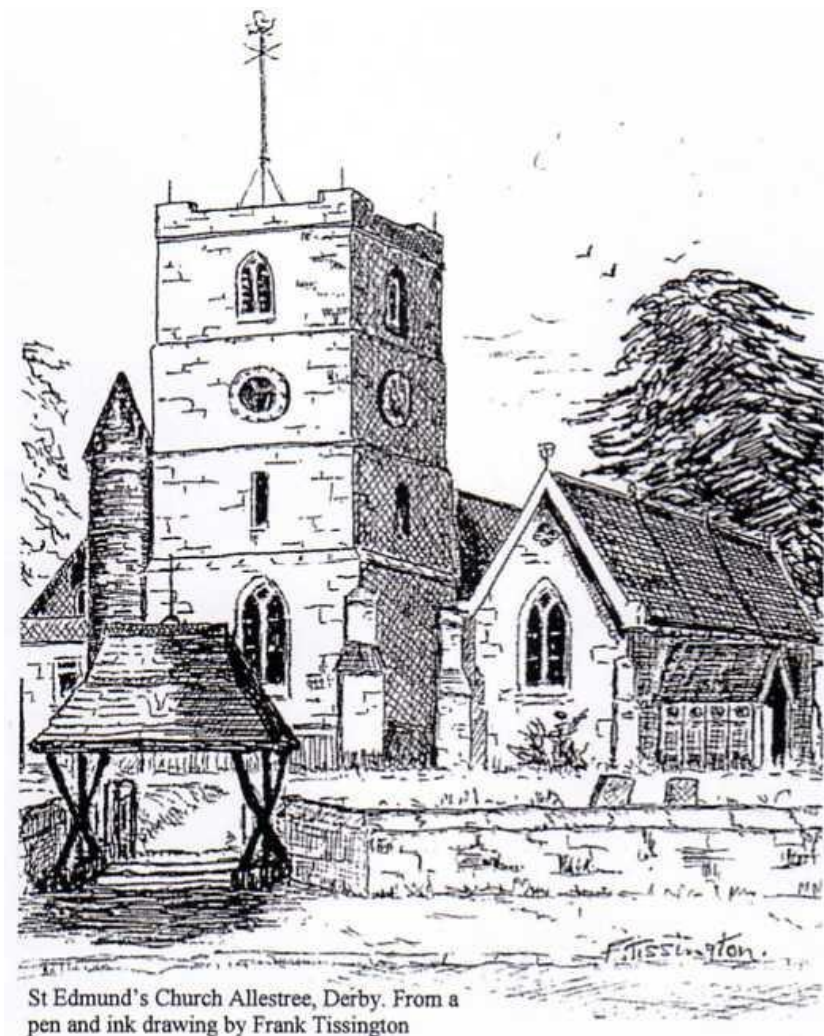


# **The Parish of St Edmund, Allestree**



**Election of Churchwardens**  
**and**  
**Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023**  
**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023**  
**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 2022 (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 2022 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 12)
7. Financial Report (see page 14)
8. Appointment of Auditor
9. Presentation of other Reports (see page 19)
10. Churchwardens' Report (see page 23)
11. Vicar's Report (see page 25)
12. Opportunity for questions

**THE PARISH OF ST. EDMUND ALLESTREE**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL CHURCH WARDENS' MEETING**

**8<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Present: Revd Peter Barham, Chairman

Parishioners: 30

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, John Aspinall, Doreen Heath, Margaret Pearson, Jane and Steve Burton, Richard Wood, Rita Harvey, Jo Allison, Janet Wolstenholme, Margaret Statham and Jane Parkin.

**3. Minutes of the Churchwardens' Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

The minutes were read and accepted as a true record.

**4. Election of Church Wardens**

Michèle Aspinall is standing down as Church Warden after 6 years in the role. Peter thanked her with a gift from St Edmund's and parishioners all agreed with Peter as to what a fantastic job she had done. There was a round of applause for her.

One nomination for Church Warden had been received. Paul Smith was nominated by Kate Smith and seconded by Richard Flatman. Peter was very grateful that Paul had volunteered but reminded parishioners that we needed a second Church Warden. Peter explained that we are not electing Deputy Church Wardens again this year because those people who carried out this role prior to Covid have dwindled down to very few for various reasons. Peter and Paul will sit down to work out how to get all the jobs done but volunteers are desperately needed to step forward to work with Paul.

**5. Land Charities Accounts**

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

The progress of moving the Land Charities accounts has been slow and frustrating. Peter reported that the money has been moved into the PCC account, both bank accounts have been closed and rent payments for the land we own have been transferred and rent increased. Work is still on going to formalise those holdings and get them registered in the name of the PCC and to move the CCLA (Charity Fund Managers) accounts across. Peter thanked trustees Colin and Barbara and everyone who had done a lot of hard work on this especially Michèle, Richard, Chris, Geoff and Caroline.

Geoff Bailey asked for the notes accompanying the financial statement to correctly state that Sawrey Hill is within the Markeaton estate not part of the Markeaton Estate as stated.

