

The Parish of St Edmund, Allestree



St Edmund's Church Allestree, Derby. From a pen and ink drawing by Frank Tissington

2024 Trustees' Report and Accounts and Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2025

Sunday 6th April 2025

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 2024 (see page 4)
4. Election of Churchwardens

Followed by:

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2024 APCM (see page 5)
3. Presentation of the Electoral Roll
4. Election of Laity Representatives
5. Annual Report of the PCC (see page 8)
7. Financial Report (see page 10)
8. Appointment of Auditor
9. Presentation of other Reports (see page 16)
10. Churchwardens' Report (see page 21)
11. Parish Priest Report (see page 23)
12. Opportunity for questions

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

28th April 2024

Present: the Revd Rachael Brooks, Chair.

Parishioners: 40

1. Welcome

Revd Rachael Brooks welcomed everyone and opened the meeting in prayer.

2. Apologies

Steve and Jane Burton, Margaret Western, Margaret Pearson, Michèle and John Aspinall.

3. Minutes of the Churchwardens' Meeting on 23rd April 2023

The minutes were read and accepted as a true record (proposed Kate Smith).

4. Election of Churchwardens

Paul Smith was willing to stand for a further year. He was nominated by Kate Smith and seconded by Geoff Bailey.

Ann Miller was also willing to stand as a warden. She was proposed by Paul Smith and again seconded by Geoff Bailey.

Both nominations were made on the correct , duly completed.

There being no other nominations, no vote was held, and Paul & Ann were elected.

5. Land Charity Accounts

Accounts had been prepared and included in the meeting pack. Chris Jack explained that expenditure was nil while income was included in the main church accounts rather than here. We had however been advised that accounts were needed as the charity still existed. Moreover, the land owned needed to be shown as an asset until such time an ownership was transferred to the PCC (work ongoing and held up by delays at the Land Registry). Chris and Paul thanked Richard Flatman for compiling and presenting these accounts.

This concluded the Churchwardens' meeting.

Acting PCC Secretary - Paul Smith

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

28th April 2024

1. Apologies

Steve and Jane Burton, Margaret Western, Margaret Pearson, Michèle and John Aspinall.

2. Minutes of 2023 APCM

The minutes were reviewed. Steve Burton had requested the following amendment: delete "Steve Burton asked about the £3,500 donation to St Nicholas to supports their work with young people and why St Edmund's hasn't seen any young people" and replace with his actual words: "Steve Burton queried the donation of £3,500 to St Nicholas Allestree to support their work with young people. He asked on what basis it was given and how this benefits St Edmund's, and moves us forward in encouraging and engaging with young people in our church and parish". Subject to this change, last year's minutes were accepted as a true and fair record: proposed Kate Smith, seconded Richard Wood.

3. Presentation of the Electoral Roll

Matt Cooper reported that the roll has 111 (2023: 124) names in total. Interestingly, more now lived outside rather than in the parish: 40 in and 71 outside.

We remembered with love and affection Ken Eunson who passed away during the year.

Rachael thanked Matt for updating the roll.

4. Election of Lay PCC Members

Paul explained that there was no election for deanery synod members as this was on a three-year cycle and was done last year.

As for lay members, Michèle Aspinall and Madeleine Fullerton had stood down in the course of the year for personal reasons; Madeleine had expressed interest in rejoining. Thelma Thompson, who had acted as PCC secretary, wished to stand down from that role but would like to remain a PCC member. Richard Flatman and Matt Cooper had both come to the end of their terms but also wished to remain on the PCC.

As Madeleine, Thelma, Richard and Matt had all been duly proposed and seconded, they were elected as lay representatives.

PCC membership for 2024/2025 will therefore be:

Associate Minister	the Revd Rachael Brooks (ex officio)
Churchwardens	Paul Smith (ex officio)
	Ann Miller (ex officio)
Parish Safeguarding Officers	Louise Whittaker
	Madeleine Fullerton
Treasurer	Chris Jack
Secretary	Vacant

Other Lay representatives

Geoff Bailey

Matthew Cooper

Richard Flatman
David Halliwell
Elizabeth Jack

Deanery Synod Representatives

Mark Halliwell (ex officio)
David Redfern (ex officio)
Richard Wood (ex officio)

Retiring members at APCM 2025

None

Retiring members at APCM 2026

Geoff Bailey, David Halliwell, Christopher Jack, Elizabeth Jack, Louise Whittaker.

5. Annual Report of the PCC

The report is contained within the 2024 APCM booklet.

Mark Halliwell commented that it was a good report and commended it to the meeting (seconded, Matt Cooper).

6. Financial Report

The full report is contained within the 2024 APCM booklet.

Chris Jack commented that the accounts showed a surplus for the 2023 calendar year. He warned that this was only the case because of legacies. Planned giving had reduced, costs increased and day-to-day, we spent more than we received.

The hall operated at a profit.

Our main cost was the Parish Share which had been paid in full (many churches did not do this). The amount requested for 2024 was considerably less, a most welcome reduction.

Monies received from the Churchwardens' charities had been reclassified as endowment funds. This meant the income could be used but not the capital, in line with the manner in which those now defunct charities had been set up.

Pay/benefits for the PCC's two employees, Caroline Audley and Tony Delaney, had been reviewed and increased.

In closing, he thanked the finance committee (Richard Flatman, Mark Halliwell and Paul Smith) for their support.

