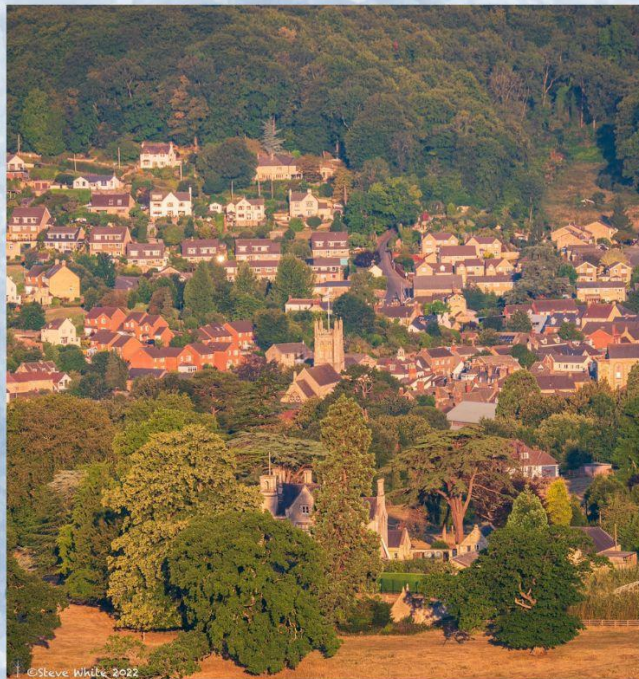


# **St James the Great, Dursley**



**APCM reports 2025**

**Ewelme Benefice**  
**Dursley Parochial Church Council**  
Registered Charity No. 1130972  
**Trustees Annual Report 2024**

Dursley Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Revd Juliet Jensen, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is specifically responsible for the churches of St James the Great Dursley (the parish church) and the Parish Centre located behind the church of St James.

### **Our Vision**

As members of the Ewelme Benefice, we will work together to share in the Diocese of Gloucester's LIFE Vision. *'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full'*.

*John 10:10*

### **Objectives and activities**

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and be part of our community. Patterns of worship are discussed by the PCC which makes suggestions on how to improve contact with everyone within the parish. We try to enable all people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; hearing about the Gospel, and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To do this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of our buildings.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding has to be a thread that runs right through our church lives, both during services and the community outreach areas - and it is everyone's responsibility, not just for one or two people to do.

The Parish Dashboard system is designed to be easy to use, I am looking forward to exploring all its capabilities to generate reports and monitor how, as a church, we approach safeguarding and other areas where need to ensure that we have the right people at the right time in the role. Clare White has found some role descriptions, and I am hoping to work with her and Juliet to ensure that people know what they are letting themselves in for when they volunteer to do something. Going forward, I am aiming to have reports ready prior to PCC meetings so that people are aware of what has been done/still needs doing to keep us

compliant and safe for all - and have the opportunity to question me about what is needed and why.

I have recently become an authorised evidence checker for DBS checks, and have just had my first disclosure back. I know that there are more due for renewal, along with any new members of the PCC, so look out for emails from me, along with training reminders.

Reminder - safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

*Heather Arnold*

*March 2025*

### **Electoral Roll 2022/23**

We had a starting figure of 157, there were 2 people to be removed because they had died during the year.

Final figure for 2022/23 was 155.

*Clare White*

*March 2025*

### **Fabric**

2024 has been a challenging year with two large projects held in abeyance pending receipt of sufficient funds. Fortunately, as the year came to an end, our financial position dramatically improved. This will enable a start to be made early in 2025 on repairs to the tower roof to make it watertight. At the same time, it is envisaged that a much needed new boiler will be installed in the coming months. It should be mentioned that many parishioners have supported this project with generous donations to the Boiler Fund.

Early in 2024, following the theft of lead from the porch roof, repairs were carried out which included the fitting of a steel roof which is working well. Refurbishment of the porch room has yet to be made. The entire work is covered by insurance.

The year saw a Quinquennial Inspection which highlighted a number of issues on which the church's architect is working on a specification of works. Included will be addressing the dampness in parts of the church, redecoration of the building, and suggestions for improvements in both the lighting and sound systems. Once estimates are available, grants will be sought.

The church's gutters and downpipes (and those of the Parish Centre) continue to be cleared twice a year.

In the Parish Centre, a new boiler is required which will form part of a project for the refurbishment of the entire premises in 2025.

