



**2023 Annual Reports
presented to the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
of the
Parish of Widford
on
21st April 2024**

WIDFORD PARISH PCC

AIM AND PURPOSES

St Mary's Church and Church of the Holy Spirit, Widford PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Stephanie Gillingham, in promoting in the parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of the Widford Parish Centre, Forest Drive, Widford.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC is committed to encouraging people to worship with us at our different services and to become part of our parish church family. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer, Bible reading and teaching, music and the sacraments.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community.

Our wardens have led us in managing the fabric of our properties, for which we are very grateful.

OUR PARISH MISSION STATEMENT READS:

We want to grow:

- To be more like Jesus
- Knowing Christ together
- Loving one another
- Serving others
- Being at the heart of our community.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS

This year has felt a return to a more normal pattern, something that we experienced before covid. We have continued to record the services to our Facebook page so that people who are unwell or are unable to attend can watch from home. We have continued to share Communion together by intinction, (Priest dips the wafer into the Communion wine) and offer the cup for those who would like to take the wine that way.

Prayer: We continue to meet for prayer every Wednesday morning at 9.15am at Church of the Holy Spirit. This gives a good start to the day as well as a good time of fellowship as well as talking to Father God. We would be pleased to welcome anyone who would like to join us. We also meet for prayer on the first Monday in the month at 7.00pm. This is an opportunity to pray for ourselves, for parish activities and the needs of the world. We also meet on the third Monday in the month at 7pm just before the PCC meeting. This is an opportunity to pray for the work of our parish before decisions are made.

Prophecy: Throughout the last year, some 'Words of Knowledge' have been received during services. These are words from God which are relevant and helpful to one or more people but not the church as a whole. This has been encouraging.

We have also received a few prophecies, briefly summarized as follows:

God has challenged us to rise up in his name, to take up the powerful sword of the Spirit, His word, as darker times are approaching and we will need to stand firm in Jesus.

Jesus will light our way and empower us with all that is needed and we will see Him move in powerful ways.

There are people around us who are struggling and fearful; Jesus wants to lead us to them and wants us to share His words of hope with them and to love and comfort them so that they might know how much He loves them.

We each need to seek and listen to Jesus for His way forward then, full of the Holy Spirit, go forward joyfully and in faith in His name.

KNOWING CHRIST TOGETHER

Within the Framework of the Services:

At St. Marys worship has followed our normal pattern. Holy Communion on the first and third Sundays of each month. Morning prayer on the second Sunday and All Age Worship on the fourth Sunday.

At Church of the Holy Spirit: Our Worship pattern follows All Age Café-style Worship on the 1st Sunday each month, Holy Communion on the 4th Sunday and Morning Worship on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday each month.

St. Mary's have a morning prayer on the fifth Sunday and CHS have a Café Style Worship.

	Average Attendance	Baptisms	SM 3 CHS 4
St. Mary's	28+2 children	Weddings	3
		Wedding Blessings	0
Church of the Holy Spirit	26+2 children	Funerals at St. Mary's Interment of Ashes Funerals Overall	1 1 4
Messy Church	45	Confirmations	2

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

The Pastoral Group

A small group of our parishioners who have a particular care for the well-being of those with whom we have contact, meets three times each year, for mutual support, sharing and prayer.

The group includes Revd Stephanie Gillingham, Shirley Deering, Barbara Jones, Sheila Schofield, Hilary Selwood, Jess Wiseman, Gill and Peter Wood, Pam Myall, and towards the end of 2023, James Pollock joined us.

Bereavement contacts continued – with a telephone call after a funeral and a card being sent out, where appropriate, a year later.

Home Communion was taken, regularly, to a few housebound ladies (including Joyce D. to whom Stephanie had taken monthly communion ever since she came to Widford, until Joyce died, aged 105 years, in November.) Communion was also shared with some of our members who were temporarily unable to attend church.

The main focus of the Pastoral group has been on supporting individuals and, as we get together it is clear that a wide range of people can benefit from that support. However, our contribution is only part of the fellowship of the Parish as a whole. Perhaps one of our aims is to ensure that, as far as possible, individuals in need are not overlooked.

House Groups:

St. Mary's House Group: It has been our norm to meet monthly, beginning with a meal and fellowship. After which we feed our spiritual needs with a bible study or watch a DVD with a topical Christian subject.

This year we have hardly met but we had a Christmas meal together at The Chequers in Writtle. The male members of the group had a small number of socials together meeting in various hostleries on weekday afternoons. Hopefully, our busy lives will allow us to meet again on Friday evenings in 2024. We continue to support each other although meeting has been infrequent, we feel a close affinity to one another.

Rossendale House Group We began the year by looking at the Book of Ruth and then, leading up to Easter, we looked at the Resurrection. After that, we used the 'Thy Kingdom Come' resources which encourages special prayer for five people between Ascension Day and Pentecost and lasted for eleven weeks. In the summer, we followed a series on Suffering and then in the Autumn, we used Ivor Moody's book Six Songs for the Soul. We ended 2023 with the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity's Re-purpose; six studies for retired folk which encouraged us to carry on working for God. We are never too old to tell others of His love for us all.

Ravensbourne Group: The Tuesday evening home group has continued to meet weekly through most of the year. We enjoy being together, encouraging each other and building each other up. We have a time of worship and singing while Peter plays his guitar, and we read the Bible learning from God and each other as the Holy Spirit leads us. This year we're slowly reading through the book of Acts. We are thankful to God for his leading and for the deepening friendship and fellowship we share.

SERVING OTHERS

Homework Club: Homework Club continues to meet on Tuesday and Thursdays 3:15pm-5pm. We are regularly attended by a group of secondary school girls, including from Hylands and Sandon. Next year will be a big year as they start their GCSEs. All live within Widford Parish on a full or part time basis and are also part of the youth group.

Homework club is not just seen as a place to complete school work, but also as a safe place for the young people to come after school where they feel at home. Homework is now set and completed online so we rely heavily on the computer and laptops kindly donated.

We enjoy a hot drink and usually snacks left over from Hope Café. Homework ranges from Spanish (for which I have very little experience!), to Maths, History and Design Technology.

Both I and the young people, are thankful for Vicky and Bob who help regularly each week. It's good for the young people to meet other church members!

Craft Club: Attendance at craft club continues to grow as word spreads amongst the mums at Westlands (infants and juniors!) Our youngest crafters are 5 years old from Westlands Community Primary, spanning up to year 9 at Hylands High School. Many of the mum's stay and enjoy catching up at the end of the week over a cup of tea/coffee, which has meant we have come to know whole families. Through our craft club ministry, we are able to invite families to Messy Church each month and likewise, Youth Group, so it is a valuable ministry. We have a different craft each week, for example tea light holders, school bag tags, ceramic decorations, picture frames, coronation crafts, mosaics and face masks– some crafts from 2023. We are a small team. Sometimes just consisting of Zoe and myself. But we are thankful some weeks to have Bethany and Peter to help. Craft Club meets in the Parish Centre on Fridays, 3:30pm -4:30pm.

Youth Group: 2023 was a busy year for our growing Youth Group. We have about 15 regular members.

We began the year with a New Years roast dinner together in the Parish Centre.