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 PERIOD ENDED 1/3/2022**

RECEIPTS	£	PAYMENTS	£
Dividends		PCC of St. Edmund's Allestree	
COIF A/C No 302160002T February	1,157.38		25,683.09
COIF A/C No 302160001T February	12.80		
Rent (all rent this year is paid to St. Edmunds PCC)	0.00		
Interest from Business Reserve A/C	0.06		
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>1,170.24</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>25,683.09</b>
<b>EXCESS OF PAYMENTS OVER RECEIPTS</b>			<b>24,512.85</b>

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Cash at Bank and in Hand (1st Jan 2022)	24,512.85
Cash at Bank and in Hand (31st Dec 2022 )	0.00

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**B/ CASH FUNDS TRANSFERRED DIRECTLY TO ST EDMUND'S PCC ACCOUNT  
FOLLOWING CLOSURE OF THE NAT WEST ACCOUNTS ON 1/3/2022  
AND CLOSURE OF CCLA ACCOUNTS ON 12/5/2022**

Dividends	£
COIF A/C No 302160002T 31st May	1,157.38
COIF A/C No 302160001T 31st May	12.80
<b>TOTAL CASH ASSETS</b>	<b>1,170.18</b>

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**C/ ENDOWMENT ASSETS TRANSFERRED TO PCC ACCOUNT  
FOLLOWING SALE OF SHARES ON 12/5/2022**

COIF Charities Funds	£
COIF A/C No 30210002T Sale of 8560.50 shares	157,009.84
COIF A/C No 30210001T Sale of 94.7 shares	1,736.91
<b>TOTAL ENDOWMENT ASSETS TRANSFERRED</b>	<b>158,746.75</b>

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

**A/ INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 1/3/ 2022**

RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	£
Dividends Received			
COIF A/C No. 330720001T 28/02/2020 (see below)	0	PCC of St.Edmunds Allestree	588.79
Building Society Interest	0.32		
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>588.79</b>
<b>EXCESS OF PAYMENTS OVER RECEIPTS</b>			<b>588.47</b>
<hr/>			
Cash at bank ( 1st January 2022)			588.47
Cash at Bank (31st December 2022)			0.00

**B/ CASH FUNDS TRANSFERRED DIRECTLY TO ST. EDMUNDS PCC ACCOUNT  
FOLLOWING CLOSURE OF LEEDS B/SOCIETY A/C ON 1/3/2022,  
AND CCLA ACCOUNT ON 1/6/2022**

Dividends	£
COIF A/C No 330720001T 30/11/2021 due date	13.92
28/02/2022 due date	13.93
31/05/2022 due date	13.93
<b>TOTAL CASH ASSETS</b>	<b>41.78</b>
(paid to PCC A/C on 24/6/2022)	

**C/ ENDOWMENT ASSETS TRANSFERRED TO PCC ACCOUNT  
FOLLOWING SALE OF SHARES ON 1/6/2022**

COIF Charities Fund	£
COIF A/C No 330720001T Sale of 103.0 shares	1,936.32
<b>TOTAL ENDOWMENT ASSETS TRANSFERRED</b>	<b>1,936.32</b>

## St. Edmund's Churchwardens' Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2022

The accounts (financial statements) of the St. Edmunds 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 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

### **Notes to the financial statements**

- (1) These accounts are the final accounts to be produced for the Churchwardens' Land Charity and the Parish Clerk's Land Charity. As reported last year, the trustees of the two charities have determined that the interests of the charities would best be served by merging their assets into the PCC, itself a registered charity. These accounts indicate the movement of funds into the PCC accounts, during the winding up process.
- (2) It should be noted that the rental income from the Sawrey Hill field has been paid to the PCC in its entirety this year, (but with an increase over previous years).
- (3) The Endowment Fund from the Churchwardens' Charity is to be held as an Endowment Fund in the PCC accounts. Annual income from the Endowment to be placed in a Restricted Fund to be spent on Church Maintenance, together with the total cash funds transferred to the PCC.
- (4) *The Endowment Fund from the Parish Clerk's Land Charity (being small) is to be held in a Restricted Fund together with the cash funds transferred to the PCC. The Fund is to be used to pay towards St. Edmund's share of the cost of our joint benefices' administrator.*
- (5) The arrangements in para (2), (3) and (4) are in agreement with Charity Commission guidance.

Prepared by: Richard Flatman

*Richard Flatman 2/1/2023*

Approved by:

Barbara Colder (Trustee)

*B Colder 9.1.23*

Colin Pearson (Trustee)

*CF Pearson 9.1.2023*

# **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**8<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

## **1. Apologies**

As recorded in previous minutes.

## **2. Minutes of 2021 APCM**

The minutes were accepted as a true record with one correction.

## **3. Presentation of the Electoral Roll**

The roll has 125 names in total, 77 being resident in the parish and 48 not resident in the parish.

Peter read out the names of members of the congregation who have died since the last APCM – John Gear, Brian Wrigley, Robert Owen and Colin Miller. We remembered them with love and affection.

Due to ill health, Ken Eunson has stood down as Electoral Roll officer. Peter asked that we hold Ken and Jackie in our thoughts and prayers as Ken starts treatment for Leukaemia.

A new officer is needed.

## **4. Election of Laity representatives**

The three members of the PCC who are due to retire at this APCM are Madeleine Fullerton, Ken and Jackie Eunson. Ken and Jackie will not be standing again, and Peter thanked them both for many years of service to St Edmund's. Julie to send a card of thanks. Madeleine was happy to stand again and was proposed by Michèle Aspinall and seconded by Geoff Bailey. Michèle was nominated by Geoff Bailey and seconded by Madeleine Fullerton to become a member of the PCC (rather than Church Warden). There remains one vacancy on the PCC. Paula Birchall has been unable to attend PCC meetings for over a year due to poor health and we send love and prayers to her.

Nominations were elected to the PCC unanimously.

## **PCC MEMBERSHIP FOR 2022-2023 will be -**

<b>Incumbent</b>	<b>Rev Peter Barham</b>
<b>Church Wardens</b>	<b>Paul Smith</b>
	<b>Vacancy</b>
<b>Parish Safeguarding Officers</b>	<b>Louise Whittaker</b>
	<b>Madeleine Fullerton</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Chris Jack</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Julie Hutchinson</b>
<b>Readers</b>	<b>Julie Barham</b>
	<b>Deborah Simpson</b>



## **ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE PCC**

**Michèle Aspinall**

**Geoff Bailey**

**Paula Birchall**

**Matthew Cooper**

**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 2023

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

Retiring members at APCM 2024

Matthew Cooper, Richard Flatman.

