

St Mary the Virgin, Almondsbury

Annual Parochial Church Report 2024

Presented at a meeting held on 18th May 2025

This combined report is presented in accordance with the Charity Commissioner's Statement of Recommended Practice commonly known as SORP 2005.

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 - Detailed notes to the accounts;
 - Independent Examiner's Report.

St Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Almondsbury, BS32 4DT

**Annual Report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council
and the activities of the parish generally for the year to 31 December 2024.**

Correspondence address: St Mary's Church, Church Road, Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4DT

PCC Members:

Rev Anjali Kanagaratnam, Priest -in-Charge	Rev Paul Van Rossum, Associate Vicar & Treasurer
Astrid Domingo Molyneux, Lay Minister	Pam Van Rossum
Helen Hine	Clare Jefferis
Tim Jefferis, Churchwarden	Gill Bostic
Thelma Gibbs	Dick Avery
Mo Pearson	Rosemary Griffiths, Deanery Synod
Sandy Thompson	Josh Pullan
Pam Skelding, Safeguarding Officer	Hannah Roberts
Mike Jenkinson, PCC Chair and Lay Minister	James Rogers

INTRODUCTION

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The Parish of St Mary's, Almondsbury, is part of the Benefice of Almondsbury and Pilning with Compton Greenfield.

The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure. The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules and is drawn from those on the Electoral Roll of the Parish. The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission (registration number 1131407).

REPORT OF PRIEST IN CHARGE

APCM Report: Rev Anjali Kanagaratnam

Overview: I look back over the life of St Mary's Church in 2024 with a sense of gratitude to God for being able to be part of a generous worshipping community that is committed to love God, grow in discipleship, tell others about Jesus and serve the local community. Alongside carrying on with the usual business of the church, my initial focus was to get to know my new context and then begin the process of discerning the mission and vision of the church in this new season of ministry (beginning with the Mission and Vision day in November).

Sunday Services: The service pattern at St Mary's has remained the same with two main services on a Sunday: 8:30am Communion service and 10:00am All Age Service. The congregation at the 8:30 service has grown steadily with attendance often in double figures. The service pattern remains the same with BCP on the first Sunday of the month and a Common Worship liturgy on the other Sundays.

The All Age 10am service with a children's group continues to draw a genuinely all age congregation and we regularly see new faces in the pews. Over the year we have explored different themes and structures in our services in order to best serve the needs of the congregation. This has included the introduction of a regular 'all-age' slot before the children leave for their groups, using a mixture of a thematic and a lectionary-based approach to our sermons and the worship group continues to explore ways in which we can be more open to God in our worship.

Seasonal services: Our seasonal services continue to be well attended. This included the Remembrance Service and the outdoor service to commemorate D Day which were attended by members of the community and the uniformed organisations. Attendance at the services at Christmas time remained high with over 600 people worshipping at St Mary's Church between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and a number of members of the community joined us for the all age nativity and the carol service on 22 December.

Ministry Team: Rev Paul van Rossum, Mike Jenkinson and Astrid Domingo Molyneux have worked together with me to lead and preach at the Sunday services as well as leading funerals. Rev Paul van Rossum has also assisted with weddings and leading services in St Peter's, Pilning. We continue to conduct a number of pastoral services for the community and those connected to St Marys. In 2024 we conducted 6 baptisms, 5 weddings and 17 funerals. Through the year we have continued to explore ways of encouraging those in the congregation to participate in leading worship. This has included greater participation in the leading of prayers and intercessions and a couple of members of the congregation have begun the Exploring Christianity course with the diocese. Since September we have been joined by Trinity Ordinand Val Slade who has taken a full part in the life and ministry of the church.

Discipleship and fellowship: The online home group and the Lent and Advent groups have provided opportunities for discipleship as have the various regular prayer groups: the weekly Tuesday morning prayer group at the Old Hospital and the monthly Tea and Toast and Prayers for a suffering church. Other opportunities to connect with each other include coffee after the 10am service, a weekend away at Lee Abbey and the Lent Lunch.

Outreach: Aside from the seasonal and pastoral services, the church has continued to connect with the community in a number of ways. The church remains open during the day for private prayer. The weekly toddler groups and Messy Church (held approximately once a month) continue to be well attended and draw children and families. Similarly, the Good Friday Activity morning in the Old School Hall drew over 100 people who engaged with the Easter story through crafts and activities. Our links with the school remain strong: Pam Skelding and I lead collective worship in the school and the children have visited the church regularly for collective worship and occasional RE lessons. I am also involved in the life of the school in my capacity as Foundation Governor.

Through the year, we have continued to have a charity focus in our services through the Charity of the month and we have continued to support a number of local and national agencies: Bristol Home bank, Community of the Sisters of the Church Food Bank, the Salvation Army Toy Appeal, the Children's society (through the Christingle service collection).

Parish Administrator: Following the departure of Judi Thompson in January, we were pleased to appoint Louise Simmons to the post of Parish Administrator in June.

A team effort: The continued life, ministry and mission of the church is only possible through the commitment and service of so many people including those in the community. Many of them work in quiet unseen ways. We are very grateful to each and every person who contributes in any way to the life of the church.

CHURCH WARDEN

APCM Report: Tim Jefferis

In a welcome change from 2023, Almondsbury has had an incumbent - Rev Anjali Kanagaratnam - throughout 2024. Having been licensed by the Bishop of Swindon in December 2023 she was warmly welcomed by those involved in the three South Severnside benefice churches and also by the wider community.

