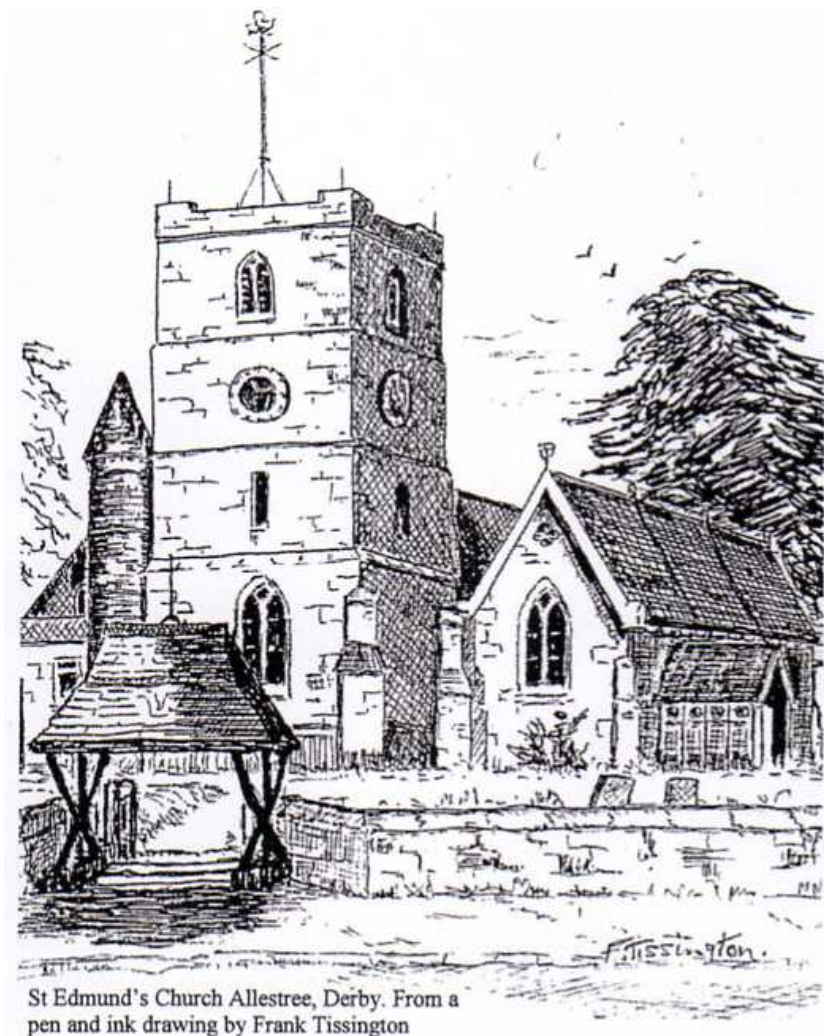


The Parish of St Edmund, Allestree



Election of Churchwardens

and

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2022

Sunday 8th May 2022

After the 10am service in the Church

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Agenda

Meeting of Parishioners

1. Prayers
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the Churchwardens' Meeting 2020 (see page 4)
4. Election of Churchwardens
5. Land Charity Accounts (see page 5)

Followed by:

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2021 APCM (see page 8)
3. Presentation of the Electoral Roll – this year we have 125 people on the roll
4. Election of Laity Representatives
5. Annual Report of the PCC (see page 11)
7. Financial Report (see page 13)
8. Appointment of Auditor
9. Presentation of other Reports (see page 18)
10. Churchwardens' Report (see page 22)
11. Vicar's Report (see page 23)
12. Opportunity for questions

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CHURCH WARDENS'S MEETING

4th July 2021

Present: Revd Peter Barham, Chairman

Parishioners: 35

1. Revd Peter Barham welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Apologies

Julie Barham, Madeleine Fullerton, David Redfern, Clive and Cyra Buxton, Louise Whittaker, Mark Halliwell, John Aspinall, Doreen Heath and Margaret Pearson.

3. Minutes of the Churchwardens' Meeting on 11th October 2020

The minutes were read and accepted as a true record.

4. Election of Church Wardens

There have been no new nominations to take on the role of Church Wardens

Michèle Aspinall has agreed to do one more year, while we search for new Church Wardens, now that a lot more help has been put in place to support her in her role. There are now welcomers at services, volunteers who handle weddings and funerals, the standing committee has done much more this year (one more person needed to sit on this committee) and the Church Hall Committee is now up and running with Caroline, the parish administrator, taking on bookings etc.

Michèle was proposed by Maureen Caughey and seconded by Julie Hutchinson. Peter accepted the proposal with great joy and thanks. Everyone showed their appreciation to Michèle with applause.

5. Land Charities Accounts

The accounts were presented in the APCM booklet and Michèle thanked Richard Flatman for preparing them.

Discussion is under way to enable the PCC to handle these two charity accounts within the PCC accounts. This would reduce the workload of the Church Warden and also would enable more of the VAT to be reclaimed on repairs. Everyone was happy that this should go ahead.

This concluded the Church Warden's meeting.

1. ST. EDMUND'S ALLESTREE, CHURCHWARDEN'S LAND CHARITY
(Registered Charity No 219394)

(A) INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DEC 2021

RECEIPTS	£	PAYMENTS	£
Dividends		Receipted Items	
COIF A/C No 302160002T		<u>G Bailey Expenses</u>	
February	1,112.01	Paint & Brushes for	
May	1,129.13	Church Metalwork	70.52
August	1,129.13	Cleaning Fluid	2.19
November	1,156.52	Polish for Pews	2.98
COIF A/C No 302160001T		Paint & Brushes for	
February	12.30	Church Fence+Sink	
May	12.49	Waste Repair fittings	71.63
August	12.49	Curtain Gliders	1.50
November	12.79	Wire Brush+ Padlocks	19.85
Rent		Lamps for Church	125.92
Land at Sawrey Hill			294.59
March	290.00	<u>Cooper Electrical Services</u>	
September	290.00	Repair Pelmet Cable	309.60
Interest from Business		Replace Pelmet Tube	£79.20
Reserve A/C		Purchase & Install	
January to December	0.40	Bulbs + Spotlights	£273.60
			352.80
TOTAL RECEIPTS	5,157.26	TOTAL PAYMENTS	956.99
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS	4,200.27		
Cash at Bank and in Hand (1st Jan 2021)			20,312.58
Cash at Bank and in Hand (31st Dec 2021)			24,512.85