Retiring members at APCM 2025

Michèle Aspinall, Madeleine Fullerton.

## **5. Annual Report of the PCC**

The report is contained within the 2022 APCM booklet.

Peter thanked Julie for her work as PCC Secretary.

## **6. Financial Report**

This report is contained within the 2022 APCM booklet.

Chris Jack reported that our income over expenses was £9,200. We had £86,000 in legacies without which our balance sheet would be much less healthy. Chris is very grateful to those people who have thought of the church in their wills. The church has been able to pay its parish share of £54,000 and has donated almost £9,300 to charities and mission giving as detailed in the report. Investments have done well this year. The Church Hall was revalued at £1million for insurance purposes this year. It's asset value has, however, remained unchanged because of a restrictive covenant on the hall stating that any building on the land can only be used for ecclesiastical purposes.

Chris reported that the transfer of assets from the Land Charities to the PCC is going slowly and will have an effect on next years figures. He will ensure the wishes of the original donors are respected in the PCC accounts.

Chris reported that new contracts for gas and electricity have been taken out but that the overall cost will rise from £6,000 to an estimated £18,000 per annum. The PCC and the finance committee will look at how we can reduce our energy consumption.

Chris Willis asked about who had donated the land where the church hall is. This was the brewery.

Kate Smith had read that St Matthews had been unable to pay their parish share and asked if St Edmunds was able to support St Matthews in any way. Peter explained that money was given to St Edmunds for St Edmunds so direct help wasn't possible. St Edmunds contributes a bit more to the shared parish administrator's costs as she is involved much more with taking bookings for St Edmund's Church Hall than St Matthew's Fellowship Room. Peter explained that St Edmunds is in a very fortunate position and the vast majority of churches have problems paying their parish share.

Michèle asked about the appointment of an extra archdeacon. Peter explained that the Bishop felt a 3<sup>rd</sup> archdeacon was needed because of the broad area covered and this has been agreed by the deanery and diocese. The Cathedral has appointed a new Canon but funding for Cathedrals comes from a different source.

Paul Smith congratulated Chris for all the work done on land charities and on being an excellent treasurer. Peter thanked Chris and parishioners thanked him with applause.

Chris thanked members of the Finance Committee and in particular those involved with the land charities and Peter Hilton, for support through the year.

## **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 Richard Flatman. Carried unanimously.

## **8. Presentation of Committee Reports**

Committee reports are printed in full in the APCM booklet.

Children's Work – Peter thanked Karen for continuing to do JACK by zoom through the year, but this has now ended as Karen has moved to a church nearer her home. Three activities for children have been planned but we need volunteers to take this important work forward.

Magazine – Peter thanked the editorial team especially Fiona Fraser and Chris Willis who organises distribution. Please forward anything that could be included in the magazine to the team.

Church Hall Committee – Peter thanked Caroline for all the work she does on this. It's lovely to see all the activities happening in the Church Hall. Thank you to Tony for being the caretaker.

Hand Bells – This has now restarted but desperately needs some new members.

Baby and Toddler – This restarted in November and is excellent. Peter thanked Caroline.

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

Choir – Peter thanked Elizabeth Jack and the choir as it's been so good to get back to something like normal.

Bookworms – Julie is hoping that this can restart soon, and people interested should e-mail Julie.

Food Bank – Peter thanked Paul and Kate Smith and Julie and Dave Hutchinson for organising food bank collection.

Luncheon Club – Peter thanked Anne Madge and her team.

Allestree Churches Together – Peter expressed sadness that the Methodist Church in Allestree had closed.

Safeguarding – Peter thanked Louise Whittaker and Madeleine for all their work and thanked those who were getting their training done.

## **9. Churchwardens' Report**

The report was printed in full in the APCM booklet.

Michèle reported that she was pleased the land charity wind up and transfer to PCC funds was progressing well finally as it will make life much easier for future church wardens and also makes financial sense as we can claim back VAT. She is hopeful that we can now start to plan more social events and that behind the scene tasks to keep the church clean and beautiful can be restarted with new volunteers. Her most pressing concern is our need to move forward with our work with young people. She asked for prayers and positive and practical suggestions as we look to fulfil a vital part of our ministry. Further to the thanks given in the report, Michèle wished to thank previous Church Wardens for their support and advice and to Paul Smith for agreeing to take over as Church Warden, wishing him every success as he moves into the role.

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 reiterated that he was so grateful to the Standing Committee, Michèle, Chris, Matt and Julie, for their support through the last two years. Also, to Julie, John, Clive and Debs for their regular ministry and Neil, Geoffrey and Chris who are the first people Peter calls on if extra help is needed. He also thanked Julie, Matt and Sophie for doing zoom. Peter feels there are some things which need sorting and need volunteers for – chalice bearer rota, coffee after services (needs a couple of people to get this started) and help with baptisms.

Claire suggested that a list of jobs needing volunteers could be put in the Church magazine.

Alex thanked Peter, Julie and Caroline for Toddler Group and felt it was a very good toddler group and very important to mums after the isolation of covid.

Chris proposed a vote of thanks to Peter. Parishioners showed thanks with applause.