As churchwarden I have done my best throughout the year to support Anjali, Rev Paul Van Rossum, Astrid Domingo Molyneux and Mike Jenkinson in their vital work ministering to the congregation and more broadly to the inhabitants of the parish. I have also attempted to support all of the congregation members and other volunteers who help to ensure that St Mary's runs smoothly and touches the lives of as many people as possible. My heartfelt thanks to all of you for all your contributions during 2024.

I would particularly like to thank those who have served as members of PCC this year. |This is a responsible role as the PCC is a charity and the PCC members are trustees. They therefore have overall responsibility for the church finances and also the care and maintenance of the fabric of the church and its contents. Much of this work is delegated to the Finance & Buildings and Worship & Mission committees whose focussed work in discussing and resolving issues allows the main meetings to run smoothly.

There are two matters, both in the Finance & Buildings sphere which may be of general interest:

Firstly, we are attempting to form a long-term plan for the maintenance of the church, so that when we are undertaking significant work on a given part of the building, we will also attempt to minimise future disruption by carrying out other relevant maintenance and changes in the same area at the same time.

Secondly, we have received a grant towards a survey of the condition of the chest tombs in the churchyard, some of which are in poor condition. The survey has been undertaken by a conservation firm and we currently await the report. When we have digested the outcomes we expect to be able to apply for grants to contribute towards recommended rebuilding works.

ELECTORAL ROLL

APCM Report: Mike Jenkinson

There were 103 members on the Electoral Roll as at 31 December 2024, of which 72 were resident in the Parish and 31 resided outside of the Parish.

WORSHIP AND MISSION

APCM Report: Pam Van Rossum

We receive regular input from the group members on aspects of the church's spiritual life and on how the church is functioning. Concerns are addressed and recommendations made to the PCC.

The reports we received from the team members highlight that Anjali's ministry is well received and the continuing input from the Ministry team is much appreciated too.

The Praise group and Matthew (on the organ) give an excellent lead to our worship each week. The worship is tailored to the weeks theme/reading.

It is recognised how many volunteers e.g. welcomers, AV team, cleaners, banner ladies, flower ladies, readers, prayer folk, pull together to be an active part of the worshipping community and to enable us to be a healthy and functioning church.

The 8.30 and 10.00am service reps report on good attendance, input, and good relationships.

The children's group meet each week throughout the year during the All- Age service. There are about 7 regular attendees and sometimes more children. There are usually toddlers, with a parent, too. The Roots teaching material is used.

Messy church meets once a month with about 30 children. Toddlers meet in term time with up to 12 children. There are three prayer groups meeting weekly and monthly and an online Home Group.

Last year's Good Friday Activity morning was an enjoyable community event attended by 76 children and 63 adults. Church members were involved in welcoming and door monitoring, the music group, managing the AV, craft/garden/ cooking activities and refreshments. Anjali led the service. The children go home with their crafts, a book linked to the video and Easter eggs.

The Christingle services are a popular community event too, especially the second one. There were about 500 attendees of which a large proportion were children and young adults. £718 was collected for the Children's Society. Almondsbury shop donated the oranges and village families made half of the Christingles. The Catering team provided refreshments for the Carol Service, Mission and Vision Day, a breakfast between two services, a Lent Lunch which raised funds for TWAM, Good Friday morning, as well as coffee after the 10.30 services.

The wider church community services have been well attended e.g. Remembrance. It is often commented on how the local community or visitors pop into church for some reflection time during the day.

The Charity of the Month focuses the congregation in looking beyond our immediate concerns. The Charities include Leprosy Mission, Uganda Link, Ripple Effect, Tearfund, Suicide Prevention Society, Release International, Royal British Legion, Ride and Stride (Gloucestershire Historic Churches) and the Children's Society.

FINANCE & BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

APCM report: Tim Jefferis

The Finance and Buildings Committee met four times during 2024 on:

- 27 February
- 30 April
- 3 September
- 22 October

These meetings were supported by ten different attendees. As chair I would like to thank everybody who has supported these meetings, which have been very useful and productive.

During the year matters discussed can be divided into three main categories:

Finances and Financial budget, including:

- Division of Incumbent's expenses across the benefice
- Setting and monitoring PCC budget for 2024
- Parish share

Energy and Energy Consumption, including:

- Impact of misbilled electricity consumption
- Boiler maintenance
- Heating oil consumption

General Maintenance and Planning Issues, including:

- Belfry access ladders
- Failure of SW buttress light
- Installation of replacement bench
- Survey and repair of listed table tombs
- Assessment of church wiring

The results of these discussions have resulted in a number of matters being forwarded to PCC with a recommendation for action, with others being addressed by the members of the Finance and Buildings Committee using available resources.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

APCM Finance Report: Paul Van Rossum, Treasurer

The church is a registered charity and, as such, is required to prepare its accounts under three separate headings: Unrestricted Funds; Restricted Funds; and Endowment Funds. The Unrestricted Funds also include Designated Funds which have been earmarked for future expenditure.

The principal financial aim of the church is that its regular unrestricted income should cover its normal annual expenditure, including day to day maintenance. In 2024, thanks to some generous donations towards the end of the year, this income exceeded expenditure by £6,362, which now forms part of the church's unrestricted savings and is available for use in the future. Legacies and income from the sale of assets are used for long term investments such as the reordering and major building works.

Restricted Funds can only be spent on the purposes specified for the individual funds. In 2024 the expenditure from restricted funds exceeded income by £5,365. This was mainly due to expenditure from the restricted bells fund and were covered by balances brought forward in this fund from the previous year.

Endowment Funds are funds which have been given in perpetuity. They are held in CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities) Investment Funds and dividends from these investments are used as restricted funds to support expenditure on, for example, the churchyard and children's ministry.

