



**Annual Trustees Report
for 2023/24
for the Parish of
St. Stephen's, Chatham**

**Prepared for the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
of St. Stephen's Church
24th April 2024**

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Appendices

- I. Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 24th April 2024**
- II. Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 26th April 2023**

1. Reference and Administrative Information

The Church Representation Rules (Rule 9(1) (b)) require 'an annual report on the proceedings of the parochial church council and the activities of the parish generally' to be received by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM).

Parish of St. Stephen's, Chatham

Incumbent: Revd. Barry Linney
55 Pattens Lane
CHATHAM
Kent
ME4 6JR

The Parochial Church Council

St. Stephen's Church
Maidstone Road
CHATHAM
Kent
ME4 6JE

Place of Worship

St. Stephen's Church
Maidstone Road
CHATHAM
Kent
ME4 6JE

Bankers for St. Stephen's Church:

CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

Independent Examiner:

Mr C Clemence
246 City Way
ROCHESTER
Kent
ME1 2BN

Parish Administrator

Mrs Tracey Pavan

PCC Membership 2023/24

Ex-officio:-	Revd Barry Linney Carole White (Church Warden, retiring 2025) Helen Masters (Deanery Synod, retiring 2026) Nigel Rawlins (Deanery Synod, retiring 2026)
Elected Membership:-	Keith Price (retiring 2025) David Parry - Treasurer (retiring 2026) Laura Woods (retiring 2024) Catherine Linney (retiring 2024) Sophie Tanner (retiring 2024)
Co-opted:	Catherine Cave
Other:-	Wendy Tanner (Secretary)

2. Structure, governance and management

(a) Organisation of the PCC

Since the last APCM there have been six Regular PCC meetings and no Extraordinary meetings.

(b) Main Sub-Committees are as follows

Worship	Provides an overview of services and makes suggestions concerning format.
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Ministry Team	Those operating with a license from the Bishop are: Licensed Lay Ministers Helen Beaney Christine Caldecourt The Ministry Team reports to the Worship Committee.
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Reader Emeritus	Muriel Treacher
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Children & Youth	Responsible for Sunday Club and the activities of children and young people within the Church.
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Events	Oversight of Mission and Evangelism activities within and beyond the parish with a focus on events.
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Social	Organises St. Stephen's social events. The Social Committee reports to the Finance Committee.
Fabric	Responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the church and the annexe.
Finance	Day to day running and long-term management of the church's finances.
Liturgical Review	Reviews the liturgical life of the church and reports to the Worship Committee.

3. Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral Roll was revised ahead of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. There are currently 120 people on the Electoral Roll (120 in 2022/23)

4. Annual Report of the proceedings of the PCC 2023/24

PCC discussed the format of its meetings throughout the year and agreed to keep to six meetings, with the July meeting as a social event. It was also agreed to start PCC meetings at 7.30pm rather than 8pm.

It has been noted that 2026 will be the 40th anniversary of the creation of the close link between St. Stephen's and the Church in Wesseling in Germany. During the pandemic it has not been possible for members of the congregations to meet. A brief visit was arranged in the Autumn of 2022 and ideas for the anniversary are being discussed.

Amherst Court had made a request that, in the event of any necessary evacuation of residents, that St Stephen's Church could be their 'safe place'. PCC agreed to this request and Amherst Court have contact details should the need arise.

An 'Away Time' took place on the weekend of 27th/28th January at Ladywell Franciscan Centre in Godalming, Surrey attended by a good number of the congregation. We would look to hold a full weekend away (Fri/Sat/Sun) every three or four years and a Sat/Sun every year; also, the option of an Away Day somewhere more local.

Revd Linney will be taking Extended Ministerial Development Leave in June, July and August 2024; he is currently working on a programme to include visits to both

Christian and non-Christian retreat centres to look at how these centres and leaders build character, develop values and form community. Members of clergy from the Archdeacon's list are in place for this period of absence for both Sunday and Wednesday services at St Stephen's.

During Revd Linney's absence, John Chapman has been appointed Deputy Church Warden, to assist Carole White in any decision-making process, with the support of the PCC.

A number of the congregation are now receiving communion in their pews which can take time and add some logistical pressures. In addition to already authorised chalice assistants the PCC authorised additional personnel; the total list is now: Ann Ruby, Sue Chapman, Keith Price, Alan Minnerthey, Nigel Rawlins, Christine Caldecourt, John Chapman, Helen Beaney, Helen Masters, Carole Reynolds, Helen Hopkins, Denise Jukes, Bec Parry, Joyce Adeluola.

It has been noted that a number of people struggle to get up the steps to the main altar to take Communion. PCC are currently discussing the possible installation of a removable handrail and are looking at options and costs.

PCC also agreed that new curtains in the Hall would be purchased, the old ones having been up for around 25 years; samples have been received and congregation asked for their views.

The new altar handrail and hall curtains would be paid for from a legacy received during the year.

The Carol Service at the DECC was reinstated in December 2023 and well attended.

The AV system is working well on the whole, although we experienced crackles from the left-hand side speaker for some months; this turned out to be an issue with a lead in the back of the speaker and has now been resolved.

A low turnout for 'Warm Spaces' during January, February and March 2023 meant that this was not re-instated for 2024.

The PCC have met six times since the last APCM. These have all been Regular PCC meetings: 22nd May 2023, 18th July 2023, 28th September 2023, 21st November 2023, 24th January 2024 and 21st March 2024.