(B) STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CASH FUNDS	2021 £	2020 £
Current A/C Nat West	20,378.53	16,178.66
Reserve A/C Nat West	4,134.32	4,133.92
TOTAL CASH ASSETS	24,512.85	20,312.58
ENDOWMENT ASSETS		
COIF Charities Funds	177,871.06	155,892.27
(8655.2 Income Shares)		
TOTAL ASSETS	202,383.91	176,205.85
(at year end)		

2. ALLESTREE PARISH CLERKS LAND CHARITY
(Registered Charity No 503498)

(A) INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2021

RECEIPTS	£	PAYMENTS	£
Dividends Received			
COIF A/C No. 330720001T			
February	13.38		
May	13.59		
August	13.59		
November	0.00	*Building Society Cash Book Error	
Building Society Interest	0.26		
TOTAL RECEIPTS	40.82	TOTAL PAYMENTS	0.00
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS	40.82		
<hr/>			
Cash at bank (1st January 2021)			547.65
Cash at Bank (31st January 2022)			588.47

B.STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CASH FUNDS	2021	2020
	£	£
Leeds Building Society	588.47	547.65
ENDOWMENT ASSETS	2,118.34	1,855.17
COIF Charities Funds (103 Income Shares)		
TOTAL ASSETS	2,706.81	2,402.82
(at year end)		

St Edmund's Churchwardens' Accounts

The accounts (financial statements) of the St. Edmund's Allestree Churchwardens' Land Charity and the Allestree Parish Clerk's Land Charity have been prepared in accordance with the charities' governing documents, the Charities Act 2011 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for smaller entities published on 16th July 2014.

Notes to the financial statements

(1) The Churchwardens' Land Charity was set up from an endowment fund to provide an income for maintenance of the fabric of St. Edmund's Church. The main income of the charity continues to be dividends from a holding of 8655.2 Income Shares in the COIF Charities Fund, a managed investment portfolio set up by CCLA Investment Management Ltd. This fund is an approved fund for churches and other charities to invest in, if allowed by the charity's trust deed.

The value of the total holding of 8655.2 shares has increased by approximately 14 % during the past year, and was valued at £177,871 at the year end (Dec 2021). These shares derive mainly from the sale of Church Land east of the A6 (north of Allestree village) in about 1938 for building purposes, but also includes 94.70 shares derived from the M O Cowlshaw bequest.

The other source of income is the rental income from 8.89 acres of agricultural land at Sawrey Hill (part of the Markeaton Estate). This land was Church Land assigned to St. Edmunds Church and leased by the Churchwardens of St Edmund's who would receive the rental income from the land for the upkeep of the Church.

(2) The purpose of the Parish Clerk's Land Charity is to provide an honorarium to the PCC Secretary. The sole income of the Parish Clerk's Land Charity are the dividends from the holding of 103 shares in the COIF Charities Fund, which was valued at £1,855 (at the year end). These shares derive from the sale, for building purposes, of land which was once the Parish Clerk's Garden.

(3) The limited income for both charities is below that required for either an independent examination or an audit.

(4) The trustees of the two charities have now determined that purposes of the two charities would be best served by merging them both into the PCC. This has been agreed by the PCC, and approved by the charity commission, and the accrued assets will be transferred to the PCC during 2022. The assets will be held in separate restricted and endowment funds as required by the charity commission rules and accounting regulations.

Prepared by :
Richard Flatman

Approved by:

Michele Aspinall (Churchwarden)

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

4th July 2021

1. Apologies

As recorded in previous minutes.

2. Minutes of 2020 APCM

The minutes were accepted as a true record with one correction. On page 8, under retiring members at APCM 2021, Karen Cowgill's name was removed.

3. Presentation of the Electoral Roll

The role has 126 names in total, 80 being resident in the parish and 46 not resident in the parish.

Peter read out the names of members of the congregation who have died since the last APCM – Maureen Sanders, Audrey Halsey, Fred Clarke and Hazel Thorpe. We remembered them with love and affection.

4. Election of Laity representatives

The four members of the PCC who are due to retire at this APCM are Matthew Cooper, Richard Flatman, Barbara Colder and Graham Colder. Barbara and Graham do not wish to stand again on the PCC and Peter thanked them for their many years of service to St Edmund's. Julie to send a card of thanks. Richard was happy to stand again and was proposed by Michèle Aspinall and seconded by Julie Hutchinson. Matthew was also happy to stand again and was proposed by Julie Barham and seconded by Michèle Aspinall. Richard and Matthew were elected to the PCC unanimously. There were no other nominations. The Church Representation Rules state that there should be 12 representatives of laity on the PCC for our size of electoral roll and we are now at this number.

Nominations were elected to the PCC unanimously.

PCC MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021-2022 will be -

Incumbent	Rev Peter Barham
Church Wardens	Michèle Aspinall
	Vacancy
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Louise Whittaker (with support from Anne Cogley)
Treasurer	Chris Jack
Secretary	Julie Hutchinson
Readers	Julie Barham
	Deborah Simpson

ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE PCC

Geoff Bailey
Paula Birchall
Matthew Cooper
Jackie Eunson
Ken Eunson
Richard Flatman
Madeleine Fullerton
David Halliwell
Julie Hutchinson
Chris Jack
Elizabeth Jack

Louise Whittaker

DEANERY SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES – EX OFFICIO PCC MEMBERS

Mark Halliwell

David Redfern

Richard Wood

Retiring members at APCM 2022

Jackie Eunson, Ken Eunson, Madeleine Fullerton.

Retiring members at APCM 2023

Geoff Bailey, Paula Birchall, David Halliwell, Julie Hutchinson, Christopher Jack, Elizabeth Jack, Louise Whittaker.

Retiring members at APCM 2024

Matthew Cooper, Richard Flatman.

5. Annual Report of the PCC

The report is contained within the 2021 APCM booklet.

Peter reported that the new headstones should arrive imminently and thanked Thelma Thompson for all the work she does looking after the records for the garden of rest and Debbie Fleming for digging the holes for interment of ashes.

6. Financial Report

This report is contained within the 2021 APCM booklet.

Chris reported that despite several financial risks at the beginning of the year, namely, not knowing what the ceiling project might reveal in terms of more work and the effect of Covid, we are in a far better position than expected. This position was greatly helped by the work Paul, the previous treasurer, had done in getting parishioners to change to giving by direct debit, by being able to furlough Caroline and Tony and by Richard claiming VAT. Chris thanked everyone concerned. He also thanked Caroline for coordinating Preschool so that income from the Church Hall was similar to the previous year. Chris also thanked the Finance Committee for their hard work and support and Peter Hilton, the auditor.