During the year, The Friends of St. James was launched which has attracted a large membership.

St Mark's Church was handed back to the Gloucester Diocese during the course of the year. They are now responsible for all utility bills as well as the upkeep of the building.

*Austin Meares*

*March 2025*

## **Churchwarden's report**

Jan Vonberg was delighted when Chris Tyler was elected as Churchwarden alongside her at the APCM in May, and we are both very grateful for the support we have received from assistant wardens Austin Meares, Christine Morgan, and Caroline Marrow, and our Treasurer, Sally Pearson. We were all thrilled to welcome Rev Dr Juliet Jensen as our new Rector on 1st September at a special service of Induction (by Bishop Robert) and Installation (by Archdeacon Hilary), followed by a celebratory tea in the Parish Centre, bringing our period of vacancy to an end. We hope that Rev Juliet will enjoy a long and fruitful incumbency with us.

Annual events, such as the Agape meal, Harvest lunch, Christmas Carvery, Christmas Market, have again all taken place successfully thanks to the hard work of many volunteers, (special mention going to Ann and Clive Orchard), and we enjoyed another Live Nativity in January, directed by Barbie Davies. In July, together with our friends in the parish of Uley, Nympsfield and Owlpen, we held a 'thank you' party at St Giles for all those who had supported us by leading worship in our churches during the vacancy.

The church was without heating for the whole of 2024 and the first three months of this year, owing to a long and drawn out faculty application process for new boilers. The congregation showed remarkable stoicism and patience in enduring very uncomfortable conditions in the colder months, though some, quite understandably, felt unable to attend. Thankfully, the boilers have now been installed, and we can enjoy a warmer church.

Many thanks to our Administrator, Clare White, for supporting the work of our church in so many ways, to the PCC for faithfully discharging their duties, to Nigel Davies, Lynn James and the choir for continuing to lead our sung worship with such dedication and skill, to our Verger, Joy Pepper, and our Sacristan Sheila Gardner, to Judith Staddon and Valerie Meares for editing the Messenger magazine, to our faithful team of bell ringers, and to Tony King, George White and their team for live streaming our services. We are also indebted to Clive Orchard and his team for running the bookstall, and Gill Mather for leading the Eco Church group.

Of course, there are many others who give their time week in week out to unlock and lock up the church, tend the churchyard, clean the church, arrange flowers, serve refreshments, read lessons and intercessions, and welcome people to our services, and we are deeply grateful to all of them for their valuable contributions to the life of St James.

We have recently been reviewing the role of Churchwardens at St James, and hope in future to be able to share some of their duties and responsibilities with a wider group of people.

*Jan Vonberg*

*March 2025*

## **Achievements and Performance**

At the beginning of the year we were in vacancy. After a shortlisting meeting in February, two candidates were interviewed, and Rev Dr Juliet Jensen was invited to become our Rector. Once the Lord Chancellor's approval had been obtained, the appointment was announced in April, and Rev Juliet was inducted and installed on 1st September.

During the vacancy, PCC meetings were chaired alternately, and most effectively, by Christine Morgan and Christopher Tyler, nominated by the Lay Chair, Janet Vonberg. The Churchwardens, Associate Priest, and Licensed Readers in the Benefice met monthly, together with the Benefice Administrator and the Area Dean, to plan special services and events and deal with any issues arising. The normal pattern of church services (Holy Communion at 8am monthly and 10am weekly on Sundays and Thursdays, Morning Prayer at 9 am on Thursdays, and Choral Evensong at 6.30 pm on two Sundays a month, with Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer on Zoom on Wednesdays) was maintained, with very few exceptions, and we are very grateful to Moya Wallis for organising the worship rota, and to all the PTOs, Readers and visiting clergy who led worship for us. From September, we have been delighted to have Rev Juliet chairing the PCC and leading worship alongside other members of the Ministry Team. Some Sunday services and funerals are live-streamed for the benefit of those who can't attend in person.

For the first five months of the year, the church was only open for private prayer and visitors during school hours, due to concerns about antisocial behaviour and minor vandalism. As the situation improved, we returned to opening it between 9 am and dusk every day from mid-June.

