

***St Peter & St Paul
Swaffham***

**Church
Annual
Reports
2023**

INDEX

Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting - Wednesday 1st May 2024

Minutes of Annual Parish Meetings -

AMP 2023 ('Vestry' Meeting) and APCM 2023(Parochial Church Meeting)

Receipt of Electoral Roll

Parochial Church Council Report

Churchwardens Report

Breckland Deanery Synod Report

Bell Ringers

Commonwealth War Graves

Criss Cross (formerly Churches Together)

Fabric

Flower Group

Mothers Union

Organist & Choirmaster

Saturday Coffee

Social Committee

Sunday Morning Coffee

Website & Social Media

Electoral Roll

This year, 2024, is the sixth and final year of the current Electoral Roll. The next Roll will not be compiled until 2025 and so I would urge anyone whose name is not on the current Roll to complete one of the forms which are available at the back of the church.

Our Electoral Roll currently stands at 88, up from 87 last year, 5 new names being added but with 4 removed, following the passing of a member of our church family.

Ralph Clark - Electoral Roll Officer

Churchwardens Report

Sadly Revd Janet Allan decided to take early retirement, but we are very lucky to have retired clergy to help us out in our interregnum for which we, as a Parish, are very grateful.

Our Saturday Morning Coffee & Cake are back on track, thanks to our dedicated team of ladies who give their valuable time and talents with delicious mouth-watering cakes etc.

We have Coffee Mornings, Lunches, Strawberry Teas and Harvest Supper to raise money for Church Funds and Flowers.

The Royal British Legion Festival was held at SS Peter & Paul Church, Swaffham. Elizabeth Lodge did a Piano Recital Rockavox Concert and Mid-Norfolk Singers Christmas Concert, were all enjoyed.

Our Carol Service, Christingle and Midnight Mass were well attended.

We are grateful to Johnathan White, our Organist/Choirmaster and our Choir for leading us in Worship. Also our special thanks go to Ralph Clarke and Bernard Hunt, as their help and support has been invaluable. Thanks go to all our other volunteers, too many to mention by name, but you know who you are!!

We welcome Veronica Hutchby, as our new Churchwarden; Congratulations!

Sheila Fowler - Churchwarden

Bellringers

With Linda Ballard's wish to hand over responsibility for the tower and my recent retirement, I discussed the situation with Linda and agreed to offer my services. I had organised ringing at Swaffham in the past during the incumbency of John Smith.

After a few months of intermittent practices with variable attendances, we used the warmer Spring weather of March 2023 to seek to establish a regular weekly practice - the first time in a long while that this had been possible. I am pleased to report that this has proved popular and we have only missed a few weeks since we started meeting weekly. A few new recruits have come forward and some who were ringing during my previous involvement have returned, this time with two teenage recruits! The bells were rung for the Coronation of King Charles on 6th May by 12 of the local team.

In the Summer, Oliver and James Clifton rang in the Norfolk team at the Ringing World National Youth Contest in York and rang the bells at York Minster.

We have not yet established a regular routine of Sunday ringing, but we did ring for Remembrance Sunday, having borrowed a set of muffles from St Peter Mancroft to create the traditional solemn sound on this Sunday.

We also rang for the Carol Service on 17th December and again on Christmas Day. The next Sunday ringing was for the Confirmation Service on 14th January. Perhaps the highlight of the year was our ringing for Easter Day, when we rang all 8 bells with our local team for morning service, but then went on to East Raynham to ring all 8 there also, for Stuart's service at 10:30am.

The bell installation remains reasonably stable with no major issues but at some stage we will need to address some ongoing issues such as giving the 1900 bell-frame a clean and a new coat of paint. Fortunately, the ingress of weather and birds is reasonably controlled, preventing the awful guano I found on my very first visit up there years ago and which dear old Roger Peckham and I cleared out.

I am heartened by the level of support we have received in the past year and this bodes well. We are blessed with assistance from several excellent teachers of ringing and this has meant that our less experienced ringers have received a high quality of assistance and made good progress.

I am also grateful to Stuart Nairn and Adrian Bell for their support and encouragement - it is appreciated.

I am personally delighted that the iconic and perhaps most elegant tower in the whole county has its own team of ringers who are an exemplary and committed group. I look forward to more successes in 2024/25.

Simon Rudd (Tower Captain) 07957 406172 simon@enterprise-cs.co.uk

Breckland Deanery Synod Report 2023

Last meeting of the Synod was in November 2022 when Bishop Graham Usher attended, this meeting had been an 'Open' meeting to which all PCC members had been invited. Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 22nd May at the Fountain of Life, Ashill.