## **11. Opportunity for questions**

There were no questions.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

## **PCC Report for May 2022 to April 2023 – 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	Paul Smith Vacancy

### **Deanery Synod Representatives**

Richard Wood  
Mark Halliwell  
David Redfern

### **Elected Members of the PCC**

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

### **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.

## **Retiring members at APCM 2025**

Madeleine Fullerton, Michèle Aspinall

### **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 (presently paused), Pastoral (restarted recently) and Events (presently paused). PCC members choose on which committees to serve depending on their experience and interests. Other church members may help on subcommittees 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 which are usually the Church Wardens. 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 May 2022 to April 2023**

Areas the PCC has focused on this year include:

- Reviewing the COVID situation and how we keep the congregation safe in church has taken place at each meeting this year. Thankfully we have been able to return to normal with masks as an option and we have been able to restart coffee after Church in the Church Hall.
- Reviewing how we can cover for Peter's illness and support Paul, the Church Warden, in his consequent increased work load. We have been supported well by visiting clergy.
- Reviewing the Church's financial situation reported by the treasurer. Discussing plans from the Finance Committee. These have included transferring of Land Charity accounts to the PCC accounts, ways to save energy in church and charitable giving nominations.
- Discussing plans from the Fabric Committee on an improved lighting scheme for church, war grave signs, redecoration of vestry and sacristy, work in the churchyard by the Groundforce group of volunteers and remedial work on the windows.
- Discussing plans from the Church Hall Committee (presently paused so now run under Fabric Committee) on a possible issue with a retaining wall, exploring the possibility of air source heating/ heat pump versus a new boiler, increasing insulation, fire safety and resurfacing the play area at the back.
- Discussing new safeguarding policies, taking part in online safeguarding training and renewing DBS certificates.
- Discussing plans from the Events Committee (presently paused). A few events have been run this year – Big Book Sale, a vicarage 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.

## Accounts for 2022 and Treasurers Report for 2023 APCM – Chris Jack (Treasurer)

### Summary

The Receipts and Payments summary and Statement of Assets and Liabilities are attached to this report. The former shows a surplus for the year of £11,825, however this is not an accurate statement because it includes a substantial transfer from the Churchwarden's and Parish Clerk's Land charities (see below for details). Once these are taken into consideration, we made a loss of about £10,000.

### Receipts and Payments

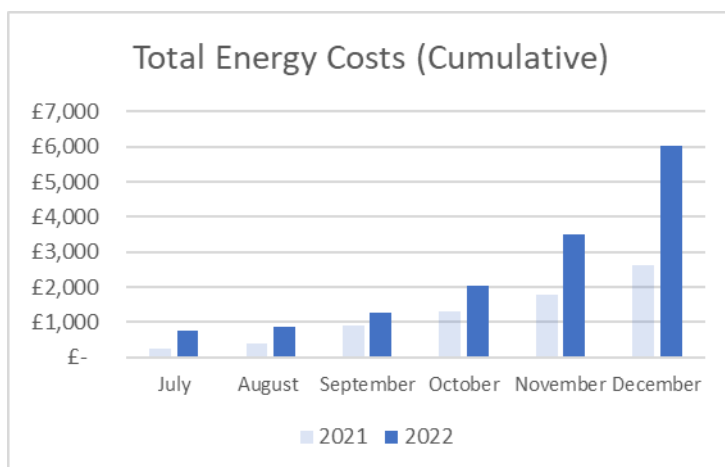
#### *Land Charities*

The major changes to the balance sheet are due to the transfer of assets from the Land charities. We received £2,567 from the Parish Clerk's Land charity and, with agreement of the Trustees of that charity it was used to pay part of Caroline's salary, since she carries out many of the tasks formerly done by a Parish Clerk. That charity has since been closed down, and these funds exhausted.

The Churchwarden's Land charity transferred £25,683 cash, and the Trustees agreed to the transfer on the basis that it would be used in accordance with the intentions of the original endowment, that is for the maintenance, repair and improvement of the church fabric. This money has therefore been placed in a Restricted Fund for that purpose. The charity cannot be closed as it still owns a field on the Markeaton Estate – see assets below.

#### *Energy costs*

Our existing gas and electricity supply contracts ran out during the year and new ones, put in place in June and lasting for 2 years, are more expensive. The chart shows the costs since that new contract was put in place, compared with the same six months of 2021. As you see costs have more than doubled.



#### *Income from donations*

Our income from donations, including reclaimed Gift Aid, dropped by more than £5,000 or about 8% which follows the trend of previous years. This is mainly due to the loss of some regular donors.

#### *Church Hall*

The surplus from lettings of the hall increased by about £2,800 which reflects increased bookings once Covid restrictions were lifted. Fuel price rises forced us to increase our hourly rates for hall users, and this will enable us to keep investing in the hall, in particular in the standard of insulation and perhaps a more environmentally sustainable method of heating.

#### *Assets*

The Churchwarden's Land Charity also held investments in a CCLA CBF account as a Permanent Endowment – that is the capital sum could not be used, but any income derived from it could be used for the purpose of the charity. These investments were sold, and the proceeds used to buy a similar investment in the name of the PCC. This is held separately from the existing PCC investment account so that the terms of the Permanent Endowment can be respected.

A field adjacent to the Markeaton estate still belongs to the Churchwarden's Land Charity. The land is currently unregistered which means its ownership is not officially recorded. We have instructed the

diocesan registrar to register the land with the Land Registry and have its ownership transferred to the PCC, and we have paid him £2,500 to do so, but it will take some time. Once that has taken place, we will get a valuation of the land so it can be recorded in these accounts.

The pre-existing PCC investment account decreased in value by about 10% over the year, reflecting market conditions.

## Donations to Charity

PCC donations			Collections at services and other donations		
Ashbourne	Animal				
Welfare	£	350	Alzheimer Society	£	166
Book Aid International	£	350	Christian Aid	£	418
			DEC (Ukraine		
Caria Babi	£	350	Appeal)	£	208
DEC (Ukraine Appeal)	£	500	Derby City Mission	£	47
Derbyshire Blood Bikes	£	350	Leprosy Mission	£	10
Malawi Students	£	700	Padley Group	£	1,000
Padley Group	£	350	Shelter	£	290
Pandas Foundation	£	350			
Railway Mission	£	700			
Rainbows	£	350			
UNHCR	£	350			
Zane	£	350			

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.

