



**The Parochial Church Council  
Of  
St Philip & St James  
Hucclecote**

**Annual Report and Accounts  
Year ended 31st December 2024**

## VACANCY / PRIEST-IN-CHARGE REPORT 2024

### **January – August:**

The start of the new year brought new adventures for us as a church. With the parish profile being completed and interviews for our new Priest-in-Charge we began heading to a new era, one with hope and anticipation.

During this period, it was important to ensure that we maintained a clear sense of identity whilst looking to deepen our understanding of and relationship with God. I believe that we achieved this well and the life of the church continued to flourish.

The first few months were not without their challenges; however, I am very grateful for the support of the congregation during the time of vacancy. Hucclecote is truly a wonderful place to minister.

Highlights included Easter services with Hillview school and the wonderful working parties to ensure that the church yard and premises were maintained in top shape. Thank you, to those who helped with the clean-up, especially the interior walls of the church.

Interviews for our new Priest-in-Charge took place with a great deal of excitement. It has been wonderful to see that months of prayer, preparation and hard work paid off and we were able to appoint Joe. Joe joining in September was a great blessing and I know that he will continue to take the church, with your support, to a deeper place and connection with God.

The church can now look towards the next adventure in our time together. Whatever this journey may look like, over the next few years and where-ever it takes us, is completely in God's plan. However, this is a journey which is filled with Easter hope, rooted in the resurrection power of Christ and under Joe's capable leadership. I trust that people will support him, in prayer and participation in the same way that people supported during the vacancy.

Rev. Duncan Hutchison

### **September – December:**

My first 3 months as your Priest-in-Charge have flown by. My licensing service had a wonderful, upbeat energy and it feels as if I have been carried along by that energy throughout the rest of the year. A huge thank you to all who have made myself, Kirsty, Arthur and Dougie feel so welcome and at home so quickly. It is a privilege to serve God and our community alongside you.

I was conscious of making every effort to get to know people and the various groups and activities that take place throughout the week and year. I'm grateful for people's patience as I've tried to focus on listening when some will undoubtedly have been impatient for change.

I will comment more on individuals, opportunities, successes and challenges in other places below, but I have felt a deep and constant sense through these months that God is at work in and through all of these. I'm also encouraged by our collective willingness to talk about difficult things (e.g. bereavement, safeguarding, finances) in a careful and courageous way.

As I look ahead, I am impatient to explore the broader vision for who God is calling us to be and what we will be called to do in the coming years with the whole church. However, this must be in God's timing, rather than our own. I get the sense that in the first few months of 2025 we need to do the important work of preparing the ground and deepening our connection with and reliance on God. In so doing, we will ensure that we have the deep roots needed to support the new life and future growth that I hope and pray lies ahead. I don't know exactly what shape that will take, but I am excited to find out.

Rev. Dr. Joe Mottram

## CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

The highlight of 2024 was the recruitment of our new priest in charge, Revd Dr Joe Mottram, and his licensing and installation by Bishop Rachel in September. It has been a great joy to welcome Joe and Kirsty, Arthur and Dougie into our church family, and to see them settle in so well to life in Hucclecote.

Huge thanks to our parish profile working group for producing such a high-quality profile which certainly had the desired effect of encouraging applications, and to Alison Dight and all who were involved in the recruitment process and the preparations for the subsequent licensing service. We would particularly like to thank our PCC secretary Margaret Edwards and our administrator Louisa Scrivener for the many hours preparing invitations and orders of service. Also, we thank the many people from our church family and local community who took part and welcomed Joe to his new role. It was a hugely uplifting and inspiring service.

We particularly want to thank Duncan and Miriam for encouraging and leading us through the vacancy period and getting us across the finish line. Their commitment, dedication and leadership has been outstanding, especially with Duncan continuing to work full time in education. We would also like to thank Jane Twitty who shared leading and preaching with Miriam at the 8:30 service.

The advice from Bishop Rachel was for us not to be vacant during the vacancy, and it has been very encouraging that we as a church family continued with our regular activities and more during the period. We would like to thank the many people who contribute to the life of our church, and those who are involved in our outreach to our local community.

Churchwardens - Kevin Hobbs and Chris Brookes

## TRUSTEES REPORT

### Administrative Information

St Philip & St James is situated in Larkhay Road, Hucclecote, Gloucester. It is part of the Diocese of Gloucester within the Church of England.

The correspondence address is:

Church Office  
Stone Building  
18 Larkhay Road  
Hucclecote  
Gloucester  
GL3 3 NS

Telephone: 01452 372177

Website: [www.hucclecotechurch.uk](http://www.hucclecotechurch.uk) & [www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14161/](http://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14161/)

Social Media: Facebook: "St Philip and St James Church Hucclecote"

Instagram: "Stpandstj"

E mail: [stpandstj.hucc@mail.com](mailto:stpandstj.hucc@mail.com)

Bankers: National Westminster Bank  
21 Eastgate Street  
Gloucester GL1 1NY

Independent Examiner: Tina Knight

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2024 until 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025, when this report was approved, are listed on page 5.

## STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

### PCC 2024 - 2025 (after APCM on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024)

St Philip & St James Church, Hucclecote

#### PCC 2024- 2025

##### Ex Officio:

Incumbent -	In vacancy January 2024 – until September 5 <sup>th</sup>
Revd Dr Joseph Mottram	Priest in Charge. From September 2024
Revd Duncan Hutchison	Associate Priest from June 2023 (From November 2024 on placement to Benefice of Hardwick, Elmore & Longney)
Revd Miriam Davis	Assistant Curate from June 2021

##### Churchwardens

Mr Kevin Hobbs	re-elected APCM 2024
Mr Chris Brookes	re-elected APCM 2024

##### Deanery Synod Representatives

Canon (Mrs) Margaret Edwards	elected 2023	*PCC Secretary & Safeguarding Officer
Mrs Doreen McLellan	elected 2023	
One vacancy		

##### Elected Members of the PCC (up to 12 in number)

Mr Tom Brown	elected 2023	
Mrs Marion Cook	re-elected 2023	
Mrs Pat Dabbs	elected 2022	
Dr Alison Dight	elected 2024	
Mr John Grime	re-elected 2022	
Mr Jackson Klein	elected 2024	
Mr Alan Preece	elected 2023	
Mr Steve Plant	elected 2024	
<del>Mrs Katherine Robinson</del>	elected 2024.	Resigned March 2025
Mrs Jane Stock	elected 2023	*Electoral Roll Officer since Sept 2023
<del>Mrs Jean Thomas</del>	elected 2023.	Died June 2024
Mr Lee Thornton	re-elected 2023.	* Treasurer

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the electoral roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC is supported in its work by sub-teams whose views and recommendations are considered by the PCC when making decisions.

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

St Philip & St James PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for St Philip & St James Church and associated property. The PCC is registered with the Charity Commissioners and all members of PCC are Trustees of the Charity; as such Hucclecote PCC must adhere to Charity Commission rules and regulations.

During 2024, the PCC met in January, March, May, July, September and November; on the alternate months the Standing Committee met to discuss matters needing attention in the interim before the next PCC. Extra PCC meetings took place in February for the Vacancy process and the Standing Committee met frequently to make final arrangements for the Interview Day on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. PCC members and other community representatives were invited to lunch on the interview day to meet the candidates. An appointment was made on that day and our new Priest-in-Charge was Licensed by Bishop Rachel and Installed by Katrina Scott (acting Archdeacon of Gloucester), on September 5<sup>th</sup>.

### 2024

The normal pattern of Sunday services on Sunday continued during 2024, with 8.30am Holy Communion every week and Morning Worship for most Sundays, with Holy Communion on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Baptisms, when booked, took place on a first Sunday of the month at 10.30am when the service follows an All-Age format with no Junior Church on that day.

#### Additional services in 2024

28<sup>th</sup> March - Maundy Thursday, evening service with Holy Communion

29<sup>th</sup> March - Good Friday, a quiet reflective time of prayer

3<sup>rd</sup> November - Memorial service

#### Christmas Activities

Christmas Make It – 22<sup>nd</sup> November. An evening of Christmas crafts.

Messy Christmas – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December.

Nativity on a Lorry – 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> December; we hosted the refreshments on 12<sup>th</sup> December

Carols at The Wagon & Horses- 19<sup>th</sup> December, singers from 3 Hucclecote churches

#### Christmas services

Christingle Service – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 4.00pm

Christingle service for Hillview School – 19<sup>th</sup> December

Carol Service - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December

Christmas Eve - 4.00pm – Crib service & 11.00pm – Midnight Communion

Christmas Day - 10.00 am Holy Communion service

### **Achievements and performance**

Sunday attendance figures have remained fairly steady through the year and we have seen some new members at both of the congregations. 2024 has been a sad year since several members of our church family passed away some in close succession, namely Nancy Lockwood, Mervyn Reynolds, Janet White, Jean Thomas, Phil Rodford and Max Aziz.

