

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN HIGHAM FERRERS

England & Wales - Charity number 1132678

Details

Other names ST MARY THE VIRGIN'S PCC, HIGHAM FERRERS

Status Registered

Legal form Previously excepted

Registered 2009-11-12

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address The Vicarage
Wood Street
Higham Ferrers
Rushden
Northamptonshire
Northamp

Phone 01933356293

Email stmarys.higham@gmail.com

Website www.stmaryhighamferrers.org

Activities

Objects: Promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church.

Activities: Promoting the ecclesiastical Parish and the whole mission of the Church of England, pastoral, evangelistic, social & ecumenical.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** UNDEFINED. IN PRACTICE, LOCAL.
- Northamptonshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£113,093	£109,336	-	-
2023-12-31	£249,408	£126,439	-	-
2022-12-31	£249,409	£126,439	-	-
2021-12-31	£164,230	£242,770	-	-
2020-12-31	£109,937	£63,107	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Brenda May Eildred		2021-05-23
Darren Kenneth Robinson		2018-10-03
Elizabeth Rosamund Coleman		2025-05-11
Graham Newell		2022-12-11
Helen Marie Stevenson		2025-05-11
Jane Alexandra Jackson		2019-04-04
Karen Holmes		2016-04-26
Linda Jayne Boxhall		2018-09-18
Mark David Smith		2022-06-01
Peter James Bond		2025-05-11
Peter MacDonald Swindley		2019-04-04
Rev Louise Suzanne Bishop		2023-07-18
Rosemary Judith Nayyar		2025-05-11
STEWART JOHN WILES		
Sandra Ann Coleman		2021-05-23
Susan Marie Clarke		2021-05-23

Accounts

St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers
Year ended 31/12/2024

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	£63,894.06	0.00	£11,755.82	0.00	£75,649.88	£74,639.20
Income from charitable activities	£7,993.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	£7,993.25	£10,487.97
Other trading activities	£12,628.32	0.00	£8,257.00	0.00	£20,885.32	£42,368.41
Investments	£192.22	£1,665.58	£5,273.57	0.00	£7,131.37	£6,843.49
Other income	£1,433.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,433.59	£6,944.47
Total income	£86,141.44	£1,665.58	£25,286.39	0.00	£113,093.41	£141,283.54
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	£439.52	0.00	£3,167.15	0.00	£3,606.67	£4,568.88
Expenditure on charitable activities	£80,806.02	0.00	£24,923.64	0.00	£105,729.66	£247,515.51
Other expenditure	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total expenditure	£81,245.54	0.00	£28,090.79	0.00	£109,336.33	£252,084.39
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	£4,895.90	£1,665.58	(£2,804.40)	0.00	£3,757.08	(£110,800.85)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,832.40
Gross transfers between funds - out	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(£1,832.40)
Other recognised gains / losses						
Gains/losses on investment assets	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net movement in funds	£4,895.90	£1,665.58	(£2,804.40)	0.00	£3,757.08	(£110,800.85)

Reconciliation of funds

Total funds brought forward	(£1,461.60)	£31,665.00	£128,770.60	0.00	£158,974.00	£269,774.85
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Total funds carried forward	£3,434.30	£33,330.58	£125,966.20	0.00	£162,731.08	£158,974.00
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Represented by**Unrestricted**

General fund	£3,434.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	£3,434.30	(£1,461.60)
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Designated

Choir Robes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Choir Vestry	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Community Outreach	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Father Warnes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Grace Milgate & Peggy Horsfield Young People Fund	0.00	£33,330.58	0.00	0.00	£33,330.58	£31,665.00
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Restricted

Agency collection	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Bede House	0.00	0.00	£5,192.79	0.00	£5,192.79	£5,192.79
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Bell Appeal	0.00	0.00	£4,110.65	0.00	£4,110.65	£6,364.46
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Chantry Chapel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Childrens Corner	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Choir	0.00	0.00	£310.14	0.00	£310.14	£310.14
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Elizabeth Groome Organ Scholarship	0.00	0.00	£1,547.98	0.00	£1,547.98	£1,547.98
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Heating Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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J Crew (Fabric)	0.00	0.00	£3,267.22	0.00	£3,267.22	£3,195.04
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Lady Chapel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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Restoration Fund	0.00	0.00	£62,553.92	0.00	£62,553.92	£54,766.72
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Servery	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
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St Marys 600 Appeal	0.00	0.00	£48,983.50	0.00	£48,983.50	£57,393.47
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Balance Sheet detailed

Class and code	Description	As at 31/12/2024	As at 31/12/2023
Current assets			
6501	Lloyds TSB current account	£20,362.02	£15,575.12
6503	Lloyds TSB 600 Appeal account	£16,643.79	£20,269.35
6505	Lloyds TSB Restoration account	0.00	0.00
6510	CCLA (CBF) General fund 1D	£2,048.97	£1,945.70
6520	CCLA (CBF) Restoration fund 3D	£84,787.17	£81,778.65
6530	CCLA (CBF) Bell Appeal 4D	£3,891.72	£6,145.53
6540	J Crew Investment account	£3,267.22	£3,195.04
6550	CCLA Grace Milgate	£33,045.24	£31,379.66
6560	CCLA (CBF) Father Warnes	0.00	0.00
6590	Cash in hand	£25.56	£25.56
Z05	Accounts Receivable	0.00	0.00
	Total Current assets	£164,071.69	£160,314.61
Liabilities			
6601	Loans received	0.00	0.00
6699	Agency collections	£1,340.61	£1,340.61
Z04	Accounts Payable	0.00	0.00
	Total Liabilities	£1,340.61	£1,340.61
	Net Asset surplus (deficit)	£162,731.08	£158,974.00
Reserves			
	Excess/(deficit) to date	£3,757.08	£89,821.47
Z01	Starting balances	£158,974.00	£69,152.53
	Total Reserves	£162,731.08	£158,974.00
Represented by Funds			
	General (Unrestricted)	£3,434.30	(£1,461.60)
	Designated	£33,330.58	£31,665.00
	Restricted	£125,966.20	£128,770.60
	Total	£162,731.08	£158,974.00

Analysis of income and expenditure

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	
					This year	Last year
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:						
Donations and legacies						
0101 - Gift Aid - Bank	£31,892.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	£31,892.67	£34,118.36
0110 - Gift Aid - Envelopes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,523.55
0120 - Donations -Gift Aid	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£820.00
0301 - Loose plate collections	£14,376.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£14,376.00	£5,479.21
0302 - Envelopes - Non Gift Aid	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£956.25
0304 - SumUp Payments	£3,445.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£3,445.00	0.00
0405 - Web Site donations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£218.48
0550 - Donations appeals etc	£870.01	0.00	£7,355.82	0.00	£8,225.83	£605.00
0601 - Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	£7,032.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	£7,032.78	£7,487.97
0701 - Legacies	£3,192.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£3,192.00	0.00
08A1 - Non-recurring one-off grants	0.00	0.00	£4,400.00	0.00	£4,400.00	£23,252.51
0901 - Other funds generated	£3,085.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	£3,085.60	0.00
0902 - Wall Safes-Candles	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£102.17
0906 - Church Flowers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£25.70
0908 - Misc	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£50.00
Donations and legacies Totals	£63,894.06	0.00	£11,755.82	0.00	£75,649.88	£74,639.20
Income from charitable activities						
1101 - Fees for weddings and funerals	£7,993.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	£7,993.25	£10,450.20
1210 - Bookstall sales to promote objectives	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£37.77
Income from charitable activities Totals	£7,993.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	£7,993.25	£10,487.97

Other trading activities

0551 - Fund Raising	£3,163.37	0.00	£8,257.00	0.00	£11,420.37	£4,404.73
0555 - St Marys 600 Appeal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£29,999.40
1102 - Heating & Lighting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£495.00
1220 - Bookstall sales - fund raising	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£52.83
1231 - Bede House - Lettings	£9,464.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	£9,464.95	£7,416.45
Other trading activities Totals	£12,628.32	0.00	£8,257.00	0.00	£20,885.32	£42,368.41

Investments

1001 - Dividends	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£43.88
1010 - Increase in share value	0.00	0.00	£72.18	0.00	£72.18	£273.00
1020 - Bank and CBF interest	£192.22	£1,665.58	£5,201.39	0.00	£7,059.19	£5,506.61
1030 - Rent from lands or buildings	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,020.00
Investments Totals	£192.22	£1,665.58	£5,273.57	0.00	£7,131.37	£6,843.49

Other income

0602 - VAT Reclaimed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£6,547.80
0909 - Chelveston Stationery Contribution	£767.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	£767.59	0.00
1315 - Special Collections	£666.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£666.00	£396.67
Other income Totals	£1,433.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,433.59	£6,944.47

Income and endowments Grand totals

£86,141.44	£1,665.58	£25,286.39	0.00	£113,093.41	£141,283.54
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EXPENDITURE ON:**Raising funds**

1730 - Costs of fundraising	£439.52	0.00	£3,167.15	0.00	£3,606.67	£155.17
1735 - St Marys 600	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£4,413.71
Raising funds Totals	£439.52	0.00	£3,167.15	0.00	£3,606.67	£4,568.88

Expenditure on charitable activities

1870 - Secular charities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£500.00
1875 - Special Collections	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£430.00
1910 - Parish Share payments	£30,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£30,000.00	£25,000.00
2001 - Assistant staff costs	£1,360.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,360.01	0.00
2050 - Salary of parish administrator	£7,887.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	£7,887.48	£2,325.00
2101 - Working expenses of incumbent	£586.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	£586.34	0.00
2201 - Parish training and mission	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£930.00
2301 - Church running - insurance	£10,267.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	£10,267.77	£9,959.52
2303 - Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£239.15
2310 - Church office - telephone	£729.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	£729.67	£908.07
2320 - Organist costs	£3,770.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£3,770.00	£3,984.02
2330 - Church maintenance	£6,552.06	0.00	£2,580.00	0.00	£9,132.06	£3,497.66
2340 - Upkeep of services	£1,053.84	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,053.84	£2,490.02
2350 - Upkeep of churchyard	£70.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£70.00	£12.99
2360 - Administration	£491.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	£491.35	£572.63
2361 - Photo Copier/Printing	£1,926.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,926.61	£1,796.19
2370 - Visiting speakers / locums	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£660.00
2401 - Church running - electric	£1,678.98	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,678.98	£1,950.93
2402 - Chantry Chapel - Electricity	£1,643.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,643.39	£1,692.03
2410 - Church running - gas	£4,577.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	£4,577.47	£9,027.67
2420 - Church running - water	£154.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	£154.01	0.00
2510 - Bookstall costs	£78.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	£78.50	0.00

2526 - Fees re Weddings/Funerals- Disbursements	£615.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	£615.40	£4,199.60
2530 - Bede House - electricity	£1,500.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,500.30	£2,156.18
2540 - Bede House - gas	£2,834.15	0.00	0.00	0.00	£2,834.15	£4,949.52
2545 - Bede House - Water Rates	£630.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	£630.49	£572.60
2560 - Bede House - General Expenditure	£646.20	0.00	£1,488.00	0.00	£2,134.20	£4,544.92
2565 - Bede House - Cleaning	£1,752.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£1,752.00	£5,172.10
2701 - Church major repairs - structure	0.00	0.00	£20,855.64	0.00	£20,855.64	£157,257.91
2710 - Church major repairs - installation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	£2,686.80
Expenditure on charitable activities Totals	£80,806.02	0.00	£24,923.64	0.00	£105,729.66	£247,515.51
Expenditure Grand totals	£81,245.54	0.00	£28,090.79	0.00	£109,336.33	£252,084.39

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers.

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31/12/2024.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); 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 Commission. 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

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



Paul Adams
19 Wymington Park
Rushden
Northants
NN10 9JP

25/04/2025

Accounts

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS and reports for the
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING, Sunday 19 May 2024,
11.45am
Including the
ANNUAL REPORT and FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE PAROCHIAL
CHURCH COUNCIL
For the year ended 31 December 2023

Vicar's Report 2023

I must start with giving my thanks for your support, friendship and welcome during my first half year with you.

I started in July 2023, and in many ways that now seems ages ago, we seem to have covered a lot of things since then! Many different services as well as our usual Sunday ones, sharing our worship with church family and visitors alike. As I have adjusted to and understood services that are quite Higham Ferrers specific, to this beautiful but different church building, you have adjusted to me and my way of worship, different hymns, and the inflatable world at the Christingle. I have been heartened by your willingness to let me try out different things, like Blue Christmas and to put back things like reading the Gospel from the centre of the church.

2023 was also marked by social events, concerts and my first introduction to Higham Sparkle with the amazing Angel Festival. For the connections that we started to renew and remake around the town with our schools and uniformed youth groups.

2023 also had a significant phase of the building works that was funded by the 600 Appeal, but one that caused some pain when the works required that I close the Bede House for more months that we would have liked. The responsibility we all have for our three Grade 1 listed buildings is immense, but there is also a feeling of love and care for them which has supported the huge amount of fundraising required in recent years. The challenge will be to start to work out how we best use them, for ourselves

as St Mary's church but also how they can be a part of our parish community, our town.

However, the pool of people that "do things" is small relative to our congregation size and to our town. The load has at time been unfairly borne and cannot continue and we need to plan for a wider involvement. Roles and responsibilities can be shared or undertaken jointly, and we need to think anew about our church structures and processes.

St Mary's weathered a long vacancy and thanks must go to Canon Lesley, Fr Paul, Rev Linda, and our Reader Brenda for ensuring services and occasional offices happened, pastoral care was given, and more. Together with the wardens and members of the PCC, the ministry patterns were maintained over that long time. Taking on building projects, major fundraising and more shows the strengths that are in the PCC, one that is small with several spaces on it unfilled. I wonder what we can achieve together if we fill those vacant spaces?

We have challenges, of course, we are still a small church, and we need to grow across all ages but especially around young families. We need to find new and different ways to share our faith and allow all to worship our Lord in ways that work for us. We have a real issue around our finances, we have not paid our Parish Share in full for many years, and the current financial squeeze on us all, increasing utilities etc adds complexity to any plans.

But however gloomy that may seem, there are green shoots over and above any slight bounce that can occur as a vacancy ends. Occasional offices are increasing, numbers attending major festivals are higher, more people are visiting this church site during the day. Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us in how we respond in this new year.

A strength of the joint benefice is its inclusivity, we number amongst our congregations those who may not always feel welcomed elsewhere but are here. I would therefore like to build

upon this by considering membership of Inclusive Church, giving a definite statement to anyone looking at us or joining us that all are welcome here. It would be a statement of our putting our faith into action, and loving, welcoming and caring for the friend and the stranger.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this report, and for all of you who do so much in many ways to support St Mary's. It is a privilege and a joy to be with you here.

With every blessing,

Mother Louise

Electoral Roll report on 2023

During 2023, five members of the congregation died decreasing the number on the roll from 114 to 109. Seventeen people have been added to the roll during the revision period bringing the roll number up to 126, of which 61% are resident within the Parish of Higham Ferrers.

Mthr Louise, *for the Electoral Roll Officer*

PCC Membership

The clergy, licenced lay reader, church wardens, and lay representatives on the Deanery Synod are members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) ex officio. In addition, up to 12 lay members are elected at our Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC

Vicar 2023	Louise Bishop	Appointed 5 July
Licenced Lay Reader	Brenda Eildred	

Church Warden	Sandy Coleman
Church Warden	Dave Stuttle
Lay representatives of Deanery Synods	Lyn Boxall
	Sue Clarke
	Peter Swindley
Elected Members	Sue Dennis
	Karen Holmes
	Jane Jackson
	Ria Jefferies Resigned 22 November 2023
	Graham Newell
	Darren Robinson
	Mark Smith
	Stewart Wiles

The PCC performs a vital function within a church, providing oversight and governance, representing the wider church, and helping steer our church life.

It is hoped that the PCC for 2024 will have 12 elected Lay members in place.

Churchwardens Report

We would like to start by thanking the Holy Handymen, Cleaning team and all other volunteers who assist in taking care of our amazing three grade 1 listed buildings. We are grateful to the Friends of St Marys for the work they do in the church yard with the flower beds, bulb planting and the re-wilding project, and also thank Peter Swindley for the work he does when we need to inter ashes in the flower beds.

Our thanks go to the people who open and lock the church on a daily basis. This enables us to keep the church open for private prayer and for visitors who require peace and quiet or just to enjoy the lovely building. We have seen an increase in the number of visitors over the last twelve months and there have been some very positive comments in the visitors' book.

We are grateful that the re-roofing of the Bede House has been completed and that it will be good for another 200 years! We would like to thank all involved in the project, in particular builder Steve Todd, architect Henry Sanders and project manager for St Mary's, Stewart Wiles. This wouldn't have been possible without the sterling efforts of the 600 Appeal group with special thanks going to Sue Dennis for leading this. Within 2023, we have also had some stonework repairs made to the church, again by Steve Todd.

Lighting within the church is improving with the installation of LED bulbs to the chandeliers as the older types of bulbs are no longer available. LED bulbs are also cheaper to run.

After a long period of interregnum, it was a pleasure to welcome Mthr Louise to the Benefice in July 2023 and we are pleased that she and her family are settling in well and are making Higham Ferrers their home. With her arrival there have been some changes made to our services and liturgical offering and we feel that these have had a positive impact on our worship. We would like to thank especially Karen Holmes and Lyn Boxall who work tirelessly for the benefit of the church.

Finally, as Church Wardens, we would like to thank the PCC and all those who volunteer in whatever capacity at our church, without the hard work and support of whom we would not be able to undertake our roles.

Sandy Coleman and Dave Stuttle, Church Wardens.

Benefice Safeguarding report

Safeguarding is part of our Christian duty of care and in the Benefice, Safeguarding is a regular agenda point on all PCC meetings. In both churches there are copies of the most recent safeguarding policies on noticeboards and a folder with the handbook plus relevant information on how to report and where to get help. All leaders of Parish groups undergo Safeguarding

training every 3 years and a record is kept by the Benefice Safeguarding Officer and Vicar.

The Safeguarding Policy along with Helpline numbers can also be found on the website link

<https://www.stmaryhighamferrers.org/safeguarding>

In the front of the Handbook is a Policy Statement from the Church of England that states that:

The Church of England is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks as welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the Gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.

Overall, the past year has been quiet with no issues to report.

Our Parish Dashboard score has remained in the 75-90% in both churches and I am grateful to all who have continued to undertake the training they need for the responsibilities they are covering so that this good score continues. The Dashboard acts as an audit to the Diocese, keeping them informed of our progress.

As a Benefice we have managed to keep on top of most of the DBS requirements and are working with the diocese on the grey areas where we use sessional staff to help support areas such as organ playing and Bell ringing without it becoming overly cumbersome.

We have seen changes of personnel in the Diocese. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor post was vacant and was replaced by Carole Fitzsimons who then left Jan 2024 and the

post is currently being covered by a Temporary DSA Beth Miller, Safeguarding training is supported by Amie Freeman.

This year I will be handing over the Benefice Safeguarding role to Lyn Boxall who has kindly agreed to take it on. There will be a period of handover so that we can ensure Lyn has all the information she needs.

Please do continue to report any concerns, no matter how small they may seem, they all matter and could prevent someone suffering alone and unnecessarily.

Thank you to every for your support over the last 4 ½ years. Please do continue to support Lyn as she takes over.

Brenda Eldred, Benefice Safeguarding Officer.

Higham Deanery Synod report

March in Rushden; a special event by the Gen2 team, providing an interactive opportunity for those present to explore the role played by young people and opportunities for helping them to grow in faith.

June in Chelveston; Haydon Spenceley, Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Director of Vocation and Formation spoke his role overseeing training for the Diocese. Deanery Mission Youth Enabler Lizzie Mouesbauer shared good news youth work stories from around the Deanery. This was Chris Youngman's last Synod before retiring, he was thanked for his hard work and leadership during his time as the Rural Dean. Carolyn Wignall was elected Deanery Lay Chair.

October in Rushden; Chris Dalliston, Dean of Peterborough, spoke on various news and topics at Peterborough Cathedral. Reminding us that we are not alone, and are part of the larger, worldwide church. He noted that Bishop Debbie Sellin would be good for the entire diocese and especially for children and young people.

Other news

- Sue Clarke led three Deanery litter picks during Lent 2023.
- We held a Deanery Prayer event in May, as part of Canon Steve Benoy's Thy Kingdom Come walk around the Diocese.
- Our annual Beer & Hymns evening at Newton Bromswold held in July.

Andrew Presland, Deanery Standing Committee

Other Reports in the Life of the Church follow:

Family Worship

The year started with us still in vacancy but with the help of Father Paul we continued to provide our monthly All age service at 10.30 on the first Sunday of the month. In July we welcomed Mother Louise and our All Age continues to grow and flourish.

Other family services offer a variety of ways to worship and are all Lay led by our Children's ministry team. Apart from All Age we offer three very different ways for engaging families and children over the month.

The second Sunday is Breakfast Church at 9am in the Bede House with everyone contributing hot and cold food to be shared around a large table. We do this in the way Jesus often shared meals with his disciples. We begin with a sung Grace, we have a reading which we discuss and share thoughts about, we have prayers and usually a good rousing sing at the end. There are usually between 15-25 people of all ages.

Kickstart began towards the end of the year and is a teaching session for the children at the 10.30 service on the third Sunday. At the beginning of the service the children go to the Bede House, where they have a reading, a prayer, a song and do activities linked with the reading. They return to church for the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion. At the end of the service,

they present their activities/pictures to Mother Louise and the congregation.

Morning Worship is on the fourth Sunday at 9am in the Bede House. This year this has been less well attended and so we are looking again at the format and timing, however, we feel it is still important to offer for those who need it. We are reminded that Jesus said "where two or three are gathered in my name there I am in the midst of them."

Brenda, Mother Louise and the Children's Ministry Team

Children's Ministry Report

The children's ministry team have continued over the year to support family events for our community, and we were delighted when Mother Louise joined us in July.

The events this past year were as follows; -

- A pre Mothering Sunday craft day, held in the Bede House, where the children make gifts and cards for their mums and the uniformed organisations help us to put together bunches of daffodils for the Sunday Service.
- The Good Friday Easter Experience where we act out the story of Holy Week in the church and churchyard and then finish in the Bede House with Easter crafts, Hot Cross buns and an Easter egg and story book to take home. This is an opportunity to spread the real story of Easter to the wider community.
- The Light Party - an alternative to Halloween was also a success.
- Making feathers for an Angel for Sparkle weekend was great fun and involved some of the schools.
- Christingle Service - we made 150 Christingles, and all were used. The service was very popular again with the wider community; it supports the work of the Children's Society and is an opportunity to explain Jesus as the light of the world giving hope to those in need.
- Crib Service on Christmas Eve. Once again this was a popular service with the church being filled with families and all generations, a wonderful way to start Christmass.

- Thank you to all the team for the amazing support and to all who come and make the events successful.

Louise, Brenda and team

First Friday Club

The First Friday Club is our Evening Club for young people aged 10+ meeting in the Bede House on the first Friday of each month from September to July 5.30-7pm.

We have 58 young people on our register and average between 25-30 attending per session.

The Club is a real opportunity for our local young people to visit our church in a relaxed and friendly session and feel the welcome of our ministry team and volunteers, building relationships with the young people and their families.

We offer a wide range of activities in the Bede House, Churchyard and in the Church. This ranges from table tennis, ball games and board games to film nights, to the more active pancake racing, easter egg hunts and 'sports day'. We have held Taskmaster Challenge events and Egg Hunts in the Church, so if you have found a paper airplane or a foam Easter Egg, you have found evidence of our fun! Food is always involved. Our last session in July will be a celebratory BBQ in the churchyard.

The Club is self-funding. We ask for a £2 donation per child towards the costs of the sessions.

As a volunteering team, we all thoroughly enjoy the sessions too - we all have an enhanced DBS check and have completed our safeguarding training, to keep our young people safe. We would welcome new volunteers...so if you like what you hear, please ask about joining us.

Leona Mantle

The altar party report

The altar party serve every Sunday, at weekday services and on feast days. We are a team of long serving members with many years' experience.

Each Sunday we prepare the altar coverings and robes based on the colours of the liturgical calendar. We ensure the smooth running of the service with support and help to Mthr Louise or visiting priest. It is the responsibility of people in the group to clear away after each service. Supplies of communion wine, wafers, candles and clean linen looked after by individuals in the group.

This year we have served not only at St. Mary's but also at St. John's at special services. The servers and chalice rota is compiled three monthly and distributed via email and printed copies for those who require it.

The year 2023 was important because in July we had the induction of Mother Louise, a service streamed to all and with the Bishop of Brixworth present plus many more people attending showing their support and friendship to Mthr Louise.

Karen Holmes & Lyn Boxall

Readers and Intercessors

— Sunday by Sunday and Feast by Feast, the readings and prayers are brought to you by our team of readers and intercessors, in the hope that different voices and different perspectives will help you in your own worship and your prayers. It is one way in which we show that lay people also have an important ministry, and a role to play in the liturgy of the church.

Currently we have eight readers and eight intercessors, but we are always on the look-out for more of the congregation to join in this work. Training is provided, and if you are interested in taking on this role, have a word with Richard Oberman. We shall be very pleased to see you.

Richard Oberman

Sidespeople

I would like to thank the sidespeople for the service they provide for the church each Sunday with greeting parishioners and visitors, taking the collection and tidying the books away afterwards etc. I would also like to thank them for supporting additional services, including Midnight Mass.

We started 2023 with a team of sixteen. We now have twelve people with people no longer able to participate because of other commitments and ill health. If anyone knows of someone who could do this role, please let me know.

Sandy Coleman

St Mary's Choir

As we do not currently have a Director of Music, Revd Linda has continued to choose the anthems, take choir practices, and arrange the rota for the organists on Sundays and other special services.

The repertoire is limited due to the small number in the choir at present, but if an anthem is known to the choir it can be sung well, which is better than singing a more difficult piece badly. If a number of singers are away on a particular Sunday we sing a hymn instead of an anthem.

During 2023 the choir sang on most Sundays, on feast days, at Revd Louise's installation, at the Town Carol service, and at some funerals. For some special occasions we are grateful that we have had additional singers (including some former choir members).

Sadly Susan Fincham is no longer singing with us due to health reasons, but we are very pleased that Vivian Buckby joined us this January. We would welcome new singers, preferably with

some experience in singing in a church choir. Anyone interested should speak to Revd Linda.

Organists

Unfortunately John Wearmouth no longer plays here, and Matthew Foster, our organ scholar, has moved to Chelmsford Cathedral to gain more experience in organ playing. However, we are pleased that Rosemary Nayaar now plays here once a month so we have 3 regular organists, and we thank them.

David Richardson

Baptism Group

Several baptisms have been celebrated throughout this year and several more have already been arranged for next few months and the coming year. Baptisms usually take place during the Sunday service, however, if a smaller service is preferred this can be arranged for after a Sunday service or at another time, with consultation with Mother Louise.

At present the team is made up of a small group of ladies who, on the day of the baptism will welcome families and their guests to the church and support them throughout the service.

We try to keep in touch with families as often as we can by sending baptism anniversary cards and event reminders if the family have indicated their interest. Many thanks to Joy York who has written and delivered many cards over the years.

We are happy to welcome new members, both male and female, to the team. If you interested please contact Sue Thompson.

Sue Thompson

Pastoral team

The Pastoral team is a small group which meets once or twice a year to review the pastoral needs of the congregation and the wider community.

All members have DBS safeguarding training and keep aware of the needs within the congregation and the community.

Every six weeks members of the team review and update the prayer list and ascertain where there is acute or long term need for visiting. Many of the congregation also undertake visiting which is much appreciated by those who are unwell or unable to get out as much as they would like.

We are hoping to set up a group to support those who have been bereaved and could, perhaps, offer comfort and friendship to the recently bereaved.

There is a lot to do. If you would like to join our group please speak to Sue Thompson or Brenda Eldred.

Sue Thompson

Social and Fundraising Committee

The first event for 2023 was the Saturday Coffee Morning raising £353.02 followed by a very successful Quiz Night with food in May which attracted people from all over the place and raised an amazing £1008.90.

In July we had Brass in the Church rather than Brass on the Grass due to windy weather conditions and at that event we raised £244.40.

Harvest Lunch was held on Sunday 1st October where we had over 30 people attend and we raised £298.47. It was a tasty lunch and good for the parish family to meet up together for a social event.

Christmas Sparkle this year was organized by the 600 Appeal Committee. This event raised an amazing sum of money with some people from the Social and Fundraising Committee helping out over the weekend.

Our next event was on Saturday December 2nd the Wreath Making Workshop which was attended by 45 people and raised a fantastic £655.

On Sunday 17th December we offered mulled wine and mince pies to those attending a Service of Lessons and Carols in the church.

Karen Holmes

The 600 Appeal

In 2023 our focus turned from St Marys Church to the exterior work on the Bede House. Funds were raised from personal donations, the Higham Hot Hundred, Coffee Mornings, Open Garden, a second Fynnius Fogg concert and NPAT concert, Football Tournament, and at the end of the year our hugely successful Angel Festival. A total of £28,330 was raised towards the cost of Bede House repairs.

The Higham Hot Hundred continues to be a steady source of income with £3,000 per annum guaranteed and, because we have such generous supporters who often choose to donate all, or part of their winnings back to the 600 Appeal, the total amount raised in 2023 was a wonderful £3,850.

Our Angel Festival aimed to raise £10,000 (a 20% increase on the last one in 2014) but was so well supported in so many different ways that it actually raised a magnificent £15,500. Our fundraising group is reducing for a number of different reasons and the appeal may have to draw to a close in 2024 but it has achieved a huge amount since its inception in October 2020 and we are grateful to all of the parish family for their help, support and enthusiasm to raise such huge sums of money to keep our beautiful buildings in good repair.

Sue Dennis, chair

Mothers Union

The branch met regularly throughout the year in various locations including the Bede House, church, and Ruth's home.

Speakers included Douglas Hall talking about his volunteering trip to Ukraine, and members of the clergy team.