Finally, we must always remember that the vast majority of our income come from regular donations from individuals, and we are extremely grateful for your generosity.

A full copy of the Accounts for 2024 is included in section 2 of this Annual Report.

SAFEGUARDING – PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH

APCM report: Pam Skelding, Parish Safeguarding Officer

After a year in the role of PSO I'm full of admiration for Liz Tierney who delivered this role so efficiently.

It's been a steep learning curve but hopefully I'm getting there. Thank you to all the people who have co-operated in Safeguarding practices. It's a necessity for every church so your support is especially important.

The parish of St Mary's, Almondsbury is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

Policies and Statements

The Safeguarding policy will be reviewed and updated by the PCC at its meeting in March 2025

New guidelines for children's and youth ministry in personal homes were approved in July 2024

Activities

The PCC oversees the following activities for Children / Young People and for Vulnerable Adults: Messy Church, Babies and Toddlers, Oasis, All Age Service Children's Group, and Pastoral Assistants.

Safer Recruitment & DBS

The PCC is responsible for the safe recruitment of people wanting to work with vulnerable groups through the activities mentioned above. During the year, the PCC has recruited the following numbers of people to support those groups.

7 DBS certificates have been processed March 2024 to 2025

Activity	Number of leaders/helpers	Number of new helpers recruited last year	Number of helpers removed (expired/

			deceased/left)
Pastoral Assistants	3	1	0
Messy Church	5	1	1
All Age Service Groups	8	1	0
Babies and Toddlers	3	0	0
Oasis	4	1	0

DBS Checks

As part of the safer recruitment process, where eligible, volunteers working with vulnerable groups have been DBS checked at the level appropriate to the role. Because the parish provides activities for vulnerable groups, the PCC members are also eligible for an enhanced DBS Check.

There are 27 of volunteers / PCC members who require a DBS check for their role and all of them must have a current check (i.e. the check has been completed within the last 3 years). **However, there are 2 volunteers/ PCC members who are due for renewal of their DBS check this year (2025).**

Training

Safeguarding training at different levels is a requirement for all roles; the current situation in terms of meeting the requirements in the parish is as follows:

Basic Awareness (all church officers and volunteers, bell ringers – I have included Flower Arrangers, Sides and Refreshment Helpers though many have not been informed that they are required to undertake the training)

Number in Role	Number completed training in last 3 years if highest level of training required	Number with no or expired training
22	0	20

Foundation Safeguarding (PCC members, volunteers working with vulnerable groups, Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officer, bellringers supervising children who ring with the team)

Number in Role	Number completed training in last 3 years if highest level of training required	Number with no or expired training
18	14 (<u>1 is due for renewal this year – 2025</u>)	4

Leadership Safeguarding (Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officers, Tower Captains where children ring with the team – excludes Licensed Lay Ministers as the Diocese are responsible for these)

Number in Role	Number completed training in last 3 years	Number with no or expired training
9	9 (3 are due for renewal this year – 2024)	

Domestic Abuse (PCC members, Churchwardens, Parish Safeguarding Officers – excludes Licensed Lay Ministers as the Diocese are responsible for these)

Number in Role	Number completed training in last 3 years	Number with no or expired training .This has changed so new requirement
9	4	5

Reporting to the PCC

The PCC was updated about safeguarding matters in the parish at all its meetings throughout the year. During the year there were no safeguarding matters which were reported on to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Action Plan

The PCC has an action plan created by the Parish Dashboard. Progress is reported to the PCC meetings and current progress on our Parish Dashboard

The Safeguarding Dashboard allows us to track down all the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. The PSO is responsible for the Dashboard with editor rights, with some PCC members (Vicar, Associate Vicar, Chairperson and Churchwarden) having read access. We continue to use the Safeguarding Hub to enter and keep track of all DBS checks and training, as well as creating job descriptions for the key roles involving children, young people and vulnerable adults.

DATA PROTECTION REPORT

It is nearly 7 years since the new legislation for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force. Though we have left the EU, these rules will still apply.

The following can be found on the Church's Website – The Data Privacy Policy, Data Consent Form and Data Protection Procedures Policy. There are copies of the Data Consent Form in church.

The PCC employs Matthew Thomas as Organist and Louise Simmons as Church Administrator. All other routine activities are undertaken by volunteers and Council places on record its appreciation of these volunteers who give their time and skills to the church and community.

THANKS

I am grateful to Liz Tierney for her role as Data Protection Officer. Liz stepped down from her role in March 2024 and Louise Simmons, our Parish Administrator, will be taking this role on.

Anjali Kanagaratnam, Priest in charge

ADOPTION

This report was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 13 May, 2025 for presentation to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 18 May 2025

St Mary the Virgin, Almondsbury

Reports from Organisations

Distributed with the Annual Parochial Church Report Presented at a meeting held on 18 May 2025

THE LICH GATE

Helen Hine

The Lich Gate Magazine is published by St Mary's and 1,220 copies are distributed to all homes in the Parish and to the community shop. In summer 2024, John and Lucy Ingle expressed their wish to retire as Advertising Managers. In December, Karen Perks kindly volunteered to take over, which was a relief!

Then at the end of 2024 Garth Jackson said that he planned to retire as editor, this was triggered by a complaint, and I do think we do need to pray protection over the magazine! Once again it looked as if the Lich Gate would have to fold, but it was agreed at PCC that the magazine still had the potential to do God's work in the community. Distribution Manager Steve Townsley is still running a strong distribution team, and Steve provides such useful advice-we are very grateful for his work.

