities. Our 16 members play an active role in St John the Baptist Church and the local community. We proudly support the Mothers' Union RISE UP campaign against domestic abuse and were one of only three branches in the country to achieve bronze, silver, and gold awards last July. Alongside our advocacy work, we support each other in friendship and Christian fellowship. New members are always welcome—regardless of gender, marital status, or whether you have children.

Interested in joining or learning more? Contact us via Facebook (@eppmu) or email stjohn.eppmu@gmail.com.

Natalie Kelberman (outgoing Branch Leader/Chair) & Catherine Smith (Vice Chair)

Music at St John's

The choir continues to support the worship at St John's at the morning services and monthly choral evensong. As ever, the highlights of the year were the Advent and Christmas carol services together with the music at Maundy Thursday and Easter Day. It was also lovely to welcome John into our midst with a combined choir from the Epping and Theydon parishes.

I would like to thank all the choir members for their continued support and commitment to the choir. Without that commitment, it would be impossible to maintain the music at weekly services. Having said that, although we are blessed to have a number of "guest" singers who help out at evensong, we are beginning to suffer from low numbers on a Sunday morning. This puts a lot of pressure on the loyal few so I am determined to try and rectify this over the coming months (it may take longer!). If anyone in the congregation thinks it might be for them but is unsure, please do speak to me and I can explain what's involved in and what skills are needed.

On a positive note, it was good to welcome Martine into the adults' choir and Abigail into the junior choir. Again, children from the age of 7 are most welcome to come and give it a go. Please speak to me...it's a great musical education and the children have a lot of fun too!

Congratulations must go to Elliot and Samuel who passed their Voice for Life Silver Award (formerly Bishop's Chorister Award) with flying colours last year. The awards are difficult and both boys put in a lot of work to achieve their success. Sadly, Samuel's voice is now breaking but we hope that he may come back to choir in the not too distant future. His brother, Ollie, will soon be going off to university and I'm sure we would all like to thank them for all that they have given to the choir over so many years. Thanks, too, to the Upfront band and, whilst not my responsibility, I know that what the Prayer & Praise band and the Taizé group offer is much appreciated within the church.

Finally, it is good that the church is used regularly by outside choirs and orchestras. Please do support the forthcoming Saturday morning coffee concerts too.

Simon Winters, Director of Music

PARISH ARCHIVES

During 2024 my work on the archive records has been greatly reduced due to my other Church commitments. I continue to receive archive material and these records will be sorted and archived during 2025. These records have been found in people's attics and homes.

With the gradual establishment of an organised filing and retention system I have been able to provide answers to questions that I have been asked as well as providing documents that people have asked to see from the archive.

Work will continue in 2025 on the deduplication of various meeting minute records and bank statements as well as those papers that can be destroyed being destroyed in accordance with the Keep or Bin, The Care of Your Parish Records 2009 guidance booklet. I also fully expect to continue the transfer of appropriate records to the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford for safe keeping.

Finally, please always ask if there is a document or information you would like to view from the archive. I will happily endeavour to meet your request. **Nick Wold, Archivist**

PASTORAL CARE TEAM REPORT

The PCT (Pastoral Care Team) have continued to meet regularly in person and this is one of its strengths for building team work, keeping continuity, communication, trust, thus growing personally and pastorally.

We have a steady 15- 18 members in this team.

A strength is that it is a Team Ministry with members from all three churches.

The team has been conscientious in equipping ourselves with various pastoral trainings and, indeed, 3 more of the PCT completed the Diocesan Pastoral Care Part 1 course and to date this is 8 people who have completed this.

We are conscientious about adhering to safeguarding requirements and are guided and led by our Safeguarding Officer.

Ministry to people who find themselves without a roof over their head has continued as does the provision of 'Grab Bags'.

The Information Folder put together to signpost people to relevant community services, as appropriate, has recently been updated and has been well used.

We now have capacity to minister to 4 Residential Homes and this includes delivering Church Services, pastoral care, end of life, Home Communion and fellowship.