## 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, thanks to our reserves. We are in a very fortunate position compared with some other churches. However, the balance sheet shows that year by year we are steadily losing money. 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 2022 Accounts

## *St Edmund's Allestree Statement of Accounts 2023*

### RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Totals 2022	Total 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
1 & 2 Planned Giving	38,463			<b>38,463</b>	45,294
3 Collections at services	5,187			<b>5,187</b>	4,748
4 Other voluntary giving and donations	4,661			<b>4,661</b>	2,300
6 Tax recovered	10,159			<b>10,159</b>	11,285
<b>Total from donors</b>	<b>58,470</b>			<b>58,470</b>	63,627
7 Legacies	9,000			<b>9,000</b>	86,644
8 Grants	900			<b>900</b>	776
9 Fund raising	632			<b>632</b>	350
10 Bank Interest	1,650		2,315	<b>3,965</b>	74
11 Service Fees	6,953			<b>6,953</b>	10,789
12 Trading Income: Hall	20,472			<b>20,472</b>	14,932
12 Trading Income: Magazine and book sales	1,568			<b>1,568</b>	1,789
13 Other income	10,814		28,749	<b>39,563</b>	7,130
13c Agency income	10,748			<b>10,748</b>	10,418
<b>Total Other income</b>	<b>62,737</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31,064</b>	<b>93,801</b>	132,902
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>121,207</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31,064</b>	<b>152,271</b>	196,529
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
17 Fund raising	350			<b>350</b>	400
18 Outward giving	2,995	3,850		<b>6,845</b>	5,883
19 Common Fund - Parish	54,527			<b>54,527</b>	54,613
20 Salaries and Honoraria	16,552		3,166	<b>19,718</b>	17,303
21 Clergy expenses	4,042			<b>4,042</b>	2,234
22 Mission giving			3,500	<b>3,500</b>	3,500
23 Church Running Expenditure	11,210		2,940	<b>14,150</b>	21,901
24 Church utilities	4,562			<b>4,562</b>	2,474
25 Cost of Trading	18,397		25	<b>18,422</b>	15,680
26 Governance	389			<b>389</b>	506
27 Major Repairs to Church				<b>-</b>	1,700
99 Other costs	1,019		2,500	<b>3,519</b>	903
Agency Payments	10,421			<b>10,421</b>	10,136
Asset Purchase					50,000
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>124,465</b>	<b>3,850</b>	<b>12,131</b>	<b>140,445</b>	<b>187,233</b>



*St Edmund's Allestree*  
*Statement of Accounts 2023*

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Totals 2022	Total 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Excess of Receipts over Payments	-3,258	-3,850	18,933	11,826	9,296
OPENING CASH BALANCES	134,801	3,348	81,080	219,229	209,933
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	-1,000	1,000			
CLOSING CASH BALANCES	130,543	498	100,013	231,054	219,229

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Totals 2022	Total 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>CASH FUNDS</b>					
CAF current	9,197	498		9,696	5,181
CAF deposit	32,446		100,013	132,459	126,302
CCLA deposit	88,900			88,900	87,746
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>130,543</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>100,013</b>	<b>231,054</b>	<b>219,229</b>
<b>INVESTMENT FUNDS VALUATION</b>					
CCLA CBF account				219,241	241,366
CCLA CBF account (Restricted: Churchwardens Land account)				154,803	-
<b>CHURCH HALL</b>				114,000	114,000
<b>CREDIT Agency</b>				327	282

**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 2022, 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 Acthave 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 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023  
Signed 

## **PCC Committee and other Group/Activity Reports**

### **Children's Work**

No report received

### **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 hire the hall during the holidays. We also welcome Ballet on a Monday (term time), Studio 86 (a dance class, term time) and Derwentio choir on a Tuesday, Brownies, and Guides on a Wednesday (term time) and Studio 86 (term time) again on a Thursday. We no longer have Zumba, also on a Thursday. We are grateful to them for this invaluable income.

Paul has already mentioned improving the hall insulation to reduce heat loss. We have also recently removed the Silver Birch from the garden which was causing root issues. In due course we will look at resurfacing the garden area with the pre-school who are the main users during term time.

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.

### **Baby & Toddler Group – Caroline Audley**

The group which meets on a Thursday during term time from 10-11.30am seems to be going from strength to strength. I don't ask people to book so some weeks are lighter than others. Some weeks are very busy though, so I'll keep an eye on it as I do want to ensure the session is comfortable and enjoyable for all. I'd always rather welcome childminders who tend to bring multiple children and not ask people to book which can be quite stressful as a new parent.

The group offers fruit and biscuits, squash, tea and coffee. This is kindly donated from Morrison's in Belper and their Community Champion Lucy.

Thank you again to Tony for helping week after week to get all of the toys in and out of the cupboard, I couldn't do it without him.

## **Flower Group - Michèle Aspinall**

2022 saw a welcome return to normality after the difficulties of the Pandemic. We decided to continue placing extra Mothering Sunday posies in the porch to be collected by people from the local community. Our displays for Easter were well received and then, happily, the wedding season began in earnest. We celebrated a good number of church weddings with beautiful flower displays. Autumn and winter meant a return to our familiar routine of Harvest, Remembrance, Patronal and Christmas flowers. Along with the continued rise in the cost of flowers, we have also had to consider sustainability and the environmental impact of importing flowers and using foam in large displays. This will be an interesting and important challenge to address over the coming years.

Perhaps the most memorable point of our flower year was the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June, which allowed us to produce spectacular arrangements to enhance the wonderful memorabilia brought into church by members of the congregation. This was, indeed, a special occasion for the parish and people of Allestree to share.

In normal circumstances, the church flower 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**

As a choir, we have been thrilled to complete what has been a relatively normal year with Covid restrictions gradually being lifted!

