



St Peter's

**Leckhampton
Parish Church**

Parochial Church Council Annual Report for 2023

Our Vision Statement

St Peter's Church Leckhampton exists to love and worship God,
to serve our neighbours and to pass on the faith in Jesus Christ.

The Parish Prayer

Loving God
Open our eyes that we might see you.
Open our ears that we might hear you.
Open our hearts and minds that we might respond to you
and bring others to know you.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord who lights our way.
Amen

Legal and Administrative Information

Name:	Parochial Church Council of St Peter's, Leckhampton (PCC).
Location:	St Peter's Church is located in Church Road, Leckhampton and is part of the Diocese of Gloucester within the Church of England.
Address for correspondence:	The Parish Office, Glebe Cottages, Church Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 0QJ

Members

Following the 2023 APCM the composition of the PCC is as follows (the years elected are shown in brackets):

Team Vicar and Chair	Revd Gary Grady
Curate	Revd Jacqueline Henson
Readers	Dereck Freeman Melissa Webb

EX-OFFICIO

Churchwardens	David Webber (2023) Sally Marlow (2023)
Deputy Churchwarden	Arthur Webb (2023)
Deanery Synod Representatives (2023-2026)	Mike Riley Peter Davies * Brad Coates

LAY MEMBERS

Lay Members elected 2021-2024 (one year of service remaining)	Ro Baillie Helen Shill * Sarah Wood
Lay Members elected 2022-2025 (two years of service remaining)	Mike Riley Margaret Kyffin Peter Marlow (Treasurer)
Lay Members elected 2023-2026 (three years of service remaining)	Jennie Hawdon Penny Piggott Christine Brown (Secretary) Anne Webber
Co-opted Member	Richard Kerr-Wilson 2023 (Eco Officer)

** SCTM Representatives (2023)*

Totals: PCC members: 10, Ex officio 6, co-opted 1

Notes on composition of PCC

Calculation of numbers on PCC : six representatives of the laity where there are not more than fifty names on the electoral roll, nine such representatives where there are not more than one hundred names on the roll and, where there are more than one hundred names on the roll, a further three such representatives for every one hundred (or part thereof) names on the roll up to a maximum of fifteen such members, and so that the aforesaid numbers "six", "nine", "three" and "fifteen" may be altered from time to time by a resolution passed at any annual meeting, but such resolution shall not take effect before the next ensuing annual meeting

Co-opted members: We can also have co-opted members, if the parochial church council so decides, not exceeding in number one-fifth of the representatives of the laity elected or two persons whichever shall be the greater, and being either clerks in Holy Orders or actual lay communicants of sixteen years of age or upwards. The term of office of a co-opted member shall be until the conclusion of the next annual meeting; but without prejudice to his being co-opted on subsequent occasions for a similar term, subject to and in accordance with the provisions of these rules.

- **Electoral Roll**: Currently there are **158** on our electoral roll, so we can have up to 15 lay members on the PCC as well as two co-opted members.
- **Ex Officio members**: The churchwardens and any deputy churchwardens are ex-officio members of the parochial church council by virtue of a scheme made under rule 18(4) of these rules.
- **Reps for Deanery Synod** are also ex officio members of the PCC.
- **The Secretary and Treasurer** will be elected from the PCC members.

Terms of Office

PCC members	3 years
Deanery synod	3 years
SCTM	3 years
Churchwardens and Deputy Churchwardens	1 year
Secretary and Treasurer	1 year

Financial Information

Status:	The PCC is a Registered Charity (1134612)
Independent Examiner:	Mr David Evans
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank plc, High Street, Cheltenham, Glos. CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent.

Aims and Organisation

The main purpose of the PCC is defined in the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956 as "to co-operate with the minister in promoting in the Parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical."

The following Committees promote the life of St Peter's:

Social Committee:	Revd Gary Grady, Ro Baillie, Helen Yates
Pastoral Team:	Revd Gary Grady, Revd Jade Scholes, Dereck Freeman, Jennie Hawdon, Anne Webber, Sally Marlow, Steve Whittington, Penny Williams

Ministry Report

Thank you to all at St. Peter's for another great year.

We have continued to worship both in-person and on-line, with the 10am Sunday Service and Morning Prayer (Mon-Thu) being live-streamed throughout the year; we will continue to do this in 2024.

A decision was made to return to the Common Cup after Easter, with each communicant given the choice of whether to accept the bread and wine, or just the bread (which itself is fully sufficient as the sacrament). House of Bishop Guidelines no longer permits the dipping of bread by the communicant, so this has now stopped.

We continued to make good progress with the reordering. A new audio visual system was installed just before Easter, new furniture ordered, and a date in early 2024 (just after Epiphany Sunday) agreed with the contractors to complete the final phase of reordering at the front, to rebuild the wooden dais, install communion rails and lay a new carpet (at the time of writing, this has now been completed).

Thank you for your patience and support for this scheme; special thanks go to David Webber for his support, and to Peter Davies for his practical advice.