A small editorial team was set up to try and spread the workload. Helen Hine, Pam Skelding and Morgan Tickner work regularly to produce the magazine, and a major new addition is the creative designer Gayle Smith at Motion Printers. There is a wider team, which currently meets monthly at the house of Lucy Rogers, and is overseen by Rev Anjali. The February 2025 issue was the last one by Garth's team and the new team have so far published the March issue. We have received much praise and encouragement from Almondsbury community.

We are very grateful to John and Lucy Ingle and to Garth Jackson for all their work on the magazine over the last few years. The team is excited to continue this important project.
Helen Hine (on behalf of the Lich Gate team)

BABIES AND TODDLERS GROUP

Sandy Thompson

Toddler sessions have been very special. We have regular mums and children coming every week. Val out trainee vicar has been telling an illustrated Bible story to our mums, children and glebe residents. Then the children do a craft and colouring related to the story. Playdoh and sit and rides are enjoyed by the children the singing and nursery rhymes with my puppets are loved by all especially the glebe residents who sing them all! At least 10 residents come weekly and join in. It's a very lovely group enjoyed by all. Coffee tea and biscuits are served to everyone weekly.

OASIS GROUP

Jan Cooper

OASIS After school children's group meets monthly in the Lady Chapel from 4.00-5.30pm. We have a Bible story theme with craft/games/discussion with Prayer and a mission focus.

The embryo group is small at present and there is a happy atmosphere with parents joining in.

Team led by Jan and Sue, Michael and Ro

MESSY CHURCH

Sandy Thompson

Messy Church is a very well attended monthly service. Anjali has been a lovely addition. The children enjoy participating in the questions and answers she asks after having watched the introductory Bible story. the children enjoy excellent crafts related to the Bible story afterwards. This is followed by Grace and tea before the children go home. Mo and I prepare the crafts and I make cakes monthly for the children to decorate. We are still looking for more helpers to sit on the craft tables and talk to the children about the craft they are doing and how it is related to the story they have just heard. We learnt about John the Baptist last month and after the overhead

story Anjali acted out a baptism with a doll in a baptismal dress with children as parents and godparents. Anjali explained the meaning of baptism and afterwards we had a parent enquire about having their child baptised. It was a special time and each month everyone takes part and a wonderful atmosphere is experienced in the church. We would still like more helpers as it takes time to set up all the tables crafts and prepare food and drink each month. All helpers are DBS trained before helping.

CATERING COMMITTEE 2024-2025

Rosemary Griffiths

Our committee is still relatively small with just five ladies but with help from willing volunteers we have kept the coffee rota filled each week. Thank you to those who donate the milk and biscuits each week so that the congregation can enjoy their refreshments after the All Age service.

Three committee members have updated their Basic Food & Hygiene certificates this year.

First of the events was at the Good Friday activities 29th March 2024, when we provided refreshments with hot cross buns for around 80 attendees. A church breakfast was held between the two Sunday services on 15th September. This was enjoyed by everyone there. Saturday 8th November. St Mary's held a Mission and Vision Day at which the committee served a choice of soups, bread rolls and cakes, the cakes were donated by members of the church. The committee also served teas and coffees at Almondsbury Village Events Annual Christmas Fayre, on 23rd November. The Christmas Carol Service, as usual we served mulled wine and homemade mince pies (donated by the congregation) after the service.

For Lent Lunches we managed to find two new soup recipes. These were served as usual with a bread roll and fruit for dessert. The charity this year was Tool with a Mission. James Rogers gave a brief summary of the work of the charity and £270 was raised. This rounded off another year at St Mary's Church.

I would like to thank everyone, the committee members and others who willingly offer their help with various events.

FLOWER ARRANGERS

Sarah Redmond

Another year gone by when the flowers looked wonderful each time an arrangement was displayed in church.

Going forward I have spoken to the ladies and agreed we will change arrangements forthrightly, instead of weekly. This is preferable to us as there are only 5 regular flower arrangers left now. We will be maintaining our arrangement during the fortnight until it is changed.

The pillar arrangements will continue to be done at Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

Wedding flowers will be a white arrangement by the church flower arranger, unless the couple commission a florist.

BELLRINGERS

Marcus Booth, Tower Captain

Another packed year as we waved a fond farewell to the Pandemic and settled into a steady routine of ringing. The bells have been rung where possible on Sundays and for weddings and practice nights. There was a large amount of ringing for the various Christmas services, weddings and activities and we even gathered enough ringers to ring at midnight on New Year's Eve 2024/ Day 2025.

Thanks must go to the following people.

- Gerry for continued maintenance, key holder, CCTV, and being able to see the bells in glorious technicolour, fly cleaning and just about everything else that wouldn't have been done without him!
- To Anjali and Paul for their support of the ringers throughout the year
- Adam for continuing as secretary and wedding organiser and doing all the paperwork and keeping us abreast of the news and developments, locally and nationally

- To our members, guests and visitors, without whom we couldn't function. im as Treasurer and Adrian as Deputy Tower Captainll who support Sunday Service ringing and practices

In statistics the story of a record-breaking 2024 is:

Attendance on Sundays ranged from 2 to 10, with the average being 6.35 up from 5.8, the average last year. We rang on all 52 Sundays and had six or more ringers on 37 of these (71% up from 58% last year), with seven or more on 22 (42% up from 24%).

Attendance on Mondays ranged from 6 to 18, with the average being 10.07 up from 8.4 on normal Mondays last year. We rang on 42 of 52 Mondays, one of the missing Mondays being due to our decision (now ceased) to ring once a month at Chipping Sodbury, one to the AGM, four to Bank holidays, and four to too few ringers being available. We had eight or more ringers on 35 of the 42 Mondays (83% up from 81% last year) and ten or more on 24 (57% up from 38% last year).