Later in January we were visited by our church mission partners, Ali and Keshule, who shared with us about the work they have been doing in Eldoret, Kenya over the last two decades. We learnt some Swahili, shared some African food together, and were able to ask questions about their experiences.

During the Easter break, we met up for lunch together in the town centre and during May we had a Safari Supper – visiting the homes of three church members for a meal in three parts. Thanks to James and Gill, Pam and Zoe & Robert and Maureen for hosting! We also had the youth group represented on our Pleshey Pilgrimage in June!

At the start of the summer, we had our end of term BBQ and water party up at St Mary's, thanks to Bob being our chief BBQ'er. As the summer holidays approached, we joined in the Solid Festival at Stubber's Adventure Centre. Solid is run and funded by the Diocese of Chelmsford, in collaboration with the Red Balloon Foundation and other Christian charities. The day consisted of a main teaching (Jesus: myth or miracle?) and worship session in the morning and evening, with free time during the day to take part in on-site activities. Our group enjoyed banana boating, high ropes, archery, laser tag, pedaloes, kayaking, SUP, along with the inflatables and football tournaments. For dinner, we joined with Meadgate Church youth group who were camping onsite. Thanks to Sandra G for coming and leading the group with me.

We are slowly working our way through the Youth Alpha course which includes short videos and questions relevant to the young people. It provides the foundations of our faith and they often take on board a lot more than I realise at the time, bringing questions to other activities. We hope to continue this journey until other material once we come to the end of the course. Thanks to Keith for coming to share his testimony. It would be great to have other volunteers for this, as real-life stories are so impactful and important.

In August, we took a group of the older youth to New Wine: Luminosity – which took place at the showground in Kent. Wind weather warnings and a collapsing cooking tent! Torrential rain and leaky tents but it didn't completely dampen our spirits! Fun and fellowship together, late night ravioli, drinking lemonade from pot noodle cups, colour run, football tournament, inflatables, bingo, lots of laughs...sometimes hysterical... struck down but not destroyed! Soaked through but full hearts. As a group, we took part in the colour run, H and I watched "If Prison Walls Could Speak" – the true story of Petr Jasek in prison in Sudan, and J took part in the Luminosity football tournament. Thanks to Roger and Stephanie for transporting our camping equipment, and Peter for retrieving us at the end of the week!

Highlights from the Autumn term include a "Bake-off" evening, the "Let there be light party" which saw probably 100 people pass through CHS and the Parish Centre. We served jacket potatoes (and ran out!), the soft play area was open, the bouncy castle was up in the church and there were craft activities running. We had an awesome team of people to make that event happen and several of the Youth Group came to support. It was the following month that we had record numbers at Messy Church!

In December we had our "unconventional" Christmas dinner (Dominoes' pizza) and party games. For our last session of 2023, we went to the Church run Megacentre in Rayleigh, for an evening of Laser Tag. We had a great time, with support from a couple of the youth group parents! Please continue to pray for the youth and their families that I have come to know and love.

You can keep up with Youth Group antics throughout the year on the Widford Parish Facebook page or in the weekly Churchtalks.

Holiday Bible Club: In 2023, our Holiday Bible Club ran from 24th-28th July for children aged 5-11, there was free admission. We met each morning from 10am – 12noon. Our theme for the week was "The Lord's Prayer Unplugged". Each morning, we took a different phrase from the Lord's Prayer and focussed in on what it means to us today. Cindy was great at making the drama's fun and accessible for the children, and we enjoyed colour coded snacks each day. Amongst Bible Stories and games, we also had time for some crafting of our huge Lord's Prayer banner. All the children really enjoyed themselves and by the end of the week, we had also learnt the Lord's Prayer in sign language. Thanks goes to the dedicated team who made the week possible.

Bible Trek - At the start of 2023, led by Pam and Keith, we concluded the Bible Society's Bible Trek course and the group wanted to continue to meet to do our own 'trek' through the bible, so starting with the Gospel of St. Luke, we listened to a chapter a week (read by David Suchet via Bible Gateway), looking at the geographical context, what it meant for the people at

the time and what it means for us today. Four new members joined the group, and new members are always very welcome to join. In the Autumn, we progressed on to Luke’s account that followed on from his Gospel - the book of Acts. After we complete the book of Acts, we hope to move on to a new set of Studies with videos by Andrew Ollerton of the Bible Society, covering the book of Romans. It’s amazing that whether we’re new to faith or reprising favourite passages, the Bible always has something new to say. We meet at CHS on a Tuesday evening from 7.30-9.15pm each Tuesday during term time. All are welcome.

Messy Church: Messy Church continues to grow in popularity amongst local families and is a valuable outreach ministry. By the end of 2023 we were welcoming 60-70 people each month. During 2023, we learnt about John the Baptist, The great commission, The wedding in Cana and Elijah and the widow. We also celebrated Easter and Christmas together. Messy Church consists of craft time, followed by Bible story and singing, concluding with a shared lunch. Towards the end of the year, we welcomed Bob and Cindy to the team! Thank you to our dedicated team: Jen, Zoe, Pam, Sheila, Stephanie, Lynette, Shirley, Gill, Peter, Bob and Cindy.

St Mary’s Singers: "A group of enthusiastic singers!" Made up of members of St Mary's and CHS, we select and practice the songs for the coming Sunday’s service and aim to introduce new songs to the St Mary’s congregation on a regular basis! We enjoy singing and socialising for an hour on Thursday evenings, 7-8pm at St Mary’s (CHS during the winter months!)

Film Nights: In 2023 we began a weekly viewing of Angel Production’s “The Chosen” and watched series 1 and 2 as a small group. We readily anticipate watching the next two series in 2024.

Wednesday Fellowship and Knit and Natter: Meetings continued throughout 2023, with a small core group, sometimes joined by visitors, depending on the nature of our meeting.

Revd Stephanie led one or two services each term. We have also enjoyed knit and natter sessions; singing familiar songs (thanks to Daniel); craft; games, such as HOY; quizzes; sharing poetry – always followed by lively conversation and a cup of tea and a biscuit.

Occasionally, visiting speakers enlightened us - on the Air Ambulance; Corrie Ten Boon; an example of questionable application of the law; seafaring. On other Wednesday afternoons, we listened to Shurig Fold Group; Keith’s songs; something of Essex history (thanks to Shirley and Keith). Then, a few of our members have been brave enough to share something of their life story, including their experience of Jesus.

Members contribute 50p each week – for refreshments, but we were also able to send a donation to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

May the Lord continue to bless our Fellowship.

Tithe Report: It was agreed that the figure of **£7,000** be taken as the sum to be distributed, being approximately 7% of Total Church income and approximately 10% of Direct giving to the church.

This was distributed in the following ways:

Support for Ali and Keshule’s ministry in Northern Kenya.	£350 per quarter	£1,400 per annum.
Hugh Pilcher in Uganda ‘Jesus loves the little children’.	£175 per quarter	£700 per annum.
Mary Wood Trust		£975
CHESS		£975
Grassroots Trust in Kyrgyzstan		£975
Church Pastoral Aid Society		£488
South Essex Wildlife Hospital		£487
‘Emergency Pot’		£1,000
Made up of 12 x £50 Food vouchers distributed after Christmas 2023		£600
Ctic donation towards Easter parade donation		£365
Royal British Legion		£25
TOTAL:		£6,990

We also received extra donations towards the work of Hugh Pilcher in Uganda ‘Jesus loves the little children’, which was also sent to him as well, but this is not included in these figures.