There were no questions. Peter thanked Chris and parishioners thanked him with applause. Peter said that our financial situation was remarkable as the picture nationally is very worrying with a lot of parishes unable to pay their parish share. Peter thanked everyone for their generosity and hard work.

7. Appointment of Auditor/Independent Financial Examiner

Peter Hilton has volunteered to be an independent financial examiner again next year. Proposed by Chris Jack. Seconded by Paul Smith. Carried unanimously.

8. Presentation of Committee Reports

Committee reports are printed in full in the APCM booklet.

JACK – Peter thanked Karen for continuing this. An activity with the families is being planned for over the summer.

Magazine – Peter thanked the editorial team especially Fiona Fraser and Chris Willis who organises distribution.

Church Hall Committee – Peter thanked Caroline for all the work she does on this.

Flower Group – Peter thanked Michéle and her team for the stunning displays that they create.

Choir – Peter thanked the choir for the singing that they have been able to do as restrictions changed through the year.

Food Bank – Paul Smith, Julie Hutchinson and Madeleine Fullerton have taken on the delivery of donations to the Hope Centre.

Luncheon Club – Anne Madge is taking on running this and hopes to have it up and running in October. Peter thanked everyone involved in keeping in touch with the members of Luncheon Club through Covid.

Allestree Churches Together – Peter has been in touch with four of the ministers from ACT churches and has been grateful for their support. Peter sadly reported that the Methodist Chapel on Duffield Road is very likely to shut.

Safeguarding – Peter thanked Louise Whittaker and Anne Cogley for all their work.

9. Churchwardens' Report

The report was printed in full in the APCM booklet.

Michèle has agreed to stand for an extra year but is keenly aware that we still need to recruit two new churchwardens. Michèle quoted from the Churchwarden's Yearbook where Bishop Libby describes the vital role churchwardens play in "growing churches, building communities, and transforming lives for good. The way that is delivered will, rightly, differ from place to place... Churchwardens, at their best, enable the contributions of others and facilitate the nurturing of everyone's gifts and skills. (They) have always been key to the flourishing of congregations: ... vital to their health and well-being". She said that at St. Edmund's, new churchwardens receive excellent support at parish and local level, and she has been grateful for the generous guidance of previous wardens, the unwavering support of Peter, the PCC and congregation, and excellent training opportunities from the diocese. Churchwardens are representatives of all that we do at St. Edmund's to serve God and to bring faith and compassion to our community. As we emerge from lock-down, she prays that volunteers will step forward to take up this important role. Through this next year, she hopes that new potential church wardens can learn alongside herself.

The parishioners showed thanks to Michèle with applause.

10. Vicar's Report

The Vicar's report was printed in full in the APCM booklet.

Peter's report shows that so much has changed over the last year and a half and that he is unsure what will happen over the next few weeks as restrictions are further lifted – what we will be allowed to do – what we will be happy to do. Zoom has been a great success and has enabled some people to join in worship much more. We are getting back to doing weddings and memorial services with 2 weddings and 4 memorials over the week or so which is very positive.

Dennis Caughey proposed thanks to Peter for all he has done through the pandemic.

11. Opportunity for questions

There were no questions.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

PCC Report for July 2021 to May 2022 – Julie Hutchinson (PCC Secretary)

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility for co-operating with the incumbent in promoting, in the parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical.

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The Churchwardens and those elected to the Deanery Synod are ex-officio members. The PCC may also co-opt, in our case, up to two members.

PCC July 2021 – May 2022

Incumbent	Reverend Peter Barham
Readers	Deborah Simpson Julie Barham
Churchwardens	Michèle Aspinall Vacancy

Deanery Synod Representatives

Richard Wood
Mark Halliwell
David Redfern

Elected Members of the PCC

Geoff Bailey
Paula Birchall
Matthew Cooper
Jackie Eunson
Ken Eunson
Richard Flatman
Madeleine Fullerton
David Halliwell
Julie Hutchinson (PCC Secretary)
Chris Jack (PCC Treasurer)
Elizabeth Jack
Louise Whittaker (Parish Safeguarding Officer)

Retiring members at this APCM

Jackie Eunson, Ken Eunson, Madeleine Fullerton.

Retiring members at APCM 2023

Geoff Bailey, Paula Birchall, David Halliwell, Julie Hutchinson, Chris Jack, Liz Jack, Louise Whittaker.

Retiring members at APCM 2024

Matthew Cooper, Richard Flatman.

Committees

The PCC works to support the clergy, mainly through subcommittees, which deal with the business of the church, such as finance issues, care of the church and church hall and pastoral matters.

Present subcommittees are Fabric (church), Finance, Church Hall, Pastoral (suspended at the moment but restarting after Easter) and Events. PCC members choose on which committees to serve depending on their experience and interests. Other church members may help on sub committees at the discretion of the respective chairs.

The Standing Committee is required by law and consists of a minimum of 5 people and usually includes the Clergy, Lay Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and the Chair of any of the other subcommittees. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings and also sets the agenda for PCC meetings.

Review of PCC Meetings July 2021 to May 2022

Areas the PCC has focused on include:

- Dealing with the changing covid situation through this period. This has taken up much discussion and planning time. December saw an alarming increase in the new omicron variant of covid and so the usually very busy crib services were sadly cancelled. Despite high levels of infection in the community early in 2022, the government removed restrictions in all settings, so we have cautiously started removing restrictions in church and started planning to return to receiving full communion at the altar. Zoom services have continued successfully. It was decided that the 8am service would not restart and the 11.15am service is not taking place because of the clash with the zoom service. The choir are singing more often at the 10am service.
- Discussing and agreeing to plans from the Finance Committee. These have included transferring of Land Charity accounts to the PCC accounts, valuation of the Church Hall and charitable giving nominations.
- Discussing plans from the Fabric Committee on an improved lighting scheme for church, an accessible toilet, a ramp and remedial work on the windows.
- Discussing plans from the Church Hall Committee for removal of a tree in the play area and getting church hall users restarted. Luncheon Club has restarted and Toddler Group, with Caroline, Peter and Julie's help, has restarted. Coffee after church is due to restart soon.
- Discussing new safeguarding policies, taking part in online safeguarding training and renewing DBS certificates.
- Discussing plans from the Events Committee. A few events have been run this year – Big Book Sale, a summer picnic and the Harvest Festival fish, and chip supper have all been successful.
- Receiving reports from representatives of Derby Deanery Synod and Allestree Churches Together.

2021 End of Year Treasurer's Report

Summary

Taking together the excess of income over expenses and the improvement in our investment valuation our financial assets increased by £93,639 during the year. However, most of the income improvement was due to some very generous legacies, whilst our income from donations fell. Overall, our expenses remained at the same level as in 2020.