We have 10 resident ringers, three fewer than last year but we are regularly joined by a number of Alveston ringers who come to us to recover skills they once had when ringing in younger days.

Our ringing highlights in 2024 were three quarter peals (one fewer than in 2023), our first touch of Stedman Triples since 2019, our first Sunday touch of Bob Triples since 2019, and our first plain course of Winterbourne Doubles. Otherwise, there was a string of individual firsts:

- Pauline's first touch of Cambridge Minor and spliced St Simon's and St Clement's Doubles. Gerry's first plain course inside of Bob Minor and Grandsire Doubles,
- Madeleine's first plain course inside of Grandsire Doubles
- Adam's first plain course of Nervous Breakdown on the second.

A visiting band rang a peal of Bristol Surprise Major and two others rang quarter peals of Plain Bob Triples and Bristol Surprise Major.

Otherwise, we rang 36 different methods versus 25 last year. These were Rounds and Call Changes, Plain Hunt, Cloisters Doubles, Grandsire Doubles and Triples, Plain Bob Doubles, Minor, Triples and Major, Little Bob Minor and Major, Single Court Minimus, Double Court Minimus, Reverse Court Minimus, Double Canterbury Minimus, Nervous Breakdown Doubles, Winterbourne Doubles, Penultimate Doubles, St Simon's Doubles, St Martin's Doubles, Reverse Canterbury Doubles, Stedman Doubles and Triples, Erin Doubles, New Bob Doubles, St Osmund Doubles, Single Oxford Minor, Very Little Bob Minor, Crayford Little Court Minor, St Clements Minor, Spliced Plain and Little Bob Minor, Cambridge Surprise Minor and Major, and Norwich Surprise Minor. With the help of some visitors the abler members of the band rang a half course of Yorkshire Major and a touch of Bristol Surprise Major.

The Almondsbury ringers won our title back as Branch Quiz champions in February 2024 by some distance and remain the team to beat this year!

We look forward to another successful year and have a new target of methods to beat now!

DEANERY SYNOD

Bristol West Deanery Synod Annual Report 2024

Introduction

Three Deanery Synods took place during 2024 and the key themes were:

- § Serving Others – Focus on Volunteers
- § Life Events and Occasional Offices
- § Priority Communities – Mission and Discipleship

May Deanery Synod:

Life Events

Deanery Synod on 15 May 2024 focused upon 'Life Events and the Occasional Offices. The Meeting was held in person at St Mary's Shirehampton.

The Main Theme: Life Events

A Brief Introduction:

Throughout its history, the Church of England has connected with people as they reach major milestones over the course of their lives and at the end of them. The church offers a variety of services - to mark the birth of a child, to celebrate a marriage, to mark the beginning of a journey of faith, and to commemorate a life that has ended. The Church recognises that all change, even positive events like a birth or marriage, can cause stress as new roles are adjusted to and values, priorities, and belief systems are brought into question. If we take funeral service (in church and at the Crematorium) alone the number in Bristol Diocese has dropped from 2,260 (in 2010) to 1,220 (in 2022). In the same period Marriage and blessings of civil marriage has also halved.

Round Table Discussion:

How do we learn from each other so that we can respond to this decline, connect with people more significantly and develop the missional nature of these events?

1. What items of Good Practice can we share?
2. Given opportunity, what would increase our effectiveness?

Summary:

- § A single approach across the Deanery is difficult because of the different parish policies on Baptism and Marriage – Funerals are more straightforward
- § Building relationships within community is the responsibility of all members of the worshipping community (not just clergy)
- § Building relationships with Schools (Primary and Secondary), Toddler Groups and other centres of community (from pub to Community Associations) is important
- § Introducing a pattern of alternative worship helps: Messy Church and multigenerational services, Tea-Time Service, Rise and Shine, etc
- § Holding specific groups and events is important: Listening Café, Bereavement Groups, Space for Grief
- § Regular invitations and keeping in contact and recognising anniversaries is important
- § Form a Parish 'Life Event Team' (not the Vicar, not a rota!)

The Uganda Link

Rev Janet Lee updated Synod on the Lira Palwo clinic (a remote health clinic in Kitgum Diocese which is this year's deanery project), the Archbishop Janani Luwum College and the Nebbi Girlchild Project.

October Deanery Synod:

Priority Communities – Mission and Discipleship

Deanery Synod on 8 October 2024 focused upon Priority Communities – Mission and Discipleship. The Meeting was held in person at St Andrew's Avonmouth.

The Main Theme: Priority Communities – Mission and Discipleship

Andy Murray, Dean of Priority Communities, provided an introduction to the work being conducted within the Priority Community Network. Many communities across our Diocese have been subject to decades of underinvestment from national and local government leading to significant socio-economic disadvantage and marginalisation. Across the Bristol and

Swindon area approximately 30 of our parishes sit within the top 20% of the national indices of multiple deprivation (IMD). Local churches and clergy in serving in these areas often face a range of particular challenges, not least limited resources. We long to turn the tide and see clergy and churches in these areas flourishing and cultivating sustainable good growth, through intentional investment and support.

Support for clergy, lay leaders and churches who serve in PCs, through:

- § Priority Community Network (PCN) gatherings for prayer, planning or social events. This has initially focussed on the gathering clergy from the churches below, and other invited clergy. In time, we anticipate opening the invitation to a wider range of PC churches.