Mark Halliwell pointed out that the donation to Malawi seemed larger than those made to other PCC charities. This was because the amount stated included donations both from the PCC and from a parishioner.

Rachael thanked Chris for all his hard work in preparing the accounts and providing leadership on financial matters.

7. Appointment of Auditor/Independent Financial Examiner

Peter Hilton was willing to act as the independent financial examiner again next year. His appointment was proposed by Chris Jack and seconded by Geoff Bailey.

8. Presentation of Committee Reports

Committee reports are printed in full in the APCM booklet. Extra comments are recorded below.

Children's Work – thanks to all those who have contributed to making the church more welcoming to children and young people.

Baby and Toddler – thanks to Michèle Aspinall, Anne Cogley and Caroline Audley for their contribution here. Anna Oldknow is now also supporting this work, funded by the PCC.

Flower Group – Rachael thanked Rosemary Yates on behalf of the whole team of arrangers for all they did to make the church look beautiful, particularly on special occasions such as the Coronation, Remembrance, Christmas and Easter. Rosemary responded that new members would be very welcome to join the group.

Bookworms – Cyra is running this since the Barham's moved to Hexham. She underlined that it was a team effort, also that it was open to anyone in the parish.

Events Committee – Elizabeth reported that the group had met recently and many great ideas for events had been tabled.

Food Bank – Paul reminded everyone how much this was needed and appreciated. More volunteers are needed to take the food collection to the Hope Centre in Derby on a monthly basis. Thanks to everyone who supports this.

Luncheon Club – Rachael thanked Anne Madge, and all involved in providing the regular lunches which are greatly appreciated by those who attend.

Handbell Group – Gill Flatman gave an update. Paul Smith thanked the group for supporting Derbyshire Blood Bikes at what has become a regular Christmas event at Park Farm. Contributions to the Blood Bikes were definitely enhanced by the group's playing.

Groundforce – Steve and Jane Burton had sent their apologies, but Rachael made a point of thanking them and the whole team for their regular work to keep the churchyard looking neat and tidy.

Safeguarding – Louise noted the support provided by the Diocese and urged anyone with any query or concern to speak to Madeleine or herself. Rachael thanked them for all they do to help us stay fully compliant. Mark Halliwell underlined the role of the Deanery Synod in this and other issues. It was a two-way forum in which we could learn from sister churches and also contribute ideas and solutions, as we had done with concerns about elderly congregation members being at risk from cybercrime and other scams. He also felt it was good that a synod report was a standing item on our PCC agenda.

9. Churchwarden's Report

The report was printed in full in the APCM booklet. Paul commented particularly on the support we had received to keep going during the vacancy, which had involved many both internally and externally. He celebrated some particular great moments, including the Bishop's Badge service at the cathedral and also the series of special events and services over Christmas which had seen record numbers attend our church.

He also referred to the large amount of maintenance work done to keep both the church and hall operational. He reported on repairs to the tower clock and the work led by Geoff Bailey to improve the hall's heat insulation. He closed by thanking Kate Smith for her constant support.

10. Associate Minister's Report

This was printed in full in the APCM booklet. Rachael explained that her placement last year had helped greatly in moving into her new role and she thanked everyone for the warm welcome extended to her and Andrew. She especially praised the contribution made by the Revd John Rice. He had given her great support and had been

instrumental in making church visits attractive to groups such as the Allestree Beavers. John was given a round of applause. She also thanked our organist David Redfern for his regular playing and flexibility.

There were several baptisms scheduled for the next few months. These would as far as possible be held within the context of regular morning worship and would be a great opportunity to extend a welcome to young families who do not currently attend. Alex Greig suggested cake with coffee in the hall would be a great way to build on the welcome in church.

Rachael also mentioned that there would be more cross-parish working in the future, for example the Ascension Service at St Matthew's would be promoted in all four churches.

Questions

Elizabeth Jack pointed out that the vicarage was now occupied again and queried if we could still use Primrose's shed for books and food bank items. Paul confirmed he had raised this with both the Diocesan property team and new occupant (Revd Adele Barker); we could continue to use the shed until further notice.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Acting PCC Secretary - Paul Smith

Presentation of the Electoral Roll

Election of PCC Lay Members

PCC Report for Jan 2024 – Dec 2024 – Paul Smith (Church warden & Acting PCC Secretary)

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for co-operating with the incumbent to promote the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical.

Members are Trustees of the church's affairs, buildings and resources. Some are ex officio (clergy, readers, wardens and deanery synod reps), the rest are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The PCC can also co-opt up to two members.

PCC MEMBERSHIP FOR 2024 was:

Clergy – the Revd Rachael Brooks

Churchwardens - Paul Smith and Ann Miller

Parish Safeguarding Officers - Louise Whittaker and Madeleine Fullerton

Treasurer - Chris Jack

Secretary (Acting) - Paul Smith

Readers – none (following retirement of Deborah Simpson)

ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE PCC

Thelma Thompson

Geoff Bailey

Matthew Cooper

Richard Flatman

Madeleine Fullerton

David Halliwell

Chris Jack

Elizabeth Jack

Louise Whittaker

DEANERY SYNOD REPRESENTATIVES

Mark Halliwell

David Redfern

Richard Wood

Retiring members at APCM 2025:

David Halliwell, Thelma Thompson and Richard Wood

Retiring members at APCM 2026:

Geoff Bailey, Christopher Jack, Elizabeth Jack, Louise Whittaker.