The regular pattern of singing for one Morning Prayer, one Communion and two Evensongs has continued throughout the year with joint services with St. Matthew's choir on fifth Sundays, alternating between the two churches; also Patronal Festivals, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Ascension Day and other major festivals. With Matt Cooper's able assistance, we were able to make a joint recording of Christmas music for Peter Barham. Matt also recorded the carol service for us.

We all enjoyed the Christmas carol service which was a good mix of old and new music. Despite coughs and colds, the choir performed well ably assisted by a few good friends and we were able to get together for mulled wine and jacket potatoes after the service for the first time since 2019.

Thanks go to David Redfern, our regular organist and also to Tom Corfield who has been able to play for several choral Evensongs for us. He also brings Rosemary his wife to join us which is a bonus. Tony Westerman helps us out if David and Tom are unavailable – this was the case for the carol service. I would like to thank him for all the years he put in as our regular Evensong organist,

My greatest thanks of all goes, as ever, to the choir who are the most loyal bunch of people I know. They turn out week after week for practices and services and continue sing to a very high standard. It is lovely when individual choir members suggest music for us to sing and this helps with the production of the monthly music sheet.

We have always been grateful for Peter and Julie Barham's support in all that we do and continue to pray for them both.

## **Bookworms - Julie Barham**

Bookworms, the book club which originally began in the Vicarage in 2016, had an enforced break from March 2020 and restarted in the Choir Vestry at St Edmunds on the 8th August last year. The first book was Tracy Chevalier's "A Single Thread" which was a good starting point for discussion. We begin with tea, coffee and biscuits and often have a lively discussion. As we have numbered about eight there is still room for more eager readers, even if they are new to book groups. We meet every second Monday of the month (postponed to the following Monday if there is a Bank Holiday) with a wide range of titles. More details are available from Cyra Buxton and the next book is always given in the church magazines and on the church website. My thanks to all the members for the good discussions we have had over the years.

## **Events Committee**

No report received

## **Food Bank – Paul Smith**

Every month on the first Sunday, we gratefully receive donations of food which we take to the Hope Centre in Curzon Street. Every time I've been there, someone has asked me to pass on their thanks to those who have donated.

Some will be quick to point out that we should not need to have food banks, but there's no doubt that they are vital especially at this time of steeply rising prices. There are so many in our city who are really struggling with food, heating and transport costs. So, please maintain the marvellous level of support for the Food Bank. You can put bags in Primrose's shed at the Vicarage or bring them to church on the first Sunday of the month. You don't necessarily need to donate a mix of things. A whole bag of breakfast cereals, or soups, or other canned goods, is just as much appreciated by the volunteers at Curzon Street, and in fact it makes their job easier.

I'm now doing all the runs to Curzon Street myself, and I'd very much appreciate some help. You don't need a big car. Also, the Hope Centre volunteers always help unload, so you shouldn't need to worry about straining your back! Please do contact me (07792 569758) if you could help, even if it's just for two or three times a year.

## **Luncheon Club – Anne Madge**

We are now operating normally following the issues with lockdown and have a great team of volunteers to enable the club to run smoothly.

Jill Potts retired as Treasurer in October 2022 after many years of sterling service. We are very grateful to her for all her hard work and are delighted to say that she has now joined us as a guest, so we still see her regularly. Eileen Holland has taken over the job of collecting the money at meetings and Anne Madge is running the bank account. This has been changed and updated to an online account, remaining with the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Currently we have a balance of £1932.62 in the account. This includes a staff fund of £105 and we have earmarked £250 to pay for a free meal to celebrate the King's coronation in May. This will coincide with our usual birthday meeting, so we are hoping to provide another free meal later in the summer as well. It is good to report that we have managed to maintain a healthy balance in view of the rising prices.

We recently made a donation to the Church funds in recognition of the increased heating costs for the hall, we are pleased that this has contributed towards improving the insulation.

Charges remain at £5 for a 3 course lunch and £5 for a place on the community bus.

We have 36 members on the books at present and possible space on the bus. We would welcome some new diners to join us.

We last had a visit from Environmental Health in March 2022 and were awarded the top rate of 5 stars.

Thank you to all our volunteers, the staff who help on the day and the ladies on the pudding rota. We couldn't do this without you all!

**Allestree Churches Together (ACT)** – Clive Lemmon (St Matthew's) wrote this report

The regular meeting of ministers allowed a successful Holiday at Home to be held in the summer, and there was a united service one Sunday afternoon in January 2023 which has prompted some of the former ACT committee to consider holding a meeting formally to decide the future for ACT as an organisation.

**Handbell Group** – Gill Flatman

We are just beginning to feel that life is returning to normal!

After the St Edmund's 2022 annual meeting, we were able to hold our own Handbell AGM in June, where we welcomed 2 new members. That is always a pleasure, as at times we have struggled to maintain a team to practise weekly. A great disappointment was the temporary withdrawal of leadership by Janice Johnson, on account of her husband's health. During the Spring and Autumn terms, her place was filled by two of our existing members. However, we are now in a position to welcome Bryan Clarke, who has volunteered to be our leader, beginning in February 23. Sadly, our Chairman also resigned! (Any volunteers from St Edmund's would be welcome.) On the plus side yet another member joined the team during the Autumn term. I do not think our existing members will be too annoyed if I say that the new members show talent superior to ours, or most certainly, mine!

It was good to return to a near normal Christmas, fundraising for Bloodbikes at Park Farm, followed by Christmas lunch, and then playing in Church, prior to Lessons and Carols, on the Sunday before Christmas. We are hoping for further fundraising venues during December, for our 2023 charity, as yet undecided.

**Groundforce** – Steve & Jane Burton

Although St Edmund's Groundforce sessions had lapsed during the pandemic we are now meeting once a month to maintain both the churchyard and the church hall grounds. It has a core team of around 8 members and has recently been joined by an ex- member of Seekers (and his parent) doing some community volunteering for a Duke of Edinburgh award.