We celebrated Candlemas at Ruth's home, joined our Methodist friends for the World Day of Prayer service and attended the induction of Rev'd Louise as our new vicar.

Social events included our annual lunch at Rushden Golf Club, lunch with our former Branch Leader Dora, a celebration tea to mark the coronation of King Charles, and a supper meeting of MU & Friends in August at the Water Mill in Ringstead. Our Coffee morning in June raised £200 for the MU Summer of Hope Appeal.

At the AGM we agreed to continue as a committee-led branch with Ruth Bond as Branch Treasurer, Jane Smeathers as Branch Secretary and Margaret Britchford, Diane Buckby, Angela Tobin and Linda Vickers as committee members. Currently we have nine members, plus two who pay direct to Mary Sumner House. We were represented at Deanery Committee meetings and the Diocesan Forum and enjoyed the Deanery Advent Carol Service at St Mary's Finedon.

In December we heard the sad news that one of our former members, Mary Jackson, had passed away. We are thankful for her long association with Mothers' Union.

Jane Smeathers, Secretary

Bellringers' Report 2023

Shortly after the last APCM, the Coronation of King Charles took place. Our ringers marked the day by half-an-hour's ringing in the afternoon, with an excellent peal of Grandsire Caters on the Sunday afternoon, much enjoyed by all at the Market Square street party, although apparently not by those at the Green Dragon's jazz concert!

Our successful coffee morning for February's Farmers' Market raised a goodly sum, adding to previous contributions to buy crockery and kitchen equipment for the Bede House, with part

going towards the 600 Appeal. Further support to the 600 Appeal by donations from visiting peal bands, often gift-aided.

On the ringing front, we have managed to ring for all Sunday morning services except for two when illness and holidays left us short. We were delighted to find that our new vicar's son Alex is a ringer, and we also have one excellent learner, William Andrews, but as our band ages we are desperately in need of some younger blood. I approach my ninth decade soon and am acutely aware of the need for succession planning, but my deputy is only slightly younger than me.

It is urgent we find more learners if our beautiful ring of bells is to ring on in future decades.

Bob Dennis, Tower Captain

St. Mary's Handymen's Report

Firstly, let us thank Richard Hall, Nick Lee, Fred Frost, Stephen Tuffnail and Graham Newell with subsidiary help from Alan Bishop and Brian Behagg for all their efforts over the year and for keeping the Bede House drains clear and roding out blocked toilets.

Regularly, manholes were lifted and flushed out in the Vicarage garden and drive, ivy was removed from the walls around the churchyard, and the surface drains leading up the drive to the Church cleared, setting of heating schedules in both buildings, and giving support to emergency issues arising.

Within the Bede House we have repaired heater guards several times, fixed plumbing issues in the varied sinks, and changed bulbs and sorted out recalcitrant lighting. Within the kitchen issues arose with CO2 monitors and safety switches, all tracked and dealt with. Graham and myself kept the Bede House sound system up and running.

Richard and Nick managed to get a wired Wi-fi link from the benefice office to the Church, and a link to the church heating allowing remote control. Seasonal moving and building of

Christmas and Easter items, and minor repairs of furniture in church continued and are much appreciated. More team members are always welcome!

Chris Hales

The Cleaning Team

We are fortunate that two new members have joined our team recently, Malcolm who will care for our windowsills, and Alex who mops the floors for us.

Having different areas for each volunteer to clean is working well, and the church being open each day allows more flexibility as to when volunteers are available.

The church gets hoovered and dusted every week to keep on top of the day to day cleaning. The extra boost of cleaning days such as a Spring Cleaning Day helps tackle areas that we can't always get to with our small team, and we hope to add in another day in the Autumn before the Christmas season.

Many thanks go to all who volunteer giving up their time to keep the church looking nice and welcoming to visitors.

Sue Clarke

Higham Ferrers Girlguiding, two Rainbow Units, two Brownie Units and one Guide Unit.

2nd Higham Ferrers Rainbows currently have 14 members, aged from four upwards. The girls have enjoyed taking part in badge work and completing the Skills Builder badges, taking part in the annual sponsored event raising money towards the census. At Christmas, entering the Mayor's Christmas Card competition, one of our girls winning first prize. The Rainbows looked around Higham in the 'Find the Shop Window' competition. A day trip to Willow Farm enjoyed by all despite the wind, having fun on the play equipment and cuddling the pets.

3rd Higham Ferrers Brownies currently number 12 and have been working on various skills builders and other badges. We had a one-night sleep over in MacQueen House before the summer holidays. This was the first time away for most of the girls and a good time was had by all. We moved elsewhere temporarily during work on the Bede House, returning recently. We have, unfortunately, had the death of Jonathan Ilott, the husband of our main leader, Kate. We have had support from leaders of other units during this difficult time, please keep Kate and the Ilott family in your prayers.

2nd Higham Ferrers Guides have had a very productive year with one girl earning her Gold Award. Prior to attending the Wellies and Wristbands festival, we had two sessions at the Frontier Centre enabling activities that are not possible here. Learning how to put up a tent and make a stretcher with what they had to hand, i.e. poles and tape, lighting fires and cooking. They also had a couple of one-night sleepovers at MacQueen House, one in January, very cold! At sleepovers, they had to cook their own food and clear up with supervision from leaders. Trips to Rock Up, and Cadbury World on the train being an example to Girl guiding with their smart turnout and impeccable behaviour. Finishing the Autumn term with a pyjama party and organising a well-supported Farmers Market coffee morning in the Bede House. We currently have 24 guides and cannot take any more without an additional adult volunteer.

Sandy Coleman

Elizabeth Groome Music Charity

We are pleased to be able to continue our support for the St. Mary's Organ Scholar. Matthew is taking a year out from University to gain experience playing different organs and is currently organ scholar at Chelmsford Cathedral. It is anticipated that he will be returning to University at the beginning of the next academic year in September.

In the past year we have made grants to individual students totalling £3545 most of whom reside in Rushden and Higham Ferrers and attend our local schools. We made a grant of £900 to Ferrers School to enable all new year 7 students to experience music education for the first year at the school.

For the third year running we have been involved in the Rushden and Higham Rotary Young Musician Competition and are pleased to have been able to award the prizes to all the winners. These are cash prizes which are paid to the school at which they receive their music education and are used by the school specifically for the individual student.

Dave Stuttle, chair

The Friends of St Mary

The Friends of St Mary are an independent secular charity whose purpose is to support the maintenance of the exterior of Church, Bede House and Chantry Chapel, and enhance the natural environment of the churchyard. A range of events are organised to raise funds. The money raised helps the identified projects succeed and provides members of the public with a range of entertaining events to attend. As an unexpected outcome of the projects undertaken the FoSM have also won awards from national bodies.

Fund raising events undertaken in 2023.

- o H E Bates afternoon lecture
- o Gilbert and Sullivan extravaganza evening
- o Spring and Autumn coffee mornings

Education outreach

- o Four assemblies delivered to Higham Ferrers Junior school focussing on the heritage of Higham Ferrers.
- o Participation in Rushden Lakes Heritage Day
- o SERVE afternoon tea

Environmental work

- o Planting pollinator friendly plants
- o Providing water baths for wildlife

- o Removal of couch grass in the meadow area
- o Planting bulbs and a cutting garden
- o Saving a tree in the churchyard from removal after being erroneously identified as having rot in the trunk.

Awards

- o Winner of the Northamptonshire Heritage award for Best Society Project for the Midland Road gate.

Funds raised.

- o £1800 towards the Bede House roof.

Brenda Lofthouse, chair

Church Finances 2023

What an interesting and changeable year 2023 has been.

We have welcomed new people to our parish, and sadly lost friends, and felt the pressures of the global financial crisis. However, one shining light to support us (and provide financial guidance) we are pleased to have Mother Louise, an ex-employee of HMRC, amongst many other roles in her career before finding ministry, and Higham Ferrers.

Whilst still in vacancy, the start of the year continued to be difficult with increased energy bills, and just like us all at home we saw four-fold increases due to the increase of standing charges, and all before we even switched on the new system installed in church a year earlier. This seems out of control, but as wholesale prices have decreased, we need to manage our energy contracts and should see costs reducing.

Year on Year increases: Electricity costs £5,798 + 106%, and Gas £13,976 +194%

Our other major expense is Parish Share. In 2023 we agreed to pay what we could each month and hopefully be able to make a top-up at the end of the year. The PCC agreed to make payments of £2,500 per month, but to aid cashflow, we only made payments for 10 months, totalling £25,000 for the year,

significantly down on what we should be paying. As a benefice the amount this year is £81,283, with a low-income reduction of £6,000, this brings us to £75,283, with St Mary's share being £58,344 meaning we now need to look at doubling our monthly payments. The diocese is fully aware of our challenges, the changes needed, and will therefore allow us approx. 3-5 years to get up to paying a full share. Thankfully, there is no debt carried forward, and we are required to pay a lesser amount compared to other parts of the country.

We need to look at our own financial gifts to St Mary's, but more importantly how we can also encourage more of the town with its increasing population to both join with us and to financially contribute to its church and buildings. We need to engage with local businesses, groups and people to make more use of our site overall. We raised £150,000 for the church heating, and significant sums for the Church spire and roof, and the Bede House in financially stretched times, money is around, the challenge is to find and release it.

The 'Cost of Living crisis,' did and still does have a major impact on our funds. People are more likely to give at an event and when they clearly know where the money is going. Therefore, I thank the 600 Appeal team for their which has resulted in the Bede House roof finally being watertight. Whilst our buildings look good, we need to be more open, honest, and transparent about our financial needs and share our situation, the costs involved in caring for our building on top of those needed to be the church in this place.

Most people are not aware of what else needs to be paid for, before we open the church doors and run services, sometimes several services, offering a complex mixture of services and events to so many living in our lovely market town. Many assume that we receive national funding to keep our buildings open and to be the church. We don't!

Those other costs include an increase of £1,100 to £10,000 for insurance, the cost of organists, cleaning, administration, and other not so obvious costs. Even printing our service sheets has

seen increased costs and so our total expenditure year on year has almost doubled to £252,804, but this does include £157,257 towards building works.

So how do we pay for all that we have to look after and wish to provide?

We had more weddings and funerals doubling our income, year on year, to £10,450. Bede House lettings were on a par with 2022 despite it being closed for an extended period whilst scaffolding was in place around the Bede House. Website donations are down as we moved away from the extra online services we implemented during the pandemic. Collection plate, envelopes, parish giving monies and resulting gift aid are all on a downward slope, whilst there are some green shoots with electronic payments. Year on Year income is down. In 2022 we benefited from two legacies to the value of £90,640, but legacy income is rare and cannot be expected or predicted.

My hope is with the arrival of Mother Louise, less building works, the easing of energy bills, and the Bede House becoming the venue of choice for hire, that better times are ahead for us to continue improvement in our cathedral square both inside and outside. After taking a pause it will allow us to build on our vision and mission especially with our young families and school children.

With restricted funds and an opening balance carried forward at the start of year, financial pressures, more building work, and a vicar for only half the year we achieved an amazing result. For the future? Things can only get better, but prayer, determination and a close eye on the pennies will be required.

Darren Robinson, Treasurer

St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31/12/2023

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	51,310.69	0.00	23,328.51	0.00	74,639.20	160,997.09
Income from charitable activities	10,487.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,487.97	5,938.50
Other trading activities	12,369.01	0.00	29,999.40	0.00	42,368.41	57,130.68
Investments	1,168.15	934.31	4,741.03	0.00	6,843.49	3,542.10
Other income	396.67	0.00	6,547.80	0.00	6,944.47	21,800.37
Total income	75,732.49	934.31	64,616.74	0.00	141,283.54	249,408.74
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	155.17	0.00	4,413.71	0.00	4,568.88	3,361.16
Expenditure on charitable activities	86,438.69	680.00	160,396.82	0.00	247,515.51	123,077.88
Total expenditure	86,593.86	680.00	164,810.53	0.00	252,084.39	126,439.04
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(10,861.37)	254.31	(100,193.79)	0.00	(110,800.85)	122,969.70
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	0.00	0.00	1,832.40	0.00	1,832.40	91,460.80
Gross transfers between funds - out	0.00	0.00	(1,832.40)	0.00	(1,832.40)	(91,460.80)
Other recognised gains / losses						
Net movement in funds	(10,861.37)	254.31	(100,193.79)	0.00	(110,800.85)	122,969.70
Total funds brought forward	9,399.77	31,410.69	228,964.39	0.00	269,774.85	146,805.15
Total funds carried forward	(1,461.60)	31,665.00	128,770.60	0.00	158,974.00	269,774.85
Represented by						
Unrestricted						
General fund	(1,461.60)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1,461.60)	9,399.77
Designated						
Grace Milgate & Peggy Horsfield Young People Fund	0.00	31,665.00	0.00	0.00	31,665.00	31,410.69
Restricted						
Bede House	0.00	0.00	5,192.79	0.00	5,192.79	5,116.79
Bell Appeal	0.00	0.00	6,364.46	0.00	6,364.46	6,180.31
Choir	0.00	0.00	310.14	0.00	310.14	400.23
Elizabeth Groome Organ Scholarship	0.00	0.00	1,547.98	0.00	1,547.98	1,910.00

J Crew (Fabric)	0.00	0.00	3,195.04	0.00	3,195.04	2,922.04
Restoration Fund	0.00	0.00	54,766.72	0.00	54,766.72	196,742.67
St Marys 600 Appeal	0.00	0.00	57,393.47	0.00	57,393.47	15,692.35

Balance sheet

Class	Description	This year	Last year
Current assets			
	Lloyds TSB current account	15,575.12	39,380.33
	Lloyds TSB 600 Appeal account	20,269.35	22,064.07
	Lloyds TSB Restoration account	0.00	0.00
	CCLA (CBF) General fund 1D	1,945.70	1,885.27
	CCLA (CBF) Restoration fund 3D	81,778.65	179,704.66
	CCLA (CBF) Bell Appeal 4D	6,145.53	4,461.38
	J Crew Investment account	3,195.04	2,922.04
	CCLA Grace Milgate	31,379.66	21,445.35
	CCLA (CBF) Father Warnes	0.00	0.00
	Cash in hand	25.56	25.56
	Accounts Receivable	0.00	0.00
	Total Current assets	160,314.61	271,888.66
Liabilities			
	Loans received	0.00	0.00
	Agency collections	1,340.61	2,113.81
	Accounts Payable	0.00	0.00
	Total Liabilities	1,340.61	2,113.81
	Net Asset surplus(deficit)	158,974.00	269,774.85
Reserves			
	Excess / (deficit) to date	(110,800.85)	122,969.70
	Starting balances	269,774.85	146,805.15
	Total Reserves	158,974.00	269,774.85
	Represented by funds		
	Unrestricted	(1,461.60)	9,399.77
	Designated	31,665.00	31,410.69
	Restricted	128,770.60	228,964.39
	Endowment	0.00	0.00
	Total	158,974.00	269,774.85

Analysis of income and expenditure

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Designated</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Total</u>	
					<u>This year</u>	<u>Last year</u>
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
<i>Donations and legacies</i>						
Gift Aid - Bank	34,118.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	34,118.36	38,109.68
Gift Aid - Envelopes	1,523.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,523.55	1,666.04
Donations -Gift Aid	820.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	820.00	350.00
Loose plate collections	5,479.21	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,479.21	4,344.53
Envelopes - Non Gift Aid	956.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	956.25	1,359.00
SumUp Payments	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	155.95
Web Site donations	218.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	218.48	1,076.16
Donations appeals etc	529.00	0.00	76.00	0.00	605.00	1,415.00
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	7,487.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,487.97	15,931.28
Legacies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Legacy - Restricted	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	80,640.00
Elizabeth Groome Organ Scholarship	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(90.00)
Non-recurring one-off grants	0.00	0.00	23,252.51	0.00	23,252.51	5,085.00
Wall Safes-Candles	102.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	102.17	188.90
Wall Safe - Church Expences	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	85.55
Church Flowers	25.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.70	0.00
Misc	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	680.00
Total	51,310.69	0.00	23,328.51	0.00	74,639.20	160,997.09
<i>Income from charitable activities</i>						
Fees for weddings and funerals	10,450.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,450.20	5,920.20
Bookstall sales to promote objectives	37.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	37.77	18.30
Total	10,487.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,487.97	5,938.50
<i>Other trading activities</i>						
Fund Raising	4,404.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,404.73	8,184.32
St Marys 600 Appeal	0.00	0.00	29,999.40	0.00	29,999.40	39,290.34
Heating & Lighting	495.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	495.00	665.00
Bookstall sales - fund raising	52.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	52.83	0.00
Bede House - Lettings	7,416.45	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,416.45	8,986.67
Parish magazine sales	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.35
Total	12,369.01	0.00	29,999.40	0.00	42,368.41	57,130.68
<i>Investments</i>						
Dividends	43.88	0.00	0.00	0.00	43.88	87.38
Increase in share value	0.00	0.00	273.00	0.00	273.00	(57.19)
Bank and building society interest	104.27	934.31	4,468.03	0.00	5,506.61	2,611.91

Rent from lands or buildings	1,020.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,020.00	900.00
Total	1,168.15	934.31	4,741.03	0.00	6,843.49	3,542.10

Other income

VAT Reclaimed	0.00	0.00	6,547.80	0.00	6,547.80	21,558.38
Insurance claims	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	241.99
Special Collections	396.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	396.67	0.00
Total	396.67	0.00	6,547.80	0.00	6,944.47	21,800.37
INCOME TOTAL	75,732.49	934.31	64,616.74	0.00	141,283.54	249,408.74

EXPENDITURE

Raising funds

Costs of fetes & other events	155.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	155.17	1,394.41
St Marys 600	0.00	0.00	4,413.71	0.00	4,413.71	1,966.75
Total	155.17	0.00	4,413.71	0.00	4,568.88	3,361.16

Expenditure on charitable activities

Giving - relief and development agencies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00
Secular charities	500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	1,000.00
Special Collections	430.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	430.00	0.00
Parish Share payments	25,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00	30,000.00
Assistant staff costs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	53.95
Salary of parish administrator	2,325.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,325.00	2,142.25
Working expenses of incumbent	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	428.82
Parish training and mission	250.00	680.00	0.00	0.00	930.00	0.00
Church running - insurance	9,959.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,959.52	8,790.49
Miscellaneous	149.06	0.00	90.09	0.00	239.15	1,372.00
Church office - telephone	908.07	0.00	0.00	0.00	908.07	539.68
Organ / Organist costs	3,622.00	0.00	362.02	0.00	3,984.02	5,021.00
Choir	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	735.87
Church maintenance	3,497.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,497.66	3,572.82
Cleaning	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,041.35
Upkeep of services	2,490.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,490.02	580.32
Upkeep of churchyard	12.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.99	74.99
Administration	572.63	0.00	0.00	0.00	572.63	951.18
Photo Copier/Printing	1,796.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,796.19	2,471.24
Visiting speakers / locums	660.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	660.00	133.60
Church running - electric	1,950.93	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,950.93	816.11
Chantry Chapel - Electricity	1,692.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,692.03	1,066.65
Church running - gas	9,027.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,027.67	2,811.49
Church running - water	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	53.62
Church running - heating and lighting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(755.00)
Grace Milgate	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	34.66
Fees re Weddings/Funerals-Disbursements	4,199.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,199.60	2,692.00
Bede House - electricity	2,156.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,156.18	925.30
Bede House - gas	4,949.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,949.52	1,931.03
Bede House - Water Rates	572.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	572.60	538.34
Bede House - General Expenditure	4,544.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,544.92	1,146.41
Bede House - Cleaning	5,172.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,172.10	3,850.00
Church major repairs - structure	0.00	0.00	157,257.91	0.00	157,257.91	9,893.00
Church major repairs - installation	0.00	0.00	2,686.80	0.00	2,686.80	38,164.71
Total	86,438.69	680.00	160,396.82	0.00	247,515.51	123,077.88
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	86,593.86	680.00	164,810.53	0.00	252,084.39	126,439.04

GRAND TOTAL	(10,861.37)	254.31	(100,193.79)	0.00	(110,800.85)	122,969.70
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Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers.

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31/12/2023.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); 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 Commission. 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Paul Adams
19 Wymington Park
Rushden
Northants
NN10 9JP

10/5/2024

Accounts

St Mary the Virgin Higham Ferrers



APCM 2023

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St Mary the Virgin : Higham Ferrers

This is the Annual Parochial Church Report, looking back at the events of 2022

Contributions have been made by our ministry team, committees chairs, wardens, and groups and volunteers who have a calling to our church.

Let us thank them for supporting and guiding us in what has been an eventful year, and we look forward to their continued support as we lead our church in growth, with numbers and finances.

Before we start, a short prayer.

Prayer

Lord of light, we pray that unity may prevail in our community. Help us to be an instrument of Your peace. Help us in Higham Ferrers to come together to resolve the issues that affect us all.

**Help us cooperate well in overcoming health issues and prejudice.
May we each bring our experiences and our expertise to the table and work out solutions together.**

Help us to listen well, to empathize, and prepare the best path for our church family.



Minutes APCM 2022

Sandy Colman.

Due to the events that took place at last years APCM, it became upsetting for the PCC secretary at the time, who left their role and the PCC, and as such there are no formal minutes from this meeting.

A second meeting was held with the Rural Dean in attendance to discuss the 'Finances' at St Marys. Below are the minutes of this meeting taken by Sandy Colman.

APCM – Continuation Meeting

In addition to the attendees of the previous meeting:-

**Chris Youngman, Rural Dean of Higham, Vicar of Whitefriars
Brian Behagg, Treasurer
Stewart Wiles, Chairman, Finance Committee**

Brenda Elldred opened in prayer with a subject of Live, Love and respect each other.

Alison Oberman was first to speak, pointing out an overspend of £6,000. £4,000 was carried forward from the previous meeting. There wasn't as much gift aid as expected taking the final over spend to £6,000

Brian Behagg responded by explaining that he normally carries over a working capital of £5,000. At the end of last year, he felt that this wasn't necessary and used the money to send an extra £5,000 for the parish share.

David Richardson was next to speak. He asked how much the church should have paid for the parish share for last year and he then asked how much was actually paid.

Sue Dennis then spoke to say that people were not aware how much the parish share is each year and how much we are actually paying. She also mentioned that if this information was put up for everyone to see, including visitors, it might encourage visitors to donate more to help keep our historical buildings open. She then mentioned that a loan for £50,000 was asked for from the diocese but only £30,000 was used. £20,000 has already been paid back and the remainder will be paid back by the end of the year.

Minutes APCM 2022

Sandy Coleman

Chris Youngman explained the location of the amount being on page 13, eight lines down.

£47,000 was paid in 2021, £24,000 paid in 2020 and £68,000 was expected for 2022. He mentioned that the diocese has frozen the parish share for the last 2 years and that one of the things it goes towards is paying for clergy.

Stewart Wiles then answered by saying that a letter is sent out to all on the electoral roll every year with the amount of the expected parish share on it.

Richard Oberman was next to speak. He mentioned that he is currently completing the necessary documentation to apply for grants towards the refurbishments. There are various restricted funds linked to the Bede House that are not used for daily running expenses. He queried that the church subsidises the Bede House and has been doing this for many years

It has always been known that the Bede house needs subsidising.

Reg Harlow was next to speak. Having seen the bank statements for the 600 appeal, he queried a difference of £80.00 more in the bank than on the financial statements.

Brian stated that the figures that he uses are given to him by Avril.

Chris Youngman explained more about the workings of the accounts system used and that it could possibly be human error or a cheque that had been issued but hadn't gone out of the bank account at the time the statement was issued.

Ruth Bond was next to speak. The main reason that the meeting was called was to approve the finances because people were unable to understand the information given and that they were too complicated for most people to understand.

Minutes APCM 2022

Sandy Coleman

Avril Harlow then mentioned that as the 600 appeal accounts were simpler, why couldn't the church accounts be in a simpler form, this comment was echoed by Alison Oberman.

Karen Holmes was next to speak. Keeping accounts for a church such as ours is a major job and the way that people are being criticised is horrible. This was echoed by Sue Dennis.

Brenda Ellred was next to speak concerning the Bede House. The accounts for the Bede House and church have to be separate. The Bede House and its facilities are important for church growth so it is important that this facility is kept.

Each request for funding for funding regardless of what it is creates an additional line on the accounts adding additional layers of complexity which is not an easy task.

Darren Robinson gave thanks to Brian for his work as Treasurer and presented him with a gift.

Peter Bond was next to speak. He asked the Rural Dean to send word back to the Diocese/Church of England to use a simpler system. Chris Youngman responded by saying that how the account reported concerning restricted funds etc is a requirement of the Charity Commission.

Cynthia Matthias was next to speak. She pointed out that the average age of the congregation was getting older and incomes were becoming more restricted.

No further questions were raised on the above subjects and that questions could have been asked at any time.

The need for a Treasurer was then mentioned. The new Treasurer is not required to be a member of the church or PCC. They can be completely independent.

Darren Robinson then reminded everyone that the church is run by a team of volunteers.

Minutes APCM 2022

Sandy Coleman

Dave Stuttle gave thanks for the participation of everyone in the meeting.

The appointment of an auditor was the next subject. Dave Stuttle proposed that Paul Adams should be appointed as Auditor again. This was seconded by Raymond Wildsmith. Sue Dennis said no to Paul Adams as an auditor as he isn't independent enough and an alternative should be sourced.

Raymond Wildsmith stated that, as a professional man, Paul Adams would state if there was a problem. Paul's role is only advisory, and he is not involved in day-to-day transactions in the church. An outside company has been used in the past, but this can be expensive.

A vote was taken for Paul Adams to continue as auditor:-

24 for

4 against.

Resolution stands.

Dave Stuttle closed the meeting, thanking everyone for their contributions and asking that if anyone knew of someone who could be treasurer, they were to inform the church wardens.

The meeting was finished with the Lycig prayer.

It was felt that there was still some questions about our finances that had not been fully answered, and so a further personal meeting took place with the Rural Dean. Only one couple attended and was given direct answers, and therefore as no one else attended it is assumed that all other parties were happy at the time.

Reflection

The rest of 2022 has been challenging without a full time vicar, and we are very grateful for the three retired clergy and lay reader who have kept us going by providing the range of joyful services across the benefice to meet the needs of our church family.

Thank you also to our church administrator, committee chairpersons for keeping everything flowing and providing the information you require.

Thank you for your understanding.

Church Wardens

Ministry Team

Father Paul

It is an honour to compile this report as I am a mere 25% of the Benefice Ministry Team and attribute the honour to being merely a seniority in age, something our lengthy vacancy period has reminded me of in recent months!

When Revd. Michelle left us at the end of February 2022 we knew that she would be a hard act to follow and three “retired” clergy and a Reader would find a challenge and so it has proved.

Between us we have managed to provide Sunday services in both our churches and a midweek Eucharist as well as baptisms, weddings and funeral services – all of which require pastoral input and hours of preparation.

Highlights of the past year have been the Holy Week and Easter with their devotions and a sense of holy joy. It was a delight that Bishop John was able to join us for some of these. Other festivals proved to be memorable blessings, even when we were not able to provide as many services as there had been in the past.

Harvest services also provided joyful and lively occasions with uplifting worship and a sense of our closeness to the world around us.

Ministry Team members have also supported Lent lunches, the regular Thursday morning Coffee Mornings, Mother’s Union meetings, Youth activities and services at the Shrubberies nursing home. We recognise the importance of a minister’s presence to bring comfort and continuity.

We are also conscious that so much more could have been done by a dedicated full-time Vicar – we have not been able to respond to requests for services at other care homes in the parish or to build on Revd. Michelle’s sterling work in local schools. However it was encouraging that our schools and playgroups came to us – in vast numbers in the run up to Christmas and gave us a chance to share in their innovative nativity plays and worship. We were also able to assure them of our prayerful support in their work. How good to see all seats in church filled with extra people standing!

Ministry Team

Father Paul

We are also grateful for the occasional ministry support of visiting clergy, not least in the hectic weekend when I went down with Covid and needed support for a wedding, baptism and an All-age service. We are aware that some in our parish might say that we have “not done those things that we ought to have done” or we have “done those things we ought not to have done – but you may be assured that your Ministry Team are praying most fervently for the appointment of a wise, loving, enthusiastic and energetic priest to be appointed soon to build on the work we have been privileged to share in.

Canon Lesley, Revd Linda, Brenda and Father Paul.



Church Wardens

Darren & Sandy – A look back at 2022

When I started this role, it was to support Reverend Michelle and help develop our 2020 Vision in all things non-ministry, even though I did chip in with many ideas especially for the younger members (school age) of the church family.

It was only after Michelle was taken from us (even if only as far as Peterborough) that you get to see what else to needs to be done, and not only rocking up at 10.30am on a Sunday morning.

The role of a warden can be a tough one, and I am not your usual stereotype not retired or semi-retired but having to fit in all the extra duties around home and work life. We chair the PCC , and are members on many sub-committees, but the list is longer than that.

From approving payment of invoices, organising a vicar for a service withing 24 hours' notice, checking on opening and closing of the church, and sadly a recent thefts, to checking alarms on the church roof on New Year's Eve; and don't forget the numerous time the toilets have been blocked in the Bede House.

This is a huge task for anyone we are a dying breed, so why do we do it. As well as my own faith it's the enjoyment of seeing everyone pull together when times are hard and they have been recent years, and even more so during the last 12 months without that leader to guide us. But we have dug deep, had to make some tough decisions at times that have not pleased everyone, had some eventful services, and we are still here, and I can see light at the end of this long tunnel.

By the time you read this I am hopeful we will have a new vicar in post and I look forward to supporting them as I am sure you all will in the many new joyful years ahead.

Thank you for all your wishes of support in 2022.

Darren Robinson - Church Warden



Like Darren, I am also a working Church Warden. I am also a leader with Girlguiding, helping to run Guides on a Monday night and Brownies on a Wednesday night. It is a lot to juggle along with all the sub committees that we are on, but I love being part of it.