World Day of Prayer: On Friday 3rd March, we celebrated World Day of Prayer, with a service at CHS. In 2023, the focus country was Taiwan and the theme of the service was Ephesians 1 verse 15: I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus. I have also heard about your love for all of God’s people. The service was written by a group of Christian women in Taiwan to celebrate the Christian faith and how it sits within the rich culture of Taiwan. Our service was led by a small group from St Mary’s and CHS and was supported by a congregation from both churches. Following the service, we shared refreshments and a buffet lunch in the Parish Centre. The theme country for 2024 was Palestine, and the service was held at St Mary’s on 1st March 2024.

Eco Church

St. Marys: In 2023, we continued to plant bee and butterfly friendly plants in our Garden of Remembrance at St Mary's. We also installed two benches made from (traceable) sustainably sourced wood. On our Facebook page we promoted wildlife-friendly reminders for gardeners.

We continue to use eco-friendly cleaning products in our kitchen and loo, and our second-hand compost bin is a haven for bugs. The bird boxes, made and installed by Peter have had nesting blue-tits for the last couple of seasons. The churchyard has become a haven for local wildlife.

CHS/Parish Centre: In 2023, the Church of the Holy Spirit achieved the Eco Church Silver Award – thanks to all involved! Vegetables were grown in the paddock and efforts were made to reduce electricity usage through the use of LED lighting.

Walsingham: In September 2023, 24 pilgrims travelled to Walsingham for a weekend retreat. Within our group, we had at least 6 churches represented! It was particularly interesting to experience different forms of worship and enjoy a restful time of fellowship. We had morning and evening prayer times together in the Barn Chapel, and attended several church services in the on-site shrine, including candlelit procession. We had fun games nights together and during our free time, some went to Cromer or Holkham for a swim, others enjoyed the sun in the grounds and Walsingham village. It was a great time of refreshment and fellowship with members of other churches as we celebrated the vastness of different worship traditions in the Church of England.

Hope Café and Soft Play: This last year has seen a big increase in the numbers attending the cafe & soft play area. On some occasions we have filled all the tables and even had to break out the reserve! We do still get some quieter days but there is still a happy 'buzz' about the place. Most who come are parents/carers with young children and we now have many regular attendees whom we have got to know well.

During the year our menu has been extended to add a full cooked breakfast which has proved very popular. This has created more work in the kitchen but we have also been blessed with some new volunteers joining the team. This has been a great help and also means we have someone staffing the soft play on both days... a great way to build relationships with the parents and carers. Last year, we had our first baptism of a family we have come to know at Hope Café.

Chelmsford College students have attended on a number of occasions to run pottery activities and these prove quite popular. During these events we often have one or two students help out in the kitchen.

In January 2022, we joined the Fareshare Scheme in which supermarkets donate short life and out of date food to charities to give away. We now have several collections from local stores each week and put the food on a table in the café for anyone to take what they need. This has become a valuable support to customers in light of the cost-of-living crisis.

We'd like to take this opportunity to encourage church members to come and bring their friends. The cafe and soft play are open from 9am to 12 noon on Mondays and Tuesdays during the school term. Thank you to our regular Monday and Tuesday team members, and for those who are on call for when we need some extra help!

Lunch Club: At Lunch Club we provide a freshly prepared nourishing meal for the elderly, and naturally this includes an opportunity for friendship and social interaction. Meals are served in the Parish Centre weekly except for a short break at Christmas and the month of August.

For 2023 the price has remained at £3 which covered the cost of the food each week and enabled us to provide the Lunch Club Christmas Dinner without charge and to make a contribution towards energy costs. Typically, there are 25 to 35 who attend each week. Cottage pie and beef and dumplings seem to be favourite meals.

The kitchen team is led by Sheila Schofield assisted by Janet Aldridge, Janet Bird, Karen Cooney, Alan Davey, Jeff Gilbert, Lynette Hunwicks, Maureen McPhee, Nelia Spratley, Linda Stephens and Jess Wiseman and occasional help from Louise Rutherford. The dining room team is led by Pam Myall assisted by Sandra Kyte, Jess Wiseman, and Stephanie. We are truly grateful to all the helpers without whom the lunches would not be possible.

Could you help? To join the rota, we need some additional members of the friendly kitchen team, and if you would like to be considered, please get in touch with Sheila!

Widford Waddlers baby and toddler Group: Widford Waddlers Baby and Toddler Group meet on Thursday mornings in Widford Village Hall from 10-11:45am.

We are very blessed to have a lovely group of Mums, Grans and Carers.

We provide a wide range of toys for babies and pre-school children, including a dolls house, train set, play kitchen, tunnel, slide, seesaw, playdough and a ball pit.

Our craft table is always very popular, and with Zoe's help, the children make something based on the theme for the week. Some of the things the children make are valentine and Mother's Day cards, children in need teddies and poppies for remembrance Sunday. The children especially enjoy Easter and Christmas crafts and taking part in Stephanie's drama.

Sheila provides refreshments (drinks and snacks) during the morning and we end our session by singing nursery rhymes and celebrating any birthdays. Huge thanks to Sheila, Zoe, Stephanie and Nelia. (The Waddlers Team)

BEING AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Friends of Essex Churches Ride and Stride: As usual, this event took place on the second Saturday of September. Both our church buildings were open for most of the day, with a friendly welcome for visitors.

Paula cycled and Zoe and Pam walked, then joined with many others at St Mary's for a delicious Cream Tea (arranged by Barbara Oxlade, with a willing team of helpers), followed by a service of Compline, led by Stephanie.

It was a most enjoyable day, appreciated by all who came. As a result of generous donations and sponsorship, £203.76 was sent to the Friends of Essex Churches, of which a half was returned for use in Widford Parish.

Harvests: We enjoyed Harvest services at both churches. We collected for the local food bank and received a generous number of gifts for which the food bank was very grateful.

God Tent: 2023 once again saw the God Tent at the music festival held in Hylands Park after a five-year break caused by cancellations and the Pandemic. This time it was the Creamfields South Festival. Our presence was warmly welcomed and appreciated by the organisers and we fitted in easily with their well organised Welfare system.

We welcomed many festival goers into the tent for tea, coffee, chat, face paint tattoos, Genga, Connect Four and the Beer Goggles Challenge. Through these, we were able to have many conversations about our faith and were often able to help them with life problems and the various problems that occur at Alcohol and drug fuelled music festivals. We were located next to one of the main entrances and consequently befriended a number of the security staff leading to more conversations about our faith.

The caravan was found to be on its last legs and after a meeting to discuss this we decided to dispose of it and replace it with a BT Box Trailer in which to store and transport various items used in the tent, the cost of which we planned to raise from Quiz Nights. Fortunately, we were able to give the old caravan to friends of Lisa's which saved us the cost of disposal. Keith very kindly located and collected a trailer.

The Creamfields festival for 2024 was unfortunately cancelled but we hope to be back there again in 2025.