The leaders of our church activities continue to take as many opportunities as possible to share their faith with those attending the groups.

Margaret Edwards

## PCC MEETINGS

During 2024, the PCC continued to meet bi-monthly and the Standing Committee (Associate Priest, Assistant Curate, Lay Chair, Treasurer, Churchwardens, PCC Secretary and Administrator) met on the alternate months; the latter group discuss the general running of the church and the financial status together with any areas of concern and then makes recommendations to the PCC for further discussion.

PCC Agenda items always include a financial report, Safeguarding issues and updates as well as reports from the Standing Committee, the Mission team and Deanery Synod and the Grounds and Building team.

At the APCM on April 10th 2024, Kevin Hobbs and Chris Brookes were elected to stand as Churchwardens for the year 2024-2025 and the PCC elections were as follow: newly elected were: Dr Alison Dight, Jackson Klein, Katherine Robinson and Steve Plant. The vacancy on Deanery Synod was not filled.

The Electoral Roll was 105.

The Statutory and essential reports had been accepted and adopted by the PCC at the meeting on March 13th 2024 in readiness for the APCM.

During 2024, a huge amount of work has been undertaken by our two Churchwardens and other volunteers to care for and maintain our church and buildings as much as they are able.

The secretary would like to thank PCC members for their commitment to their duties and attendance at meetings. Also, huge thanks must go to all those who volunteer for our church services and the many regular activities taking place on the church site or the ones off-site but under the church umbrella. The giving of time and talents by so many volunteers, means that we can honour God in all we do as a worshipping community.

Margaret Edwards

# STATUTORY REPORTS

## FINANCIAL REVIEW 2024

### Commentary on Income & Expenditure

**Total income** in 2024 from all sources totalled £126,666 which is a £12,766 (9.16%) reduction in income from 2023.

Breaking that down:

**Voluntary income** Total of £95,163 was £9,818 less than in 2023. This variance was mainly due to:

- The regular giving has reduced by £2,305 during 2024.
- In 2023 we had benefited from a large one-off gift of £8,250 (including gift aid)

**Activities for generating funds:** We have benefited from a smaller level of grants in 2024 at £560 whereas in 2023 we had received Grants totalling £10,556 with the majority being for a community garden project & to support energy costs

**Investment income** – Dividends on our funds held in banks increased by £1,193 to £4,380 in 2024

**Income from Church activities:** This shows an overall increase of £5,748 driven by both;

- Net PCC fees for weddings, funerals, etc.
- Hall hire and income from other church activities, with hall hire fees having recovered to pre-Covid levels

**Total Expenditure** - In 2024 our expenditure totalled £139,972 an increase in cost of £6,425 (4.8%) on 2023

**Charitable Activities:** The spending in this category increased by £5,616 and was driven by:

- **Parish share.** This is our largest expenditure and increased slightly over 2023 to £70,000. This contributes towards the provision of clergy and associated support and services across the Diocese. Whilst this is a large sum, it falls short of the overall value of support received.
- **Church running costs:** these increased £4,424 during the year and include a number of elements.
- **Maintenance** - Expenditure on our buildings has started to gradually increase during 2024 in order to address some of the issues with our buildings and this will increase in 2025. We spent £8,042 during the year, an increase of £4,349 on 2023. However, the majority of this increase was for a new boiler in the Youth block at a cost of £3,180 as the original could not be economically repaired.
  - **Heating and lighting** – The total cost of heating and lighting at £10,977 was £1,454 more than 2023 and will only continue to increase during 2025, with the latest contract renewals having much higher standing charges. *(To give some context, since 2022 these energy costs have increased by 76% from £6,248).*
- **Charities and Mission Giving (Tithe):** The direct tithe giving has reduced during the year, but there has been direct fundraising to support the partner Gloucester City Mission with £1,450 raised as part of their sponsored sleep out event.
- **Churchyard maintenance:** £4,960 was spent on churchyard maintenance, an increase of £2,610 on 2023 and largely driven by the cost of a major boundary hedge trimming. We will need to address maintenance of the stone churchyard wall in the coming years.
- **Local Mission and evangelism:** The expenditure in the category is supported by specific funds and overall, it was lower than in 2023, with the major expense in 2024 being for the Community Garden, drawing down restricted funds received in 2023 in the form of grants.

### Income over Expenditure

In 2024 our expenditure exceeded our income by £13,306 (10.5%) with all three types of funds (*General, Designated & Restricted*) having deficits, so reducing our overall reserves.

In 2023 by contrast we had generated a surplus of £5,885.

### Analysis of movements in funds

**General Fund** - It is from our General Fund that we pay for main operating expenses for running (*but not maintaining*) the Church and our other buildings. This had a deficit for the year of £4,994, leaving us with a General Fund balance of £27,457 at the end of 2024. This balance has been declining gradually over the years as our operating costs have



outpaced our income. During 2024 the PCC discussed this and has made the decision to adjust the Tithe calculation to deduct certain expenses in 2025, rather than base the calculation purely on percentage of income.

**Designated funds** - these showed an overall movement creating a deficit of £6,371 but this was reduced after a £3,085 movement between fund categories to a deficit of £3,286 and a closing balance of £23,825. The movement between fund categories was mostly for the essential maintenance fund to be topped up in line with a PCC mandate with the source being the Restricted PCC fund (*which is the fund of Net fees retained by PCC for funerals, weddings*). Going forward the PCC has agreed to prioritise making more funds available to repair and maintain our buildings.

**Restricted Funds** - created a deficit of £1,941 during 2024, which increased with a transfer to Essential Maintenance to £5,026, resulting in an end balance of £87,281.

Some of the activity from the Restricted funds in 2024 includes:

- Expenditure of £950 for the purchase of electronic drum kit (Music & Worship fund and Olive Withycombe bequest)
- Payment for building work on the Community Garden covered by grants made in 2023
- Donation of £2000 to the Gloucester City Deanery for funding of youth and children's worker
- Clearing down of the negative balances on the Restricted Fund and Coopers Edge Mission which had been carried forward for a number of years using the PCC Fund balance (*surplus monies from Funerals & Weddings*)
- New funds established for specific donations made for Church interior decorations and Technology in Church.

#### **Other notes**

The PCC's accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis using the Finance Co-ordinator accounting software.

To align with the Diocese Cashbook that most churches in the Deanery use, total Fees retained by PCC are displayed on a 'net' basis.

Values are shown in pounds, so there may be minor variance to totals if they were in pence.

Treasurer

Approved by the PCC on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025

St Philip & St James Church Hucclecote - 1133978

Balance sheet (Separate funds)

As at: 31 December 2024

	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted	At 31/12/2024 £	At 31/12/2023 £
<b>Represented by</b>					
<b>Unrestricted</b>					
Unrestricted - General fund	27,455	—	—	27,455	32,450
<b>Designated</b>					
Designated - Community Garden	—	888	—	888	942
Designated - Teddy Bears	—	1,636	—	1,636	2,083
Designated - Coffee Pot	—	799	—	799	549
Designated - Messy Church	—	348	—	348	384
Designated - Lunch Club	—	767	—	767	170
Designated - Essential Maintenance	—	10,359	—	10,359	13,786
Designated - Depreciation Fund	—	1,511	—	1,511	1,682
Designated - Computer Fund	—	1,346	—	1,346	1,346
Designated - Social Fund	—	1,641	—	1,641	1,641
Designated - Treasurers Discretionary Fund	—	4,525	—	4,525	4,525
<b>Restricted</b>					
Restricted - PCC Fund	—	—	7,602	7,602	9,089
Restricted - Community Garden Restricted	—	—	—	—	5,563
Restricted - Tanzania Fund	—	—	2,534	2,534	1,934
Restricted - Childrens Worker	—	—	2,363	2,363	4,268
Restricted - Music and Worship Fund	—	—	245	245	891
Restricted - Olive Withycombe bequest	—	—	—	—	304
Restricted - Local Mission	—	—	697	697	1,438
Restricted - Building Fund	—	—	64,173	64,173	61,613
Restricted - Churchyard Fund	—	—	11	11	11
Restricted - Wardens Discretionary Fund	—	—	500	500	4,175
Restricted - Restricted Fund	—	—	—	—	-1,815
Restricted - Coopers Edge Mission	—	—	—	—	-282
Restricted - Ann Smith Bequest	—	—	4,352	4,352	4,352
Restricted - Boiler Fund	—	—	520	520	770
Restricted - Church interior decorations	—	—	610	610	—
Restricted - Technology in Church	—	—	3,675	3,675	—
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>27,455</b>	<b>23,825</b>	<b>87,285</b>	<b>258,566</b>	<b>271,876</b>