Last report showed that we had delivered 40+ services and this year we will be delivering 63+

Our church services and ministry to people living with dementia continues to be informed by people living with dementia.

We will be delivering our 3rd Forget me Not Songs of Praise and this has become an annual event, requested by participants.

We hosted the 2024 Dementia Fair in partnership with the Epping Forest Dementia Friendly Community.

Our 3 churches continue to work towards becoming dementia friendly churches.

We hosted the Annual Bereavement Service and provided refreshments.

Church Mice invited us to join in with them and this we are doing as capacity allows.

This ministry also includes home visits and also Home Communion.

Apologies to the PCT if I have omitted any aspect of this ministry.

Here I give thanks to God for each and everyone of us, for bringing us together and for all the 'can-do' and positive energy.

All our endeavours are underpinned by prayer-Thanks be to God!

Jo Waller (Team Pastoral Assistant)

PLEDGED GIVING & GIFT AID

Our Pledged Giving scheme along with the Gift Aid tax recovered always provides a large proportion of the funds needed to support our church. At present there are 53 members in the scheme who give monthly with envelopes, give directly through a bank standing order or give through the Parish Giving Scheme. This year we have had £19,264.65 back, this includes £2000 that I was able to claim the full amount from the loose collections. I would like to thank all who give to the church in this way and to others that give their time and love to our church.

Marian Winters

Prayer and Praise

Our Prayer & Praise Services have been ongoing now for the last 7 years, including through the various lockdowns of the pandemic times, when we found a way to record the services remotely and then put them out on line at the usual time and day each month.

For the last couple of years, they have been held in St. John's each month on the 4th Sunday at 6:00pm, though on occasion, we have moved them due to schedules of other services, such as those during Advent and Christmas.

The services are led by our Modern Worship Band, playing contemporary songs of worship. The congregation is encouraged to join in with all aspects of the service in any way they feel comfortable; be it standing, sitting, clapping, singing, a combination of any of those, or none. So, the band will lead the service, but it really is for everyone to join us in worship in whatever way they feel comfortable.

Our projector and large screen are set up at the front of the church to display the song lyrics and the texts used in the service and to help signpost everyone through the service.

As well as sung worship, the service will usually include a short talk and passage from scripture, and also includes a time of Prayer Ministry. All of these elements of the service are coordinated under a central theme for each service.

As is the case with our other main services, the Prayer and Praise Services are live-streamed over the St John's YouTube and Facebook sites.

As well as the regular Prayer & Praise Services, the Worship Band have also taken part in Wedding Services, Confirmation Services, Priest Ordination Services and, on occasion, our main 9:20am Sunday Service.

Looking forward; we have been considering ways to make our Prayer & Praise Services as accessible to as many people as possible. So, we are trying for 2025, having our services only during the lighter Sunday evenings, and we will therefore be providing our services on 4th Sunday of each month from March through to September only. We are still considering how we might provide a service during the Advent/Christmas period, so look out for any announcements regarding that.

We look forward to worshipping with you at our Prayer & Praise Services during the year ahead.

Steve Carter

**The Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping
Registered Charity No 1128001
Financial Statements
for the year ending 31 December 2024**

**The Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping
31 December 2024**

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**Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ending 31 December 2024**

Administrative Information

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist is situated at the corner of High Street and St John's Road, Epping. The correspondence address is St John's House, St John's Road, Epping, CM16 5DN. The telephone number is 01992 579935, and the E-mail address is teamadmin@eppinganglicans.org.uk. The church has a web-site at www.eppinganglicans.org.uk which gives an overview of activities.

The church is part of the Epping District Team Ministry, which also includes All Saints', Epping Upland and St Albans Church Coopersale.

Structure, governance and management

Responsibility for the church's activities lies with the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC operates a child protection policy in line with the recommendations of the Diocese of Chelmsford, and has an officer responsible for organising DBS checks, where appropriate.