The current team are due for re-election this year, with Swaffham representatives Geraldine Ellison and myself prepared to continue & Shirley Matthews standing down.

Irene Ranner - Synod Representative

Commonwealth War Graves

Within the Eastern area of the Churchyard, we have four WW1 CWGC burials. Two have the traditional CWGC headstone and two private (family) headstones.

BANHAM	Karl Felgate	Able Seaman	Royal Navy
BUCKERIDGE	Guy Dennis	Lieutenant	Royal Flying Corps
HUDSON	Arthur	Private	Lancashire Fusiliers
REGESTER	George	Rifleman	Rifle Brigade



The CWGC representatives inspect the graves on an approximate two-year cycle, they inspect and report, but do not maintain. When it becomes necessary, the private gravestone will be replaced with a traditional CWGC headstone.

Prior to the Covid restrictions, our CWGC graves and the War Memorial Chapel within the Church, were maintained and cleaned by the Cadets from 1894 (Swaffham) Squadron, RAF Cadets. Unfortunately, during the Covid Lockdown the Squadron was disbanded.

With no routine maintenance, the War Graves in our Churchyard rapidly fell into a neglected state, with weeds growing both within and outside the marked areas. Nettles in the immediate area were a particular problem. Considering the state of the graves, and a lack of others willing to assume the responsibility, I have undertaken the care and maintenance of the graves and War Memorial Chapel.

During the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal period, remembrance crosses are placed on each grave.

In addition, there are two other sites in the town with CWGC graves, the Baptist Chapel graveyard in White Cross Road (WW1) and the Brandon Road, Town Cemetery (WW2).

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

Bernard Hunt

Criss Cross (formerly Churches Together)

The AGM of Churches Together in Swaffham was held in May 2023, convened before vicar Janet retired. Sadly, it was very poorly attended, and the decision was taken by those present to alter the structure of our inter-denominational relationship. It was agreed to dispose of the money in the CT bank account and to clear it by making a donation to Cafod, and to Christian Aid. It was also agreed that a new relational association would be established that was to be known as CrissCross. It would not have the formality of regular meetings, an AGM, a bank account, a chair, secretary, treasurer and elected committee members etc. It was also agreed that the clergy/leaders of the denominations would commit to regular meetings, and that an email group and Facebook page would be set up to facilitate good communications and inter-church notices of events. The latter has been set up by the Revd. Jacqui Horton, Methodist Minister, and it has been a lot of hard and time consuming labour for which we are very grateful. It was also agreed that where/whenever possible, the existing CT events would be continued. Since then there have been a number of ecumenical events: a united Harvest Thanksgiving on the Campinglands in September; the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January; the interdenominational World Day of Prayer in March; several ecumenical services during Lent. Plus, of course the Food Bank that was originally set up under the auspices of the CT and continues its valuable work to this day. Unfortunately it has not been possible to arrange a street collection for Christian Aid this year. CrissCross asks for support and prayers, and if anyone would like to be included in the CrissCross email/Facebook please ask the undersigned.

Revd John Handley

Fabric Report - For the period March 2023 - February 2024

A replacement Fabric Officer, is still required & the search continues for someone who would be prepared to take the task on.

Meanwhile Bernard Hunt continues to give attention to Fabric matters and grateful thanks are recorded to him for his continued commitment, also for his regular monthly updates to the PCC on Fabric matters.

Summary of Fabric Works which have been carried out / in progress / outstanding:

- i. **Ashes Plot** - Rules & regulations regarding this were checked (**RC**) & answer given was that such requests, subject to the PCC agreement, require a faculty which the individual persons have to apply & pay for.
- ii. **Audio matters** - legacy received from Derek Thackery (£2600) was used towards update of the audio system.
- iii. **Bollards**. Quotation requested (Reece) for possible replacement & making good of roadway.
- iv. **Church Car Park & Walk Lighting** - it was agreed that to prevent accidents occurring, in due course, a floodlight is required to illuminate the Car Park and also the Church Drive inside the main gates. Necessary permissions to be sought from Iceland & the Town Council for these works to be carried out.
- v. **Heating in the Bell Chamber** - when in use by the ringers, heating is required. Reece asked to quote and then install as necessary.
- vi. **Main Aisle floor** - due heavy rain & flooding into Church, the floor next to the West End back two pews had been washed out & became unstable. After inspection by the Architect & following his recommendations, temporary repair work was carried out to restore safe access down the aisle at that point. So far some £350 has been spent on this. **A Contract has been signed by Nick Warnes** for him to proceed with the necessary floor procedures & water ingress problems.
- vii. **Pigeon problems** were reported to Nick Warnes & his advice awaited. Meanwhile regular clearing is undertaken.
- viii. **Power Failures** & other lighting & heating problems; investigations are underway.
- ix. **Toilets** - investigation and possible ideas will be implemented to enable easier disabled access.
- x. **Tower drainage** - cleared
- xi. **Vestry Room** - Access up and down it is not easy & suggestion was made that a handrail should be considered for the stairway. Architect's (Reece) advice sought & answer awaited.
- xii. **West End, incursion of rainwater** - the present gully/drainage scheme does not appear to be sufficient. A new gully might be the answer, but would involve further consultation with the Town Council.
- xiii. **West End Wooden Doors** were replaced with **Glass Doors**.

