



**The United Benefice of South Petherton  
with the Seavingtons and the Lambrooks**

Charity Registration No 1128940



# **Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council**

For the year ended 31st December 2023



# **The Benefice of South Petherton with the Seavingtons and the Lambrooks**

## **Key Information**

### **Rector**

Reverend Tracey Hallett  
The Rectory,  
Hele Lane,  
South Petherton,  
Somerset. TA13 5DY

### **Acting PCC Treasurer for year ending 2023**

Mrs Ellen Howard  
Westholme  
North Street  
Martock TA12 6DH

### **Independent Examiner of Accounts:**

Mr Nic Laycock  
7, Bishopton  
Montacute TA15 6UU

### **Correspondence Address:**

The Rectory,  
Hele Lane,  
South Petherton,  
Somerset. TA13 5DY

### **Bankers:**

National Westminster Bank Plc

## **The Parochial Church Council**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the United Benefice of South Petherton with the Seavingtons and the Lambrooks in the Diocese of Bath and Wells has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting throughout the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The PCC is a charity registered with the Charity Commission (no.1128940).

It also has maintenance responsibilities for the church of St Peter and St Paul's in South Petherton; the church and churchyard of St Michael's in Seavington St Michael; the church and churchyard of St James's in East Lambrook and the schoolroom; and the churchyard at Seavington St Mary's (the church was declared redundant in 1984 and vested with the Churches Conservation Trust).

The annual accounts of the PCC are subject to independent examination by a suitably qualified person. They are published separately to this report.

## **Administration**

The Benefice office serves all three Churches and is located at The Rectory Hele Lane South Petherton TA13 5DY. Telephone 01460 240377 Email: [Office@southpethertonbenefice.org](mailto:Office@southpethertonbenefice.org)

## **Members of the PCC**

Members are either ex-officio or elected Deanery Synod representatives with a term of three years, or lay representatives with a term of three years elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), in accordance with the Church Representation rules and after due notice. The PCC works in collaboration with several committees and informal groups within the Benefice.

The following served as members of the PCC during 2023:

**Rector:** Reverend Tracey Hallett (Ex-officio)

**Churchwardens:** Mark Stainer (St James's), Manda Jaggars and Anne Shaw (St Michael's), Daphne Woodhouse and Steve Harrison (St Peter and St Paul's)

**Assistant Churchwarden:** Sandra Robinson (St Peter and St Paul's)

**Deanery Synod Representatives:** Phil Andrews (2026)

**Elected Members:** Chris Sharp (2025), Jane Ward (2025), Carol Talbot (2025), Alastair Fyfe (2024), Caroline Ireland-Jones (2024), Janet Strugnell (2024).  
(APCM at which members complete their term of office and may see re-election)

**Co-opted Members:** Shan Weston (Headteacher of the South Petherton C of E.VA Infants and Preschool)

**Safeguarding Officer:** Amanda Jaggars

## **Other Key Information**

**Gift Aid Secretary:** Julia Lear, Toad Hall, 14 St Michael's Gardens, South Petherton TA13 5BD

**Benefice Administrator:** Anne Perez, Benefice Office  
(office@southpethertonbenefice.org).

### **Ministry Team:**

The Benefice is well supported by the Churchwardens and Assistant Church Warden plus a dedicated group of Retired Priests who have permission to officiate (PTO's). With thanks to the PTO's: Rev Simon Baker, Rev Annie Gurner, Rev Mark Jackson, Rev D Fyfe, Rev Laurence Meering, and Rev Ian Gibson during 2023 this Benefice offered a full and diverse pattern of worship. The Ministry group meet to plan service rotas, to review our ministry as a team and to provide mutual support.

### **Standing Committee:**

The Standing Committee has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to directions given by the Council. (This is the only committee required by law). It normally consists of the Rector, the churchwardens, the Treasurer, the Secretary and the vice-chair of the PCC.

### **Church Membership:**

It was declared on the 2023 Parish update form that there were 112 regular worshippers in the Benefice. This figure includes 13 new regular worshippers and it is the figure of 112 that the Diocese use to calculate the fees charged for our Parish Share

### **Electoral Roll:**

The Electoral Roll stands at 124.

If you would like to become an elected member of the PCC, you are required to be on the Church Electoral Roll for a minimum of six months before nomination. Please note that by being on the Electoral Roll it does not impact the Parish Share calculations.

### **Charitable Giving Committee:**

Alastair Fyfe continues to chair this group and the policy for making grants and donations, as a proportion of our regular income, is reviewed annually in September. Members of the congregations are encouraged to suggest to the Charitable Giving Committee suitable charitable organisations that we might support. The Benefice also give on a regular basis to various charities which are supported through the Missional work of Open House and other specific fundraising events such as Lent Lunches and Christian Aid week and specifically dedicated to the support of Christian Aid.

### **Reserves policy:**

The PCC reserves policy states that our bank account should always contain at least 4 months' worth of expenditure.

### **Fundraising:**

Daphne Woodhouse has continued to coordinate most fundraising activities that take place at St Peter and St Paul's. Currently there is no formal fundraising committee, but Daphne seeks support from many other willing volunteers to ensure fundraising stays high on the agenda. These events make a huge difference to our balance sheet and therefore to the extent to which we can invest in the activities of which we reach out into our communities. Fundraising opportunities are essential to

support the Benefice in paying the Common Fund / Parish Share and other endless bills, as well as, to resource the work of God's mission. We are seeking recruit some new members to join the fundraising group and we welcome all of you to join in and share a fresh approach and any ideas for new activities.

### **Church Wardens and our Many Volunteers:**

During 2023, it has been increasingly evident that our Churchwardens are very committed to God's call placed upon them and they each fulfil their duties with willingness and commitment. We are aware that there are heavy demands being placed on our Church Wardens and their support in the day to day running and the strategic vision of the Benefice is integral to how we function as the whole body of Christ. We are very grateful to each of our volunteers, there are many of you who play such a significant role in the work of the church. For all that you do in playing your part whether it be clock winding, flag hanging, cleaning, flower arranging, chalice bearing, intercessions, reading, lay leadership, singing, there are too many roles to list but we pray that God will continue to bless you all and thank you all for who you are in Christ and all that you do for the Church and this Benefice!

At the APCM in 2022, we acknowledged that we had a need to continue with developing pastoral care within the Benefice and as such one of the greatest achievements of 2023 has been the appointment of an Anna Chaplain – Judy Bristow. Judy embraced the invitation to discern a call to chaplaincy for the elderly and expediently completed all of her training and in June 2023 was commissioned by Reverend Mike Haslam as Anna Chaplain for the Benefice. Judy visits and support the elderly residents at Burnworthy House and ministers alongside Daphne Woodhouse in the Benefice to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of those who are unable to get to Church. It is wonderful to see how the Holy Spirit has been at work, Judy has been well equipped for this ministry and our Elderly community are being well cared for under this new and exciting mission.

Community Volunteer and Lay Pioneer Ministry. In 2022 we welcomed Sam Lloyd to the team as a volunteer community worker and through Sam's gift of embracing the people who do not normally attend Church, especially the school parents who join us for Thursday morning School assembly. Through Sam's ministry, we have seen an increase in new families engaging with Church both in the building and with community activities (Church Without Walls), welly wonderers, story time and all sorts of seasonal and missional activities that take place in the Nur-Chur Yurt, in our Church buildings and at our community green spaces too. As a team we were invited to celebrate our contribution to Pioneer ministry as Sam expressed her lay pioneer ministry through poetry and shared our collaborative experiences as an inspiration to others at the Diocese Celebration of Lay Ministry held at St James's Church in Taunton. Equally, we are now able to evidence the need for a paid Children and Families worker that would further enable the Benefice to reach out into its community and support the children and young people in their journeys of discipleship.

### **Safeguarding:**

Our benefice is committed to and will champion the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Everyone who meets us, comes to us, or works with us should feel safe and cared for irrespective of their social background, culture, their abilities, religious belief or any other factor. It is the responsibility of all of us, individually as well as collectively, to make these aspirations real, to look out for one another and to pass on any concerns.

As required by the Church of England, we have a designated safeguarding officer (Manda Jaggars) and an approved policy to guide our actions. Manda's role is to support, advise and deal with specific issues for which she has been trained.

The PCC is responsible for ensuring the Benefice has a safeguarding policy which is agreed, understood and enacted. We have approved our own Safeguarding Policy and will keep it under review both to keep it in line with current expectations and also to customise it to meet our own needs. The PCC routinely receives reports to enable us to track the safe recruitment of volunteers where their roles bring them into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults in their 'official'

capacity. 'Safe recruiting' involves a DBS check, the uptake of references, a clear role description, an induction interview and an assessment of training needs.