PCC meetings take place every other month, preceded, the previous week, by meetings of the Standing Committee (SC). The SC sets the agenda for the main PCC meeting and also makes decisions on its behalf where necessary (e.g. issues too urgent to wait for the next meeting). The PCC has a number of sub-committees, notably finance, fabric, events and worship.

All meetings open and close with prayer and are minuted. A typical agenda is:

Apologies for absence

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising (where not otherwise covered by the agenda)
2. Safeguarding
3. Treasurer's report, including year-to-date financial position
4. Wardens' report, including worship/church life, fabric and hall
5. Clergy report
6. Looking forward (upcoming events)
7. Deanery synod report (if synod has met since previous meeting)
8. Any other business
9. What have we done to further God's Kingdom (review of what the meeting has achieved)

Issues the PCC has focused on this year include:

- * Developing our programme of **worship and special events** so that we retain existing congregation members while strengthening our outreach to the local community, and especially its children, young people and families.
- * Keeping **safeguarding** policies up-to-date, and making sure people are properly trained (and, where required, DBS-checked) and that information (e.g. on reporting a concern) is readily available both in and outside the church and hall. Organisations that can help, and their contact numbers, are now mentioned in every issue of the parish magazine.
- * Maintaining the **church fabric, as well as the churchyard and the hall**, to the highest possible standard. In November 2024, we had the five-yearly (“Quinquennial”) church inspection by our architects, Smith & Roper.
- * Pursuing projects to **save energy and reduce costs**, notably consideration of new heating systems for the church and the hall.
- * Ensuring the church operates on a **sound financial footing**, with all assets under the Treasurer’s overview.
- * Ensuring that our **employees** have up-to-date terms and conditions and are properly remunerated.

PCC members also took part in a series of special meetings to define the direction of our church, focusing on developing our outreach to families in our area while continuing to meet the needs of our existing congregation.

My thanks to all current and past members, without whose help the PCC could not be effective. Special thanks to Ann Miller, who joined me as warden following the 2024 APCM, the Revd Rachael Brooks, who has unstintingly encouraged her wardens, and to Geoff Bailey, who has been a constant support in the management/maintenance of our church and hall buildings.

Accounts for 2024 and Treasurers Report for 2025 APCM – Chris Jack (Treasurer)

As before the accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, and I am grateful to Peter Hilton, who has examined them. The accounts and Peter’s examination certificate are attached.

Receipts and Payments

The comments below are intended to summarise and explain some of the numbers in the accounts.

Summary

The Receipts and Payments summary show that in 2024 we had a cash shortfall of £4, 585.

Our investments appreciated in 2024 by a total of £16,475.

Giving

Overall, our giving to the church rose by about £4,000, including tax recovered from Gift Aid. This included a small increase in planned, regular giving. We received no legacies in 2024.

Bank Interest

About one third of our interest comes from the Churchwarden’s Endowment fund and is therefore Restricted to expenditure on church fabric.

Other income

This is mainly recovery of office costs, including a proportion of Caroline's pay, from St Matthew's. As we now have an incumbent, we are no longer able to claim costs of visiting clergy from the diocese.

Sawrey Hill Field

Registration of the field has finally been accepted by the Land Registry. Now this has been set up we need to engage with the diocesan registrar on the future legal ownership of the land. The annual rent income from the field (£700) is included in Other Income.

Church Utility costs

The contract for energy supplies to the church expired mid-year we were able to negotiate significantly lower costs. This resulted in a £2,000 reduction in these costs over the year even though the reduced rates were only applicable for 6 months. The new contract is also classified as 'green' in that electricity is from renewable sources.

Cost of Trading

Cost of trading, which includes most costs not directly associated with church activities, fell in 2024 as there was no major maintenance work in the hall, and fuel prices were reduced as mentioned above. As a result, the hall made an operating profit of about £10,000. To reflect this, we were able to lower our hourly hire rate to the pre-school group.

Outward giving

We were able to maintain our level of outward giving both that made from PCC funds and donations to specific charities given at services, totalling almost £5,000. The details are as follows:

Age UK	£450
Zane (Zimbabwe Emergency)	£450
RNLI	£581
Padley Centre	£500
Embrace the Middle East	£500
Malawi Student	£455
Christian Aid	£620
Children's Society	£225
Foursquare: Hope Centre	£500
Railway Mission	£450
Tynedale Hospice	£182
Cardiac Arrest in the Young	£20

Common Fund

The Common Fund request was reduced by over £10,000 compared to 2023, reflecting reduced attendance and electoral roll numbers. However, it still remains our largest annual cost. We continue to pay the full amount requested by the diocese, which many parishes do not, and the PCC has agreed that we should continue to do so in 2025.

Salaries and Honoraria

Payments to Caroline and Tony constitute our second highest and fastest growing expense but I think we all agree that we could not operate without them. When Caroline helps with the toddler group, that portion of her pay comes from a legacy.

Agency receipts and payments

These arise whenever we accept money on behalf of someone else. Most commonly this is when we are paid for occasional offices (weddings and funerals), and this includes moneys we must pass on to the diocese and to other people who are involved: verger, organist, visiting priest etc. This will always appear as a group of creditors as we pass on these payments in arrears.

Church Hall valuation

As in previous years the valuation of the hall has been held constant because of the covenant which restricts the use of the land to 'ecclesiastical purposes'. However, the hall is insured for well over £1 million.