I am proud of our own 'Cathedral Precinct' and I am grateful to all the people behind the scenes that help Darren and myself with keeping everything running.

Sandy Coleman – Church Warden

Church Wardens

Dave Stuttle ObIOSB
Churchwarden Emeritus

Having served four years as Churchwarden, through the period of Fr. Richard's illness and then through the Covid pandemic I decided to discontinue as Churchwarden. Following the advice of Revd Michelle, I took on the role of Churchwarden Emeritus so that I could provide support to Darren and Sandy over the coming year.

It hardly seems possible that nearly a year has gone past since the last APCM and also the moving on to a new role in Peterborough of Revd Michelle. During the past year I have been happy to shoulder some of the Churchwarden burden on behalf of Darren and Sandy as well as give them my support and help in some of their decision making and also liaising with other people, groups and organisations within the Benefice and externally.

It has been a privilege to serve St. Mary's in this capacity over the last year and I look forward to continuing in the role for another year at the request of the Churchwardens.



MUSIC

Revd Linda Bond

On Easter Sunday 2022, Keith Green relinquished his post as acting Choir Director after four years. It was uncertain if the choir would continue. A choir needs a director, encouragement, a challenge if it is to survive. I formed the choir in 1983 and was the director until 1996 when I had to step back when I began training for ordination. Obviously I have a vested interest and wanted to help the members if they wished to continue for music enhances worship and can bring people closer to God when there is a sense of the numinous. The members of the choir met in church after a Sunday Service to discuss if they wished to continue and the outcome was unanimous. We fixed a date to meet informally at the home of one of the members to find a way forward. I offered to direct the choir until such a time the Incumbent could appoint an Organist / Choir Director. We had a positive meeting with drinks and nibbles and made the decision to rehearse once a month on a Friday evening to prepare music for the services for the next five or six weeks. I now draw up a list of suitable anthems which I circulate to the choristers so they can, if they wish, look at the music prior to the rehearsal. They also rehearse the anthem and the Gospel Acclamation on a Sunday morning at 10.00am in the Chantry Chapel. During the last year we have welcomed two new regular members, a tenor and a bass into the choir. A former alto returned, and a Cambridge Choral Scholar also sings soprano when she is home for the vacation. She sang a moving rendition of O Holy Night at Midnight Mass.

In addition to the choir, I have taken on some of Keith's other responsibilities. I prepare the organist's rota and circulate the Music List to them so they are able to prepare for the services. We now have two organists, Alan Cufaude and John Wearmouth. We also have an Organ Scholar, Matthew Foster. Bill Wright can be called upon in an emergency but does not wish to be included on the rota. Paul Harris stepped back a month ago due to ill health.

Another task I have taken on is finding suitable musicians to perform at the Farmer's Market Recital on the last Saturday of each month. I formed a small working group which includes Bill Wright, David Richardson and me to plan, engage musicians, prepare the programme notes and host the recitals. We see this as important outreach on a day which is community focused.

Music is a vital part of worship. It can attract people to worship with us at St. Mary's. It would be good to welcome new members to the choir and even encourage past members to return. Please think about this and encourage any singers you know to consider joining. A monthly rehearsal is not too great a commitment.

ELIZABETH GROOME MUSIC CHARITY

Dave Stuttle

As a former Head of Music at the John Lea School in Wellingborough and musical and artistic director of various choirs, drama groups and amateur theatrical societies, Elizabeth Groome was known to many in the local music community.

The John Lea Swing and Wind Bands, formed by Elizabeth with the help of the County School of Music, in many ways laid down the foundation for the County Youth Big Band.

Elizabeth's directorial skills allowed the school to perform many musicals, culminating in the production of the opera Carmen by Bizet and Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana, productions that gained the attention and cooperation of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

Outside of the school Elizabeth took the lead in several musicals such as Anna in the King and I. She was a much sought after producer and musical director locally, including Rushden Amateur Theatrical Society.

Elizabeth went into full-time nursing care in 2005 in Northampton. The Charity was set up in her name by her good friend and carer Terry Broughton in 2011 as a lasting legacy to Elizabeth.

Sadly after a long illness we lost Elizabeth in December 2015 and I regret to say that we also lost Terry in October 2019 after a long battle with Cancer. However, the charity continues with the support of the current trustees.

Grants to Families and St. Mary's Church

So far since it began the Charity has given out £421,283 to individual families in Northamptonshire, many of those in the Higham Ferrers and Rushden area. The Junior Choir at St. Mary's Church in Higham has over the years been granted a total of £508. In 2021 we began to support an Organ Scholar at the Church, at the sum of £2000 per year for the four years of his training. Also at the church in 2021 we gave £2000 to support the Children's Singing Workshops led by Adam Hope the Choral Conductor of the Junior Royal Academy of Music

Dave Stuttle

The Ferrers School.

We began our involvement with Ferrers School in 2017 when we were very pleased to present two shields, and each year the winning students receive financial support for their continued music tuition in the school. We have also supported year 7 students through bursaries each year and have also supported individual applicants from the school and the NMPAT Saturday Music School. In addition we were pleased to be able to give the school £1667 towards the purchase of 8 Trumpets a classical guitar and 8 keyboards. In 2021 the grant the school received for year 7 students to begin musical education was no longer available so in place of the bursaries we gave the school £1750 to make up for that loss of funding from the government.

Northampton Music and Performing Arts Trust (NMPAT)

In July 2017 made a grant of £700 to NMPAT towards the purchase of a specially made bespoke trumpet for one of their students who suffers from dwarfism and has difficulty using a standard instrument.

In 2022 we were extremely pleased to be invited to be involved in the Rotary Club Young Musician Competition and to be able to donate the prizes for the winners and runners up in each category. We are pleased that we have been invited to do the same in 2023.

Anyone wishing to know more about the charity, how we can help your young musicians, how you can help us raise funds for us to continue to make our awards, on if you wish to apply for a grant, please contact us or talk to Dave Stuttle at the Church.

**PATRON
DAVID WILSON-JOHNSON**

THE ELIZABETH GROOME MUSIC CHARITY

**Registered Charity Number 1142094
Dave Stuttle ObIOSB
Grants Administrator and Secretary
Tel: 07 941 306391 Email: egmc2011@virginmedia.com
Website: www.egmc.org.uk**

Recycle 4 Charity supporters link: - <http://www.recycle4charity.co.uk/Register/C93495>



Treasurers Report

Brian Behagg

The challenges of 2021 continued into 2022. The old Peterborough based Standing Order scheme was finally closed, with the 5 remaining contributors to the scheme offered the opportunity to switch to the Parish Giving Scheme (the Universal scheme that is based in Gloucester and is used by 50 of our Congregation). It is a very efficient scheme, free to Parishes, and I would encourage those who still use the Envelope scheme to consider switching to Parish Giving. Application forms are in the Church or can be provided by myself or Stewart.

Loose plate collections (which include the Glass Jar monies) were up from £2,617 to £4,640 in 2022 and reflected the fact that the Church was open following the Covid restrictions of 2021. The Bede House also benefited from the easing of Covid restrictions with lettings up to £8,986 from £6,130. Bookings and interest for 2023 suggest that the Bede House will continue to be popular for these 3rd party events.

On the expenditure side, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has seen a universal increase in Energy prices and whilst we did not have increases until the Autumn, 2023 looks to be a major challenge with large increases in November and December. The 'Holy Handymen' continue to monitor usage and ensure we do not waste costly heat.

Parish Share was once again a major challenge. We managed to make a total contribution of £30,000 towards our target of £63,000. To bridge this gap will be a mammoth task in 2023, particularly when we are faced with expenditure on the Bede House which is expected to be in excess of £100,000. Many thanks to Karen and her team for their fundraising efforts, and to Paul O'Dell for his continuing support on Thursday mornings with counting cash and the Lloyds banking.



Treasurers Report

Brian Behagg

St Marys Church Higham Ferrers - 1132678

Statement of Financial Activities

For the period from 01 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	60,153	10,000	91,410	—	161,564	83,014
Income from charitable activities	5,938	—	—	—	5,938	6,433
Other trading activities	17,440	—	39,390	—	56,830	73,605
Investments	1,011	278	2,250	—	3,540	196
Other income	241	—	21,558	—	21,800	339
Total income	84,786	10,278	154,609	—	249,674	163,588
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	1,394	—	1,966	—	3,361	8,407
Expenditure on charitable activities	75,780	34	78,207	—	154,022	232,979
Other expenditure	—	—	—	—	—	1,311
Total expenditure	77,175	34	80,174	—	157,384	242,698
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	—	—	—	—
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	7,611	10,243	74,435	—	92,290	(79,109)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	—	—	80,099	—	80,099	22,731
Gross transfers between funds - out	—	—	(80,099)	—	(80,099)	(22,731)
Other recognised gains / losses						
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	7,611	10,243	74,435	—	92,290	(79,109)
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	1,078	21,013	124,713	—	146,805	225,914
Total funds carried forward	8,689	31,256	199,149	—	239,095	146,805

Treasurers Report

Brian Behagg

St Marys Church Higham Ferrers - 1132678

Analysis of income and expenditure
Selected period: 01 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This year	Total Last year
Income and endowments						
Donations and legacies						
0101 - Gift Aid - Bank	38,251	—	—	—	38,251	37,615
0110 - Gift Aid - Envelopes	1,688	—	—	—	1,688	2,217
0120 - Donations - Gift Aid	350	—	—	—	350	1,020
0301 - Loose plate collections	4,640	—	—	—	4,640	2,617
0302 - Envelopes - Non Gift Aid	1,359	—	—	—	1,359	1,438
0303 - Bank - Non Gift Aid	4	—	—	—	4	651
0304 - SumUp Payments	127	—	28	—	155	1,124
0405 - Web Site donations	1,078	—	—	—	1,078	916
0501 - One-off Gift Aid gifts	—	—	—	—	—	175
0550 - Donations appeals etc	545	—	770	—	1,315	3,419
0601 - Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	10,874	—	5,062	—	15,936	15,146
0701 - Legacies	20	10,000	—	—	10,020	—
0702 - Legacy - Restricted	—	—	80,640	—	80,640	—
0703 - Elizabeth Groome Organ Scholarship	—	—	(90)	—	(90)	2,000
0704 - Children's Singing Workshops	—	—	—	—	—	2,000
0801 - Recurring grants	—	—	—	—	—	1,523
08A1 - Non-recurring one-off grants	85	—	5,000	—	5,085	10,600
0901 - Other funds generated	200	—	—	—	200	5
0902 - Wall Safes-Candles	188	—	—	—	188	372
0903 - Wall Safe - Church Expences	85	—	—	—	85	23
0906 - Church Flowers	—	—	—	—	—	100
0908 - Misc	680	—	—	—	680	50
Donations and legacies Totals	60,153	10,000	91,410	—	161,564	83,014
Income from charitable activities						
1101 - Fees for weddings and funerals	5,920	—	—	—	5,920	6,433
1210 - Bookstall sales to promote objectives	18	—	—	—	18	—
Income from charitable activities Totals	5,938	—	—	—	5,938	6,433
Other trading activities						
0551 - Fund Raising	7,784	—	—	—	7,784	8,194
0555 - St Marys 600 Appeal	—	—	39,390	—	39,390	58,323
1102 - Heating & Lighting	665	—	—	—	665	750
1231 - Bede House - Lettings	8,986	—	—	—	8,986	6,130
1260 - Parish magazine sales	4	—	—	—	4	207
Other trading activities Totals	17,440	—	39,390	—	56,830	73,605
Investments						
1001 - Dividends	87	—	—	—	87	170
1020 - Bank and building society interest	24	278	2,250	—	2,553	26
1030 - Rent from lands or buildings	900	—	—	—	900	—
Investments Totals	1,011	278	2,250	—	3,540	196

Treasurers Report

Brian Behagg

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	
					This year	Last year
Other income						
0602 - VAT Reclaimed	—	—	21,558	—	21,558	—
0909 - Chelveston Stationery Contribution	—	—	—	—	—	339
1310 - Insurance claims	241	—	—	—	241	—
Other income Totals	241	—	21,558	—	21,800	339
Income and endowments Grand totals	84,786	10,278	154,609	—	249,674	163,588
Expenditure						
Raising funds						
1701 - Fees paid to fund raisers	—	—	—	—	—	78
1730 - Costs of fetes & other events	1,394	—	—	—	1,394	5,731
1735 - St Marys 600	—	—	1,966	—	1,966	2,598
Raising funds Totals	1,394	—	1,966	—	3,361	8,407
Expenditure on charitable activities						
1801 - Giving to missionary societies	—	—	—	—	—	500
1830 - Giving - relief and development agencies	1,500	—	—	—	1,500	1,000
1870 - Secular charities	1,000	—	—	—	1,000	1,165
1875 - Special Collections	—	—	—	—	—	198
1910 - Parish Share payments	30,000	—	—	—	30,000	47,000
2001 - Assistant staff costs	53	—	—	—	53	100
2050 - Salary of parish administrator	2,142	—	—	—	2,142	—
2101 - Working expenses of incumbent	428	—	—	—	428	4
2150 - Vicar's telephone	—	—	—	—	—	84
2201 - Parish training and mission	—	—	—	—	—	48
2301 - Church running - insurance	8,790	—	—	—	8,790	8,452
2303 - Miscellaneous	1,372	—	—	—	1,372	25
2310 - Church office - telephone	539	—	—	—	539	420
2320 - Organ / Organist costs	5,021	—	—	—	5,021	3,977
2325 - Choir	586	—	149	—	735	551
2330 - Church maintenance	3,492	—	—	—	3,492	5,059
2331 - Cleaning	1,041	—	—	—	1,041	688
2340 - Upkeep of services	580	—	—	—	580	1,603
2350 - Upkeep of churchyard	74	—	—	—	74	55
2360 - Administration	951	—	—	—	951	433
2361 - Photo Copier/Printing	2,471	—	—	—	2,471	2,059
2370 - Visiting speakers / locums	133	—	—	—	133	—
2401 - Church running - electric	816	—	—	—	816	1,152
2402 - Chantry Chapel - Electricity	1,066	—	—	—	1,066	1,047
2410 - Church running - gas	2,811	—	—	—	2,811	1,410
2420 - Church running - water	53	—	—	—	53	—
2440 - Church running - heating and lighting	(755)	—	—	—	(755)	—
2515 - Grace Milgate	—	34	—	—	34	—
2526 - Fees re Weddings/Funerals-Disbursements	3,217	—	—	—	3,217	2,535
2530 - Bede House - electricity	925	—	—	—	925	556
2540 - Bede House - gas	1,931	—	—	—	1,931	818
2545 - Bede House - Water Rates	538	—	—	—	538	185
2580 - Bede House - General Expenditure	1,146	—	—	—	1,146	1,202
2585 - Bede House - Cleaning	3,850	—	—	—	3,850	5,374
2701 - Church major repairs - structure	—	—	9,893	—	9,893	2,700

Treasurers Report

Brian Behagg

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This year	Total Last year
2710 - Church major repairs - installation	—	—	68,164	—	68,164	142,567
Expenditure on charitable activities Totals	75,780	34	78,207	—	154,022	232,979
Other expenditure						
2326 - Childrens Singing Workshop	—	—	—	—	—	1,311
Other expenditure Totals	—	—	—	—	—	1,311
Expenditure Grand totals	77,175	34	80,174	—	157,384	242,698

ELECTORAL ROLL

Stewart Wiles

The Electoral Roll was renewed in March 2019 and is due for renewal in 2025.

After a review this year (2023) the membership now stands at 115. This figure is 1 less than last years figure of 116. This is due to the sad loss of David Rockley. No new members joined during the year.

Of the 115 members, 47 live outside of the parish.

A copy of the Electoral Roll minus telephone numbers and email addresses for privacy reasons will be posted on the notice board in the Church porch for 2 weeks before the APCM.



Please check that these details are correct, and if not. please contact myself or a Church Warden.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Stewart Wiles

Church Heating.

The new gas fired heating system has been in use throughout the year allowing us to have a warm church during the winter months. We can now control the heating units so that only certain parts of the church can be heated if required. This is very useful as energy costs have increased considerably since October 2022. The total cost was £126,000 after the VAT was claimed back.

Thanks to the many members of the parish, grant giving bodies and the many events that help pay for the system.

Servery.

The Servery was completed in August 2022 and is now in use every Sunday. The total cost was £31,312 + VAT which has been claimed back. This has added a very useful amenity to the church.

Tower and Spire repairs.

The restoration work on the tower and spire was started in the autumn of 2020 but some of the decorative corbels were damaged when the scaffolding was removed later in that that year. It has now finally been repaired at the builder's expense. The total cost was £21,000. £5,000 has come from the grant given to us by Church Care and £5,000 from the St Mary's Bell Appeal Fund. The remaining £11,000 will come from the Restoration Fund.

Church.

Work started on the Church in October 2022 to replace a large number of stone blocks in many of the outer walls and windows of the church which, after many hundreds of years in place have eroded away. Parts of the lead covered roof over the South porch and the wooden roof below have also been replaced and other repairs to the lead on main nave roof which was installed in 1979 have been carried out. Also some of the cast-iron rain water pipes and gutters are being replaced. The cost of the work is £70,000 +VAT and should be completed by May 2023. Funding for this will come from a £5,000 grant from the National Churches Trust and £5,000 from the Francis Coales Charitable Foundation and the remaining £60,000 from the Restoration Fund.

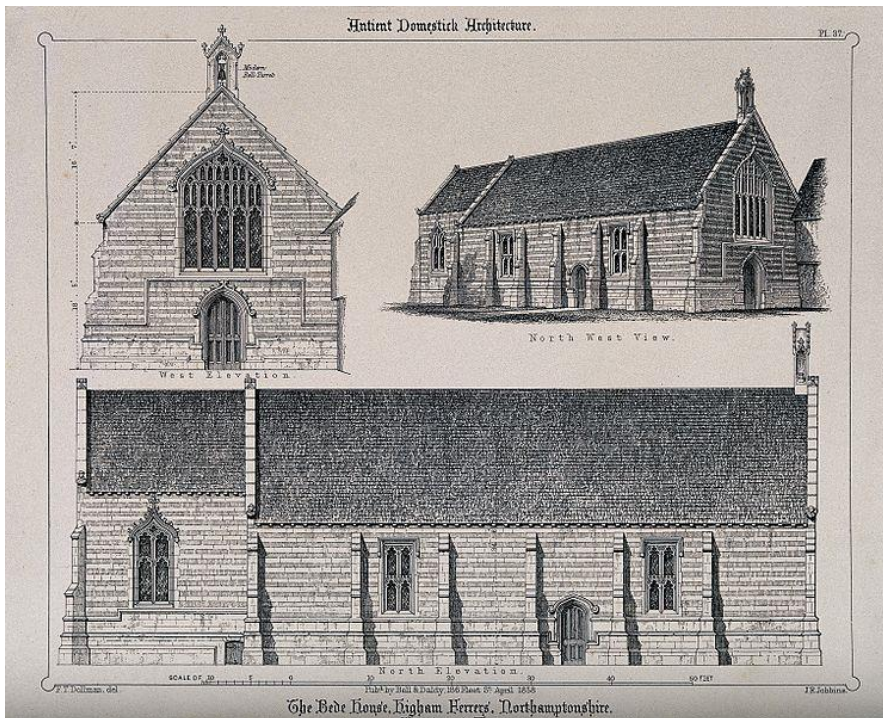
CAPITAL PROJECTS

Stewart Wiles

Bede House. - External.

We now have an update quotation for this work at £140,000. This figure includes VAT as we cannot claim it back as the Bede House is not classed as a Place of Worship.

Most of the cost of the work relates to the North facing roof that needs to be removed , re-felted and battened and the tiles replaced together with high level stonework and rainwater gutters. The PCC has recently given permission to spend up to £90,000 on this part of the repairs. It is hoped to start this work in mid-summer 2023. St Mary's 600 Appeal Fund raising events in 2023/24 will hopefully raise the remaining funds together with applications to grant giving bodies.



Bede House. - Internal.

The Bede House lighting in the main hall has recently been upgraded to LED lighting at a cost of £2,560, but there are still a number of areas such as the floor, walls, sound and vision equipment, stage storage, welcome porch, toilets upgrade etc. that need looking at, costing and then finding the funds to do it. However, in the last 2 years we have raised and will have spent £340,000 to keep our three Grade 1 Listed Buildings in good repair and improve their facilities.

We should be proud of our achievements.

CHILDRENS MINISTRY

Brenda Eldred

During the past year, since the last APCM the 'Children's Ministry team' have had several planning meetings and managed, despite having no vicar, to make sure all the children's events have been running as normal.

On March 26th, on the Saturday before Mothering Sunday, we had a Mothering Sunday craft day, held at St. John's, where the children made cards, biscuits, decorated glass jars for vases, bookmarks, and personalised chocolate bars for their mum whilst mums enjoyed a cup of tea and cake.

Good Friday we held our 'Messy Church' called 'Exploring Easter'. The children walked through the story of Easter including taking part in the 'Last Supper' using bread and grapes. We finished the morning making the Easter Garden and having Hot Cross Buns. All were invited to come back on Easter Day for our annual egg hunt.



We then had a bit of a break until after the summer. This year it was felt that it would be too much to have a summer holiday club as many people were now booking holidays to see family and catching up with friends after the last 2 years of the pandemic.

Our next event was on October 29th where we held a 'Light Party' as an alternative to Halloween. This was very well attended and loved by all the families. We had food and party games and then the story of how Jesus brought light to the darkness and that is what we celebrate.



CHILDRENS MINISTRY

Brenda Ellred



CHILDRENS MINISTRY

Brenda Eldred

Sparkle gave another opportunity to get together and the families met after Morning Worship on 13th November to make their sparkle decoration for the church. They cut out angels, hung them on a decorated hoop with lights above the font – reminding us of all our church children.

Christingle was our next big event and we advertised it around the schools. After a short Morning Worship Service on 18th December, we made 160 Christingles whilst enjoying bacon butties! The service was at 4pm in the afternoon and 148 people, including children came – the Church was lit with the candles as we sang and learnt about the Christingle.



CHILDRENS MINISTRY

Brenda Eildred

December saw the church filled on many occasions with the school concerts. This had been in part due to the LyCiG work we had been doing with the schools. This gave us an opportunity to share with them our planned Crib Services.

On December 24th we held 2 Crib Services; midday at St. John's where we had mostly adults, but it was enjoyed, and 4pm at St. Mary's where we had 168 people in total with children dressed for the part and who made a live crib scene as the story was told.



Another Mothering Sunday craft event is planned for 18th March this year in the Bede House 2-5pm.

The ongoing work with children is vital as these are our Church now and in the future. We always need more volunteers to help with crafts and refreshments so if you feel you would like to get involved please speak to any of the team; - Brenda Eildred, Sue Thompson, Annette Robinson, Amanda Smith, Sandy Coleman, Claire Headland.



Benefice Safeguarding

Brenda Eldred & Annette Robinson

Safeguarding is something every member of the church needs to be aware of and indeed it is part of our Christian duty of care. In both churches there are copies of the most recent safeguarding policies on noticeboards and a folder with the handbook plus relevant information on how to report and where to get help. The Safeguarding Policy along with Helpline numbers can also be found on the website link <https://www.stmaryhighamferrers.org/safeguarding>

In the front of the Handbook is a Policy Statement from the Church of England that states that:

The Church of England is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks as welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the Gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.

Statement

With the lifting of the pandemic restrictions this year more of our groups and events have been taking place. Considering the above statement, Safeguarding has been top of the list ensuring that all PCC members and leaders in both churches have a current DBS and have completed Safeguarding training. We have a comprehensive list of all activities and the leaders with the required information. This information is gradually being uploaded onto the central 'I Know Church' system so that we can be more efficient and transparent.

Both DBS and Safeguarding training regulations changed from requiring refreshing from 5 years to 3 years with everyone by 2024 on a 3-year cycle. Work has been ongoing, and we are on track to be compliant by the end of 2023. Safeguarding training can be completed online or face to face and we have the benefit of Cathy Kennedy who provides locally our face-to-face training.

We also complete the Parish Dashboard regularly and this gives us an action plan ensuring that we keep up with all we need to do. This year we have moved from Level 2 to 3 in both churches and progressing well.

We have had no reported Safeguarding issues this year although we have had some general enquiries regarding the vulnerability of people in the community and we have supported those people.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer vacancy has now been filled by Carole Fitzsimons and we are well supported by Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory team.

BAPTISM & PASTORAL

Sue Thompson

Baptism Team.



The baptism team is a small group, of mainly ladies, who support families throughout a baptism service. We get to know the children and adults prior to the service and keep in touch with them for a few years after by delivering anniversary cards and visiting when we can.

As church life returns to normal, we are pleased to see more families requesting baptisms. If you would like to join our group please contact Sue (01933 313956).

Pastoral Committee

The aim of this group is to follow our Lord when he asked us to be good shepherds to "Take care of his sheep and lambs". (John 21 v 15-17).

We have regular meetings to organise visits for those who find it difficult to get out and to take communion to those who cannot get to church. We also offer help to those recently bereaved.

We monitor the sick list and those who have been ill and for whom we have concern. The sick list is reviewed every six weeks to keep it up to date. We are also developing "Books of Concern" for names of those who are no longer ill but would like the congregation to include them in their personal prayers.

Another important aspect of pastoral work is with families and children. We have been approached by local schools for volunteers to listen to children read.

Within the parish we have "Tiny Tots" and playgroups who would appreciate some help to prepare drinks and snacks or perhaps read a story to a small group of children.

If you have an hour or two to spare, weekly or monthly, the groups would appreciate your help and you would gain a great deal of satisfaction from the experience too. Please contact one of the team for information.

MORNING WORSHIP

Brenda Eldred & Sue Thompson

It is with great joy that we once again are able to offer regular Morning Worship services in the Bede House. The monthly format was agreed with Rev. Michelle before she left, to help us through the interregnum.

Generally, we have 3 regular services each month,

- An All-age service to encourage the families to experience and contribute to a service in the Church and enjoy the pleasure of worshipping together with other generations. We also enjoy the baked creations made by the Mums and Dads.
- A service in the Bede house which is shorter but follows the familiar pattern of Church services.
- Breakfast Church. Jesus enjoyed sharing meals with his friends and acquaintances, talking, and preaching in this setting. We start with singing a grace and eating a meal prepared and shared by all. This is followed by reading, discussion and prayers. It is lovely to hear the children joining in with the prayers to the best of their ability and improving as the weeks pass. We finish with a lively song when the children and adults sing their hearts out.

As the weather improves, we hope to continue with Wild Worship when we will worship in the churchyard or enjoy a walk together to appreciate God's wonderful world and give thanks.

Although the attendance is varied it is good to have more of the older members of the congregation joining us.

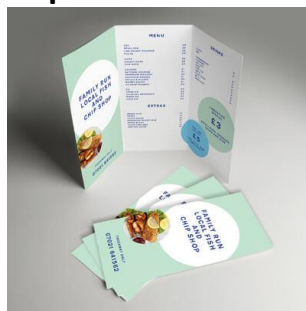


COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Father Paul

The Communications Advisory Group is not a formal sub-committee of the PCC but is a bi-monthly meeting of the diverse and enthusiastic individuals involved in church communications, external and internal.

We have worked to develop the preparation of special services, building on the work done by Rev Michelle, and the preparation and provision of a weekly service guide and news sheet edited by Jane Smeathers.



Publicity for special services and seasons has been planned and printed, thanks to the graphic design guidance from Pam Webbley, who has also helped us keep the style and content of our church website up to date.

Another development and a tool for our future missions and ministry contacts has been the gradual introduction of a church database, under the guidance of Bill Wright. This should prove of immense value to an incoming parish priest.

The website also includes two recorded services for church contacts near and far with the weekly Celtic devotions and a Sunday online service. These are not alternatives to regular attendance but available for anyone unable to be physically in church, for whatever reason, and they are also used as additional resources for people beyond our regular services. The website is faithfully tended and updated by Richard Hall.



Other items which have occupied us in our frank (and occasionally hilarious!) discussions have been the provision of church noticeboards and information available to visitors, regular and occasional.

My thanks to all who have made this “behind the scenes” ministry positive and joyful.

Benefice Website

Richard Hall

The website has performed well this year thanks mostly to the contributions from Fr. Paul and Brenda with their podcasts of the Meeting Point service for Sunday and the Celtic Evening Liturgy for Wednesday.

The site has become a valuable point of contact with the Benefice, through the contact page, for those who don't normally attend one of our churches and enables us to reach out for Baptisms, Weddings, etc. especially as the Church of England "A Church Near You" site has the website link displayed for both parishes.

The average number of hits for the Sunday service is around 50 each week and for the Celtic service it averages 20 each week and the site gets around 12 hits per day.

The site is viewed worldwide and in the last year has been seen in 48 different countries. Obviously the majority of viewers are from the UK but we also have a regular following in Spain and Canada. The latter hits nearly all come from the North Bay area where I understand there are no churches open for worship.

In the UK the hits are mostly from Northamptonshire but there is a surprising following in Birmingham, ex-pats from Higham and Chelveston perhaps?

The total site sessions for the past year are 8816 with 3497 unique visitors and the site has been active for 99.98% of the time. The maximum hits in any one day have been 86 on 20th February 2022 and again on 18th December 2022.

My thanks to Fr. Paul and Brenda for all the work put into their contributions and to Pam Webley for her invaluable help with design of the site and her additions for special occasions.