We are very grateful to Manda for her dedication and commitment to safeguarding.

For more information on Safeguarding please email Manda:

[safeguarding@southpethertonbenefice.org](mailto:safeguarding@southpethertonbenefice.org).

### **South Petherton Church of England Voluntary Aided Infants School and Pre-School:**

The majority of governors of the school (ie the foundation governors) are nominated for appointment through the PCC. Our Foundation governors in 2023 were Kirsten Carp, Sue Harrison, Richard Killen, Rev Tracey Hallett (ex-officio) and Fiona Gane. We encourage anyone interested in becoming Foundation Governor to contact Shan Weston (Head Teacher):

[sweston@southpethertoncofeinfants.co.uk](mailto:sweston@southpethertoncofeinfants.co.uk) for further information.

### **Parish Magazine**

Articles for inclusion should be sent to [office@southpethertonbenfice.org](mailto:office@southpethertonbenfice.org) by around the 17th of each month (earlier in February). We do our best to ensure that articles are printed as they are written but reserve the right to edit copy which should be sent to [office@southpethertonbenfice.org](mailto:office@southpethertonbenfice.org) by around the 12th of each month (earlier in February). We do our best to ensure that articles are printed as they are written but reserve the right to edit copy where necessary. Julia Lear manages the advertising in the magazine. We are grateful to our advertisers whose support enables us to keep our costs to readers down – we do ask our readers to support our advertisers in return.

### **South Petherton Mothers Union Branch**

An active branch of the Mothers' Union meets monthly and is coordinated by Judith Riley please see attached report and for more information about Mothers' Union please contact Judith on: [judithriley939@btinternet.com](mailto:judithriley939@btinternet.com).

## APCM REPORTS FOR 2023/24

We have invited all who are involved in the life of our Benefice to contribute to the APCM and we do hope that you will take the time to enjoy their attached reports.

### The Rector's annual report for APCM reflecting 2023

*Our benefice aspires to be:  
A growing, learning, Christian family committed to serving  
God and the community.*

As I reflect on all that has been achieved this year, it is hard to know where to begin, there have been many highlights, achievements, and significant moments, as we also work towards overcoming challenges. It's clear to see God at work in this Benefice.

We have continued to bring a fresh perspective to our worship by providing a diverse pattern of services which include us being intentionally intergenerational. There are two permeant Café Churches happening with the Benefice and two-family services a month. We have found that by taking an intentionally intergenerational approach to café Church and family services, it has brought a fresh perspective to our worship and enabled us to reach out into the community with inclusivity and welcome. We have also introduced monthly Celtic worship as a reflective and contemplative service. The service review held across the Benefice during Lent revealed that the new pattern of services had been generally well received and suggestions made have been acted upon; with the idea of re-introducing seasonal Evensong at St Peter and St Paul's and St Michael's for the Patronal Festival.

This year St Peter and St Paul's entered South Petherton Carnival with the most amazing Noah's Ark entry. It was wonderful to partner with South Petherton Infants School as we illustrated our vision of being Church without Walls, carrying Noah's Ark on a very warm summer's evening was a real testament and witness to our faith. We are doing very well at encouraging the community to recognise how the Church shows God's love in action.

We are continuing to help each other grow spiritually through sharing Bible Study and fellowship with each other. Two new Bible studies developed in late 2022 / early 2023. The Tuesday evening Bible study group is now being lay led and Tuesday daytime study is led by Reverend Annie Gurner. During Lent we offered the Church of England Living in Love and Faith course again to encourage the Benefice in a greater theological understanding of diversity and in April the PCC voted in agreement for Reverend Tracey to be able to officiate a blessing for same sex couples in the Prayers of Blessings for those who are Living in Love and Faith. The Benefice now hosts a Foodshare / Food Pantry in partnership with Liz Baker and South Petherton Parish Council to support her in providing food to those in need. The Foodshare is available in St Peter and St Paul's during Church opening hours and has a very steady foot fall of people using it. This is an excellent example of Church being at the heart of the village, pro-actively reaching out to our communities. We also store second-hand school uniforms and so parents and carers can access uniform for their children as and when needed.

I have been delighted to see the relationship between The Church and South Petherton Junior school flourish this year. It has been such a joy to be invited to teach the Children about the Christian faith and important sacraments such as Baptism and Holy Communion. The wonderful relationships built with the children and their families whilst they are at south Petherton Infant School really does help them with the transition into the Juniors, it is so valuable to be a constant connection between the two schools. The children recognise me and remember with fond memories all the learning from Infant School Assemblies. Relationships are positive and strong with those who are of faith and those of none, they can approach the Church and the vicar without any reservations – they see the Church as an integral part of its community and vice versa. One of the most significant achievements of 2023 is with thanks to the Friends of St Peter and St Paul's in

there very generous gift of finance to enable St Peter and St Paul's to replace the heating system. Roy Duffy kindly agreed to project manage and oversee the installation of the heating, the faculty process was rather daunting and our Church wardens also supported and assisted Roy in all that was needed. Thankyou Roy, you have enabled us all to have a warm glow! Much appreciated. We are hopeful that the list B application for the installation of Gigaclear internet will be approved before too long!

It really is exciting to see how our Benefice is growing, baptisms are frequent, during 2023 we baptised 7 children and married 6 couples, sadly we also conducted 33 funerals. I always feel very privileged to lead occasional offices and it is a wonderful pastoral calling to be able to journey with all who come to their local Churches in moments of great joy as well as the moments of sadness, loss and grief. Each of the three Churches in our Benefice provide a safe and sacred place of comfort to many who find themselves seeking solace.

When I consider the challenges we face, there is a shared concern over the difficult and demanding financial times which was provoked further by recent research conducted by the Diocese regarding changes in the common fund. I am grateful to Steve Harrison for helping us explore our position and respond with a well thought out response to the Diocese research. In our estimations we are expecting to receive a common fund bill that equates to an expectation that each person on the electoral roll will be able to contribute financial gifts of over £700 per year to the Diocese. Thus, it's evident to see we need to take great care over Benefice finance as we are experiencing the significant impact of the financial crisis.

However, I want to encourage us all to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and remember that we are called to follow God in his mission. Let us not be disillusioned but keep hope and in the perfect of our Faith and together let us "Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father". Thank you for your wonderful support and valuable contributions – I am grateful for all of you and will continue to keep us all covered in prayer.

Rev Tracey

### **Safeguarding Report**

I took over as Parish Safeguarding Officer in Autumn 2023. I am very grateful to Sue Harrison for all the work she did whilst she was in the role.

On 19th November, the Benefice held a service for Safeguarding Sunday, which was well supported. It was gratifying to see so many people engaging in conversations about aspects of safeguarding. The Diocese is now supported by a Christian organisation Thirty-one Eight, who manage DBS checks. They are very supportive and proactive, making the process straightforward and efficient. Several people have asked where the name Thirty-one Eight comes from, it is from Proverbs 31, verse 8 "Speak out for all those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute."

Rev Tracey and I have updated the Parish Dashboard and this will be done monthly. A Safeguarding Report is shared as part of every PCC meeting, safeguarding is everybody's business.

I have now been trained to deliver Basic and Foundation Level Safeguarding Training face to face, please contact me if you are required to complete this and prefer not to train online.

Thank you all for your support, I believe passionately that Safeguarding is not just a tick-box exercise, it is part of my current professional role and very relevant in our community, we often do not know what people are going through or what happens behind closed doors.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding, or to discuss your training or DBS requirements.

Amanda Jagers



## **Report on the Proceedings of The PCC During 2023**

2023 was a busy year for the PCC, with 9 full meetings in total. Much time was spent on managing the day-to-day work of the three churches in the Benefice, maintaining the buildings, ensuring safeguarding procedures are observed and that we comply with all regulations. There were several big issues:

**PCC Sub-groups:** In order to share out the workload, and enable more efficient use of PCC time, sub-groups, comprising PCC members and interested members of the congregation, have been set up to look after particular issues, reporting back to the PCC. The sub-groups include Greener Futures (looking into ways the Benefice can progress towards Net Zero), Buildings (issues with all building concerns), Charitable Giving (advising on distribution of the annual charitable grants made by the PCC), Bell Ringers, Mission Action Group (organizing Café Church and helping outreach). The Fundraising Group folded during the year and new members and new ideas are needed to bolster our fundraising efforts. When time permits, it is hoped to get a Pastoral Care group going too. The Open the Book team started working in the Infant School.