Looking forward

As stated above we made a cash loss of about £4,500 last year. This compared with a surplus of £7,000 in 2023, but that included a sizeable legacy without which the 2023 would have had a deficit of £27,000, so aside from the legacy there was a considerable improvement in our cash flow, for reasons discussed above. The church remains in a very healthy financial position, with nearly £13,000 per annum coming from bank interest. This figure is important because if we choose to spend some of our capital, we will clearly lose some of this income.

It is worth noting that over half of our cash balance is in Restricted Funds, i.e. they have been given to the church with limitations on how we can spend it, and of these about 80% (some £90,000) are restricted to the maintenance and improvement of St Edmund's church fabric.

The PCC is considering several improvements to the church and hall, the most significant of which are changes to our heating systems, as the boilers in both buildings reach the end of their working lives. From a financial perspective it is important that these changes substantially reduce the running costs, although environmental and other factors need to be considered. We are not allowed to install new fossil fuel-based heating systems in the church.

Currently we can claim back VAT for church repairs under the government Listed Places of Worship (LPW) scheme. The Scheme is run by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and is funded until 31 March 2026, but there is some information that it may not be extended beyond that date.

The PCC has agreed that we continue to make donations from our funds to external charities of £4,000 in 2025, excluding collections taken for specific charities taken at services.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meets irregularly and usually by Zoom. We find that most of our business can be conducted by email or in person at church. I am very grateful for the support from each of them, without which the treasurer's job would be much harder or impossible.

St Edmund's, Allestree 2024 Accounts

St Edmunds, Allestree 2024

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Totals 2024	Totals 2023
	£	£	£	£	
RECEIPTS					
1 & 2 Planned Giving	35,863			35,863	34,082
3 Collections at services	4,283			4,283	5,159
4 Other voluntary giving and donations	7,766			7,766	6,497
6 Tax recovered	10,549			10,549	8,494
Total from donors	58,461	0	0	58,461	54,232
7 Legacies	0				34,395
8 Grants	812			812	
9 Fund raising	260		423	683	582
10 Bank Interest	8,179		4,702	12,881	9,841
11 Service Fees	10,054			10,054	6,152
12 Trading Income: Hall	26,026			26,026	25,424
12 Trading Income: Magazine and book sales	1,563			1,563	1,691
13 Other income	10,716			10,716	17,156
13c Agency income	10,581			10,581	6,713
Total Other income	68,191	0	5,125	73,316	101,954
TOTAL RECEIPTS	126,652	0	5,125	131,777	156,186
PAYMENTS					
17 Fund raising	225			225	
18 Outward giving	1,128	3,805		4,933	4,539
19 Common Fund - Parish	43,496			43,496	54,527
20 Salaries and Honoraria	27,956		1,138	29,094	26,245
21 Clergy expenses	2,509			2,509	4,968
22 Mission giving	880			880	-
23 Church Running Expenditure	12,241		4,500	16,741	13,893
24 Church utilities	8,586			8,586	10,524
25 Cost of Trading	19,655		589	20,244	27,297
26 Governance	458			458	361
99 Other costs	759			759	1,545
Agency Payments	8,437			8,437	5,279
TOTAL PAYMENTS	126,330	3,805	6,227	136,362	149,178
Excess of Receipts over Payments	322	-3,805	-1,102	-4,585	7,008
OPENING CASH BALANCES	125,904	5	112,153	238,062	231,054
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS	-3,800	3,800			
CLOSING CASH BALANCES	122,426	0	111,051	233,477	238,062

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Totals 2024	Totals 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
CASH FUNDS					
Cash and cheques on hand	0				1,233
CAF current	6,408	0		6,408	7,914
CAF deposit	19,399		111,051	130,450	137,166
CCLA deposit	96,619			96,619	91,749
TOTAL	122,426	0	111,051	233,477	238,062
INVESTMENT FUNDS VALUATION					
CCLA CBF account				259,389	246,790
CCLA CBF account (Endowment from Churchwarden's Land charity)				173,246	169,370
CHURCH HALL				114,000	114,000
CREDITORS					
Agency				2,144	1,434

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 2024, 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:

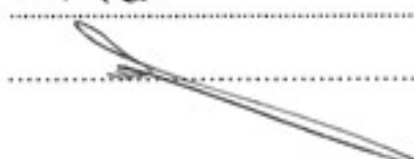
- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Acthave not been 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 9/2/25

Signed



PCC Committee and other Group/Activity Reports

Children's Work – Please see Rev. Rachael Brooks report.

Church Magazine – Fiona Fraser, Chris Willis & Claire Pegg

Fiona Fraser (all the work). Chris Willis (distribution and proof reading), Claire Pegg (proof reading).

The Parish Magazine continues to be produced throughout the year, there being 11 publications in a 12-month period with a double issue for December/January. The number of copies printed by John E Wright in Derby is 180 at the moment, a slight reduction on previous years because demand has fallen slightly. Of these, 112 are hand delivered by a team of 14 devoted helpers, 12 are posted, 20 placed for sale at CTD News at Blenheim Parade, 5 at the Pharmacy and 1 free copy goes to the Library at Park Farm Centre. The remainder are placed in the Church. The price for the magazine is £1 per copy, but the people who have their copy delivered pay £10 for the year, provided they pay in advance. The magazine 'year' runs from 1st July to 31st June in any one year, so requests for annual payments usually appear in the May and June issues – with reminders later as needed.