CHURCH
ENGLAND

United Benefice of St.Mary, Higham Ferrers, and St. John, Chelveston

The Diocese
of Peterborough

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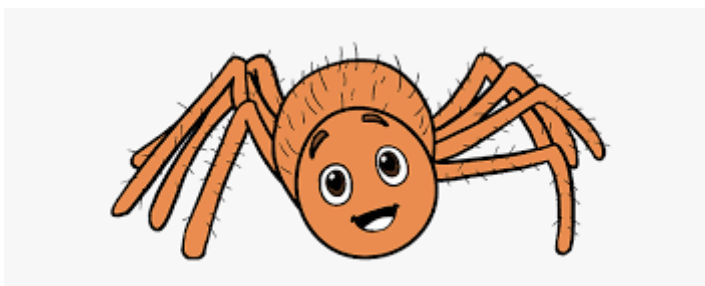
Cleaning Team

Sue Clarke



As St. Mary's is open every day it does need to be cleaned more often than it was previously. The carpets and entrance hall are now hoovered every week, with an extra clean before funerals and weddings. However, being open daily has had the advantage of more flexibility for the cleaning team. Rather than all having to arrive at the same day and time, they are now able to come at a time that is suitable for themselves. This has also enabled me to divide the church into areas which individuals have taken responsibility for (with Darren Robinson and Peter Swindley taking responsibility for removing large spiders before areas get hoovered). Sadly I still need someone to mechanically scrub and buff the floors a couple of times a year, but I'm able to keep on top of most things with the help of my much appreciated volunteers.

Very many thanks to Sue Thompson, Chris and Graham Newell, Linda Boxall and Karen Holmes, Alison Oberman, Ruth Bond and the M.U., Mary Harber and Elizabeth Bradshaw.



SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE

Pam Whiting

I cannot believe that a year has passed by since I last wrote a report for the 2022 Annual Meeting.

In that time, we have been fortunate enough to have the servery finally installed. It has taken a long time but it is well worth the wait. Providing coffee now is so much safer than using the urn on a hostess trolley, and so much nicer to be using proper mugs instead of the paper ones which, more often than not, either burnt your fingers or leaked everywhere.

During the past year we have raised over £350 for the Church Funds so thank you to you all for your donations.

Once again, my thanks must go to Ruth, Angela and Nikki for their help in providing coffee following the Sunday Service, and this year we have also had the help of the members of the Family Worship, so my thanks also go to them for organising coffee on the first Sunday of the Month.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Rev. Linda, Rev. Lesley, Father Paul, and Layreader Brenda, for all her hard work during the year, and for holding the Church together whilst we await a new Vicar.

We would like to continue providing refreshments on a Sunday morning and will always welcome anyone who wishes to join our little band of helpers, if that could be you then please speak to anyone of us “behind the counter”

Thank you all



Bede House & Sides people

Diane Behagg

Bookings continue steadily with children's parties being one of the busiest. We do have several weddings booked for 2023 and even one for 2024.

Our regular bookings are Guiding units: - Girl Guides, two Brownie packs and Rainbows.

Also, two children's groups, Badminton, Mothers Union, Chichele Society and regular coffee morning on Thursdays.

We do have enquiries from people in other towns and have a yearly booking from a group in Brixworth who love the old building. It is therefore very important that we continue to keep the hall looking attractive to prospective hirers.

Thursday morning coffee would really love to see a couple more people to assist with the making of coffee.

Many thanks must go to the Holy Handymen for all their work and to the 600 Appeal for fundraising towards the many things that need doing to keep this very old building in good use.

Thank you to everyone on the sides people's rota now that we really do feel that things are 'back to normal'.

We have a very loyal band of people to welcome our congregation which ensures a smooth running for our services.

It is very important when we have new people and visitors in the congregation to make them feel welcomed.

600 Appeal

Avril Harlow & Sue Dennis

The Team members have worked hard this year to promote and complete the first two objectives of the Appeal, the Heating system and the new Servedy, which are now both in good working order and paid for in full.

Some costings and final bills were, happily, reduced or altered in some way towards the end of the year, thus giving the opportunity to transfer excess funds and begin the next project.

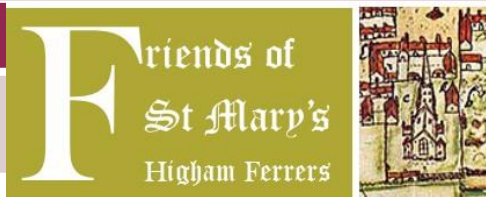
We have been able to organise and run several successful concerts and events; the Two Violins, the Belcanto and Fynnus Fogg Concerts, the H.E.Bates Afternoon, as well as running several Coffee and Market Morning stalls. The Higham Hot Hundreds Tote makes £3,000 per year and we hope to add further to the Auction of Promises during the coming months. Thanks to some very hard work on the part of our member in charge of applications to Grant Giving Bodies, we have acquired £8,000 this year, and from generous and anonymous donations another £15,000.

We are grateful for the continued support we receive from the parish family; donations which in most cases are given with permission to claim Gift Aid. Several Tote winners have been kind enough to donate all or part of their winnings back to the Appeal; we thank you all.



The focus for the Appeal has now moved to the Bede House and the repairs needed to the roof. This will take another big push; £140,000 is the target with a further £60,000 for the internal upgrades. Unfortunately, it will not qualify for help from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Our Team therefore will need more members, more help with this task, people with ideas, time and energy to share. The various groups who use the Bede House, and people from the wider community will want to participate; we shall welcome all.



2022 was a busy year, most of it in tribute to Higham's most famous son, Henry Chichele, in what was the 600th Anniversary of the founding of Chichele College and the Bede House.

Unique timeline tapestry and labour of love unveiled



We began in January with the framing and the hanging of the final piece of the Life of Henry Chichele in Fabric and Thread; the banner. This was jointly funded between the Friends and the profit from the book, *Higham Ferrers 1251–1914 A portrait of the town and people through its historic charters*. At the end of February as one of Revd. Michelle's final tasks, this frame was unveiled and celebrated at a dedicated event with the Material Girls who created

the work.

Our annual coffee mornings

Our Spring Coffee Morning was a great success with pots of miniature daffodils being sold in aid of the Ukraine Appeal. Spring flowers filled the churchyard and the daffodils bloomed in the Bedeswoman's Garden for the first time.

Our Autumn Coffee Morning at the end of October was warmly supported and financially successful with live music and many stalls. The profits from the selling of spring flowering bulbs were given to the Ukraine Appeal.

Enhancing the churchyard for visitors

Trustee Liz added a honeysuckle to the arbour in the Bedeswoman's Garden and Marian, the Bedeswoman, planted two white roses. The herbs and lavender planted last summer became nicely established. Many beautiful wild flowers bloom in the meadow area and areas purposefully left for the wildlife to thrive further enhance Church Walk.



During the summer months the new notice board purchased by the Friends, was supplied and installed. We also organised the installation of donated benches following permission from the Archdeacon.

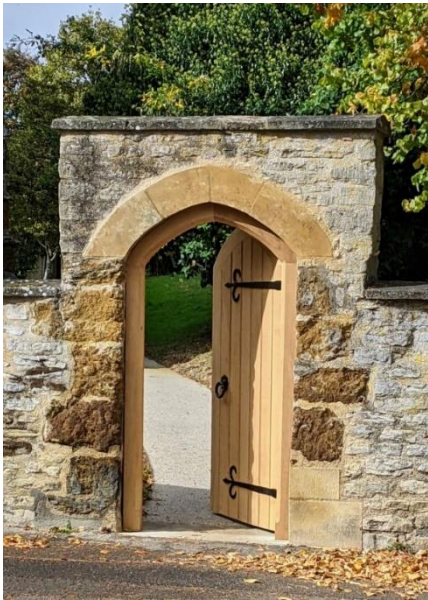
Our churchyard will be made even more beautiful with the addition of 1,000 purple crocus donated by the Chichele Rotary Group. Volunteers planted these and other bulbs at our regular Thursday morning gardening sessions. Tulips were added to the Chantry Chapel border in November and the tradition of planting daffodil bulbs to enhance the

entry to the town in Station Road continued.

Friends of St Marys

The gateway to God ... the Bede House ... and beyond

We waited patiently for the necessary permission from the Diocese of Peterborough to pursue our vision of the new Gateway to the Bede House plus of course the important work of securing funding. This gate has been inaccessible for several decades; some would say in living memory. The work involved replacing the stones in the arch, the removal of the large concrete step, the creation of a new oak door using the old ironmongery where possible, and a non-slip smooth pathway. The laying of a pathway was for reasons of safety with no trip hazards which is also more suited to the wheelchair, walking aid and buggy user and those unsure of their footing as they negotiate the gradient. John Barker was appointed as the Project Manager from the offset, monitoring materials and the work undertaken.



Along with the support of members of the Friends of St. Mary's, our carefully considered plan attracted success in securing the support of Nenescape (a Heritage Lottery initiative), the Duchy of Lancaster and the John Warren foundation. The skill of those working on this project was exceptional and we are very proud of the craftsmanship which is clearly evident.

In September, the beautifully bespoke gate and frame was fitted, and our vision realised and marked with a special Grand Opening by the Bedeswoman, Marian Knott, accompanied by her Bedesmen and blessed by the Revd. Paul Needle.

Friends of St Marys

Minutes from APCM 2022

The Grand Opening was accompanied by the Bedesmen and Beadswoman and guests of SERVE and working in conjunction with Tourism, we were able to host an Afternoon Tea funded by Jenny Bone's Council Empowerment Fund.

The week of the Nene Valley Festival and its funding allowed for another splendid Afternoon Tea with the Chichele Over 60's Club attended by the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, Morcea Walker MBE. Both these occasions allowed for those less mobile to view The Henry Chichele Exhibition which was on display as part of this special year together with the Life of Henry Chichele in fabric and thread that is permanently on display in the Bede House.



Rewilding the churchyard

In November, The Wildlife Trust Forum was held at our invitation in the Bede House and the Churchyard Conservation Awards presented. This was attended by over 30 other churchyard conservation groups. Our rewilding work was described to include the reprieve of the maple tree, planting of a shrub bed and tending of the wildflower meadow. We are proud that the breeding pair of peregrine falcons once again produced four chicks that successfully fledged. A management plan of our conservation work was added to the al fresco information boards together with a map displaying our accomplishments.

Friends of St Marys

Minutes from APCM 2022

Christmas Sparkle



We submitted an entry to the Christmas Sparkle display in the Church. Our monochrome display celebrated the 600th anniversary of the founding of the Bede House and Chichele College, accompanied by a poem on the Midland Gate written by Susan Waters.

Sharing the history of Higham Ferrers



Following an invitation to deliver school assemblies from Higham Ferrers Junior School, Brenda Lofthouse has been researching the named Houses of Higham Ferrers Junior School: Ferrers, Lancaster, Wykeham and Chichele. With education being such a substantial part of our aims as a registered charity we were happy to work with Higham Ferrers Tourism on enlightening local children as to the town's special heritage. Fellow Trustee Carol

Fitzgerald created PowerPoint presentations based on this research to ensure that the children discovered more about the people behind the names. Special guests also took part to include the Mayor, Mayor's Sergeant and a Bedesman over a four week period and we also shared finds from the medieval period thanks to the Higham Ferrers Archaeological Research Society. We were fortunate to be helped by the Fellow Librarian of All Souls College, Oxford, Professor Horden, a specialist in medieval history who checked all the details and offered advice. All Souls was built sixteen years after Chichele College and during this 600th Anniversary year, new friendships have been re-established.

Communication

We shall share the research on the school house names with our members through our regular newsletters. The website shows details of our activities and the year's newsletters. Our Facebook page is used to share news and promote events.

1st HIGHAM FERRERS RAINBOWS

Jelly Bean (Katie) Bubble-gum (Karen) Candy Cane (Rachel)

Our Rainbow unit meets weekly at the Infant School during school term times. 2022 was another exciting year for the unit. We took part in a long list of activities which included playing games, fun crafts, learning new skills and gaining badges, singing songs, exploring our local area and having fun! We enjoyed the girl guiding programme and the many opportunities it offers.

A few of the highlights were:-

- **Celebrating World Thinking Day.**
- **Making new friends**
- **Enjoying a teddy bears picnic**
- **We have enjoyed learning new games and exploring what we like to do.**
- **Completing a Nature Walk with torches.**
- **Crafting is one of the activities we enjoy the most and try to fit in as much as possible. We have made some wonderful craft items to take home such as cards, promise mementoes, Christmas tree decorations, rabbits, splash painting, and paper plate craft.**
- **Enjoying the outdoors and summer sun by playing in the playground.**
- **Guiding adventure day at Stanwick Lakes.**
- **Climbing fun at Rock Up Rushden Lakes.**
- **Attending church celebrations and the Christingle service.**
- **Welcoming new Rainbows and Leaders to our group.**



FERRERS DISTRICT: If you would like your daughter to join either Rainbows, Brownies or Guides in the future please register them at www.girlguiding.org.uk.

2nd HIGHAM FERRERS RAINBOWS

Carole, Jennifer & Sarah

Numbers of Rainbows has increased since the covid restrictions have been relaxed.

Rainbows enjoy games (like parachute), crafts, outings and singing songs with the help of Carole, Jennifer and Sarah.

They also worked towards their 'Skill-Builders' earning badges as part of their badge-work (some interest badges seemed to be more popular than others).

We did a sponsored activity night to raise funds to pay the annual census and held a Thinking Day service (on Rainbow night) to remember Lord Baden Powell.

We made crafts for Mothers Day and Fathers Day and also enjoyed the window display quiz around Higham Ferrers.

Rainbows enjoyed a party to celebrate the Queen's 96th birthday.

The leaders attended the County Awards night at Chester House where Sarah was presented with her long service award and all 3 leaders now passed their Safer Space Level 3 and 1st Aid training.

We attended the beacon lighting and picnic at Wicksteed Park to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Queen's coronation and Rainbows enjoyed a 'red, white and blue' party in the Bede House.

Rainbows enjoyed the day trip to the Cotswold Wildlife Park to celebrate the 35th birthday of the forming of Rainbows.

This year we celebrated the Chinese New Year (of the Tiger), decorated a Church window to celebrate Harvest Festival, and attended the Civic Service, the Remembrance Sunday service on the Square and the Christingle service in the Church.

Rainbows attended their Christmas Party and Disco to finish off the year.

We now can start girls at age 4½ and they can stay until age 7 when they would move up to Brownies. If your daughter would like to join please register her on the Girlguiding web site.

DEANERY SYNOD

Peter, Linda B, Sue C, Sandy

The Deanery Synod representatives are Sandy Coleman, Linda Boxall, Peter Swindley and Sue Clarke, with Sue Clarke and Sandy Coleman as members of the Deanery Synod Standing Committee.

In 2022, we had the following meetings:-

28th June, we met at St Peters Church, Raunds and the guest speaker was Alison Booker, Arch Deacon, to discuss Intergenerational Ministry. Encouragement of young people being involved in the running of the churches and as members of the PCC was discussed as a way of making them feel that they belong. Afterall, they are the church of tomorrow!

12th July – Beer and Hymns at the Swan, Newton Bromswold. The Synod met in the pub garden for hymn singing and fellowship. It was a very enjoyable evening with only a little bit of rain. It didn't dampen the proceedings! It was nice to have local people from the pub joining in with the singing. The pub even provided a buffet afterwards!

12th October- St Peters Church Rushden, Guest speakers were Paul Adams and Lizzie Moesbauer (Youth Enabler). Lizzie has been achieving success at the Ferrers School, Higham Ferrers with students achieving 100% attendance who had previously been only achieving 10%.

Paul Adams discussed the machines available for taking card payments in church and the assistance that the diocese is giving churches to obtain one. St Mary's is in the process of obtaining a new machine.

At the time of writing this report, the next meeting is the Deanery worship on 5th February at St Lawrence's church Stanwick, Lent Litter pick on 11th, 18th and 25th March and Deanery prayer meeting on 23rd May.

HOLY and HANDYMEN of St MARYS

Chris Hale

Yet another busy year to occupy our time though with five of us now active – some more - than others – we have managed to keep on top of things.

Firstly let us all let us thank Richard Hall, Nick Lee, Fred Frost, Stephen Tuffnail and Graham Newell for all their efforts over the year and for keeping the Bede House (BH) drains clear and roding out sections that were blocked with toilet paper etc which had clearly been the work of saboteurs and other time wasters. Breakages to toilet seats and toilet roll dispensers also figured in the aforementioned folk's activities and even a large broken mirror. Other diverse tasks included repairing and maintaining the BH sound system's microphones, laying fires, repairing the Auto flush in the Gents and repairing plaster work in the BH office.

Naturally the BH unfortunately sustained the most damage sometimes through carelessness by hirers or failure to follow 'simple home care' rules e.g. pulling the curtains, covering the chairs too violently causing rings and ring hooks to break etc. Fortunately our good men – any ladies care to join us ? – were up to the repair work with fixing a heater guard that had been pulled off the wall. Separately, the installing of a locked switch guard to prevent lights being switched on from the stage unnecessarily. The main doors of the BH also came to our attention- oiling hinges and easing friction at the base though the keys are still a problem – some only working from the inside and others from the outside..

Within the Church itself, Richard, Nick and others worked hard to install the now present Wi- Fi system which involved laying a cable from the BH to the Church with it suitably buried out of sight. At Christmas the crib was moved from the boiler room , decorated and, after use returned. Candle holders likewise .

Once more our rods (cost £24) were used to clear birds' nests from the entries to the Church downpipes and clear other blocked outside pipes – mainly moss – causing the usual blockages. Much time was spent in the Churchyard clearing ivy off the perimeter walls and cutting back intrusive bushes on walls overlooking churchyard paths.

Richard discovered a hitherto unknown manhole in the vicar's drive which proved useful in identifying other blocks further back and confirming that there was a flow out into the Wood Street drains. Much time was also spent clearing the North side Church gutters of leaves and moss and on small items such as repairs to the vicar's side gate, chair moving etc.. all helped to fill our Thursdays

Happily, we all get on fine and enjoy a coffee as much as any – so it's not all work. Again – thanks to you all,

FIRST FRIDAY YOUTH CLUB

Children

We are :

- **A group of 20 to 30 children**
- **Year 6 and upwards (Age 10 to Age 18)**
- **Meet the first Friday in every month**
- **In the Bede House and churchyard**
- **5.30pm-7.00pm.**

Brenda, Lizzie, Annette, Darren, Claire, Keith & Jo, Kelvin & Leona let us play lots of board games, table tennis and pool. They also feed us lovely hot dogs, pizza and wedges and we also have some cake treats.

We would like to do more, but need funds and adult volunteers

PLEASE HELP AND SUPPORT

This is us.....having fun



FIRST FRIDAY YOUTH CLUB

Our Children



Tiny Tots

Ria Jefferies

Tiny Tots restarted in December 2021 and grew steadily in numbers up until July 2022. It was identified at the APCM 2022 that the group was at risk due to a reduction in volunteers. During the summer holidays promotion of the group within the town took place garnering a lot of interest from new families. Additionally several calls for help within the congregation were made for more volunteers to assist run the group but with little to no response.

Tiny Tots returned in September 2022 but had to be suspended after two sessions, as due to changes in the personal circumstances of the one volunteer running the group it could not continue. Another call for volunteers was made but again no response. Since then the group has been unable to restart. An online presence to maintain communication with the public has been maintained, encouraging interaction with other church activities and corresponding with new enquiries.

Alongside Tiny Tots, local childminders have been running a Stay and Play group on Monday mornings, and a Packed lunch and Play group on Fridays. This is on behalf of the church. These groups are immensely successful and well attended, to the point some weeks families are being turned away. The childminders have identified they need financial assistance to buy food and craft items, as they are having to use their own cash to replenish, despite a £1.50 donation taken from parents. This is to be looked in to by Ria Jefferies.

Additionally these groups need extra volunteers to help maintain ratios, to avoid having to turn away newcomers, and to meet and greet parents. Ria Jefferies is to start doing this on Mondays, and take this to the Children's Team for further discussion. As the Tiny Tots leader, Ria is also going to start providing story time with the older children on Mondays using a faith/moral based book and activity. This is so the message of Tiny Tots is still maintained until the official group can be restarted.

Lastly the childminders are happy to partner with the Children's Team on Fridays throughout the summer holidays to provide a play scheme. This is to combine resources, particularly in regards of volunteer numbers for ratio and supervision safety. This is currently for further discussion

Volunteers and assistance for all three groups are desperately needed to keep these groups running. As identified before we need to nurture these potential future church users and make them feel wanted and valued. Our highest service user on social media are mothers, the demographic who are the gateway for our future users. We need to continue to provide services for them and welcome them, but stretched volunteers who do not have time to fully engage, or no services at all will not do this.

PLEASE THINK IF YOU CAN HELP, OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT WANT TO, EVEN IF IT'S JUST SERVING REFRESHMENTS OR SUPERVISING. DIRECT PROVISION OF ACTIVITIES IS NOT NECESSARILY REQUIRED, JUST A SMILE AND A HELLO.

Social & Fund Raising

Karen Holmes

The first event for 2022 was Brass on the Grass on Sunday 31st July which was held in the Churchyard and we served Prosecco and Strawberries. This was a very enjoyable afternoon with everyone loving the music and at the same time raising £318.10 for the church.



The next event was the Farmers Market Coffee Morning on Saturday 24th September where we raised £225.

Harvest Lunch was held on Sunday 2nd October where we had 44 people attend and we raised £345.04. It was a tasty lunch and good for the parish family to meet up together.

Our next event was Christmas Sparkle which was held on Saturday November 19th; this year sadly we had fewer displays in the church unlike previous years. Footfall going inside the church was a little down however overall with refreshments, craft stalls and mulled wine we raised £4,403.16. People love to visit our 13th Century Church however the costs of keeping it in good order are quite staggering and so every penny counts.



Social & Fund Raising

Karen Holmes

Our next event was on Saturday December 3rd the Wreath Making Workshop which was attended by 39 people and raised £460.



(Wreath Making Workshop)

On Sunday 11th December we offered mulled wine and mince pies to those attending the Carol Service organised by the choir. This was a service of Lessons and Carols displaying St. Mary's choral tradition.



(Refreshments after the Carol Service)

Lycig

Brenda Elldred



Leading your church into growth is all about building connections with our local communities, getting to know people and sharing God's love by listening and caring and encouraging them to connect with God. It's about putting into action our faith. At Leading your Church into Growth, we think a good way to begin the process of planning for growth is to think about 'The Four P's'. These are based on Paul's ministry in Acts 17.

1. We pray for growth.
2. The church is an intentional presence in the community.
3. We take opportunities to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.
4. Not all will respond, but some will want to hear more, so we 'persuade' those who do want to hear more, by teaching them how to become a follower of Jesus.

As the year began so Covid restrictions were lifting and generally church life began to take shape again. However, we were also now in vacancy and so felt we needed to review our capacity for keeping things going. A meeting was held on 19th July with the Diocesan lead Revd Charlie Nobbs. A full programme of church events was mapped, it was extensive, but it gave a plan for the year and it was good to see at the end of the year that the majority of the planned work was achieved. There are 7 steps to the programme, and we agreed that we would continue working on the 3 Steps originally chosen as needing work. They are as follows;

Creating a prayerful culture of Growth
Developing engaging worship
Becoming an inviting and welcoming church.

Leaving the next step of Making a pathway for seekers to become disciples until we had more capacity and leadership from a vicar.

The 7 steps

- 1 Create a prayerful culture of Growth: Mustard Seed (Matthew 13: 31)
- 2 Implement an effective strategy: Kingdom Come (Matt. 6:10)
- 3 Practise fruitful evangelism: Catching Fish (Mark 1: 17)
- 4 Develop Engaging Worship: Holy Ground (Exodus 3: 5)
- 5 Become an inviting and welcoming church: Banquet (Luke 14: 21)
- 6 Make a pathway for seekers to become disciples: Make Disciples (Matthew 28: 19)
- 7 Begin a planned journey of growth Early Church (Acts 5: 14)

Lycig

Brenda Eildred

In St. John's Chelveston we don't have schools, but we have been working closely with our Parish council and now have joint events.

We are part of the 'Environmental group' looking to clean up our countryside and encourage recycling and less use of plastics. We also had a joint 'Queens Platinum Jubilee' event in the church and we have regular joint Quiz nights held in the church— all this has brought more interest in the church and an opportunity to talk about our faith and we hope to build on this.

In the September meeting Charlie Nobbs provided some training on the 4 step approach on how best to recruit volunteers which we now need to follow through. Simply put:-

Step 1 I do – you watch

Step 2 I do – you help

Step 3 you do – I help

Step 4 You do – I watch



WARM SPACES

	Rushden	
Monday	Salvation Army	10am - 2pm
Tuesday	St. Mary's Church	10am - 2pm
Wednesday	Wesleyan Chapel	10.30am - 1.30pm
Thursday	St. Mary's Church	12pm - 4pm
Friday	Rushden Hall	1.30pm - 3.30pm
	Higham Ferrers	
Tuesday	Hope Church	1pm - 4pm
Thursday	St. Mary's Church	12pm - 2pm

All welcome
Refreshments provided
Please join us for chat or tabletop games,
bring your own book or knitting project.

In November we joined in with the Council of Churches for Rushden and Higham in providing 'Warm Spaces' for people who were struggling to heat and eat.

At the meeting in January 2023, we agreed to investigate more the joint work with the Council of Churches, particularly for learning and study groups, and in order to promote more joined up thinking. This Lent we shared in the Lent Lunches and Sue Clarke from St. Mary's has set up a Deanery Lent Litter pick, which gives an opportunity to do our bit for the environment and gives the opportunity to speak to people as we do.

We also hope to join in 'Party in the Park' in the summer with all churches together and, where we can, share our faith and promote our churches.

Going forward we hope that with a new vicar we can begin looking at study groups to help grow our faith and at the same time grow our team of volunteers.

Thank You

God of Mission
Who alone brings growth to your
Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen



Leading your Church
into Growth

**May the grace
of the Lord
Jesus Christ,
the love of
God, and the
fellowship
of the Holy
Spirit, be with
you all.**

2 Corinthians 13:13

St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31/12/2022

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and legacies	59,586.56	10,000.00	91,410.53	0.00	160,997.09	83,014.81
Income from charitable activities	5,938.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,938.50	6,433.00
Other trading activities	17,840.34	0.00	39,290.34	0.00	57,130.68	73,605.24
Investments	1,012.51	285.77	2,243.82	0.00	3,542.10	196.29
Other income	241.99	0.00	21,558.38	0.00	21,800.37	339.23
Total income	84,619.90	10,285.77	154,503.07	0.00	249,408.74	163,588.57
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	1,394.41	0.00	1,966.75	0.00	3,361.16	8,407.49
Expenditure on charitable activities	74,755.74	34.66	48,287.48	0.00	123,077.88	232,979.33
Other expenditure	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,311.40
Total expenditure	76,150.15	34.66	50,254.23	0.00	126,439.04	242,698.22
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	8,469.75	10,251.11	104,248.84	0.00	122,969.70	(79,109.65)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	0.00	146.56	91,314.24	0.00	91,460.80	22,731.18
Gross transfers between funds - out	(148.43)	0.00	(91,312.37)	0.00	(91,460.80)	(22,731.18)
Other recognised gains / losses						
Net movement in funds	8,321.32	10,397.67	104,250.71	0.00	122,969.70	(79,109.65)
Total funds brought forward	1,078.45	21,013.02	124,713.68	0.00	146,805.15	225,914.80
Total funds carried forward	9,399.77	31,410.69	228,964.39	0.00	269,774.85	146,805.15
Represented by						
Unrestricted						
General fund	9,399.77	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,399.77	1,078.45
Designated						
Grace Milgate & Peggy Horsfield Young People Fund	0.00	31,410.69	0.00	0.00	31,410.69	21,013.02
Restricted						
Bede House	0.00	0.00	5,116.79	0.00	5,116.79	4,996.79
Bell Appeal	0.00	0.00	6,180.31	0.00	6,180.31	6,070.16

Choir	0.00	0.00	400.23	0.00	400.23	0.00
Elizabeth Groome Organ Scholarship	0.00	0.00	1,910.00	0.00	1,910.00	2,000.00
Heating Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(33,002.23)
J Crew (Fabric)	0.00	0.00	2,922.04	0.00	2,922.04	2,979.23
Restoration Fund	0.00	0.00	196,742.67	0.00	196,742.67	123,776.51
Servery	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	231.15
St Marys 600 Appeal	0.00	0.00	15,692.35	0.00	15,692.35	17,662.07

Balance sheet

	Total funds	Prior year funds
Current assets		
Investments	2,922.04	2,979.23
Cash at bank and in hand	268,966.62	174,707.62
	271,888.66	177,686.85
Liabilities		
Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year	2,113.81	30,881.70
	2,113.81	30,881.70
Net current assets less current liabilities	269,774.85	146,805.15
Total assets less current liabilities	269,774.85	146,805.15
Total net assets less liabilities	269,774.85	146,805.15
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
General fund	9,399.77	1,078.45

Designated

Choir Vestry	0.00	0.00
Grace Milgate & Peggy Horsfield Young People Fund	31,410.69	21,013.02
Community Outreach	0.00	0.00
Choir Robes	0.00	0.00
Father Warnes	0.00	0.00

Restricted

Bede House	5,116.79	4,996.79
Restoration Fund	196,742.67	123,776.51
Servery	0.00	231.15
St Marys 600 Appeal	15,692.35	17,662.07
Bell Appeal	6,180.31	6,070.16
Chantry Chapel	0.00	0.00
Choir	400.23	0.00
J Crew (Fabric)	2,922.04	2,979.23
Heating Fund	0.00	(33,002.23)
Childrens Corner	0.00	0.00
Lady Chapel	0.00	0.00
Elizabeth Groome Organ Scholarship	1,910.00	2,000.00

Funds of the church

269,774.85	146,805.15
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Analysis of income and expenditure

<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Designated</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Total</u>
				<u>This year</u>
				<u>Last year</u>

INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

Donations and legacies

Gift Aid - Bank	38,109.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	38,109.68	37,615.22
Gift Aid - Envelopes	1,666.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,666.04	2,217.49
Donations -Gift Aid	350.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	350.00	1,020.00
Loose plate collections	4,344.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,344.53	2,617.57
Envelopes - Non Gift Aid	1,359.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,359.00	1,436.00
Bank - Non Gift Aid	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	651.00
SumUp Payments	127.47	0.00	28.48	0.00	155.95	1,124.59
Web Site donations	1,076.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,076.16	916.91
One-off Gift Aid gifts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	175.00
Donations appeals etc	645.00	0.00	770.00	0.00	1,415.00	3,419.75
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	10,869.23	0.00	5,062.05	0.00	15,931.28	15,146.25
Legacies	0.00	10,000.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00	0.00
Legacy - Restricted	0.00	0.00	80,640.00	0.00	80,640.00	0.00
Elizabeth Groome Organ Scholarship	0.00	0.00	(90.00)	0.00	(90.00)	2,000.00
Children's Singing Workshops	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
Recurring grants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,523.96
Non-recurring one-off grants	85.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,085.00	10,600.00
Other funds generated	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.08
Wall Safes-Candles	188.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	188.90	372.39
Wall Safe - Church Expences	85.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	85.55	23.60
Church Flowers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Misc	680.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	680.00	50.00
Total	59,586.56	10,000.00	91,410.53	0.00	160,997.09	83,014.81

Income from charitable activities

Fees for weddings and funerals	5,920.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,920.20	6,433.00
Bookstall sales to promote objectives	18.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	18.30	0.00
Total	5,938.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,938.50	6,433.00

Other trading activities

Fund Raising	8,184.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	8,184.32	8,194.33
St Marys 600 Appeal	0.00	0.00	39,290.34	0.00	39,290.34	58,323.11
Heating & Lighting	665.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	665.00	750.00
Bede House - Lettings	8,986.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	8,986.67	6,130.80
Parish magazine sales	4.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.35	207.00
Total	17,840.34	0.00	39,290.34	0.00	57,130.68	73,605.24

Investments

Dividends	87.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	87.38	170.28
Increase in share value	0.00	0.00	(57.19)	0.00	(57.19)	0.00
Bank and building society interest	25.13	285.77	2,301.01	0.00	2,611.91	26.01
Rent from lands or buildings	900.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	900.00	0.00
Total	1,012.51	285.77	2,243.82	0.00	3,542.10	196.29

Other income

VAT Reclaimed	0.00	0.00	21,558.38	0.00	21,558.38	0.00
Chelveston Stationery Contribution	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	339.23
Insurance claims	241.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	241.99	0.00
Total	241.99	0.00	21,558.38	0.00	21,800.37	339.23
INCOME TOTAL	84,619.90	10,285.77	154,503.07	0.00	249,408.74	163,588.57

EXPENDITURE

Raising funds

Fees paid to fund raisers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	78.36
Costs of fetes & other events	1,394.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,394.41	5,731.13
St Marys 600	0.00	0.00	1,966.75	0.00	1,966.75	2,598.00
Total	1,394.41	0.00	1,966.75	0.00	3,361.16	8,407.49

Expenditure on charitable activities

Giving to missionary societies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	500.00
Giving - relief and development agencies	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Secular charities	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	1,165.00
Special Collections	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	198.74
Parish Share payments	30,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	30,000.00	47,000.00
Assistant staff costs	53.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	53.95	100.13
Salary of parish administrator	2,142.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,142.25	0.00
Working expenses of incumbent	428.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	428.82	4.99
Vicar's telephone	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	84.00
Parish training and mission	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	48.62
Church running - insurance	8,790.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	8,790.49	8,452.55
Miscellaneous	1,372.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,372.00	25.00
Church office - telephone	539.68	0.00	0.00	0.00	539.68	420.28
Organ / Organist costs	5,021.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,021.00	3,977.99
Choir	586.10	0.00	149.77	0.00	735.87	551.60
Church maintenance	3,492.82	0.00	80.00	0.00	3,572.82	5,059.63
Cleaning	1,041.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,041.35	688.40
Upkeep of services	580.32	0.00	0.00	0.00	580.32	1,603.72
Upkeep of churchyard	74.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	74.99	55.00
Administration	951.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	951.18	433.48
Photo Copier/Printing	2,471.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,471.24	2,059.71
Visiting speakers / locums	133.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	133.60	0.00
Church running - electric	816.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	816.11	1,152.03
Chantry Chapel - Electricity	1,066.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,066.65	1,047.87
Church running - gas	2,811.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,811.49	1,410.93
Church running - water	53.62	0.00	0.00	0.00	53.62	0.00
Church running - heating and lighting	(755.00)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(755.00)	0.00
Grace Milgate	0.00	34.66	0.00	0.00	34.66	0.00
Fees re Weddings/Funerals-Disbursements	2,692.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,692.00	2,535.00
Bede House - electricity	925.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	925.30	556.22
Bede House - gas	1,931.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,931.03	818.41
Bede House - Water Rates	538.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	538.34	185.66
Bede House - General Expenditure	1,146.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,146.41	1,202.32
Bede House - Cleaning	3,850.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,850.00	5,374.30
Church major repairs - structure	0.00	0.00	9,893.00	0.00	9,893.00	2,700.00
Church major repairs - installation	0.00	0.00	38,164.71	0.00	38,164.71	142,567.75
Total	74,755.74	34.66	48,287.48	0.00	123,077.88	232,979.33

Other expenditure

Childrens Singing Workshop	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,311.40
Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,311.40
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	76,150.15	34.66	50,254.23	0.00	126,439.04	242,698.22
GRAND TOTAL	8,469.75	10,251.11	104,248.84	0.00	122,969.70	(79,109.65)

Independent Examiner’s Report to the Trustees of St Mary’s Church, Higham Ferrers.

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31/12/2022.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The church’s trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church’s trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); 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 Commission. 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a ‘true and fair view’ and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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 2011 Act; and

- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

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

Signed



Paul Adams
19 Wymington Park
Rushden
Northants
NN10 9JP

Date 17th March 2023

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of St Mary's Church,
Higham Ferrers.**

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31/12/2022.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); 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 Commission. 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

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

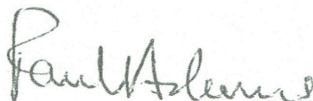
1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the require

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and

• to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

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

Signed



Paul Adams
19 Wymington Park
Rushden
Northants
NN10 9JP

Date 17th March 2023

Accounts

St Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers

2021 – 2022 Reports

**For the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
to be held in the Church on
Sunday 29th May at 12.00 noon.**

£1 donation



AGENDA

Part 1

Annual Vestry Meeting

1. Prayers
2. Apologies
3. Election of Churchwardens

Part 2

1. Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting
2. Electoral Roll Report
3. Election of the Parochial Church Council
4. Presentation of the Accounts and the Treasurer's Report
5. The Appointment of the Auditor
6. The Sidespeople's Report
7. Election of Sidespeople
8. Presentation of other reports
(Please see the Reports in this booklet)
9. Any other Business
(to be submitted to Dave Stuttle 48 hours before the meeting)

MINUTES of the Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting for the Parish of Saint Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers, held in Church on Sunday 23rd May 2021, at 12.00.

PRESENT: The Revd. Michelle Dalliston, The Revd Linda Bond, The Revd. Paul Needle, David Batchelor, Brian Behagg, Diane Behagg, Susie Betts, Peter Bond, Ruth Bond, Pat Catlin, Sue Clarke, Sandy Coleman, Bob Dennis, Sue Dennis, Brenda Elldred, Linda Ellson, Chris Hales, Derek Harber, Mary Harber, Avril Harlow, Reginald Harlow, Karen Holmes, Celia Ingram, Jane Jackson, Barry Matson, Karin Matson, Cynthia Matthias, Lynda Needle, Alison Oberman, Richard Oberman, Julie Poole, David Richardson, Annette Robinson, Darren Robinson, David Stuttle, Sue Thompson, Jennifer Tuffnail, Stephen Tuffnail, Caroline Walker, Nicky Way, Raymond Wildsmith and Stewart Wiles

APOLOGIES were received from Joy Yorke, Jo Green, Keith Green, Chris Newell, Graham Newell, Jane Smeathers, Ann Pack, Ruth Pack, Susan Fincham, Margaret Tuffnail, Carol Allen, Leona Mantle and Marion Knott,

Introduction

Revd. Michelle welcomed those attending reminding them that this was the first APCM since 2019, having regard to the Coronavirus pandemic and lockdown. She then prayed for God's blessing on the proceedings, pointing out the significance that the meeting was taking place on the Feast of Pentecost.

A MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1 Election of Churchwardens

Revd Michelle explained that Caroline Walker, who had held the post of Churchwarden for a number of years, had decided not to

seek re-election. Michelle explained that we might see Caroline a little less in the future, in that she was prayerfully exploring joining the Roman Catholic Church. On behalf of the Parish, Michelle thanked Caroline for her hard work, devotion and support during her period of office and wished her well in the future. Members expressed their appreciation with a gift, and by applause.

Revd Michelle then advised that there were two nominations, properly proposed and seconded, for the post of Churchwarden, namely David Stuttle and Darren Robinson. An election was therefore unnecessary, and David and Darren were duly appointed as Churchwardens for the Parish for the ensuing year and would thus serve as ex-officio members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Revd Michelle explained that Darren had served as Assistant Churchwarden for part of the preceding year, and she expressed her personal thanks, and that of the Parish, to both candidates for all they had done during the preceding period.

2 Assistant Wardens

Michelle went on to say that it was proposed to appoint Assistant Churchwardens in the future, but that would be dealt with by the PCC.

B ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1 Minutes

On a motion by Dave Stuttle, seconded by David Batchelor, **it was resolved** that (with minor typographical amendments) the minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, held on 4th April 2019, be agreed and signed as a true record.

2 Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral Roll Officer, Stewart Wiles, presented his report. There were now 120 members on the Roll, of which 48 lived outside the Parish. This roll had been advertised in the Church Porch as required.

3 Election of Lay Representatives to the Deanery Synod and PCC

Revd Michelle reported that nominations for election as the lay representatives of the Parish on the Deanery Synod, all properly seconded, had been received from Lynne Ellson, Sue Clarke and Sandy Coleman. Although not present, Peter Swindley had indicated that he wished to continue to serve on that body and his nomination was proposed by Dave Stuttle and seconded by Sue Clarke. Lynne, Sue, Sandy and Peter were thereupon elected as the Parish's representatives on that body for the next two years. By virtue of that election, they become ex officio members of the PCC.

Michelle advised that Graham Newell had indicated that he no longer wished to serve in that capacity and would therefore cease to be an ex officio member of the PCC. He had served on the Deanery Synod for 22 years, including service as Treasurer, and had been a PCC member for the same period. Michelle further indicated that Nicky Way, another Deanery Synod representative had also indicated she no longer wishes to serve. Michelle expressed the Parish's thanks for all they had done for the Parish, thanks confirmed by gifts and applause.

Turning to the membership of the PCC, Michelle indicated that three members had indicated that they no longer wished to serve as such, Sue Thompson, Derek Harber and Raymond Wildsmith (the PCC Secretary). Michelle paid tribute to the contribution these

members had made to the PCC and the Parish during their tenure, and expressed the Parish's thanks for their works, thanks again supported by gifts and applause.

Raymond Wildsmith then reminded members of the decision made at the last APCM in 2019, that all PCC members be elected for three years, with their individual tenures (1, 2 or 3 years) being settled by the PCC. Unfortunately, attempts by the PCC to bring this into effect had been hampered by the Coronavirus lockdown, and the inability to hold an APCM in 2020, We were therefore left in the situation where the previous decision to elect all members for 3 years still stood. It therefore followed that all existing members (save those who had resigned) would remain in office until 2022, obviating the need for an election this year. The matter can then be reviewed next year.

4 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Brian Behagg, presented his report and the audited accounts for the years ending 31st December 2019 and 31st December 2020. He emphasised the difficulties we had experienced during those two years, particularly as a result of the Coronavirus restrictions and lockdown. One of the results of these difficulties was a significant underpayment in the Parish Share 2020, greater than the underpayment in the preceding year. David Richardson queried the nature of the expenditure covered by item 2710. In the income and expenditure analysis. Having had no advance notice, Mr Behagg was unable to give an instant response, but indicated he would look into the matter.

Revd Michelle mentioned that the requirements of the Diocese for the format of the parochial accounts, and the information they would contain, were likely to change in the near future, facilitating their production, and making the information they gave more comprehensible.

On a motion by Barry Matson, seconded by Derek Harber, **it was resolved that the report and accounts be accepted, with thanks to the Treasurer.**

Mr Behagg further reported that, to deal with the problems arising from the need to replace the Church heating system, a separate team, with Sue Dennis as Appeal Leader and Avril Harlow as Treasurer, had been appointed to handle the raising of funds for that project. The team had extended their responsibilities to include the carrying out of other structural or maintenance repairs that presently existed, or might arise in the future. The fund-raising appeal was operated under the name "Higham 600". Members received a report detailing the magnificent achievements of the team and were advised that we were now only £12,000 short of the monies required to put the work in motion.

5 Appointment of Auditor

Brian Behagg recommended the appointment of a new Auditor, Paul Adams, the Diocesan Stewardship Adviser. Mr Adams had already been appointed as auditor to a number of parishes, and was highly respected in that role.

A motion was then presented by Dave Stuttle, seconded by David Batchelor, that Mr Adams be appointed as Auditor for the Parish during the ensuing year. Bob Dennis and Sue Dennis spoke in opposition to that motion. They questioned whether Mr Adams' diocesan role, and his involvement in advising the PCC and its committees on the question of stewardship, cast doubt on whether he had the required degree of independence. Revd Michelle indicated that Mr Adams had not been involved in making any decision arising from the matters he advised on; these decisions were the sole responsibility of the relevant Committees and the PCC. Raymond Wildsmith pointed out that Mr Adams' professional obligations would preclude him acting in any way

which was in conflict with the interests of his client. Revd Michelle expressed a similar view.

The motion was then put to the vote. 18 attendees voted in favour and 7 against, with one abstention. **The motion that Mr Adams be appointed auditor was therefore carried.**

6 Report and appointment of sidespersons

The Secretary reported that the persons appointed at the last APCM as sidesmen and sideswomen were June Alder, Carole Allen, David Batchelor, Elizabeth Bradshaw, Margaret Britchford, Sue Dennis, Pat Ellis, Mary Harber, Karin Matson, Paul O'Dell, Ann Pack, Jennifer Tuffnail, Linda Vickers, Pam Whiting and Stewart Wiles. The meeting also received a report as to their activities from Diane Behagg, their organiser.

Revd Michelle pointed out that there were others fulfilling this role, as recorded by Diane. The meeting agreed that the existing persons acting as sidesmen or sideswomen should continue so to act.

Michelle pointed out the importance of the work carried out by this group. It was hoped that further volunteers would be forthcoming, so that an additional team could be made up.

7 Presentation of reports

In addition to the reports already referred to, the meeting received, and where appropriate, accepted, the reports presented by or on behalf of the following persons and organisations.

- a) The Vicar's Report for 2020 – 21
- b) The Churchwarden's report for 2019 - 21
- c) The Higham Deanery Synod Report 2020

- d) Tine Tots 2019
- e) Bede House Report 2019
- f) The Benefice Magazine
- g) The Acting Director of Music
- h) St Mary's Bellringers 2019
- i) The Handymen
- j) The Mothers' Union
- k) The Social and Fundraising Committee
- l) Thursday Coffee mornings
- m) The Church Website
- n) Holy Dusters
- o) 1st Higham Ferrers Rainbows
- p) 2nd Higham Ferrers Rainbows

8 Safeguarding

Brenda Eldred, the Benefice Safeguarding Officer, presented her report on the activities of the Benefice Safeguarding Group. She emphasised the need for all PCC members, as well as those in leadership roles, to be DPS checked and to undergo appropriate training. There had been no reports of any incidents involving safeguarding issues during the preceding two years,

9 Stewardship Campaign.

Revd Michelle informed those present that, arising from the difficulties identified in the Treasurer's reports, It was proposed to hold a Stewardship Campaign, to begin from 23rd May. Stewart Wiles then explained the background to this campaign, and, very briefly, what it would involve. Apart from the capital income required for the heating project, some £250,000 per annum was required to run the Church and its activities properly. In fact, our income was very much less than that, in the region of £120,000. We could not rely on separate fundraising activities for that sum; and those activities were in any event designed for separate

projects. To meet the deficit, we needed to increase substantially our regular income. This was not as difficult as it might at first seem. An increased giving of £5 per week by each member of the Parish Family could produce some £40,000 per annum. If more wealthy members could increase this sum to £10 per week, the total would obviously be greater.

To that end, a letter will be circulated to all those with any connection with the Church, whether or not as worshippers, pointing out the financial difficulties, and the steps needed to address them. Any response should ideally be made through the Parish Giving Scheme, but other sources of income – cheques, card payments for example – would be welcomed.

10 Leading your Church into Growth (LYCIG)

Revd Michelle introduced and explained the Diocesan project being operated under this heading. Its objects were to achieve growth in the Church in this Parish and beyond in three areas: growth in numbers; growth in spiritual commitment; and growth in service to the local community. The project involved a series of training sessions for representatives of each benefice/parish, to provide guidance on how these objects could be achieved in their localities. Four of the benefice's representatives; Dave Stuttle, Sue Clarke, Sandy Coleman and Brenda Elldred gave brief accounts of what the project had achieved so far, opening up a number of exciting possibilities.

Michelle drew attention to the LYCIG prayer, which would be used regularly during the ensuing weeks.

11 Any other business

Under this heading Revd Michelle explained briefly the decisions the PC C had made in relation to the new heating system, what it

would involve on a practical level, and why this project was being approached as a whole, rather than piecemeal. It had now reached the stage of seeking the formal approval by the Diocesan Advisory Committee and, ultimately, the Diocesan Chancellor.

David Richardson commented that this information might have been given at an earlier stage, but was advised that the decisions had been made by the PCC after professional advice and detailed consideration and had been notified to parishioners, if only in basic form. It had always been open to parishioners to approach PCC members for more detailed information. Full details of the proposals would, of necessity, be available to parishioners in connection with any faculty petition.

12 Conclusion

The Meeting ended with those present saying together the LYCIG prayer and the Grace.

Signed as a true record at the meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 29th May 2022

Chairman

Electoral Roll Report

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers.

Electoral Roll Report for the APCM 29th May 2022

The Electoral Roll was renewed in March 2019 and is due for renewal in 2025.

After a review this year (2022) the membership now stands at 116. This figure is 4 less than last year's figure of 120. This is due to the sad loss of Noreen and Peggy and Pat and Eddie Spencer leaving the parish. No new members joined during the year.

Of the 116 members, 49 live outside of the parish.

A copy of the Electoral Roll minus telephone numbers and email addresses for privacy reasons will be posted on the notice board in the Church porch for 2 weeks before the APCM.

Please check that these details are correct, and if not please contact myself or a Church Warden.

Stewart Wiles

2nd May 2022

Treasurer's Report 2022

2021 was a year of consolidation following the stresses of Covid. Core Income from the various Parishioners Giving schemes had a small increase but there is a need for a considerable increase in income in 2022 to close the gap on our Parish share deficit.

The Peterborough Diocesan Standing Order scheme has finally been closed by the Diocesan Office (March 2022) with the remaining 5 contributors advised of the closure. The Scheme was a trail blazer for the Church as a whole but restricted to Peterborough Diocese. It has been replaced by the Parish Giving Direct Debit scheme. This new scheme is administered by Gloucester Diocesan Office and covers the Country as a whole. We currently have 53 subscribers which is an excellent achievement. Can I ask those of you who currently use the Envelopment system or the 'Plate' to consider joining the Parish Giving. Applications can be found in the Church or from your Church Wardens and Treasurer.

The Elizabeth Groome Music Charity has made a donation of £2,000 to fund Matthew Foster, our young Organ Scholar, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the EGMC for their generosity on behalf of the Parish and Matthew.

Turning to expenditure, we managed to pay £47,000 in 2021 towards our Parish share, approx. 2/3 rds of our target and a substantial increase on 2020. The most significant item of expenditure was, of course, the installation of the new Heating System. This has been funded through the excellent work of the 600 Appeal Committee, who have raised the necessary funds. There are still one or two small items of expenditure relating to the project, and we will in due course reclaim the VAT.

This is my 16th and final Treasurers Report. I would like to take the opportunity to thank those who have provided support over the 16 years, in particular Paul O'Dell and the late John Appleton. These two have helped me 'Count the Cash' every Thursday morning when we enjoyed the Bede House Coffee and biscuits whilst putting the Church and World as a whole to Rights.

Brian Behagg
Treasurer

Sidespeople Report.

We have only just returned to having sidespeople again and how lovely it is to be greeted with a smile and not a mask.

They contribute to the smooth running at our services and it is especially welcoming for newcomers and visitors.

A big thank you to Barry, Peter and Sandy for joining our merry band.



St Marys 600 Appeal

Our Appeal group has been working hard over the last year to ensure the completion of Phase 1 of our fundraising. Hopefully everyone reading this will be aware that an important piece of work was completed in November when our new heating system was installed in time for the winter months. It has meant that services are warmer once more and that the church can be used for social events too.

We are all keen that the church can be accessed our community and be used for a variety of different events. As well as the heating we have raised funds towards the cost of repairs that needed to be completed, and the final piece of the jigsaw will be the installation of our long-awaited Servedy – due for completion in June.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our fundraising in many different ways, by making monetary donations or buying tickets for events, donating raffle prizes or buying the limited edition prints of our church buildings. Our fundraising efforts have been added to two generous donations by members of our church to ensure that we have the servedy that we have long desired. Being able to serve refreshments in church in a more professional way means that new fundraising opportunities will be open to us as well as making after church coffee considerably easier to serve.

So, Phase 1 of our fundraising draws swiftly to a close - thanks to the donations from our church family, the wider community and success that has been achieved from our bid applications, totally around £50,000 towards church repairs and enhancements. Special thanks must go to Richard Oberman and Stewart Wiles for the many hours of work and sheer dedication that they have given to ensure the successful outcomes from the grant giving bodies. It

really is incredibly hard work to raise funds in this way, but so very worthwhile when we do.

Many of you know that we made a successful application to the Diocese for an interest free loan to cushion us while trying to raise funds for the heating system. Although we were granted the full £50,000, we actually never needed to draw the full amount down, instead we had £30,000. I am delighted to tell you that we have already paid back £20,000 and that it is our intention to pay back the final £10,000 on completion of the Servedy – once all the invoices have been finalised. Accessing the loan offered us contingency funds in a time when it was hard to predict the success of our fundraising. However, with the support of all of you, we have reached our target amounts much more quickly than we could have imagined when we set off on this five-year journey.

Now we are preparing for Phase 2 - the exterior initially and then the interior of the Bede House. We estimate the costs to be in the region of £200,000 and so the fundraising must continue. BUT it would be a huge amount of Coffee Mornings and Bake Sales to raise the money needed and so we are embarking upon a Heritage Lottery Fund application in the hope that this will help us with a large percentage of the funds we need. It will be a long, arduous task in which we will need to jump through many hoops, but with our top class bid writers we have high hopes of being successful.

Please continue to support us in our fundraising initiatives, we are trying to offer a wide array of social events. But do please also consider whether you are able to give a one-off personal donation, or maybe when celebrating a special birthday or anniversary asking friends and family to donate money instead of buying gifts and help to swell our coffers in that way too.

We are incredibly fortunate to have 3 stunning Grade 1 Listed buildings here in our churchyard and we all owe it to future

generations to leave them in good order so that our childrens children can worship here, be baptised and married here which means that we have to do all that we can as individuals, and groups, to work together to ensure that others may enjoy all that we currently do every day - and have done for most of our lives.

Thank you all,
Sue Dennis and all members of the 600 Appeal Fundraising Group.



Vicar's Report

Sadly, Revd Michelle left us on 27th February to take up the role of Vicar of Peterborough. This report is extracted from her Newsletter circulated in February.



The last three years have been for me an amazing time – an experience I would not have missed for the world. Yes, the challenges have been significant, and the commute and living apart from my family, not to mention Covid, have at times been seriously tough – but none of this have I faced alone because I have found in you all a team, in fact a family, who have helped carry the burdens and share the joys. In all of it, going right back to the early days, we have been asking God to lead us in a vision for our Benefice and in serving our community which has been exciting, exhilarating and full of the Spirit bringing growth and ever more possibilities.

We should all be proud of what has been achieved even in the incredibly difficult time of lockdown and closed churches. When the buildings had to be shut, the life of the church not only continued apace, but actually developed in more ways than ever before! This was an exhausting and worrying time for all of us, but helped us grow closer together and learn to trust God more.

Now a new phase has opened up for me and for you. I will now be working in partnership with Chris in Peterborough in a key time of opportunities and challenges there. And for Higham and Chelveston a new and exciting phase begins as you move along the path to seeking a new Vicar, one whom I'm sure will have a clear call to carry forward all the good initiatives you have all begun and continue to develop.

The Church of England is looking to develop its Vision and Strategy for the for the 2020's to be a **simpler, humbler, bolder Church that is Jesus Christ centred and Jesus Christ shaped**: a **simpler** Church, both in governance and structure and in the way we live and share the gospel; a **humbler** Church, recognising our failings and working with others to serve the common good; a **bolder** Church energised and enthused by the good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ and sharing with everyone.

So, may God bless you all richly as you journey on and I look forward to hearing of all the good things that will continue and begin, and I've no doubt that there will be times of being together again and how joyful that will be!

Much love and blessings to you all,

Michelle



Benefice Safeguarding Report

APCM 2021 St. Mary's Higham Ferrers

This past year has been another year of certain restrictions being relaxed during the pandemic where groups and activities have once again begun to meet and so keeping an eye on Safeguarding has been even more important.

The Benefice Safeguarding Group met 3 times in the year to update policies and pick up any issues.

We have had no reported issues this year, although we have had general enquiries about the vulnerability of people in the community and have supported those enquiries with direction from the Diocesan Office.

All our policies are up to date and displayed on noticeboards in the church. The information on help groups displayed in discreet places such as back of the toilet doors has also been updated this year.

As we are now in vacancy the Vicar's details have been removed from public notices and all safeguarding issues are reported by the Benefice Safeguarding Officer directly to the Diocese Safeguarding Office until our vacancy is filled.

Our current records for completed DBS and safeguarding training for all PCC members and leaders of groups is up to date for both churches, however the validity of the DBS and training has reduced to 3 years from 5 years and so many will need to be prompted to renew. This will happen after the APCM with the new PCC and reminder emails will be sent out.

To help with the amount of DBS renewals we now have a second recruiter in the Benefice, Annette Robinson. Thank you Annette.

This year also saw the launch of the ‘Volunteer Recruitment Package’ to all new volunteers. The role out of this package is vital for us to be compliant with the regulations. It contains a self-declaration form which everyone must do, a basic job description, instructions on applying for DBS and Safeguarding training, information on the Lone Working policy and how to report a suspected incident.

Finally, our Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Bev Huff, resigned as of April 2022 and whilst we await a re-appointment all Safeguarding issues are being dealt with by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory team.

Brenda Eildred 15.5.22



Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) -Report 2021

This year has once again been blighted by some restrictions due to the pandemic but nevertheless the LyCiG team have continued to promote and work within the principles agreed the previous year, using initiatives both inside and outside the churches and where events were restricted such as Messy Church for Mothering Sunday 2021 and Christingle then these were replaced with DIY kits.

The 3 areas of work chosen were reviewed with Reverend Charlie Nobbs, Director of Mission, Peterborough Diocese and the results under these 3 areas identified are as follows;

Prayerful Culture of Growth (Mustard Seed Matthew 13:31)

The LyCiG prayer has become a regular prayer within our services. Welcome postcards of the churches with the prayer are available for all to take home and use.

The availability and use of candles and tealights in prayer corners has increased over the year, possibly identifying with the grief felt during the pandemic. Also, the daily opening of St. Mary's church has made this more accessible.

During the Christmas season the Remembrance Trees in both churches were extremely well used.

Moving forward, we are looking into such ideas as reintroducing the Prayer Walks, a daily prayer time, and a Church Prayer WhatsApp group.

Becoming an Inviting and Welcoming Church (Luke 14:21)

There have been initiatives such as cushions on pews, regular updating of noticeboards, encouraging personal invitations to friends and neighbours, busy bags for children (St. Mary's), and highchairs for babies and toddlers (St. Mary's). Also expanding

the WhatsApp groups to new people and once again welcoming the uniformed groups.

Helping all Ages along the Journey of Faith. Make a Pathway for Seekers to become Disciples. (Matthew 28:19)

We have started by making contact with the local schools and, at the end of the summer term, we sent cards of thanks and some chocolates to the Heads and teachers for all their continued hard work especially during the pandemic. Within our Family Services we have introduced Breakfast Church once a month, which is an informal short service within a breakfast setting, and an All Age Service at the 10.30am service to encourage families and help them feel welcome and relaxed within our Eucharist service. Unfortunately, until now we have been limited by the pandemic for setting up any fellowship or study groups such as a START course or similar but it is hoped that this will now be a possibility as people are able to meet more in each other's houses.

The LyCiG team has welcomed a new member Ria Jeffries, we now have 7 members and would welcome many more as we plan to continue following the 7 Steps of LyCiG and the 4 P's, Prayer, Presence, Proclamation and Persuasion.

Brenda and the LyCiG team (APCM May 2022)



THE SOCIAL AND FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN HIGHAM FERRERS JANUARY 2021 TO DECEMBER 2021

The first event for 2021 was Brass on the Grass on Sunday 1st August which was held in the Churchyard and where we served Prosecco and Strawberries. This was a very enjoyable afternoon with everyone loving the music and at the same time raising £400.

The committee supplied refreshments on Saturday 14th August when Northampton Historic Churches Trust visited.

Our next event was our Patronal Festival on Sunday August 15th with a Family Mass followed by a Bring Your own Picnic in the church grounds and vicarage garden. A glass of sparkling wine was served to those who wanted it. Members of the parish family brought flowers to make the church look absolutely amazing.

The August Bank Holiday was a busy weekend with the Coffee Morning on the Saturday which continued until 4pm. On the Sunday we served cream teas and on Monday Ria did refreshments from the Naafi Van. Higham was busy with the Garage Sale on the Saturday, Open Gardens on the Sunday and the Art Exhibition in the church over the weekend. The weekend raised an amazing £1053.86.