**New Worship Pattern:** The new pattern of services was approved and put in place. A regular Celtic Worship service (5pm on 4th Sunday of the month at St Peter & St Paul's church) was introduced during the year, with the help of Rev. Jayne Hinds.

**Finance:** a perennial problem as Parish Share goes up and cost of living impacts income. Much discussion took place about paying our parish share. Fundraising is vital, and much time and effort goes into organizing events. A decision was made to adopt the Parish Giving Scheme, which uses a Diocesan scheme to reduce some of the administrative work for the Treasurer and Gift Aid Secretary arising out of regular giving by the congregations.

**Replacement Boiler Project:** Roy Duffy took on the role of Project Manager for this project following the complete failure of the boilers at St Peter & St Paul's. A faculty application was submitted and approved, a contractor found and appointed, and the new boilers were in operation in December. Grateful thanks to the Friends of South Petherton Church for their generous assistance with funding. This was a huge project and we were extremely grateful to get heat back into the church!

**East Lambrook Schoolroom:** Major works were required to repair the fabric of the building and update the interior to provide a building to meet the needs and comply with current access legislation. The East Lambrook Schoolroom Committee mounted a vigorous fundraising campaign, and aided by Daphne Woodhouse, obtained various grants which have enabled Phase 1 of the work to be completed.

**Independent Examiner of Accounts:** Nic Laycock has been appointed the new Independent Examiner and has been working with the new Treasurer, Ellen Howard, to ensure that all procedures are correctly followed. Many thanks to Ellen who has had a very busy first year in the role.

At the end of 2023 the following were members of the PCC:

Chair: Rev. Tracey Hallett

Churchwardens: Steve Harrison, Daphne Woodhouse, Amanda Jaggars, Anne Shaw, Mark Stainer

Deanery Reps: Phillip Andrews, Mandy Maggs

Elected members: Diana Baker, David Chapman, Roy Duffy, Alastair Fyfe, Caroline Ireland-Jones, Susan Ogilvy, Crispin Raikes, Sandra Robinson, Chris Sharp, Janet Strugnell, Carol Talbot

Co-Opted (Ex-officio): Shan Weston (Headteacher, South Petherton Infant School)

## Charitable Giving

The PCC acknowledges its Christian duty and obligation to provide financial support for the poor and needy. Every year, it allocates grants to charities and welfare organisations. For many years, the amount to be distributed was calculated as 10% of the regular in-come received in the previous financial year. This year, however, due to the serious financial situation in which the PCC found itself, the decision was taken to reduce the amount to be distributed to 5% of the regular income received. The figure will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Charitable Giving Review Group is responsible to the PCC for proposing which charities and charitable organisations might be de-serving of financial support. Prior to its meeting, the Review Group had sought the views of members of the Parish, a few of whom responded with suggestions. The Review Group then presented its recommendations to the PCC.

As always, beneficiaries were selected across a broad spectrum, including the Church and Christian Societies, Hospitals and Medical units, the Third World, the Environment, Agriculture, local schools and the elderly.

At the PCC meeting in September 2023, the Review Group's recommendations were approved. A sum, totalling £2200 was allocated to 27 charities, societies and organisations. The full list of beneficiaries is attached.

The PCC is also committed to donate the sum of £1500 every year to the Luapula Diocese in Zambia, earmarked for the parishes of Katuta, Chibaya/Mulala and Museba. It also collected the sum of £554.71, which was collected by donations from our parishioners for coffee/biscuits during the year, after the Sunday Morning Services. This money is earmarked for 'the training of priests', and also goes to the Luapula Diocese in Zambia.

In 2023, the Charitable Giving Review Group consisted of the following:

Alastair Fyfe (Chairman), Judy Deegan (St Peter and St Paul's), Caroline Ireland-Jones (St James'), Philip Andrews (St Peter and St Paul's) and Christopher Lawrence (St Michael's).

Alastair Fyfe

### **CHARITABLE GIVING - 2023**

#### **Societies, The Church, Christian and the Diocese**

Bath and Wells Diocesan Association of Change Ringers	£30	
Church Mission Society	£100	
Friends of Wells Cathedral	£70	
Churches Conservation Trust	£50	
Church Homeless Trust	£100	
		<b>£350</b>

#### **Farming and Agriculture**

Farming Community Network	£100	
		<b>£100</b>

#### **International**

Barnabas Aid	£100	
Akamba Aid Fund	£50	
Tearfund	£100	
		<b>£250</b>

#### **Climate**

Tree Aid	£100	
Water Aid	£50	
		<b>£150</b>

<b>Welfare</b>		
Somerset Supports Ukraine	£100	
Somerset Community Foundation (Cost of Living Crisis Appeal)	£200	
Alabare (Christian Care and Support)	£50	
Safe Families	£100	
Mothers' Union (Away from it all)	£50	
		<b>£500</b>
<b>Armed Forces</b>		
SSAFA – The Armed Forces Charity	£100	
		<b>£100</b>
<b>Senior Citizens</b>		
Burnworthy House Amenities Fund	£100	
South Petherton Community Shed	£50	
		<b>£150</b>
<b>Youth, Children and Infants</b>		
Children's Hospice (South West)	£100	
South Petherton Scouts Hardship Fund	£50	
South Petherton Pre and Infants School	£100	
		<b>£250</b>
<b>Hospitals, Hospices and Medical Organisations</b>		
St Margaret's Somerset Hospice	£100	
League of Friends, South Petherton Hospital	£50	
Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance	£50	
Yeovil, Sherborne and District Samaritans	£100	
International Justice Mission	£50	
		<b>£350</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>£2200</b>

### **Are We a Pioneering Benefice?**

We all know now that our Rector Tracey is a Pioneering Priest and are delighted that her new perspective on 'Being Church' is enlivening both our worship and our work in our communities. So the question that follows for me is, does that make us a Pioneering Benefice?

What do I mean by Pioneering Benefice? At parish quiet days some members of the congregations, inspired by the emergence of new possibilities, have been discussing and praying about this, and some of us, me included, have been on study courses about pioneering. I have concluded that pioneering involves taking what we have – our faith in the knowledge that God loves us all, His love embraces us all and makes us a family – and finding ways of making that real for everyone. It does not mean casting aside everything we know and love, but new and sometimes challenging things can be added to what we do.

Church Without Walls is one description we have been applying to our new approach. We love our church buildings deeply, God has been worshipped faithfully in them across the centuries, and through our services and our church life together we find the spiritual strength and guidance for our Christian living. But we do not want to be walled in to our own safe community or for the walls to shut out those who are not part of it. We need to find ways to go out and be the body of Christ in our communities, demonstrating by our actions the love of God for everyone and this may draw in

people who we welcome to be part of our family. This may be in organised activities, or just by being beside someone in need.

Many of us have long participated in ventures in the community which are loving and giving, but perhaps we are not quick enough to give the credit to God for what we do. I include myself in this, I find it hard at times to do things 'in the name of Jesus'. I think though we would be surprised to find out just how much we all do if there were an audit of activity! So perhaps the seeds of pioneering were already there, just not acknowledged?

New ideas, activities and ways of worshipping have developed in the time Tracey has been with us, and we are seeing more families attending more services, and a generation of children who seem to feel at home in the church, which is a joy. With 3 lovely churches in the benefice we are able to offer a wide variety of worship services, from the traditional to the modern. We have added Café Church in Seavington and South Petherton to our regular pattern as well as a monthly Family Communion at St Peter & St Paul's. We have the Open the Book team who are assisting Tracey in her work of teaching the Bible to the schools. We have the monthly Open House coffee morning which offers cake and conversation to all comers, raises money for charity and now provides a venue for the local carer's group to meet. The Food Share larder is now in St Peter & St Paul's church. Bible studies, prayer groups and ways for families to come together to worship without formal liturgy are in place. Welly Wonderers summer holiday activities for families take place in the Rectory garden, and the Yurt offers a safe space for all. We are re-wilding parts of the churchyard in South Petherton and attempting to raise our eco status and awareness. We now have an Anna Chaplain. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could appoint a Children and Families worker to assist our efforts with those in all sorts of need?

So, to answer my question, I would say yes, we are a pioneering Benefice, or at least taking steps along the pioneering path. But there is much more that can be done and it is open to all of us. Anyone who would like to know more, or who has any ideas (however small or simple) that bring the church closer to the community, please share.