ELECTORAL ROLL

There are currently 72 people on the Electoral Roll, of which 43 are resident in the parish and 29 are non-resident.

DEANERY SYNOD:

The representatives from Widford Parish for the start of 2023 were Bob and Pam. Pam stood down at Easter. We are most grateful for her loyalty to the meeting and for her reports to the PCC.

Hilary Selwood took Pam's place and has now completed a year for us.

Jess is also on the Synod because she has a place on Diocesan Synod. Stephanie is on Synod because she is a Priest.

In January Dan Pierce (Lead Minister in Beaulieu) spoke about using experimental ideas in worship. He encouraged us to take risks and experiment a little.

It has become a feature of our Synod, that we pray for one another at the end of the meeting. This is very supportive and useful in exchanging topics to pray about for each church.

In February the meeting was held in Broomfield. Miss Ball spoke to us about an inclusion initiative that she has introduced at Meadgate Church. The session is held in their soft play area and is open to families who have an autistic child or special educational needs. The project was very interesting and informative. Then we took time to pray for one another.

Gill Reading is the Lay-chair of the Synod, and Tim Ball is the Dean.

In June we took part in an initiative by Gill. She asked us to consider a number of questions, the results of which would inform Tim and Gill about our Parishes, but also inform the creation of a Deanery Day. Then we prayed for one another.

In September we appointed a new treasurer: Robert Andrews.

We discussed what the churches are prioritising at the moment; there was a suggestion that newssheets could be shared. A date was proposed for the Deanery day.

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

St. Marys: The congregation members continue to be a caring community. In the first half of the year, we were pleased to be joined regularly by Kevin and Katherine together with Martin and Kelly-Ann, both couples were married at St. Mary's. K & K have

become part of our church family. M & K-A settled in Clacton but have been back to visit. Our attendance figures have remained stable, although we have a significant number of older members. For some, illness or infirmity have made it difficult for them to attend week by week.

We said goodbye to Joyce Dines who died at the wonderful age of 105. I remember it was a very wet day as she was laid to rest with her late husband.

Stephanie leads us in our spiritual journey and presides when we have Holy Communion. Her work load means she cannot be with us every week, so we are grateful to others amongst us who consistently take lead roles in our services.

The building has not required a great deal of maintenance this year but a persistent rain leak in the north valley had to be tackled and we called upon Bakers of Danbury to sort it for us. They did a good job and despite a lot of rain we have stayed dry.

Sadly, we had a break-in during September which caused a lot of damage to the main door and the vestry door and some of the surrounding stone work. Virtually nothing was taken as the perpetrators were unable to get into the safe. Fortunately, we are insured as the cost of repairs amounts to thousands of pounds. Again, we relied on Bakers of Danbury to carry out the repairs. The vestry door and surrounding stone work were soon restored. At the time of writing, we are still awaiting repairs to the main door.

During the year we held a number of social events: Afternoon Tea on the day of Ride and Stride. A firework party on 4th November.

Significant services were Easter, Harvest and at Christmas, for which a willing team always decorates the church beautifully.

We have teams of helpers who make the church run: Sidespersons, cleaners, tea & coffee makers, gardeners, service leaders, readers and our very own organist. Thank you all for your service to Christ.

Next year 2024 will be the next quinquennial inspection, we have not yet appointed an architect to replace Mr Simon Marks, who, I have been informed has retired.

Church of the Holy Spirit: Wardens Barbara and Keith would like to give a huge 'thank-you!' to all who have helped our worshipping community across the Parish to thrive throughout 2023. Your work, sacrifice and commitment has helped us to broaden and deepen our community involvement impact through increased use of CHS and the Parish Centre. Services at CHS continued throughout 2023 as live and live-streamed, and our services were augmented by monthly 'Café Church' on first Sundays and occasional joint services with our partners across Southwest Chelmsford Churches.

The PCC had approved the redecoration of CHS along with new, dimmable lighting and the work was completed in 2023. With the help of amazing volunteers (you know who you are, and for your work we thank you!), this dramatically enhanced the Church and its usability. In the spring and autumn, we took the opportunity to carry out a 'walk-around' with our caretaker Tammy Squirrell. This enabled the rolling programme of work to be continued in the Parish Centre and CHS over the year as time, money and opportunity permitted. Tammy had received authorisation from the Parochial Church Council to renovate the Prayer Room and got the work started after the CHS redecoration, and the prayer room redecoration is due to be completed in 2024. Also, in 2024, in our rolling programme of maintenance work at CHS and the Parish Centre, we are hoping to renew the North and South gable end Soffits and fascias, which desperately need replacing.

As part of the internal renovations and new lighting, the communion table was moved to its new 'home' in the centre of the platform at the front of CHS, which was widely welcomed. As part of the changes, the Music Group area was moved to the south side of the platform, and in 2023 we welcomed new contributors to the music group, which has helped to enhance our worship.

In February the new fire door was added to the communal room used for soft play in the Parish Centre.

To enhance the usefulness of the paddock for small children and families, as part of a capital investment following the legacy gratefully received from Eileen and John Fowler, a new, recycled eco-surface was applied to part of the area, and in the summer of 2024, we expect to raise the sail to protect users in part of the area from the sun. We are grateful for all the voluntary support and evolving enhancements that have been put in to make the work in the Soft Play and Hope Café a success. At the end of 2023, it was decided to implement an external CPR station at the front of the Parish centre and to make this available to the wider community.

Following POWfest in 2022, the Chelmsford Art Society decided to make the Parish Centre their new 'home' and we are grateful for them and the other hirers for enhancing our vibrant local community.

During 2023 Bible Trek, (which had followed the Bible Society courses of the same name), opened its doors to others to join on a Tuesday evening for a video on a Biblical place, nice refreshments, discussion and a prayer. As the 'official' course completed in April, the group continued to explore the Gospel of Luke and continued Luke's account in the book of Acts. All remain welcome to join as the group meets from 7.30pm – 9.15pm at CHS.

At Easter we met at CHS to join others for the Good Friday Walk of Witness, joining many hundreds of other believers who met in the city centre to celebrate our Lord, the completion of his work on the cross and his resurrection to life.

During the winter months at the start and end of 2023, the 'Warm Welcome' initiative continued for those who were finding it difficult to heat or eat. Thanks to the Café Team for including this welcome as part of Hope Café.

In the Autumn, the PCC met for an awayday and as part of that, we applied for and were granted silver Eco-Church status, and now it remains our responsibility to take decisions as good stewards of both our churches and what we can influence in the environment.

Also in the Autumn, we received PCC approval to plant a 'Memory Tree' (also funded from the Fowler's legacy) on the grass on the South side of CHS. This tree will take upwards of twenty years to mature fully, but, God-willing, in the meantime we intend that it will serve as a reminder of *all* those whom we love, those who have served the church over the years, and those who have been promoted to glory. As you pass, feel free to have a moment to be thankful for any and all you have loved who are no longer here, and pray for those near and far who are with us now. As we write, the young sapling is in bud ready for the spring, and as the seasons pass, may it be a reminder that our Lord always remains the same.

Over the Christmas period our service attendance swelled as we welcomed familiar faces and visitors alike.

