



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



St James's, East Lambrook



St Peter & St Paul's South Petherton



St Michael's, Seavington

## Annual Report of the PCC for the Year 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

### Aim and Purpose

Parochial Church Council (the PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the Rector of the benefice, in promoting in the benefice the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. As well as the church buildings of St Peter and St Paul, South Petherton (Grade I Listed), St Michael, Seavington (Grade II listed), and St James, East Lambrook (Grade II\* listed) together with the churchyard at St Mary's, Seavington, the PCC is also responsible for maintaining the Schoolroom, East Lambrook. (The church building of St Mary, Seavington is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, though the PCC retains a duty to hold services there at least 6 times in the year).

### Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship in our Benefice, and to become part of our benefice family. When planning our activities, the PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, sacrament, and music. We try to enable people to live out their faith as part of our benefice family, through:

- Worship and prayer: church communities learning about the good news of God's love for us, and developing knowledge and trust in Jesus;
- Outward focus towards our wider local communities: building relationships and trust within our local context – especially with our church infants' school in South Petherton – in order to exemplify a life of service and to reflect God's love to all;
- Respect for the traditions of the Church while also exploring new ways to be welcoming and responsive to those seeking more than a secular world can give.
- To facilitate this work, it is vital that we support one another, and are generous with our time and resources; we must also maintain the fabric of our church buildings and the Schoolroom at East Lambrook.

## Administrative Information

Address for correspondence:

The Parish Office, The Rectory, Hele Lane, South Petherton, TA13 5DY  
office@southpethertonbenefice.org

Benefice Administrator: Anne Perez

Bankers:

NatWest Bank plc, 2 Hendford, Yeovil, BA20 1TN

Hon Treasurer

Ellen Howard  
Westholme  
North Street  
Martock TA12 6DH

Independent Examiner:

Mr N Laycock, 7 Bishopston, Montacute, TA15 6UU

Benefice website: [www.southpethertonbenefice.org](http://www.southpethertonbenefice.org)

## PCC Members and Trustees during 2024

Rector (until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024): Rev Tracey Hallett

Churchwardens: Steve Harrison (Vice-Chair), Manda Jaggars, Mark Stainer, Anne Shaw, Daphne Woodhouse

Elected Lay Representatives (including those as Deanery Synod representatives): Phil Andrews [2026]\*, Diana Baker [2026], Caroline Ireland-Jones [2027], Mandy Maggs [2026], Susan Ogilvy [2026], Crispin Raikes [2026], Sandra Robinson [2026], Chris Sharp [2025], Janet Strugnell (PCC Secretary) [2027]. *\* Denotes the APCM at which the term of office ends*

Co-Opted: Shan Weston (Head Teacher of South Petherton CofE Infants' School and Pre-School), David Chapman

Also serving for part of the year: Rev Simon Baker (appointed by the Bishop Michael Beasley as a priest licensed to the Benefice from October 2024). Roy Duffy (lay representative elected in 2023) took extended leave of absence due to ill health from March 2024.

The PCC should comprise 3 Deanery Synod representatives and 9 elected lay representatives; of the latter, at least 3 should be worshippers at St Peter & St Paul's, South Petherton, at least 2 worshippers at St Michael's, Seavington, and at least 2 worshippers at St James's, East Lambrook. As at shortly before the APCM 2025 there are: vacancies for 2 Deanery Synod representatives; and one vacancy for a worshipper at St Michael's, Seavington.

## **Achievements and Performance**

The resignation of our rector midway through the year has been a hugely significant matter in assessing the achievements of the PCC during 2024. You might also think of it (in common parlance) as “a game of two halves”.

Many of the matters in development early in the year, such as the review and development of formal policies and procedures, have necessarily had to be placed on the back-burner while our available capacity has been redirected towards maintaining worship and outreach, maintaining fundraising, dealing with the fallout and speculation from the resignation (including such practical matters as the renting out of the Rectory with the consequential removal of Benefice Office and of the Yurt from the Rectory) and taking practical steps towards making an appointment for a new appointment of a Rector.

## ***Worship and Prayer***

The PCC is keen to offer a range of styles of worship across the benefice. While wanting the Rector to be seen in and to value all three parishes appropriately, the PCC recognises that the Rector cannot be in different places at more or less the same time every Sunday. The range and quantity of services we want to offer therefore needs and benefits greatly from the support our ‘retired’ clergy with ‘permission to officiate’ (PTO). We are greatly blessed by them for their love and service, as much in ordinary times as we are in our current vacancy.

It has been our principal priority during vacancy to continue to offer the same range and timings of services, and in that we have been very successful. The pattern of worship established by Rev Tracey Hallett in 2023 across the benefice has continued almost entirely as in the previous year.

It is our privilege to be able to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. There have been 11 Baptisms, 4 weddings and 7 funerals in church (+5 graveside committals and 8 crematorium services) during the year. Those who are no longer able to come to Church are not forgotten; we are grateful to Rev Geoff Wade of the neighbouring Winsmoor benefice for his provision of ‘Sunday Worship at Home’ which we make available to some of our parishioners. When funds permit it is our intention to ‘stream’ our main services at St Peter & St Paul’s, plus, on request, those for weddings and funerals. Completion of the installation of broadband was achieved early in 2025.

There are detailed reports from the churchwardens on the worship at each church in Annex 1 to this document.

## ***Deanery Synod***

Two members of the PCC (one of whom is a churchwarden) sit on the Somerset South Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with a valuable link to the churches around us, and also to the Diocese as a whole. We actually have an allocation of three elected representatives, so as noted above, we have vacancies to increase our representation.

## **Church Fabric**

### **(a) St Peter & St Paul.**

Completion of the new heating system was achieved right at the end of 2023, and the new system has proved to be running effectively – it has certainly made services and other events in the church during the colder months of 2024 a lot more bearable. There were concerns early in the year about internal security of the building. While at the time this was on account of only low-level mischief-making, it highlighted a need to improve our arrangements. As a result, new cctv equipment has been installed – this was a gift from Steven Muxlow, Managing Director of SES Alarms, to whom we are very grateful. There are on-going issues with the draining of water from the dishwasher in the kitchen which have stopped us from continuing to benefit from having the appliance. Some repairs were made to the blue lias flooring although the fragility of the stone makes that an ongoing issue. The high-level lighting in the nave, the chancel and the north and south aisles has been replaced with low-energy LED fittings which, when broadband is installed, will enable dimming and alternative colours by using a phone app. The internal decoration of the ringing chamber in the tower needs improvement. Otherwise, the condition of the building remains fairly stable and acceptable. The external work done where the south-west side of the tower meets the roof has been effective in keeping us dry despite some severe testing by the weather. As ever, the PCC is very grateful to the *Friends of South Petherton Church* for their invaluable support in helping us meet much of the costs in maintaining the building. At the request of the *Friends*, the PCC commissioned a quotation for redecorating the internal sides of the outside walls of the aisles and the west end of the nave; unfortunately, the size of the estimate puts this project out of range for the time being until alternative sources of funding can be found. The PCC were advised late in the year that the organ is now due for a thorough clean and some refurbishment. The estimated cost at circa £20k means that we are searching for grant funding to make this a viable project. The church's quinquennial inspection is due in 2025.

### **(b) St Michael**

In February it was decided we needed to review the maintenance of the churchyards both at St Michael's Church and St Mary's. Manda approached three gardening companies to tender for the contract for 2024 after a disappointing 2023 with the Council and deciding not to renew our contract with them. After consultation with the PCC, James Satterley Garden Maintenance was awarded the contract. Our working relationship with James has been excellent, and he has been very accommodating of any additional needs we have required especially around funerals. We hope the villagers of the Seavingtons have noticed an improvement in the maintenance of our churchyards.

