

Diss Team
Ministry

Diss

ST MARY THE VIRGIN, DISS
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31st DECEMBER 2023

The PCC is a registered charity No. 1134118

Administrative Information

St. Mary's Church is situated in Mount Street, Diss and is part of the Diss Team Ministry in the Diocese of Norwich within the Church of England and in the Deanery of Redenhall.

The correspondence address is: St. Mary's Church
Mount Street, Diss IP22 4QG
Telephone: 01379 643783

Incumbent Vacant

Team Vicar The Reverend John Cruse
The Vicarage, 61 Roydon Road, Diss, IP22 4LW
Telephone 01379 641259

Assistant Priest The Reverend Maggie Swayze
32 Croft Lane, Diss, IP22 4NA
Telephone 01379 644701

Team Administrator
The Parish Office, St Mary's Church,
Mount Street, Diss IP22 4QG
Telephone 01379 643783

PCC Members who have served from 1st January 2023 until the date this report was approved are:

Team Vicar	The Reverend John Cruse	(ex officio)	
Curate	The Reverend Samuel Thorp	(ex officio)	Until 23.04.23
Assistant Priest	The Reverend Maggie Swayze	(ex officio)	
LLMs:	Dr Sue Drake	(ex officio)	
	Ms Janice Cruse	(ex officio)	
Wardens:	Mrs Janet Blight	(ex officio)	Until 23.04.23
	Miss Ingrid Scheider	(ex officio)	From 23.04.23
	Mr. Ronald Wheeler	(ex officio)	From 23.04.23
Secretary:	Mrs Sylvia Grace		
Treasurer:	Mrs. Yvonne Gooch		Until 23.04.23
	Mr. Neal Gooch		From 23.04.23
Representatives on the Deanery Synod:	Ms Janice Cruse		Until 23.04.23
	Mrs. Melanie Cowley		From 23.04.23 (Resigned Feb.23)

Elected Members (until APCM 2024)

Mrs Jan Fearn (until 23.04.23), Mr. Neal Gooch, Mrs Yvonne Gooch (until 23.04.23)
Mrs. Janet Blight (from 23.04.23), Mrs. Lesley Morris, Miss Eleanor Parker,
Miss Myra Pinnell (from 23.04.23)

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

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

The PCC operates normally, meeting seven times during the year.

A standing committee is required by law. Its statutory members are the Rector, the Vicar, the two Churchwardens, the Administrator and the Treasurer. This committee has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Church Attendance

The Electoral Roll at the end of 2023 stood at 97.

Review of the Year

The PCC met seven times during the year.

Sylvia Grace, Secretary

Churchwarden Report 2023

Two new Church Wardens were elected in 2023 but were not appointed until July 2023. We have therefore itemized the changes made after the appointments.

- The Cupola and its roof was repaired as rain leaked onto the clock mechanism and bells etc. This work cost £2,420.00
- The Church roof and Church hall roof were repaired. The rear corridor in the Hall has been neglected and subsequently the outside has rotted in places. This work will be completed when the weather has dried the wood. The total cost will be £6,675.00.
- A well qualified builder will inspect the Church and extension (roofs) on an annual basis at a cost of £400.00. This means we no longer require a Window Cleaner to wash the roof which only blocked the guttering. This will save a cost of £1,250 annually.
- The clock on the Church tower has had estimates to be repaired. Subsequently fund raising was implemented and a Grant was applied for. A Grant has been obtained for £8,000.00 and the other £8,000.00 has been raised and promised. The clock is planned to be repaired in 2024.
- A new Ricoh photo copier has been installed which is far superior to the previous model. The monthly cost is approximately the same as for the previous model.

We believe the work already carried out and those proposed will be of benefit to the Church and its financial situation and as Church Wardens we look forward to serving in 2024.

Ron Wheeler & Ingrid Scheider
Church Wardens

Financial Review

2023 was a very tough year for the parish.