Objectives and Activities

Epping PCC has the responsibility of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. In addition to the church building, it also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church Hall and St John's House, both in St John's Road, Epping.

**The Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping**

Charity Trustees

The Charity Trustees are elected members of the PCC plus co-opted and ex officio members. The full PCC met on 5 occasions in 2024. Membership and attendance at meetings is summarised below.

Name	Attendance meetings held 2023/4
John Fry - Rector - Ex Officio - Chair	2
Jessica Bostock - Asstt Priest	3
Marian Winters - Churchwarden	4
Diana Lowry LLM	5
Jill Brant - PCC secretary	5
Peter Byatt - Treasurer	4
Nick Wold - Safeguarding	4
Jo Waller - Pastoral assistant	5
Margaret Fowler	4
Janet Whitehouse	4
Simon Winters - Director of Music	5
Shereen Nimmo	2
Maria Surman	0
Jane Agnew	4
David Siebler	3
Tim Valder Hogg	5
Sue Lane	5
Steve Carter	4
Natalie Kelberman	5

There was a total of 5 meetings of the PCC during 2024 (January-December 2024). During that year, some people moved away, some completed their term of office in April, and others took up a term of office in April. The numbers above show the total attendance for each PCC member during the year.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping

Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll for St John's Epping stands at 144 in December 2024. This is made up of 98 who are resident in the parish and 46 which are non-resident.

Attendance at Services and Statistics

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
* Usual Sunday Attendance				114	105	115
* Usual Mid-week Attendance				62	50	N/A
* Usual Weekly Communicants				102	70	N/A
Easter Day Communicants	217	0	136	140	143	39
(Total Attendance)	259		158	174	196	139
Christmas Midnight and Day Communicants	310	113	138	211	1231	109
(Total Attendance)	427	130	174	271	148	177
Carol Service	310	130	124	167	170	167
Crib Service	403	0	125	180	160	187
Baptisms	27	12	17	29	39	59
Weddings	6	5	8	6	6	0
Blessings	0	0	1	0	0	0
Church Funerals	8	6	11	12	12	3
Burial of Ashes	0	0	1	0	1	0
Confirmations	6	0	8	2	0	0

The changes made to the way these figures are recorded is to bring St John's into line with the data requested by the national Church.

**The Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping**

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Parochial Church Council in respect of the
for the Year Ending 31st December 2024**

I report on the accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set on the following pages.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

The charity's trustees 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

It is my responsibility to examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;

To follow procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and

To state whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiners Statement.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. 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 the management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no material matters have come to my attention gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the to be reached.

David Courtier FMAAT AATQB for and on behalf of:

Community360
Winsley's House, High Street, Colchester,
Essex, CO1 1UG




The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping
Statement of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st December 2024

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Incoming Resources					
Pledged giving and parish giving scheme	71,607	-	-	71,607	80,765
Loose collections and donations	15,128	-	-	15,128	11,699
Tax recovered	14,490	6,839	1,525	22,854	23,024
Fundraising and other income	1,890	16,612		18,502	9,839
Legacies & donations	462	830	1,000	2,292	63,210
Investment income	184	-	-	184	184
Rent from land and buildings	28,096	-	-	28,096	26,535
Bank interest	780	-	-	780	73
Events income	2,133	-	-	2,133	26,737
Sundries	791			791	2,040
Insurance - Boiler	10,440	-	-	10,440	-
Total Income	146,001	24,281	2,525	172,807	244,106
Resources Expended					
Utilities	9,388	-	-	9,388	28,392
Insurance	9,227		-	9,227	10,574
Contrib. to Team Ministry Costs	8,040	22,500	-	30,540	8,629
Bank Charges	124	-	-	124	1,206
Study materials	283	-	-	283	-
Diocese (Parish share 2023)	11,720	-	-	11,720	76,060
Diocese (Parish share)	70,000	-	-	70,000	-
Cleaner	1,660	-	-	1,660	397
Printing	756	-	-	756	814
Events - Verger	145	-	-	145	282
Licenses etc	3,579	-	-	3,579	2,057
Maintenance	4,048	9,124	1,916	15,088	11,800
Sacristy expenses	1,896	-	-	1,896	1,749
Flowers	-	387	-	387	-
Independent Examiners Fee	534	-	-	534	512
Donations to charity	-	-	-	-	-
Music honararium and organists	9,567	-	-	9,567	8,997
Sundry other expenses	2,064	-	708	2,772	3,400
Insurance - boiler	20,885	-	-	20,885	-
Tree Festival	-	20,933	-	20,933	17,510
Total Expenditure	153,916	52,944	2,624	209,484	172,379
Excess of income over expenditure	(7,915)	(28,663)	(99)	(36,677)	71,727
Transfer between funds	465	(465)	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	(7,450)	(29,128)	(99)	(36,677)	71,727
Total funds brought forward	36,016	168,080	39,719	243,815	172,088
Total funds carried forward	28,566	138,952	39,620	207,138	243,815