Home Communion has been given regularly to housebound members of the church family, and Holy Communion has also been celebrated monthly at residential homes for the elderly in Dursley. Although we were unable to provide a Foundation Governor for Dursley Primary Academy (Our Rector took up the role of Governor in January 2025), contact with the school was maintained through the weekly visits of our Open the Book team (highly praised by visiting school inspectors), Experience Easter sessions in the church, and our hosting, in June, of the 4 Front Christian theatre group's production of The Parabarium, performed for pupils from both Dursley and Uley primary schools. Dursley Academy held their Leavers' Service in St James in July, but the lack of heating meant that neither they, nor Rednock School, opted to hold a Christmas end-of-term service/ concert in the church in December.

The Diocese of Gloucester took over responsibility for St Mark's, Woodmancote, on 1st August (St Mark's, formerly a chapel of ease within Dursley parish, was closed for worship in March 2023).

St James is a member of Churches Together in Cam and Dursley, and contributed to the series of Sunday evening Lent services and the Good

Friday Walk of Witness. We were represented on the Deanery Synod by one PCC member until May, and thereafter by three members.

The number on the Electoral Roll this year was 155.

Average attendance at normal Sunday services was 65. Attendance on Easter Sunday was 146 across 3 services, at Harvest 92, at All Souls evening service 40, the Remembrance service at 3 pm on 10th November welcomed, among others, representatives of the British Legion, uniformed organisations and civic dignitaries, the number attending was 334. The attendances at the Epiphany, Advent and Christmas carol services were 56, 68 and 202 respectively. The Crib and Christingle service at 4 pm on Christmas Eve was attended by over 300, approximately half of whom were children. Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve drew 115, and 48 attended on Christmas Day. The lack of heating meant that attendance was somewhat lower during the colder months, though 'special' services were not affected so much. Worship at Sunday Parish Communion, Evensong and Carol services was much enhanced by the singing of the choir, and musical accompaniment by our organist and deputy organist was also greatly appreciated.

1 baptism, 1 wedding and 12 funerals/thanksgiving services were held in St James, and there were 4 interments of ashes in the churchyard during 2024. A member of our congregation, Roland Swift, was confirmed in St George's church, Upper Cam.

St James has welcomed many members of the wider community through its doors to the weekly free bookstall, bimonthly Bring and Take events, monthly (from April to October) 'Coffee, Cake and Music' organ recitals, concerts by local choirs and music groups and an art exhibition, enabling good relationships to be forged.

Church news and messages from the clergy and Readers have been disseminated through the monthly Messenger magazine, and services and events have been advertised on our website and social media.

The churchyard has been well maintained by volunteers, and our Eco Church group ensures that certain areas are managed for the benefit of local wildlife.

## **The Finance Report**

- **Basis of Accounting**

These financial statements have been produced on a Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006.

They have been produced utilising the Diocesan cashbook, developed by the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance as a simple way of recording receipts and payments, for the average PCC. It uses the information entered to produce a generic Receipts and Payments Account and Finance Return.



- **Accounting Policies**

The financial statements include transactions and assets for which the PCC can be held responsible. They do not include the accounts of other church groups that owe affiliation to another body, nor those that are for informal gatherings of church members

During the year the PCC have agreed Financial Control Procedures to ensure the PCC meets the legal requirements and good practice recommendations set out in the [Charity Commission Guidance on Internal Financial Controls for Charity](#).

These will be reviewed annually at the first PCC meeting following the APCM.

- **Reserves Policy**

This is now reflected in the Financial Controls Procedures. The purpose of a Reserves Policy is to provide a level of working capital that protects the continuity of core work. The Reserves Policy is to retain a minimum of £8k in unrestricted funds across all accounts at all times to protect 3 months of core work.

- **Year End Balances**

The Statement of Assets at annex 1 shows at the yearend 2024 we were holding assets to the value of £460,302.51. This is predominantly due to the transfer of the Omega Trust (a separate charity) to the PCC. The value of the fund at transfer was £336,611.29. The trust is an endowment with an original investment of £250,000 and any growth in the investment available for the upkeep and other purposes of St James church. In November the growth in the fund (£85,239) was transferred to the Fabric Account to ensure sufficient funds to enable the replacement of the church boiler.