Our Bank, Barclays, requires two approvals for every transaction. Sadly, we dropped down to one recognised signature so for the last few months have not been able to make transactions. We had been trying to get new signatories approved by Barclays for many months and they have lost paperwork, rejected it for mistakes made by their staff and changed requirements. For example, it took 3 attempts for them to accept my identity documents. We are now making progress on resolving this issue as I did eventually get through to someone who had enough common sense to explain the changes in requirements (that were never published) and guide me through the modified requirements. These issues are not unique to St Mary's and have been mentioned in the national press on more than one occasion. I also understand that other parishes within the Benefice have had similar issues with other banks.

Our main items of expenditure were utility bills and Parish Share. The gas bills for Winter 2023/24 have been substantially reduced as a new one-year extension to the contract with British Gas Lite was agreed late in 2023 at much lower rates. The rates are still high so heating levels must continue to be kept to a minimum. We do expect to be able secure lower rates again when the current contract expires late in 2024.

The Parish Share agreed to was £67,000 for the year. By the end of October 2023, we had paid £46,200, which equates to 69%. During the last PCC meeting for 2023 it was agreed that we would make a final payment to at least 75%. Sadly, the loss of signatories with Barclays prevented this from happening.

Regular giving reduced slightly from the previous year to just short of £50,000. This is significantly less than our Parish Share on its own without considering all our other running costs.

New bell ropes have been ordered largely paid for by monies donated by the Bell Ringing team and the resulting Gift Aid. The bill for these will arrive during 2024.

The annual accounts show an excess of income over expenditure of nearly £12,600. This gives the wrong impression as, had we operational control of our bank accounts most of this would have been paid in Parish Share. Even if we had paid all of this to Parish Share, we would still have been over £8000 short.

Neal Gooch
Diss PCC Treasurer

Bankers

Barclays Business Banking, Barclays, Leicester, LE87 2BB

Independent Examiner

Mark Johnstone, Argents

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of this Church to hold in reserves the equivalent of two months general running costs and an additional one month's salary costs. It is also the policy of this Church to hold an amount for likely works that may arise as a result of the next quinquennial inspection.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Notes for Information:

1. The Charities Act 2011 requires charities to have a purpose in holding onto money. A reserves policy shows the purpose for which reserves are held.
2. The reserves are maintained as part of St Mary's investments held in CCLA, the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund

Risk Analysis

This note summarises the key risks to the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Diss, and the steps taken to manage them.

(a) Financial Risks

The church is exposed to financial risk through its financial assets. The key risk is the loss of financial assets resulting in the Parochial Church Council becoming unable to meet its financial obligations necessary to maintain the Church as a viable centre of Anglican Worship in Diss.

The Parochial Church Council during 2015 authorised the Treasurer to relocate all suitable financial reserves to accounts operated under the auspices of the Central Board of Finance.


The Parochial Church Council considers that existing internal controls on the management of cash collections, gifts and other similar monetary amounts are adequate to ensure that these are handled in a safe and professional manner.

(b) Statutory and Operational Risks

Diss Parochial Church Council manages other risks to which it may be exposed:

- By compliance with all relevant legislation
- By the purchase of adequate property and other relevant insurance covers through a scheme operated by the Diocese of Norwich and underwritten by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group
- By the carrying out of suitable risk assessments and the implementation of appropriate risk management strategies to minimise risks to employees and third parties using the facilities at St Mary’s Church and to reduce the possibility of asset damage or loss.

Approved by the PCC on 2024
Signed on their behalf by Ingrid Scheider (PCC Chair)

Signed.....