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping
Statement of Assets and liabilities as at 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Monetary Assets					
Bank balances	28,566	138,952	39,620	207,138	243,815
Total cash at bank and in hand	28,566	138,952	39,620	207,138	243,815
Cash funds	28,566	138,952	39,620	207,138	243,815
Non monetary assets and liabilities					
Fixed Assets					
Tangible	541,648			541,648	541,648
Investment	4,597			4,597	5,455
	546,245	-	-	546,245	547,103
Current Assets					
Debtors	12,656	-	-	12,656	-
Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due in one year	497	35,931	-	36,428	8,280
Net assets	558,404	(35,931)	-	522,473	538,823

Approved by Epping Parochial Church Council on 10th July 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

 	Marian Winter John Fry	 (Rector)
	Amanda Theodorou	(Treasurer)

**The Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping**

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31st December 2024**

1. Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2015 together with applicable accounting standards and Statement of Recommended Accounting Practice; Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis

The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the Parochial Church Council is responsible in law.

1.1.1 Funds

Endowment funds. The Parochial Church Council has no endowment funds.

Restricted funds represent donations or grants received for a specific object or invited by the Parochial Church Council for a specific object. The funds may only be expended on the specific object for which they were given. Any balance remaining unspent at the end of each year must be carried forward as a balance on the fund. The Parochial Church Council does not usually invest separately for each fund. Where there is no separate investment, interest is apportioned to individual funds on an average balance basis.

Unrestricted funds are general funds which can be used for ordinary Parochial Church Council purposes.

Designated funds are allocated to specific projects by the Parochial Church Council, which has the right to reassign these funds to other designated funds or to unrestricted funds.

1.1.2 Incoming Resources

Planned giving, collections and donations are recognised when received. Grants and legacies are accounted for when the Parochial Church Council receives the amounts due. Amounts received specifically for mission (e.g. retiring collections) are dealt with as restricted funds. Dividends are accounted for when received. All other income is recognised when it is receivable. All incoming resources are accounted for gross.

1.1.3 Resources expended

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over. The Diocesan parish share is accounted when paid. All other expenditure is recognised when it is paid and is accounted for gross.

**The Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping**

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31st December 2024**

1.2 Fixed Assets

Consecrated and benefice property is not included in the accounts in accordance with Part 1, Chapter 2 S.10(2) (a) of the Charities Act 2011. (For the record, the insurance valuation of the church building and contents is £9.7 million). (2) (a) of the Charities Act 2011. (For the record, the insurance valuation of the church building and contents is £9.7 million).

Movable church furnishings held by the vicar and churchwardens on special trust for the Parochial Church Council and which require a faculty for disposal are inalienable property, listed in the church's inventory, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time). Capital purchases of less than £10,000 are written off in the year of purchase and such items are not valued in the financial statements.