As we write this, we are well into 2024 with many exciting things to share – but as this report is required to cover only the calendar year, you'll have to wait until next year's report for a summary of the latest developments!

Barbara and Keith would like to pay tribute to the work of our fellow Warden Bob, and to the energetic, innovative and faithful work of our staff (Tammy and Jess) and, naturally, Stephanie and husband Roger, without whose work we could not have achieved so much in our Parish in 2023. Thanks too to all who volunteer their time, energy and effort to ensure that our Parish remains at the heart of our local community where we can find hope, safety, learning and, with both CHS and St. Mary's, be the worshipping heart of the Parish. Thank-you for all you do.

As Churchwardens we remain your lay representatives supporting and serving our Clergy and congregation. Should you have any questions or concerns, you are always welcome to get in touch.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Widford Parish Safeguarding team consists of the Reverend Stephanie Gillingham, Karen Cooney who oversees the training needs of each individual performing a role within the church and Barbara Jones, Safeguarding Officer for the parish.

During the past twelve months the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Parish of Widford has complied with the duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance.

Over the past year Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks have been performed when the three years have expired since the previous one was completed providing the volunteer was still in post. There are currently no outstanding DBS checks.

In accordance with the Diocesan safer recruitment process all new applicants for volunteer positions are taken on using this process to make sure that they are recruited correctly and safely. Over the past year, there have been several new recruitments to the volunteer section within the church: two new volunteers have joined the Welcome Desk team, one of which also helps at the Cafe, one new volunteer is helping at the Cafe and also assisting with Rainbows and Homework club, another is helping at the Cafe as and when required and one new volunteer helps with the Youth work as and when required.

The training needs for each person performing a role within the church are based on National/Diocesan requirements. These are monitored by Karen Cooney who also advises when any of the courses have reached their three-year expiration date and need to be repeated.

LYNCHPIN'S REPORT

The purpose of the South-West Chelmsford Churches Lynchpins is to encourage collaboration and supportive relationships between the five churches in our Mission and Ministry Partnership (MMP): St Luke's (Moulsham), St John's (Old Moulsham), St Michael's (Galleywood), CHS (Widford) and St Mary's (Widford). In June, Jacky (from St John's) and Jess (St Mary's) lead a pilgrimage from Pleshey back to Chelmsford Cathedral! It was approximately 9 miles long and we enjoyed a picnic lunch enroute. There were 16 walkers from across our partner churches, and two furry friends. It has been enjoyable getting to know one another during our cross-country walks and over a pub lunch at the end! Although our respective PCCs voted to end our second Sunday united afternoon services, we are agreed to take up a united afternoon service on the fifth Sundays. In 2023, we also shared an Ash Wednesday Service at St Mary's, Maundy Thursday at St Michael's and an Easter dawn Service at St Luke's, followed by a delicious cooked breakfast!

RECTOR'S REPORT

This year (2023) has been one of surprises. It has been lovely to move away from covid, and although we have had some people affected by the illness it has become less of a cause of chaos to our church life. The café and soft play have become places of real welcome, and Messy church is livelier month on month with good teaching and craft that helps to tell the Bible story. Since Rev'd

Gemma Fraser had left St Lukes church in Moulsham, I have been asked to attend their PCC meetings. Over time, it was clear that they needed a Priest in Charge to have oversight of the Parish, and so I was licensed to that role in November 2023.

We introduced a café style all-age service and café style service on the 5th Sunday in the month at CHS. These services are very relaxed and mean that I can attend the start of the service.

We are a busy parish. Our buildings are well used which creates its' own workload in up-keep. I remain very grateful to our wardens for the work they put in to ensure our buildings look nice and run as economically as possible, and to Tammy who manages to keep us clean and tidy.

None of our activities would happen without the hard work of our group leaders. Jess continues to motivate our children and youthwork and the numbers reflect the interest she takes in them. Do pick up or sign up for our weekly Churchtalk and join in with the groups that you can.

We have a God who cares, and that love and care flows out into our community and is making a difference.

A big thank you to our PCC members, secretary and treasurer. Would you like to be on our PCC – join us and help us to continue to move forwards.

Thank you

Reverend Stephanie

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our finances remained healthy in 2023, and the parish benefit from one sizeable legacy from a couple who had been long standing members of the Parish.

Income

The total income for the Parish in 2023 was £ 158,984, and expenditure was £ 119,843.

This compares with a total income of £ 112,504 in 2022, and expenditure of £ 112,614.

This includes all sources of income including specific locality funding grants (£2,512), for a defibrillator at the parish Centre and support for the vulnerable, and the legacy (£29,220) as described above.

Giving and Gift Aid:

Our regular giving (Standing Orders, Envelopes, Parish Giving Scheme, and other planned giving) increased from £43,672 to £53,306.

Our general income (including the regular giving and plate collections, Gift aid claims, one off gift aided donation, etc.) from giving by parishioners increased from £74,332 to £86,208, a 15% increase. Reversing last year's fall.

Parish Giving Scheme:

This is now accounting for 32% of the planned giving.

Fund Raising Activities:

Our Parish income from fund raising activities (e.g., Car Park Donations and hall hires) has continued to gradually increase £23,182 v £21,182 (2022). Thanks to Bob for managing this important source of income.

Bank Interest:

Bank interest increased significantly in 2023, receiving £3753 in 2023 v. £616 in 2022 and £79 in 2021.

We will see this fall again in 2024 as interest rates fall back again.

Other receipts from Church activities (Weddings and funerals, youth work, café and soft play and craft club) rose further in 2023 to £7,241, from £4,070 in 2022.

Expenditure

Parish Share:

This fell compared to 2022 from £56,807 to £51,321 in 2023 and will be slightly higher in 2024.

Giving:

We committed to give 7% (£7,000) of our 2022 total income (£99,880) away as a tithe in 2023. This is approximately 10% of the directly given money received (£78,082), if Car park and Hall hire - £21,182; and Bank interest - £616, were not considered.

Employed workers:

Our financial commitment to having a caretaker and youth worker rose in 2023 from £13,946 to £15,758. It will again increase in 2024 because of the increases to their wages and pension liabilities.

Church Running Expenses:

These increased in 2023 from £28,946 (2022) to £32,137. They will certainly be more in 2024 as an approx. 100% price rise in electricity and gas comes into effect.

Major Projects:

The Garden of Remembrance Project is all but complete and we spent £714 on 2023 on this, and the total expenditure to date is £30,782. Further expenditure on this will be taken into the general St. Marys Running costs.

Bank Accounts:

We now use the Co-operative Bank entirely for our general day to day banking, both for the general fund and other associated expenditure, and another account for the fees account.

All payments that need to be manually processed, i.e., not direct debits or standing orders, have been made by internet banking which has been a safe and effective way to manage them.

Gift Aid:

We have tried very hard to ensure that we claim all the Gift Aid that we can, getting all those who can to sign up for this, and have seen good results as a result. The claiming of Gift Aid is done in three separate ways.

1. Sheila Schofield deals with the Envelopes and plates.
2. Peter Wood deals with deposits direct into the bank account.
3. The Parish Giving Scheme automatically do a Gift Aid claim for those who give this way.