Receipts and Payments Account

Diss Parochial Church Council – 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

Income	2023	2022	Expenditure	2023	2022
Barclays Bank Loyalty	55.01	50.29	Bank Charges	380.95	366.39
CH Bookings	2,675.00	2,880.00	Break-In Repairs	565.00	0.00
Charitable Shopping Online	37.46	22.63	CH Kitchen	90.27	461.10
Covenants and Gift Aid	37,622.00	40,231.00	CH Wages	3,252.00	2,847.00
Diss Parochial Charity Income	10,000.00	10,000.00	Church Running Expenses - Cleaning	400.99	501.05
Dividends Received - Restricted	107.08	106.49	Church Running Expenses - Electricity	2,248.16	2,681.10
Dividends Received - Unrestricted	3,304.52	3,286.33	Church Running Expenses - Gas	12,502.49	12,607.84
Donations - Restricted	3,000.00	250.00	Church Running Expenses - Insurance	7,009.40	6,531.75
Donations - Restricted Bell Ropes	820.00	0.00	Church Running Expenses - Maintenance	1,300.38	4,694.86
Donations - Restricted Clock	731.00	0.00	Church Running Expenses - Services	1,187.81	1,192.39
Donations - Unrestricted	4,815.33	2,134.02	Church Running Expenses - Social Activities	0.00	150.00
Fees for Church Heating	2,305.00	2,170.00	Clergy Expenses	34.20	0.00
Fees to PCC	2,574.00	3,178.00	Computer Costs	640.23	1,323.63
Fund Raising - Concerts & Other	640.30	1,127.12	Grants to Charities - Home Missions	120.00	120.00
Fund Raising - Fetes	401.60	0.00	Grants to Charities - Secular	40.00	40.00
Fund Raising - Mini Market	1,615.51	1,628.97	Honorarium - Organist	4,863.75	4,250.00
Fund Raising Sales	0.00	156.20	NI Employer Contributions	0.00	8.00
Funeral Collections	130.00	32.50	Parish Share	46,200.00	64,275.00
Funeral Donation to Organ	110.00	105.00	Printing & Stationery	1,110.88	1,088.86
Grants	1,500.00	0.00	Rectory Mower Maintenance	8.70	861.21
Interest Received - Restricted	100.51	10.23	Salaries & Honorarium - Administrator	6,897.00	5,500.00
Interest Received - Unrestricted	2,615.87	1,161.47	Salaries & Honorarium - Verger	625.00	750.00
Kitchen	238.02	135.30	Samuel Leaving Collection Payout	563.00	0.00
Legacies	500.00	10,238.75	Sundries	512.00	744.00
Office Costs Contribution	4,109.82	3,626.33	Telephone & Internet	3,613.63	3,047.53
Organ/Choir	80.00	0.00	Training Costs	150.00	0.00
Refund for Purchases made on behalf	106.14	13.94			
Rent Received	300.00	300.00			
Samuel Leaving Collection	563.00	0.00			
Sunday Collections	1,977.37	3,309.54			
Tax Refund	12,377.20	13,273.46			
Unconvenanted Gifts	10,156.30	11,182.92			
Use of Church Building	350.00	50.00			
Wall Box - FWO	994.28	1,411.04			
Weekday Collections	0.00	388.87			
TOTAL INCOME	106,912.32	112,460.40	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	94,315.84	114,041.71
			EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	12,596.48	(1,581.31)

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Cash Funds	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	2022
Barclays Current Account	16,703.63		16,703.63	10519.60
Barclays BPA Fabric		1,884.59	1,884.59	1760.25
Barclays Restricted Funds				
Bells		1,119.60	295.05	
Flowers		1,057.95	1168.29	
Organ		6,840.12	7036.24	
Choir Robes		375.55	372.01	
			9,393.22	8871.59
CBF Rector & Churchwardens	5,728.24		5,728.24	5,550.36
CBF Victoria Hall *	75,658.09		75,658.09	70,069.51
Receivables net	0.00		0.00	0.00
	<u>98,089.96</u>	<u>11,277.81</u>	<u>109,367.77</u>	<u>96771.31</u>

* includes £5,000 held for vestments (from restricted legacy)