ANNEX 1

### St James PCC Dursley Statement of Assets 31 December 2024

Account	Account Name/Description	Opening ACTUAL Balance	Transactions In	Transactions Out	ACTUAL Balance
		£76,475.46	£602,692.45	(£218,865.40)	£460,302.51
A	PCC Dursley Treasurers Account 02391588 (cash)	£12,402.90	£116,995.77	(£97,412.36)	£31,986.31
B	PCC Dursley Fabric Account 02391693 (cash)	£32,246.49	£134,168.99	(£27,942.40)	£138,473.08
C	PCC Dursley Stewardship Account 07974395 (cash)	-	£3,906.38	(£1,331.12)	£2,575.26
D	St Marks Treasurers Account 02476397 (cash)	£6,521.16	-	(£144.72)	£6,376.44
E	St James Parish Centre 02476060 (cash)	£2,866.52	£6,713.05	(£6,795.30)	£2,784.27
F	CBF Fabric Fund 616190001D (inv)	£6,500.00	-	-	£6,500.00
G	CBF Legacy Fund 616292001D (inv)	£13,203.15	-	-	£13,203.15
H	McClaverty Shares (Inv)	£2,735.24	£62.61	-	£2,797.85
I	CBF Dursley PCC Omega Trust CB127603-001 (inv)	-	£340,845.65	(£85,239.50)	£255,606.15

(Larger copy available)

- **Receipts and Payments**

The Receipts and Payments Account (Annex 2) shows the areas of expenditure and income across all accounts and allows comparison with last year.

# PCC Dursley Receipts & Payments Accounts

For the Year ended 31 December 2024

Notes	General fund	Designated fund	Restricted fund	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Voluntary income:					
Planned giving	43,703		360	44,063	44,763
Collections, donations & other giving	32,988	393	16,378	49,759	37,169
Income tax recovered	12,777		63	12,840	13,446
Legacies	-	-	-	-	-
Activities for generating funds					
Magazine/Bookstall sales/Hall Lettings etc	7,371			7,371	6,255
Income from other Properties					
Annual Fete/events	15,362	276	2,612	18,250	16,647
Investment income:					
Interest & dividends	776	-	338	1,114	833
Income from charitable activities:					
Parochial fees		-	-		
Other incoming resources:					
Insurance claims	-	-	12,465	12,465	-
Gain on disposal of fixed assets	-	-	-	-	-
Loans received	-	-	-	-	-
Other	8,554	-	-	8,554	8,203
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>121,531</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>32,216</b>	<b>154,416</b>	<b>127,316</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Charitable activities:					
Donations/Grants to charities	(448)	(138)	(466)	(1,052)	(2,333)
Mission & Evangelism	(25)	-	-	(25)	(880)
Parish Share	(25,000)			(25,000)	(25,000)
Clergy expenses	(163)	-	-	(163)	(1,650)
Church running expenses	(22,063)	(219)	(4,693)	(26,975)	(32,059)
Churchyard maintenance	(369)	-	-	(369)	(152)
Cost of raising funds	(2,120)		(750)	(2,870)	(1,010)
Running costs:					
Support costs	(1,193)	-	-	(1,193)	(81)
Administration costs (inc. staff costs)	(21,478)	-	-	(21,478)	(20,349)
Other	(8,619)	-	-	(8,619)	(11,909)
Governance costs	(432)	-	-	(432)	(360)
Major expenditure					
Repairs to church buildings	-	-	(20,969)	(20,969)	(1,392)
Repairs to other property	(150)		(2,200)	(2,350)	(2,946)
Capital purchases/additions				-	
Loan repayments				-	
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>(82,060)</b>	<b>(357)</b>	<b>(29,078)</b>	<b>(111,495)</b>	<b>(100,121)</b>
<b>Net (outgoing)/ incoming resources</b>	<b>39,471</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>3,138</b>	<b>42,921</b>	<b>27,195</b>
Transfers between funds					
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before gains	39,471	312	3,138	42,921	27,195
Gains on investment assets	63		340,846	340,909	237
Net movement in funds	39,534	312	343,984	383,830	27,432
Funds brought forward at 1 Jan	41,154	3,114	32,206	76,474	49,042
Funds carried forward at 31 Dec	80,688	3,426	376,190	460,304	76,474



## • Parish Share

At the beginning of the year the PCC made a commitment as our Parish Share contribution of £34k. This was considerably below the amount requested of £52.3k but was agreed to be affordable based on the budget for 2024 agreed in November 2023. These accounts show an expenditure of £25k against the Parish Share, but a further payment in early 2025 means that the commitment for 2024 will be met in full.

During 2025 the Diocese is introducing a new approach to determining Parish Share Contributions. Whilst this is being finalised the PCC have budgeted for a commitment of £60k.