Balance sheet

As last year the categorisation and numbering of the income and expenses are in accordance with the PPC Accountability booklet published by the Business Committee of the General Synod.

The Covid pandemic continued to have significant effects on the life of the church in 2021 and, not surprisingly, the churches finances. Planned giving has fallen as income from the white envelope scheme has fallen away and several of our major donors are no longer with us. As a result, our income from donations fell by about £4,500. HMG grants for VAT rebates and furlough payments also reduced. Our income from legacies rose by £48,250. These resulted in an overall income increase of £37,600.

Major expenditures included radiator covers for the church hall and memorial stones, but overall payments were similar to last year.

The PCC authorised the transfer of £50,023 from the designated fund to the unrestricted fund. The designated fund is intended to hold in reserve those expenses authorised in advance by the PCC. No one on the PCC knew, and no record can be found, of the intended purpose of this money. Rather it seems to have been a pot into which monies from certain sources (possibly fees for wedding and funerals) had been paid for unspecified purposes. Sufficient funds were retained in the designated fund to meet PCC obligations which, this year were all charitable donations.

Assets

The PCC agreed to transfer £50,000 from our deposit account to our investment account, both with CCLA (our charity fund manager). This reflected prospects of low interest rates and raised inflation, both of which have continued. Thus, the value of investment account rose from £156,993 to £241,336 over the year, an increase of £84,373 of which the return on these investments was £34,373. Invested capital is, of course, subject to market fluctuations.

Our other main asset is the church hall, and we undertook in 2021 to have the value of the hall re-assessed. We employed a chartered surveyor to establish a) the rebuilding cost and b) the asset value of the hall i.e. what we might sell it for should the unlikely circumstance ever arise. The surveyor has estimated the total rebuilding cost at £1 million, and our insurance has been increased accordingly. The asset value is more complex as the land was donated to the parish with a restricted covenant such that the land and any building can only be used for 'ecclesiastical purposes'. So, we could only sell it to another church – a very limited market – with the restricted covenant still in place! Our examiner therefore advised that we did not change the asset value of the hall.

Charitable giving

During the year the congregation were invited, as usual, to nominate charities to which they would like to see the PCC make donations from our funds. These were reviewed by the PCC and £350 allocated to each charity nominated. In addition, collections were taken at regular services, weddings, funerals, and memorial services on behalf of specific charities. The total sum donated was £5,882, distributed as follows:-

<u>PCC donations</u>		<u>Collections at services</u>	
Aquabox	£ 700	BacZac	£ 70
Children with cancer	£ 350	BBC St Martin's appeal	£ 100
Embrace Middle East	£ 350	Book Aid International	£ 52
Just Ice	£ 350	Cancer Research	£ 137
Padley Group	£ 350	Christian Aid	£ 958
Practical Action	£ 350	Friends of Royal Derby Hospital	£ 26
Pro Zane	£ 350	Just Giving	£ 131
Railway Mission	£ 350	Kidney Research	£ 23
Unicef	£ 350	Nagpur Link	£ 327
		Parkinson's UK	£ 313
		PEEPS baby charity	£ 21
		Save the Children	£ 54
		Teenage Cancer Trust	£ 125
		The Dogs Trust	£ 46

In addition, we donated £3,500 to St. Nicholas, Allestree to support their work with young people. This appears under 'Mission giving' in the balance sheet.

Land Charities

There are two historical charities, entitled 'Parish Clerk's Land Charity', and 'Churchwarden's Land Charity'. The statement of accounts for these charities are given elsewhere in the APCM report. They each have only two or three of trustees and act independently of the PCC.

During the year, it was proposed that these charities be wound up and the assets and management of the assets be passed to the PCC, in order to simplify the management of the church's money and relieve the churchwardens of responsibility for their management. The trustees have met and agreed to this proposal on condition that any assets and income transferred to the PCC are used in accordance with the original purpose of the Land Charities. The PCC has formally agreed to this, and we are currently going through the various processes required to enact this decision.

When complete this will have major effects on the treasurer's report next year, as both the money and its distribution between the various fund categories are included.

Looking forward

The overall financial position of the church remains very healthy, and we are more than able to meet our current obligations including making significant donations to charity. We are in a very fortunate position compared with some other churches. However, the balance sheet shows that year by year we are very dependent on legacies.

As we emerge from the effects of the pandemic and more particularly with the threat to the cost of living, now is not the time to be asking our congregations for more money. But the church and its buildings are also going to see increased outgoings, not least to the cost of fuel, employees pay and other services.

I would like to record my thanks to members of the Finance Committee, who do a lot of the work of administering our finances. Without their help the Treasurer's job would be almost impossible. I would also like to acknowledge the help of our examiner Peter Hilton, who not only checks the numbers but also provides expert advice when needed throughout the year, without any charge.

St Edmund's, Allestree 2021 Accounts

These accounts are on the 'receipts and payments' basis and therefore include (1) the receipts and payments account and (2) an assets and liabilities statement.

St. Edmund's PCC Accounts for year ended 31st December 2021

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

		Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Totals 2021	Total 2020
		£	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS						
	Notes					
1 & 2 Planned Giving	1	45,294			45,294	54,077
3 Collections at services	2	4,748			4,748	1,947
4 Other voluntary giving and donations		2,300			2,300	1,332
6 Tax recovered		11,285			11,285	10,817
Total from donors		63,627	0	0	63,627	68,173
7 Legacies		86,644			86,644	38,394
8 Grants	3	776			776	7,376
9 Fund raising		350			350	635
10 Bank Interest	4	74			74	553
11 Service Fees		10,789			10,789	8,525
12 Trading Income: Hall		14,932			14,932	16,620
12 Magazine and book sales		1,789			1,789	2,228
13 Other income		7,130			7,130	6,068
13c Agency income		10,418			10,418	10,384
Total Other income		132,902	0	0	132,902	90,783
TOTAL RECEIPTS		196,529	0	0	196,529	158,956
PAYMENTS						
17 Fund raising		400			400	376
18 Outward giving		2,033	3,850	0	5,883	4,007
19 Common Fund - Parish		54,613			54,613	54,698
20 Salaries and Honoraria		17,303			17,303	15,664
21 Clergy expenses		2,234			2,234	3,126
22 Mission giving				3,500	3,500	129
23 Church Running Expenditure	5	21,046	802	53	21,901	7,402
24 Church utilities		2,474			2,474	3,371
25 Cost of Trading	6	15,680			15,680	9,812
26 Governance		506			506	465
27 Major Repairs to Church				1,700	1,700	26,796
99 Other costs		903			903	212
Agency Payments		10,136			10,136	9,083
Total payments (less asset purchase)		127,328	4,652	5,253	137,234	135,141
Asset Purchase	7	50,000			50,000	
TOTAL PAYMENTS		177,328	4,652	5,253	187,234	135,141
Excess of Receipts over Payments		19,201	-4,652	-5,253	9,297	23,814
OPENING CASH BALANCES		65,577	58,023	86,333	209,933	186,118
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	8	50,023	-50,023			
CLOSING CASH BALANCES		134,801	3,348	81,080	219,229	209,933