### **(c) St James**

The condition of the building both internal and external is in good order, with no issues or work needed, other than regularly clearing the gutters of leaves and debris due to the close proximity of trees. Several of the main lights have failed due to their age and these 100W bulbs have been replaced with low energy LED bulbs.

During 2023 we had some issues with the council ground maintenance team who maintained the cemetery, in particular the frequency of cuts, and they had to be chased up on a number of occasions as the grass was becoming long and untidy, and some villagers were to be seen

with garden shears tidying the graves of their loved ones. To add insult to injury the council's new contract had risen considerably from the previous year. After receiving new quotes for the maintenance of the cemetery, the PCC approved James Satterley, who is a local ground maintenance contractor from Stenbridge.

### **Community Outreach**

Our fundraising activities continue to be dual purpose: yes, we need to generate income, but also we want these events to model the generosity God's love and the joy of being together. Likewise, St Peter and St Paul's church and the East Lambrook Schoolroom are available for booking and used to enable community events such as concerts, photo and art exhibitions. Not all our outreach – for example: the harvest suppers, agape supper, the men's 'No Name' group, hosting Foodshare, our Parish Magazine and Connected weekly newssheet, 'Pilgrimage' village walks – is intended to raise funds, or – as with our Monthly 'Open House' and our Lent Lunches – at least not funds for us but for other worthwhile causes. One of our ambitions for the future remains to be in a position to employ a children and families worker.

### **Other Activities**

Published separately to this report are reports from the many activities and groups that fall within the umbrella of our churches and are critical to the principal objectives of worship and prayer and outward focus. These are diverse and rich .... and recommended reading for all. They include, for example: Choir, Bell Ringers, Greener Futures, Mother's Union to mention but a few.

### **Financial Review**

Details of our financial accounts are published separately but suffice it to say that the state of our finances are a constant worry, a constant struggle and a constant handicap to achieving much of what we would like to do. What cannot be reported in the financial accounts is the drain on the time and energy of our ever-so willing volunteers in an attempt, if not to stand still then at least not to go too far backwards too quickly.

The numbers will speak for themselves; what is less visible is the cost firstly of the missed opportunities for outreach and for presence in our community, and secondly of the impact of relentless grind on the stamina of our volunteers.

We should perhaps celebrate the fact that we paid our parish share in full in 2024 (and have undertaken to continue to do so in 2025). Are we rightly fulfilling our duty to the diocese as we should or just being mugs? Moving into 2025 there is a new methodology for calculating Parish Share. It is supposed to be more transparent, though for parishes such as ours in vacancy it is critically not. It is also founded on a recognition that year-on-year increases in parish share are unsustainable, yet it oversees another increase in 2025 amounting to a rise in the baseline amount in the last three years of 28%.

With this backdrop there is a particular mean-spirited niggles that has surfaced recently. During vacancy, the diocese allows us to claim a fee to pay to our retired clergy for the services they take for us. This is highly laudable and a small, practical way in which we can thank them for all they do for us without cost to ourselves. Or is it? This allowance is limited to four services per week *across the whole benefice* and is strictly applied – that is no allowance

for 'extra' services even at Christmas or Easter. Really? Yes, really: can the leadership of the diocese be that much out of touch with its own purposes?

Looking forward into later in 2025, the PCC is looking into the practicalities of introducing the 'Parish Giving Scheme'. This is intended to bring together all forms of regular giving (standing orders and giving envelopes) for those who do either of these. It works as a simple direct debit and critically it offers the option (and it is optional) to increase your giving by the rate of inflation automatically each year. Watch out for more information.

### ***Reserves Policy***

The PCC has previously resolved to maintain a balance on our General (unrestricted) Fund, which equates to at least four months' unrestricted payments (around £40,000) to cover regular running costs and unforeseen expenditures.

It is our policy to 'ring-fence' monies from specific activities (such as Phil Andrews's scrap metal collection) and from legacies by putting them into 'designated funds' to isolate them from general expenditure.

From time-to-time the PCC receives gifts and legacies which have specific conditions attached to their use; these are placed in 'Restricted Funds'. Where it is likely that spending of these funds will be spread over a period of time and the amount is sufficient in size, it is our policy to invest these funds with CCLA, through the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund, their Investment Fund units, and their Property Fund units in order for them to attract interest payments.

### ***Safeguarding***

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Maintaining good practice and high standards in safeguarding is a key priority of the PCC: reporting on safeguarding is a standing item at all PCC meetings.

Manda Jagers, Parish Safeguarding Officer, writes:

I would like to start by thanking everyone in the benefice for their support of safeguarding in our churches and keeping them as safe places.

Our Parish Safeguarding Dashboard is now level 3, which is quite a target and I am grateful to the ministry team, wardens, Parish Administrator and volunteers for their compliance with training and having the necessary protocols in place. I know it involves a lot of work, alongside the other commitments we all have.

May I remind everyone that "Safeguarding is everyone's business," basic training in safeguarding is available free for anyone who wishes to participate and can be face to face if that's what you prefer. The training isn't aimed at ensuring we don't put others at risk, it is more that we can recognise signs of possible abuse (in its many forms) and are equipped to respond to someone reporting them, or just wanting to talk. I know this is out of our comfort zone for many of us, but sadly, abuse is a very present reality within our beautiful villages and, in many ways, living in what appears to be an affluent

and safe area, may make it harder for victims to report or even speak about their experiences.

Abuse does not just involve child victims, anyone, particularly those who are vulnerable (have any care needs) can be a “victim.” Awareness of suspicious activity is a fundamental of all training.

I don’t want to end on a sad or depressing note – I want to thank everyone for their acts of random kindness, for making people welcome in our churches (and in the wider community) for those friendly conversations over a cuppa. This is how we spread the gospel.

### ***Volunteers***

The members of the PCC would like to thank all the volunteers who work so tirelessly to make our benefice a lively and vibrant community. Nothing works without you.

### ***Structure, Governance and Management***

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The Council comprises the Incumbent, the Churchwardens, those elected to the Deanery Synod, and other members who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, by those on the Electoral Roll. Members of the congregation are always encouraged to join the Electoral Roll, and to consider standing for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance in the benefice, and for all financial matters. The full PCC met eight times during 2024. The average level of attendance was 69%. All meetings were quorate. Given its wide responsibilities, the PCC has started to develop a number of subgroups, each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life, policy, or governance. These include Mission Action, Buildings, Greener Futures, Finances, Bell Ringing, and East Lambrook School Room, plus some ad hoc teams to work on specific policies. While each of these has made some progress during the year, the other priorities and calls on capacity consequent on the resignation of the rector have effectively brought much of that work to a standstill. This will need corrective action once a new appointment is made for rector.

The key posts on the PCC are all filled: Hon Treasurer (who is not a PCC member), Hon Secretary, Safeguarding Officer, and Vice-Chair. The Treasurer is supported by an Assistant Treasurer (who is a PCC member) and a Gift Aid Secretary (who is not).

### ***Towards Appointing a Rector***

A key priority for the later part of the year has been the procedures which will lead us to making a new appointment in 2025. By the end of the year, the churchwardens had held meetings with the Archdeacon of Taunton, Ven Simon Hill and the Somerset South Area Dean, Rev Jo Stobart, and also with Bishop Michael Beasley ; the PCC held a pre-Section 11 meeting in early November and had planned for December a ‘discernment meeting’ open to the whole benefice as a consultation process in preparation for creating our ‘parish profile’ (though this meeting had to be postponed until early January due to unsafe weather conditions. Work to

complete the profile and begin advertising the post in April 2025 has been ongoing with a view to holding interviews in May 2025.