- § Tailored lay & ordained ministry development coaching, courses, and programmes.
- § The offer for 5 parishes to be part of 'Jesus Shaped People' discipleship programme, which is running parallel to the PC programme (for churches in the top 20% IMD).
- § Financial investment for 14 PC contexts, which sit in the top 12.5% IMD.

1. Intentional Mission and Discipleship

a. Mission is about sharing God's vision of justice and love for all people in the world around us, including our local neighbourhood. Discipleship is about recognising and responding to God's presence in every aspect of our lives and, as church members, helping each other to do that. How does this translate into what we do as a Deanery?

Roundtable Discussions:

Following an introduction provided by Revd. Andy Murray, Synod discussed the question of what we actually mean when we talk about Christian Discipleship.

Key points included:

Discipleship:

- § Is more than 'volunteering' it is embarking on a journey with God.
- § It is the 'working out' of our faith
- § The challenge to parishes is to create a culture that enables people to grow in faith – it's about flowering and flourishing
- § Some parallel ideas are about 'stepping-out' and 'life of service'
- § Is there an important idea about 'belonging' before taking next steps?
- § Enable sense of fellowship

Invitation:

- § Far better to make personal contact and invite rather than general requests for volunteers
- § Also, keep investing in people – enabling offering learning and opportunity, equipping, encouraging, being affirmative, recognize gifts
- § How do we recognize those who would like to take next steps?
- § Do we have a plan to foster future leaders/
- § Make sure it's a safe place to take risks
- § Make sure we stick to the Safeguarding policies

Focus:

- § The focus of our gifts can be in worship, nurturing, prayer, ministry, pastoral activity and mission – so many ways to live-out being a disciple
- § Preaching, teaching, home-groups
- Challenge:
 - § Many parishes are limited in the number of potential 'volunteers'
 - § Young people and families are often an empty area in churches
 - § Volunteers for key roles
 - § Being willing to stop something if it doesn't work
 - § Being willing to share across boundaries

Elections to Diocesan Synod

Bristol West elected the following numbers to Diocesan Synod:

House of Clergy Nine members elected (out of nine places)

House of Laity Ten members elected (out of eleven places)

Ex-Officio Two members from General Synod – one of each house (not elected)

THE END

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary's, Almondsbury
Statement of Financial Activities
January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total 2024	Total 2023
Incoming Resources (Note 2)					
Income from Charitable Activities	3,519.00			3,519.00	
Income from Donations and Legacies	66,764.27	1,638.10		68,402.37	
Income from Lich Gate Advertising	9,923.00			9,923.00	
Investment Income	1,692.10	1,443.41		3,135.51	
Total	81,898.37	3,081.51	0.00	84,979.88	119,595.60
Resources Expended (Note 3)					
Charitable Activities:					
Charity Management and Administration	148.30			148.30	
Church Buildings Costs	8,211.67	2,567.61		10,779.28	
Church Running Costs	10,658.31	5,285.96		15,944.27	
Cost of Services	206.27			206.27	
Employment Costs	8,100.73			8,100.73	
Expenditure on Lich Gate Magazine	10,106.52			10,106.52	
Grants and Donations	2,451.65			2,451.65	
Ministry Costs	3,642.18	593.23		4,235.41	
Parish Share	32,010.00			32,010.00	
Total	75,535.63	8,446.80	0.00	83,982.43	91,792.93
Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)					
	6,362.74	(5,365.29)	0.00	997.45	27,802.67
Gains/(Losses) on Revaluation of Investments	4,679.57		1,190.15	5,869.72	14,800.82
Net income/(expenditure)	11,042.31	(5,365.29)	1,190.15	6,867.17	42,603.49
Total Funds Brought Forward (Note 6)					
	136,237.19	14,938.03	51,997.85	203,173.07	160,569.58
Total Funds Carried Forward (Note 6)					
	147,279.50	9,572.74	53,188.00	210,040.24	203,173.07

Balance Sheet

	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2023
Fixed Assets (Note 4)		
Investments	149,533.63	143,663.91
Current Assets (Note 5)		
Debtors	3,601.43	2,850.00
Cash At Bank And In Hand	59,524.74	59,962.69
Total current assets	63,126.17	62,812.69
Creditors falling due within one year (Note 5)		
Other Creditors	2,619.56	3,303.53
Net Current Assets	60,506.61	59,509.16
Total Assets	210,040.24	203,173.07
Funds and Reserves (Note 7)		
Endowment Funds	53,188.00	51,997.85
Restricted Funds	9,572.74	14,938.03
Designated Funds	101,428.33	79,882.70
Unrestricted Funds	45,851.17	56,354.49
Total Funds	210,040.24	203,173.07

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, ALMONDSBURY

Notes to the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2024

Note 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared under the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the current Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005).

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for investment assets, which are shown at market value. The financial statements include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of other church groups (e.g. The bellringers) or informal gatherings of church members.

Fund accounting

Endowment funds are funds, the capital of which must be retained either permanently or at the PCC's discretion; the income derived from the endowment is to be used either as restricted or unrestricted income funds depending on the purpose for which the endowment was established in the first place.

Restricted funds comprise (a) income from endowments which is to be expended only on the restricted purposes intended by the donor and (b) revenue donations or grants for a specific PCC activity intended by the donor. Unrestricted funds are income funds which are to be spent on the PCC's general purpose. They may also be used to support Restricted funds which are deficient. Designated funds are unrestricted funds that are allocated by the PCC to specific projects and purposes. They may only be re-allocated at the direction of the PCC.