St. Edmund's PCC Accounts for year ended 31st December 2021

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

		Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Totals 2021	Total 2020
		£	£	£	£	£
CASH FUNDS						
CAF current		5,181			5,181	4,604
CAF deposit		122,954	3,348		126,302	67,649
CCLA deposit	7	6,666		81,080	87,746	137,680
TOTAL		134,801	3,348	81,080	219,229	209,933
INVESTMENT FUNDS						
CCLA CBF account	7	241,366			241,366	156,993
CHURCH HALL	9	114,000			114,000	114,000
CREDITORS	Agency	282			282	1,301

ST EDMUND'S CHURCH ALLESTREE PCC

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE PCC OF
ST EDMUND'S CHURCH ALLESTREE**

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31st December 2021, which comprise the Receipts and Payments Account and Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

This report is made solely to the trustees in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 and the Church Accounting Regulations 2016. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the members of the PCC those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity trustees for my examination work.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act)) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts (under Section 145 of the Act, to follow procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under Section 145 of the Act and Church Guidance, 2016 edition and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act

have not been met; or

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

Name P B Hilton FCA

Address 5 Wharfedale Close, Allestree, Derby

Date 5th March 2022

Signed

PCC Committee and other Group/Activity Reports

Children's Work – Peter Barham

At St Matthew's we have been unable to run a Kids' Church since Rachel Trybula-Bryan moved to Canada. At St Edmund's Karen Cowgill started 2021 continuing with a monthly Zoom JACK meeting, but this is no longer taking place. We thank them both for their work over the years. Peter and Julie hosted a Vicarage Picnic for families from both churches in the summer, and we managed a small Nativity Play at St Matthew's just before Christmas. Sadly, all our other children's services at Christmas had to be cancelled because of Covid. There are discussions about what we can do in 2022, and we have three dates in the diary for Sunday afternoon Children's Work at St Matthew's. As churches which welcome so many children for baptism, where we have a flourishing Baby and Toddler Group and good links with Pre-school and with schools, there is a lot of potential, but we need people willing to commit to this work. Please pray that this is an area we can grow and develop over the next few months.

Church Magazine – Peter Barham, Fiona Fraser & Chris Willis

A huge thank you to Fiona and Chris who do most of the work for the magazine. Fiona has deadlines down to a fine art – we aim to get it out for the last Sunday of each month, so we start getting material to her a week or so earlier. By Wednesday evening I think "where is the magazine?", and it always arrives. We do some final sorting on Thursday; it goes to the Wrights the printers on Friday morning and is ready that afternoon (a huge thanks to them). Chris sorts out the distributors – and thanks to the team – and all is done for another month! We also thank our advertisers – if you use their services, please tell them you saw them in the church magazine, and Caroline, who helps with some of the practicalities.

We have a small bunch of people who regularly contribute but are always on the lookout for more. If you have a "one off" contribution, or just some nice church photos from a holiday, or want to give us your thoughts, we are always glad to receive items. The magazine is part of our church's outreach – we give a copy to every family who comes for baptisms, we hand them to visitors at services, and if you are in church at any time and someone comes and explores, do offer them a magazine – it's always nice to receive some money for it, but getting it into peoples' hands is the most important thing. If your neighbours would like a copy, please use it. Magazines left gathering dust at the end of the month are no use to anyone. Thank you for supporting your magazine.

Church Hall Report – Caroline Audley

St Edmund's Preschool continue to use the hall Monday-Friday during term time and School's Out have been using the hall during the holidays. We are grateful to them for this invaluable income.

We are nearly back to our pre-Covid regular bookings with Ballet on a Monday (term time), Derventio choir on a Tuesday, Brownies, and Guides on a Wednesday (term time) with Zumba and a dance class on a Thursday. We are no longer asking groups to clean touch points before and after their classes but the cleaning box that was created during Covid is kept topped up for all hall users to use. We are grateful to our regular groups for coming back to use the hall as soon as they felt it was safe.

As ever we continue to try and get those groups paying under the 'church rate' for bookings, closer to that rate but it's a fine balance to ensure the groups can continue to afford to meet in the hall.

We continue to share the cost of the weekly cleaner with the pre-school during term time and with School's Out during the holidays.

On the suggestion from the pre-school (who are all ladies), we also share the cost of a sanitary bin which will also be of benefit to other hall users.

Thank you as always to Tony for helping with various aspects of the hall from cleaning the windows and dusting the high corners to sweeping the outside play area for the pre-school. We are very grateful.

Handbells – Gill Flatman

Our regular weekly meetings ended on March 20th, 2020. When Covid regulations allowed, we met twice in December 2021 to practise our Christmas carols. We are now in a position to return to weekly practices in the Choir Vestry. However, each session is now in jeopardy as our leader needs to stay at home to look after her husband and another member has been forced to retire through ill health. As our membership numbers are low, we will need to check weekly whether or not we have enough members to play. This is particularly sad as we all enjoy playing and want to meet weekly. Do you know of any prospective members who would like to join our friendly group? During Covid, when national regulations allowed, we met twice for coffee in Hudson's Garden Centre. We all enjoyed these social occasions.

Baby & Toddler Group – Caroline Audley

We re-started the group on November 4th 2021. We continued to ask people to wear masks which everyone was happy to do. Now that there are no longer restrictions, we don't ask people to wear masks anymore, but we do still offer them, along with hand sanitiser.

Numbers vary every week but today (28th April 2022) we had 28 adults and 37 children! If we're honest it was probably a little too full. We would rather not ask people to book and turn away childminders who bring more than 2 children, but we do need to ensure the session is comfortable and enjoyable for all. We'll continue to monitor the numbers and decide in the coming weeks if people need to book.

Pre-Covid we offered fruit donated from Croots and had a rota of lovely ladies who helped make the teas and coffee. We now buy fruit from Aldi purely to save time, and it doesn't come to a huge amount. We must contact our previous teas ladies to see if any would like to come and help again.