## • Parish Finance Return

This return which is required by the Diocese, and generated from the Diocesan Cashbook, used to record all transactions across all our accounts and investments, is included at Annex 3

### Parish Finance Return 2024

The form below is produced by the Archbishops' Council's Statistics division, and should be submitted using their webportal at:

<http://parishreturns.churchofengland.org/>

Return of Parish Finance			Parish code:	616031	If the form is NOT completed on behalf of the entire parish, please list below the churches included:	Deanery:	Wotton
January to December 2024			Parish name:	St James, Dursley. St Marks Woodmancote		Diocese:	Gloucester
INCOMING RESOURCES		UNRESTRICTED (nearest £)	RESTRICTED (nearest £)	RESOURCES EXPENDED		UNRESTRICTED (nearest £)	RESTRICTED (nearest £)
<b>Voluntary income/ receipts</b>				<b>Costs of generating income</b>			
1	Tax efficient planned giving	£ 39,351	£ 360	17	Costs of fund-raising activities	£ 2,120	£ 750
2	Other planned giving	£ 4,351		<b>Church activities</b>			
3	Collections at services	£ 4,239		18	Mission giving and donations	£ 586	£ 466
4	All other giving and voluntary receipts, including Special Appeals (recurring and one-off)	£ 4,141	£ 16,378	19	Diocesan parish share contribution	£ 25,000	
6	Gift Aid recovered	£ 12,777	£ 63	20	Salaries, wages and honoraria	£ 15,796	
7	Legacies received (capital value)	£ -	£ -	21	Clergy and staff expenses	£ 1,356	
8	Grants (Include recurring and one-off)	£ 25,000	£ -	<b>Church expenses</b>			
<b>TOTAL Voluntary income:</b>		<b>£ 89,859</b>	<b>£ 16,801</b>	22	Mission and evangelism costs	£ 25	
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>				23	Church running expenses	£ 27,677	£ 4,693
9	Gross income from fundraising activities	£ 15,637	£ 2,612	24	Church utility bills	£ 8,854	£ -
<b>Income from investments</b>				25	Cost of trading	£ -	£ -
10	Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	£ 776	£ 338	26	Governance costs	£ 432	
<b>Church activities</b>				<b>Major capital expenditure</b>			
11	Statutory fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc)			27	Major repairs to the church building	£ -	£ 20,969
12	Gross income from trading (e.g. hall lettings, magazine, bookstall). NOT fundraising.	£ 7,485		28	Major repairs to church hall or other PCC property, including redecoration	£ 150	£ 2,200
<b>Other incoming resources</b>				29	New building work to the church, church hall, clergy housing or other PCC property	£ -	£ -
13	Any other income/ receipts not already listed	£ 8,440	£ 12,465	<b>SUB-TOTAL for Church activities &amp; expenses</b>			
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES (FROM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)</b>					<b>£ 81,996</b>	<b>£ 29,078</b>	
A	Unrestricted	£ 122,197		99	Other payments/expenditure not already listed	£ 420	
B	Restricted	£ 32,216		<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED (FROM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS)</b>			
C	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 154,413</b>		D	Unrestricted	£ 82,416	
<b>PLANNED GIVERS AND LEGACIES</b>				E	Restricted	£ 29,078	
14	Number of tax efficient planned givers	58		F	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 111,494</b>	
15	Number of other planned givers	5		<b>Cash and Investment Balances</b>			
16	Number of new legacies received in year	0		31	Cash and deposit balances as at 31 December 2024	£ 68,113	£ 114,082
100	Weekly Average Planned Giving per Planned Giver	14.5		32	Investments as at 31 December 2024	£ 16,001	£ 262,106
<i>This section needs to be completed manually as the figures are not recorded within the Cashbook</i>				<b>Account basis: on which basis are your accounts prepared (indicate ONE)</b>			
				30	Receipts and payments [ X ]	Accruals	[ ]

Date	04/04/2025
Name	Sally Pearson
Position	Treasurer
Telephone or email	v6sep@aol.com

\*produced using the Diocesan Cashbook v5

- **Appointment of Independent Examiners**

The PCC has elected to subject the financial statements to independent examination. These accounts have been examined by Davies Accountants Limited. Their report will be included as Annex 4 when this report is presented to the APCM.

Having made appropriate enquiries, the PCC propose Davies Accountants Limited as independent examiner until the next APCM.