Central to all these efforts has been the compilation of the 'Parish Profile'. It may have been assumed that this could be a simple re-hash of the previous one from two years ago. Well, not really. While some of the background information about the locality may still have been accurate and relevant, how the Benefice sees itself, its sense of direction, its worship and its priorities have changed during Rev Tracey's incumbency. All that needed to be reflected too – OK, maybe within a similar framework to that of the old profile – in a new version. We – the PCC – all of us - are greatly indebted to Chris Sharp who took on the poisoned chalice and has led the way (and done the donkeywork) with great sensitivity, diplomacy, insight and good humour in the later part of 2024 and into 2025.

### ***Electoral Roll 2025***

The Electoral Roll is regularly updated as our church membership changes. However, on a 6-yearly cycle, we are required to build a new Roll from scratch; 2025 is a year when we have had to do that.

The PCC is grateful firstly to Rod Page who has served as Electoral Roll Officer for as long as anyone can remember, and secondly to Tim Robinson who has kindly taken on that responsibility for us.

A clear timetable was set by the PCC for ensuring that a new Roll could be produced by the due date. The need to re-make the Roll in 2025 was well advertised through announcements at services at all three churches, through articles in the Parish Magazine and through reminders in the parish weekly news sheet, 'Connected'. At the initial closing date prior to the Annual Parish Church Meeting, the number on the Roll was 125.



*Bristol Ensemble showcasing and explaining their musical skills to the Infant School children*



## **Annex 1: Churchwardens' Reports on Worship and Outreach at the Three Churches**

### **St James, East Lambrook**

**Mark Stainer**

In February Simon Baker led a conversation regarding service patterns at St James's. This was to be a review after a year with the new service patterns being held in all three churches. There was a good turnout of the regular congregation, and all had an opportunity to put their views across. Overall, the consensus was everyone seemed happy with the pattern of services, maintaining the morning and evening services and much gratitude to the various clergy who make it possible to have a service every Sunday.

As we moved into Lent we had extra services. On Wednesday's we had Compline preceded by up to half hour of quiet prayer. On Palm Sunday, Rev Tracey Hallet led a service of Holy Communion. The Good Friday Liturgy with Canon Ian Gibson was well attended and all agreed it was a thoughtful and moving service. Finally on Easter Day, which was on a fifth Sunday, we had a special service of Holy Communion.

On 28th July we had our Patronal Festival. This was a Holy Communion service led by Rev Tracey Hallett and following the service everyone gathered around the font for food and drink which everyone had contributed. It was a lovely sunny morning so the door was left open to let in the sunlight.

This turned out to be Tracey's last service at St. James's and we would soon be faced with another interregnum.

Our congregation numbers had been good throughout September and October. In addition, we had our harvest festival. We had a congregation of 26 at the harvest service and supper. Rev John Tyler led this special Evensong service. After the service everyone made their way to the Schoolroom for a harvest supper of cheese, bread and cider. There were very generous harvest donations of fresh produce as well as packet and tinned food. Most of the fresh produce was taken to Burnworthy care home and the tinned and packet donations to the Lords Larder at St Peter and St Paul's.

On the Saturday before harvest we had the first of two weddings. This happy occasion was led by Canon Ian Gibson. It was a small gathering and for the first time that week the sun shone brightly.

In complete contrast the second wedding was in November and being late in the afternoon it was completely dark outside. Much of the light was provided by candles and night lights in the windows and on the altar.

On the last Saturday in November, we had our Christmas Fair in the Schoolroom, this was a great success and very well supported. The total raised this year was £1,558.94 which is a substantial increase from last year. It was heartening to see the Schoolroom full almost to the





end and with many new faces, everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves. Thanks to all concerned for the tremendous effort into making this such a success.

In the build up to Christmas we had good congregation numbers, and this culminated on Christmas Eve with a very well attended Carols by Candlelight service with a congregation of 104. Our hard-working retired clergy covered the many extra services during this period and on

Christmas Day they were joined by the Archdeacon of Taunton, Simon Hill who led the morning service at St. James's and St. Michael's.

Although we have been in an interregnum since August all our services have been covered thanks to 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, compiling the various rotas, the cleaning and bell ringing and the many readers, all playing their valuable part in the life of the church.

## **St Michael, Seavington**

***Manda Jagers & Anne Shaw***

How can it be that time of year already to write about our 2024 celebrations at St Michael's Church? The early part of the year was quite turbulent, but thankfully we ended the year growing in strength and numbers. Our first service of the year was Cafe Church, led by Anne and Manda, exploring the subject "God Shakes Things Up" - I think we can all agree things were "Shaken Up" in the Benefice during 2024.

Lent time was then rapidly upon us with Rev Simon Baker leading an evening Ashing Service on 14th February for Ash Wednesday, perfect for the working congregation who were unable to attend the morning service at St Peter and St Paul's Church in South Petherton. During February, Rev Simon led Evensong and Conversation services, with Rev Tracey, to enable parishioners of the Benefice the opportunity to express their thoughts on the new service patterns that had been put in place during 2023. On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February a well-attended service was held at St Michael's Church. Rev Simon led a lovely Evensong service and everyone was given time to join in "the conversation". Plenty of notes were taken on a large flipboard; these notes became a very useful tool later in the year when sadly we had to start thinking about returning to the recruitment process when we moved into Interregnum.

March was a very busy month; Rev Simon led our Mothering Sunday service, marking halfway through Lent. Holy Week in the Benefice was well supported, a Holy Week Mediation Service with Rev Tracey on Tuesday at St Michael's Church. Rev Simon took an evening Holy Communion Service on Maundy Thursday for those who were unable to attend the Agape Supper in South Petherton, and the Good Friday Reflection Service. Easter Day fell on a fifth Sunday, so the main service in the Benefice was held at South Petherton. Rev Simon kindly offered to lead a Holy Communion Service at 9am at St Michael's Church to enable the parishioners of the Seavingtons to take Holy Communion in their Parish Church, also allowing

time for those who wanted to attend the Benefice Service too. Cafe Church Led by Rev Tracey and Sam Lloyd in May had a last-minute venue change due to the Cafe in Seavington having a fresh coat of paint - many thanks were sent to Frogmary Farm for allowing us to use their educational space.

We were lucky to be able to celebrate St Mary's Patronal Festival at St Mary's Church on 11<sup>th</sup> August, always a lovely occasion to worship in St Mary's Church. The service was led by Rev Simon who understands the sensitivity in our community for those who still feel saddened that St Mary's Church is now in the care of the Church Conservation Trust Church.

St Michael's Patronal Festival was held on 29<sup>th</sup> September at 3pm - we were thrilled to be supported by our Benefice choir, with Ruth accompanying them on the keyboard. This was a real treat for Rev Simon and Anne not to have the stress of downloading music to play through Bluetooth speakers!

We are so lucky to live in a farming community, so the opportunity to celebrate the Harvest Festival is always a blessed time. Rev Simon led our service on 13<sup>th</sup> October; we requested non-perishable items to be brought to the service for the Foodshare held in St Peter and St Paul's Church - the biggest celebration was the lack of marrows!

Manda and Anne led a Celtic Worship Service on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October. Liz Harper reflected on the Gospel reading and encouraged us all to join in with our own reflections. A very uplifting conversation was had by all. The year is now running away with us; our annual Gift Day in the Benefice was held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November. Gift Day is always a time to be at peace in our beautiful church, time to stop and reflect. We have so much to be grateful for. We had another fabulous turn out for our Remembrance Sunday Service held at the war memorial in Seavington playing fields. This service is accessible to all and has grown in popularity over recent years. Again, we were blessed to have Rev Simon lead the service, followed by coffee and biscuits at the community cafe.