Many thanks are due to Fiona, who does the lion's share of the work needed to produce the 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 most holidays. We also welcome Ballet on a Monday (term time) as well The Tuneless Choir. Studio 86 (a dance class, term time) and Derventio choir hire the hall on a Tuesday. Brownies and Guides are in on a Wednesday (term time). On a Thursday we currently have a Reki class who have been using the Conference Room. Fridays tend to be free. Ann Miller's choirs hire the hall fairly regularly, but this tends to be at the weekend when we also have parties. We are grateful to them all for this invaluable income.

Thank you as always to Tony for helping with many aspects of the hall from moving chairs and tables, 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 continues to meet on a Thursday during term time from 10-11.30am. We have a number of regulars but often have new faces too. I don't ask people to book as this can be stressful for parents and plans also change so some weeks are quieter than others, but some weeks are very busy. I welcome childminders who tend to bring multiple children. I don't think it's right to exclude them like some groups do.

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

Thank you as ever to Tony for helping week after week to get all of the toys in and out of the cupboard, as well as moving the tables and chairs, I couldn't do it without him. I definitely notice when he's on holiday! Huge thanks also to Michèle who does a wonderful job helping to make teas and coffees, wash up at the end so there is now nothing for me to take home and chatting to the Mums and Grans, making them feel welcome.

Flower Group - Michèle Aspinall

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 follow the wishes of families 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 whilst still providing flowers at a more competitive price than some florists. Unfortunately, 2024 saw a marked drop in the number of weddings celebrated in the church. This had a significant impact on our funds. Nonetheless, 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.

In September, as part of our work in the community, Baby and Toddler Group, Preschool, Brownies, Guides and Rainbows helped us to create displays for Allestree Scarecrow Festival.

The church flower group 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 "normal" weeks are particularly 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 at the heart of our community.

Choir - Elizabeth Jack

The choir continues to sing regularly at 2 morning and 2 Evensongs a month plus several joint services with St. Matthew's choir and their new leader, Tim Capes. In addition, we organised an afternoon Epiphany celebration and led the hymn singing at Rachael and Sarah's licensing service. We were honoured to sing at Chris and Charlie Pegg's wedding – mother of the bridegroom joined the choir to sing anthems and descants! We sang at a RSCM Diocesan Festival Evensong at Chesterfield Parish Church, along with over 100 others, ably conducted by Alex Binns from Derby Cathedral.

Chris and I celebrated 50 years of singing with St. Edmund's choir in September with a wonderful Evensong involving a large choir of friends who have sung and continue to sing with us. We were delighted to welcome Hugh Morris, Director of the RSCM who not only joined us for the presentation of a certificate but played the organ as well.

We sang at a moving afternoon All Souls service at the beginning of November followed by the annual Remembrance Sunday service the following week. The Advent Procession with both choirs were at Darley Abbey and the successful traditional carol service with an augmented choir took place the Sunday before Christmas.

I am, as ever, indebted to my wonderful group of singers and thank them most sincerely for their total commitment. Thanks too to David Redfern for his regular, week in, week out organ playing, to Tom Corfield for his choral Evensong accompaniments and to the small band of extra singers who help us out from time to time.

Bookworms - Cyra Buxton, Jane Burton and Anne Madge

Bookworms has continued to meet monthly throughout the year in St Edmund's choir vestry and currently has 9 members, from both St Edmund's and St Matthew's parishes.

The new method of selecting the books to read introduced last year, whereby each member takes it in turn to put forward a book title for discussion, has proved to be very popular. It has provided a wide variety of titles, in different genres, and historical and geographical settings, ranging from those remembered from more youthful days up to very recent publications.

Members continue to enjoy both being introduced to new authors and/or titles, and the opportunity to share their life and literary experiences with fellow booklovers.

Events Committee – Elizabeth Jack

We met several times over the course of 2024 and, in addition to organising refreshments for many services, we have been planning an exciting range of events for the future as we feel we are not just providers of tea and coffee but aim to continue raising funds for the church with our ideas.

The pancake evening was a great success with the raffle, organised by Mary Pollett, raising a great deal of money. The pie and chips Harvest Supper was well received but with small numbers and we shall be consulting with people to ask their preferences for future suppers.

I am indebted to the committee of Michele Aspinall, Mary Pollett, Gill Flatman and Diane Bakhda who are wonderful to work with and full of bright ideas and enthusiasm. Long may they continue!

Food Bank – Paul Smith

As in previous years, we have **supported the Hope Centre (Curzon Street)** with monthly donations of groceries and toiletries. These are collected just after the first Sunday of the month (food bank Sunday) and are then taken to Curzon Street by one of our team of volunteers. Special thanks to the Revd John Rice, Chris & Elizabeth Jack, and Chris Willis for doing this on a regular basis.

In 2024, John stood down from his role, so one or even more replacement volunteers would now be most welcome. As with any other enterprise, the work is less if shared and we could really do with a couple **more people** to help with this most valuable work. The more names we have on the rota, the less often your turn comes round! You don't need a large car and help with loading/unloading can be readily arranged. Please speak to me if you would like to join our team.

It continues to be shameful that, in our wealthy city of Derby, **so many need to use, and indeed rely on, food banks**. I greatly value this work which directly involves our church in helping the needy right on our doorstep. Thanks again to all volunteers, and to you who regularly donate substantial quantities of groceries and toiletries.