Thank you again to Tony for helping week after week to get all of the toys in and out of the tiny cupboard, and to Peter and Julie for their tea making, storytelling and singing. I am very grateful and couldn't do it without them.

Flower Group - Michèle Aspinall

In January 2021 the third lockdown began, and we wondered if there would ever be a return to normal life. Thankfully, with the arrival of a vaccine, things gradually improved, but it was still not considered safe to re-open the church. As a result, Mothering Sunday posies were left in the porch to be collected by people from the local community. Would anyone want them? We needn't have worried – good news travels fast in Allestree and in less than two hours all the posies had gone! We were able to produce attractive displays for Easter and then, happily, the wedding rush began. The team were delighted to be back at work, creating lovely displays for so many couples who had endured the disappointment of plans which had been postponed many times. Autumn and winter meant a return to our familiar routine of Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas flowers. The cost of flowers has risen greatly, but people continue to be generous with the donations they make towards church flowers. I hope that everyone appreciates the beauty of the natural world displayed in our church building.

In normal circumstances, the group ensures that fresh flowers are always on display for services apart from Lent and Advent. A special effort is made for festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Appropriate flowers and colours are also in place for Remembrance Sunday, Whitsun etc. We always try to carry out family's wishes for funeral flowers and also provide arrangements to celebrate anniversaries or memorials.

Some of our funding comes from wedding flowers, when we make a small profit while providing flowers at a more competitive price than some florists. Thanks to generous donations from individuals, the congregation's response to appeals and the skills of the group, the floral arrangements at Easter, Harvest and Christmas continue to impress. Mothering Sunday flowers are also provided from this funding.

This is a longstanding group which gladly welcomes new recruits. Many of our team are also members of Allestree Flower Group. No flower arranging skills are required as full training is offered by our expert, talented team.

Volunteers to clear flowers and help with "ordinary" weeks would be most welcome. We see flower arranging as a pleasant, social and creative way of serving the church and helping to make it a welcoming and comforting place to be.

Choir - Elizabeth Jack

How we long for a “normal” year but who knows when this will happen!

We cautiously began to sing again in April 2021, for just 2 morning services with this pattern continuing until July when we added 2 choral Evensongs. We have settled into a pattern of singing choral Evensong on the 2nd Sunday of each month, Morning Prayer on a 3rd Sunday and 10 am Communion plus a further choral Evensong on a 4th Sunday. 5th Sundays continue to be joint 10 am Communion services with St. Matthew’s.

We began regular choir practices at the beginning of September 2021 with a few of us opting for a bit of Dutch courage at the Red Cow first! We continue to learn new music, including pieces heard on the Zoom services and using our new 16th Century Anthem Books.

We were delighted to sing at a full-length Christmas carol service, although the usual choir get together afterwards did not happen due to Covid worries. St. Matthew’s choir sang at midnight Communion and St. Edmund’s 10 am on Christmas Day. An Epiphany carol service followed at the beginning of January.

We were honoured to sing an anthem and Nunc Dimittis at Joyce Redman’s memorial service in March as well as several of her favourite hymns. She had always been a great supporter of the choir! The men, with a few extra volunteers, sang Compline after choir practices in Lent. Thanks to Peter Barham and John Rice for leading these short reflective services for us. Together with St. Matthew’ choir we sang on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and then twice on Easter Day.

We welcomed Claire Pegg to the choir in September. She has proved a great asset to the soprano line and made my life a lot easier! She is full of good ideas and has quickly become part of our choir family. Tony Westerman, who sadly had to step down as our evening organist, and Steve Fraser Burton regularly join us for Evensong on 4th Sundays.

Thanks go to David Redfern, our regular organist and also to Tom Corfield who has been able to play ay several choral Evensongs for us. The greatest thanks of all goes, as ever, to the choir who remain totally dedicated and continue sing to a very high standard on a weekly basis. We continue to be grateful for Peter Barham’s support of all that we do and are encouraged by the many compliments we receive from members of the congregation.

Bookworms and Other Vicarage Social Events - Julie Barham

Bookworms has been in abeyance for obvious reasons – our sitting room was packed when everyone came, no social distancing in sight. I would like to restart something this year, perhaps using the choir vestry at St Edmund’s as that is larger. If you would want to be part of it, probably one afternoon a month, please speak to me or drop me an email – julieebarham@gmail.com

Events Committee – Peter Barham

The PCC has a small events committee, comprising on myself, Michele, Elizabeth, Madeleine and Amy, but we have not had a very productive year. We were involved in the Allestree Scarecrow weekend in September, the Scarecrow Vicar and Reader were quite special. We did manage a successful Harvest Fish and Chip Supper in the Church Hall in October, and a less successful St George’s Day Concert (in 2022) which suggested that many of us are out of the habit of being social. We hope that Her Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee will be an opportunity to come together, enjoy each other’s company, and show our communities that we are still alive and welcoming.

Food Bank – Paul Smith

For several years Mike and Shirley Dawson have been in charge of our monthly food bank collection, with a lot of help and support from John Rice.

Paul Smith took this job on last year. With a lot of support from Julie and Dave Hutchinson, and others. Thank you to everybody who brings food to both churches on the first Sunday of the month and to those who deliver directly to Primrose’s Book Shed. The Hope Centre are always very grateful when we arrive with a car full of bags. They are very appreciative of the support they receive from our churches. Demand continues to grow so please continue to be generous. It is also worth recording that Joyce Redman was one of the founders of the Food Bank and Hope Centre – we give thanks to God for her life and ministry.

Luncheon Club – Anne Madge

Staffing numbers have been a bit of a problem due to Covid, but there are a number of people who may be willing to help in the future. (Colin Pearson; Diana Allsop and Carer for Rita Wrigley.)

The Treasurer presented her report covering the two years to February 2022. The following points were highlighted. The report showed funds totalling £1508.02 of which £250 was one untaken free meal, £80 Staff meals fund, and the balance of £1178.02.

No contribution has been made to Church funds for two years. Jill Potts reported that she had been told by Rev Peter Barham that the church hall funds were healthy, and no contribution was expected from the LC until further notice. This was well received and appreciated by the meeting.

The audit has been undertaken by Ken Eunson, who has also intimated that he will not be auditing the LC accounts in future, and we will need to find a new auditor. Review

Running Costs. The fortnightly contribution of £5 per lunch is currently adequate. However, in view of the progressive increase in the costs of the bus, the £3 contribution per person, which has stayed unchanged for several years, should be increased to £5 per person which is more in keeping with current costs. This is partly due to the increase in fuel, and also journeys taking longer and therefore costing more as the bus company charges by the hour. Increases will commence from May 2022

Jill informed the meeting that she would be retiring as Treasurer in October. Anne is hoping that Eileen Holland will take over as Treasurer and she will assist in the change. The committee expressed their appreciation to Jill for over 30 years as Treasurer.