Tasks have included a considerable amount of leaf-gathering, sweeping paths, weeding round the church, spreading compost and caring for the flower beds, as well as more specific projects such as starting to clear the graves close to the southern boundary wall which are completely overgrown with brambles, etc, making a new compost bin for the churchyard, and cutting down the overhanging branches in the church hall car park.

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

As the Parish Safeguarding Officers for Saint Edmund's Church, Madeleine Fullerton and Louise Whittaker are continuing to comply with our duties in relation to Safeguarding as set down in the House of Bishops guidance. We remain dedicated to fulfilling our Parish Safeguarding Officer duties and have had a year of bringing things back up to date as Church life has gradually returned to near normal in the aftermath of the Covid epidemic.

We have continued to put our energies into ensuring that the necessary Safeguarding Training has been completed by all role holders within Saint Edmund's Church. The required Basics and Foundation Safeguarding Training for PCC members is now up to date. Last year the way in which Domestic Abuse courses are run changed. They stopped being run on an individual online basis and are now held in live groups run by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office trainers. PCC members are required to complete this training, and all have either completed it or are booked on to future courses. We continue to ensure that relevant groups who provide services through the Church receive up to date safeguarding training and that

up to date risk assessments are in place. The Pastoral Group has recently restarted and expanded, and we will ensure that everyone involved with this group receives the appropriate safeguarding training for their roles.

Although a few DBS Certificates have had to be processed from scratch this year, the three year renewal of DBS Certificates has generally been much quicker and simpler for those who joined the updating service. It is still a time consuming process but so very important in terms of maintaining as great a protection as possible for all members of our Church. We appreciate all the support we have been given to help us keep on top of all this paper work.

With regards to the Annual Safeguarding Audit (the Dashboard), we continue to fulfil all of the requirements that are highlighted for us.

- We have written a safeguarding addendum that has been added to all hire agreements and signed by all hirers of the church hall/church premises.
- As mentioned above, the Pastoral group has recently been reinstated and we have helped put together a policy and risk assessment for this group. All other risk assessments for our Church groups have also been brought up to date.
- Safeguarding strategy information sheets and a Safeguarding poster have been updated and displayed on notice sheets in the Church and in the Church Hall.

Since this last report, we have had one minor Safeguarding issue arise which has been addressed with valued support we were given from Church House.

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](http://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding) for everyone to access.

## **Churchwardens' Report – Paul Smith**

### **REVD P BARHAM**

The latter half of the year has been overshadowed by the shocking news of Peter's cancer. On behalf of us all, I'd like to record our huge thanks to Peter and Julie for their ministry here and at St Matthew's, and express our very warmest wishes for whatever their future holds. The PCC's priority has been to support Peter and Julie in their anguish and to keep the life of St Edmund's running as normally as possible on the basis that this is what they would wish us to do.

In doing this I, as churchwarden and acting PCC chair, have been supported by an army of people both inside and outside St Edmund's. We have had great support from Matthew, our Archdeacon, and Sarah, our Area Dean, many retired and visiting clergy, and the licensed Readers of both St Edmund's and St Matthew's. Many of you know Barbara Coe who lives in our parish but worships at St Matthew's. She has done a fantastic job of arranging people to lead services at both churches. She initially covered Epiphany to Easter, and she has now agreed to organise the next three months through to end May. This has been an enormous help.

Since Ash Wednesday, we have also been very pleased to welcome Revd Rachael Brooks on a leadership placement; she has been especially tasked to develop the work of both churches with the approximately 5,000 children and young people resident in the area.

I am also delighted that Archdeacon Matthew has consistently paid tribute to Peter and Julie's ministry and presented his plans for the future as building on that foundation.

## **COVID-19**

Looking through previous reports, it's striking to see how things have changed with regard to Covid: this is the first year since 2019 that Covid has not severely restricted our worship and activities. The PCC has always taken a precautionary approach to this risk, recognising that many of our congregation are elderly, clinically vulnerable, or both. Covid precautions are a standing item on the PCC agenda, and I'm pleased to say we have now been able to make mask wearing optional, relax social distancing and reinstate communion in both kinds as well as the taking of the collection. I also know how much you appreciate the return of tea/coffee after our morning service: many thanks to Gill Flatman for organising our tea/coffee makers.

## **FABRIC**

Churchwardens bear a heavy responsibility for the fabric of the church, but fortunately I have been supported by an extremely competent and enthusiastic Fabric Committee comprising Richard Wood, Geoff Bailey, Richard Flatman and David Halliwell. A large amount of work goes on behind the scenes to make sure that electrical and gas equipment is checked, boilers and clocks are serviced, and that roofs/gutters and downpipes remain clear so as to minimise the risk of water ingress. This year, work has been carried out to improve the efficiency of the lightning conductor, to keep the clock going/striking and to redecorate the choir vestry and sacristy. Plans are being pursued to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the church lighting; especially worthwhile given the huge increase we have seen in electricity prices.

The hall is of course a much more modern building, but it is heavily used. This is great news, but it does lead to many calls for action, such as dealing with blocked toilets, loose door bolts and other fittings as well as non-functioning equipment (such as the kitchen microwave which we replaced). Here again we have focused on improving energy efficiency, with substantial work being done to improve the ceiling insulation and reduce heat loss. This is just the first stage of a much bigger plan to maximise efficiency and minimise both costs and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

We are very fortunate to have, in Caroline Audley, a most pleasant and efficient administrator who looks after hall bookings as well as myriad other admin matters, not to mention supporting our sister church at St Matthew's, helping with the parent/toddler group and liaising with all hall users.