Harvest Lunch was on Sunday 3rd October where we had 57 people attend and we raised £484.91. It was a tasty lunch and good for the parish family to meet up together.

Our next event was Christmas Sparkle which was held on Saturday November 20th which took a lot of organizing and risk assessments due to Covid. We raised £4560.01 which was sadly down on previous years however that was due to Covid restrictions and us not being able to do refreshments in the Bede

House due to Covid regulations. We were able to offer refreshments from the Naafi Van courtesy of Ria.

The last event was on Saturday December 4th the Wreath Making Workshop which was attended by 40 people and raised £651.

KH MAY 2022



Bede House.

Bookings were very slow after the covid outbreak. People were being very cautious about large gatherings. Things are now picking up and we have several weddings booked and many childrens parties.

The monthly Farmers Market coffee mornings are, once again, very popular and our weekly coffee mornings on a Thursday are increasing in numbers.

We do have space for a couple of daytime regular bookings and the odd evening but bookings are definitely on the up.

A BIG THANK YOU to our Holy Handymen for their hard work maintaining the fabric of the building thereby containing maintenance costs. Also a big welcome to Nick, Fred and Steven who have joined the team since covid.





REPORT FOR THE SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE

Unfortunately we were not able to provide coffee for some time due to the pandemic so the profits this year have not been as good as we would have liked. Since the end of August when we started up again, a total of £220 has been raised. This was raised by asking for donations towards the cost, which each week gets more expensive for coffee and biscuits.

At the moment we are working with a team of four, which is not ideal, but it is only once a month. Despite no-one coming forward following the appeal by Rev. Michelle, we would be very pleased if anyone would like to join the rota. Hopefully when the Servedy is completed it will be a much nicer area to serve coffee than is available at the moment. During this time please bear with us as we shall have to work around the building work.

I would like to thank most sincerely, Ruth, Angela and Nikki for providing the coffee, and a special thank you to Dave Batchelor who every week fills and switches on the urn and gets everything out for us.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support.

Pam Whiting

St. Mary's Handymen's Report – April 2021 to April 2022

Yet another year – and though we all felt that the maintenance programme must surely be reaching an end point – once again we were wrong and have been kept even busier and struggling to keep up with demand with our services severely stretched at times – this despite our numbers having increased by the welcome addition of Nick Lee, Fred Frost and Stephen Tuffnail. With this new influx of talent one would have felt that there shouldn't be too much of a problem; alas, Father Time marches on and what previously took 10 minutes to sort now takes 20.

Meanwhile time spent clearing debris and scraping away moss from the gullies on the North side of the Church plus churchyard rubbish collection began to add up and we are still struggling to clear the weeds from the stones on the South side of the Church.

As usual in the Bede House toilet roll holders, seats and mirrors needed attention not to mention door handles all requiring similar or new fittings. Outside, work continued checking the roof gutters and removing old bird nests that blocked the flow of water to the downpipes below. Within the Church itself we continued in the quest to replace as many of the existing lamps with low wattage bulbs of a similar luminosity. Accessing such lamps is now somewhat hazardous.

Other activities have continued unabated; – Wi-Fi has now been extended from the Bede House (B.H.) office to the main hall and it is hoped to eventually run a line into the Church itself. Candle holders have been drilled out, fires laid in the Bede House, the Xmas tree and crib erected and removed, the Sacristy lock removed and restored to a working condition, shelving fitted in the B. H. office and vestry and finally the drains between the Bede House toilets and the Vicar's manhole and thence to the top of the vicar's drive cleared.

Tiny Tots APCM report 2022

Overview

After ceasing for Covid, Tiny Tots restarted in December 2021 with a Christmas special which was well attended after heavy promotion. This coincided with a new Tiny Tots team taking over the running and organising of the group - Clare Headland, Kasey Cheetham, and Ria Jefferies. Since January 2022 Tiny Tots has resumed its weekly sessions in term time (Wednesdays 1.30-3pm) with growing success. Attendance varies between 10-21 children, with an average number of 12-15. This in part can be attributed to continued support from child minders and promotion via social media.

The management of the social media is under the new Tiny Tots team. This has seen an increase in followers and interactions, which in some part is believed to have fed into the increased attendance.

Strengths

- Good relationships being built between church members and attendees
- Tiny Tots provides an access point for baptism enquiries, and other enquiries for church services
- Tiny Tots feeds into other areas of church life, and other church events have seen attendance from this group increase
- It is a gateway service to bringing new families and future users of the church into the congregation

Areas of Concern

Tiny Tots is currently run by 3 church members, but with its continued success and growth will need more volunteers to add to the rota for either delivering the activities, preparing refreshments, or both. This is made more critical by two members whose commitment is dependent on young family needs, and potential

increase in paid employment demands which will impact their availability. Additionally the third member is still developing confidence and experience in all aspects of the group. This was highlighted in March with the cancellation of 2 sessions because of sickness and no cover.

Plan - to reach out to church community for in house volunteers to come on rota. Look within wider community at Jubilee event.

The increase in numbers means we are getting too big for the corner in church.

Plan - discuss minor rearrangement of corner to make bigger with extra carpeted area.

Ria Jefferies



Report from the Friends of St. Mary's May 2022

Over the past year the **rewilding project** continued and the fruits of labour became evident as we witnessed the wildlife around us. A formal birdwatching survey fed back to RSPB yielded positive results and we were delighted to see the return of the peregrine falcons who produced four chicks which all safely fledged. We believe another brood has hatched and we await their sighting along with many other twitchers and cameras. The Make it Count survey in June 2021 inviting the public to record what they saw further added to evidence of the richness in biodiversity and we were happy to work with HFJS children who also planted sunflowers to the rear of the Bede House.

We have established a dedicated Facebook page, sent [regular Newsletters](#) and continue to expand the outdoor exhibition of information boards featuring wildlife in the churchyard

In May, the good news of a grant was received from Nenescape enabling the creation of the **Bedeswoman's Garden** to the rear of the Bede House. This set the precedent for the positioning of a bench and, whilst seeking permission, other sites were agreed upon for those who wished to donate memorial benches which the Friends arranged.

In August, the **Richard Hacon Memorial** was rededicated following cleaning and repainting by the Holy Handymen of the surrounding railings to mark 150 years since his death and acknowledging his selfless dedication and indeed, the dedication of all health workers, during the Covid pandemic.

In September, we received the prestigious Silver Award from the Wildlife Trust as part of the Churchyard Conservation initiative. Also, in September, we received a grant as part of the Nene Valley Festival in September which enabled us to pay for the **Bedesmen**

and Bedewoman's exhibition researched by the Prior, Stuart Wilby and put together by our Trustee, Pam Webbley.

This was launched at an Afternoon Tea with SERVE and Ron Manning Centre guests, also sponsored by the Nene Valley Festival (part of the Heritage Lottery funded Nenescape). Following a tour of the exhibition and churchyard projects, our guests enjoyed a slap-up tea with trifle! This exhibition then was displayed at the Heritage Family Fun Day at Rushden Lakes accompanied by Bedesmen, Trustees and the Material Girls working on the Henry Chichele banner.

During autumn, many hundreds of bulbs were planted, mainly daffodils along the pathway to the Midland Road gate and careful management of the wildflower meadow area continued.

In October, another evening with the Revd. Richard Coles and our annual Coffee Morning helped towards this year's project of **opening up the arched gateway from Midland Road**. A further Nenescape grant allows for the imminent repair to the stone arch and the provision of a new gate using existing ironmongery. The intention is to extend the York stone pathway to the gate for ease of access for all to this amazing building which this year celebrates 600 years since its foundation.

In February at our farewell tribute to Revd, Michelle, she and Barry unveiled of the final banner of **the Life of Henry Chichele in fabric and thread**. At the March Spring Flower Coffee Morning further funds were raised towards our Gateway to the Bede House project as well as £220 for the Ukrainian Appeal from the sale of potted miniature daffodils.

In April, many wildflower seeds were scattered and shrubs planted to allow further cover for wildlife. By the month's end, the **new church notice board** will be in place.

Carol Fitzgerald 11th May 2022

2nd Higham Ferrers Rainbows

Rainbows enjoy games, crafts and sing songs with the help of Carole & Jennifer and Sarah.



Rainbows attended Remembrance Sunday on the Square.

They also worked towards their 'Skill-Builders' earning badges as part of their badge-work (pet-lover seemed to be their favourite Interest badge). If they don't have a pet, a soft toy is acceptable.

Lots of photos were taken which we are pleased to see.

This year we celebrated the Chinese New Year and 'Thinking Day'. We held services in our unit meeting.

We made crafts for 'Mothers Day' and also entered the town 'Sparkle' window display competition where one of our girls won a prize.

We took part in a Church display where we made hands for a wreath display.

Rainbows enjoy using the new equipment and games bought for us by the Mayors' charity fund in 2020.

We now can start girls at age 4½ and can stay until age 7 when they would move up to Brownies. If your daughter would like to join please register her on the Girlguiding web site or call Carole on 07 811 516 357.

Carole, Jennifer & Sarah

The benefice website.

The Benefice website continues to be looked at regularly both locally, countrywide and even worldwide.

During the last year the site has been viewed over 11,000 times by over 4000 viewers.

It also receives donations for both churches and is a useful contact point.

Thanks to the efforts of Fr. Paul and Brenda we are able to provide two weekly services online, the midweek Celtic Liturgy and a Sunday morning service, Meeting Point. The latter has now been reduced in length to 15 minutes as with the lifting of Covid restrictions there is less reason for people not to attend church. It is recognised that there is always a group who are unable to do so and the shortened service is intended for them.

I am very grateful for the continuing assistance of Pam Webbley whose design skills have made a great improvement to the site and make the day to day running of the site less onerous.

Richard Hall. (Webmaster)



St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31/12/2021

Balance sheet

	Total funds	Prior year funds
Current assets		
Investments	£3,306.42	£2,894.09
Cash at bank and in hand	£174,694.07	£223,902.41
	£178,000.49	£226,796.50
Liabilities		
Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year	£30,625.70	£881.70
	£30,625.70	£881.70
Net current assets less current liabilities	£147,374.79	£225,914.80
Total assets less current liabilities	£147,374.79	£225,914.80
Total net assets less liabilities	£147,374.79	£225,914.80
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
General fund	£1,365.44	£7,317.87
Designated		
Choir Vestry	£0.00	£0.00
Grace Milgate	£21,166.95	£23,158.55
Community Outreach	£0.00	£0.00
Choir Robes	£0.00	£0.00
Father Warnes	£0.00	£0.00
Restricted		
Bede House	£4,996.79	£5,896.79
Servery	£231.15	£1,971.15
St Marys 600 Appeal	£17,712.07	(£1,296.60)
Bell Appeal	£6,122.38	£3,920.22
Chantry Chapel	£0.00	£0.00
J Crew (Fabric)	£3,306.42	£2,894.09
Heating Fund	(£19,601.44)	£34,290.50
Childrens Corner	£0.00	£0.00
Lady Chapel	£0.00	£0.00

Elizabeth Groome Organ Scholarship	£1,820.00	£0.00
Restoration Fund	£110,255.03	£147,762.23
Funds of the church	£147,374.79	£225,914.80

Analysis of receipts and payments

<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Designated</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>This year</u>	<u>Total Last year</u>
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INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

Donations and legacies

Gift Aid - Bank	£37,615.22	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£37,615.22	£37,708.44
Gift Aid - Envelopes	£2,217.49	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,217.49	£2,904.00
Donations -Gift Aid	£1,020.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,020.00	£2,580.00
Loose plate collections	£2,617.57	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,617.57	£2,359.60
Envelopes - Non Gift Aid	£1,436.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,436.00	£1,893.40
Bank - Non Gift Aid	£651.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£651.00	£27.00
SumUp Payments	£1,129.67	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,129.67	£0.00
Web Site donations	£916.91	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£916.91	£97.00
One-off Gift Aid gifts	£175.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£175.00	£0.00
Donations appeals etc	£2,894.12	£0.00	£600.00	£0.00	£3,494.12	£867.48
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	£10,800.56	£0.00	£4,271.32	£0.00	£15,071.88	£13,030.05
Elizabeth Groome Organ Scholarship	£0.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	£0.00
Children's Singing Workshops	£2,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,000.00	£0.00
Recurring grants	£1,523.96	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,523.96	£1,527.50
Non-recurring one-off grants	£600.00	£0.00	£10,000.00	£0.00	£10,600.00	£0.00
Wall Safes-Candles	£372.39	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£372.39	£92.62
Wall Safe - Church Expences	£23.60	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£23.60	£10.40
Smarties	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£10.20
Grace Milgate	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£500.00
Church Flowers	£100.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£100.00	£0.00
Misc	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£998.58
Total	£66,093.49	£0.00	£16,871.32	£0.00	£82,964.81	£64,606.27

Income from charitable activities

Fees for weddings and funerals	£6,689.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6,689.00	£1,244.80
Bookstall sales to promote objectives	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£64.00
Total	£6,689.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6,689.00	£1,308.80

Other trading activities

Fund Raising	£8,194.33	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£8,194.33	£2,565.49
Fund Raising- Restoration	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£140.00
St Marys 600 Appeal	£0.00	£0.00	£58,373.11	£0.00	£58,373.11	£33,988.04
Heating & Lighting	£750.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£750.00	£375.00
Bookstall sales - fund raising	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£20.00
Bede House - Lettings	£6,130.80	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6,130.80	£1,854.75
Magazine income - advertising	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£500.00
Parish magazine sales	£207.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£207.00	£1,110.90
Total	£15,282.13	£0.00	£58,373.11	£0.00	£73,655.24	£40,554.18

Investments

Dividends	£85.14	£0.00	£85.14	£0.00	£170.28	£83.48
Increase in share value	£0.00	£0.00	£327.19	£0.00	£327.19	£1,537.09
Bank and building society interest	£0.97	£11.02	£72.39	£0.00	£84.38	£720.53
Total	£86.11	£11.02	£484.72	£0.00	£581.85	£2,341.10

Other income

VAT Reclaimed	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£125.00
Chelveston Stationery Contribution	£339.23	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£339.23	£756.74
Special Collections	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£246.30
Total	£339.23	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£339.23	£1,128.04
INCOME TOTAL	£88,489.96	£11.02	£75,729.15	£0.00	£164,230.13	£109,938.39

EXPENDITURE

Raising funds

Costs of fetes & other events	£5,731.13	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£5,731.13	£900.00
St Marys 600	£0.00	£0.00	£2,598.00	£0.00	£2,598.00	£1,296.60
Total	£5,731.13	£0.00	£2,598.00	£0.00	£8,329.13	£2,196.60

Expenditure on charitable activities

Giving to missionary societies	£500.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£500.00	£260.00
Giving - relief and development agencies	£1,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,000.00	£200.00
Home mission	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£310.53
Secular charities	£1,165.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,165.00	£0.00
Special Collections	£198.74	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£198.74	£0.00
Parish Share payments	£47,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£47,000.00	£24,000.00
Assistant staff costs	£100.13	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£100.13	£2,538.45
Working expenses of incumbent	£4.99	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£4.99	£228.98
Vicar's telephone	£84.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£84.00	£0.00
Parish training and mission	£48.62	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£48.62	£55.16
Church running - insurance	£8,452.55	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£8,452.55	£8,444.96
Miscellaneous	£25.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£25.00	£510.00
Church office - telephone	£420.28	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£420.28	£410.93
Organ / Organist costs	£3,797.99	£0.00	£180.00	£0.00	£3,977.99	£1,782.66
Choir	£551.60	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£551.60	£950.00
Church maintenance	£5,059.63	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£5,059.63	£1,463.81
Cleaning	£688.40	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£688.40	£514.74
Upkeep of services	£1,603.72	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,603.72	£1,471.40
Upkeep of churchyard	£55.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£55.00	£138.88
Administration	£433.48	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£433.48	£641.38
Photo Copier/Printing	£2,059.71	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,059.71	£2,453.09
Church running - electric	£1,230.39	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,230.39	£972.65
Chantry Chapel - Electricity	£1,047.87	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,047.87	£1,977.88
Church running - gas	£1,410.93	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,410.93	£1,649.59
Magazine expenses	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£336.00
Fees re Weddings/Funerals-Disbursements	£2,535.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,535.00	£688.80
Bede House - electricity	£556.22	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£556.22	£718.78
Bede House - gas	£818.41	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£818.41	£1,374.83
Bede House - Water Rates	£185.66	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£185.66	(£948.84)
Bede House - General Expenditure	£302.32	£0.00	£900.00	£0.00	£1,202.32	£1,233.96
Bede House - Cleaning	£5,446.22	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£5,446.22	£3,944.23
Governance costs examination/audit fee	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£100.00
Church major repairs - structure	£0.00	£0.00	£2,700.00	£0.00	£2,700.00	£750.01
Church major repairs - installation	£590.26	£0.00	£141,977.49	£0.00	£142,567.75	£1,738.80
Total	£87,372.12	£0.00	£145,757.49	£0.00	£233,129.61	£60,911.66

Other expenditure

Childrens Singing Workshop	£1,311.40	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,311.40	£0.00
Total	£1,311.40	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,311.40	£0.00
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	£94,414.65	£0.00	£148,355.49	£0.00	£242,770.14	£63,108.26
GRAND TOTAL	(£5,924.69)	£11.02	(£72,626.34)	£0.00	(£78,540.01)	£46,830.13

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers.

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31/12/2021.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); 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 Commission. 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

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

Paul Adams

Paul Adams
19 Wymington Park
Rushden
Northants
NN10 9JP

19/05/2022

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers.

I report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31/12/2021.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The church's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); 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 Commission. 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

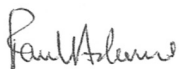
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- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

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



Paul Adams
19 Wymington Park
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19/05/2022

Accounts

St Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers

2019 – 2020 Reports

**For the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
to be held in the Church on
Sunday 23rd May at 12.00 noon.**

£1 donation



AGENDA

Part 1

Annual Vestry Meeting

1. Prayers
2. Apologies
3. Election of Churchwardens

Part 2

1. Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting
2. Electoral Roll Report
3. Election of the Parochial Church Council
4. Presentation of the Accounts and the Treasurer's Report
5. The Appointment of the Auditor
6. The Sidespeople's Report
7. Election of Sidespeople
8. Presentation of other reports
(Please see the Reports in this booklet)
9. Any other Business
(to be submitted to Rev. Michelle 48 hours before the meeting)

MINUTES of the Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting for the Parish of Saint Mary the Virgin, Higham Ferrers, held in the Bede House on Thursday 4th April 2019, at 7.30 pm.

PRESENT: The Revd. Michelle Dalliston, The Revd. Tom McLean, The Revd Linda Bond, Carol Allen, Georgia Barnes, Brian Behagg, Ruth Bond, Margaret Britchford, Sue Dennis, Pat Ellis, Linda Ellson, Jo Green, Keith Green, Derek Harber, Avril Harlow, Karen Holmes, Celia Ingram, Marion Knott, Rachel Lee, Justin Maltby-Smith, Leona Mantle, Barry Matson, Karin Matson, Lynda Needle, Christine Newell, Graham Newell, Alison Oberman, Richard Oberman, Ann Pack, Ruth Pack, David Pocock, Lynne Pocock, Penny Reading, David Rockley, Pat Rockley, Annette Robinson, Darren Robinson, Jane Smeathers, David Stuttle, Peter Swindley, Sue Thompson, Jennifer Tuffnail, Stephen Tuffnail, Linda Vickers, Caroline Walker, Jessica Walker, Nicky Way, Pam Whiting, Raymond Wildsmith, Stewart Wiles and Joy Yorke.

APOLOGIES were received from Diane Behagg, Peter Bond, Elizabeth Bradshaw, Terry Broughton, Bob Dennis, Susan Fincham, Pat Hall, Richard Hall, Mary Harber, Anna Sauntson, Elizabeth Swindley and Margaret Tuffnail

Introduction

In opening both meetings, Revd. Michelle welcomed those attending, and introduced the proceedings with prayer.

Meeting of Parishioners

There were two nominations, properly proposed and seconded, for the posts of Churchwarden, namely Caroline Walker and David Stuttle. An election was therefore unnecessary, and Caroline and

David were duly appointed as Churchwardens for the Parish for the ensuing year. Revd Michelle expressed her personal thanks, and that of the Parish, to the Churchwardens, for putting themselves forward for the offices, for the welcome and help they had given her, and for their hard work for the Parish in the preceding year.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1 Minutes

On a motion by Barry Matson, seconded by Richard Oberman, **it was resolved** that the minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, held on 19th April 2018, be agreed and signed as a true record.

2 Electoral Roll Report

In presenting his Report, the Electoral Roll Officer, Stewart Wiles reminded members that, to comply with the Church Representation Rules, a new Electoral Roll had had to be prepared this year, and he outlined the steps he had taken to prepare that document. On 20th March 2019, the date on which the new Roll closed, it contained 123 persons, of whom 70 lived outside the Parish. He explained the reasons for the reduction in numbers since the last Roll; firstly, a number of entrants had died or moved away; secondly a number of previous entrants, although issued with application forms, had not applied for inclusion in the new Roll. However, 11 persons, not on the previous Roll, had applied for inclusion in the new one.

Richard Oberman queried certain calculations made in the Report. Sue Dennis asked what steps had been / were being taken to “chase up” the previous entrants and other candidates who had not asked to be included in the new Roll. Mr Wiles and Father Tom

indicated that this was being addressed. Mr Wiles reminded the meeting that the Roll was now open for new names to be added.

Members thereupon **agreed** to accept Mr Wiles' report, and expressed their thanks for his work in preparing the new Roll and keeping it up to date.

3 Election of Lay Representatives to the Parochial Church Council

Revd Michelle advised members that there were fourteen candidates, properly proposed and seconded, for election. Of these, two would be admitted to the Council in another way (as co-opted member or Deanery Synod Representative) leaving twelve candidates for the twelve vacancies. The remaining candidates were Sue Dennis, Derek Harber, Karen Holmes, Jane Jackson, Justin Maltby-Smith, Leona Mantle, Barry Matson, Alison Oberman, Darren Robinson, Sue Thompson, Nicky Way and Raymond Wildsmith.

On a motion by Dave Stuttle, seconded by Linda Bond, **it was resolved** that these twelve candidates be appointed to serve as the Lay Representatives on the Parochial Church Council.

Michelle advised that meeting that it was intended that Stewart Wiles and Brian Behagg would be made co-opted members of the Council.

She further indicated that it was expected that Brenda Eildred would be admitted as Reader for the Benefice in the Autumn. On a motion by Georgia Barnes, seconded by Ann Pack, **it was resolved** that Brenda would be made a member of the Council on her admission.

Michelle also mentioned the terms of office of the new Representatives, Previously, they had served for only one year. This did not prove wholly satisfactory, in that there was no guaranteed continuity.. She suggested that the Representatives be appointed for a period of three years, with one third retiring every year. The question of applying this process to the terms of the newly elected Representatives (who should serve for one, two, or three years) should be devolved to the first meeting of the new Council.

Richard Oberman spoke in support of this proposal and, on a motion by Georgia Barnes, seconded by Ann Pack, **it was resolved**, that this practice be adopted, both to the newly elected Representatives, and to future elections of Lay Representatives to the Parochial Church Council.

4 Treasurer's Report and presentation of accounts for 2018

The Treasurer, Brian Behagg, presented his report and the audited accounts for the year ending 31st December 2018. He advised that the Parish's core income, from giving by worshippers, continued to fall, and that our payment towards the Parish Share had been £14,274 short. He further drew attention to the imminent need for substantial capital expenditure – something like £430,000 – for the installation of an effective heating system and the structural repairs identified by the Quinquennial Inspection Report.

Two individual queries were raised concerning the report; The first was by Alison Oberman as to the recording of income from sales of the Parish Magazine. The second was by Joy York, who queried whether some items of expenditure falling under the general "Charitable Activities" heading was properly included in that category. Mr Behagg responded to these queries and indicated that, where appropriate, he would look into the matters further.

Richard Oberman commented that the accounts did not present, in simple form, an overall picture of the Parish's finances and its financial difficulties. Mr Behagg replied that the accounts were purely historical. They did not, and were not designed to, report on likely financial obligations to arise in the future. Members reported that much of this information was available elsewhere, Father Tom added that the information Mr Oberman required would be made available in the context of a future stewardship campaign.

On a motion by David Rockley, seconded by Barry Matson, **it was resolved** that the annual accounts for 2018 be accepted. Members expressed by applause their appreciation of the hard work Mr Behagg had done, both recently and over many years, in seeking to control the Parish's finances.

5 Appointment of Auditor

Brian Behagg advised members that the existing auditor, Kevin Bond, was prepared to continue as auditor for the next twelve months. On a motion by Barry Matson, seconded by Karin Matson, **it was resolved** that Mr Bird be appointed Auditor for the ensuing year. The Secretary was instructed to write to Mr Bond, advising him of this decision, and thanking him for his services.

6 Sidespeople's Report and appointment of sidespeople

Members were referred to a report as to the contribution made to the Parish by the sidesmen and sideswomen. The meeting was advised that the present list comprised Carol Allen, Jennifer Tuffnail, Ann Pack, Paul O'Dell, Pat Ellis, Sue Dennis, Pam Whiting, David Batchelor, Linda Vickers, Margaret Britchford, Anna Sauntson, Stewart Wiles, Mary Harber, Elizabeth Bradshaw, June Alder, Karen Matson and John Appleton.

Members **agreed** that the existing sidespeople be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with power to co-opt other parishioners to fill any vacancies when required.

Revd Michelle expressed the Parish's thanks to person taking on this task. It was an important one, and often represented the first contact people attending worship had with the Church.

7 Reports

The meeting received reports from the following persons and organisations, or on the following topics

- a) Clergy Report by Father Tom
- b) Churchwardens' Report on the Parochial Church Council
- c) The Pastoral Team
- d) Higham Deanery Synod
- e) Tiny Tots
- f) 1st Higham Ferrers (St Mary's) Rainbows
- g) 3rd Higham Ferrers (St Mary's) Brownies
- h) Bede House
- i) The Parish Safeguarding Officer
- j) The Magazine Editor
- k) The Acting Director of Music and Choir Chairman
- l) The Bellringers
- m) The Mother's union
- n) St Mary's Handymen
- o) The Fundraising Committee
- p) The Church Website
- q) The Holy Dusters
- r) The Sunday Coffee Team (Verbal Report from Pam Whiting)

On a motion by Stewart Wiles, seconded by Derek Harber, **it was resolved** that the reports be noted and accepted, with thanks to

those who had prepared them, and for the contribution to Parish life shown by the activities they described.

In summing up, Revd. Michelle expressed her thanks to Father Tom, Revd. Linda, the Churchwardens and all others concerned, for their hard work in keeping the Parish, and its worship and activities, alive during Father Richard's illness. She very much appreciated the warm welcome she had received since coming to the Parish. The Parish had a strong foundation of prayer and worship, which had continued to develop since her arrival. It was her intention to develop Parish life still further, to include a "Vision Day" in the Autumn, when we could look to how the Parish might develop its Mission in the future.

Barry Matson expressed his thanks, on behalf of the Parish, to Father Tom, and the others Revd. Michelle had identified, for keeping the Parish going during a very difficult time. He especially thanked Revd. Michelle for her achievements since her arrival, and the uplift she had provided for the Parish and its worshippers.

8 Conclusion

The Meeting ended with those present saying the Grace together.

Signed as a true record at the meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 23rd May 2021

Chairman

Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral Roll was last renewed in March 2019
The membership as of 1st April 2020 stands at 122.

This figure is 1 less than last years figure of 123 with the sad loss of Terry Broughton.

Of these 49 (40%) members live outside the parish.

A copy of the Electoral Roll minus telephone numbers and email addresses for privacy reasons will be posted on the notice board in the Church porch when a date is fixed for the APCM.

If anybody wishes to verify that these details are correct, please contact myself or one of the Churchwardens.

Stewart Wiles
April 2020

Treasurer's Report 2019

The challenge of 2018 continued into 2019, although there does appear to be a chink of light at the end of the tunnel. We have seen an increase in Regular Giving towards the end of 2019 and if this continues into 2020 we will be better prepared to meet our Fixed Outgoings. The current Standing Order Scheme is due to end latter this year and will be replaced by a Church of England National Direct Debit scheme based in Gloucester. For those of you who have not yet switched to the new scheme Authorities can be found on the Book Table in Church or from myself. Should you have any questions regarding the new system Stewart Wiles or myself will be happy to help.

In 2019 we paid Parish Share of £50,000 - £18k short of our target (The Accounts show Parish Share payments of £70k but this includes a payment of £20k relating to the 2018 Parish Share that was made in early January 2019).

The items under 'Miscellaneous' includes a Transfer of £15,000 to Chelveston PCC and relates to their share of Father Roger Davidson's legacy. The Legacy was received in December of 2018 and after discussions between the Church Wardens the transfer was made to Chelveston in January.

You will note that the Bede House Water Rates were exceptional high. This was due to the fact that Anglia Water could not find the meter! They therefore made an estimated claim totally out of proportion to our usual bill and have now refunded £1,330 in January this year.

2020 will no doubt provide a further challenge. In addition to bridging the shortfall in Parish Share we are currently looking at Major Building repairs to the Church and Bede House recommended in the last Quinquennial Report (including a new

heating system for the Church) in excess of £400,000. Whilst we currently have £144,000 in our Restoration Fund our only realistic hope of funding these projects will be by obtaining grants & donations. In this connection I would like to thank Derek Harber and Stewart Wiles for all their efforts in co-ordinating our Grants Application strategy. Their efforts have started to bear fruit.