As at 31 December 2022

Investments	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	2022
CBF Investment Fund (Victoria Hall)*		120,893.14	120,893.14	110,414.27
CBF Investment Fund (Fabric Shares)		3,917.50	3,917.50	3,577.93
CBF Fixed Interest Fund (Old Church Hall)	7,141.36		7,141.36	6,739.76
Land at Roydon Fen*	21,500.00		21,500.00	21,500.00
	<u>28,641.36</u>	<u>124,810.64</u>	<u>153,452.00</u>	<u>142,231.96</u>

* See Notes 2, 8 and 6

The attached notes form part of these financial statements

Total Funds	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	2022
	126,731.32	136,088.45	262,819.77	239,003.27
Movement on Reserves				
Opening Reserves	239,003.27			
Surplus of Income over Expenditure	12,596.48			
Increase in Value of Investments	11,220.04			
	<u>262,819.79</u>			

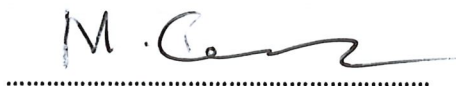
Approved by the PCC on

2024

Signed on their behalf by Ingrid Scheider (PCC Chair) and Mr Neal Gooch (PCC Treasurer)



.....



.....

I have reviewed the accounts and notes presented to me for the year ended 31 December 2023 and have agreed them to the underlying records of The Church of St Mary the Virgin



.....

Mark Johnstone, Argents

Notes

1. Financial Statements

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.

2. Victoria Hall Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund, from the sale of Victoria Hall, must be retained as a Capital Fund and shares may not be sold, but the income is for ordinary church purposes. It is invested in the CBF Church of England Investment Fund and the value as at 31st December 2023 was £ 120,893, an increase of £ 10,478 since 31 December 2022.

3. Payments to PCC Members

None

4. Diss Team Ministry

With effect from 1st September 2013, a new account was created which is not associated with Diss PCC but acts as a 'clearing house' for funeral and wedding costs, office costs and the Parish Administrator's salary. Money received for these purposes is distributed between all the churches in Diss Team Ministry (fees), Norwich Diocese (fees) and the Diss Team Administrator (salary). The accounts are therefore cost neutral.

5. Missionary and Charitable Giving

PCC payments were made to Diss and District Churches Together (£120).

6. Roydon Fen

This is land just under 3 acres located in the middle of a field at Roydon Fen. It was valued at £21,500 in 2006 and no subsequent valuations have taken place. Rent is received on this asset.

7. Equipment Policy

Any equipment purchased during the year is shown as an expense and is not capitalised.

8. Victoria Hall Endowment Fund (2)

The Church is entitled to receive income from this investment but has no entitlement to manage or draw down on the capital sum. Dividends from this investment are unrestricted. For the purposes of these accounts, the investment has been included in the Restricted Funds column

9. Former Heywood School Fund

The PCC Treasurer also administers the Former Heywood School Fund, a charitable fund for educational purposes. This is separate to and not included in the above accounts.

Independent Examiners Certificate

Report to the trustees/ members of:

THE CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN

On accounts for the year ended:

31 DECEMBER 2023

Charity no (if any):

1134118

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 / 12 / 23 .

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 [The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by... being a qualified member of []]. Delete [] if not applicable.~~

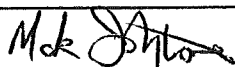
I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- 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; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:



Date:

11 / 3 / 2014

Name:

MARK JOHNSTONE

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

ICAEW

Address:

15 PALACE STREET

NORWICH, NORFOLK

NR3 1RT

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose

NONE

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, DISS - REPORTS FOR 2024

GROUP REPORTS FOR ANNUAL MEETING 2024

AGENDA ITEM 4(d) DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

REDENHALL DEANERY SYNOD.