Appreciation:

I would like to thank Bob and Pam who usually count the money ready for paying into the bank, and Barbara Oxlade and Pam who both get involved in banking cash and cheques for us. We have made use of the Local Post Office as well as the Co-operative Bank in town.

Finance Subcommittee:

This has met on an irregular basis to enable us to look at the finances prior to the PCC meeting to enable reporting back to the PCC easier.

The Subcommittee consists of: Peter Wood (Treasurer), Sheila Schofield, (Stewardship Officer), Barbara Jones and Bob Wiseman (Church wardens). Thank you to them all for their time and commitment and constructive comments and support.

Summary:

2023 was a good year for the parish in financial terms. The general fund ended the year with a balance of £68,559 v £49,469 at the end of 2022. We should be thankful to God for various income streams that we have as a church and that we are able to look ahead trusting God to provide.

Going forwards:

2024, as any other, will continue to be a challenge for Widford Parish, whether it is because of falling congregation numbers, or the result of the increased cost of living, with rising energy prices.

I hope that 2024 will be a positive year both for the spiritual growth of the church and, alongside that, that we will see God's continued faithfulness to us as a community as we give to enable God's work within our parish to flourish.

Let us all play our part in this.

Parish of St Mary Widford - 1128307
Statement of Financial Activities
For the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
<i>Receipts</i>					
Planned giving	53,306.49	—	—	53,306.49	43,672.46
Collections and other giving	6,007.43	—	—	6,007.43	4,120.54
Other voluntary receipts	41,919.84	1,050.00	—	42,969.84	15,772.24
Gift Aid recovered	12,643.64	—	—	12,643.64	14,520.47
Other receipts	4,564.44	—	—	4,564.44	5,262.14
Activities for generating funds	23,142.25	—	—	23,142.25	21,182.50
Investment Income	3,499.62	253.52	—	3,753.14	616.23
Receipts from church activities	12,597.57	—	—	12,597.57	7,357.99
Total income	157,681.28	1,303.52	—	158,984.80	112,504.57
<i>Payments</i>					
Cost of generating funds	412.77	—	—	412.77	—
Missionary and Charitable Giving	9,692.00	979.00	—	10,671.00	7,710.11
Parish Share	51,508.70	—	—	51,508.70	56,807.99
Clergy and Staffing costs	10,248.91	—	—	10,248.91	8,937.61
Church Running Expenses	30,297.97	1,267.39	—	31,565.36	28,971.93
Hall Running Costs	1,508.78	—	—	1,508.78	342.38
Church Repairs & Maintenance	5,917.61	—	—	5,917.61	1,092.82
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	256.46	—	—	256.46	409.64
New Building work	7,553.68	—	—	7,553.68	8,141.69
Governance Costs	200.00	—	—	200.00	200.00
Total expenditure	117,596.88	2,246.39	—	119,843.27	112,614.17
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	—	—	—
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	40,084.40	(942.87)	—	39,141.53	(109.60)
<i>Transfers</i>					
Gross transfers between funds - in	39,671.10	—	—	39,671.10	15,128.75
Gross transfers between funds - out	(39,671.10)	—	—	(39,671.10)	(15,128.75)
<i>Other recognised gains / losses</i>					
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	40,084.40	(942.87)	—	39,141.53	(109.60)
<i>Reconciliation of funds</i>					
Total funds brought forward	92,143.60	10,281.30	—	102,424.90	102,534.50
Total funds carried forward	132,228.00	9,338.43	—	141,566.43	102,424.90

Parish of St Mary Widford - 1128307

Statement of Assets as at 31 December 2023

Cash Funds	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2023	Total 2022
Cash on Deposit	125,880.12	6,657.54	132,537.66	87,492.75
Cash at Bank	5,691.31	2,680.89	8,372.20	14,497.81
Cash in Hand	656.57	-	656.57	434.34
	<u>132,228.00</u>	<u>9,338.43</u>	<u>141,566.43</u>	<u>102,424.90</u>
Other Monetary Assets				
Income tax recoverable	<u>1,889.00</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,889.00</u>	<u>271.00</u>

Approved by the Parochial Church Council and signed on its behalf by:

KD Self Date: 18th March 2024

Stephanie Gillingham Date: 18th March 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts & Payments basis.
2. Assets recognised but not valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities include:
Computer for office administration work.
Audio and visual presentation equipment.
Church inventory assets vested in the churchwardens on special trust.
3. During the year the PCC employed a caretaker and a youth worker, neither of whom earned in excess of £40,000.
4. The expenses paid to clergy may include a small immaterial proportion which relates to their function as PCC members. Tammy Squirrell and Jessica Wiseman, who are also PCC members and are employed as caretaker and youth worker respectively were paid £15,402 in total (2022: £13,453). No other payments were made to PCC members.

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
WIDFORD PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out in this document.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the Independent Examiner

As members of the PCC you do not consider that an audit is required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of Independent Examiner's 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 PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you 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 audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect, the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act;
 - and to prepare accounts which accord with those accounting records, have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signature:

Mr George Large

166 Beeches Road, Chelmsford

Date: 18th March 2024

PCC Fees Account

During the year Revd. Stepanie conducted 6 funeral services two of which were carried out at St. Mary's the remaining services were held at Chelmsford crematorium.

There were 3 wedding services at St. Mary's in the same period.

The accounts have been examined by Mr. George Large and signed-off by him.

He has made 2 recommendations for the disbursement of monies.

Unclaimed verger fee at a funeral and a duplication of a payment.

Turnover for the year £4096.00.

In addition, we hold £600.00 in advanced wedding payments for 2024.

Parish Office

The Office was open for extended hours in the first half of the year. When the need for a tuition space was not required for J on a daily basis the hours reverted back to 10am-12pm Monday to Friday.

The staffing is covered by: Mondays – Bob W, Tuesdays – Barbara O, Wednesdays -Jess W. Thursdays – Shirley D assisted by Val H. Friday -Sylvia S.

Sylvia is currently suffering with mobility problems and is considering her position. We hope she will improve.

Everyone has a different role so that we do not duplicate tasks.

The office administration is getting busier but the team appears to be willing to continue.

Shirley proves that age is not a hindrance to serving others.

Thank you to all the above.

Volunteers

Thanks go to our churchwardens, Barbara Jones, Keith Schofield and Bob Wiseman, Peter Wood as the church's Treasurer. and Pam Myall as our PCC Secretary. We would also like to thank Keith Schofield for his role as lay chair.

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At Widford St. Mary's and Church of the Holy Spirit, the membership of the PCC consists of the Incumbent, churchwardens, the licensed lay minister and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The full PCC met from January to November in person.

Safeguarding continues to be a high priority. We thank Barbara Jones for the work she has put in as Safeguarding Officer and are grateful to Karen Cooney for taking a lead on safeguarding training.

Administrative information

St. Mary's church is situated in London Road, and Church of the Holy Spirit in Forest Drive. It is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is "Widford Parish Office, Forest Drive, Chelmsford, Essex. CM1 2TS". Registered charity number 1128307."

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2023 until the date this report was approved are:

Rector: Reverend Stephanie Gillingham

Church Wardens:

Barbara Jones

Keith Schofield

Bob Wiseman

Deanery Synod Reps.