The bank mandate of signatures will require updating when the new officers are established, and payment procedures will need upgrading for Banking changes. This may entail moving the account to a new bank.

The constitution has been updated to reflect the fact that we now meet every 2 weeks and no longer have any financial support from the council.

The annual Environmental Health inspection was satisfactorily completed in March 2022, and subject to a couple of minor points which will be addressed, again resulted in an excellent 5* certificate.

In 2022 the annual party will be free, and Jubilee themed with all volunteers being involved.

As we have a few members who have not returned since we reopened after lockdown, staff are to review the current membership to establish whether spaces could be released for new members to join.

Allestree Churches Together (ACT) – David is our ACT representative. Peter Barham wrote this report

Although ACT has not met as a formal group, the ministers of several of the Allestree churches have kept in touch and spent time praying together with regular Zoom meetings. We were sad to say “farewell” to Becky Mathew, the Vicar of St Nicks, who has moved to Manchester. We have shared resources – St Edmund’s support of Anna Oldknow, the Youth and Children’s Worker at St Nick’s, is much appreciated. Good work is being done in our schools – Peter was back in person at Portway Infants in April. There is an increase in environmental work, and deepening links with “Green” groups at St Matthew’s, Broadway, St Alkmund’s and others. There has been some support for the Allestree Nagpur link, with small fundraising and social events. There are plans for a Holiday at Home at Broadway this summer. One of the sadness’s was the closure of Allestree Methodist Chapel in October 2021 – we give thanks to God for their work and ministry over the years. No doubt there was Anglican annoyance when that Chapel opened – now there is Anglican sadness when it closed. Ecumenical work is different from how it was a decade ago, and it may be that formal Churches Together groups have had their day, but we still try and build God’s Kingdom together.

Safeguarding - Louise Whittaker & Madeleine Fullerton (PSO’s for St Edmund’s Church, Allestree)

As many of you will be aware, we report verbally to the PCC at each meeting throughout the year and are required to present a written Safeguarding Report to the PCC every six months. Our latest report dates back to March 2022. Since Anne Cogley retired from her position as Parish Safeguarding Officer last October, Madeleine Fullerton, our new PSO (approved by the PCC on 12th January) and Louise Whittaker are continuing to comply with our duties in relation to Safeguarding as set down in the House of Bishops guidance. As Church life has gradually started back up

again, we are pleased to report that we too have hit the ground running and are fully engaged once again in fulfilling our Parish Safeguarding Officer duties.

As from last September we have put our energies especially into bringing all Safeguarding Training requirements up to date. PCC members, along with paid staff, volunteers, and leaders of groups within the Parish have all received an email explaining what training is required for the roles that they each play and how to go about obtaining the various training certificates required for these roles. Most people are now up to date with at least the Basic Awareness training that is required of them. Madeleine has taken over the training side of the Parish role from Louise and she herself is working her way through the courses that are required for her to be fully up to date and qualified for the PSO role. I am very grateful for her support. Thanks, are also due to Caroline Audley who has helped Peter, Madeleine and Louise with offering some Basic Awareness training from her office, to those who do not have access to a computer of their own.

Since January 2022 DBS Certificates need to be renewed every three years rather than every five years, as was formerly the case. We have had to process DBS Certificates for all members of the PCC as well as many other members of the Parish with specific leadership roles. This has been especially time consuming and quite a learning curve for Louise as a church PSO has a much larger part to play in the process which in the past was largely completed by the diocesan Safeguarding officers at Church House. We are hoping that everyone manages to join the updating service this time round in order to make the process much quicker and simpler when certificates need to be renewed in three years' time.

With regards to the Annual Safeguarding Audit, we are working once again on fulfilling all requirements for the three levels that need to be completed as soon as possible. An Audit Action Plan was approved by the PCC at the meeting in March and most actions including an updated GDPR policy, updated Risk assessments and Role descriptions for volunteers and paid workers and a Safeguarding policy statement for Saint Edmund's Church added to our Church website are now completed and in place.

Since the last report, we have had no Safeguarding issues arise. The information on the Church website that was aimed at helping and informing those with Safeguarding anxieties or concerns has remained on the site throughout these difficult and uncertain times.

We will continue to work closely with Peter on our Safeguarding responsibilities and report back to the PCC at each meeting.

Finally, we would like to remind everyone that a copy of the Parish Safeguarding handbook 'Promoting a Safer Church' brings into one place the key safeguarding responsibilities for parishes and is designed to support day to day safeguarding work. It is available online in its most up to date format and can be found by going to www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding for everyone to access.

Churchwardens' Report - Michèle Aspinall

As I mentioned in last year's report, Shrove Tuesday's pancake evening was our last unrestricted social gathering. At that point we could not have imagined that two years down the line, we would still be living with the pandemic and dealing with its consequences. Luckily, we have faced these challenges together. We have become well versed in adapting our ways of worshipping, working, and keeping in contact. Meeting on zoom, drawing up risk assessments and reacting to changing guidance have all demanded patience, persistence, and flexibility. Led by Peter, we have been able to worship, celebrate and mourn, sometimes in ways that have differed from our usual custom, but always with the aim of allowing our church community to remain united.

In January 2021, a third lockdown was announced, so February and March saw Mothering Sunday posies and Palm Sunday crosses distributed from the church porch. As we emerged from lockdown and church re-opened for Easter worship, volunteers came forward once more to act as welcomers for services. They adapted their ways of working as these roles evolved, depending on Covid guidance and rules. Their work ensured that we could keep everyone as safe as possible.

Summer 2021 was a busy time for weddings, many of which had been postponed more than once. These joyful celebrations inspired the theme of the St. Edmund's entry for the Allestree Scarecrow festival. Our scarecrow bride and groom, accompanied by a scarecrow vicar and reader, earned us an award in the community section of the competition.

Autumn continued to be a busy time for weddings and baptisms. Harvest supper was celebrated with the now traditional fish and chips, a welcome return of music on the Compton organ and an autumn themed literary entertainment. It was good to gather for a social event. We were able to hold our All Souls' service and a beautiful Remembrance Sunday service with a full congregation.