Synod met 3 times during 2023, only twice since the last APCM. Topics covered included:

- 8 February: Paul Dunning, Diocesan Director of Education & Jonathan Richardson from the Children, Youth & Families team came to speak about "Your church and your school". Synod members were urged to make the most of contact with local schools, especially Church of England schools (in our case Diss Junior School), to encourage regular contact and the provision of "chaplains" (not necessarily clergy) for each.
- 6 July: This meeting had no outside speakers as it was mostly concerned with Deanery business,
- 11 October: John Bryden, a member of General Synod but speaking in a personal capacity, came to speak about his backing for the "Save the Parish" group who were calling for a greater emphasis by the Church on the importance of presence and witness in each parish, especially in rural areas. There were questions and comments aplenty after his talk which had touched some raw nerves!

Unfortunately our Deanery Synod Representative, Mrs. Melanie Cowley, has been unable to attend any meetings since her appointment at our 2023 APCM.

AGENDA ITEM 4(e) MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

ST. MARY'S DISS, TOWER CAPTAIN'S REPORT

Ringling at Diss at present is full of difficulties. We are very short of ringers as not all returned after covid and without the help of ringers from the villages, the bells would be silent. We still manage to ring every Sunday, but I doubt if many of the congregation hear us. Since the times of the services have changed, we have had to finish ringing 15 minutes before the services at Diss start, as the ringers who kindly come and help have commitments at their own churches. Anyone listening will have noticed we only ring the front six bells. This is because the ropes keep breaking and despite Ian Grandfield's efforts there comes a time when there is no rope left to splice. The tenor bell, which weighs 22 ½ cwt, has been silent a long time now, the reason being if the rope on that bell broke while ringing full circle it would put the ringer and everyone else in danger, as the rope would be flying round the ringing chamber free to hook round the guides or even a ringer. The reason for the ropes breaking is obviously use and age but the fact that the tower roof has been leaking badly for a number of years now hasn't helped. Constant wet and dry will rot the natural fibres. Thanks to some very generous donations we have been able to order a new set of ropes which we very much hope will arrive in time for Palm Sunday, which is the 40th anniversary of the restoration of the bells, when we hope to ring a quarter peal to celebrate. Our worry now is that if the tower roof is not fixed by then, the considerable cost of buying the ropes will be wasted as the new ones will deteriorate very quickly. The

damage being done by the damp is not just restricted to ropes, it is affecting the steel frame, the bell fittings and the bell wheels and the timber floors and joists below the bells and in the sound chamber. I would therefore, ask you please to put "tower repair" at the top of your "to do" list. The bells are probably the most valuable items in the church and as such should be looked after better than they are at present. I know funds are short but I wonder if other things have taken priority over the bells as "out of sight, out of mind" could be part of the reason for the delay in making the repairs. 40 years ago a huge amount of money was raised by the inhabitants of Diss to restore our bells and we owe it to all who contributed by way of funding or help to look after our inheritance. Please don't let the bells become silent again.

Betty Baines
St. Mary's Diss Tower Captain

DISCOVER

We held a Lent Course entitled Experiencing God's Love. This course, written by Bishop Steven Croft, was based on passages from the Psalms and St. John's Gospel - how they might transform our experience of God, and increase and deepen our faith.

Sue Drake

FRIDAY COFFEE MORNING

The coffee morning continues to be a place to meet friends and enjoy fellowship. There is a good mix of church members and towns people and occasional visitors. We took part in the MacMillan coffee morning in September and raised £82. Most weeks church funds receive between £25-£35. Besides coffee and biscuits we have cards, books and jigsaw puzzles for sale. My grateful thanks to all those who help keep the coffee morning running week by week.

Linda Curtis

SACRISTY

Many thanks as always to Maria for all her hard work in the vestry and the church and to Sandra for her help after the service. We also thank our head server, Gerry, and all our team of servers. If any one would like to join us please see Gerry. Thank you to all the people who help me clear up at the Wednesday service. Kathy Vincent has been training to serve the priests at Wednesday services at 10.45. Well done Kathy and many thanks to Jane Mould and Linda Curtis for making teas and coffee after the service. Many thanks to Revd. John and all our team of priests and it is lovely to have Sandy back. Thanks also to the churchwardens.