Again, we have so much to be grateful for! Our December Cafe Church explored "Hopeful beginnings and journeying through Advent". It seemed right that our Posada figures (Mary, Joseph and their donkey) set off on their journey around the Seavingtons, including visits to homes in Ilminster and South Petherton. They travelled with a book for every home to complete, reflecting on their time offering rest places for the soon to be new parents. They arrived into St Michael's Church on Christmas Eve at the very well attended Carol Service, in time for Mary to deliver baby Jesus on Christmas morning. On December 15<sup>th</sup> Rev Ian Gibson led our Christingle Service at St Mary's Church. This is always a popular service and St Mary's Church was a perfect backdrop for the candle lit service. Mary, Joseph and their donkey popped in too to join in with the merriment. A generous collection was forwarded to Save the Children charity to aid with their good works.

Our final two services for 2024 were very well attended; Christmas Eve Traditional Carol Service and Christmas Morning Family Holy Communion, both led by Rev Simon.

In September, Manda and Anne attended the Churchwarden Training Day at Flourish House in Wells - we had an excellent day with lots of helpful information provided and good conversation with other Churchwardens. It was lovely to come away from the training feeling like maybe we aren't doing too bad a job!

Everything we achieve at St Michael's Church could not be done without the amazing support of our retired PTO's. We are so incredibly lucky to have Rev Simon supporting us on a day-to-day basis, not just on a Sunday! Also, many thanks go to Rev John Tyler, Rev Ian Gibson, Rev Tim Price, Rev Annie Gurner who have enabled most Sundays to be covered.

During our time of Interregnum, our Area Dean Rev Jo Stobart, has also come to our rescue fitting in services at altered times to enable the Seavingtons to be able to worship in our churches each week - we are thankful to our parishioners for their flexibility too.

Finally, Manda and Anne are grateful for the support from Liz Harper in helping them facilitate Cafe Church. These informal services require a lot of preparation and are often considered by the congregations as the most Spirit filled of all worship. These services are well attended, and we are thankful that the Seavington Community Shop and Cafe committee are still happy for us to use their facility. This really helps us to achieve the "accessible for everyone" which is so important to us. 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 & St Paul, South Petherton**

***Steve Harrison and Daphne Woodhouse***

2024 began, as it did at our sister churches, with a special meeting at the church to discuss the pattern of worship, established by Rev Tracey during 2023. This kind of thing is healthy and welcome. Change and evolution is inevitable in any living organisation, including the church; the alternative is become moribund and to dwindle. But change also needs to be reviewed by everyone it affects – how well has it worked? what needs to be tweaked in the light of experience? what has been lost as well as what has been gained? It was important to ask these questions and to give opportunity for everyone of all shades of Anglican tradition to express their views in an atmosphere of mutual care and respect. The discussion is an end in itself, but the record of it has also been a valuable resource in compiling our Parish Profile and in shaping the PCC's thinking in articulating its person specification for the new post-holder.

It has to be said that 2024 was a tumultuous year! The impact on our church life of Rev Tracey's departure has been difficult to navigate and so many have worked hard to enable worship and areas of service to continue. I am thankful for all the encouragement and support so many have given me.

There was considerable uncertainty over the Summer as to what would actually happen but once the decisions were finalised and Rev Tracey left at the end of August, we were required to remove the yurt and empty the office which had resided in the rectory, in order for the Diocese to rent out the rectory. The tenancy commenced in December and ends in June 2025. Most of the contents and the yurt itself are being stored by kind permission of the Killens in a barn at Barcroft Hall. Our administrator now works from home and the copier and other contents of the office are in St Peter & St Paul's Church vestries.

During Rev Tracey's incumbency I feel we grew in our sense of being a church family and this contributed to the sense of loss that many of us experienced. We learnt more about how to be an outward-facing body of believers, and the pioneering spirit was sparked! This has enabled Sam, our community volunteer to progress her pioneer training, endorsed by Rev Tracey and the PCC.

People move away for many reasons and our Sacristan, David Ward, Jane who had drawn together our last profile, and their lively children, Marianne and Jonathan, went to live in Jersey and have been much missed. Sandra Robinson, changed her role from Assistant Churchwarden to Verger and also took over many of the weekly sacristan duties, supported by others who help care for the linen.

We have been blessed by the way our 'retired' clergy have supported the benefice in the provision of regular worship and the occasional offices of weddings, funerals and baptisms. Some mid-week services were lay led by Judy Bristow, Anna Chaplain, and by Daphne Woodhouse.

That said, it is nonetheless evident that Rev Tracey's resignation has brought about some decline in attendance at services. Let's look at some numbers over three four-week blocks:-

| <b>Attendance</b>  | <b>Feb 2024</b> | <b>Oct 2024</b> | <b>Feb 2025</b> |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Average number at four 8am HC services (adults)          | 12              | 13              | 11              |
| Average number at three 9:30 am HC services (adults)     | 56              | 53              | 47              |
| Average number at three 9:30 am HC services (children)   | 4               | 1               | 1               |
| Actual number at 10:30 am café church service (adults)   | 82              | 44              | 41              |
| Actual number at 10:30 am café church service (children) | 18              | 8               | 3               |

Following Rev Tracey's departure we see:

- not much change in the 8am HC attendance;
- a small decrease (5-15%) in the number of adults at the 9:30 HC services;
- children at the 9:30am HC services have nearly disappeared despite one of the services being billed as a 'Family Communion';
- a substantial decrease (of around 50%) in the number of adults attending café church;
- children at café church becoming a rarity.

We have continued to host the Foodshare and the South Petherton Carers Group who meet during Open House, our monthly café. Foodshare is in regular use; it operates on a help-yourself basis to support local families. There have been a few concerns over one or two individuals helping themselves rather disproportionately but, on the whole, the scheme serves a very good purpose. Pastoral care continued with the support of Judy who, with others, provided a short service in Burnworthy at intervals, and visited residents who expressed a wish to talk with her. Her deep spiritual care of Jo Goldie in her final weeks was much appreciated by Jo, her friends and family. Our love and prayers go with Judy as she relocates nearer family. Other valued members of our congregation left us for heaven or have needed to move either nearer family or into residential care homes.

Fundraising continued with 12 events between February and November. Some proceeds were shared with various charities, in line with our desire to express the generosity shown to us by the Lord. Phil Andrews continued to collect and sell scrap metal with fantastic results. See financial report for total added to church funds. Various ad-hoc opportunities for fellowship and a generous spirit - such as the Lent Lunches (supporting Christian Aid), an Agape Supper on Maundy Thursday, Folkfest hospitality, the Christmas Lights Switch-On event – have been well supported, as have the regular gatherings of such as Mothers' Union and Phil Andrews's 'No Name' men's group. Our many fundraising events don't just raise funds; they bring a wide cross-section of our local community into the church maintaining the strong sense in the



village that St Peter & St Paul's is their village church – and that is further reinforced by welcoming events from established village organisations, such as the SP Combined Arts Choir concerts and the SP Photographic Society annual exhibition. The church is well used for concerts and performances, the highlight of which in 2024 was surely the Bristol Ensemble's Vivaldi concert – or was it the Beach'd Boys Shanty Band? – there's something for everyone.

Two home groups have continued to meet for learning and mutual encouragement and the prayer ministry during communion on first and third weeks each month has seen a number of answers to prayer for different people for which we thank God. Morning prayer has been available each Tuesday 08.30, providing an opportunity to pray for God's work in the village and Benefice. All comers welcome.

Scope for working with the Infants School reduced temporarily from September due to Rev Tracey's departure and the school's preparations for its Ofsted inspection. The inspection went very well: "A school filled with sparkle and joy" is high praise indeed and thoroughly well deserved. The termly Open the Book session was suspended, as were the weekly assemblies in church. There is still mutual desire for church and school to work closely together, indeed it is a key task of the new incumbent to make this work well. The core 'Open the Book' team from the church remains committed to picking up where they left off when the time is right.