**Structure, Governance and Management**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The members of the PCC are listed below. All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. Elected members serve for 3 years to enable a rotation of the membership.

PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC held 5 meetings during 2024. We held a very short meeting in the Church immediately after the APCM in May to make the necessary election of PCC Officers.

**Administrative information**

St James the Great Church, Silver Street, Dursley

This church forms part of the Parish of Dursley which is part of the Ewelme Benefice with the parish of Uley with Owlpen and Nympsfield. The Benefice is part of the Diocese of Gloucester within the Church of England.

The correspondence address for these churches is via the Parish Office, St James Parish Centre, Silver Street, Dursley. GL11 4NA

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a registered charity, number 1130972

**PCC members** who have served at any time from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 until the date of this report are:

**Ex-officio members:**

Incumbent:	The Revd Juliet Jensen (from September 2024)
Associate priest:	The Revd Jane Wood (until February 2025)
Reader:	Antony King
Churchwardens:	Christopher Tyler Janet Vonberg

**Elected members:**

David Smith	Deanery Synod representative	
Elizabeth Oakley	Deanery Synod representative	
Donna Pinker	Deanery Synod representative (from May 2024)	
Clare White	PCC Secretary	
Sally Pearson	PCC Treasurer	
Edwina Walton	(from May 2024)	
Anne Shipton	(from May 2024)	
Kathryn Rebbeck	(until May 2024)	
Christine Raffle	(until December 2024)	
Sarah Hodge	(until May 2024)	
Sheila Gardner	Austin Meares	Gillian Mather
Joy Pepper	Christine Morgan	Caroline Marrow
Parish Safeguarding Officer: Rachel Brown (until November 2024)		
Heather Arnold (from November 2024)		

*Revd Juliet Jensen, PCC Chairman*

*March 2025*

**Wotton Deanery Synod**

Ewelme Benefice, which includes Dursley, is part of the Wotton Deanery. This covers an area from Nympsfield to Chipping Sodbury. The Synod meets about four times a year. Donna Pinker, Elizabeth Oakley and David Smith are the current Dursley representatives from the PCC.

The deanery has spent the year discussing and starting to implement a deanery strategy. The priorities are growth, buildings, finance, governance and administration, mission and ministry. Small groups have met to discuss these priorities.

The main outcomes during the year have been on

- (a) devising a Building Manual Template. This would cover things such as power distribution, building and drainage services, alarms, heating. There would also be a list of shared service providers for maintenance activities.
- (b) Finance. Means of fundraising and discussion of the Parish Share. The latter included how it is calculated, how it is allocated and how it could be made fairer, better understanding of it in each benefice. A new model for calculating parish share will be introduced by the diocese in 2026.

The emphasis during the year has been on the advantages of benefices working together, sharing information and encouraging each other.

*David Smith*

*February 2025.*

## Music Report

### Choir

As ever, I am grateful for the way in which our music-making is supported, enabling us to sing a range of styles from the vast treasury of church music. We are fortunate in having Anne Shipton who organises the library, Lynn James who conducts the accompanied choir pieces, and Geoff Whiley who is an unflappable cantor, sticking to his guns even when the organist is playing the wrong gospel alleluia!

It is to the choristers' credit that we have managed to sustain our music while the church has been without heat, particularly during the winter where, on several occasions the choir outnumbered the congregation in a building which is literally wringing with damp. At the time of writing we are told that the new church boiler will be installed at the beginning of March, but it will take a considerable amount of time for the building to resort to how it was before the boiler gave up in October 2023! I just hope that the complex workings of the organ haven't suffered too much. In 2024 we lost two stalwart members of the alto section; Dr Jacquelin Hill, whose funeral was well attended by her fellow choristers on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, and Chris Raffle (Memorial Service on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025). Jacquelin had been ill for some while, and being a retired GP, she had a good idea what was happening to her body. Whereas Chris' sudden death came as a real shock (just before the Advent Carol Service) as she was in really good spirits and looking forward to singing all the festive music we were rehearsing. Like many who occupy the choir stalls both Jacquelin and Chris were involved in several other areas of the church and their contributions to church life are missed.

We were glad that Sue Gibson (alto) joined us, and we are always recruiting and happy to welcome singers to join one of the few remaining four-part church choirs in the area. No audition!