As Christmas approached, members of the congregation were generous in their donations to the Rotary Club's shoebox appeal. We were able to enjoy carols in the churchyard, albeit without the customary mulled wine and mince pies. Our carol service went ahead as planned, but unfortunately, the Christmas Eve crib services had to be cancelled. We were able to hold Midnight Mass at St Edmund's and Boxing Day's feast of St. Stephen in a United Service at St. Matthew's.

During 2021, we lost a number of faithful members of the congregation, dear friends who served the church and community over many decades. They will be sorely missed.

Fabric Committee continued to address items raised in the 2019 Quinquennial Inspection and to explore ways of ensuring that the church remains an attractive place of worship. Painting of the church ceiling was completed at a final cost of £21,996.30. Throughout the year, essential maintenance was carried out; this included routine work of tuning the organ and servicing the tower clock, the lightning conductor, the fire system, and alarms. Initial plans were drawn up for a new lighting scheme. This work has become more urgent as the current light fittings are failing. New lights will have considerably lower running costs and a new scheme will provide better and more evenly distributed lighting throughout the building. There have been preliminary discussions regarding the possibility of installing an accessible toilet in the choir vestry. Remedial work on the church windows is being considered as a number of concerns were highlighted in previous Quinquennial Inspections and these problems are now becoming more serious. A report is being drawn up and future actions will be considered. I would like to thank Richard Flatman for continuing to audit the churchwardens' accounts and the committee as a whole for providing expert advice and practical help.

Radiator covers were installed in the church hall, providing a safer environment, and improving the appearance of the facilities.

Throughout the year, thanks to the Ground Force Team, work in the churchyard continued uninterrupted; the grass was cut, paths were swept, graves were tidied, and flower beds were planted up. I am grateful to all who donated plants and bulbs for the flower beds and to everyone who gave their time and labour in order to enhance the appearance of the churchyard and the church hall grounds. The tranquillity of the churchyard is appreciated by the many passers-by who walk through it and by those who use it as a quiet space for reflection. We continue to welcome and encourage volunteers to help with the multitude of tasks that contribute to the life of St Edmund's church.

The PCC purchased 8 large stones for the burial of ashes area adjoining Church Walk. This area is now complete. The total cost of £12,800 will be retrieved from the plot fees.

I would like to finish by thanking Peter, Julie and all who have led and contributed to worship during these challenging times. I am grateful to Caroline for her efforts to ensure that administration ran smoothly in spite of so many Covid-related complications. I am proud to have served as churchwarden since 2016 and am grateful to so many members of the congregation who work tirelessly in different roles to serve God and our church and who, through doing so, make the churchwarden's job so much easier. With God's guidance, we can look forward with confidence as we emerge from the pandemic.

Vicar's Report - Peter Barham

Another year of Covid and, in some ways, a more challenging year than 2020. Then we had rules, now we sometimes have guidance, but on occasions we have been left to work it out by ourselves. I have been very fortunate that both PCC Standing Committees have been pillars of strength as we have negotiated our way forward. I am incredibly grateful to them. At St Edmund's Michele, Chris, Julie and Matt at St Edmund's – with the presence and assistance of Paul, who will also step up to be Churchwarden (Hallelujah). At St Matthew's David, Peter, Clive, Barbara, Richard and Phil. Thank you. Thanks too to people who have stepped up to be welcomers, who have learned which key unlocks which door, and who have coped with regular changes to how we do things. Thank you too to all of you who have been understanding and patient. I am aware that some of you have lost your normal service over the last year as we have stopped doing 8 and 11.15 services – and I am grateful that the vast majority of people have quietly transferred to another. I believe we now have a service pattern which is sustainable. I am grateful to John, Clive, Julie, Melonie, and Debs for their ministry, and to Neil, Geoffrey and Chris who are the first people I call on when we need additional help. Thank you to our musicians, and all engaged in worship.

I am sad that some people have not returned to regular worship – indeed our Sunday congregations in both churches are at least a quarter down on where they were. Some of those who have not returned in person are joining us on Zoom – and my thanks to Julie, Clive, Matt and Sophie for their work ensuring that runs every week. Others watch on YouTube during the week. Others need regular visits and home communions – I am doing my best,

but there is only one of me! I hope others will return, but I can't make them. I am sad that people are still so reluctant to cross the A38 – they will drive to one church for Evensong, but not drive to the other the following week. Our churches cannot exist in isolation. The Diocese is planning to reduce clergy numbers from 120 to 80 in the next few years. That means that each Deanery will lose about five full time clergy. In our Deanery, basically the City of Derby, housing growth is in the south of the city – the parish of Sinfin is being increased by several thousand people - and that is where clergy will be concentrated. You don't need to have a crystal ball to realise that this will affect the way our churches do ministry in the years to come.

We started 2021 by making the decision to close our buildings due to Covid. We worshipped on Zoom through the first few months of the year. We regularly got 60 people on zoom, plus others watching in the following week. We reopened both churches on Easter Sunday – social distancing, masks, no singing, and we didn't shout that "Christ is Risen", but we know he is. We restarted Wednesday morning services in June and Evensongs in July. We had small choirs as soon as we could, and eventually re-started congregational singing. Both our churches were full for Remembrance Sunday, and we were looking forward to something like a normal Christmas. Sadly, that was not to be. Covid numbers rose, and we made the difficult decision that we could not host our big services – this was the second year they have had to be cancelled. It felt a real knock back. We did our best, in church, on Zoom and with home communions, but there was a real sadness.

It has been a difficult year financially in both churches. At St Matthew's we were unable to pay our Parish Share in full. Unless we can turn it round, this will have implications for the future of ministry in these parishes. I am grateful to those who continue to give and give regularly. At St Edmund's we are very fortunate to have income from Preschool and School's Out in the Hall (as well as using the Hall to support our families and young people in the area), and we have some hall bookings back. We have some bookings back at St Matthew's too – we need the Fellowship Room to be used. Every month we are collecting for the Food Bank – and the economic position of so many in our city just gets worse and worse. Many of our number are suffering from the pains of old age (which I'm sure is a line from a psalm) and finding that much of the support they need is not there. There is a lot of loneliness of young and old, and a lot of fear – many situations where a caring, loving church has so much to offer. Thank you for all you do in our communities.

We baptised 26 children last year across the two churches – actually in the last six months of last year – and it is a huge privilege being part of family celebrations once again. We married 22 couples – sometimes with just a handful of guests and a video link. Our organists are now "international organists", they have been livestreamed across the world! These services of joy and celebration have been wonderful. They are also a great deal of hard work, so a huge thanks to Caroline in the Office. Her efficiency and good humour, her skill at being a listening ear, and the way she copes with me – she deserves a gold star. She is, of course, not the only one – a gold star to Julie as well.