I'd also like to especially thank:

- Our Groundforce volunteers, ably led by Jane and Steve Burton, who meet monthly to keep the churchyard clean and tidy.
- Our church musicians, both the regulars and the visitors.
- Geoff Bailey and Richard Flatman, whose experience and practical skills make a huge contribution to keeping our buildings running and to the life of the church generally.
- Michèle Aspinall, who, although no longer a churchwarden, still does so much to support the presentation of the church and the life of our parish.
- Louise Whittaker and Madeleine Fullerton, who take the lead on vital safeguarding matters including reporting, training and keeping our policy/procedures up to scratch.
- Chris Jack, our very effective Treasurer, whose wise counsel extends well beyond money matters.

The truth is that we would not be able to operate without the selfless commitment, skills and expertise of these people.



**Vicar's Report – Peter**  
Barham

2022 has not been the year I had planned. You can find an overview of it, and lots of lovely photos, on the church website under “News” – and there is plenty there to be enthusiastic about. We started with Covid still prevalent, masks, social distancing, etc. etc. – and everyone coping with the restrictions with good humour.

We were busy with baptisms, weddings and funerals all through the year – and I am grateful to everyone in the team for all their help with these. Over the year we have expanded the number of people involved, and everyone has risen to the challenge of providing a caring, professional, service. The number of these services we do has diminished, which is the inevitable result of communities which no longer look to the Church. It is frustrating. I am sad when people tell me what a special building the church is, how much they appreciate it, but then tell me they will have dad's funeral at the Crematorium because that's easier. I find it ironic when people organise funerals with no clergy present, but then get in touch with me because they want the ashes to come to a churchyard. I get cross when I watch afternoon television and it is full of adverts for simple cremation, no funeral, no need – and then I get phone calls from people who did just that and realise six months later they had no opportunity to grieve. I see adverts from lots of wedding venues, but the Church of England seems incapable of advertising our wonderful churches as superb places to get married in. Please remember that we need church people to encourage and advertise and welcome – to be enthusiastic about all we have to offer, to be welcoming to all.

We celebrated Candlemas with a wonderful United Service and welcomed the Dean of Derby as our preacher. We had 500 people through our churches on Ash Wednesday as we welcomed all the children from Walter Evans School. We had wonderful Easter art from the school as well. Clive stepped in at short notice to cover at St Edmund's when Covid messed up the rotas – and preached his thousandth sermon. Our worship has settled into a new pattern, and the rhythm of worship has been very special. Thank you to everyone who makes it happen, week in and week out. We were able to start hosting concerts and our Books Sales again, and Easter was very special. It felt like normality was being restored.

We had proper Annual General Meetings again. Peter and David continued as churchwardens at St Matthew's, Paul replaced Michele at St Edmund's. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to the four of them for all their help and support over the years I have been Vicar. I have been extremely fortunate in my churchwardens here (not forgetting Patrick and Trevor in previous years) – thank you. There were jobs that needed filling – and we should have two churchwardens in each church – but people have stepped forward as the year has gone on (stepped forward in ways I often don't know about). Thank you. We've also, especially at St Matthew's, had outside groups who have come to help and support us – a huge thanks to them (and to church people who have organised it). Wonderful to see the Green Agenda bear fruit and bring people into church and churchyard.

As the summer started it really seemed as if we were picking ourselves up after Covid and making progress in so many areas of our church life. It was great to have a Children's afternoon in preparation for Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, to welcome families from both churches. The Jubilee Birds in St Matthew's were stunning, and we had a good Jubilee weekend. St Edmund's looked lovely too, but the support we had from the community over the weekend was pretty dismal – which was a shame. When Her Majesty died, we welcomed some people who wanted space to reflect and give thanks – but many parish churches (not just us) found that it was Cathedrals and town centre churches that were the focal points for their communities. It is a changing world.

In the summer it was lovely to celebrate my 60th birthday with picnics in the garden – an event for our families, and another for our congregations. My plan was to build on all these events through the autumn

and into 2023 – to do a decent job of rebuilding after Covid, to get back some of those we have lost, to restart our children's work, and to know that two parish churches do have a role in the 21st century (even if the role is very different to what it was a decade ago).

But sometimes our plans do not work out. A blood test led to a scan, which led to a colonoscopy, which led to a diagnosis of cancer, which led to stopping work and a major operation, and now I am about to start chemo and have applied for early retirement. I can't really put into words how I feel about all this – angry, frustrated, guilty, fed up ...

In the middle of it all is the love and care we both feel from all of you, and the amazing way you have stepped up and continued to serve our communities. Thank you. Caroline is (as always) the most wonderful church administrator I have ever had. I've already praised our Wardens. The Readers and the retired clergy have been great. The Deanery and Diocese have supported us and will continue to do so. As we've moved into 2023, I have gained a Curate – welcome and thank you Rachael.

I spent an hour sitting in hospital yesterday reading a railway magazine while I waited for blood results to come back. Preserved railways are struggling. The costs of energy have sky-rocketed, whether that's coal for the locos or electricity for the buildings. People are more cautious after Covid, less likely to come out for an event and spend money. Money is tight – people don't have the spare cash to spend on a day out or to support a charity, even if they love their local steam train, they are less inclined to donate towards it. Every railway seems to be struggling to find volunteers, the age profile does not help, nor the changing face of legislation and Society – you cannot run your railway in the same way you did a decade ago. Those who manage our railways are saying that life is harder now than it was during Covid – those dreams of getting back to normal are simply dreams.

It all seems so familiar – all of these problems are problems the church has too. We coped with Covid, but normality has never returned. I am not the sort of Vicar who regularly quotes Scripture at you, but "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14.6) is as true today as it has always been. It is our job, our mission, our purpose, to proclaim that to the world. Proclaim it with joy, with love, with tears (when it all gets a bit much), with laughter – proclaim it together – and proclaim it in faith. May God bless us all. Thank you.