Despite all the efforts to link a group of children from our primary school to the choir, it seems that there is a lack of parental support for this venture to succeed. Edwina Walton has conscientiously taken a "choir club" after school which a good number of youngsters enjoyed attending, but when the word "Sunday" was mentioned the numbers quickly evaporated. In the past we have managed to get a group of children to sing with us for specific occasions, but that did not happen at Christmas 2024. So we are looking at ways of building on previous successes to involve children on a more regular basis. We've not given up! Some churches have a diocese-funded youth worker whose main job it seems (certainly in Reading) is to recruit young people to the church choir. I wonder if the same would ever happen in our diocese?

Whilst we take our music-making seriously, there are fun occasions too; pre eminent of which is the Annual Choir lunch with its unique Tambourine Award delivered inimitably by our Senior Chorister, David Wood. Our fund-raising activities have, once again, included a collection tin in lieu of the cost of sending individual Christmas cards to each other,

and the Annual Plant and Produce stall which usually coincides with the May “Coffee, Cake and Music” recital.

### Concerts and recitals

It is good to see that the church continues to be used by local musicians, and the Dursley Male Voice Choir and Tyndale Choral Society's concerts were given to capacity audiences. The more informal musical gatherings during the mammoth “free books” have also become a feature during the year. The organ recitals “Coffee, Cake and Music” have continued to flourish and draw listeners from a wide area, and I am particularly grateful to those who are involved with the catering. At the time of writing, the 2026 series has already been booked!

Christmas seems to be the time when everyone wants music! Although with so little traditional music of a Christian nature in our nation's schools, the decline of the Christmas carol is well on the way. However, in 2024 it was good to see rather more people joining in our “Shoppers' Carols” and the volume of singing was good – considerably better than the capacity congregation/audience managed for the Christingle service! The “Live Nativity” directed by Barbie Davies on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> January brought together a large group of humans and animals of all ages and abilities! The choir were cast in the most unlikely role as the “choir of angels”, and it was good to see Peter Kirvan, with mammoth wings, taking the part of Gabriel. We all know the “plot”, but it was good to have a visual and musical dimension to the story which was much appreciated by the large audience of adults and many children who joined in the congregational carols.

*Nigel Davies*

*February 2025*

### **Dursley Ringing Master's Report – February 2025**

In general both Sunday services and practices have been well attended. Most Sundays have seen a variety of methods rung, as well as Call Changes. We've been blessed with regular visits from ringers from other towers which have helped us add to the variety of methods rung.

We continue to give our own ringers priority in what they are learning as well as helping regular visitors to progress and take their experience back to their own towers.

Our annual outing was in June and we rang at the three newly restored rings at Hartpury, Staunton and Corse as well as the 8 at Sandhurst. It was well attended and we had some nice ringing, beer and food.

In October we rang for the funeral of Gerry Pierce. A prominent figure in local politics, Gerry was the father of Erica and Wenna who both learned to ring here. There were a number of top Bristol ringers attending the service, which was a bit nerve racking, but they were very complimentary about our ringing.

On 5<sup>th</sup> December we had to cancel the practice due to rain pouring through the ceiling, a first in my experience. The Sunday before had also involved ringing in the rain. However, a local builder was able to get up

and clear the offending blockage in the corner of the belfry and we've been ok since.

We were able to ring 6 bells for both Midnight mass and Christmas Morning but couldn't raise enough for the Crib service. Ten ringers attended the annual ringing in the new year ceremony and we managed to do the final tenor bong at almost exactly midnight.

We have had an encouraging amount of interest from potential new ringers and three Andys and myself have been sharing the teaching sessions for 45 minutes prior to the Thursday practice. The four Ladies are all making good progress and there are more waiting in the wings! I'd like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their support for the ringing over the last year, both members of the band and the regular visitors who have helped in ringing for services and other events.

*Philip Pope and Elizabeth Byrne*

*February 2025*

### **Open The Book**

The Bible Society made changes last year. There is now a yearly fee to be paid to the Bible Society for membership. This covers the new materials supplied, where before we had to purchase them, insurance and other things. We have been very lucky that the Vizard Trust has paid the membership fees for us. We currently have twelve members, but unfortunately some members are only available for one session out of the normal five to six times we go into school.

The team consists of myself, Liz Byrne, Anthea Fittall, Jennifer Kendrick, Edwina Walton, Canon Richard Morgan, Philip Staddon, Pauline Chidlaw, Joyce, Lombard, Gill Mather, Sheila and Revd. Ian Gardner, Rachel Tyler and John Ewer.