Flower Group Report

2023 has been an uneventful year, there being no flower or patronal festival this year. However our group of very accomplished ladies have continued to provide wonderful flower arrangements to welcome visitor and worshipers at the Church entrance and High Altar, throughout the year when appropriate.

In addition a group of us produced our traditional Mothering Sunday posies to hand out alongside the Mothers Union prayer cards. After the period of Lent with no flowers we celebrated Easter with our traditional decoration of the church with exuberant white and golden arrangements throughout. Many thanks to all those responsible for creating such a joyous celebration with their flower arrangements.

The church was again appropriately dressed to celebrate the Harvest Festival, with flowers, foliage and produce, to showcase the bounty we produce each year.

Remembrance Sunday saw our usual respectful Poppy arrangements to honour our fallen soldiers to accompany the civic service.

To round off the year following a very successful Christmas Tree Festival the church was joyously resplendent with red themed arrangements to welcome all for the Christmas festivities.

During the year we have also hosted a number of fund raising events to raise funds for the Church & Flower funds which included a Saint Patrick Day Soup & Pudding lunch; Afternoon Tea; Traditional Strawberry Tea and a Harvest Supper.

A very big thank you to everyone for all their hard work, creativity and generosity throughout the year helping to keep our church looking so wonderful.

Meg Heale - Church Flower Group

Mother's Union Swaffham Report 2023

Our group had another active and enjoyable year. We currently have 16 members but are regularly joined at meetings by non- members who we actively encourage to come along.

Sadly we lost one of our oldest and most loyal members, Eileen Lawrence, as she passed away in the summer. She will be greatly missed.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of our year was the result of a new initiative from the Diocesan Trustees, that groups in our area (some of which are very small) should get together more.

Consequently we visited, and were visited by, groups from South Wootton, Dersingham, Fakenham and Dereham. For example, together we celebrated Mary Sumner Day with a joint service at St. Nicholas Church, Dereham, followed by a picnic lunch. Also in October we hosted a Members Day (usually held in Norwich) in Swaffham. We attended the licensing of our new Chaplain, Rev. Aubrey- Jones, in Dersingham, and we shared a coach together for a delightful outing to the Bishop of Norwich's Garden Party and strawberry tea.

We have valued these opportunities to share fellowship and ideas with these other groups, and we particularly thank Eunice Norwood (a Fakenham MU member and Trustee) for working so hard to facilitate the initiative.

Something else new was that we were invited by Rev Canon Stuart Nairn and Rev Canon Adrian Bell to assist at Baptisms. This has been a good experience to get to know new families and welcome them to the church family

both with our presence and a card. We shall send the family a card on the yearly anniversary of the Baptism until the child is 5.

We have met monthly as always, and enjoyed some excellent speakers; we have welcomed Andy Mash with his rhyming new year message, the Blood Bikers, Susan Smith with anecdotes of her Northumbrian grandma, Sheila Tuffield on MU Enterprises, and Phil Jesson with a talk on modern day slavery. A special thank you to one of our committee, Jenny Bell, who stood in at short notice with a talk when a speaker was unable to attend!

In addition we gave our usual hospitality to the Pilgrim Cross group, walking from London to Walsingham, on Maundy Thursday; we held a fund raising coffee morning and Bring and Buy we met at West Acre Nurseries for lunch in July, and had a book discussion session in August. In November one of our members, Beryl Neyt, led us in a Christmas Craft session and we ended our year as always with a special Christmas meeting of carols, readings and a shared lunch.

Throughout the year alongside these activities, we never forget our purpose as Mothers Union members and we begin each meeting with worship and prayer. We have raised funds for our Diocesan charities, particularly AFIA-Away From It All, providing family holidays for those in need. At Christmas we supported the Angel Tree project and supplied (in conjunction with the Prison Fellowship) gifts for prisoner's children at Wayland Prison in Watton. We have also supported Baby Basics and the Syrian refugee families in Norwich, for whom Mothers Union provides all the bedding in their allocated housing.

We have supported international projects and national campaigns, such as Rise Up, which focuses on domestic violence.