**Receipts and Payments Account for the year ending 31st December 2024**

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	This year	Total Last year
<b>INCOME</b>					
<b>Voluntary giving</b>					
Regular giving	73,180	-	600	73,780	76,085
Collections at services	3,489	-	91	3,580	2,197
All other giving and voluntary receipts, including	522	-	210	732	8,671
Gift Aid recovered (regular giving and one-off)	16,071	-	-	16,071	18,028
Legacies received (capital value)	500	-	500	1,000	-
<b>Total voluntary giving</b>	<b>93,762</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,401</b>	<b>95,163</b>	<b>104,981</b>
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>					
Grants (include recurring and one-off)	560	-	-	560	10,556
Fundraising activities (gross proceeds)	282	567	629	1,478	1,035
<b>Income from investments</b>					
Dividends, interest, income from property etc.	863	276	3,241	4,380	3,187
<b>Church activities</b>					
Fees retained by PCC (weddings, funerals etc.)	-	-	4,059	4,059	2,358
Hall hire & other church activities	17,026	4,000	-	21,026	16,979
<b>Other incoming resources</b>					
Other income	-	-	-	-	86
insurance claim	-	-	-	-	250
<b>Totals Income</b>	<b>112,493</b>	<b>4,843</b>	<b>9,330</b>	<b>126,666</b>	<b>139,432</b>
<b>PAYMENTS/EXPENDITURE</b>					
<b>Charitable Activities</b>					
Parish share	70,000	-	-	70,000	68,519
Church running costs	19,680	8,073	2,495	30,248	25,824
Churchyard expenses	4,960	-	-	4,960	2,350
Donations/grants to charities & mission giving	8,180	-	-	8,180	9,610
Local mission & evangelism	-	2,177	6,776	8,953	11,668
Children/youth work costs	-	964	2,000	2,964	1,284
Clergy expenses	321	-	-	321	859
Fundraising costs	104	-	-	104	-
<b>Total Charitable activities</b>	<b>103,245</b>	<b>11,214</b>	<b>11,271</b>	<b>125,730</b>	<b>120,114</b>
<b>Management and Administration</b>					
Salaries and wages	8,102	-	-	8,102	6,596
Administration costs	2,122	-	-	2,122	2,335
Insurance costs	3,978	-	-	3,978	3,838
Sundry expenses	40	-	-	40	664
<b>Total Management &amp; Admin</b>	<b>14,242</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,242</b>	<b>13,433</b>
<b>Major repairs</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>117,487</b>	<b>11,214</b>	<b>11,271</b>	<b>139,972</b>	<b>133,547</b>
<b>Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>- 4,994</b>	<b>- 6,371</b>	<b>- 1,941</b>	<b>- 13,306</b>	<b>5,885</b>
<b>Funds Opening Balance 1.1.2024</b>	<b>32,451</b>	<b>147,111</b>	<b>92,307</b>	<b>271,869</b>	<b>265,984</b>
<b>Movement between fund categories</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,085</b>	<b>- 3,085</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Funds Closing Balance 31.12.2024</b>	<b>27,457</b>	<b>143,825</b>	<b>87,281</b>	<b>258,563</b>	<b>271,869</b>
<b>Purchase value of Church Centre</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>120,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>
<b>Net Funds Closing Balance 31.12.2024</b>	<b>27,457</b>	<b>23,825</b>	<b>87,281</b>	<b>138,563</b>	<b>151,869</b>



**CHARITY COMMISSION**  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

### Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A

## Independent Examiner's Report

### Report to the trustees

Charles Nichols

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL  
PARISH OF HUCCLECOTE, ST PHILIP AND ST JAMES

On accounts for the year ended

31-December-2024

Charity no  
(if any)

1133978

**Set out on pages**

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ('the Trust') for the year ended 31 / 12 / 2024.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: T. J. Knight

T. J. Knight

Date: 09/03/25

**Name:** Tina J. Knight

Tina J. Knight

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

**Address:**

## DEANERY SYNOD

Doreen McLellan and Margaret Edwards are the Parish Representatives on Deanery Synod.

The Synod convened 3 times during 2024: February, July and November

There were other gatherings for worship and discussions open more widely to our PCCs/members of our congregations.

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity there was an opportunity to hear and pray about developments in youth work in the Deanery: one of the priorities in our Deanery Strategic Plan (DSP) This was at St Catharine's, London Road on January 21. There was quite a crowd of young people from St Andrew's Churchdown as well as from our local churches, so there was a lot of energy in the building. Barrie Voyce, Connector for Youth Work in the Diocese is keen to initiate some liturgical/sacramental youth work to complement the Youth for Christ's less formal style. Work is going on in secondary schools to restart Christian Union groups which were disrupted during Covid lockdowns etc.

20 February at St Philip and St James' Church Hucclecote: The speaker was Lisa-Jayne Lewis, the Stewardship and Giving Officer who introduced herself and enthusiastically spoke of her role in the Mission and Ministry department. She was keen to visit parishes to offer ideas and advice to congregations or PCCs on the values of the Parish Giving Scheme. She would also be offering workshops on grant applications and funding bids. She promised that she would be available if we wanted to tap into her skills. We only have to ask.

Before the next Synod there were 2 opportunities for worshipping together. On Easter Day, 31 March, there was a Sunrise Service at 6 am on Robinswood Hill. Then on Ascension Day, 9 May, there was a Eucharist and a social get together at St James' Church, Upton Street

As well as prayer and praise gatherings there has been another underlying theme during 2024. What else could it be but Parish Share (PS)? The City Deanery is heavily subsidised by the other deaneries in the Diocese but is still unable to meet its allocation. This fact underlies much of the Deanery's concerns. (In 2024 we fell £59k short) There were plans from the Diocese that there would be a new approach to the allocation of PS ready for 2025.

Deanery reps along with incumbents and interested parties were invited by a team from the Diocese to attend a consultation evening on the new parish share model on 3 June at St Catharine's. Our parish was represented by our Treasurer. The planned new approach got delayed in implementation after the consultations to address questions arising. This meant that it was not in place by August to be ready for 2025 allocations. A detailed proposal for the new approach was sent out at the end of 2024.

17 July: This Synod was held in the nave of St Mary de Crypt where members of Synod and our speakers enjoyed a splendid buffet prepared by a team of volunteers. It was generously acclaimed.

Dean Andrew and Canon Craig had come from the Cathedral. Canon Craig spoke to a power point presentation about the mission and ministry of the cathedral and their strategic priorities. In many ways they are very similar to those of the parish churches in the rest of the city. Dean Andrew and Canon Craig expressed their eagerness to build connections with our deanery: another of the five priorities of our DSP. A lively Q and A session followed. The Dean indicated that there would be an Evensong with special reference to the City Deanery on 30 September at 5.30 to be followed by a glass of wine and nibbles. This duly took place and was much appreciated.

During the Autumn some parishes in the Deanery had committed varying sums of money for the employment of a youth worker for 2 days a week. Revd. Helen Champion, Priest in Charge (0.5) at Upton St Leonards was appointed to this post. This was a significant implementation of our DSP now standing for Do Something Positive.

7 November: This Synod was planned as a time for members to assess how we were progressing in the implementation of our 5 priorities and to pray. The meeting started with a time of prayer arranged by 3 of our newest curates. Each spoke of the needs of different sections of the communities in our Deanery. There was then time given for reps to pray in small groups: voiced prayers or silently.

The Business Meeting followed a coffee break. Among topics discussed were Parish Share Planning, DSP implementation and a report from the Diocesan Synod. One of the tasks of the members of Deanery Synod is to elect the Diocesan Synod for the next 3 years. This was duly done. 6 lay reps and 8 clergy reps were elected.

Report by the Deanery Secretary Justine Sullivan

## **CHURCH FABRIC STATUTORY REPORT**

### **Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measures 1991**

#### **St Philip and St James Church, Hucclecote**

In the Fabric Report for 2023 we reported that the most visible area of concern in the church was the black mould and flaking paint on the internal walls. During 2024 in preparation for the licensing service we made good progress with deep cleaning the black mould on the internal walls, using extending window cleaning poles. A lot of flaking paint has come off during the cleaning and has continued to fall off since. Some areas need more work, particularly the high section of the nave west wall. We produced a technical specification for the redecoration works and submitted a list B application for approval. DAC approved our application and advised that we can go ahead providing the work is carried out by an experienced contractor.