We were supplied with a new storybook and a new introduction and end book for the new stories. These have not been well received. Some of the words used we feel are not appropriate and many other things we are not happy with. Luckily The Bible Society have said we can also use the old material as well. In fact, we have selected some stories from the new storybook but also used the old material too.

As we only have three copies of the new storybook, Tony was scanning the story, adjusting where it was thought necessary, and printing off the story each week. He was also highlighting the relevant speaking parts for those taking part that week. I am thankful for what Tony had prepared and sent to me (the stories for this last half term) before he was taken ill and sadly died.

The group and children at school all really miss Tony's dedication and input.

It would be good if we could enroll further members, especially more men, as I do struggle some weeks to put a team together. Please speak to one of the team members if you are interested in finding out more what is involved. Please remember you do not have to commit to every week.

*Joy Pepper*

*March 2025*



### **Parish Centre Report.**

We still have 7 groups who still meet on a weekly basis.

The building is sadly deteriorating because of the lack of heating.

The office is cold and damp which is affecting the paper and therefore the printer.

The PCC has decided that we need to refurbish the building, a decision on the new heating system will be made once a team have planned the buildings future. A group will be put together to oversee this work.

Parishioners will be asked to form a planning team. Building users and parishioners will be asked to propose any changes they feel would benefit the buildings future.

Marie Mills, the cleaner, works very hard 2 days a week (3hours/week) keeping the building clean.

*Clare White*

*February 2025*

### **Messenger Magazine Report**

The Messenger continues to be a window into our Church, giving information, not only to our congregation but also anyone who visits our beautiful church. We have dates for your diary and useful contact details on the inside cover and on the back.

We continue with sales of 95-100 copies per month and online copies go out each month too.

Our advertising prices have increased slightly this year. £65 for 1/4 page, £106 per ½ page and £167 per full page and next year the cost of the magazine will rise slightly too, to 70p and £7 for 12 copies.

Most of our booklets have been the full 40 pages and Valerie Meares and I are very grateful to everyone who contributes articles and photographs, and we hope that they will continue to do so and if anyone else is moved to write something for us that would be wonderful.

*Judith Staddon*

*March 2025*

### **St James Eco Church Report**

Throughout the year, the group has highlighted the importance of recycling and reusing stuff, mainly to help us all think about, and tackle the problem of rubbish both globally, as well as locally.

The Eco Church group in partnership with Dursley Freegle has held several successful 'Bring and Take' events over the past year. Indeed, it seems to be gaining popularity, and the most recent two events in in November and January have been very well supported, both with donations as well as people attending.

Plenty of things seem to get given and, following the last couple of

events, a large sort out of stuff was needed. Surplus things were given to Gloucester City Mission, Bristol Homeless Shelter and Kid's Stuff (a Stroud Children's charity). These have turned out to be excellent contacts. Running the Bring & Take events alongside the book stall is also very successful, with people visiting both events.

The number of regular helpers for the Bring & Take has increased slightly to five of us, but we would very much welcome more!

St James continues to provide a recycling point for used toothbrushes. We also promote other local recycling arrangements including 'Gloucestershire Recycles' (a partnership of Gloucestershire County Council and its six districts which aims to answer questions the public have, about recycling.)

In April we thought about the Christian charity A Rocha, and its inspirational work leading Eco Church. Their update in 2024 reported that 8,000 churched in England and Wales were now participating in the scheme which is wonderful. Eco Church member Jennifer Kendrick organised a coffee morning, with funds raised going to support the important work of A Rocha.

Other church and churchyard projects including the Bug Hotel and swift boxes made progress throughout 2024. We have 2 swift boxes installed in the church tower and will be watching in the spring to see if they are occupied this year. The Bug hotel underwent a couple of refurbishments by Adrian Mather. Both the hotel and the surrounding area is establishing well. Yellow Rattle seed has been planted in the autumn with the hope for further wildflowers to grow. Herbs have also been planted. A hedgehog has been spotted near the Broadwell steps. Hurrah!

We had another successful Count on Nature event in St James Churchyard in June. This year, we are planning to have two separate events: one with our usual nature exhibits, craft and art stations, and a visit by the 'Moth Man' again. A separate biodiversity count will be held on a different day.

*Gill Mather*

*February 2025*