Janet Strugnell

### **South Petherton Mothers' Union Branch**

We began the year with 14 members and ended with 17, Jane Bedford having rejoined and two new members, Judy Bristow and Barbara Summers, being enrolled by the Revd Tracey Hallett at the December meeting.

Meetings began with the AGM in January and in February we learned about 'The Clewer Initiative and Hidden Voices' from the Revd Georgina Vye. The Quiet Day in March had to be cancelled due to the ill health of the Revd Wendy Mitchell. The Revd Annie Gurner spoke in April on 'Shepherding People and Animals' and in May Daphne Furey talked about her life – 'Daphne in her own words'. 'Men's Shed' was the subject in June and two of those involved enlightened us and brought examples of the work produced. We went to the Rectory Yurt for the July meeting when Lydia Munday told us about the 'Ilminster Food Bank'. We celebrated the Branch's 100th Anniversary on August 9th, Mary Sumner Day, with a service led by the Revd Tracey Hallett. Banners from the Deanery Branches were carried, Madeline Hellier, Diocesan President, gave the Address and cut the cake at the strawberry cream tea which was enjoyed by the many present. Chris Mahony, Diocesan Literature Representative, brought a wide selection of MU cards, gifts and literature. Liz Randall conducted a 'History Tour of St Peter & St Paul Church' in September and in October Judith Riley's subject was 'Praying with Russian Christians'. In November she asked us to 'Come to Kenya', and showed us items and photos of her time there. Sue Harrison kindly hosted our Christmas party in December. She also provides music for our hymns.

Fundraising included 'Make a Mother's Day', the work of Clewer in the Diocese, the Cake Stall on Mothering Sunday which raised £148, 'Summer of Hope', £50, 'AFIA', £50, and MU Worldwide

collection. We were pleased to support a family with a hamper and spending money on receipt of an Away From it All holiday.

The Diocesan Annual Meeting in April, held at Bagley, was attended by Daphne Furey and Hazel Ricketts when Bishop Michael Beasley gave the Address and the exhibition 'Souls of our Shoes' was on display. Hazel went to the Marketing Panel Meeting in February and the Coffee Morning in Wells in December. The purchase of MU cards, etc, has raised £269.50 which includes £16.65 on Mothering Sunday and Christmas cards, diaries, etc, £138.85.

Two Branch Committee Meetings were held. Unfortunately, the Revd Wendy Mitchell's poor health has prevented her from participation this year. Judith Riley continues as the Branch Secretary, Anne Brunton as Treasurer and Hazel as the Literature Rep. Ann Lovick sends Baptism Anniversary cards and knitted teddy bears are presented to those being baptised. Brenda Joynes has organised the Archives which are now kept in the Choir Vestry. Jane Bedford has worked the MU contribution to the Stitching project in South Petherton. Gill Beveridge collects postage stamps in the area which raise funds for the MU. Individual members continue to support the work of the Church. We are grateful to receive support from the Rector, the benefice clergy and congregation.

### **APCM Bell Ringing Report**

I joined the PCC at the last APCM because I felt that our Bell Ringers should be represented on that forum. I had previously been Tower captain for 15 years and a member of the PCC at Hinton St George with Dinnington for 22 years. The move from the tower at Hinton with its six bells to here with but twelve bells was daunting, however everyone was very friendly in welcoming me to my new tower. Having settled in, I now find myself as Vice-Captain and one of the two ART qualified Ringing Tutors, with Rosemary Heard being our Tower Captain and the other Ringing Tutor.

Having 12 bells indicates that we need a lot of people to ring them. This time last year we had about 8 regular ringers but with holidays it meant that even ringing six on Sundays was a problem. We had to find new ringers and set about organizing for a Charnborough Ring at our Church for anyone who wanted to have a go at ringing, on a system rigged up in the church grounds. This happened in July last year but it rained, so we had to put the apparatus up in the church. The Charnborough Ring is to show those who want to have a go at ringing, how to do it. We also encouraged those who came and had rung before to ring in our tower, with the necessary teachers to support those who were a bit rusty. It was a successful event, and we gained several enquiries from local people interested in being taught to ring in our tower.

Since then, Rosemary and I have been teaching five absolute beginners and one person who had rung bells 30 years before. Unfortunately, one of the beginners, partner of the chap who had rung before moved away, leaving us with four beginners. Of those four, two are ringing regularly on Sunday mornings.

We now have enough ringers to regularly ring 8 bells on Sundays and look forward to ringing 10 and all 12 bells.

We have a lot of visiting ringers who come to ring peals on our bells because they are so good to ring, having been rehung in 1998, and because we have twelve bells, enabling more of their people to ring together. On average 2 or 3 visiting ringing bands come here to ring every month.

On 6th May 2023 five of us and one other rang a 1/4 Peal in celebration of the Coronation. For two of our ringers, it was their 2nd Coronation Peal.

We have a lot of visiting ringers who come to ring peals on our bells because they are so good to ring, having been rehung in 1998, and because we have twelve bells, enabling more of their people to ring together. On average 2 or 3 visiting ringing bands come here to ring every month.

On 6th May 2023 five of us and one other rang a ¼ Peal in celebration of the Coronation. For two of our ringers, it was their 2nd Coronation Peal.

We still need more people to join us and welcome people to this interesting form of exercise, very good for people who have spinal and back problems, a lot cheaper than going to the gym!

Please get in touch with Rosemary or me, if you or any of your friends are interested.

David W. Chapman

27th April 2024

Tel No: 01460 55426

Email: [dwc271074@gmail.com](mailto:dwc271074@gmail.com)

Contact details for Rosemary Heard (Tower Captain) are to be found in the Benefice Magazine and the TA13 Booklet.

### **South Petherton Foodshare - Sharing Hope**

In October 2023 we received £2623 raised from the Co-op local community fund, and earlier this year Rev Tracey passed on £1000 from South Petherton Relief in Need for the Foodshare! Small charity guidance dictates we mustn't take in more than £5000 in cash donations in any one year, so I would welcome any suggestions of who to approach for funding later in the year. If anyone would like to make a personal donation please get in touch: for the bank details:

[foodsharesouthpeth@gmail.com](mailto:foodsharesouthpeth@gmail.com)

In December 2023 the Foodshare moved location to Saint Peter and Saint Paul's church! As you know, there is a lovely cupboard and some shelves where we're stocking long-life and ambient food. Donations are still being taken in the basket in Co-op. Getting food from Co-op to the church is a little more challenging than just carrying it across the road and I am very grateful for the help from Tracey and Annie and volunteers currently coming alongside to join the effort. The main challenge facing us is to keep up with the demand. I now get a decent order of food delivered on a weekly basis directly to the church. This is working well, although I would love to hear from anyone who could help take these deliveries on the weeks I cannot. We have also floated some ideas about hosting drop-in cafe sessions in the church to share fresh food waste, and to get back some of that contact with people who appreciated friendship, support and prayer.

We are grateful for the opportunities God has given us since I started the Foodshare 3 years ago, and excited about our strong finances, our growing team and the hope and vision we share! Our prayer is that our focus will continue to be on the people we meet, and that the love of Jesus will keep compelling us to stop for each one in need and share not just food, but also encouragement, wisdom, help and hugs.

If you would like to join the Foodshare team, please speak to Tracey or Liz, or email Liz:

[foodsharesouthpeth@gmail.com](mailto:foodsharesouthpeth@gmail.com)

Liz Baker & the Foodshare Team

### **SP Infant School and Pre-School**

The School and Pre-school links with the Church remain firmly part of its bedrock. Weekly Services with children, staff, governors and parents/friends of the School are held at St Peter & St Paul's on a Thursday morning. It's a joy to see the children's ease with being in Church and their engagement with the Service; in addition, the Service (and coffee and time together afterwards) has become a significant part of our outreach to parents. Do remember that the Service is not exclusive to the School's children and parents – you can come too.

There is always something special about the School's Nativity Performances; this year the School performed 'Whoops a Daisy Angel' on a stage kindly provided by the South Petherton Combined Arts Choir and with the addition of an acoustic system to enhance the performance, the children could be both seen and heard in all their glory.



You may have heard about the School's special link with Frogmary Green Farm! The initiative and outdoor learning opportunities have really developed. Our children have been exploring everything 'The Shed' has to offer from 'real life bear hunts', minibeast hunts, singing songs around the campfire and learning the basic rules of safe Forest School provision. We have been so lucky to benefit from access to The SHED facility. This provides our children with an additional element to school life and a sense of connection with local nature.