Problems with mould on the walls prompted us to look at how we could improve ventilation in the church. Articles by church organisations recommended that we ensure air-flow through the building at all times, not just when the church is open. Following approval by PCC and a list B application, stained glass specialist SDL have refurbished the vents in the two-vent window in the north aisle, so that they can now be kept open during the week but closed for services if required. The vents have been de-rusted, re-painted with three coats satin black, and new cleats and cords fitted. A broken pane of glass was also replaced. This is one of the 2021 Quinquennial Report recommendations. The polycarbonate sheet on the exterior of the window fell off in high winds; we are planning to replace it with stainless steel window guards in 2025.

A revised specification has been produced for repairs to the inner vestry ceiling and submitted to the DAC for approval. We are waiting for their response. This is one of the recommended tasks in the 2021 Quinquennial Report.

Work has been carried out on the inner vestry wall to investigate damp problems on the inner vestry and toilet walls. The damp is occurring because there is no end stop on the gutter in the vestry roof. A temporary repair using flashing tape has been made around the gulley which should reduce water ingress during the winter. The cracked concrete channel and damaged grate to the left of the vestry door has been repaired.

The south porch ceiling plaster has been checked for stability. Although there are hairline cracks, there appears to be no movement in the ceiling.

Gutter clearing has been carried out by Forrester Access. In the process several missing tiles were replaced, and some damaged stonework on the chancel east gable was removed. A detailed report with photos was provided and shared with the PCC and the church surveyor.

The annual gas safety inspection on the boiler was carried out. The annual fire extinguisher inspection has also taken place.

It has not been possible to address all the Quinquennial Report recommendations during the year; we plan to take items forward in 2025 subject to finance.

Churchwardens - Kevin Hobbs and Chris Brookes

## **SAFEGUARDING**

At St Philip & St James Church, the PCC take seriously their legal duties to promote a safe environment for all, working closely with the Safeguarding Department at the Diocese of Gloucester, in our responsibility for the protection both of Vulnerable Adults and of Children & Young People (Under 18s). We follow closely the advice given to PCCs and the necessary legal documents are on display in church and in all our church buildings where our activities take place.

Safeguarding Training to at least Foundation level (the second training level) is mandatory for all PCC members, as they are Charity Trustees, with training now including Domestic Abuse Awareness as essential.

Appropriate Safeguarding Training is necessary for all our church volunteers and all new volunteers are required to go through the Safer Recruitment process.

During 2024, under the guidance of the Diocesan Safeguarding team, we have been working towards getting accreditation on the Parish Data Dashboard for Safeguarding. This has involved a lot of work and a lot of reading on the part of PCC members, to ensure that all our policies, guidelines and procedures, concerning Safeguarding are all fit for purpose and standardised. We have also needed to produce Role Descriptions for all activity leaders and helpers. These will be issued as soon as they have been finalized.

We have a legal duty to produce the statutory documents (as listed below) in time for the APCM and in this Annual report and then display them in public area of our church buildings. Approval and adoption of these documents by the PCC was sought at the meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup> 2025.

The full versions of the documents are available in the Church Office or available electronically on request by contacting the church office or the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The following documents need to be on display on all our Noticeboards:

- 2025 Safeguarding Policy.
- Promoting a Safer Church - Parish Safeguarding Handbook (Oct 2018 version)
- Types of Abuse (including signs and symptoms)
- Poster with details of Safeguarding Officer
- Supporting Survivors of Abuse
- Guidelines for Working with Children & Young People
- Guidelines for Working with Vulnerable Adults

Safeguarding Sunday on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2024 was acknowledged at both services.

Canon Margaret Edwards  
Parish Safeguarding Officer

# NON-STATUTORY REPORTS

## 1. MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP

January – August:

Ministry continued to flourish during the first few months of the year. Whilst no large changes were made to what we did within the church, it is true to say that we did not stand still. We held the charge that was presented to us by Bishop Rachel not to be 'vacant during the vacancy'.

I am hugely grateful to so many people who did so much during the vacancy to enable the church to continue to work in the way that it did.

Thanks go to Chris and Kevin, as church wardens who worked faithfully and tirelessly ensuring the smooth running of the church. Thanks also to Lou, in the office, who made sure that everything was well organised, and everyone was kept well informed as to the day-to-day ventures.

My thanks also to Miriam, who was a great support and partner in ministry as we traversed the rocky undertaking of the vacancy. It was wonderful to share in services with colleagues who share a deep love for God and this church.

Service patterns continued as they had been and I was grateful for the support of Lee and Ceci in leading us in sung worship. During this time, we made the transition back to sharing the common cup, something that we had not done since COVID. This was a successful re-introduction and I am grateful to everyone for their positive approach to this transition.

Now under Joe's leadership we are ready to take the next step at looking at where we as a church go in ministry and discipleship in the service of God.

Rev. Duncan Hutchison

September – December:

A huge thank you to everyone who continues to contribute and share in the leadership and ministry of our Church, both during the vacancy and following my arrival.

Special thanks go to Chris and Kevin as Churchwardens. I have been so encouraged by your faithfulness in every sense of the word, be it praying before services or diligently sorting out practical matters behind the scenes. Your calm presence has made the transition far smoother than I had any right to expect. My thanks also to Margaret as PCC Secretary and Parish Safeguarding Officer, both large roles which can be rather thankless at times but so very essential for the life of our church to thrive.

It has been wonderful to share in leading services and other aspects of ordained ministry and leadership with my fellow members of clergy. Thank you for your support, your insight, and your willingness to help me get up to speed.

There has been some change in this time within the clergy team, with Duncan being seconded to Hardwick, Longney & Elmore from November and Jane having to step back from ministry for a while due to health issues. Both of you are missed and we look forward to when you will both be ministering among us again. Thank you to Claire for agreeing to step in to take the joint service on the last Sunday of the year, which was very much appreciated. Last but far from least, a huge thank you to Miriam for all the many areas of Ministry that you're involved in. I have learned from and been encouraged by each of you, even though it's only been 3 months.



The life of the church is enriched by the gifts that each of you offer and by having different voices and perspectives present within it. My hope is that as I settle in, we'll be able to find a good balance that sees everyone's gifts and talents used and celebrated in appropriate ways, while not expecting more than is reasonable or sustainable.

I'm also grateful to PCC for the way we have responded to the challenges in front of us and embraced having difficult conversations, particularly around buildings and finance. Our meetings have included important questions and while we have had to make some hard decisions, particularly around how we support our mission partners, I feel we have been able to listen to one another and disagree well when we could not reach unanimous consensus.

On Finance in particular, having seen a significant decline in general funds over recent years, it was important for us to challenge ourselves to plan for a surplus in 2025. We have done this by setting targets around fundraising, by considering our outgoings when calculating the Mission Tithe, and by reviewing how we advertise the hiring our buildings. We also considered how we might raise funds in different ways for mission partners and consider other ways of supporting them. While these may not have been decisions we wanted to make, I think we have been realistic, prayerful, and courageous in how we have responded.

Thanks also go to those who lead and volunteer across our various groups and activities, be it Coffee Pot & Teddy Bears, Junior Church, Core Group, Messy Church, Lunch Club, Tuesdays at 2, Tea and Toast, the Community Garden, Bible study and home groups, the Flower team, the various volunteers within services, Open the Book, the Foodbank or any other aspect of church life. Engaging in what God is doing is for everyone, and it's been so encouraging to be part of a church where so many are actively involved in living out their faith through acts of ministry, mission, service and discipleship. It is also important that, while some activities might be targeted at particular groups of people or ages, taken together we share our faith with and meet the needs of the widest possible cross-section of our community without bias or restriction. In this we are building God's Kingdom in line with the priorities Jesus taught.

One of the things I became aware of is the need to facilitate communication and coordination across so many different groups and activities, and so at the end of the year Standing Committee looked at how we might group areas of church life into sub-teams. In the coming year the hope is that this will enable our church to flourish and grow in healthy ways.

Rev. Dr. Joe Mottram

## **2. PRAYER AND WORSHIP**

January – August:

We were able to hold both 8:30 and 10:30 services weekly during the vacancy months till September without calling on outside help with our team of three ordained clergy – Duncan, Jane and myself. My thanks particularly for Duncan who gave so much to leading the church while working fulltime and for Jane's experience, wisdom and support. We were also very aware of the loving support of our church family in what were a challenging few months. This included not just the vacancy process, but the deaths of six dearly loved church members, three of which were unexpected.