The year drew to an end as the PCC started work on the recruitment process for our new Rector and closed with services over Christmas being joyful, positive and well attended celebrations of the incarnation of Jesus. He is the reason for the season and for whom and by whom we live, breathe and have our being. Hallelujah!



*Craft skills at the  
Christmas Lights  
Switch-On*



*Camera Club  
Exhibition*

*The School's Easter  
Bonnet Parade at St  
Peter & S Paul's*



## **Annex 2: Report on the Proceedings of the PCC During 2024**

### **Janet Strugnell (PCC Secretary)**

This was another busy year which started with work on initiatives inspired by the Rector as well as the ever-present issues of maintaining 3 church buildings and administering the 3 parishes correctly. However, in August, with the resignation of the Rector, much attention went onto the smooth running of the benefice without an incumbent and arrangements for the recruitment of a new rector.

The PCC wishes to record its gratitude to Rev Tracey Hallett for her inspirational and dedicated work with our benefice. She worked tirelessly towards building relationships with all three communities, with a vision of a 'church without walls', sharing God's message of love, hope and salvation with everyone. She proved to us that we have capabilities greater than we had imagined, and we pray that this will enable us to support the work of a new Rector.

There were 6 regular meetings throughout the year, with 2 additional extraordinary meetings (to discuss the new method of assessing Parish Share and a policy on Living in Love and Faith), and in November a Pre-Section 11 meeting, required as part of the process to prepare for the recruitment process for a new incumbent. In February there were also 3 consultation meetings (one in each parish) considering the new pattern of services.

The major, ever-present issues were:

**Buildings and maintenance** - ensuring the upkeep of our buildings and grounds to a safe and suitable standard. Applications have to be made to the diocese for almost all changes within the buildings. We successfully applied for a faculty to install broadband within St Peter & St Paul's church, as well as replacement of the failing lighting. The organ at South Petherton is due for its 25 year maintenance in 2025, and also the Quinquennial Inspection (a survey of the structure of the building conducted every 5 years). Damp issues at St Michael's have necessitated work. We supported the East Lambrook Schoolroom Committee as they continue their efforts to maintain and update the building to create a safe and useful space for the church and community,

**Finances** – paying our Parish Share to the diocese (in 2024 this was almost £75,000), running costs for the benefice and fundraising for general funds as well as special projects. Assistance with help running and ideas for fundraising events is much needed. The annual Gift Day, Autumn Fair, Plant Fair and Folkfest are supplemented by quizzes and concerts, all of which entail much organisation.

**Safeguarding** – now an essential element in the administration of all church activities

**Governance** – the PCC members are Trustees of the charity that is the benefice, and there are strict rules on how the charity is run. We need to ensure that we are up to date with all our policies and procedures.

**Outreach** – The Greener Futures Group worked hard to engage with the congregation and community to enable us to achieve a Bronze Eco Award (and in January 2025 we made Silver!). The local Foodshare scheme is housed in St Peter & St Paul's and members of the congregation assist with its running. We have supported various charities through special events. After much discussion, we supported Rev Hallett in her desire to allow on request blessings for those in same-sex relationships (as outlined in the CofE Living in Love and Faith

initiative), although it remains to be seen how a new rector will approach this issue. Lent lunches supported Christian Aid as well as an envelope distribution during Christian Aid week in May. Efforts, chiefly by Phil Andrews collecting and selling scrap metal, are underway to raise funds for a dedicated children and family worker, but again, we will have to discover the priorities of the new Rector.

**Schools** – We continue to support the work of our Church of England Infant School and to build relationships with the Junior School.

This is by no means an exhaustive list but gives an indication of the work undertaken by PCC members. It also shows that there are several initiatives where efforts were begun, but their precise future will depend on our new incumbent.



*Folkfest tradition of ‘clipping the church’*





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



St James's, East Lambrook



St Peter & St Paul's South Petherton



St Michael's, Seavington

## **Reports from Church Groups and Activities 2024**

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.

A lot has happened since my report last year.

Last year we were only managing to ring eight bells on Sundays but mostly it was only six. Recently, you might have noticed all twelve bells ringing on Sundays and on our Thursday practice nights we are ringing ten and twelve bells on a regular basis.

You might also have noticed that the ringing is smoother than is used to be with most of the spaces between the bells being the same. This has happened for two main reasons:

1. Rosemary Heard and I have continued to teach four of our beginners, who are now able to handle our bells and are competent to ring rounds and call changes. One of the four actually calls the changes and rings in other local towers to improve his skills. Another of them is learning to ring Methods, which is being able to learn the pattern which the bell she is ringing goes to link up with all the other bells which are doing the same. Another of them is almost there and so are most of our other ringers who at last May could only ring rounds and call changes.
2. Since May last year we have been joined by four new competent ringers: Emma Brooks, Wendy Bishop, John and Jaqueline Davis.

This brings our total local ringing members up to an amazing 16.

On our Thursday evening practices we have four or five visitors who practice with us and then we welcome back two past ringers who return from university and other destinations from time to time.

Rosemary Heard, who has been our Tower Captain in recent years, has decided to step down and has been replaced by John Davis, who has a lot of experience having been Tower Captain in many places including Truro Cathedral. Rosemary is now Vice Tower Captain also, she is our Association of Ringing Teachers trainer with me carrying, on my teaching role as an ART qualified teacher.

We are now in a good position to go from strength to strength.

Having been on the Benefice PCC for a year now, representing the St. Peter and St. Paul's ringers and bells, I feel that the other three church's bells and ringers (St Mary's, St. Michael's and St. James), need to be represented, so that any of their issues can be discussed at our Benefice PCC. This would provide the route for any improvements needed, in the other two towers as well.

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## CHRISTIAN AID

Nigel Kinsman  
for the Christian Aid (South Petherton) Group

Christian Aid Week 2024 was focused on rural women in Burundi. The posters and envelopes featured Aline who had been street homeless, attended a women's empowerment workshop in her area and went on to create a thriving business selling food products on behalf of local women. Aline learned to create adobe (essentially mud) bricks, built a house and was soon able to pay for her children's schooling. In partnership with a local organisation, Christian Aid funded the workshops and agricultural outreach work.

This story is another example of how Christian Aid lives out the belief that "Everyone is equal in the sight of God, yet we live in a world where the scandal of poverty, inequality and injustice persists".

In South Petherton a small team organised various awareness raising, prayer and fund-raising events in 2024. Sandra Robinson organised two Lent Lunches which drew people from across the Benefice including some from the Roman Catholic community. Together with a Bring-and-Buy stall, these raised £715.

Christian Aid Week began with a café church in St Peter & St Paul's. This attracted 70 -80 people and who gave £465 via the envelope scheme. For the rest of the week our volunteers delivered appeal envelopes to approximately 2,000 households organised by Tim Browning. Since Covid, we no longer knock doors to recover envelopes but label them with details of collection points. This scheme worked well and added £680.

Sandra also recruited hardy souls to stand with collection tins in St James' Street on Saturday morning and brought in another £135.

Finally, Daphne and her Open House team made Christian Aid their beneficiary of the month and collected a further £120. A few weeks later Claire Gordon and Nigel Kinsman presided over "The Count" and were delighted to take more than £1,400 to the bank.

Our overall total of £2,126 was down on 2023 but still a thoroughly worthwhile effort. Many, many thanks to the tens of volunteers who helped and the hundreds who contributed.

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## GREENER FUTURES

Nigel Kinsman

Greener Futures were pleased to complete the requirements for the ARocha/EcoChurch Silver Award on deadline day in January 2025. Since gaining the Bronze Award we have ...

(Worship) Held services relating to caring for God's earth, highlighted ways to do this in the Parish Magazine and encouraged more frequent prayers for the environment.