The title of St John's House and the Church Hall (also known as the Church Rooms) are held by a Diocesan authority on behalf of the Parochial Church Council. As these buildings are used by the Parochial Church Council in its continuing work they are not investment properties but are functional properties used by the Parochial Church Council in undertaking its activities. As such, under the accounting regulations, they should be included in the balance sheet as fixed assets. The freehold land on which St John's House stands is covered by restrictions which limit its use to certain activities associated with the Church of England. Thus it is likely to have little value in a potential sale to a Third Party. However, for accounting purposes it is given a notional value of £50,000 in the balance sheet. If the Hall were to be sold, any money arising would be held by the Diocese on behalf of the Parochial Church Council for use on an agreed project. Although the building is over 100 years old and fully depreciated, the freehold land on which it stands was valued on 24th February 2015 at £491,648 and the Hall is now included in the balance sheet at this notional value.

There is only one investment, in City of Manchester Consolidated Irredeemable Stock, which is valued at its fixed amount of £4,597.

1.3 Reserves Policy

Under the 2008 Regulations we are required to have a policy for reserves in our general fund. In order that the church may carry out its mission, the Parochial Church Council takes the view that the reserves should be as small as possible compatible with ensuring we meet our cash flow needs and likely contingencies. Whilst a full risk analysis has not been carried out, it is prudent to have reserves to cover likely equipment breakdowns (e.g. church boiler) or loss of income (e.g. a major donor with gift aid leaving the Parish). The reserve for the general fund is set at £20,000. However the Parochial Church Council considers that paying the Parish Share in full is more important than maintaining a particular level of reserves.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping
Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2024

Restricted and Designated Funds

Restricted and Designated funds are held in the Heart of Epping Appeal, Friends, and Restricted bank accounts. For simplification the totals are summarised here.

	Brought forward 2023 £	Received 2024	Spent 2024 £	Transferred 2024 £	Carried forward 31st December 2024 £
<u>Restricted Funds</u>					
Organ	564	429	-	-	993
Piano	1,426	-	-	-	1,426
Children's Group & Little Lambs	306	46	(52)	-	300
Flower guild	582	110	(387)	-	305
Choir	580	-	-	-	580
Old Balances	465	-	-	(465)	-
Clock	500	-	-	-	500
Church Mice	302	-	-	-	302
Bell Fund	1,893	357	(816)	-	1,434
Restricted Legacies	55,500	4,500	(23,715)	-	36,285
Heart of Epping Appeal	85,955	3,717	(6,850)	-	82,822
Friends of St John's	1,771	70	-	-	1,841
Tree Festival	14,997	14,927	(20,933)	-	8,991
Projector Fund	417	-	-	-	417
Prayer and Praise Fund	997	-	-	-	997
Music Ministry fund	1,513	-	(191)	-	1,322
Hardship Fund	312	125	-	-	437
Total Restricted Funds	168,080	24,281	(52,944)	(465)	138,952
<u>Designated Funds</u>					
Designated Legacies	19,719	2,525	(2,624)	-	19,620
Reserve Fund	20,000	-	-	-	20,000
Total Designated Funds	39,719	2,525	-2,624	-	39,620

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping

Bank Balances

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	Total 2024 £	2023 £
General Account	£28,566	£10,391		£38,957	£33,693
Heart of Epping		£82,822		£82,822	£85,955
Friends and deposits		£1,841		£1,841	£1,770
Restricted Account		£43,898	£39,620	£83,518	£122,397
Totals	£28,566	£138,952	£39,620	£207,138	£243,815

**The Parochial Church Council
of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Epping**

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Parochial Church Council in respect of the
for the Year Ending 31st December 2024**

I report on the accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set on the following pages.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

The charity's trustees 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

It is my responsibility to examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;

To follow procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and

To state whether any particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiners Statement.

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. 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 the management committee concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no material matters have come to my attention gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the to be reached.

David Courtier FMAAT AATQB for and on behalf of:

Community360
Winsley's House, High Street, Colchester,
Essex, CO1 1UG