We saw the numbers of volunteers for Sunday rotas – welcomers, PA operators, readers, prayers, coffee makers etc – increase and are very grateful to all who contribute in these vital roles. But we would love to welcome more to ease the load on those already volunteering. Lee and Cecilia continued to lead their respective music groups in providing wonderful music for our 10:30 service. Duncan was our fall-back guy with his guitar when neither Cecilia nor Lee were available. Organ was the main instrument for 8:30 services with the occasional piped music. An ongoing prayer is the need for more organists and it would be good to see new members contributing to our music groups at 10:30.

The vacancy process and preparing for our priest in charge to be was the big focus of our prayers on Sunday mornings and in the two weekly (Monday and Saturday am) and once a month (first Wednesday evening) prayer groups. Those prayers were amply answered on and following the interview day and we were delighted to welcome Joe in September. In addition to the regular prayer groups, we held our second Church Prayer Breakfast in January. This took a different form to the first one as four church members shared something of their experience of prayer. This was followed by table discussions around a Bible reading on prayer and closed with a time of prayer in the table groups. Numbers were slightly lower than 2023 due to last minute illnesses but attendees felt a strong sense of God's presence as they prayed. Church was open for prayer on the third Saturday each month from 9-11am. The occasional outside visitor was a good reminder that having church open as often as we can is in itself a witness to the community that the church is alive and active.

Miriam Davis

September – December:

A big thank you to Miriam for playing the Organ and Lee and Ceci, who lead our contemporary worship groups, along with all those who contribute to the different styles of worship on offer at our services. The ability to show videos and play music through the AV and sound systems gives further capacity to respond in prayer and worship. This breadth is a real strength and encouragement, allowing us to offer a range of worship that suits different circumstances and styles, from Messy Church and intergenerational worship, to more formal services. The range of volunteers also adds to the sense of the whole Body of Christ being part of worship and is very much appreciated.

We have established the pattern that the same person will preach at both the 8:30 and 10:30 service for all weeks except the first of the month, to provide continuity between the two congregations. On the first Sunday, we have begun the move towards having Intergenerational worship at the 10:30am service regardless of whether there is a Baptism or not. The hope is to make this service more intentionally intergenerational, and to include more people including children and young people in leading different parts of it, in 2025.

Our Harvest Festival on 20th October was joyful, and our annual Memorial service on 3<sup>rd</sup> November was a moving and poignant opportunity to prayer and reflect with those who have lost loved ones. It was a privilege to lead our 8:30am service on Remembrance Sunday and then for Miriam to lead the 10:30 service in church while I was part of the civic service at Hucclecote War Memorial together with representatives from Hucclecote Methodist Church and Hillview Evangelical church. We then marked Safeguarding Sunday on 17<sup>th</sup> November.

Services through Advent and Christmas included an afternoon Christingle service on 8<sup>th</sup> December for the first time in some years. The turnout was promising, and leftover Christingles were gratefully received by various people over the following week so did not go to waste. Messy Christmas was a hit once again, and both the Carol and Crib services were well attended, as was the Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve and the Joint Family Communion service on Christmas day. Indeed, numbers were up across all our services, continuing a trend of rising attendance over the past few years.

Prayer has been a constant throughout these three months, with the weekly Monday morning prayer group a wonderful way to set the day and week in its proper context as belonging to God. The Wednesday monthly prayer group continues to meet faithfully, though numbers are small. Prayer on Saturday mornings is also going well, though with small numbers, including the monthly time in Church. On 21<sup>st</sup> September we had an extended morning with opportunities to pray in different ways for the new season our church is stepping into. Thank you to everyone who contributed and came, and for all the hard work in organising the morning and prayer stations.

Rev. Dr. Joe Mottram

### **3. YOUTH & CHILDREN**

#### **JUNIOR CHURCH (SUNDAYS)**

During 2024, our Junior Church has followed the same pattern of the children leaving the 10.30am service, to have their own time of teaching and activities in the Church Centre. The volunteer team who has taken responsibility for Junior Church continue to struggle with the large age range, sometimes 3 years to 15 years, in the one group, we also have the difficulty of not knowing how many young people we will have on any one Sunday. It is, however, a privilege to be building relationships with the wonderful young people we have in our church family.

We have been using the Scripture Union material, called SPLASH! and although it is aimed for 5-8 year olds, it is a starting point on which to base the lessons. If we could have another regular volunteer, it would enable us to hold two groups and so separate the age range.

Margaret Edwards + team (Pat Dabbs, Tina Knight, Judith Manns, Doreen McLellan, Judy Preece, Chris Scourfield).

#### **COFFEE POT**

Coffee Pot is one of the church's outreach activities for pre-school children and the adults who bring them – Mums, Dads, Grans, Grandads and child minders. Based in the Church Centre, we are open from 10.00am to 11.30am every Tuesday in term time.

We try to ensure that the Christian ethos is evident in all we do and say and in the ways in which we interact with everyone. Each week there is plenty of time for play, to participate in craft activities, share snacks, listen to stories and sing. Over the year we will hear a mixture of stories around a termly theme, some of which will be from the Bible. Three times a year we have a short service – at Harvest, Christmas and Easter – led by one of the clergy team and we were joined by children from Abbeymead Under 5's on 2 occasions in 2024.

It is always sad to say goodbye when children leave us at the end of the summer term, but we have had the privilege of watching them grow and develop over the time they have spent with us and can look back at the many conversations we have had with the adults who brought them: these are memories which remain.

Coffee Pot could not run without its team of volunteers – Rhianydd Warren, Linda Weedon, Susan Taylor, Josie Cumberbatch and Pat Peachey – thank you all for your commitment week by week and for your care of our families.

Peggy Brown

#### **P & J TEDDY BEARS TODDLER GROUP**

During 2024, Teddy Bears has continued to flourish as a Parent/Toddler group, catering for our 25 families, meeting every Friday morning in term time at Pineholt Village Hall. Although priority is given to families with church connections, or those who live in the Cranham Gate/Coopers Edge areas, we have had referrals via Hucclecote surgery, for families who would benefit from our services.

The parents/grandparents/carers who bring their pre-school age children along, all enjoy chatting and supporting each other, with many of them now sharing their worries or problems with team members and asking for our prayers.

The children all enjoy the activities on offer and join in with 'Amen' at the end of the prayer time following the story and they especially love the actions to the Christian songs we sing at the end – "Our God is a Great Big God" is a firm favourite.

Most of our TBs families attend our monthly Messy Church and some attended services over the Christmas season. We were all very sad during the year to lose Jean Thomas, our regular refreshment lady, following her sudden death, with many of the parents still talking about her and missing her.

Huge thanks, as ever, to the loyal and committed volunteer team, without whom Teddy Bears would not operate: Kay Galling, Chris Scourfield, Susan Taylor, Wendy Vickers, and Rhianydd Warren.

Margaret Edwards

## **MESSY CHURCH**

A question...how many picnic bags do you prepare when you don't know how many children will turn up on a Messy Church Saturday? 30? 40? 50? I don't know but sometimes there has been an urgent trip to the shop for extra supplies. It can be a bit nerve wracking when we don't know how many to cater for, or if anyone is going to turn up, but God always sorts it. Each month invitations are sent to the local schools and children's groups and we wait expectantly at the church door to welcome our guests.

This year we started with the story of the young Jesus visiting the temple and created our own painting of a journey, made an indoor camp and tried keeping fit to help us grow healthily. The session for both Lent and Mother's Day had us putting a chocolate in a box and waiting weeks to eat it and creating a beautiful flower as a special gift for mums. We heard about the faithful friendship of Ruth and with bare feet and paint we made a pathway. We heard how faithfully Hannah prayed to God for years and we made and then watched our prayers on paper hands open up as we dropped them in a pool of water. We acted the thrilling story of beautiful Esther and how she prayed to God to help her be brave. Creating portraits, bead jewellery and even a miniature throne room helped us to get into the story. Later in the year we explored Jesus as a vine, a light and a good shepherd with a riot of fruity creations, lanterns, lighthouses and Christingles, and sheep made out of paper, pom poms and cake (not all at the same time).

How does this happen? Only with a brilliant team of 20 plus regular helpers who express by their genuine welcome and infectious enthusiasm their own faith In God. They are always willing to try new things and encourage the children to join in. There is a great fellowship with our team of helpers and a sense of joy as families arrive and get stuck in! Underlying all the planning, preparation, and the activities on the day itself, is the strength gained from the prayer support of the Church family. Thank you.

Judy Preece & Dianne Brookes

## **OPEN THE BOOK**

Another year of early morning gatherings at Hillview Primary School for Judy Preece, Jane Twitty, Philip Wenham, Chris and Dianne Brookes. Sadly, we lost our faithful storyteller, Jean Thomas during the year. She was always willing to slot in wherever needed irrespective of whether she had been able to rehearse. Her long experience of being part of the team carried her through and she stayed calm whatever challenges were presented to the team.