Despite a very short Spring Term we have managed to relish so many learning opportunities. To mention just a few; Safer Internet Day, World Book Day and we finished the Spring Term with our traditional Easter Bonnet Parade enjoyed by the school community.

World Book Day took place on Thursday 7th March and we were able to enjoy the amazing costumes of the children's favourite story characters.

Our Easter Bonnet Parade was yet another massive success. The Church was full to bursting at the Family Easter Service where each Class performed a range of Easter songs for all to enjoy. Due to the heavy downpour, we were unable to get outside, however, we were delighted to parade around the Church for the community to enjoy the colourful display of Spring Time flowers and interestingly designed bonnets.



We continue to strengthen the school's link with Akamba in Africa with a more recent visit to the school from Dr Buckle who presented a special assembly to our Year 1 and Year 2 children. This provided all with a wider perspective on the world and a chance to reflect on how lucky we are with the life we have here in Somerset.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Church, being able to use it for events such as the Christmas Fayre, Easter Bingo and Ascension Day; all further cements the close links between the school community and the Church.

We continue to be blessed by the commitment of our Foundation Governors and Friends of the School, whose hard work and commitment to the School and Pre-School help aid and secure the strategic direction in changing educational times. If you are interested in joining our dedicated team of Governors or becoming a Friend of the School and Pre-School please don't hesitate to contact the School directly on 01460 240750.

### **APCM Report from St. James's Church**

The first months of the year are usually the quiet period at St. James's, though with an improvement in weather there had been a steady increase in attendance for services.

The Coffee morning in the Schoolroom was moved from Wednesday to the first Tuesday in the month and this seemed to be a popular move with many more villagers turning up for coffee, tea and a good selection of homemade cake.

As we moved into Lent the church was stripped of flowers and decoration. Each Wednesday evening during Lent we had our Compline service, this was preceded by a half hour of quiet prayer and reflection. On Palm Sunday we had a special service of Holy Communion and on Good Friday the Good Friday Liturgy at St. James's and a Messy Easter event in the Schoolroom.

The Good Friday liturgy with Canon Ian Gibson was very well attended and all agreed it was a particularly thoughtful and moving service. In the Schoolroom we had our first Messy Easter. Here the Rev. Tracey had a line up of activities for children, concluding with an egg hunt followed by soup for all. About 12 families turned up, which was a very good start to what was a new event.

Finally Easter Day we had a special Holy Communion service which again was very well attended.

'Thank you for being open. I needed time, tranquillity and sanctuary. You gave me just what I needed and I will be back' The comment above had been written in the visitors book at St. James's. I often call into the church and find someone quietly sitting in the pews, and a walker with her dog told me she walks all the way from Coat, as she finds the church so calm and peaceful and uses that time to 'recharge her batteries'. This highlights the need for churches to be open and accessible so it can be used by the whole community when they need it.

On 23rd July we celebrated our Patronal Festival, which included an interesting sermon on St. James by the Rev Tracey Hallett. Several members of the congregation brought a selection of food and drink for sharing after the service. We used to celebrate in the Schoolroom, then during Covid we had a non-sharing picnic in the cemetery. Since then we have gathered around the font by the main door of the church, which makes a very pleasant space with the door open and the area outside bathed in sunshine.

We had a well filled church for The Harvest Festival on 15th October. We were joined by members of the United Reform Church, Mid Lambrook after we joined them for their Harvest Festival a couple of weeks before. Following the service we sat down together in the Schoolroom for a supper of Cheese, bread and cider, benefiting greatly from the newly installed double glazing and new heaters which everyone agreed were very effective and this being an opportunity how best to operate them.

There was a good selection of harvest produce for the festival which was divided between St. Peter & St. Paul's for The Lord's Larder and the fresh produce to Burnworthy care home, who were delighted with the offering.

With the approach of the autumn leaf fall it had been important to keep the leaves from settling too long and killing the grass underneath as this caused problems the previous year with the slope up to the cemetery gates. Also, with the seemingly endless rain it had been doubly important to keep all the drainage gullies clear around the church, and this included the guttering.

The highlight this Christmas was the Candlelit Carol Service on Christmas Eve. The Rev Tracey introduced a new line up of readings which freshened up this popular service though its familiar format was maintained. We had a congregation of 116 and all were entranced with St. James's bathed in candlelight and with the old familiar carols, everyone agreed it made the perfect start to Christmas.

As well as the regular services we had a funeral with burial and several thanksgiving services and a wedding.

In order to have and maintain all these services at St. James's, we are fortunate to have such a hard-working and enthusiastic rector combined with the tireless efforts of our wonderful, retired clergy. Finally a big thank you to all those involved with the everyday working of the church from the beautiful flower displays, the cleaning and bell ringing and the many readers, all playing their valuable part in the life of the church

Mark Stainer  
Churchwarden



## **St Michael's Report for the Annual Meeting 2024**



2023 started with Cafe Church on New Year's Day, led by the churchwardens. Nine adults, ably supported by two children celebrated the changing seasons.

On Palm Sunday we had our now traditional walk from Seavington Café to St Michael's carrying palms and stopping to share the gospel, before decorating the church with our palms, finishing with communion.

On Easter Sunday, five of us greeted the sunrise with a special service in St Michael's churchyard, followed by a shared breakfast.

We are very grateful to Diana Baker and Matt Currie for all their work tidying the flower bed in the garden area. This is very much a work in progress, but it is a very pretty backdrop for wedding photos.

In August, Rev Fyfe led a service at St Mary's to celebrate the patronal festival, as usual it was well supported, many villagers love to attend services there, its closure was felt very strongly.

After the service, with the agreement of the Church Conservation Trust, the church was left unlocked and many visitors enjoy this pretty building.

The organ at St Michael's developed a fault early in the year; after this was examined by experts, as recommended by the Benefice Director of Music, it was confirmed that it was not reparable and was removed by volunteers. Rev Tracey and Dean found a lovely keyboard to replace the organ and we are grateful for all their effort getting it into the church.

At our October Café Church service, we welcomed two members of staff from Safe Families, who talked about their work and ways in which the charity can be supported

Harvest Festival was held at St Mary's, fittingly in the main farming part of the village. Rev Tracey and Sam led a dramatic reading, before we all shared communion, when we gathered in the Nave and broke the traditional harvest loaf.

In November, work started on the re-pointing of the west gable of St Michael's, using traditional materials, to eradicate the issue we have with damp inside the church. While the scaffolding was in place, we took the opportunity to replace the damaged bell tower louvres. A local carpenter built beautiful oak replacements, which will last for many generations. We are grateful to the PCC for agreeing to fund these.



On Remembrance Sunday, Rev Simon led more than fifty villagers in our Act of Remembrance at the village war memorial on the playing fields.

This has now become a tradition to remember the young Seavington men who died in the wars, it is well supported each year, as an accessible venue and service. Chris Lawrence has researched the history of those who died and also kindly cleaned the memorial plaque in St Michael's.

A traditional Carol Service was led by Rev Simon on Christmas Eve and it was lovely to welcome lots of people visiting family in the village. He also led Holy Communion on Christmas morning. We are very thankful for him and the other retired clergy for their support in facilitating a weekly service in Seavington



Our Christingle service at St Michael's was well attended, thank you to the volunteers who created the traditional Christingles, hosted by Liz Harper and Rev Tracey for explaining the significance of each part. As usual, the collection was donated to Save the Children. This was the first time since covid that they were brought to church ready assembled.

The year ended as it began, with a Café style service, this time for the whole Benefice, held in the Millennium Hall on New Year's Eve. We would like to use this opportunity to thank the Lay Worship Leaders who facilitate Café Church, particularly Liz Harper. These informal services require a lot of preparation and are often considered by the congregations as the most Spirit filled of all worship, they are well attended and again accessible for everyone. Thank you to all volunteers who help in so many ways, the "Flower Ladies" for their beautiful arrangements in both churches, those who clean the church, launder the linen and make the congregation and visitors feel so welcome.



## **St Peter and St Paul's APCM Report**

As I re-read my PCC reports from the last 12 months it is interesting to see how things have moved forward in different areas and how prayerful hard work, led by the Holy Spirit is bearing fruit. As churchwardens and PCC members we are involved, led by Tracey, in developments at an early stage and participate in the unseen work that is needed before it arrives before others. This is both a privilege and a responsibility that some of you have had in the past and maybe others of you will have in the future.