5. Stewardship Committee and Gift Aid

Thank you to everyone who is able to support the work of St. Stephen's by giving regularly.

During the year, 61 members of the congregation participated in the various planned giving schemes; of these, 45 people were able to give tax efficiently by Gift Aid or Give As You Earn (Charities Aid Foundation).

Successful claims to HMRC for refunds were made in March for Gift Aid and in June for Gift Aid Small Donations (for the tax year 2022/23)

The Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme allows the church to claim back from HMRC an amount equivalent to Gift Aid on a proportion of our collections given in cash if we meet certain conditions and have the records to back up our claim.

6. Fabric, goods and ornaments

Since the last APCM in April 2023 the following work has been completed.

Church Building

- The lightning conductor system was tested and found to be satisfactory.
- Annual testing of our portable electrical appliances (PAT) was carried out in October. There were no failures.
- Annual inspection and servicing of the fire extinguishers was carried out.
- Gutters around the church and annexe were cleared of leaves and standing water.
- The under-sink water heater in the Pastoral Room kitchen developed a leak and was replaced.
- A leak in the flat roof over the southeast corner of the church behind the organ was located and repaired.

Quinquennial work

- All the areas of flat roof over the church and on both towers, were treated with Cromar Acrypol plus, a waterproof and solar reflective sealant. Damaged bitumen felt flashings were replaced.

Annexe

- Maintenance of the wheelchair lift was carried out in two six monthly visits by Kinetic Lift Services.
- Annual inspection and servicing of the fire extinguishers was carried out.
- Fire alarms and emergency lighting were inspected and serviced.
- Annual testing of our portable electrical appliances (PAT) was carried out in October. There were no failures.
- In December, the extractor fans in the male and female toilets were found to have stopped working and were replaced.
- In January this year, the annexe heating boiler, which was 27 years old, was replaced. The new boiler enables all areas of the annexe to be heated at the same time.
- Also in January, the push bar on the panic bolt to the fire escape door in the hall sheared off, and a new panic bolt was fitted. The faulty panic bolt on the fire door at the end of the corridor was also replaced.

Church Grounds

- Grass cutting continued to be carried out in 2023. We have appealed for volunteers for this year's rota. Many thanks to Geoff Gosling, David Gibbons, Nigel Rawlins, Vimbai and family, and Patrick Gilroy for volunteering in 2023.
- In December, a working party cleared the grounds of leaves and debris.

Goods and Ornaments

- Generally, the church goods and ornaments remain in a good state of repair.

The Church Property Register has been checked and updated where necessary.

7 Deanery Synod

At the APCM Meeting on 26th April 2023, Nigel Rawlins and Helen Masters were elected as St Stephen's Deanery Synod members from 1st July 2023 until 31st May 2026.

The Deanery Synod met on 19th July 2023, 11th October 2023 and 1st February 2024

In July, Julia Burton Jones had given a presentation about Anna Chaplaincy – its history and how it has grown. A number of Friends and Chaplains are in place in the Diocese to provide spiritual care for the elderly.

A new Lay Chair for the Deanery Synod was needed following the resignation of Roben Mills. Roben was thanked for his service. Chris Bostock was the only nomination and was duly elected.

In October the meeting discussed an issue raised at The General Synod regarding identity, sexuality and marriage within church and discussed what it means to live in love and faith in the church; discussion around ordination of women priests, gay marriage and how to resolve any issue surrounding these; Church of England has not been able to resolve some of these issues as yet as a number of legal rules need to be addressed.

Paul Filmer retiring on 30th June 2024; Ruth Pryke to be priested and a new role for Chris Dench.

It was reported that the Cathedral was hosting the Fenland Oak Table and the Creative Threads exhibition.

St John's Church in Chatham has temporarily moved to the Emmaus Centre whilst repairs are being undertaken

The February meeting had a presentation about prison chaplaincy and the support and involvement of the Mothers Union. MU have an important role in supporting prisoners at times of crisis, e.g. bereavement, and provide small gifts at Christmas. It is greatly appreciated by inmates as they may not receive anything else.

8 Safeguarding Report

The Parish Administrator oversees a central register of all members of the congregation who are required to undertake safeguard training and DBS checks. Safeguard training is undertaken at different levels, dependent on the role within church. The Parish Administrator issues training and ensures completion as required. Below is the number of people who have completed courses this year:

- Foundation: 4
- Basic Awareness: 4
- Leadership: 0
- Level 3: 0
- Raising awareness of domestic abuse: 1
- Safer Recruitment and People: 2

DBS checks are in place and updated as required. All members of the PCC are required to have Enhanced DBS Certificates in place along with Awareness of Domestic Abuse

Nigel Rawlins is St Stephen's Parish Safeguarding Officer, having taken over this role from Nicky Coates in November 2023. As a PCC and congregation, we need to ensure we pass on any safeguarding concerns to Revd Linney, Nigel Rawlins, our Safeguard Lead, or to the Diocese directly.

The Church's Safeguarding Policy – Promoting a Safer Church was adopted for the year on 24th May 2023

Revd Linney confirmed that he was unaware of any safeguarding issues.

9 Risk Management

Throughout 2023/24, we have continued to monitor all our activities in order to minimise any instances of risk.

Signed  **Date:** 7th April 2024
Reverend Barry J Linney, Vicar

Signed: **Carole White** **Date:** 7th April 2024
Carole White, Church Warden

Signed: **Wendy Tanner** **Date:** 7th April 2024
Wendy Tanner, Secretary to the Parochial Church Council