Incoming resources

Planned giving, collections and similar donations are recognised when received. Tax refunds are recognised when the incoming resource to which they relate is received. Grants and legacies are accounted for when the PCC is entitled to the use of the resource, their ultimate receipt is considered reasonably certain and the amounts due are reliably quantified. Dividends are accounted for when declared receivable, interest as and when accrued by the payer. All incoming resources are accounted for gross.

Resources expended

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded, if that award creates a binding or constructive obligation on the PCC. The diocesan parish share expected to be paid over is accounted for when due. All other expenditure is generally recognised when it is incurred and is accounted for gross.

Fixed assets

Consecrated and benefice property is not included in the accounts in accordance with s.10(2)(a) and (c) of the Charities Act 2011.

Moveable church furnishings held by the vicar and churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which requires a faculty for disposal are inalienable property, listed in the church's inventory, which can be inspected (at any reasonable time). For anything acquired prior to 2000 there is insufficient cost information available and therefore such assets are not valued in the financial statements. Subsequently no individual item has cost more than £2,500 and all such expenditure has been written off when incurred.

The PCC owns the land on which the Doctor's Surgery and Church Rooms were constructed. The building is subject to a 125-year lease to the doctor. The underlease on the Church Rooms was held by the PCC but was sold to the surgery in 2019. In view of the long-term letting of the surgery, no value is given to the land containing this surgery.

Equipment used within the church premises is depreciated on a straight-line basis over 4 years. Individual items of equipment with a purchase price of £2,500 or less are written off when the asset is acquired. There are no items with an accounting value at 31 December 2024.

Investments are held within accounts managed by the CCLA within the CBF Church of England Investment Fund.

The Consolidated Churchyard and the Frost and Miles funds are 'Permanent' Endowment funds. The former is an amalgamation of many individual gifts, funds and bequests. The latter is held under the terms of the bequests of the late Miss Frost and Mr Miles. The capital (and any associated capital growth) underpinning these funds remains locked into the Endowment funds, the income, in the form of dividends, being allocated to the respective Restricted revenue accounts which remain restricted to the purpose of the underlying fund. The Endowment Chancel fund contains the amalgamation of several obligations for the support of the chancel that were converted into lump sum payments a number of years ago. Again, income from dividends is restricted to expenditure on the Chancel. The Investment Fund was created from some of the proceeds of the sale by the PCC of the house containing the village shop. It is a Designated Fund.

Investments are valued at market value at 31 December 2024 using share values provided by the CCLA – the fund manager.

Terms Used in the Report

Fees received on behalf of third parties

Fees received on behalf of third parties (e.g. elements of wedding and funeral fees which are collected on behalf of the diocese) are not under the control of the PCC and, therefore, not included in these as income and expenditure.

Employees

During the year the PCC employed an organist and secretary (both part time). These employees equate to less than one full time employee. There were no associated social security costs but the secretary and organist are enrolled in the NEST pension scheme.

Payments to trustees

No payments or expenses were paid to any PCC member, persons closely connected to them or related parties, other than to reimburse clearly identifiable expenditure incurred on specific purchases or in accordance with the recommendations of the Diocese for the payment of clergy and Licensed Lay Minister expenses.

Note 2	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total
Incoming Resources				2024
Income from Charitable Activities				
PCC Fees Income:				
Funeral Travel - PCC	120.00			120.00
Funerals - PCC	1,728.00			1,728.00
Weddings - Bells - PCC	200.00			200.00
Weddings - PCC	1,471.00			1,471.00
Total	3,519.00	0.00	0.00	3,519.00
Income from Donations and Legacies				
Donations:				
Bible Reading Fellowship Notes Donations	30.00			30.00
Coffee/Catering Donations	650.95			650.95
Good Friday Activities Morning Donations	137.91			137.91
Toddlers/Messy Church Donations	502.67			502.67
General Donations	6,358.98			6,358.98
Legacies	1,000.00			1,000.00
Regular Giving	44,253.18			44,253.18
Gift Aid Claimed	12,220.93			12,220.93
Grants		1,638.10		1,638.10
Special Collections and Activities	1,609.65			1,609.65
Total	66,764.27	1,638.10	0.00	68,402.37
Income from Trading Activities				
Lich Gate Magazine Advertising	9,923.00	0.00	0.00	9,923.00
Investment Income:				
Dividends received		1,443.41		1,443.41
Interest Received	1,692.10			1,692.10
Total	1,692.10	1,443.41	0.00	3,135.51
Total Income	81,898.37	3,081.51	0.00	84,979.88

NB As a new structure of accounts has been introduced in 2024, the detailed breakdown in 2023 has not been included above. For the detailed breakdown please see the 2023 accounts.