We have **discontinued the use of Primrose's Shed** as a depot for contributions, so please do bring them to church on, or within a day or so of, our food bank Sundays, always the first Sunday of the month. Don't forget to let me know if **you could help** with these deliveries, which are so much appreciated by the Hope Centre managers – and the people of Derby.

Luncheon Club – Anne Madge

We have had another successful year with a great team of volunteers to enable the club to continue to run smoothly.

This year, we have managed to keep our prices at a manageable level of £5 for a 3-course meal as well as £5 for a place on the community bus, despite rising prices. We have maintained a positive bank balance which includes a small staff fund donated by our members. We have earmarked £600 to pay for 2 free meals this year, one for our birthday in May and the other for Christmas.

We were last visited by Environmental Health in November 2023 and were again awarded the top rating of 5 stars.

Thank you to all our volunteers, the staff who help on the day and the ladies on the pudding rota. You all have a very important contribution to make for this to continue to be a happy place for isolated people to meet, socialise and share a meal together.

We currently have 34 members on our books with a very limited spare capacity on the bus. If you know anyone who would like to join us, please let us know.

Allestree Churches Together (ACT) – Rev'd Rachael Brooks

ACT as a formally continued body has been dissolved. However, Holiday At Home happened successfully in summer 2024.

Handbell Group – Gill Flatman

We have had a successful and enjoyable year, practising in the choir vestry, under the leadership of Bryan Clarke. During the year, two of our members were hospitalised and Margaret Clarke is no longer able to join us for our weekly practices. However, I am delighted to report that Janice Johnson, our former leader, has returned to the group as a ringing member.

Prior to Christmas '24 we rang our Christmas Carols at Park Farm in support of Blood Bikes. We look forward to welcoming you again this year on Saturday 13th December. Please come and support us and of course, Blood Bikes! At the invitation of Derby Music Club, we played at St John's Church, Bridge St and finally in our own Church prior to The Nine Lessons and Carols.

Socially, we meet regularly at Hudson's Garden Centre for coffee on a Saturday morning. We have just enjoyed our Spring Lunch at the Red Cow, where a number of members continue to socialise after our Monday evening practices.

This year we had an extended winter break and returned to enjoy lighter evenings.

Groundforce – Steve & Jane Burton

The St Edmund's Groundforce team continues to meet once a month to maintain both the churchyard and church hall grounds. It consists of a loyal team of about 10 members from both within St Edmund's congregation and the wider community.

Over the past year due to the various storms, we have suffered damage to several more trees in the churchyard which, although Derby City Council has made the trees safe, has necessitated clearing a considerable amount of fallen timber from the graveyard.

There has been further work trying to repair the worst of the damage badgers have done foraging for food and we have been gently trying to discourage them from further activity. Unfortunately, they are continuing to dig up turf in multiple locations within the churchyard.

We have ensured that the flower border adjacent to the church entrance is cared for, and weeds growing immediately adjacent to the curtilage of the church building have been removed. Ivy which was beginning to inundate some gravestones and trees has been cut back, and the hedge adjacent to the Red Cow's outside seating area has been supplemented with holly and hawthorn saplings to reinforce the boundary.

At the bottom of the churchyard the three new woodpiles which we created last year have been added to and they continue to provide a habitat for small mammals and insects. Access to graves in this area generally has been improved by removing both some of the overhanging branches from the large leylandii hedge, and also large quantities of fallen leaves which were completely covering the graves.

Apart from this, dead flowers have been regularly cleared from graves, and dead leaves cleared to keep graves exposed thereby enabling the grass to grow and the spring bulbs to thrive and be visible.

In the church hall grounds, we have continued to tidy the borders, planted out some shrubs and groundcover plants in the border opposite Playgroup's outdoor area to help to re-dress some of the damage caused by the replacement of the fence. We have also coppiced some of the hazel between the car park and the road, allowing more natural light to come in and reduce the stress on the boundary wall.

A current long-term project is to ensure that gravestones in the churchyard which have become obscured by vegetation are uncovered. We have made a start this year by clearing the brambles, self-seeded holly, ash saplings and scrub from the graves closest to the southern boundary wall.

There is always a conflict between facilitating access to and caring for the gravestones, and removing the brambles, nettles and holly, etc which provide a valuable food source for wildlife. So, as some sort of mitigation, we have sown a wild meadow seed mix in the cleared areas surrounding some of these gravestones and wait to see how successful this will be.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the Groundforce team for their willingness to turn out in all sorts of weather and the valuable contribution they make to keeping the church grounds in good order.

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

As the Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) 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 Safeguarding policy 'Promoting a Safer Church'. We remain dedicated to maintaining 'Best Practice' in parish safeguarding. Although there is often something that will crop up for us to sort and keep on top of, we are confident that everything is up to date or in the process of becoming so. This year we have updated all of the individual role descriptions and risk assessments for the specific groups within our parish and made them consistent with the latest Diocesan recommended format. We updated our Recruitment of ex-offenders' policy in accordance with the Diocesan template received from Church House and the Safeguarding Code of Conduct, forwarded to us by the Diocese has also been given to and signed by all individuals who hold a volunteer or paid role at Saint Edmund's Church. We continue to fulfil all of the requirements of the Annual Safeguarding Audit (the 'Dashboard') and following our involvement in the

successful trialling of the second Dashboard Hub (as mentioned in last year's report), all our safeguarding training results are now part of this online Hub.