Janet Ransome

SERVERS

What remains of servers are "bumping along the bottom". This would conclude my report if it was not the fact that I need to explain more. When I first became a server here 20 years ago there was a strong team of servers in place, but as time went by the word "multi-skilling" crept in where servers were asked to do other jobs on a Sunday morning leaving us short. I have more servers doing just that now, so I have decided to step back having served in the Church of England around the country for 54 years. Thanks to all who have served with me at St. Mary's, Diss, and special thanks to sacristan, Janet Ransome, for always stepping in when we are short. I am not leaving the church, so see you all around in a different way. God bless.

Gerry Hosking

SILENT PRAYER

We have met throughout this year on most Tuesdays in the church hall. However, in January we have been meeting at Rosemary Boutet's house. We usually take breaks at major festivals and in August. There are regularly four to six of us and we have readings, music and about 40 minutes silence. We are eager to expand our group and new members and seekers are very welcome.

Midge Davidson

STREAMING

We use YouTube to stream our Sunday Eucharists to those who are not able to attend. We have a link on the Diss Team Ministry website that goes straight to the service, which goes live at around 10:55am.

The stream requires two laptops to operate, two cameras for two different angles, one television monitor so the operator can see what is happening on both cameras, various cables and other equipment.

Every Sunday morning, we have anywhere between 5 and 13 people watching the stream, many of whom are unable to attend in person for whatever reason. These numbers do not consider the amount of people who watching, only the single device being used to watch the stream. For example, two people could be watching on one laptop, but only one person will be counted.

Until recently, Neal Gooch and I have been the only people to set up the stream. Before his departure, Samuel Thorp understood the streaming setup and could help if needed. Now it is only me. There are some who know how to operate the stream during the service. These people can also help pack up the equipment after the service ends. I am grateful to all who have been involved past and present.

It is my belief that our streams are a service to our parishioners and should not end. I am willing to do all that I can to ensure it continues. The only issue is that someday I may be unable to come to church. My hope is that I can form a small team of people that collectively have the knowledge to set up the streaming equipment. A team that I can train over time, have them help me before or after services and they can be called upon later to set up the stream for me when I am unable to.

Ellie Parker

Safeguarding Officer's Report

Annual Parochial Church Meetings of the Diss Team Ministry 2024

The aim of our Safeguarding policy is to promote a culture of care where everyone feels welcome, safe, and respected. Our strapline "Welcome, Safe, Respected" is a summary of what we are trying to achieve in our church communities.

We have adopted the Church of England guidance 'Promoting a Safer Church' as the basis for our safeguarding policy and use the Parish Safeguarding Handbook as our reference.

The Benefice Safeguarding Officer takes an overview and advises PCCs and the Team Council on policies and procedures as necessary. She liaises with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and is available to deal with any concerns or allegations and provide confidential advice to church members. Implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the PCCs. Each PCC has appointed a member to act as the Safeguarding Link. Safeguarding is a standing item on each PCC agenda. Accurate records are kept using the Safeguarding Log to ensure that we have a list of key workers together with the necessary checks and training.

We must not overlook the fact that safeguarding principles apply equally to our Ministry Team members as to our congregations. This is especially important during the period of the vacancy whilst resources are so stretched. This links with the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing.

We have continued to receive excellent support from Sue Brice, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, and her team, particularly for advice on individual concerns.

Several matters have been discussed with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and we have acted on her advice. Unfortunately, it has been harder to engage other support services when we have felt it necessary.

For most people Safeguarding training is now available as an online course via the Church of England website. This is proving challenging for many of our members who are not comfortable with computer-based work. The material is not so easy to access even for the computer literate.

Regarding the safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults, the biggest concern continues to be financial abuse. Scams and fraud are targeted on older age groups, particularly those living alone. The scams are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and we all need to be aware of the risks and support our most vulnerable members.

I am looking to retire from the post in the coming year and am hopeful that a new Benefice Safeguarding Officer can be recruited.

Gill Abbott
Safeguarding Officer for the Diss Team Ministry