(Buildings) Switched to a green tariff, installed LED lights, provided rainwater collection butt.

(Land) Promoted & engaged in wildlife surveys, changed mowing regime for part of churchyard.

(Lifestyles) Written about ethical investments, food waste, (LOAF choices) Local, Organic, Animal-friendly and Fairtrade and promoted a personal carbon audit.

(Community & Global) Organised litter-picks, joint activities with TWiG, Rectory Toilet twinning and financially supported an overseas environmental charity "TreeAid".

Since the award we have continued to represent how Caring for Creation looks to us ...

- Working with Churchwardens to collect data for the Energy Footprint Tool (an analysis of the energy costs of each church in the Diocese).
- Encouraged participation in the RSPB Garden Bird Count.
- Encouraged participation in the Earth Hour when global supporters turn out their lights for an hour and the Rivers Trust/Earthwatch River Watch.
- Joined with TWiG in organising a Village Litter Pick (Sth Petherton & Over Stratton).
- Contributed articles to the Parish Mag on pollution of our waters and #No Mow May.

We have been delighted to welcome Trish Harper at our group meetings as she is co-leader of the Trees & Wildlife Group and known in our Church. Sadly, Roy Duffy has not yet felt able to re-join us and we wish him well over his health issues. Greener Futures remains an activist group and would still welcome additional parishioners keen to contribute.

The group could not have achieved many of the things we do without the active support of Daphne, Steve, Janet and the Magazine Editor. Thank you to them.

Ultimately, the Greener Futures group remains committed to supporting the PCC over their efforts to lead our churches to Net Zero by 2030 (now a formal commitment as of Jan 2025) and exploring and supporting us all in Caring for Creation through prayer, activities and lifestyle change.

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## **MOTHERS' UNION (South Petherton Branch)**

Hazel Ricketts

Membership has remained at 17 as Pat Preston has joined though the Revd Wendy Mitchell has resigned. One member, Sheila Frost, has moved into a nursing home.

Meetings began with the AGM in January which was held in St Peter and St Paul Choir Vestry. This was followed in February by the Wave of Prayer, when we particularly remember our linked dioceses around the world, led by Ann Lovick. The Revd Tracey Hallet led a Quiet Afternoon in the Church, "Lenten Reflections", in March. Mandy Maggs spoke about "Shared Lives, a new way of caring" in April and in May Judy Bristow told us about her Training and Work as an Anna Chaplain. In June Judith Riley reported on the Diocesan AGM, held in Wells, which had included a presentation and discussion about the future of the MU in Bath & Wells. Barbara Summers hosted a Strawberries and Cream Tea in her garden in July, to which several visitors came. In September Daphne Furey, with contributions from Sue Harrison, enlightened us about "Open the Book". Andrew and Ellen Howard talked about the Christian Response to Eastern Europe and the Shoebox Appeal in October and in November we had a general discussion including future plans. Sue hosted the Christmas Party in December when the Revd Annie Gurner enrolled Pat Preston. Sue continues to play her guitar for our hymn and carol singing.

The Cake Sale in aid of the Make a Mothers' Day Appeal raised £151: Sue's Simnel Cake being blessed the Revd Tracey being an additional feature. The strawberry Tea raised £55 for the Summer of Hope Appeal and £425 was donated for the Worldwide Fund. Sales of MUE cards, etc raised £263.90, including £19.25 on Palm Sunday.

Diocesan and Deanery Events were attended by several members during the year. These were the meeting in Yeovil to discuss what the future held for the MU in Bath & Wells, the Diocesan AGM in Wells, the Blue Christmas Service at Holy Trinity, Yeovil, and 2 MUE Committee Meetings. Following a request for prayers for the MU Diary, three members sent suggestions.

Two Committee Meetings were held. Judith Riley continued as Secretary, Anne Brunton as Treasurer and Hazel Ricketts as Literature Representative. Ann Lovick continued to send an anniversary card to those baptised and a knitted teddy bear was presented to those baptised. In December six members attended a baptism in St Peter and St Paul and it is hoped to maintain a link with the family.

Jane Bedford's contribution can be seen on the South Petherton Stitching Project. Postage stamps are collected around the area by Gill Beveridge which raise funds for the MU. Individual members participate in the life and work of the church and the Branch appreciates the support of the clergy and congregation.

Following a diocesan-wide vote in November, it is expected that Bath & Wells members will join the SW Cluster of Dioceses in 2025.

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## NO NAME GROUP

We've never formally settled on a name for this group, but somehow 'No Name Group' or simply 'NNG' is affectionally what it seems to be known by. What is it? It is a very informal men's group.

It's the inspiration of one Phil Andrews who is its driving force, and as he both seems to know almost everybody in South Petherton and is seemingly boundless in reaching out to all and sundry, he is its *de facto* leader. What's it about? Basically, finding excuses for an occasional meet-up and an amiable evening together ..... somewhere along the line a glass of fine ale and/or acceptable wine might also be involved.

Here's a flavour of what 'an amiable evening' constitutes: Fred Rumsey speaking on his role as a curator at the Natural History Museum – a skittles evening - Alan Davies telling us about his experiences of being a steeplejack (working with Fred Dibnah) and also travelling the world as a pylon and telecommunications tower constructor – a guided tour of Sherborne Minster – a Christmas meal at the Ranch Café.

Now, mostly the participants are gentlemen of a certain age (some might even say 'old fogies' but recently we've joined by a 'young fogey' which is brilliant). Applications to join are not needed – just talk to Phil and he will add you to his circulation list.

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## OPEN HOUSE 2024

Daphne Woodhouse

It does not seem possible that Open House was first opened in early 2017! A team came together to provide drinks and cakes along with a welcome to all. We hope that all members of our communities are happy to join us on the third Wednesday of every month and bring friends to share in the welcome.

Tea and coffee, (including decaf) or soft drinks, and home-made cakes (we try to include 'free from' offerings), and when we can, savouries like sausage rolls or cheese scones, are supplied by the volunteers in a happy, friendly and beautiful setting. There is no charge made for refreshments, but each month donations are welcomed for our 'Charity of the Month'.

When weather (and availability of staff to accompany residents) permits, a party of residents of Burnworthy will join us. Many enjoy the opportunity to 'get out' and socialise and love our beautiful church.

Since September 2022 we have provided a safe and welcoming space for local carers (with their 'carees' if they wish) to meet. Cath Holloway of Somerset Carers attends and sometimes arranges guest speakers on issues of particular concern for carers, sometimes it is just time for relaxation and shared chat.

We try to support a range of charities and the donations in 2024 were as follows:

Transform Trade £100.45  
Crisis x2 £213.34  
Practical Action £75.80  
Barnabas Aid £124.00  
Christian Aid £120.00  
Safer Families £127.40  
St Margaret's Hospice £109.97  
Anna Chaplaincy £111.00  
CR2EE (shoeboxes) £131.13

Church Homeless Charity £92.90

Royal British Legion £93.30

We look forward to welcoming more visitors, and if anyone is a keen baker and able to supply cakes/biscuits, or just to help serving or providing welcoming chat we would be delighted for you to join us.

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## PARISH MAGAZINE

Steve Harrison

With a regular circulation to over 300 subscribers, our parish magazine continues to be a significant part of our outreach and communication strategy. However, it is expensive to produce – I’m referring here not just to the printing costs, but to those costs that are less obvious: the cost of the time our Benefice Administrator has to give to collecting and assembling content, and the opportunity cost of not having some of her time for directly supporting the work of the Rector.