In our specific roles as PSO's we continue to ensure that the relevant groups who provide services to the parish receive up to date safeguarding training. All training for role holders within Saint Edmund's Church is currently almost up to date and there are only a couple of volunteers, including a new vergers who have completed the Basic safeguarding training course, but still have the Foundation course before them.

All of St. Edmund's role holders have up to date DBS certification in place and the online Updating Service that everyone has now subscribed to has continued to ensure that many of our DBS certificates have been renewed with relative ease over the last few months.

As PSO's we very much appreciate that despite the concerns of many within our congregation regarding safeguarding in the wider church, most of our volunteers understand that we must continue nevertheless to show ourselves to be open to all scrutiny and checks. The safety, trust and support of all our church members and of the wider community wishing to belong to official groups within our churches is of paramount importance to us.

In the light of what has been brought to light within the Church of England in autumn 2024, it looks like there will be future changes and extra support in parish safeguarding that will be gradually introduced.

The Church of England is strengthening its safeguarding practices and policies which will include both a more regional approach to allow for cross-learning and sharing best practice as well as providing more support to us PSOs at a local level.

Since the last Annual Safeguarding report, no Safeguarding issues have arisen in our parish.

As we conclude this report, we would like to remind everyone that the parish magazine now provides contact numbers and website details for individuals to refer to in varying cases of concern and also for those who are interested, a copy of the Parish Safeguarding handbook 'Promoting a Safer Church' brings into one place the key safeguarding responsibilities for parishes. 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.

As the Parish Safeguarding Officers, we are keen to support the members of our parish and would just like to reiterate that if anybody has any safeguarding concerns then please do not hesitate to contact us. Our details are on the back page of the parish magazine and on the posters on the church noticeboards.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with Rachael and Sarah on our Safeguarding responsibilities in the months ahead and we will continue to report back to the PCC at each meeting.

Churchwardens' Report – Paul Smith & Ann Miller

Cause to Celebrate

We continue to have much to celebrate and be grateful for. Highlights of 2024 include:

- The appointment and licensing of the Revds Sarah and Rachael to our church and our three sister parishes.
- The award of the Bishop's Badge to Gill & Richard Flatman, and to Richard Wood, at a special service in the Cathedral in September, recognising their long service and commitment to St Edmund's.

- The monthly churchyard working parties involving our Groundforce volunteers. We regularly receive favourable comments from friends and neighbours on how neat and well-kept this area is.
- Work to make the tower area more attractive to visiting children. This has involved the placing of a storage cupboard to keep toys and other children's materials tidy. This was gifted in memory of Janet Hogben, a fitting legacy to a former Sunday School teacher.
- The full immersion baptism of Jason Carnell on 30 June.
- A most-moving Remembrance Service, led by the Revd Rachael Brooks and attended by our City Councillors and HM Deputy Lord Lieutenant, as well as by our friends from the Royal British Legion. With some careful planning and a bit of fine tuning on the day, we hit the hour of eleven on the nail, just as the clock struck. We also heard the Last Post and Reveille played with panache and confidence. Other special services included our Harvest celebration and All Souls' commemoration.
- A wonderful series of services through Advent and Christmas, which saw record numbers attend church and also allowed significant donations to the Children's Society and to Christian Aid. Huge thanks to all involved, and especially to those who participated in the two very well-attended crib services on Christmas Eve.

Choir and organist

We are blessed to have a small but talented choir able to sing a large repertoire of church music. Many thanks to our singers for their commitment and devotion, and especially to Elizabeth Jack for all she does to plan the music and lead the choir. We are also very fortunate in our regular organist, David Redfern, who is able to play such a wide range of music and who is always so friendly and flexible. We have also welcomed visiting organists on many occasions and we thank them too for their wonderful contribution to our worship.

Welcomers etc

This report would be incomplete without mention of our team of welcomers, lesson readers and prayer leaders. We feel it is vital that everyone who enters our church for a service is properly greeted and made to feel very welcome, and we have a wonderful team of people who do this, week in and week out. Not everyone feels comfortable standing up to read from scripture or lead our prayers, but we are again fortunate to have a team of people who do this as well as it could possibly be done. Whether welcomer, reader or prayer leader (and some are all three) you are a key part of our church life and your ministry is so much appreciated.

Fabric

The management of the church itself, along with the churchyard and the heavily-used church hall, create a very demanding workload. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who regularly decorate the church with beautiful flower arrangements, and who carry out essential maintenance such as bulb-changing, and keeping roofs, gutters, downpipes and gullies clear. This particular work is vital to prevent water ingress into the building, and consequent rot, mould and similar costly and unsightly damage. Other work deserving mention includes:

- Gaining planning permission for the move of Primrose's shed.
- Producing manuals containing practical information on the hall and church buildings.
- The replacement of the choir vestry toilet floor in November.
- Discussions with HM Prison and Probation service about possible work to help the church.

- The setting up of a heating group to examine and recommend options for the replacement of the church heating system.
- The quinquennial inspection by our architects Smith & Roper.
- The carrying out of the quinquennial test and inspection of the church wiring.
- Deep cleaning of the hall meeting room carpet.
- Work to improve the hot water supply to the hall kitchen sinks, and to improve the drainage from the same.
- Refurbishment and repainting of the red church noticeboard facing St Edmund's Close following the appointment of the Revds Rachael and Sarah.
- The fitting of a meter to the church water supply, meaning that we are only charged for the small quantity of water we actually use, instead of paying a flat rate based on average consumption. Thanks to Chris Jack for instigating and executing this project.
- Annual inventory check done on 11 April.