Finally, a big 'Thank you' to Paul (and Graham, his understudy) for his help on Thursday mornings when we count the money whilst putting the World & the Church to rights

Brian Behagg
Treasurer

St Marys Church Higham Ferrers - 1132678

Balance sheet (Church of England)
As at: 31 December 2019

	As at 31/12/2019	As at 31/12/2018
	£	£
Current assets		
Investments	1,357	1,357
Cash at bank and in hand	179,186	240,531
	<u>180,543</u>	<u>241,888</u>
Liabilities		
Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year	1,484	709
Net current assets less current liabilities	<u>179,059</u>	<u>241,179</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	<u>179,059</u>	<u>241,179</u>
Total net assets less liabilities	<u>179,059</u>	<u>241,179</u>
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
Unrestricted - General fund	498	20,727
Designated		
Designated - Choir Vestry	—	—
Designated - Grace Milgate	21,222	21,183
Designated - Community Outreach	—	1,384
Designated - Choir Robes	—	—
Designated - Father Warnes	—	1,153
Restricted		
Restricted - Bell Appeal	9,791	9,714
Restricted - Chantry Chapel	—	—
Restricted - J Crew (Fabric)	1,357	1,357
Restricted - Childrens Corner	—	—
Restricted - Lady Chapel	—	—
Restricted - Restoration Fund	144,379	183,849
Restricted - Servery	1,811	1,811
Funds of the church	<u>179,059</u>	<u>241,179</u>

There may be minor discrepancies in the totals if the pence are not being shown

St Marys Church Higham Ferrers - 1132678

Analysis of income and expenditure
Selected period: 01 January 2019 to 31 December 2019

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	
					This year	Last year
Income and endowments						
<i>Donations and legacies</i>						
0101 - Gift Aid - Bank	37,514	—	240	—	37,754	39,396
0110 - Gift Aid - Envelopes	3,691	—	—	—	3,691	3,733
0120 - Donations -Gift Aid	450	—	—	—	450	560
0301 - Loose plate collections	8,834	—	—	—	8,834	7,553
0302 - Envelopes - Non Gift Aid	2,655	—	—	—	2,655	2,637
0303 - Bank - Non Gift Aid	13	—	—	—	13	402
0550 - Donations appeals etc	704	—	1,000	—	1,704	924
0601 - Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	12,669	—	—	—	12,669	12,797
0702 - Legacy - Restricted	—	—	—	—	—	30,820
08A1 - Non-recurring one-off grants	9,000	—	6,000	—	15,000	11,960
0902 - Wall Safes-Candles	395	—	—	—	395	72
0903 - Wall Safe - Church Expences	39	—	—	—	39	31
0904 - Smarties	—	—	—	—	—	16
0906 - Church Flowers	173	—	—	—	173	178
0908 - Misc	1,181	—	—	—	1,181	1,290
Donations and legacies Totals	77,322	—	7,240	—	84,562	112,374
<i>Income from charitable activities</i>						
1101 - Fees for weddings and funerals	7,696	—	—	—	7,696	9,025
1210 - Bookstall sales to promote objectives	73	—	—	—	73	247
Income from charitable activities Totals	7,770	—	—	—	7,770	9,272
<i>Other trading activities</i>						
0551 - Fund Raising	14,841	—	—	—	14,841	14,377
1102 - Heating & Lighting	1,019	—	—	—	1,019	900
1220 - Bookstall sales - fund raising	80	—	—	—	80	13
1231 - Bede House - Lettings	8,372	—	—	—	8,372	8,275
1250 - Magazine income - advertising	525	—	—	—	525	1,283
1260 - Parish magazine sales	787	—	—	—	787	212
Other trading activities Totals	25,626	—	—	—	25,626	25,061
<i>Investments</i>						
1001 - Dividends	81	—	—	—	81	80
1020 - Bank and building society interest	1,034	41	352	—	1,429	962
1030 - Rent from lands or buildings	300	—	—	—	300	300
Investments Totals	1,416	41	352	—	1,811	1,342
<i>Other income</i>						
0602 - VAT Reclaimed	—	—	3,692	—	3,692	—
1310 - Insurance claims	5,764	—	—	—	5,764	—
Other income Totals	5,764	—	3,692	—	9,457	—

There may be minor discrepancies in the totals if the pence are not being shown

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	
					This year	Last year
Income and endowments	117,900	41	11,285	—	129,227	148,051
Grand totals						
Expenditure						
<i>Raising funds</i>						
1701 - Fees paid to fund raisers	—	—	—	—	—	500
1730 - Costs of fetes & other events	1,051	—	—	—	1,051	2,138
Raising funds Totals	1,051	—	—	—	1,051	2,638
<i>Expenditure on charitable activities</i>						
1801 - Giving to missionary societies	240	—	—	—	240	693
1830 - Giving - relief and development agencies	550	—	—	—	550	550
1850 - Home mission	661	—	—	—	661	300
1870 - Secular charities	1,501	—	—	—	1,501	1,092
1910 - Parish Share payments	70,000	—	—	—	70,000	27,500
2001 - Assistant staff costs	911	—	—	—	911	2,195
2101 - Working expenses of incumbent	1,185	—	—	—	1,185	1,980
2150 - Vicar's telephone	49	—	—	—	49	—
2201 - Parish training and mission	457	—	—	—	457	124
2301 - Church running - insurance	8,264	—	—	—	8,264	8,015
2303 - Miscellaneous	1,159	—	15,410	—	16,570	705
2310 - Church office - telephone	378	—	—	—	378	377
2320 - Organ / piano tuning	7,537	—	—	—	7,537	6,239
2325 - Choir	923	—	—	—	923	1,825
2330 - Church maintenance	9,629	—	900	—	10,529	7,991
2331 - Cleaning	—	—	—	—	—	42
2340 - Upkeep of services	2,787	—	—	—	2,787	18,590
2341 - Robes, Vestments	3,980	1,458	—	—	5,438	—
2350 - Upkeep of churchyard	396	—	—	—	396	55
2360 - Administration	332	—	—	—	332	2,247
2361 - Photo Copier/Printing	1,566	—	—	—	1,566	—
2370 - Visiting speakers / locums	—	—	—	—	—	35
2401 - Church running - electric	2,324	—	—	—	2,324	1,712
2410 - Church running - gas	3,048	—	—	—	3,048	3,614
2420 - Church running - water	—	—	—	—	—	8
2501 - Magazine expenses	1,580	—	—	—	1,580	1,611
2510 - Bookstall costs	—	—	—	—	—	225
2526 - Fees re Weddings/Funerals-Disbursements	4,389	—	—	—	4,389	5,791
2530 - Bede House - electricity	1,071	—	—	—	1,071	1,301
2540 - Bede House - gas	1,031	—	—	—	1,031	738
2545 - Bede House - Water Rates	1,723	—	—	—	1,723	543
2560 - Bede House - General Expenditure	8,980	—	—	—	8,980	5,356
2565 - Bede House - Cleaning	2,397	—	—	—	2,397	—
2601 - Governance costs examination/audit fee	100	—	—	—	100	100
2701 - Church major repairs - structure	—	—	24,495	—	24,495	8,550
2710 - Church major repairs - installation	—	—	8,872	—	8,872	25,207
Expenditure on charitable activities Totals	139,158	1,458	49,678	—	190,295	135,322
Expenditure Grand totals	140,210	1,458	49,678	—	191,346	137,961

There may be minor discrepancies in the totals if the pence are not being shown

Sidespeople Report 2019.

A BIG thank you to all our sidespeople for their loyal service throughout the year.

They always provide a real contribution to the smooth running and greet you with a smile and kind word. They are always willing to step in to cover when people are on holiday or off due to illness. Many thanks go to those who have done extra duties for festivals and events.

Special thanks are also due to our Brownie and Rainbow units for their help on Parade Sundays.

We always like to invite more people to help our regulars so if you could possibly spare extra time before the service please see Diane or one of the sidespeople on duty.



Vicar's Report 2020-21



Our APCMs this year are a chance to stop and take stock as we look back on all that has happened over two such different years and all that

has changed as a result.

My first year with you all was a time of getting to know you, beginning to pick up some of the loose ends and working with Fr Tom especially to bring some stability and confidence after a difficult period. Fr Tom had done a remarkable job of keeping things going and it was a joy to work with him throughout 2019 when we were able to begin to plan and look ahead. In the autumn 2019 we held Vision Days at both St John's and St Mary's to explore together what 'God's dream' might be for us across the Benefice and within each parish. In January 2020, Fr Tom moved onto an exciting post as Interim Chaplain at King's College, Cambridge and while we were all sad to see him go, it was a fantastic opportunity and a role which he would relish.

Of course in the event 2020 was not what any of us had expected. Our last services before lockdown were held on Mothering Sunday, 22nd March, which at St John's was a live broadcast service. From then on we had to learn rapidly how to produce online services, which, thanks to Fr Paul's skills and expertise, became an audio broadcast format which allowed for us to bring a myriad of voices and creative options into play each week. Sometimes this literally meant a cast of thousands from across the whole world, let alone the Benefice! It has been a time-consuming, terrifying, exciting, breath-taking, white knuckle ride, but one which became clear, was reaching a very large number of people and enabling us to experience worship together even in our lockdown and isolation. Of course, there were also the Daily Podcasts, and a myriad of other online services, study groups,

social occasions, meetings and gatherings via Zoom that have enabled us to keep in touch and conduct parish business in ways we would never have imagined possible! I am enormously grateful to Fr Paul and my Ministry Team colleagues- Brenda, Revd Linda and Revd Lesley for all they have willingly offered into all this, and to Adrian Dale, Richard Hall and Pam Webbley who have made it possible for all the online services to happen across various platforms and of course to all those who have lent their voices, gifts and ideas to making these services come alive.

Despite the difficulties we were going through, many people said how they felt closer to one another and to God than ever before. The first Lockdown was especially hard in that we had to close our churches completely – at a time when we wanted them to be available more than ever. We found ways to be present despite the closed doors – our churchyards became both havens for daily walks and places where we could ‘meet’ via churchyard prayer walks, outdoor Easter Gardens, and creative ways of celebrating Pentecost with decorations of flames and doves. Alongside all this were phone calls, emails, What’s App groups, Facebook pages, the updated and more accessible website, noticeboards, weekly Newsheet mailings and Benefice magazine as well as pastoral care offered in as many ways as could be found. The Pastoral Team have been fantastic in this regard, as have so many of you who are in daily and weekly contact with each other – a loving, supportive and prayerful network of care that reaches across our communities.

Since last summer, the rollercoaster of opening for services, then closing again has been wearying and at times for us all, very hard to cope with, practically, emotionally and spiritually. All this set against the background of such loss of life and suffering that has left no-one untouched or unaffected, and one which has made us more aware than ever of our interconnectedness with our sisters and brothers across the world, and with the wonder of God’s

creation. This has been the other way in which we have been united in our renewed appreciation of the natural world and our wish to protect it at a time when this is needed more than ever. Now we look forward with hope as restrictions ease, as the weather warms and as some of the things we have most missed in our church and community life can begin again.

But we are exhausted, and fearful for the future. Our faith may have deepened in lockdown, but our world has also been turned upside down. We know that things have changed and we cannot simply return to what was, but how are we to make sense of where we are, let alone what comes next?

In the first lockdown we spoke of being in exile, or wandering in the wilderness – the image of the Ark was a very real one. Now we are like the exiles returning to their beloved Jerusalem, only to find the Temple destroyed and things no longer as they had been. There were many people absent, and those who were there, were changed. It was a disconcerting and distressing time – not at all what they had imagined in the time of exile when they were dreaming about how it would be if only they could get back.

So, now we are back, and some still returning, and some looking forward to doing that, and some perhaps who will not, or cannot. And so it is just as strange and uncomfortable for us and there are just as many mixed feelings and experiences. We need to be very aware and sensitive of each other in all this and know that what we might wish for or need will not be the same, and indeed may be the opposite, of what others need.

What is clear though is that we have a unique opportunity before us and many people locally and across the world are saying we need to reflect now on what is really important. As God's people, we need to hear what God is saying to us about how we reshape our lives and the life of the church. Our Archbishops speak of an

emerging church which must be in response to an emerging nation. In many ways this carries on the conversation that we began back in autumn 2019 but this is now a conversation that needs to be had as widely as possible, as part of our church family and our wider family of our community.

Over the coming summer and autumn, let's work out together how best to invite as many voices to be a part of that conversation as possible – to hear what God is saying into the hearts and lives of us all together. Let's not rush into trying to put back everything as it was, but to discover what new things God might be calling us into. What is important to all God's people now? How are we as the people of St John's and St Mary's to allow God to dream in us and grow us as a church, in our own faith and in being Christians in the world?

The Leading your Church into Growth Course, which a group of us are taking part in, will help us with this and Brenda Elldred, Jess Bernudez, Rick White, Sue Clarke, Dave Stuttle, Sandy Coleman and I are looking forward to sharing more about that with you all soon. For now though, the most important thing is that we pray together for growth and for God's guiding – that we pay good attention to one another, and to what God is saying to us all.

So many blessings for you all, and let's pray for the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit of grace and power to equip us for the exciting adventure of life and faith that lies ahead.

Revd Michelle

Here are two passages of scripture that might help us as we look forward, as well as the Leading Your Church into Growth Prayer that we are sharing in praying together as we ask God to help us grow together.

Isaiah 43

Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert - for I give water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

Mark 2:21-22

‘No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.

LyCiG Prayer:

*God of mission, who alone brings growth to your Church,
send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning,
wisdom to our actions and power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you,
and in service to our local community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



ST MARY THE VIRGIN, HIGHAM FERRERS

REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) present their report for the period since the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), together with their consolidated financial statements for the years ended 31st December 2019 and 31st December 2020. The organisation was added to the charity register as charity number 1132678 on 12th November 2009.

The report covers the period from April 2019 to April 2021. As will be explained later, no APCM could be held in 2020.

Aims, objectives and activities

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent to promote in the ecclesiastical Parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. Its responsibilities also include the maintenance of the Church building, together with the Chantry Chapel and the Bede House. In meeting these responsibilities, the PCC has been led by the incumbent, and has worked with other members of the Ministry Team.

When planning activities, the incumbent and the PCC consider the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion, in particular through worship and prayer, and the provision of pastoral care for people living in the Parish.

The method of appointment of the PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The elected members are appointed at the APCM by those who appear on the electoral roll. All persons attending Church are encouraged to register on this roll

and to stand for election to the PCC. At the 2019 APCM, it was decided that members would be appointed for a term of three years. The PCC was authorised to make appropriate adjustments for the introductory period to allow continuity of proceedings.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD 2019/2021 - ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Personnel

During the earlier part of the review period there were a number of changes to the Benefice's Ministry Team which serves Higham Ferrers. Father Richard Stainer left us for the Grand Union Benefice and was installed there on 9th September 2019. Father Tom McLean, the Assistant Curate, left us in the early part of 2020, following his appointment as Interim Chaplain at King's College, Cambridge. Father Richard's departure was followed by the formal appointment of the Revd Michelle Dalliston (formerly Associate Interim Vicar) as Interim Vicar for the Benefice. In the Autumn of 2019 Brenda Elldred was admitted as Reader for the Benefice and Father Paul Needle was added to the Clergy Team, joining the Revd Linda Bond and the Revd Canon Lesley McCormack as Assistant Priests. Dave Stuttle and Caroline Walker have continued as Churchwardens, although, to assist in their heavy workload, the PCC appointed Darren Robinson as Assistant Warden, to serve until the 2021 APCM.

Meetings and activities

The PCC has, since April 2019, met on 15 occasions., with an average attendance of 85%. A further meeting is to be held on 12th May 2021. Since 21st June 2020, these meetings have been held by Zoom. In addition, two meetings have been held by correspondence, as permitted by the Church Representation Rules.

Committees of the PCC have met as appropriate, with reports of those meetings being submitted to and discussed by the full PCC.

Administration

So far as the lockdown restrictions have permitted, the Parish Office continues to run efficiently and effectively, thanks to the contributions made by Diane Behagg, who has given her time voluntarily as required. The need for further administrative assistance for Revd Michelle has also been recognised and a volunteer, Derrian Le Brun Powell, had been found to fulfil this role. (Derrian has now had to stand down from this role following changes in her paid employment due to the lockdown. We are also grateful to Diane for the additional work she has carried out in taking responsibility (pre-lockdown) for Bede House bookings. We look forward to her continued assistance in this role with the re-opening of the Bede House once the lockdown comes to an end.

WORSHIP

The Coronavirus Pandemic

Our worship and activities have been significantly affected by the action taken, both nationally and locally, to deal with the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid 19). The spread of virus began to be a matter for serious concern in the latter part of 2019 and early part of 2020. It culminated in a Government decision to impose a lockdown on 22nd March 2020. Subject to certain exceptions, this required people to remain in their homes and to take appropriate steps to avoid contact with others. This obviously precluded the holding of an APCM in 2020. The Bishop dealt with this problem by making an order extending the period for holding such a meeting by one year, until 31st May 2021. In the same order, he extended the terms of office of all Churchwardens and elected members for the same period.

Most significantly from our point of view, the lockdown required the closure of Churches for public worship. This resulted in the cessation of Sunday's 10.30 Family Mass, and the 9.00 Family Worship. The lockdown was partially lifted on 10th June 2020, following a reduction in the infection rate, and, alongside other removals of restrictions, public worship was again permitted. It was however subject to strict safeguarding conditions, including social distancing, the avoidance of personal contact, and the wearing of face coverings. Sadly, the improvement did not last, and, after a few months, the infection rate rose again. The response of the Government was to reimpose many of the previous restrictions. Unlike the original lockdown, these restrictions did not forbid worship in Church, but there were serious concerns about its risks. Following advice from senior clergy, including the Bishop of London, Chair of the Church of England's Recovery Group, on 8th January 2021 we decided, with considerable reluctance, again to suspend worship in the Church. We returned to church for our worship on Easter Sunday and from the 18th April, services in church have once again resumed on Sundays.

However, the requirement/decision to suspend worship in church, did not mean the end of public worship. It provided an opportunity to extend the facilities for worship through the Benefice website, recently improved and made more accessible. Thanks are due to Richard Hall and Pam Webbley for their ongoing work with this. A range of online resources have been made available including a Sunday Service for the Benefice, a weekly online Celtic service and weekly Morning Prayer by Zoom. At other times daily podcasts, a Midweek Message, services for special feast days and civic occasions, including VE Day in June 2020 and Remembrance Sunday 2020 were accessed by a large number of people.

Being available for people to access at their convenience encouraged a wide engagement, but the suggestion to join together

when possible at 10am for the Sunday Service and 7pm on Wednesdays for the Celtic Service has helped maintain a sense of the community worshipping together.

Resources, activities and worship for children and young people has also made sure that our families are continuing to meet and every effort has been made especially to assist our older members to access services via laptops, tablets and smart phones, and where necessary, to find ways to include others such as via the phone or through printed material.

The Sunday Online Service has proved a great success, attracting worshippers far beyond the Parish boundary – indeed beyond the boundary of the UK. Although the preparation of this act of worship was and is costly in terms of time we plan to continue to offer this service even as church services resume as it is reaching a different and wider congregation, as well as enabling many people from across the Benefice to take part in leading the service. We extend our thanks to Father Paul for his skill and time in technical production and to all those who have contributed to these services in so many ways.

Zoom has enabled us to meet socially for After Church Coffee on Sundays, Wednesday Morning Prayer, Compline, Family Worship and First Friday Club. We have also held numerous study groups, including Advent and Lent Groups, as well as joining with Rushden & Higham Council of Churches Lent Prayer meetings.

Families have been encouraged (with due regard to social distancing) to build outdoor Easter Gardens (2020 & 2021) and to 'Follow the Star' – a trail through Higham leading to the church nativity scene, and follow the 'Easter Trail' which told the Easter story via stations in the churchyard leading to the Easter Garden and the empty tomb. When regulations have allowed in-person

services have happened during ‘Café Church in the Bede House and outdoors for ‘Wild Worship’.

We have also been keeping in touch with one another via the weekly Newsletter and monthly Benefice Magazine which is sent out electronically and several active WhatsApp groups. Resources based on the Gospel each week for children have been circulated as part of the weekly mailing which reaches some 200 people. Where required we are making these available as hard copies too for those who cannot access electronically.

Attendance at or participation in public worship

Until 20th March 2020, the average Sunday morning attendance (for Morning Worship and the Family Mass combined) was 87 adults and 16 younger members under the age of sixteen.

Weekday Services held during that period had a combined average attendance of 80. These figures discount special occasions like civic services, parade services and baptisms. In the period between 15th June 2020 and 9th January 2021, when worship in Church was resumed, the average attendance at the Family Mass was 35.

Since its introduction on 15th June 2020, the average number of worshipers accessing the Benefice Website for the Online Worship provisions was approximately 300 a week.

Music

The lockdown provision imposed serious restrictions on music in Church. Not least public singing has been largely forbidden, although we have on a few occasions sung outside in the Churchyard. The choir have recorded pieces remotely for use in Online Services and have sung when allowed socially distanced as part of our services in church. We look forward to the ultimate

removal of the restrictions, permitting us to sing our hymns once again.

Our efforts to appoint a new Director of Music have so far been unsuccessful, but we are grateful to Keith Green, as Acting Director of Music, and the choir under his leadership, for the steps they have taken, notwithstanding the lockdown restrictions, to keep the musical life of the Church alive.

MISSION

A principal theme of our discussions throughout the review period has been the advancement of our Vision for Mission in the Parish; how we can best bring the Christian Faith to the Community at large. This began with the consideration of the Diocesan paper “Thy Kingdom Come” in April 2019. It was followed by the organisation of an “At Home Day” in the Autumn, with members of the Parish Family being asked for representations and suggestions as to how our Pastoral Objectives could best be met. The discussion and implementation of the proposals so made, culminated in the publication of the “2020 Vision and Mission at St John’s and St Mary’s” in March 2020, but the lockdown interrupted its further development.

On 24th March 2021, The Revd Roger Woods, the Diocesan Urban Support Officer, introduced us to the national programme: “Leading your Church into Growth”. This encourages the growth of the Church in terms of numbers, spirituality and impact on the local community. This was of particular relevance to the post-lockdown situation which was likely to necessitate changes from what had gone before. We have representatives attending a training course on this, who will report back to us for discernment about how to move forward. This is also informed by the Church of England’s ‘Vision 2020s’ – a vision and strategy put forward by the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell as a result of

conversations with adults and children across the Church and the Anglican Communion and in considering what the emerging church needs to be.

In addition we have been asked to consider “Living in Love and Faith” a Church of England report resulting from a period of consultation exploring our faith and our identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage and asking the question, what does it mean to be human? Our feedback from discussion groups is invited to be part of the response to be considered by General Synod in the autumn.

Many of the points made during these discussions have already been met. 2019 saw an increase in the numbers being prepared for confirmation and in the requests for baptism. Our Ministry to the Young was further represented in the introduction of a monthly Sunday morning venture ‘Second Sunday Cool’ and in the creation of a monthly Youth Club. This was in addition to our ongoing work with younger children and their families through our weekly ‘Tiny Tots’ on Wednesdays and our Toddler groups – ‘Toddle In’ on Monday and ‘Play Club’ on Wednesday and Friday. Unfortunately, these physical activities came to an end with the Coronavirus lockdown, but, as previously mentioned, further contact with young people continued through the Benefice website and through monthly Zoom First Friday Club sessions. In another youth-centred venture, in March 2020 we agreed to participate in a proposal by the Higham Deanery for the employment and training of a Deanery Youth Enabler, to work in with teenagers in secondary schools, in Church and in the community, in an effort to counter the drop off of the involvement of young people in religious matters.

A further aspect of our Mission concerned our engagement with the local community. Until closed by the lockdown, the Bede House provided excellent facilities for such engagement. It

enabled us to join with the Town Council in celebrating the Town Charter Day, including the display of the Town Charter and the Chichele panels. Further opportunities for contact with the Town Council were provided by the appointment of the Revd Michelle as Mayor's Chaplain in 2019.

The Churchyard is also an important feature in our contact with the Town and community, both pre and post lockdown. Various informal events have been held in the Churchyard, and its contribution to the community has been enhanced by assistance provided by the Friends of St Mary's. They have constructed a Memorial Garden between the Church and Chantry Chapel, initiated an eco-conservation 'Re-Wilding Project celebrating our involvement with nature and the environment; and, on a religious note, have set up a plain wooden cross during Lent and Easter, reminding passers by the significance of those seasons.

A further aspect of our relationship with the community has been the opening of the Church to the public outside worship times. The implementation of the plans we put forward 2019 to extend opening times was interrupted by the lockdown. However, where the lockdown provisions permitted, the church was opened for private prayer on one day per week. At our meeting on 24th March, we discussed opening the Church more widely, including permitting unsupervised access. To begin with the Church has been open for Private Prayer two days per week and we wish to thank all those who have volunteered their time to be stewards during the opening hours, especially during the cold winter months. Plans to introduce these extended provisions are currently being drawn up.

BUILDINGS AND FABRIC

In addition to our Mission based responsibilities, one of our primary functions is the preservation of the church buildings. To

this end, the stonework repairs to the Chantry Chapel, recommended following the latest Quinquennial Inspection, have been completed and appropriate surge protection has been installed on the spire. Work on the Spire is nearing completion. We have left other external works in abeyance for the time being, pending the completion of the next Quinquennial Inspection. Internally, problems with the Bede House heaters have been dealt with and we have approved policies for the letting of the Bede House and Chantry Chapel, once the lifting of lockdown restrictions make this possible.

A major concern has been the church heating system. The system has not worked properly for some time, and recently it has ceased to work at all. To deal with the problem, we have appointed James Sheehan, a Heating Consultant, to advise us on a new system. We considered a detailed report he prepared at our meeting on 9th October 2019. Having concluded that other options were impracticable, we have accepted his recommendation for a gas-fired system using new fan convectors, with the installation of new boilers and some new pipework. The proposals include the re-ordering of the pew platform and some of the pews immediately in front of the nave altar. Mr Sheehan estimates the likely cost of the system as £120,000, with a further £20,000 for associated building work (Ex VAT). The financial aspects of this problem will be discussed later in this report.

We have not made as much progress as we might have liked with the servery/hospitality centre planned for the rear of the south aisle. It will be remembered that our original proposals required some adjustments after initial consultation with the DAC. We are now ad idem with the DAC on the nature and details of the project, and are awaiting the preparation of final plans by our Architect, to enable a petition for a faculty to be presented.

On a day-to-day basis, responsibility for the completion of the projects we have mentioned rests with the Fabric and Maintenance Committee. We have concluded that these projects will require the involvement of a Project Manager, and we have amended the constitution of that Committee to provide for this.

Before leaving the question of buildings and fabric, it is appropriate to pay tribute to the work of the Holy Handymen, who operate under the aegis of the Fabric and Maintenance Committee. They have able on a regular basis to handle many building and fabric-based problems as they arose, and thereby save the Church significant sums of money.

FINANCE

Both before and during the reporting period, one of our aims has been to rebuild our general reserves and to retain a balance on unrestricted funds to cover approximately six month's unrestricted payments; investing funds not required for immediate expenditure with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund. As will be seen, we have not been able to achieve this object, but it is something that will need to be borne in mind once our financial position improves.

We are grateful to our Treasurer, Brian Behagg, for his wisdom in leading us along a sound financial route and we rely on his report for a more detailed description of our finances. We would however mention the following:

- The need to promote individual membership of the national Parish Giving Scheme, which will replace the diocesan based system.
- We have installed a card machine, to facilitate the making of "one off" payments.

- The Epiphany Gift Scheme, where worshippers were able to identify particular targets for their donations, proved a success, particularly in 2020.

The financial problems arising from the Coronavirus Lockdown are obvious. Whilst regular giving via the Parish Giving Scheme has been largely maintained, plate collections have decreased substantially.

It is in this context that we would mention, and pay tribute to, the contribution to our funds achieved by the Social and Fundraising Committee. In 2019, they raised some £500 from the Town Charter weekend, and £571 from the Harvest Lunch. Their contribution to that year's Town's 'Christmas Sparkle' weekend was as successful as ever. However, the lockdown brought events of this type, many of which were then in the planning stage, to a temporary halt, with a consequent reduction in our income. In spite of this, members have continued to organise fundraising activities within the lockdown's limitations. But we should also remember that their work is important, not just for the funds they raise, but also for the opportunities they provide for social interaction between members of the Parish Family.

One area in which the lockdown has had a considerable effect is in relation to the payment of the Parish Share. Whilst we were not able to pay it in full in 2019, we did manage to raise £50,000. Our contribution for 2020 is much less, at £24,000, 37.66% of the sum requested. No doubt other parishes are facing similar difficulties, but the fact remains that, if the Diocese is to continue its ministry on an acceptable basis, this situation cannot be allowed to continue. For example, the Diocese points out that the average cost of each full-time incumbent is £66,885.

Our overall financial difficulties are something that we intend to address, not least through holding, with the assistance of the

Diocese, a Stewardship Campaign beginning on Pentecost Sunday.

A further major financial problem we have had to address is the need for funds for the Church heating project. To assist in that regard, we have applied for, and been granted, a loan of £50,000 from the Diocesan Church Major Works Fund. The loan is interest free for the first five years and the dioceses is prepared to offer advice as to the loan's repayment. Although this is perhaps the worst time to launch a fund-raising activity, a Fund-Raising Group has been set up, with Sue Dennis as Chairman and Avril Harlow as Treasurer, with the object of raising the necessary funds, under the heading "St Mary's 600 Appeal". Phase 1 is aimed principally at the heating system, and also to fulfil the long awaited servery facilities in the back of church. Phase 2 of the appeal will also include other structural repairs to the Church buildings and improvement of the interior of the Bede House. The Group has so far been extremely successful. Substantial donations have been made or promised by members of the Parish Family. Some applications for grants have been successful, and others are outstanding. Many other fund-raising activities have taken place, or are planned. The measure of their success can be seen in a report the Group made to the PCC meeting on 24th March 2021 that, with the Diocesan loan, all but £30,000 of the sum required for the heating project had been raised or promised.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults is an integral part of our parish life and is the shared responsibility of all as we care for each other. We are grateful to Patricia Ellis, who served as Parish Safeguarding Officer during the earlier part of the reporting period, and to Brenda Elldred who then took over as Safeguarding officer for the whole Benefice. The Safeguarding Policy, based on that suggested by the Diocese, was re-approved early in the review

period, and appropriate arrangements made for the Policy, and its associated material, to be publicised as required. All PCC members have now undergone the necessary Safeguarding training, and have been issued with appropriate DBS clearance. Further advances in the Safeguarding field include the creation of a Benefice Safeguarding Team and the production of material for a Safeguarding Audit.