The income we get from our advertisers is very helpful (so a big ‘thank you’ to them – and a plea to you to use their services from time to time). So is the income we get from subscribers (‘thank you’ too for supporting it). Nevertheless, we really do need to look towards making up a volunteer team to take on the production work involved: someone to source content from contributors - someone to edit/format it on to the page – and an additional someone to proofread and polish up the presentation as needed. Could you help out? By building a team, we can keep the size of the job reasonable for all concerned.

Finally, a quick shout-out for the backroom effort: those who give us content, Anne Perez who brings it together, the proof-readers, the collators who organise the magazines into sets for distribution, and the delivery team who get them out to subscribers ..... it only works because of you!

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## PCC BUSINESS

Janet Strugnell (PCC Secretary)

This was another busy year which started with work on initiatives inspired by the Rector as well as the ever-present issues of maintaining 3 church buildings and administering the 3 parishes correctly. However, in August, with the resignation of the Rector, much attention went onto the smooth running of the benefice without an incumbent and arrangements for the recruitment of a new rector.

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replacement of the failing lighting. The organ at South Petherton is due for its 25 year maintenance in 2025, and also the Quinquennial Inspection (a survey of the structure of the building conducted every 5 years). Damp issues at St Michael's have necessitated work. We offer support to the East Lambrook Schoolroom Committee in their efforts to update the building to create a safe and useful space for the church and community,

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## **PILGRIMAGE WALKS**

Claire Gordon

Last year, a small group of us ( Nigel Kinsman, Sarah Milrose and myself) came together to organise some pilgrimage walks within the parish.

They started last June with a walk through Stoodham and across the fields to East Lambrook and then alongside the River Parrett. We stopped at the Ranch for delicious refreshments. We then went through the Orchard and up over Cripple Hill to Joyler's Mill and back into the village past the hospital. On the way we stopped to admire the view, share some thoughts and readings and rejoice in God's glorious creation. About a dozen people shared fellowship on the walk.

Our second walk in October began in Lopen. We walked South West, crossed Summer Lane on the way to Mill Farm before turning North to Meade Farm and then onto the Seavington Community Cafe where we were joined by some other people, not able to manage the walk. After some lovely refreshments we returned via St Michael's Churchyard and across the fields to Lopen.

Our third walk, in April 2025 focused on spring with a series of meditations on different meanings of the word spring. We walked from Compton Durville to the beautiful National Trust property at Barrington Hall where we stopped for refreshments at the tea rooms.

We then enjoyed some tranquillity at Cowleaze Meadow as we came back via Shepton Beauchamp to Compton Durville. The walk began and ended with a prayer and along the way several people shared thoughts and poems. The numbers had increased to 18 people for this walk including a lady from the Nottingham area who was on holiday in the area. It was good to see people from several local churches there as the walks are open to everyone.

We feel the walks have been a blessing to those who have joined them, and we intend to continue this “church without walls” initiative. Our intention is to walk in Spring, Summer and Autumn, enjoying God’s creation in different seasons. The next walk is planned for Thursday 17th July.

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### 3<sup>rd</sup>@3

Fran Cripps

Our entry in the parish profile:

*There is also a group of young families and others who use the church on the 3rd Sunday monthly for informal worship, food and family time; led by participants, seeking to follow where the Holy Spirit leads, learning and experiencing together, exploring questions such as 'What does whole-family discipleship look like?' and 'How do we all practice the gifts of the Spirit in whole-family corporate worship?'*

I offer some background and our story so far:

3<sup>rd</sup>@3 started in March 2024, meeting on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 3pm in St Peter and St Paul's church. It was born out of a conversation between families, individuals and Rev Tracey, and brought together several ideas, namely the desire to explore intergenerational worship, what “following Jesus” looks like as a family unit, and a stirring from the Holy Spirit to make space for what God appeared to be springing up.

When we began, we started with craft, and open contemporary worship with the desire to make space for God, then we shared a meal together. We had 4-5 families and a few individuals coming along.

In August 2024, some of us went to a Christian Conference and discovered a model of intergenerational worship run by Worship for Everyone. We recognised that this was a model that we could adapt to our gathering.

So now our meet-ups usually involve sung worship, sharing and discussion around a biblical passage or topic (we are working our way through the “I am...” sayings of Jesus in John) and prayer/response activity. Then we share a meal together. The gatherings are run and led by everyone who comes along, It’s a bit like a small group for families, meeting in the church to enjoy the greater space it offers.

We welcome all who would like to come and engage with this expression of worship, and have been joined by several visitors who have come into the church to look around on a Sunday afternoon and stayed to join in.

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**Parochial Church Council of South Petherton  
with the Seavingtons and the Lambrooks**

Charity Registration No 1128940

## Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

### Receipts & Payments Account

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 and designated funds were £132,295, with £13,052 for restricted funds during 2024. The total amounted to £145,347, which was made up of a increase of £11,818 in general funds and designated funds and a decrease of £16,295 in restricted funds during 2024.

On the current account the total expenditure amounted to £124,313 from unrestricted and designated funds and a balance of £36,294 from restricted funds during 2024. The positive figure for the restricted fund is due to the boiler being paid for in 2023 and The Friends of South Petherton Church kindly paying for this work in 2024. The total amounted to £88,019, which was made up of a increase in spending of £5,189 from general funds during 2024.

For the current account and investment account our total reserves for year end were £157,982, a increase of £58,836 on 2023. Planned giving increased by £763 on 2023.

The contribution towards the Diocesan Common Fund was £74,543, an increase of £9,723 on 2023. 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: -

|                               | <b>2024</b>     | <b>2023</b>    |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Total Reserves at 31 December | £157,982        | £99,146        |
| Less restricted funds         | £39,405         | (£33,173*)     |
|                               |                 |                |
| <b>Free Reserves</b>          | <b>£118,577</b> | <b>£65,973</b> |
|                               |                 |                |

\*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 2024 were:

|  |                 |               |                 |
|--|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Nat West Bank                          | £120,939        | Actual        | £120,939        |
| CCLA Deposit Account (General Fund)    | £727            |               | £727            |
| CCLA Deposit Account (Restricted Fund) | £0.28           |               | £0.28           |
| CCLA Deposit Account (Memorial Fund)   | £36,316         |               | £36,316         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>£157,982</b> | <b>Actual</b> | <b>£157,982</b> |

## Restricted Funds

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

| Restricted Fund              | Balance B/fwd<br>£ | Income<br>£ | Expenditure<br>£ | Balance C/fwd<br>£ |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Zambian Priests              | 0                  | 502         | -502             | 0                  |
| Hymn Book Fund               | 21                 | 0           | 0                | 21                 |
| Organ Fund                   | 0                  | 50          | 0                | 50                 |
| East Lambrook Schoolroom     | 4,501              | 5,616       | -262             | 9,855              |
| Yurt Fund                    | 5,410              | 122         | -207             | 5,325              |
| Legacy Bellringers Education | 23,262             | 0           | -1,200           | 22,062             |
| Children's Youth Worker      | 85                 | 0           | -39              | 46                 |
| Friends of SP Church         | 0                  | 28.71       | -28.71           | 0                  |
| Boiler Fund                  | (44,832)           | 45,282      | -450             | 0                  |

## 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 from HMRC a total of £14,657 this year, compared with £12,708 in 2023.

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 and designated funds this year amounted to a splendid £18,014 (2023 £17,827). Well done the fundraising team and everybody that supported it. Thanks are due especially to Phil Andrews for raising £5,462 from scrap metal sales.

## Seavingtons.

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 and payments have started to arrive in 2025.

### **East Lambrook Schoolrooms**

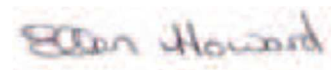
A considerable amount of work took place on the Schoolrooms in 2023 which involved a large amount of fundraising and applying successfully for grants. The fundraising and applying for grants continued in 2024 resulting in an income of £5,616 and an expenditure of £262. With thanks to everybody involved.