Robert (Bob) Wiseman

Hilary Selwood

Jess Wiseman

Licenced Lay Minister: Roger Gillingham

PCC Members:

Barbara Jones

Peter Wood (Treasurer)

Keith Schofield (Lay Chair)

Bob Wiseman

Colin Groves

Jessica (Jess) Wiseman

Karen Cooney

Tamzin (Tammy) Squirrell

Barbara Jones

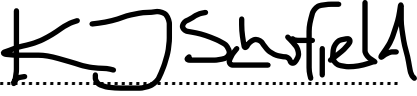
Pat Brown

Pam Myall

Hilary Selwood

18th March 2024

Report approved by the PCC on

and signed on their behalf by 

The Parish of Widford
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
21st April 2024
in Church of the Holy Spirit, Widford

A. Meeting of Parishioners

Election of Churchwardens

B. Annual Meeting Agenda

- 1) Welcome and Prayer
- 1) Apologies for Absence
- 2) Notification of Any Other Business items (to be taken at the end.)
- 3) Minutes of previous APCM held on Monday 16th May 2022
- 4) Matters Arising
- 5) Stephanie's Report (Rector to Widford Benefice)
- 6) Electoral Roll
- 7) Annual Reports
- 8) Finance
- 9) Wardens' - Fabric Report
- 10) Deanery Synod Report
- 11) Election of second lay representative to Deanery Synod
- 12) Lynchpins Report
- 13) Election of a Lynchpin Member
- 14) Election of PCC Members
- 15) Appointment of Independent Examiner
- 16) Any items for discussion:
 - (i) Prayer Walking.
- 17) Any Other Business
- 18) Date for the next APCM – Either Monday 19th May 2024/Sunday May 2023 or 16th/17th April.
- 19) Close with prayer

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meetings of the Parish of Widford

Held on 4th June 2023, at 11.20am, at CHS

A. Meeting of Parishioners

Revd Stephanie Gillingham opened the meeting with prayer. She read the nominations for the positions of Warden:

Robert Wiseman was nominated by Pam Myall and seconded by Sheila Schofield.

Keith Schofield was nominated by Pam Myall and seconded by Joan Barker.

Barbara Jones was nominated by Pam Myall and seconded by Vicky Smith.

All three were re-elected unanimously. Stephanie expressed her grateful thanks to our wonderful Churchwardens.

This meeting closed with prayer at 11.25am.

B. Annual Parochial Church Meeting opened at 11.30am.

Present: Revd Stephanie Gillingham (Chair) and Roger Gillingham; Barbara Jones; Keith and Sheila Schofield; Bob and Jane Wiseman; Peter and Gill Wood; Janet Aldridge; Joan Barker; Denise Blackwood; Eddie Carpenter; Shirley Deering; Mosope Faburimi; Jen Gaskin; Dan Gullick; Jenni Guymmer; Valerie Hayward; Lynette Hunwicks; Sandra Kyte; Elizabeth Olatunji; Barbara Oxlade; Bob and Janet Pettifer; James Pollock; Janet Robinson; Vicky Smith; Tammy Squirrel; Jess Wiseman; Pam Myall.

Welcome and Prayer. Stephanie welcomed church members and opened the meeting with prayer.

1. **Apologies for Absence** had been received from Lionel Blanks; Pat Brown; Karen Cooney; Colin Groves; Coralie Gullick; Maureen Hart; Zoe Myall; Hilary Selwood; Linda Stephens.
2. **Notification of Any Other Business.** There was none.
3. **Minutes of the APCM, held on 16th May 2022,** (already approved by PCC), were accepted as a true record.
4. **Matters Arising** Item 5. No development had yet taken place in the Paddock area, though there had been a sharing of ideas. A change of heating system at CHS was not appropriate at this time.
Item 12. Lynchpins. A new and enthusiastic Vicar had been appointed, within South West Chelmsford Churches, to share her time equally between St John's Church Moulsham and the Anglia Ruskin University.
5. **Stephanie's Report** Stephanie stood by her report as printed on page 15 of the 2022 Annual Reports that had been presented prior to the meeting. She re-emphasised the Diocesan initiative presented in the *Travelling Well Together* booklets, in which we are invited to consider thoughtfully our core values, in particular awareness of God's concern for the small, marginal and vulnerable; always being acutely aware of His Grace. Stephanie hoped that these values and the inspiration they bring would be highlighted in preaching and sharing with one another.
6. **Electoral Roll** (page 11)
Shirley reported that, since the Annual reports were written, five people had been added to the Electoral Roll, making the total 70, of whom 43 are resident in the parish and 27 non-resident.

7. Annual Reports

Stephanie reviewed the Annual Reports, inviting any comments.

Widford Waddlers (pages 4 – 5) was described as a very good, lively, group. Stephanie expressed 'Big Thanks' to the team of Jane, Sheila, Zoe and Nelia.

Stephanie expressed thanks to Jess for all her groups (pages 5, 6, 7 and 8) and appreciation for those who support them. Messy Church continues to grow.

Thanks were also due to all the Musicians who support worship at both churches.

Lunch Club had grown again in popularity after the limitations of the pandemic (an extra table was needed!). Stephanie expressed thanks to Sheila and all the team.

Tithe Report The charities selected for our support in 2022, were listed on pages 8 and 9 of the reports. For 2023, the list is published in *Churchtalk* for 4th June, the day of the APCM.

Hope Café and Soft Play Area Stephanie expressed thanks to Jess, Dan and all the volunteers who help with this facility, which has become an important resource and outreach.

Harvests (page 11) Keith reported that three beehives had been installed in Kenya, purchased with our Harvest collection.

Safeguarding (page 14) Stephanie expressed thanks to Barbara and Karen for all the work they do behind the scenes, to ensure that our Parish complies with all the safeguarding requirements.

8. Finance

Treasurer's Report. (Pages 16 – 20) Peter having presented a very full Report and Statement of Financial Activities, in the Annual Reports, there were no questions. He is thankful that the parishioners are generous and faithful, and that George (our examiner) is helpful. Sincere thanks were expressed to Peter for all the work he does as our Treasurer.

9. Churchwardens' ('Fabric') Reports (pages 12 - 14)

St Mary's Bob reflected that "If I were as old as St Mary's and in its condition, I'd be happy!" There had needed to be some emergency roof repairs recently, with some damage

to recent decoration. It was hoped that the repairs would be successful, but we shall not know until there is a significant amount of rain.

The next Quinquennial Inspection will be due in 2024.

CHS Keith added to this report that *No Mow May* had come to an end, but that the plan was to keep a 'wildflower meadow' in the centre of the front garden at CHS. Tammy and Keith do a walk around every 6 months, to assess jobs that are needed. Some work is needed to the soffits and fascias, but there are reserves to cover the cost. Thanks to everyone for working together.

Internal Decoration and New Lighting for CHS Joan Barker expressed, on behalf of all members of Widford Parish, sincere thanks to Roger and his amazing team, who carried out such a wonderful transformation, early this year, making CHS Bright and Beautiful.

10. Deanery Synod. Pam had written a rather full report – since she would not be standing for election to this position. Stephanie expressed thanks to Pam for being a Deanery Rep for many years.