The total income in 2023 was £119,595.60

Note 3	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total
Resources Expended				2024
Charitable Activities				
Charity Management & Administration				
Bank Charges	148.30	0.00	0.00	148.30
Church Buildings Costs:				
Church Insurance Costs	5,724.42			5,724.42
Church Routine Repairs and Maintenance	1,196.48	1,965.50		3,161.98
Churchyard Maintenance Costs	1,290.77	602.11		1,892.88
Total	8,211.67	2,567.61	0.00	10,779.28
Church Running Costs				
Electricity	3,252.06			3,252.06
Equipment Purchase and Maintenance	993.07	5,285.96		6,279.03
Heating Oil	4,602.48			4,602.48
Office and Administration Costs	1,705.52			1,705.52
Water and Sewage	105.18			105.18
Total	10,658.31	5,285.96	0.00	15,944.27
Cost of Services				
Organ / Piano Tuning & Repair	75.00			75.00
Wine / Wafers / Candles	131.27			131.27
Total	206.27	0.00	0.00	206.27
Employment Costs	8,100.73	0.00	0.00	8,100.73
Expenditure on Lich Gate Magazine	10,106.52	0.00	0.00	10,106.52
Grants and Donations				
Grants and Donations	842.00			842.00
Special Collections and Activities	1,609.65			1,609.65
Total	2,451.65	0.00	0.00	2,451.65
Ministry Costs:				
Children's Ministry Costs:	196.31	88.29		284.60
Good Friday Activities Morning	96.84	43.56		140.40
Messy Church and Toddlers	503.41	226.41		729.82
School	407.95	183.47		591.42
Sunday Groups	114.50	51.50		166.00
Total	1,319.01	593.23	0.00	1,912.24
General Ministry Costs:	28.41			28.41
Bible Reading Fellowship Notes	184.71			184.71
CCLI and Other Licences	604.50			604.50
Catering	616.87			616.87
Clergy Expenses	888.68			888.68
Total	2,323.17	0.00	0.00	2,323.17
Total	3,642.18	593.23	0.00	4,235.41
Parish Share	32,010.00			32,010.00
Total	75,535.63	8,446.80	0.00	83,982.43

NB As a new structure of accounts has been introduced in 2024, the detailed breakdown in 2023 has not been included above. For the detailed breakdown please see the 2023 accounts.

The total expenditure in 2023 was £91,792.93

Note 4**Fixed Assets**

Investments	Investment Fund	Chancel	Churchyard	Frost and Miles	Total
Brought Forward 31 Dec 2024	91,666.06	8,937.01	21,690.24	21,370.60	143,663.91
Gains/(Losses) on Investment Assets	4,679.57	204.55	496.46	489.14	5,869.72
Carried Forward 31 Dec 2025	96,345.63	9,141.56	22,186.70	21,859.74	149,533.63

All Investments are in CCLA Church of England Investment Accounts

Note 5**Current assets and Liabilities**

Current Assets	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2023
Debtors		
Gift Aid Pending	4,251.53	2,850.00
Pilning and Compton Greenfield - Clergy Expenses	121.66	
Prepaid Grant Income	(771.76)	
Total	3,601.43	2,850.00
Cash At Bank		
CCLA - Deposit Account	22,546.05	21,409.66
HSBC - Deposit Accounts	29,810.13	32,884.68
HSBC - Main Current Account	7,168.56	5,668.35
Total	59,524.74	59,962.69
Total current assets	63,126.17	62,812.69
Current Liabilities		
Creditors due within one year		
Miscellaneous liabilities	215.74	3,291.53
Deferred Income - Lich Gate	1,047.00	
Liability - Heating Oil	728.82	
Liability - Invoice paid twice	445.00	
Receipts on Behalf of 3rd Parties	183.00	
Total Current Liabilities	2,619.56	3,291.53
Net Current Assets	60,506.61	59,521.16

Note 6

Analysis of Funds

Fund Name	Type of Fund	Brought Forward 31 Dec 2023	Gains/(Losses) on Investment Assets	Income	Expenses	Transfers	Carried Forward 31 Dec 2024
Chancel	Endowment	8,937.01	204.55	0.00	0.00		9,141.56
Churchyard	Endowment	21,690.24	496.46	0.00	0.00		22,186.70
Frost and Miles	Endowment	21,370.60	489.14	0.00	0.00		21,859.74
Total Endowment		51,997.85	1,190.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	53,188.00
Bells - ABRP	Restricted	14,938.03		0.00	5,613.36		9,324.67
Chancel	Restricted	0.00		248.07	0.00		248.07
Churchyard	Restricted	0.00		602.11	602.11		0.00
Frost and Miles	Restricted	0.00		593.23	593.23		0.00
Total Restricted		14,938.03	0.00	1,443.41	6,808.70	0.00	9,572.74
Bells	Designated	4,882.70		200.00	0.00		5,082.70
Building and Grounds	Designated	30,000.00				(30,000.00)	0.00
Short/Medium Reserve	Designated	5,000.00				(5,000.00)	0.00
Long Term Reserve	Designated	40,000.00				(40,000.00)	0.00
Share Volatility Reserve	Designated	15,000.00				(15,000.00)	0.00
Investment Fund	Designated	0.00	4,679.57	0.00	0.00	91,666.06	96,345.63
Total Designated		94,882.70	4,679.57	200.00	0.00	1,666.06	101,428.33
General Fund	Unrestricted	41,354.49		81,482.63	75,319.89	(1,666.06)	45,851.17
Total Unrestricted		41,354.49	0.00	81,482.63	75,319.89	(1,666.06)	45,851.17
Totals		203,173.07	5,869.72	83,126.04	82,128.59	0.00	210,040.24

Independent examiner's report to the PCC of St Mary's, Almondsbury

This report on the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 1 to 8, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ('the Regulations') and s.43 of the Charities Act 1993 ('the Act') to the extent described below.

Respective responsibilities of the PCC, Examiner and Treasurer

Members of the PCC are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. They consider that, given the relatively simple nature of the church accounts (and corresponding income and expenditure), the formal the audit requirement of the Regulations and s.43(2) of the Act does not apply. The SOFA is examined by an independent examiner who is not a member of any of the PCC committees but who is a member of the congregation. Independently, the SOFA is checked against bank accounts and CCLA returns by members of the PCC who confirm that they are satisfied that the SOFA presents a true picture of the church assets held in these accounts. It is my responsibility as treasurer to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.


Basis of this report by the independent examiner

My examination of SOFA2024 was carried out in accordance with good practice to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the figures and calculations. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from PCC 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 the SOFA contains any material inaccuracy;
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

 12/2/25

Anthony S G Kite