Each person in a church has gifts to use for the common good, scripture tells us. Sometimes we don't see what we are capable of until we're bold enough to offer something. We are not expert in listening to the prompting of the Holy Spirit but when we do hear and obey, we are rewarded by seeing the fruit of our labours, enabled by God. That's how I feel about being churchwarden and hope this encourages others to consider new ways they might be able to join in with things that God is doing.

The pastoral care of our congregation and sometimes others in the wider community, is happening throughout our church and all that individuals do for one another and their neighbours is honoured by the Lord but largely unseen by the rest of us. When a request comes in from hospital or Village Agent, or a family member of a local person, things are a little different. Tracey, as priest, is often the most appropriate person to go but there are other times when others of us can help and visit or help out in other way, praying with a person and, on occasions, ministering with Home Communion by extension. That is, sharing with a short liturgy, the bread and wine that has been blessed earlier by a priest. This is when a lay ministry member has been licensed by the Bishop. Judy Bristow, as Anna Chaplain is offering this to a number of folk in Burnworthy House and others in the parish. It has been a great encouragement to me that Judy is ministering so faithfully and as a team we encourage each other and pray together. This is part of how God is fulfilling the vision he has given us to be Church without Walls.

There is an opportunity to participate in this ministry through prayer and practical help for Judy for anyone who is inspired to enquire. There isn't a high expectation of people in supporting roles so no need to be fearful or anxious and it is as part of a team which is so enriching.

Another aspect of our inclusive approach to our wider community, is our potential engagement with the gay couples in our area. The Bishop's letter came, commending prayers that have been written for people in same-sex relationships. This has exercised the PCC for some months, culminating in a vote regarding whether our Benefice would, if asked, say prayers for them in a regular worship service. The Living in Love and Faith courses, run here in Spring, were intended to offer a forum to learn more about this area of pastoral concern. Few people came which was disappointing given the huge range of views that are held in our society and the wider church. The PCC concluded that we should publicly offer these prayers so that, should a gay couple want a blessing, they know that they would be welcomed here. This is not to say that we all share the same theological understanding, but that we would enable them to access the same grace of God that we enjoy. Earlier in the year, some of us did some training online with Church Mission Society about pioneering churches. I learnt that there are ways we can re-imagine church life as the Holy Spirit leads us, that helps to live and tell the story of Jesus in our community. It involves being open to change in our attitudes and actions which can make us uncomfortable at times but, again, brings the reward of seeing God at work, beyond what we thought was possible. Life is an adventure! These courses are ongoing and if you're interested, speak to Tracey or me.

Open House is an illustration of how incremental developments can meet the needs of different people. This last 18 months we have hosted the South Petherton Carers Group run by the Community Council of Somerset. The Burnworthy residents now regularly join us with the care staff as one of their weekly outings. If you think you could help at Open House by talking with newcomers, extending the hand of friendship over coffee, introducing people to one another, or baking a cake or batch of buns or biscuits occasionally, you would see what a buzz it gives people and share that buzz! It may be possible for a further development soon, to join forces with Lunch

Club, while they are homeless. This is at an early stage of discussion but we are hopeful to welcome both the clients and volunteers to join us possibly twice a month to provide the space and time, with some sustenance, for people to socialise over food.

Since Tracey arrived and post-Covid, things have become a lot busier for us as churchwardens. In the last year, Sandra has joined us as Assistant Churchwarden and really made the role her own by providing much of the support Tracey needs with the midweek services and school assemblies, as well as the baptisms, weddings and funerals. This sharing of the load has helped enormously and working as a team helps us all.

In this year we have been supported in a number of ways by different individuals and groups. You will remember how cold it was without the boilers functioning properly. How could we forget! So we have so much to thank the Friends of South Petherton Church for who put in so much for that. Responding to the church's needs, a suggestion came from members of the wider community to Beat the Bounds and raise money for the boilers. This prayerful walk culminated in a BBQ in the church garden and shows that even adversity can bring people of wide interests together for God's glory.

We experienced further support in collaboration with members of the wider community at the Autumn Fair in October. This was the first year without our faithful team of Clock winders and others who, for many years, raised a huge amount, often around £1000, by restoring unwanted tools of all descriptions, and selling them in the Autumn Fair. So, with much talking, prayer and head scratching Tracey accepted a kind offer from a family who regularly raises money for children at the Social Club in Market Square. Together they filled the space and put on lots of amusements for children at low prices, giving that essential warm welcome to families that we want to get to know better. They also sourced the amazing array of Raffle prizes from businesses. Others came up with creative ideas for new stalls, some of which may be recurrent and some were one-offs. All together we raised as much as usual, even a little more. This is not to say we didn't miss the Tool Stall! So, any ideas you have for this year's Fair, come and tell us, anytime.

Fundraising is key to resourcing the mission and ministry of our Benefice. It spreads the financial needs wider than our congregations alone, so this, I hope, will motivate all of us to think what part each can play. We try to make it enjoyable and fun but there is a lot of hard work that is needed and the more volunteers we have, the more fun it will be. We raised £9000 between May 2023 and April 2024, and a further £3600 for various charities through Open House and shared fundraising events.

Some other, less fun things have been going on too. The PCC has formed groups to tackle some of the outstanding governance requirements that all churches and charities have to have in place. This pulls back some of the skills and knowledge that most of us left at work when we retired! It is challenging but has to be done and is getting there. Financial matters are crucial and with Ellen Howard, who was new to us this time last year, our Assistant Treasurer role, first filled by Matthew Rowswell and now by Crispin Raikes, working as a team with Tracey and churchwardens, these are moving forward steadily.

The PCC has also been busy, on behalf of all church members, engaging with the Diocesan proposal to change the way our Parish Share is calculated to make the Common Fund into which our share goes more transparent, more mutually supportive, using independent data with an awareness of local context. Digging into this to really understand how it will impact our churches has been challenging and Steve Harrison has dug deep and led our corporate response to the consultation, giving the Common Fund Committee some critical things to think about in the ongoing deliberations.

A long report, touching on so many aspects of church life and I haven't even mentioned the review of worship patterns which I'm sure will feature elsewhere. Thank you to those who made it to the last line!

## **Seavington St Mary Church Update**

The church is now open all the time, and visitors are delighted to find it open. We are gradually adding items of interest. Our latest find is a roof slate inscribed by the roofer years ago: James Clark, Shepton Beauchamp, June 18th 1856. God save the Queen!

Some interesting engravings have been discovered on the front of the porch. They are quite indistinct, but if you look carefully you can see lines like the rays of the sun, maybe a sundial? There are also some strange circles. Perhaps these are mason's marks, though it is unusual for them to be in such a prominent position.

The book sales are going well. Do call in and choose a book, and bring any that you have finished with, to keep a good turnover.

There are fresh flowers in the church all the time now, to welcome visitors. A small team of ladies are providing and arranging them, which helps the church to look alive and cared for.

The water butt behind the porch has been cleaned out and it has a new tap so that water is available for people putting flowers on the graves.

There is a big problem with damp in the church. The recent Maintenance Check noted that there is an area of render on the outside of the north wall, and this is beginning to fail. We wonder why a mainly Ham Stone church would have a small area of render? Perhaps when this is repaired the reason will become clear. There are also places where the pointing is failing and there is a gutter that may be contributing to the problem. It is hoped that the money can be found to sort out these problems – a stitch in time!

The double doors at the front of the porch are looking very sorry for themselves. They would love a new coat or two of paint. Would anyone like to do that? There is enough money in the Bellingers' Fund to pay for the paint if someone is prepared to give their time for free.

The church bells are still in regular use, and some of the ringers recently took out the clappers and fitted new "bushes", which has made them much easier to strike accurately. The ringers also maintain the bells, oiling them, caring for ropes, and checking for wear.

A group of them have been challenging themselves to ring some really complicated stuff. They have been ringing Quarter Peals of Spliced Surprise. A Quarter Peal takes about 40 minutes, and if the ringing goes wrong it can't be counted and can't be published in The Ringing World or the Bath and Wells Association Annual Report. The Band are working towards ringing 41 different methods in one Quarter Peal! Surprise methods are the most difficult of all the thousands of methods and are only attempted by experienced ringers. They have already succeeded in ringing "The Cambridge Six", "The Beverley Six", "The London Six", and "The Norwich Twelve". Just The "Carlisle Eleven" to learn now, whilst not forgetting the first thirty!

Quarter Peals can be attempted to celebrate all sorts of different things. If you would like to have a Quarter rung as a tribute to someone or for a special event, the ringers are glad to arrange one in return for a donation to the Churches Conservation Trust. Enquiries to Helen Beaufoy 01460 240943.