Our stories through the year ranged from the adventures of David to women who dared to do right and lots more stories about Jesus. The reflections from these stories gave children time to think about trusting God for the future, asking for help when they don't know what to do, valuing everyone in the school, being brave enough to make the right choices and most important of all that they are all, each and every one, precious to God. Some of the stories would help the children to think about their own behaviour especially towards others. Is it right to laugh at someone who is different to them or be mean to them? Are there times when they should stand up for their friends? Can they do something to help families who are hungry or homeless? The short closing prayer is a place where these subjects can be mentioned in an accessible way.

In case you think that Open the Book assemblies are serious places then be reassured. We try to have the children taking part every week and as the classes come in their hands go up even before we ask for helpers. Some teachers keep a list to make sure everyone gets a turn. The children love to get dressed up and take part without rehearsal, just gentle pushes in the right direction. Swords are very popular so it's good that the Roman army were posted to Jerusalem in the New Testament.

As a team, we are thankful that we have this opportunity to go into the school and tell the Bible stories that we know and love. We tell them in an interactive way to capture their imagination and embed them in their memories. One day a story will pop up in their heads just when they need it.

Dianne Brookes

## **4. MISSION**

### **OUTREACH**

January – August:

During the first 8 months of the year, church members continued to reach out to our local community through a wide variety of activities including Coffee Pot and Teddy Bears, Open the Book, the community garden, Tuesday at Two, Cameo, Lunch Club, Food Bank and the Warm Space (January to March). These have their separate reports in elsewhere but a very big thanks to the many organisers and volunteers who gave unstintingly of their time and energy to demonstrate the love of Christ and the presence of the church in our community.

The positive relationship with Abbeymead Under 5s continued to flourish and it was also a delight to welcome KS2 from Hillview Primary along with many parents to church for Easter on the last day of the spring term. Year 4 children gave their presentations and Duncan thoroughly engaged everyone's attention with the story of Easter. There was much positive feedback from staff and parents and I am very grateful to Duncan for taking time off work for this.

The 6-week Start course which ran in April and May was an effort to follow up on contacts from Messy Church, Coffee Pot and Teddy Bears as well as baptism families. I've reported on this in more detail and on the follow-up course, Moving On, in the report on discipleship. Expressions of interest from parents regarding baptism for themselves and for their children, and from parents of a Catholic background for First Communion for their children, didn't translate into action in 2024 but we continue to foster relationships and pray on for contacts to deepen their connection with Jesus and with us.

Miriam Davis

September – December:

Many of the activities across our church community touch on outreach, whether formally or informally. I won't duplicate the reports by Coffee Pot and Teddy Bears, Open the Book, Messy Church, Lunch Club, Tuesday at Two, or the Community Garden, but I would like to add my thanks to all involved. Each in its way provides a space for those who are in need of community and support, and places where faith is seen in action.

The Foodbank continues to meet the needs of both parishioners and those from further afield, and is an amazing point of shared outreach and mission by the churches in Hucclecote.

Not long after I arrived, I was approached by Doreen and Philip McLellan about re-starting the warm space alongside the Foodbank. It was felt that the low take-up in previous years had been in part due to how it was named and publicised. It was therefore re-branded as 'Tea and Toast', a Wednesday morning drop-in coffee morning in the church centre kitchen between 9am and 1pm, with posters and publicity arranged. It has been wonderful to see how it has grown and flourished

as a result, popular with both existing church members, those coming to other groups like the community garden, and others from the local community seeking companionship. My deepest thanks to Doreen, Shelley, and the others who volunteer their Wednesday mornings to support this important and now thriving outreach.

Outreach with Hillview Primary School has continued with KS2 coming to church for Harvest and Christmas services. I also helped to lead a Service of Remembrance on 11<sup>th</sup> November for the Year 5 class at the War Memorial. We also had joint toddler services for Harvest and Christmas with our toddler groups and Abbeymead Under 5's. The hope is to build on these outreach opportunities to include more of the nursery settings in the parish, develop links with Dinglewell Infant and Junior Schools, and to expand beyond key festivals as opportunities and capacity allow.

Rev. Dr. Joe Mottram

## **THE HUB**

The Hucclecote Hub operates between St Philip & St James Church, Hillview Evangelical Church and Hucclecote Methodist Church. We aim to work together to promote the Christian faith across Hucclecote. This is done by working together across a number of activities. Identified below are ones which happened in 2024.

### **Christmas 2024:**

We produced a joint newsletter to go out in December to promote the various services and other activities going on in the churches.

Nativity on a Lorry. Once again members of the churches went around Hucclecote, some dressed as biblical characters, whilst others gave out sweets to local families, and generally tried to both promote the Christmas message and raise the profile of the three churches.

Members of the churches also sang Christmas carols at the Wagon & Horses pub – again seeking to promote the Christian Christmas message. Thanks to Ruth Thornton for organising the concert.

### **Hucclecote Foodbank Hub:**

Volunteers from the three churches run a hub of Gloucester Foodbank from the hall of St Philip & St James Church. We aim to provide enough food & toiletries to support individuals and families for three days. Those in need are identified by around 300 organisations who provide a voucher which can be “exchanged” for food etc. People are encouraged to collect supplies from our hub. We do run a delivery service for people who cannot travel to the hub. We normally support around twelve to fifteen people each week; some are individuals, others family groups. The Hub additionally gave out Christmas food in December to help clients.

Thanks are due to the volunteers, and also to the many members of our congregation who donate food & toiletries. Special thanks to Mike Webber from Hillview Evangelical Church who co-ordinated all the hub activities.

### **Tea and Toast:**

Over the 2023/24 winter months there was a warm space provided in the Church kitchen. This was not very successful. It was decided to “re-brand” for 2024.

After much discussion the name was changed to Tea & Toast. The “new” name was advertised widely on social media, via local newsletters etc. It operated every Wednesday morning from October to December 2024. The aim was to provide not only a hot drink etc but also to allow people who are church members, and those who are not, to engage with other people. On average 16 people attended each week.

Thanks are due to the small group of volunteers who helped to run Tea & Toast.

Philip McLellan

## MISSION TEAM

In 2024 we continued to support our five mission links from the church tithe – The Diocese of Western Tanganyika (four theological students, Lake Tanganyika Theological College in Kasulu and our link parish, Mwilanvya); OMF International and the Pawsons in Japan; Scripture Union UK and the Reaching the 95% of children and young people not in church project; Gloucester City Mission and Gloucester Foodbank.

### Japan and OMF:

- A second, very successful, 'A glimpse of Japan' event was held in church on Sat. 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2024 with a number of Japanese families from Worcester. This event drew in around 60 people and fulfilled its purpose of deepening our understanding of the culture in which our mission partners, the Pawson family are working. Another purpose was providing an opportunity to connect with many in the community who would not usually come to church.
- March 2024 saw David and Manuela Pawson with Esther, Gideon and Daniel complete four years of ministry in Japan with OMF International and return to UK and Germany for a year of Home Assignment. We had the privilege of welcoming them to Hucclecote from 10<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> May during which they shared on a number of occasions including Sundays and weekday small groups.

### Gloucester City Mission:

- In addition to our tithe, Margaret Edwards organised another Sleepout in church on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and more than £1,300 was raised through sponsorship.

### Foodbank:

- We continue to support Foodbank through our Wednesday 11-1pm Foodbank Hub, through church members who volunteer with Foodbank both locally and centrally and through individual donations. At our Harvest Festival on 20 October 2024 134.25 kilos of food was donated. This is sufficient to feed about 40 people for three days. Although the Foodbank budgeted £100,000 for food the estimated spend will be £75,000. This is partly due to increased donations of food and partly due to increased financial income.

### Tanzania:

- Two of our four LTTC students graduated and were ordained in June. We took on 2 new students in August maintaining our support for four students.
- Alison Dight hosted Bishop Ephraim from Tanzania for four days in November. He was able to meet Revd Joe, attend lunch club and visit the community garden.
- Alison and Judith Manns continued to be very active as part of the team that promotes the link with DWT on behalf of Gloucester Diocese.

### Scripture Union: Hannah Legge, Mission Enabler for the SU Central England Team.

- It proved difficult to maintain a personal contact with Hannah and in October she moved to New Zealand. It seemed timely to move our interest in children and young people's ministry to a new partnership with our city deanery Youth connector, Revd Helen Champion. Our mission tithe commitment to SU hence came to an end as 2024 closed, following the approval of PCC at their November 27<sup>th</sup> 2024 meeting.

We continued with a monthly mission slot in services on the third Sunday of each month. A big thank you to the mission team members and all who volunteered their time to help host events and to all who gave generously.