11. Election of Deanery Representatives. This was the year for elections of Lay Reps (for a period of three years).

Bob Wiseman had been nominated by Pam Myall and seconded by Hilary Selwood.

Hilary Selwood had been nominated by Bob Wiseman and seconded by Pam Myall.

The meeting unanimously voted to elect Bob and Hilary to this position.

(Jess is also a lay rep. on Deanery Synod, by virtue of her membership of Diocesan Synod.)

12. Lynchpins (report on page 15).

13. Election of Lynchpin members

Each Parish in South West Chelmsford Churches can have three lay members of this group. Our representatives from last year were all prepared to stand again;

Shirley Deering was proposed by Pam Myall and seconded by Sylvia Skardon.

Jess Wiseman was proposed by Pam Myall and seconded by Sylvia Skardon.

Tammy Squirrell was proposed by Pam Myall and seconded by Lionel Blanks.

The meeting unanimously accepted these nominations.

14. Election of PCC Members

Since we elect PCC members for three years, several members were due for re-election.

Karen Cooney was proposed by Pam Myall and seconded by Sheila Schofield.

Colin Groves was proposed by Pam Myall and seconded by Sheila Schofield.

Tamzin Squirrell was proposed by Roger Gillingham and seconded by Alan Davey.

Pam Myall was proposed by Sylvia Skardon and seconded by Colin Groves.

All four candidates were voted on to the PCC.

The Parochial Church Council for the coming year would be made up of Revd Stephanie (Rector); Bob Wiseman (Warden and Deanery Rep.); Barbara Jones (Warden); Keith Schofield (Warden); Jess Wiseman (Diocesan Rep); Hilary Selwood (Deanery Rep.); Pat Brown (elected 2021); Peter Wood (elected 2021); Karen Cooney; Colin Groves; Tammy Squirrell; Pam Myall.

(Roger Gillingham, as a licensed lay minister is also, ex officio a member of PCC)

15. Appointment of Independent Examiner

After a short discussion, the re-appointment of George Large as Examiner of our Parish Accounts, was welcomed by all members present.

16. Item for Discussion

Stephanie shared the suggestion, made by Christians Together in Chelmsford, that we re-introduce prayer walking (following lock down) and accompany it with the distribution of postcards with the message that the church is alive, praying, and interested in the people of the parish. CTiC offer to make a note of roads covered in this way. Three different designs/wordings of the cards were distributed to the parishioners grouped around tables. They were invited to express their opinions, in writing, about the most effective and appropriate format.

It was agreed that, to make the cards easily legible, A5 size would be more appropriate than A6.

17. Any Other Business

There was none.

18. Date for the next APCM. After some discussion, it was agreed to hold this on **Sunday 19th May 2024**, after morning service, at St Mary's.

19. Barbara closed the meeting with **Prayer** at 12.30pm

These Minutes were approved by the PCC and signed by Keith Schofield (Lay Chair) at their meeting on 19th June 2023.

All members of the PCC wished to record their sincere thanks to Lynette Hunwicks, for her work in collating the reports which were presented to the Annual Meeting.

Leadership in Widford Parish: We are developing teams – do let us know if you would like to join one.

Wardens: Barbara Jones, Keith Schofield and Robert (Bob) Wiseman

Treasurer: Dr Peter Wood

Deanery Synod: Bob Wiseman, Jess Wiseman and Hilary Selwood

South West Chelmsford Lynchpins: Tammy Squirrell, Shirley Deering and Jessica (Jess) Wiseman

Licensed Lay Minister: Roger Gillingham

Licensed Lay Preacher: Keith Schofield, Bob Wiseman, Jen Gaskin, Pam Myall, Gill Wood, Peter Wood, Jess Wiseman

Preachers: Zoe Myall

All Age Service Leaders: Pam Myall and Jess Wiseman at St. Mary's and Stephanie, Barbara Jones and Jess Wiseman at CHS

Caretaker: Tammy Squirrel

Office Volunteers: Barbara Oxlade, Bob Wiseman Shirley Deering, Valerie Hayward, Jess Wiseman and Barbara Jones

Baptism /Thanksgiving home visiting team: Pam Myall and Jane Wiseman and Gill Wood

Children's work: Tammy Squirrel and Jess Wiseman, Pam Myall, Joan Barker and Gill Wood

Churchtalk: Barbara Oxlade, and Jessica Wiseman

Flower Arranging: Reg & Daphne Blowers, Sylvia Skardon, Shirley Deering, Janet Bird at St. Marys, Sandra Kyte, Barbara Jones at Church of the Holy Spirit

Friday Afternoon St. Marys Open Church Working Group Coordinator: Bob Wiseman

Gift Aid: Sheila Schofield

Home Communion Assistants: Pam Myall, Shirley Dearing, Gill Wood and Peter Wood, Hilary Selwood

Home Groups Co-ordinator: Tammy Squirrell

Messy Church Team: Jessica Wiseman, Gill Wood, Pam Myall, Roger Gillingham, Shirley Deering, Sheila Schofield, Jen Gaskin, Zoe Myall, Barbara Jones, Lynette Hunwicks and Stephanie Gillingham

Mission and Evangelism Team: Stephanie Gillingham

Music and Hymn Choice: Jess Wiseman at St. Mary's. Keith Schofield, Sheila Schofield, Barbara Jones, Jen Gaskin and Stephanie Gillingham at CHS.

Pastoral Team Coordinator/Pastoral Care Team: Pam Myall & Stephanie, Shirley Deering, Peter Wood, Gill Wood, Jess Wiseman Sheila Schofield and James Pollock.

Prayer Chain: Barbara Jones

Prayer Ministry Coordinator: Stephanie Gillingham

Prophecy: Pat Brown

Quiz Masters: Bob Wiseman, Alan Davey and Alan Jones

Safe-guarding: Barbara Jones, Karen Cooney and Stephanie Gillingham.

Sound and Visuals: Alan Davey, Tammy Squirrell, Colin White & Elizabeth Olatunji at CHS and Daniel Gullick and Jess Wiseman at St. Mary's.

Sunday Children's: Tammy Squirrell, at CHS and Pam Myall at St. Mary's.

Website and Other Media: Jess Wiseman and Peter Wood

Wednesday Lunch Club: Sheila Schofield & Pam Myall

Wid-Wads Team: Jane Wiseman, Sheila Schofield, Zoe Myall, Nellia Spratley and Stephanie Gillingham.

Wednesday Fellowship/Knit and Natter Leadership Team: Pam Myall and Shirley Deering.

Youthwork: Jess Wiseman

Refreshments Teams: Valerie Hayward, Jen Gaskin, Janet Alldridge, Vicky Smith, Lynette Hunwicks and Barbara Jones at CHS. Jackie Dickens, Linda Stephens, Shirley Deering, Janet Bird, Janet Robinson and Janet Hazel at St. Mary's.

Church Cleaning Teams: Barbara Jones, Elizabeth Olatunji, Sheila Schofield, James & Jill Pollock, Roger Gillingham, Jen Gaskin, Lisa Quilter, Lynette Hunwicks, Cindy and Janet Alldridge at Church of the Holy Spirit and Shirley Deering, Janet Bird, Jackie Dickens, Linda Stephens, Denise, Jane Wiseman and Sylvia Skardon at St. Marys.



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