Other Work Completed and Ongoing

Work has included the necessary checks of fire, electrical and gas safety as well as numerous running repairs and some specialist work to keep our historic tower clock in good running order. At the same time, we are seeking to move towards net Zero (and manage our energy costs) with ongoing projects to improve insulation, evaluate alternative heating methods and make our church lighting both more effective and more efficient.

We continue to have an issue with the retaining wall to the west of the church hall car park. Restricting use of the car park (to minimise the load on the wall) has stabilised the situation. We have now appointed consulting engineers to systematically monitor whether there is any further movement.

In all these, we have had the outstanding support of the Fabric Committee comprising Geoff Bailey, Richard Wood, Richard Flatman and David Halliwell, and of many other volunteers who, in so many ways, ensure our church is able to continue its rich ministry to our local community.

Parish Priest's Report – Rev'd Rachael Brooks

2024 was a year of being welcomed and finding my feet. It has been a joy to start to get to know members of the church, their family, and local people in the parish. Thank you so much to all of you for your kindness and grace to Andrew and me as we've settled in.

It has been an eventful year aside from our arrival. Peter's death in July, while anticipated, was hard. It was good to gather on that first Sunday after the news came out, thank you to those who spread the news and ferried people without transport from church to St Matthew's at short notice. It was also good to gather in church to join in the funeral via livestream, huge thankyou's to those who made the tech happen.

Nationally, we've had the impact of the Makin report and the resignation/retirement of the Archbishop of Canterbury. While this hasn't overtly affected our church services or attendance, it has had an impact on the way the church is viewed by those outside our doors. We have work to do to win back trust. I am thankful to Louise and Madeleine and PCC who endeavour to help us keep one another safe, and to all those who complete the necessary training and checks. Demonstrating our love for one another can be time-consuming and tiresome at times, but it's the right thing to do so we bear it.

Planning for the future

In the summer the four churches' PCCs joined together for an away day looking at who we are, how culture around us has changed and what that means for how we might engage with people of different ages who are open to finding out more about the God who loves and died for them. Our PCC drew up a priority list which comprised:

1. Less formality in worship to make church more accessible to new members.

We began this in coalition with St Matthew's who also have this priority, forming our cross-benefice All Age team in time for our Harvest services. The team swung into action to put on our Crib services too. More plans are afoot for 2025.

2. Pastoral outreach to Allestree families, starting with contacts from occasional offices.

2024 saw lots of funerals, baptisms and some weddings, each supported by a fabulous team who do their jobs with care. Thank you to the small but effective team who put on baptism preparation with me. The All Souls' Service was very well attended and connections were made or deepened and links made with the wonderful Luncheon Club. And our tots group is so appreciated by local families. It would be wonderful to have a couple of other people to serve God and our young families by helping wash up, or serve drinks and chat with those who come.

3. Growing our own faith and discipleship through study and prayer.

I set up a group aimed at relatively newish Christians in the autumn which was a handy learning opportunity and informed my thinking about how home groups might work here. I decided that Lent 2025 would be a good time to aim at for commencing home groups across the benefice.

Uniformed groups

We had encouraging contact with two Beavers groups in Allestree earlier in the year. It was disappointing that they didn't get involved with Christingle, perhaps in 2025. However, it was wonderful to have our Brownies and Guides involved in preparing Christingle kits and in running that service, something that we must build on in 2025.

The four parishes

My joint appointment with Rev'd Sarah Watson has led to a closer engagement with St Nick's and St Paul's. St Nick's hosted a post-service picnic in their hall in the summer which was well attended and enjoyed by all. As well as working together at the PCC away day we have encouraged joint working for our communities. A couple of us joined the Experience Easter team to deliver immersive learning to local primary, infant and junior schools and I'm very glad to report that one of our congregation has joined the youthwork team running an after-school club at St Nick's for pupils at Woodlands School.

Sarah and I have also planned for our fifth Sunday services to now be celebrated as a four rather than a two. The first joint service took place on 29th December here at St Edmund's, resulting in a very healthy congregation of 77 people, with all four churches represented. We're working together on special services too, the first one of which was the All Souls' service and advertised one-another's Advent and Christmas services. It was good to find various people going to services at different parishes according to which timings worked best for them.

Thank you

2024 provided me with a very steep learning curve and I'm very grateful to all of you for the ways you've helped me, whether by giving me information, helping me with things or simply being patient with my efforts to lead you well.

There are several groups/ people I must thank in particular:

- The choir and David Redfern for their roles in leading worship with me.

- the pastoral care team who shares my pastoral responsibilities and do so much behind the scenes to support vulnerable members of our congregation.
- I could not do my job without the various members of PCC doing theirs. I am so grateful that you take the lead on finance, the building, safeguarding and other organisational stuff, using the gifts God has given you to serve us here. Paul and Ann are such fab churchwardens to work with, bringing their own considerable gifts to lead you with me.

And finally, there are two people without whom I would have been completely stuck.

- Caroline is just the most capable, organised, thoughtful, wise administrator – Peter really picked a good one in her! The breadth of stuff that comes at her day by day really is astonishing, we've had some particularly thorny churchyard challenges to unpick this year, and she's supported me so well through it all.
- Andrew, who basically makes our home function and masterminded our move from Littleover into our vicarage, so I've been able to focus on what it means to be a parish priest here. He's a total gem, as I'm sure many of you are beginning to find out.