I would like to sincerely thank our retired clergy - Revs Stuart, Adrian, Neil and John - during this interregnum, for their support for Mothers Union. Thanks to the Baptist Church for the use of their lovely room, and thanks to Father Mark from Our Lady of Pity for letting us use the church car park.

Most of all I am so grateful to our members, and particularly our very hard- working committee, for their enthusiasm and support throughout the year.

Julia Higbee - Branch Leader

Organist & Choir Master Report 2023

Over the last year the choir has continued to grow in number, with Susan joining the Soprano's and Susie an addition to the Alto's. We have also welcomed back Beckie following a break due to family commitments. In total we now have 14 members and most Sunday's we have at least 12 which is a great achievement.

Over the last year we have seen several changes to services following Janet's 'early retirement'. This has been a bit of a challenge with communication sometimes being an issue with information not being passed on. It's certainly been good to see a few extra people in the congregation towards the end of the year.

My sincere thanks are due to Shelagh Langbridge who purchased enough music copies of the Mission Praise hymn book for the choir, so now we can use the word copies that had been sitting in the cupboard unused since before the pandemic. We now use Mission Praise on the 1st, 3rd & when there's a 5th Sunday as well, where we have been learning some of the more modern worship songs as well as reviving the older ones some of us grew up with. Also, I must thank Keith for covering me during holiday's and at short notice when Dad had a fall one Sunday morning during the year, it is much appreciated.

Unfortunately, with the changes to services since Revd Janet's departure, we have still not revived the Family Service, at least once a month, which I think is a great shame. We almost filled the church for the Christingle service with young families (although not as many this year as I have seen previously) but what is there to offer and encourage them back to church before next year's Christingle? This is just my opinion and I know it's a PCC decision to make but felt it needed to be mentioned.

So now moving into 2024 we hope for a promising year and for news of a new incumbent soon to lead us forward for the future and to see Swaffham Church flourishing once again

Johnathon White (Organist/Choirmaster)

Saturday Coffee

A big 'thank you' to all those who gave of their time and talents during 2023 Coffee Mornings making it such a success. We raised a magnificent total of £8185.75, an increase of £1438.85 on the previous year. This does not include the refreshment takings from the Christmas Bazaar or the Christmas Tree Festival which are recorded separately.

Unfortunately, near the end of the year, two of our members stood down but we are hoping to gain two replacements shortly, bringing our numbers up to 25 on the rota. However, we would still like to hear from anyone who would be interested in joining us in this important outreach and we would also welcome anyone who could help with the occasional baking or willing to cover emergencies.

Once again many thanks to all our helpers, servers, bakers, cashiers, washers-up and the movers of tables & chairs; without whose tireless efforts these mornings would not be possible. A special 'thank you' to Veronica Hutchby, who has agreed to take over keeping our provisions well stocked.

We now look forward to another successful year during 2024.

Susan Butler. (Rota Organiser)

Social Committee

We started our year of Fund Raising with a St Patrick's Day Lunch, this raised £385.36. This was followed by a lunch in June which raised £433.50. Our last event was the Harvest Supper which raised £505.80.

Thank you to all those who brought savory items, puddings and cakes to our events during the year, especially for the Harvest Supper when we had a wonderful selection of savory & sweet delights.

My thanks also to Jean Clarke, Sheila Fowler, Meg Heale and all those that help with the washing up etc., and of course to Ralph Clarke and Geraldine Ellison on Raffle duty.

Dorothy Starling (Social Chairman)

Sunday Coffee

I would like to thank all the members of the team who volunteer to serve coffee, tea, and biscuits (and sometimes cake!) after the 9.30 Sunday morning service in church. This allows us to provide a welcome to visitors, to friends from our sister parish of Sporle when they are with us, and also gives the congregation a chance to chat and catch up. We value this social time together.

My thanks also go to the members of the congregation who willingly step in to help when we are busy. New members are always welcome on the team rota.

Bridget Lewin (Rota Organiser)

Website and Social Media report

The Facebook Social Media account was held by Revd Janet Allan after Revd Tori moved to Dereham.

Unfortunately, it took a while to trace the account administrator and so I did not have any input until it was transferred to me at the end of March 2024. It had been mothballed for nearly a year.

I aim to publish relevant information about services and events and welcome news and photographs from all.

Veronica Hutchby

Independent Examiners Certificate

Report to the trustees/ members of:

ST PETER & ST PAUL CHURCH
SWAFFHAM P.C.C.

On accounts for the year ended:

31 DECEMBER 2023

Charity no (if any):

1134160

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2023 Pages 1 to 14

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

[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:

Susan J. Nairn

Date:

23/04/2024

Name:

SUSAN NAIRN