MISCELLANEOUS

As another part of our safety remit, we have approved a Health and Safety Policy to cover the church activities, and are grateful to Dave Stuttle, our Health and Safety Officer, for preparing the Policy.

Chancel Repair Liability

The Parish has Lay Rectors who, by virtue of their ownership of land in Newton Road, are subject to Chancel Repair Liability, which is appropriately registered at the Land Registry. The PCC has not had occasion to seek to enforce that liability in the reporting period

As already mentioned, during the review period we have said goodbye to two of our Clergy; Father Richard Stainer, the Vicar, and Father Tom McLean, the Assistant Curate. We extend our thanks to both for all they achieved in office, and convey to them our best wishes for the future.

There are countless folk in our Church who, week by week, give of their time and talents and for that we are very grateful. Some we have already mentioned, but there are also those members of the Parish family who arrange flowers, clean and tidy, mend items, provide coffee after Mass, collate and edit the Benefice magazine, change altar frontals, run the Parish Office, set the

Church and Bede House heating and help with maintenance. There are also so many others who together contribute to the smooth running of the Parish and consequently to our mission. These include the choir, servers, sacristans, handymen, Eucharistic Assistants (including those who administer home communions), bell-ringers, vergers, flower arrangers, sidespeople and stewards, Baptism Support Teams, readers and intercessors and those who lead Morning Worship and our activities with the young. It is recognised that many of these activities have not been possible during the Coronavirus Lockdown, but we look forward to their continued assistance once the lockdown is at an end. We would also add our particular thanks to those who have helped us get through that episode, including maintaining and operating the Parish Website, and the facilities for worship and mission it provides; and ensuring that we achieve the social distancing and other safety precautions to counter the dangers the virus produces. We are grateful to Richard Hall and Pam Webbley for re-vamping our website to make it more attractive and accessible. The website, along with our Facebook, presence and our very active WhatsApp groups have ensured our continued communication with the parish and the wider world. The Benefice Magazine is now available on the website every month and there is a growing number of people who receive it electronically.

Members of the Parochial Church Council

The members who served during the reporting period were as follows:

Ex officio members

The Revd Canon Richard Stainer (Vicar and Chair – until September 2019)

The Revd Michelle Dalliston (Associate Vicar/Interim Vicar and Chair)

The Revd Tom McLean (until January 2020)
Brenda Eldred (Benefice Reader)
Caroline Walker (Churchwarden)
Dave Stuttle (Churchwarden and Deanery/Diocesan Synod member)
Linda Ellson (Deanery Synod Member)
Graham Newell (Deanery Synod Member)
Peter Swindley (Deanery Synod Member)

Elected members

Sue Dennis; Derek Harber; Jane Jackson, Karen Holmes, Justin Maltby-Smith, Leona Mantle, Barry Matson, Alison Oberman, Darren Robinson, Sue Thompson, Nicola Way and Raymond Wildsmith (Secretary)

Co-opted members

Brian Behagg (Treasurer) and Stewart Wiles (Electoral Roll Officer)

Keith Green attends meetings as Acting Director of Music

Legal and Administrative details

Saint Mary's Church is situated off the Market Square in Higham Ferrers. It is part of the Diocese of Peterborough in the Church of England.

Principal Address: St Mary's Parish Office, The Bede House, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire, NN10 8BT.

Bankers: Lloyds Bank plc., 133, High Street, Rushden, Northamptonshire, NN10 0NX

Independent Examiner: Kevin Bond, 16 Blake Walk, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire, NN10 8DB

On behalf of the Parochial Church Council

**Caroline Walker
Churchwarden**

**Dave Stuttle
Churchwarden**

Dated 23rd May 2021

APCM 2021

Higham Deanery Synod Report 2020

1. Higham Deanery Synod has met three times since the 2019 Annual Parochial meetings, with all meetings having also been open to non-members of the Synod:

i) Tuesday 11th June at All Saints' Church, Great Addington

This included an update on mission opportunities in the Rushden East Development and the work of various ROC (Redeeming Our Communities) action groups – e.g. seeking befrienders for elderly isolated people. There were also spoken updates from Diocesan Synod and General Synod, including an invitation for members to feed in comments on a consultation taking place on whether the period of office for lay members of deanery synods should be limited to six years (two terms) as a default.

ii) Wednesday 16th October at St Laurence's Church, Stanwick

Rev Dr Linnet Smith spoke to those present on supporting people with dementia, including an overview of ideas for making churches more dementia-friendly. This was one in which the Deanery Mission Plan's aim of encouraging the support of vulnerable people was being put into practice.

iii) Thursday 6th February at All Hallows' Church, Hargrave

The main item was a presentation on the Generation to Generation (gen₂) youth project that had recently started within Higham Deanery, supported by national church funding and providing for a Deanery Youth Ministry Enabler, Lizzie Mouesbauer, currently based at Whitefriars Church, to train at Ridley Hall Cambridge and then work with other churches in the Deanery, with a view to working one day per week for a term each year. The Synod also agreed to an updated Deanery Mission plan for 2020. This was also Revd Chris Youngman's first meeting as Rural Dean, having

taken over from Revd Canon Steve Prior.

2. **Other news from 2019 and early 2020:**

- A big thank you to all parishes in the Deanery for their contributions to the **Diocesan parish share in 2019**, and to **Steve Prior** for all his work as Rural Dean.
- We had a **Beer & Hymns evening** at Newton Bromswold on Monday 24th June, and **Higham Deanery Evensong** at Irthlingborough on Sunday 17th November.
- Meetings for **PCC Treasurers** from across the Deanery were held on 22th April and 23rd October 2019 at St Peter's, Rushden. The next one will be at St Peter's, Rushden on Wednesday 22nd April.
- Gatherings of **Church Wardens** in Higham Deanery took place in Rushden on 6th June and 7th November 2019. The next one will be at Newton Bromswold Village Hall on Thursday 6th June.
- **The next Deanery Synod meeting** will take place on Wednesday 10th June at Chelveston; and the next **Beer & Hymns** will be at Newton Bromswold on Monday 22nd June: details of these and the 2020 Evensong to be circulated in due course.
- **Elections of lay members of the Deanery Synod** for 2020 to 2023 will be taking place at this year's APCM. They will also form the electorate for the Diocese's lay members of **General Synod**, in elections taking place in September/October

Andrew Presland (Lay Chair) and Chris Youngman (Rural Dean)

Tiny Tots 2019.

Wednesdays during Term Time we welcome lots of little ones with their Mums/grannies and child minders to church.

We begin singing and clapping as we parade round church with our musical instruments. This is followed by a game relating to the story for the week and then they have a picture to colour in. We always display their pictures on the wall in the children's corner for the week and they take them home the following Wednesday.

Please have a look at their lovely pictures!

Following this we sing songs with actions and have prayers before going over to the Bede House for drinks and biscuits.

An Easter story book and cream egg are given to the children when we break for the Easter holidays.

We have a party in July when we say goodbye to our older children who are moving up to 'big' school.

A lovely Christmas Party is always enjoyed in the Bede House with a special visit from the man in red before the Christmas break.

I would like to thank Stella and Angela for organising the toys, tea and biscuits in the Bede House, and special thanks to Beccy for her help organising the story and activities.

Unfortunately our numbers have dropped this year so please spread the word for us and hand out the leaflets that can be found in church.

Diane Behagg

1st Higham Ferrers (St. Mary's) Rainbows – 2019

Our Rainbow unit meets weekly at the Infant School during school term times.

2019 was another exciting year for the unit. We took part in a long list of activities which included playing games, fun crafts, learning new skills and gaining badges, singing songs, exploring our local area and having fun! We enjoyed the girl guiding programme and the many opportunities it offers.

A few of the highlights were:-

- Having a trip to St Mary's Church and ringing the bells!
- Golf adventure at Paradise Golf, Rushden Lakes
- Celebrating World Thinking Day.
- Making new friends
- Enjoying a teddy bears picnic
- We have enjoyed learning new games and exploring what we like to do.
- Crafting is one of the activities we enjoy the most and try to fit in as much as possible. We have made some wonderful craft items to take home such as cards, promise mementoes, Christmas tree decorations, marshmallow sculptures and time machine parts.
- Enjoying the outdoors and summer sun by playing in the playground.
- Making a giant picture together to decorate the church window at Harvest time.
- Adventure at Stanwick Lakes
- Achieving our Drama Llama Challenge badge
- Making memories at our end of term parties
- Climbing fun at Rock Up Rushden Lakes
- Attending church celebrations and the Christingle service
- Welcoming new Rainbows and Leaders to our group.

Jelly Bean (Katie)

Pear Drop (Sally)

Haribo (Carla)
Bubblegum (Karen)

Skittles (Phillipa)

FERRERS DISTRICT: If you would like your daughter to join either Rainbows, Brownies or Guides in the future please register them at www.girlguiding.org.uk.

Bede House Report 2019.

The Bede House is a difficult building to keep well maintained and we must thank our Holy Handymen for their valued help every Thursday.

Our monthly Farmers Market Coffee Mornings are still very popular and are hosted by various organisations, some Church, some secular. We still have many regular hirers including our uniformed organisations plus zumba, ballet and badminton which all provide a regular income source.

Bookings for parties and weddings are very popular as word spreads of the unique and impressive nature of the Bede House. Lots of fundraising events take place including fashion shows, film nights, quiz nights etc. for local charities and our own funds.

Unfortunately 2019 saw our lettings income at £8,372 whereas outgoings were £15,202. This reflects the cost of the new heaters but shows we need to keep our bookings up.

Benefice Safeguarding report 2019 and 2020 St. Mary's, Higham Ferrers

2019

The Safeguarding Officer in 2019 - mid 2020 was Patricia Ellis who for health reasons handed over the Benefice Safeguarding Office to Brenda Elldred in September 2020.

On September 9th 2019 a safeguarding training session for levels C0 & C1 was arranged and took place in the Chantry Chapel at St. Mary's. This was attended by 16 people and those who required training but could not attend were encouraged to either rebook a convenient date or complete online. Over the course of 2019 and 2020 training and DBS checks for all relevant personnel has been completed.

On September 9th 2019 a Benefice Safeguarding Group was set up its role and purpose being; -

- a. The main purpose of the group is to ensure Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is a priority in all events and activities across the Benefice.
- b. To be an integral part of the life of our Benefice for which responsibility is shared by all.
- c. To Identify and cascade information to all church groups across the Benefice.

This group will meet quarterly or more frequently should an extraordinary meeting be required. This group also oversees the policies and procedures in place along with the promotion of Safeguarding in the Benefice.

The diocesan dashboard is regularly updated and produces an action plan for the church. This is currently waiting for update after the APCM as there was no APCM in 2020 and there are still some actions to be completed.

2020

During 2020 new posters and information with contact numbers have been made and posted in the church and in the Bede House. These posters now also have a photograph of the Vicar and the Benefice Safeguarding Officer so that they can be easily recognised by anyone who wishes to raise an issue or has a concern.

March 23rd - June 24th the church was closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. At this point Safeguarding was focused on Pastoral care and keeping in touch with our congregational members specifically those in the vulnerable groups.

Churches reopened with the first service being 22nd July but with tight Covid restrictions in place. Safeguarding information was updated and placed prominently for the reopening. The Church was stewarded for private prayer times using 2 stewards for safety reasons at all times.

During the year this pattern of lockdown and reopening occurred again and all safeguarding procedures were adhered to and wherever the church or Bede house was being used the normal processes and policies were in place.

Online safeguarding became a new focus, particularly with young people on Zoom. Leaders of the Youth First Friday Zoom club were made aware of the dangers of online and social media and in order for children and youth to participate a parental consent form had to be signed.

Compliance with DBS

All PCC members as trustees of a charity are now DBS checked. All Clergy, lay leaders and those in leadership roles currently in post are checked. This is all kept on a database and checked regularly.

Compliance with training

This is ongoing as every 3 years the training has to be refreshed. Members have the access to online training until we can reopen face to face training. The training dates are all logged and kept on a database and checked regularly.

Safeguarding reports

There have been no reports of any incidences over the past 2 years.

Brenda Eildred
Benefice Safeguarding Officer
APCM May 2021



Benefice Magazine



This has been a somewhat different year for the Magazine. 2019 into the beginning of 2020 went smoothly with the magazine being published every month as usual. Then the pandemic hit and we had to re-think how we can still publish the magazine. Distributing printed copies was ruled out by the Government Guidelines for Covid which prevented the handling of printed matter. However, we have managed to publish a fewer number of editions, but with more pages on a bi-monthly basis. These have been distributed to a reading list in pdf format by email and the magazine has been added to the website.

My grateful thanks to Richard Hall for placing the magazine on the website each issue. Also, following on from changes to our printed copy requirements the few hard copies we have printed off have been done in-house in full colour. Looking ahead we would like to move to a larger uptake of the electronic version by subscription, with fewer subscribers having the printed version. More about this in due course as we get to grips with how it will be managed.

My thanks also to Adrian Dale who converts the magazine into two pdf versions for circulation and with his whizzy software also improves the quality of some of the pictures and graphics.

I must express my gratitude to all the regular contributors who send me their items for inclusion each month, most of them on time before the copy date! I am impressed by the quality of the contributions I receive and do my best not to make any drastic changes to them but occasionally space dictates that I must wield the blue pencil.

stmaryspm@virginmedia.com

Dave Stuttle

Editor

Acting Director of Music A.P.C.M. notes

First of all I would like to thank all members of the choir for their loyalty, and support, and to all the organist`s that play for us each week.



I do try and keep to the liturgy with anthems, which we strive to sing at every service. As we are a smaller choir sometimes it is difficult to make a choice, but with the encouragement Rev. Michelle gives us I usually know I`m on the right track. We must keep our music tradition at Higham alive.

For all our special services over Christmas 2019 we were able to argument the choir considerably. It gave a real uplift to our worship. We were hoping to do the same again for our Easter services, but alas effects and events of the coronavirus put a stop to everything. Throughout the time we were not in church we took on a very bold step and were able to record certain pieces for the podcast services. This was a learning curve for me, and for everyone. It was so good as well to include other voices that wouldn`t normally be singing in the choir. To achieve these recordings we are very indebted to Michelle`s daughter, Georgie, who has the equipment and expertise to link it all together for us.

We have been able to sing at services the past few weeks with reduced numbers. This is not ideal, but we have to follow the guidelines set out by the C of F, and the RSCM. At Pentecost we hope to return at full strength Let us hope we can continue with renewed strength, and possibly be able to welcome some new choir members. It would be wonderful to have a larger choir again, so that when members are not able to attend it doesn`t make such a gap in the choir. I keep saying, more the merrier!!! If anyone would like to consider having a go, or know anyone

outside of our church family that likes to sing, please come and talk to me.

It was good last year to welcome Ethen Powell into the junior choir, and Ella Byan has joined in recent months, and Mandy Berry to the adult choir.

There have been several moves in the last year to find a new Director of Music. At one point we thought it had reached its conclusion, but unfortunately things didn't turn out the way we wanted them to. Our hopes were raised again, but once again nothing came to fruition. Three years ago I thought I would be keeping things going for just a few months, but I am happy to keep going so that St Mary's doesn't lose its music tradition.

It was a real shame because of the pandemic all our Framers Market Recitals had to be cancelled. This was set up when Tony was with us, and was a function not to be missed, but already I am getting enquiries from groups of singers, and organists eager to come back as soon as it is possible to brighten our Saturday mornings

In writing this we have been through difficult times, let us through God's good grace hope we can get back to glorifying God with the music we love.

Keith



ST. MARY'S BELLRINGERS REPORT 2019.

During the past year the Bells have been rung for most of our Sunday Services although due to unexpected illnesses and occasional clashes of holiday dates there have been a few non-ringing times. We have also rung for several special occasions including six weddings and Remembrance Sunday. Our Tuesday night practices are generally well attended by both our own regular ringers and visitors from other towers within The Diocesan Guild.

We have also welcomed visiting groups from various parts of the Country and local visiting bands have also joined us for ringing occasions. All the visitors have commented on how lovely both The Church and the Bells themselves are.

Over this past year we have welcomed new ringers to the Tower and the more advanced ringers have also continued to progress with more complicated method ringing. Several of our Ringers have taken part in Wellingborough Branch events including The Striking Competition and Monthly Branch Practices.

The Farmer's Market Quarter Peals continue to be rung on a monthly basis and there have been six full peals completed throughout the year.

The Bells and Bell-Frame are generally in good order with regular stewardship and maintenance being undertaken by our experienced ringers.

Our thanks go to The Rev. Michelle and The PCC for their continuing interest and support.

Bob Dennis. [Tower Captain]

Holy Handymen

Another year gone and still repairs /projects awaiting – perhaps it would have been simpler to re-build the Bede House and start again. However, whilst enjoying the coffee and socialising we did manage to fit in some action and actually achieve quite a lot – though I say it myself.

On the project side we spent some considerable time under Richard's direction building the plinths for the B.H. (Bede House) heaters and adjusting them so that outlet vents lined up with the rear of the heaters and waste gases passed out smoothly, after which it was then possible to attach the safety guards to the hooks we installed.

Once again the heavy church doors had to be prevented from dragging on the stonework below and this involved raising the doors a small amount and then moving the hinges to complete the repair – thanks to Ted and Richard. Thereafter, the gravestones received our attention and loose ones re-set to the safety margins required.

As usual the downpipes on the north side of the church and tower required rodding out and our £24 - worth of connecting rods proved to be a financial blessing. Not only that but they were again successful - after permission was readily obtained from our esteemed vicar -in clearing the blocked multi manhole drain junction of the BH in the vicar's garden – a job that had been delayed for months and carries the entire waste from the BH. A word on the former who has been most co-operative in our ventures and in identifying certain malfunctions on the premises.

As usual the toilets provided our attention with broken or disconnected toilet seats, toilet doors that had to be replaced/adjusted and a new grab bar installed. Clients there actually used the toilet roll holders as their most convenient grab bar with the

consequent result-broken and displaced holders. Considerable time was also spent in securing the BH hazardous cupboard and fixing combination locks to the BH cupboards.

Sparkle display, Xmas crib/tree and a new bier - for the Mary statue's festival walk round the Church (Chris) - tested our skills and inventiveness though routine matters – pressure washing paths, gutter clearances, moss removal and hedge cutting again occupied more time.

The repair of the Eagle and its relocation in the Church , a new socket on the outside of the Chantry (Justin), new office shelving and book ends all happily completed. Again Justin's expertise enabled the light in the tower staircase to be repaired and add to that the repair and replacement of kitchen taps and fittings and one gets the width of expertise within the group

Finally, we were pleased to help with the painting of the railings for the memorial garden and assisting with some general work in the Churchyard – not least the on-going removal of a bush prominently displayed near the B.H. Meanwhile Graham and myself have attended to the safety of the premises and some general repair work.

Again, my thanks to Graham Newell, Richard Hall, Justin Maltby-Smith, Nick Lee and the wonderful ladies and gents who make us coffee.

Chris Hales

Higham Ferrers Mother's Union

Branch membership remained steady in 2019, with meetings normally held on the first Thursday of the month at 2 pm in the Bede House. The Branch Leader and committee met regularly during the year and also attended deanery committee meetings and the Diocesan Forum.

In January we joined with MU members worldwide in welcoming Sheran Harper, our first ever Worldwide President from outside the British Isles. Closer to home the new Diocesan President, Jill Cannings, came to the deanery on a sunny July day as part of her Prayer Pilgrimage around the diocese. Deanery members and friends walked with Jill from St Mary's to St Peter's Irthlingborough then on to St Mary's Finedon for very welcome refreshments. In August we hosted the Deanery Festival, and in September Jill came back to Higham as the speaker at our Harvest Lunch. In December friends from the deanery joined us for our lunchtime Christmas Party in the Bede House when we enjoyed seasonal entertainment by the Stanwick Handbell Ringers followed by an early visit from Father Christmas. Branch members also attended the Deanery Advent Carol Service at St Katharine's Irchester,

At the AGM in March Pat Hall retired as Branch Leader and Angela Tobin as Branch Secretary. Dora Paynton was elected Branch Leader, Jane Smeathers as Branch Secretary, with Ruth Bond re-elected as Branch Treasurer. Dora and Jane were commissioned by Revd Michelle on Mothering Sunday.

During the year we enjoyed an after Christmas lunch at Rushden Golf Club in January and a visit (with lunch) to Emmaus at Carlton in June. Speakers at other monthly meetings included Revd Tim Short about his pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela; Major Jake Baker about his military experiences and his life

before and after enlisting; Helen Allan about her work with the homeless; Linda Norris about “Embroidery Through the Ages”, including church embroidery; and Revd Linnet Smith explaining how to find ways of expressing our Christian faith in everyday conversation (this meeting was held in the evening in the hope of increasing attendance).

At the end of September we joined with the choir to run the Farmers’ Market Coffee Morning, raising much needed funds for both organisations. On 30th October we held a successful Flower Arranging Demonstration by Keith Gubbins in the Bede House, and raised £140.50 for MU funds.

At the end of the year the branch launched an initiative to introduce more people to the work of Mothers’ Union by hosting an informal social evening at a local restaurant. Eleven members and friends enjoyed an evening of fellowship, food and wine, and listened to a speaker from the anti-bullying charity Kidscape. The group will meet again and is provisionally called ‘MU & Friends’.

In common with other church organisations the branch was unable to meet for most of last year, so it is good to revisit activities in early 2020.

Our speaker at the first meeting of the year was St Mary’s Church Warden, Dave Stuttle, talking about his own faith journey and the retreats he has enjoyed. In February we visited Rushden Golf Club for a belated New Year lunch, and later in the month the branch hosted a second evening meeting of ‘MU & Friends’. It was planned to hold further events on a bi-monthly basis until covid intervened.

At the AGM in March Dora Paynton retired as Branch Leader and it was agreed that the branch would continue as committee-led. Ruth Bond was re-elected as Branch Treasurer and Jane Smeathers as Branch Secretary with Margaret Britchford, Diane Buckby, Pat Catlin, Angela Tobin and Linda Vickers remaining as committee members. Thirteen members had paid subscriptions

for the year. Following the formal meeting Marion Knott spoke to members about Northamptonshire Women.

During the remainder of the year members kept busy in a variety of ways – making blankets, face masks, busy bags for children (ready for family services in the future); supporting the food bank; and shopping etc for those who were housebound. We continued to support one another and the parish family in prayer, and also by telephone and socially distanced visits. It was so good to see familiar faces (behind masks) at the times when public worship resumed.

In December we heard the sad news that one of our longest serving members, Margaret Whiteman, had passed away. Margaret was able to be with us for the AGM in March but had subsequently struggled with various health issues. We are thankful for her long association with Mothers' Union.

Jane Smeathers
Secretary



The Fundraising and Social Committee January 2019 to December 2019

The first event for 2019 was the Coffee Morning on Saturday February 23rd which raised £209.65 for the Church.

In June we organized the refreshments for “The Open Gardens” in the Bede House from 12.00 noon until 5pm after which Choral Evensong was sung in the church. This event raised £388.99.

June was a busy month with the Charter Weekend at the end, an event which saw us doing refreshments over two days with tea and scones plus hot sausage rolls in the morning. It was a great event enabling us to raise £786.92.

In August at our Patronal Festival we organized a Parish BBQ which was not a fundraising event but a social one for all the parish family. We were lucky with the weather and finished the day with Choral Evensong.

October saw us organize our annual Harvest Festival Lunch in the Bede House after our service in church. It was another good social event with a lovely lunch and good for the parish family to get together. The Harvest Lunch raised £571.96 for the church.

Our next event was Sparkle which was held on Saturday 23rd November our major fundraising event of the year. In one day we managed to raise £5738.75. This event takes a lot of organizing with evenings of crafting and meetings to organize what we need to buy plus help on the day from the parish family.

The last event for 2019 was the Wreath Making Workshop in December where we sold all our tickets and raised £442.00. It was a very enjoyable afternoon and people went home with a lovely Christmas Wreath.

St Marys 600 Appeal



Back in the autumn of 2020, in the midst of a pandemic and lockdowns, we launched our five-year St Mary's 600 Appeal – the timing is designed to celebrate and remember Archbishop Henry Chichele's legacy of 600 years ago (in 2022) and also to aim to raise £600,000 for work needed on two of the three Grade 1 listed buildings in our own 'mini-Cathedral Close' (or that's how I think of our beautiful churchyard anyway). Not many towns of our size can lay claim to such magnificent historic buildings but with them comes responsibility and cost.

A new group of fundraisers came together and worked out a plan of how to tackle the fundraising in bite sized pieces – despite all the challenges. We divided the work into three phases with Phase 1 being all about the church including the spire repairs, roof and stonework repairs, the replacement heating system, and the servery. This is what we have been very much concentrating upon. Once we have funded the work on the church - £263,400 plus VAT which is refunded, we will move on to Phase 2 which is external and internal work on the Bede House and continuing to be mindful of the loan repayment.

Thanks to the support of so many of you, our church family, and the talents of members of our fundraising group who have been so successful in getting grants for us (again, not at all easy in the present climate) and an interest free loan from the Diocese we are currently incredibly close to being able to put in the heating system and Servery. Both will make our church much more suitable for community use as well as our services being more comfortable for us all. It will give us the opportunity for fundraising events to be held once again - as soon as the world

allows. These in turn will help us to repay our loan and raise future funding.

Please ‘watch this space’ for the beginning of both pieces of work in the coming months. We really cannot do it without your support, and we do owe it to future generations that they too can enjoy the history of our town for the next 600 years. Please support us in any way that you are able as we move on with our fundraising; if we do not press on with fundraising and completing the various pieces of work then the future of our historic town centre is a bleak one – and none of us want that, do we?

Sue Dennis
Appeal Leader



St Mary 600 Appeal Balance Sheet 2020

Bank Account opened 1st November 2020 for the following funds:-

1. Church Heating project
2. Repairs to stonework of Church and Bede House
3. Installation of a Servery in the Church
4. Redecoration and improvement to the Bede House interior

Receipts 2020	£
Church Heating project	
Loan from Church Account - Make£10Grow project	800
Profits from previous fund raising event	2,643
M Scarborough Print Sales	480
Make £10 Grow	6,605
Special Donations	12,000
Donation 'in memoriam'	10,000
Gift Aid Claim (to 30/11/2020)	2,562
Total	35,090
Payments	
Repay loan to church account	800
Printing and packaging Prints and Notelets	493
Material for 2021 calendars	3
Total	1,296
Excess receipts over payments	33,794

Receipts 2020

Bede House Interior

Profits from previous fund raising events	2,560
The Co-op Community Fund	2,337
Donation St Mary Bell Fund	500
Donation "Higham Ferrers Charter 1215"	500
Total	5,897

Funds at 31.12 2020

Lloyds Bank – St Mary the Virgin PCC Higham 600 Appeal 39,691

Analysis sheet, bank statements, cheque and paying in books reconciled

Date... 7.5.21 Signed  W.J. ELLRED

Thursday Coffee Mornings

Thursday mornings are now seeing a few more people coming to enjoy a coffee and a chat.

In September we welcomed the ladies from the "Knit and Natter" group who used to meet in the Library. These 12 ladies meet on the first Thursday of the month and the needles are going at quite a pace, while enjoying a good natter.

I would like to thank those who come along to prepare coffee, Mary, Elizabeth, Pat, David, Richard, Shirley and Diane, who is always there to lend a hand when its my turn, and any week if needed, apart from folding the news sheets. Unfortunately we have lost the help of Maureen, who found it difficult to come across from Sywell following her knee operation.

Thank you all very much indeed. The money raised from Thursday mornings goes towards Church Funds.

Coffees served after the Sunday Mass were beginning to increase before the "lock down" and following a suggestion from Rev. Michelle, the money now goes towards the Served Project. Over the past year a total of £430 has been raised.

The biscuit stock never lasts long, as somehow everyone prefers the chocolate ones. Again grateful thanks must go to the people who come along to help serve every week. Ruth, Peter, Angela, Flo, Kerry, Pat, David, Joan, John and Nicky. A special thank you must go to David Batchelor, who without fail, fills and switches on the water urn every week.

I am sure we are all looking forward to life getting back to normal and as such a time as we can all get together over coffee once more. Until then stay safe.

Pam Whiting

Report on the church website for the APCM

The church website has been maintained for the past year to give up to date information on services and other events involving the church. We did make one alteration during the year to make it more of a Benefice website than exclusive to St. Mary's by adding an extra domain name, www.stmarystjohnunited.co.uk.

During the year the page received an average of ten visits per day, with double the number on Sundays. However, the use of the site increased enormously with the advent of the Corvid 19 lockdown and the decision of the ministry team to broadcast a Sunday service each week in addition to a daily "Keep in Touch" podcast and a Celtic Liturgy on Monday evenings. It culminated in the site having over 200 hits on Easter Day and numbers in three figures for subsequent Sundays and a total of 5176 visits in the last 3 months.

I am very grateful for the help and support of Fr. Paul who has spent hours putting the sound together for the services and podcasts, Rev. Michelle and Brenda for supplying the text for the services and for everyone for their help in supplying pictures etc. for use on the website.

We do know that the site is viewed worldwide, not only through personal contacts but because it is used to pass messages to the church.

Richard Hall.

HOLY DUSTERS REPORT

The group lost several member towards the end of 2019. It has been difficult to replace them as most people in the younger age group are working, so the average age of the existing group (except one lady) is between 70 and 80 years of age. About 5 or 6 people remain and when all of them are available it is possible to clean the church properly once a month as all of them are very hard working. An effort ought to be made to find willing people to take part or think about how the church will be cleaned in future.

This year we were arranging to have a group lunch just before Easter at Rushden Golf Club but, like everything else, it did not take place due to lockdown. When we can get into the church we will need some extra help.

Ann Pack