Miriam Davis, Mission Partnerships Team Chair

## 5. DISCIPLESHIP & PASTORAL CARE

### DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship takes place in a variety of contexts both formally and informally through Junior Church, Core group and four home groups (please see separate reports on each of these activities.) We are deeply appreciative of all the hard work, prayer, time and energy that the leaders and volunteers put into these groups.

We did not run any Lent or Advent courses in 2024. However, we ran the 6-week excellent Start course in April and May. The inspiration for this was a Mum from one of our toddlers' groups who expressed a desire for baptism for herself and children. It was also an opportunity to invite Messy Church adult contacts and parents of children who were being brought for baptism. While there was no take up from baptism families, Margaret Edwards and I welcomed a group of up to six participants (including one observer from Hillview Church) during the course. In the autumn, we were delighted to go through the 7-session follow-up course 'Moving On' with 2 of the mums from 'Start'. 'Moving On' focuses on aspects of life as a Christian – church, prayer, Bible reading, fellowship etc -and was challenging in its content. But both courses are easily accessible and the video material is well presented and engaging. It is to be hoped that these courses can be used again in future. A very big thanks to Margaret for her support throughout.

Revd Miriam Davis

### HOME GROUPS

Four home groups met regularly for bible study and fellowship throughout 2024. Three groups met in the evening – two on Thursdays and one on Tuesday. One Thursday group and the Tuesday group met on zoom with an occasional in-person social. The Wednesday afternoon group met at 2:30 in the Church Centre Kitchen.

**The Tuesday evening group on Zoom:** 'In 2024 our home group studied the following:

1. Philippians for Everyone by Tom Wright which we found very accessible.
2. Encountering the Risen Christ by Mark Bradford, which we found very helpful, a book you would want to come back to a number of times as there was so much in it to take on board.
3. In between we also did some sessions as a follow up on the Sunday service sermons, and sessions on Advent in December.

We also restarted sharing the leading of the sessions. We visited Mike and Joy Noah in Malmesbury for a tea party in July. We also met socially for tea parties at Jane Stock's and enjoyed a Christmas meal at the pub. (contribution by Chris and Dianne Brookes).'

**The Wednesday group** was appreciated by its seven members. We aimed to meet for an hour only and continued studies in the gospel of John and then the letters of John through to summer. On a couple of occasions, we used the Lectio Divina approach to our Bible passage and this was much appreciated. A variety of resources were used in the autumn with Advent studies at the end of the year. The group had a summer tea-time social inviting others and in December we visited Pam Henning to sing carols.

**The Thursday evening group at Rachel Cooke's home:** 'We met on Thursday evenings 8-10pm. The group at present consists of Paul Springham, Chris Scourfield, Sue Lyon, Steve Plant, Brian Trott and myself. During 2024 we have lost Ruth Holman (moved to a care home) and Phil Rodford. Both were valuable members of our group and are greatly missed—Ruth especially for her outstanding knowledge of the Bible and Phil for his long friendship and valuable contributions to discussions. Phil, Paul Springham and myself had been together since Spring 1995 when the Home Group was formed after completing the Alpha course. Phil's death was unexpected and a shock and we miss him. We have used booklets—often Cover to Cover booklets-- on Romans, Isaiah and Luke. We start each meeting with updates on all things going on in our lives, friends and families while enjoying a coffee and open with a short prayer time before starting the Bible Study. The fellowship we share is really important to us all as we pray for each other and support



each other in prayer. We always end with prayer-- hopefully for 10 minutes, but discussion time on the study sometimes dictates this (contribution by Rachel Cooke.)

**Thursday evening group on Zoom:** 'We have 6 active members. In 2024 we studied studies in Isaiah: The Sermon on the Mount (C. Leonard); a study book called 'Encountering the risen Christ' and 'Advent Journey to Christmas.' Some of the things the members appreciated about the group were as follows: 'It's good to get different views on things I wouldn't necessarily have thought of myself;' 'I appreciated the fellowship within the group and everyone's concern for each other;' 'I appreciated the prayer time and sharing things of concern;' 'I appreciate the confidentiality within the group, and being able to text/email urgent prayer requests at other times too;' 'I found it very helpful sharing leading the studies with several others.' (Contribution from Marion Cook)

A big thanks to all our group leaders. All groups are open to newcomers and are a great way of supporting one another and deepening our faith. Please speak to Miriam if you are interested in joining a group. We add regularly to the Bible study resources for home groups (also great for individual use) on the shelves in the outer office of the Stone Building, and anyone is welcome to borrow these for personal or group use.

Miriam Davis

## **PASTORAL CARE**

The Pastoral Care Team has been in existence for three years and although it is a small team, it is a very caring and dedicated group. There are several groups and activities happening within the Church life and the leaders of those groups are responsible for the care of their members.

The Pastoral Care Team aims to keep people feeling loved and connected with church life when members are not able to attend either through illness, frailty or general circumstances either temporarily or permanently. Several church members have had spells in hospital this last year and visits have been made to different hospitals across the county. Holy Communion can be taken to members who request it, at home or in hospital. Several much loved and key members of our church family died in 2024, some unexpectedly. They are each greatly missed.

Everyone in the Church has a role to play in pastoral care and can care/phone/visit people who have not been to church or are in need. Please let Miriam or Pat know if you are doing this.

All members of the fellowship are encouraged to love, care for and support each other. This is our church family and sometimes people who are attending week by week need a caring ear.

We continue to knit the small "prayer squares", embossed with a cross, that we give to our members that we visit, together with a note reminding them of God's love and our prayers.

We also contact bereaved families after a funeral service has taken place in the parish and on the first anniversary of the death. We attend the annual memorial service, being available to pray with anyone and giving the prayer squares.

Pastoral care is a privilege and a great joy getting to know members of our fellowship in greater depth, hearing the wonderful stories of their childhoods and youth. The team is dedicated and committed. Please pray that God will lead our actions/visits/words/prayers, that we may be sensitive to the needs of the people being visited and their partners and that we may have the gift of love and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Pat Dabbs - Coordinator

## **6. FACILITIES & BUILDINGS**

### **GROUND AND BUILDINGS**

Stone Building, Church Centre, Youth Centre, Gordon Rooms & Site.

#### **Church Centre**

The church centre is in need of a major overhaul inside and out.

Prior to the licensing service we painted the south door, the surrounding external wall and window frames and the rail to improve its appearance.

PAT Testing of the electrical appliances in the Kitchen resulted in several failed tests, we had to purchase two new kettles and a microwave.

#### **Stone Building**

The Stone Building is in fairly good condition. Externally we have painted the window frames on the south and east walls. The lime plaster on one wall in the church office was in a very poor state, so we cut out the plaster back to the stonework and brought in a lime plasterer to replaster that section of the wall. Subsequently we repainted the wall with Potmolen paint. The office is now looking much improved.

#### **Youth Centre**

Following concerns raised by the PCC, a structural survey of the Youth Centre and Gordon Rooms was carried out in January by a surveyor with experience of Horsa buildings. The life of the buildings has been well exceeded. The surveyor advised that in his view the buildings are still usable but they have a limited life. While there is no immediate danger, the surveyor advised that the risk would be increased in the event of a heavy snowfall in which case the buildings should not be used. The surveyor recommended planning for their replacement in 10-15 years, providing that recommended maintenance work is carried out in the meantime.

Based on the surveyor's report we carried out a detailed inspection of the building and compiled a list of repairs. Following approval by PCC we have started on the repairs, initially with items we could do ourselves at low cost. More than half of the windows on east wall have since been caulked. Spalling has been removed on one of the external uprights and the steel treated. However there remains a lot to be done.

Following repeated breakdown of the boiler, PCC agreed to purchase a new gas boiler which was installed by Gloucester Gas Services in April. AU5 Playgroup are very pleased to have reliable heating and hot water.

A faulty electric socket has been replaced. We repainted the staff toilet floor. We had problems with a squirrel who tried to set up home in the youth centre and Gordon Rooms roof space, so we installed more galvanised wire netting in the ventilation gap. We also had a problem with the east gutter overflowing in heavy rain and a leak in the roof. The gutter, downpipe and drain have been cleared and the roof has been repaired.

#### **Gordon Rooms**

The Gordon Rooms are in worse condition than the Youth Centre, and much work needs to be done. We receive an income from the building as Sportily hire the main hall to store their sporting equipment. They reported rain coming through into the hall after heavy rain. Two broken panes of glass have been replaced to stop the leak. The former caretaker's office has been cleaned up and scrap removed so it can be used as a tool room. Sportily have requested additional space but we haven't been able to do this yet.