On a personal note, it was a privilege to take up the role of Team Rector for the South Cheltenham Team during 2023 and look forward to how we can be stronger as a team by working together. I will continue to hold pastoral oversight and responsibility for St. Peter's as part of this, but will no longer be the Area Dean for Cheltenham, having stepped down following the completion of 5 years in the role.

I continue to look ahead with optimism. Our numbers and finances (and church building) are all in good shape, our relationship with the local schools is excellent, and we continue to reach out in many ways to the local community through the different groups and events we offer. Our beautiful church building and churchyard continues to attract people to 'come and see' and we have once again shared God's love through the many baptism, wedding and funeral services we have conducted.

During 2023, we were blessed to welcome Kit Perona-Wright as our new Director of Music. There has already been a noticeable increase in choir numbers and repertoire, and we are exploring new settings and looking at additional evening services for 2024.

As the year turned to 2024, we had to say goodbye to Revd Jacqueline Henson and family, Jacqueline having completed her curacy with St. Peter's and moving on to a new role as Team Vicar in the North Cheltenham Team. We send her and her family on their new adventure with grateful thanks and blessings, albeit I will miss her support, friendship and presence hugely.

Next year we will be blessed with the arrival of Revd Jade Scholes, who will join St. Peter's as an Associate Priest, having completed her curacy in Churchdown. Revd Jade is a Minister in Secular Employment (MSE) and I am looking forward to working with her as the year unfolds.

Thank you to all who have supported the life of St Peter's in 2023, with special thanks going to our churchwardens, David and Sally, our Readers, Dereck and Melissa, to all who have served on our PCC, to Peter Davies, our Sacristan, and to Liz Johnson, our Administrator. Thank you also to all who have supported our social events, made music, rung bells, arranged flowers, tended our churchyard, welcomed at the door, served at the front, or have simply showed your love for God through worship and what you do for others.

Every blessing for 2024...

Revd Gary Grady, Team Rector

Review of financial activities and affairs for 2023

The accounts have three sections:

- The Receipts & Payments Account, which shows how much money we received and what we paid out in 2023
- The Statement of Assets and Liabilities which shows the monetary and other assets which the Church has on 31 December 2023
- Notes that explain the detail.

Overall, St Peters remains in a good financial position with total unrestricted funds carried forward of £179,194, a decrease of £30,264 over 2022. This is a better-than-expected result given that we have spent unrestricted funds of £49,717 on reordering this year. Total funds carried forward, which includes restricted income and investments, is £214,748, a decrease of £33,263 over 2022.

We had set a balanced budget for Running Costs for 2023 but we have ended the year with a deficit of £5,027. An increase in Energy costs and a reduction in Fees income contributed to this. To counter this in part was an increase in Giving, with a record Christmas collection, and an increase in interest payments from our investments. We did get an energy grant from the Diocese for £1,200 which is not shown in Running Costs, so the final deficit was £3,827.

We currently have 78 regular givers, 75 of whom give through the Parish Giving Scheme. Regular giving massively helps St Peters to plan its finances. The reordering furniture appeal raised £4,438. Carol Singing and Friday lunches raised £1116 for the Childrens' Society. The Afternoon Tea organised by the Leckhampton Local History Society raised £105 for Family Space.

Over the past year there were 487 transactions through the card reader in church to a value of £3,160 (474 transactions to a value of £2,822 in 2022). The terminal fees were £258 over the year with a 2.5% transaction cost.

We pressed on with the reordering project in 2023 completing the Gifford Tomb enclosure, installing a new Audio-Visual System, and paying deposits for the Sanctuary Furniture and Sanctuary Carpet. The cost was £52,768 offset by grants of £2,500 from the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust and £534 VAT refund from the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme.

Policy on Reserves

As a result of the Quinquennial Inspection Report of 2020 the Churchwardens and PCC propose to set aside unrestricted reserves of £20,000 to cover liabilities, as has been previous policy. They also recognise that it is prudent to retain unrestricted reserves of 6 months running costs (£65,000) to meet unforeseen occurrences. The remaining funds are earmarked for the continuing reordering project in 2024.

Expenses Payments

Other than the reimbursement of expenses and purchases made on the church's behalf, no payments have been made to members of the PCC.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Steve Whittingham the Assistant Treasurer and Mike Riley the Gift Aid Officer for their invaluable help in 2023. Also many thanks to the Independent Examiner, David Evans.