### **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 and this year the church has been warm again. The ceiling lights in St Peter and St Paul's started to fail at the start of the year. Having obtained a recommendation from the Diocese it was decided to remove the existing flood lights from the church interior and replace with 30 x LED RGB Wi-Fi controlled flood lights in colour black. We thank the Friends of St Peter and St Paul's for funding these projects.

### **Conclusion**

I would like to thank Crispin Raikes for his help as Assistant Treasurer and Julia Lear for her diligent work as Gift Aid Secretary. Also I thank Nic Laycock for his help throughout the year and for agreeing to be our Independent Examiner and his ongoing advice on implementing much needed protocols and procedures.



Ellen Howard

Hon Treasurer

|   | Note | General Fund     | Designated Fund | Restricted Fund | 2024            | 2023             |
|---|------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
|   |      | £                | £               | £               | £               | £                |
| <b>Receipts</b>                                     |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Donations and Legacies</b>                       |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| Planned Giving                                      |      | 52,763           | -               | -               | 52,763          | 51,980           |
| Collections, Donations & Other Giving               |      | 17,502           | -               | 8,625           | 26,127          | 43,643           |
| Income Tax Recovered                                |      | 14,657           | -               | -               | 14,657          | 12,708           |
| Legacies  |      | -                | 12,055          | -               | 12,055          | -                |
| <b>Other Trading Activities</b>                     |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| Magazine/Bookstall sales/Hall Lettings etc          |      | 7,399            | -               | -               | 7,399           | 7,464            |
| Income from other Properties                        |      | -                | -               | -               | -               | -                |
| Annual Fete/Events                                  |      | 12,402           | 5,612           | 4,427           | 22,441          | 21,127           |
| <b>Receipts from Investments</b>                    |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| Interest & Dividends                                |      | 2,352            | 1,830           | -               | 4,182           | 2,505            |
| <b>Receipts from Charitable Activities</b>          |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| Parochial Fees                                      |      | 5,451            | -               | -               | 5,451           | 5,092            |
| <b>Other Receipts</b>                               |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| Insurance Claims                                    |      | -                | -               | -               | -               | -                |
| Sale proceeds from fixed assets                     |      | -                | -               | -               | -               | -                |
| Loans received                                      |      | -                | -               | -               | -               | -                |
| Other   |      | 272              | -               | -               | 272             | 4,649            |
| <b>Total Receipts</b>                               |      | <b>112,798</b>   | <b>19,497</b>   | <b>13,052</b>   | <b>145,347</b>  | <b>150,168</b>   |
|   |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Payments</b>                                     |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Charitable Activities</b>                        |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| Donations and Grants to Charities                   |      | -                | -               | -               | -               | (2,898)          |
| Mission & Evangelism                                |      | (61)             | -               | -               | (61)            | (3,598)          |
| Parish Share  |      | (74,543)         | -               | -               | (74,543)        | (64,820)         |
| Clergy Expenses                                     |      | (44)             | -               | -               | (44)            | (240)            |
| Church Running Expenses                             |      | (23,473)         | -               | (286)           | (23,759)        | (13,916)         |
| Church Maintenance                                  |      | (4,974)          | -               | -               | (4,974)         | (3,037)          |
| Cost of raising funds                               |      | (3,916)          | -               | (98)            | (4,014)         | (3,976)          |
|   |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| Support Costs                                       |      | (2,717)          | -               | 633             | (2,084)         | (2,442)          |
| Administration costs (inc. staff costs)             |      | (9,687)          | -               | -               | (9,687)         | (10,048)         |
| Governance Costs                                    |      | -                | -               | -               | -               | -                |
| Other   |      | (8,758)          | -               | (1,204)         | (9,962)         | (6,361)          |
| <b>Major Expenditure</b>                            |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| Repairs to church buildings                         |      | 3,860            | -               | 37,169          | 41,029          | (53,848)         |
| Repairs to other property                           |      | -                | -               | 80              | 80              | (38,596)         |
| Capital purchases/additions                         |      | -                | -               | -               | -               | -                |
| Loan Repayments                                     |      | -                | -               | -               | -               | -                |
| <b>Total Payments</b>                               |      | <b>(124,313)</b> | <b>-</b>        | <b>36,294</b>   | <b>(88,019)</b> | <b>(203,780)</b> |
|   |      |                  |                 |                 |                 |                  |
| <b>Surplus/(Deficit) of Receipts over Payments</b>  |      | <b>(11,515)</b>  | <b>19,497</b>   | <b>49,346</b>   | <b>57,328</b>   | <b>(53,612)</b>  |
| Transfers between funds                             |      | -                | -               | -               | -               | -                |
|   |      | (11,515)         | 19,497          | 49,346          | 57,328          | (53,612)         |
| Cash at bank and in hand at 1 Jan (Actual Balance)  |      | 74,020           | -               | (10,049)        | 63,971          | 117,583          |
| Cash at bank and in hand at 31 Dec (Actual Balance) |      | 62,505           | 19,497          | 32,297          | 121,299         | 63,971           |

## Parochial Fees Note

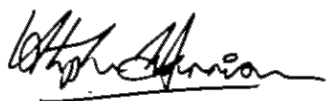
The PCC received parochial fees as detailed below during the year. Part is made up of statutory fees due to the PCC or the DBF, as prepared by the Archbishops' Council under the Ecclesiastical Fees Measure 1986. The balance relates to charges as fixed by the PCC, for extras such as bells, flowers and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

Of these fees only the amount due to the PCC (statutory & non-statutory) is shown above as legally the amount due to the DBF and other ministers (as set out in the DBF policy) should not be treated as PCC income.

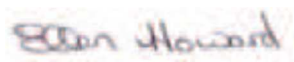
|  |           |   |
|--|-----------|---|
| During the year, the PCC received parochial fees totalling                             | £9,255.00 |   |
| Statutory Fees due to the PCC totalled   | £3,702.00 |   |
| Statutory Fees due to the DBF totalled   | £2,534.00 |   |
| Statutory Fees received on behalf of a third party                                     | £1,562.00 |   |
| Non-Statutory Extras due to the PCC totalled   | £1,749.00 |   |
| Non-Statutory Extras due to a third party totalled                                     | £0.00     |   |
| The PCC also received Deposits for the following year totalling                        | £0.00     |   |
| In total the PCC repaid the following Fees during the year                             |           | Balance owed at year-end<br>(inc. in Creditors) |
| Payment to DBF of Statutory Fees   | £2,077.00 | £457.00   |
| Payment to visiting ministers/Readers/NSMs   | £471.00   |   |
| Payment to visiting ministers/Readers/NSMs   | £0.00     |   |
| Payment to visiting ministers/Readers/NSMs<br>(This excludes fees for Sunday Services) | £0.00     | £1,091.00                                       |

Approved by the PCC on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025

Signed on their behalf by



Steve Harrison (PCC Vice Chairman)



Ellen Howard (PCC Treasurer)

# Independent examiner's report on the accounts



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Section A

## Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

South Petterton with the Seavingtons + Lambrooks PCC

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 December 2024

Charity no  
(if any)

1128940

Set out on pages

1-2 (Separate informal letter to PCC)

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. [The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [named body]]. Delete [ ] if not applicable.

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 material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

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

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report 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:**  **Date:**

**Name:**

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

**Address:**

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

# Independent examiner's report on the accounts



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Section A

## Independent Examiner's Report

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members of

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On accounts for the year  
ended

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(if any)

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Set out on pages

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

**Signed:** ONC Laycock **Date:** 22/9/25

**Name:** NIC LAYCOCK

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

N/A

**Address:**

|              |
|--------------|
| 7 BISHOPSTON |
| MONTACUTE    |
| TA15 6UU     |

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

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