#### **Site**

The annual boiler service has been carried out for the church, stone building and church centre. The annual fire extinguisher service has been carried out across all buildings. Water testing has been carried out across the site.

#### **Grounds**

Grass cutting has been carried out by Greenfields regularly from March, but because of heavy rain early in the year the grass was overgrown quite quickly and we received complaints. The garden of remembrance has been maintained. The

churchyard hedge was cut back in January by Greenfields. Following a complaint from a family member about a hidden gravestone, the north hedge has been cut back further and memorial stones under the hedge have been trimmed. Working parties were carried out twice in the year and a lot of foliage removed.

The garden around the Stone Building and the peace garden border have both been cut back and tidied up. Work has been carried out to strengthen the peace garden fence posts following a complaint from a neighbour. The area between the Horsa buildings has also been tidied up and a tree stump removed.

Work is required to cut back the lower branches of the yew trees where they overhang gravestones.

### **Team**

The Grounds and Buildings team consists of Tom Brown, Kevin Hobbs, Steve Plant and Chris Brookes, and recently Joe has joined our meetings. Many thanks to Graham White who stood down in the year, and to Tom who has handed over leading the team, for their commitment and expert knowledge. We welcome new members to join us, whatever your experience, you will be greatly valued.

Chris Brookes, Grounds and Buildings Team Chair

## **7. ADMINISTRATION**

### **STAFFING**

We currently have just one paid member of staff, our Church Administrator Louisa Scrivener, to whom we all remain extremely grateful for her loyal and dedicated service. 2024 was a challenging year for Louisa as she had to cope with the extra work in preparation for the Interview day for the candidates to be our new Priest-in-Charge. Then once appointed, it was again another busy time to get out all the invitations sent out and the administration done for the Licensing and Installation service in September. Louisa coped with all these new and sometimes daunting tasks so well, with her usual calm demeanour and everything went very smoothly. Louisa is an asset to the smooth running of all our church services and activities and is so pleasant as our “public face” of St Philip & St James, both in person to callers at the Church Office and also during phone calls. Huge thanks to you, Louisa.

We are also very grateful to all who serve in voluntary capacities to enable St Philip & St James Church to function, but we must acknowledge that many of our volunteers are ageing. While they are currently still able to do all the necessary tasks, we need to plan for succession, and have new volunteers shadow during the next few years, so the transition will be a smooth one. Thank you to all volunteers for all you do.

Margaret Edwards for PCC

## **8. SOCIAL & FELLOWSHIP**

### **COMMUNICATION**

We have worked hard this year to continue to raise our profile in the community.

Our team account on Canva has proved successful and we have been able to produce prominent posters in order to publicise events and services throughout the year. These posters are displayed around the church grounds, as well as being published on our Facebook and Instagram pages. Miriam updates our social media with regular posts, which ensure our pages continue to appear on users’ feeds and keep us known. Posts are regularly forwarded to three local Facebook

noticeboards – What's On in Hucclecote, Hucclecote Noticeboard, Hucclecote Community Group, the Hucclecote Hub (the three Hucclecote churches) and when appropriate to the Events in the Diocese of Gloucester page.

Once our church profile on A Church Near You (ACNY) got up and running, we cancelled our subscription on our original website. Web traffic is now directed straight to ACNY and this is our sole webpage. This has made it easier to ensure that all information is kept up to date and relevant, and has also saved us money, due to ACNY being free for churches and we no longer need to pay the cost of our previous website domain.

A weekly notice sheet continues to be created, which includes the readings for the forthcoming service, a prayer list, weekly calendar of events and details of regular groups. This is printed for church and emailed to our church distribution list.

We currently have around 100 people signed up to our email distribution list. As well as the weekly notice sheet, which is sent each Friday, we also regularly send out our posters for events and services and any other relevant information about our church or our mission partners, thus ensuring regular contact is made with these members of the church, and wider community.

Joe, Miriam and Jane Stock met in November and created a plan of action around communication via ACNY. Jane is now writing news articles about the church and these are then posted onto ACNY. A write up about the Gloucester Foodbank was shared in October, and an article regarding Advent was posted in December. Further news reports are planned for 2025.

Work continues into the next year to ensure we remain well-known in the community, and up-to-date and relevant with our communication methods.

Louisa Scrivener

## **CHURCH FLOWERS**

We continue to arrange flowers in church each week and have been blessed with two new members joining the team this year– Katherine Robinson and Pelagia (Peggy) Maenzanise.

Although we only had one Wedding last year, which we enjoyed doing, we still of course arranged flowers for special occasions such as Easter, Harvest, Christmas and 70 Mothering Sunday Posies as well as arrangements in memory of loved ones, when requested.

Thanks to all who give donations to the flower fund, with the cost of flowers increasing, it is much appreciated, and a big 'thank you' to the whole team who willingly give up their time to enhance our beautiful church.

Jenny Barton

## **LUNCH CLUB**

Lunch Club met on twenty-two Thursdays during 2024, serving a total of 432 meals to our happy and appreciative group of guests! The meal is always preceded by the saying or singing grace and that has even been spoken in Japanese and when we welcomed Bishop Ephraim from Tanzania, in Swahili!

Not only are the guests so appreciative but so also are their supporting family members, who frequently call voicing their grateful thanks for the love, care and the opportunity to get out, to meet and share a meal and fellowship together.

As always, guests have received birthday cards, Easter and Christmas cards, and have been kept in touch with what else is happening in our church.

In December the choir from Hillview Primary School came to entertain and lead us in the singing of Christmas carols, when guests and team members sat down to enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner.

My grateful thanks to all the Lunch Club team who work so well together.

Margaret Wenham on behalf of the Lunch Club team

## **TUESDAY @ TWO**

Tuesday @ Two has met twice monthly throughout the year with an ever-increasing number coming to join together in an afternoon of fun and fellowship whilst enjoying playing cards and board games. On some tables there has been quiet concentration while others have become quite excited!

The afternoon always finishes with everyone sitting down together, chatting and enjoying a welcome cup of tea and slice of home-made cake.

Newcomers are always welcome.

Margaret & Philip Wenham

## **HUCCLECOTE COMMUNITY GARDEN**

2024 saw the completion of some major projects in the garden. The first was Phase Two of the refurbishment of The Cottage. Alan made and fitted a wheelchair-wide door; Dave Limbrick rendered the exterior walls, and installed solar and mains power, and a kitchenette; and Marilyn Sharland painted the outside. The Cottage is a marvellous addition to the garden, offering shelter in inclement weather and, most importantly, being a place of companionship and chat. It is much used and valued.

Another major project was to lay a seating area near the entrance. Phil Rodford started us off by hiring a digger to mark out the area, and two local neighbours donated their annual 'volunteer' day from their respective companies to help dig and lay the foundations. Another volunteer was able to source a whacker plate. But we needed professional help to lay the bricks, and this was provided by local company Greenfields. The patio looks splendid, and is ready to be well used for years to come.

A third major project was the development of a wood-carving workshop in the double garage. This has been spearheaded by David Shale, and a small group of men are meeting there each Tuesday and Thursday. The workshop is a work in progress, but tools, work benches and battery lighting are in place, and beautiful walking sticks are being hand carved there under David's tutelage.

A significant development was an extension to the garden on the west side as the adjoining bungalow was sold. The boundary fence was repositioned, creating enough space to develop a flower garden.

In keeping with our ethos to be as self-sufficient and environmentally friendly as possible, two 1000-litre tanks (recycled food containers) were installed. This means that no mains water is used on the garden.

Our first plant sale in May was a great success. We welcomed over seventy people who clearly loved their visit, and the tea and cakes that were provided. For a second year we arranged a family event in August; but on a bigger scale than in

2023. As well as the sale of garden produce, plants, jams and preserves, we had a musical interlude, a children's story and other activities, a bric-à-brac sale, an 'Ask the gardening expert' facility, and a demonstration of how to make a walking stick in the workshop, plus tea and cakes. Once again, we were well supported by the local community – over a hundred people came – and the two events meant that we were able to raise funds for our ongoing projects. More significantly, our number of volunteers has increased as the garden is becoming better known.

In November we were delighted to welcome Bishop Ephraim of Lake Rukwa diocese, Tanzania, on a visit to Gloucester after a conference in Canterbury. He insisted on doing some work! On the last day before closing for the winter, we held a Christmas wreath-making event, led by Emma Crofts, Social Prescriber at Hucclecote Surgery. In the bitter cold, we still had several who came along to join in the fun.

Amidst all the progress and joy, the year was tinged with sadness at the loss of Phil. A faithful friend to the garden from the beginning, he was always ready to help, give advice, and contribute in any way he could. We miss him terribly.

Alison Dight, Alan Preece