If you haven't been into St Mary's recently, do pop in. We think you will be pleasantly surprised.

Seavington St Mary's Church is cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or supporter we are actively looking for help. Please contact Marie Leverett, Local Community Officer on [mleverett@theccct.org.uk](mailto:mleverett@theccct.org.uk) or 07831 873489.



## **Church Without Walls and Lay Pioneering Experience 2023**

It has been an absolute joy and pleasure to volunteer for the benefice in 2023. So much has been achieved and so much has been learned by myself and the community. Starting the year, I have been part of benefice services and regular café church which has been completely fulfilling for me. I really do have a passion for being part of the leadership team and creating services, especially after undertaking a Lay Worship Leader training course on how to put together services. It has also helped grow the community's faith and knowledge of God and has brought church to all types of people and many new families throughout the whole Benefice as well as nourishing the families who already attend church on a Thursday morning for school assemblies.

I then got to physically help to build the community yurt which is now in the Rectory Garden, and come alongside children and families in that yurt (Nur-Chur Yurt) leading and supporting Welly Wonderers and then story time with Sarah Milrose. Then after the summer during the Autumn we celebrated Light instead of Halloween in October with a party in the yurt, offering Jesus is the light as the foundational story of the evening and sharing light themed craft activities and offering pumpkins and toasted marshmallows. This has helped grow a community around the families and has inspired me to want to develop that community and show them God's love in the way that the Benefice and God has shown me their love.

I have also had the great opportunity to get super creative in 2023 by making the church's first ever carnival entry with the assistance of my dad's company and also supporting the infant school for extra curricular days with events like Kapla club, where we built amazing sculptures out of what looked like small Jenga bricks. I have also worked closely with Rev Tracey to create and deliver the Easter Experience, Messy Easter in East Lambrook and the Christmas Experience to children within the benefice.

Working with the children and families and showing God's love in action by being Church without walls, fills my heart and helps me show the world what this benefice showed me when I first arrived inside the church walls. I have been able to finally get my guitar out in the church and perform at Folk Fest and the Kings Coronation event and I am looking forward to 2024 Folk Fest where I will once again be running PA and playing the guitar (sorry) but I have also had the opportunity to perform as part of the Open the Book team in December after training with a small team from the Benefice. This has been amazing. Being able to deliver Bible stories in an alternative creative way is just amazing. It engages the children and parents and will help to develop Biblical knowledge and show God's love, in yet another way and I love that it can continue into 2024 and develop into something beautiful.

Finally in 2023 we had some amazing events over Christmas which I engaged in and loved being a big part of the team in sharing my creativity and encouraging others - we have had an amazing year. The Church community, the leadership and God during 2023 has helped develop me, grow me and helped me see where God wants me to be and what he is calling me to become in him.

Report by Samantha Lloyd,  
Community Volunteer



**The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of South  
Petherton with the Seavingtons and the Lambrooks**

# **Annual accounts for the Year 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**

As presented at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024

# Independent Examiner's Certificate for the PCC Accounts

Report to the trustees of:

South Petherton with the Secovingtons + Lambrook

Parochial Church Council

On accounts for the year ended:

31 DECEMBER 2023

Charity Number (if applicable):

1128940

Set out on  
pages

1 (Separate informal letter to PCC re work needed)

## Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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

It is my responsibility to:

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

## Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

## Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect,

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

JNCLaycock

Date:

9/5/24

Name:

NIC LAYCOCK

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body (if  
any):

Address:

7 BISHOPSTON

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South Petherton with Seavingtons and the Lambrooks's Receipts & Payments Account  
for the year ended 31 December 2023

	General fund	Designated fund	Restricted fund	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>					
<b>Donations and Legacies:</b>					
Planned giving	51,691	-	289	51,980	52,309
Collections, donations & other giving	19,235	-	24,408	43,643	40,184
Income tax recovered	12,708	-	-	12,708	20,666
Legacies	-	-	-	-	24,123
<b>Other Trading activities</b>					
Magazine/Bookstall sales/Hall Lettings etc	7,464	-	-	7,464	6,494
Income from other Properties	-	-	-	-	-
Annual Fete/events	17,827	-	4,300	22,127	8,796
<b>Receipts from Investments:</b>					
Interest & dividends	1,435	1,071	-	2,506	563
<b>Receipts from Charitable activities:</b>					
Parochial fees	5,818	-	-	5,818	9,152
<b>Other Receipts</b>					
Insurance claims	-	-	-	-	350
Sale proceeds from fixed assets	-	-	-	-	-
Loans received	-	-	-	-	-
Other	4,299	-	350	4,649	9,058
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>120,477</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>29,347</b>	<b>150,895</b>	<b>171,695</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
<b>Charitable activities:</b>					
Donations/Grants to charities	(2,898)	-	-	(2,898)	(6,696)
Mission & Evangelism	(3,243)	-	(355)	(3,598)	(3,000)
Parish Share	(64,820)	-	-	(64,820)	(63,549)
Clergy expenses	(240)	-	-	(240)	(11,697)
Church running expenses	(13,826)	-	(89)	(13,915)	(18,962)
Churchyard maintenance	(3,037)	-	-	(3,037)	(1,975)
Cost of raising funds	(3,876)	-	(100)	(3,976)	(3,239)
<b>Support costs</b>	<b>(2,126)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(316)</b>	<b>(2,442)</b>	<b>(682)</b>
Administration costs (inc. staff costs)	(10,048)	-	-	(10,048)	(9,397)
Governance Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Other	(6,305)	-	(56)	(6,361)	(9,532)
<b>Major expenditure</b>					
Repairs to church buildings	(8,705)	-	(45,143)	(53,848)	-
Repairs to other property	-	-	(38,596)	(38,596)	(1,440)
Capital purchases/additions	-	-	-	-	-
Loan repayments	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>(119,124)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(84,655)</b>	<b>(203,779)</b>	<b>(130,169)</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) of Receipts over payments</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>(55,308)</b>	<b>(52,884)</b>	<b>41,526</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Cash at bank and in hand at 1 Jan (Actual Balance)</b>	<b>72,965</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>44,618</b>	<b>117,583</b>	<b>76,057</b>
<b>Cash at bank and in hand at 31 Dec (Actual Balance)</b>	<b>74,318</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>(10,690)</b>	<b>64,699</b>	<b>117,583</b>

\*prepared using the Diocesan CashBook v5

UNCLAY cash  
9/5/24

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Accounts are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with Church Accounting Regulations. They have been independently examined. The Examiner's report and financial statements are attached.

For the current account the total receipts on the unrestricted funds were £120,477, with £29,347 for restricted funds and reinvested interest of £1,071 during 2023. The total amounted to £150,895, which was made up of a decrease of £27,275 in general funds and an increase of £1,753 in restricted funds during 2023.

On the current account the total expenditure amounted to £119,124 from unrestricted funds and £84,655 from restricted funds during 2023. The total amounted to £203,779, which was made up of a decrease in spending of £10,980 from general funds and an increase in spending of £81,059 from restricted funds during 2023.

For the current account and investment account our total reserves for year end were £99,146, a decrease of £42,755 on 2022. Planned giving decreased by £309 on 2022.

The contribution towards the Diocesan Common Fund was £64,820, an increase of £1,271 on 2022. Our Parish Share was paid on time and in full this year.

### Free Reserves

The free reserves of the PCC are those funds that are freely available to be spent in pursuing the charitable objectives. The Free Reserves of the PCC, at the financial year end were: -

	2023	2022
Total Reserves at 31 December	£99,146	£141,901
Less restricted funds	(£33,173*)	(£24,266)
<u>Free Reserves</u>	<u>£65,973</u>	<u>£117,635</u>

\*The general fund lent the boiler restricted fund monies pending repayment from the Friends of St Peter and St Paul's and VAT reclaim.

Balances of Accounts in the bank, and in hand, as at 31 December 2023 were:

Nat West Bank	£63,971	Actual	£65,048
CCLA Deposit Account (General Fund)	£690		£690
CCLA Deposit Account (Restricted Fund)	£0.27		£0.27
CCLA Deposit Account (Memorial Fund)	£34,485		£34,485
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£99,146</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>£100,223</b>

## Restricted Funds

Restricted funds can only be used for the purpose for which they were given:

Restricted Fund	Balance B/fwd	Income	Expenditure	Balance C/fwd
	£	£	£	£
Zambian Priests	0	555	-555	0
Reach re Hampers	3,000		-3,000	0
DEC Appeal	0	642.50	-642.50	0
East Lambrook Schoolrooms	8,465	26,563	-30,527	4,501
Yurt Fund	12,155	1,960	-8,705	5,410
Legacy Bell Ringers Education	23,998	0	-736	23,262
Childrens Youth Worker	0	288	-203	85
Friends of St Peter and St Paul's	0	101	-101	0
Boiler Fund	0	311	-45,143	-44,832

## Reserve Policy

Under Charity Commission rules, we are required to have a policy regarding the amount of funds we hold in our accounts at any one time. It is suggested that this should be sufficient to cover 3-6 months of operation. The PCC reserves policy states that our bank account should always contain at least 4 months' worth of expenditure.

## REGULAR GIVING

The Gift Aid has been claimed quarterly this year. A special thanks to Julia Lear for undertaking this onerous work.

We have received a total of £12,708 this year, compared with £20,666 in 2022. 2022 figures include the YURT appeal.

If you give on a regular basis and pay enough tax to cover the gift and have not already signed a Gift Aid Form please do so or put the money in a Yellow Gift Aid envelope and complete the outside. More and more people are unable to Gift Aid their donations, as they do not pay enough tax to cover them. If you no longer pay tax and have signed a Gift Aid Form please let Julia Lear our Gift Aid Secretary know.

## FUND RAISING

The total raised for unrestricted funds this year amounted to a splendid £17827 (2022 £8,796). Well done the fundraising team and everybody that supported it. Thanks are due especially to Phil Andrews for raising £4016.97 from scrap metal sales.

## Charitable Giving Committee:

Alastair Fyfe continues to chair this group and the policy for making grants and donations, as a proportion of our regular income, is reviewed annually in September. Members of the congregations are encouraged to suggest to the Charitable Giving Committee suitable charitable organisations that we might support. We supported 23 charitable causes this year with £1950 in donations. We also supported the DEC appeal for the Earthquake in Syria with £642.50 being raised by a special collection. The Zambian Priests are still supported via monies raised at services and during the year £554.71 was raised and donated. Monthly donations are also made via the Open House meetings and Christian Aid was also supported.



#### **Seavingtons.**

A special thanks to Seavington Parish Council for giving a grant to help with the upkeep of the Churchyards. Somerset County Council were maintaining the Churchyards in 2023 and a different operator has been awarded the contract for 2024.

In late autumn 2023 the west gable of St Michael's was re-pointed and the bell tower louvres were replaced. This work by local craftsman will help preserve the beautiful church for future generations. We thank St Michael's Trust for offering to repay this considerable cost to the PCC in 2024.

#### **East Lambrook Schoolrooms**

A considerable amount of work has been completed during the year on the Schoolrooms which has involved a large amount of fundraising and applying successfully for grants. With thanks to everybody involved.

#### **St Peter and St Paul's**

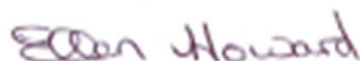
During 2023 the church was cold at times due to boiler problems. A lot of hard work went into planning and obtaining a faculty for the new boiler which was installed towards the end of the year. We thank the Friends of St Peter and St Paul's for funding this project.

#### **Yurt**

The Yurt project which started in 2022 with fundraising was completed successfully in 2023.

#### **Conclusion**

I would like to thank Steve Harrison for his help when I commenced this role and during the year, Mathew Rowsell for his help as Assistant Treasurer and Nic Laycock for his help in setting up the Diocese Cashbook and for agreeing to be our Independent Examiner.



Ellen Howard

Hon Treasurer

# South Petherton with Seavingtons and the Lambrooks's

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

## Receipts & Payments Account

	General fund	Designated fund	Restricted fund	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>					
<b>Donations and Legacies:</b>					
Planned giving	51,691	-	289	51,980	52,309
Collections, donations & other giving	19,235	-	24,408	43,643	40,184
Income tax recovered	12,708	-	-	12,708	20,666
Legacies	-	-	-	-	24,123
<b>Other Trading activities</b>					
Magazine/Bookstall sales/Hall Lettings etc	7,464	-	-	7,464	6,494
Income from other Properties	-	-	-	-	-
Annual Fete/events	17,827	-	4,300	22,127	8,796
<b>Receipts from Investments:</b>					
Interest & dividends	1,435	1,071	-	2,506	563
<b>Receipts from Charitable activities:</b>					
Parochial fees	5,818	-	-	5,818	9,152
<b>Other Receipts</b>					
Insurance claims	-	-	-	-	350
Sale proceeds from fixed assets	-	-	-	-	-
Loans received	-	-	-	-	-
Other	4,299	-	350	4,649	9,058
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>120,477</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>29,347</b>	<b>150,895</b>	<b>171,695</b>

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £
<b>CREDITORS: DUE IN LESS THAN ONE YEAR</b>				
Charitable Giving	347			347
Other invoices	729			729
	1076	0	0	1076

Approved by the PCC on the 23<sup>rd</sup> 2024

Signed on their behalf by



Rev Tracey Hallet (PCC Chairman)



Ellen Howard (PCC Treasurer)

## Payments

### Charitable activities:

Donations/Grants to charities	(2,898)	-	-	(2,898)	(6,696)
Mission & Evangelism	(3,243)	-	(355)	(3,598)	(3,000)
Parish Share	(64,820)	-	-	(64,820)	(63,549)
Clergy expenses	(240)	-	-	(240)	(11,697)
Church running expenses	(13,826)	-	(89)	(13,915)	(18,962)
Churchyard maintenance	(3,037)	-	-	(3,037)	(1,975)
Cost of raising funds	(3,876)	-	(100)	(3,976)	(3,239)

Support costs	(2,126)	-	(316)	(2,442)	(682)
Administration costs (inc. staff costs)	(10,048)	-	-	(10,048)	(9,397)
Governance Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Other	(6,305)	-	(56)	(6,361)	(9,532)

### Major expenditure

Repairs to church buildings	(8,705)	-	(45,143)	(53,848)	-
Repairs to other property	-	-	(38,596)	(38,596)	(1,440)
Capital purchases/additions	-	-	-	-	-
Loan repayments	-	-	-	-	-

<b>Total payments</b>	<b>(119,124)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(84,655)</b>	<b>(203,779)</b>	<b>(130,169)</b>
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<b>Surplus/(Deficit) of Receipts over payments</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>(55,308)</b>	<b>(52,884)</b>	<b>41,526</b>
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Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
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	1,353	1,071	(55,308)	(52,884)	41,526
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Cash at bank and in hand at 1 Jan (Actual Balance)	72,965	-	44,618	117,583	76,057
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Cash at bank and in hand at 31 Dec (Actual Balance)	74,318	1,071	(10,690)	64,699	117,583
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\*produced using the Diocesan Cashbook v5

*JN Chapman*  
9/5/24

### Parochial Fees Note

The PCC received parochial fees as detailed below during the year. Part is made up of statutory fees due to the PCC or the DBF, as prepared by the Archbishops' Council under the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986. The balance relates to charges as fixed by the PCC, for extras such as bells, flowers and special heating, or paid to visiting ministers, Readers or Non-Stipendiary Ministers as set out in the DBF's Parochial Fees policy

During the year, the PCC received parochial fees totalling	£11,410.00		
Statutory Fees due to the PCC totalled	£3,981.00		
Statutory Fees due to the DBF totalled	£4,403.00		
Statutory Fees received on behalf of a third party	£1,389.00		
Non-Statutory Extras due to the PCC totalled	£1,912.00		
Non-Statutory Extras due to a third party totalled	£0.00		
The PCC also received Deposits for the following year totalling	£0.00		
		Balance owed at year-end (inc. in Creditors)	
In total the PCC repaid the following Fees during the year			
Payment to DBF of Statutory Fees	£4,727.00		£324.00
Payment to visiting ministers/Readers/NSMs	£1,141.00		
Payment to visiting ministers/Readers/NSMs	£0.00		
Payment to visiting ministers/Readers/NSMs	£0.00		£248.00
(This excludes fees for Sunday Services)			



# Independent Examiner's Certificate for the PCC Accounts

Report to the trustees of:

South Petherton with the Securingtons + Lambrook Parochial Church Council

On accounts for the year ended:

31 DECEMBER 2023

Charity Number (if applicable):

1128940

Set out on  
pages

1 (Separate informal letter to PCC re work needed)

## Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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

It is my responsibility to:

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

## Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

## Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect,

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

JNCLaycock

Date:

9/5/24

Name:

NIC LAYCOCK

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body (if  
any):

Address:

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