Peter Marlow
Hon Treasurer

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
for the year ended 31 December 2023

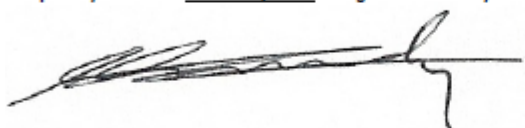
	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
INCOMING RESOURCES						
Voluntary Income						
Tax efficient planned giving		£ 71,629	£ 10	£ -	£ 71,639	£ 72,262
Other planned giving		£ 8,219	£ -	£ -	£ 8,219	£ 7,525
Collections at Services		£ 8,168	£ -	£ -	£ 8,168	£ 7,163
All other giving, inc Special Appeals	3	£ 3,934	£ 7,143	£ -	£ 11,076	£ 14,839
Gift Aid recovered		£ 19,751	£ 451	£ -	£ 20,202	£ 20,778
Legacies		£ 12,000	£ -	£ -	£ 12,000	£ 11,597
Grants	11	£ 1,740	£ 2,500	£ -	£ 4,240	£ -
Activities for generating funds						
Gross income from fundraising activities	4	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Income from investments						
Dividends, interest, income from property etc		£ 7,305	£ 815	£ -	£ 8,120	£ 2,350
Church Activities						
Statutory fees retained by the PCC (weddings, funerals etc)		£ 10,623	£ -	£ -	£ 10,623	£ 14,249
Gross income from trading (e.g. hall lettings, magazine, bookstall). NOT fundraising.	5	£ 9,897	£ -	£ -	£ 9,897	£ 11,070
Other Incoming Resources						
Any other income/ receipts not already listed	10	£ 50	£ -	£ -	£ 50	£ 29,081
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		£ 153,316	£ 10,919	£ -	£ 164,234	£ 190,913
RESOURCES EXPENDED						
Costs of generating income						
Fund-raising activities (costs and payments)		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Church Activities						
Mission giving and donations	3	£ 20	£ 1,237	£ -	£ 1,257	£ 7,695
Diocesan parish share contribution		£ 71,516	£ -	£ -	£ 71,516	£ 71,516
Salaries, wages and honoraria		£ 11,467	£ -	£ -	£ 11,467	£ 9,927
Clergy and staff expenses		£ 2,811	£ -	£ -	£ 2,811	£ 2,909
Church expenses						
Church expenses: Mission and evangelism costs	6	£ 4,281	£ 350	£ -	£ 4,631	£ 2,028
Church running expenses	7	£ 41,459	£ 825	£ -	£ 42,284	£ 37,957
Church utility bills (gas, electricity, water, oil)		£ 8,775	£ -	£ -	£ 8,775	£ 5,289
Cost of trading	8	£ 1,556	£ -	£ -	£ 1,556	£ 1,210
Major capital expenditure						
Major repairs to the church building		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 4,565
Major repairs to church hall or other PCC property, including redecoration		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
New building work to the church, church hall, clergy housing, or other PCC property	9	£ 49,717	£ 3,011	£ -	£ 52,728	£ 35,535
Governance Costs (examination or audit fee)		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Other outgoing resources	10	£ 662	£ -	£ -	£ 662	£ 29,440
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		£ 192,265	£ 5,423	£ -	£ 197,688	£ 208,070
NET (OUTGOING)/INCOMING RESOURCES		£ (38,949)	£ 5,496	£ -	£ (33,454)	£ (17,157)
Transfers between funds		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 0
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before gains		£ (38,949)	£ 5,496	£ -	£ (33,454)	£ (17,157)
Gains on investment assets		£ 8,685	£ -	£ (8,494)	£ 191	£ (7,450)
Net movement in funds		£ (30,264)	£ 5,496	£ (8,494)	£ (33,263)	£ (24,607)
Funds brought forward at 1 January 2023		£ 209,459	£ 11,312	£ 27,240	£ 248,011	£ 272,618
FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER 2023		£ 179,194	£ 16,808	£ 18,746	£ 214,748	£ 248,011

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
PCC Main Bank Account (CAF)	£ 22,652	£ 16,808	£ -	£ 39,460	£ 46,212
PCC Lloyds Bank Account (Treasurer)	£ 874	£ -	£ -	£ 874	£ 883
PCC Lloyds Bank Account	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 691
PCC Deposit Account with CCLA	£ 122,578	£ -	£ -	£ 122,578	£ 147,578
PCC Lloyds Bank Account & Petty Cash (Flowers)	£ 70	£ -	£ -	£ 70	£ 1,071
PCC Investment with CCLA	£ 27,567	£ -	£ -	£ 27,567	£ 18,882
MONETARY ASSETS	£ 173,741	£ 16,808	£ -	£ 190,549	£ 215,316
Gloucester Diocesan Trust (consolidated) *	£ -	£ -	£ 18,746	£ 18,746	£ 27,240
OTHER MONETARY ASSETS	£ -	£ -	£ 18,746	£ 18,746	£ 27,240
Fixed Assets (Furniture, Shed, Office & Cottages)	£ 5,454	£ -	£ -	£ 5,454	£ 5,455
FIXED ASSETS	£ 5,454	£ -	£ -	£ 5,454	£ 5,455
				£ 214,748	£ 248,011

* £9,000 shares moved from Gloucester Diocesan Trust to PCC Investment account to cover churchyard maintenance costs.

Adopted by the PCC on 16 January 2024 and signed on behalf by:



Rev Gary Grady, PCC Chair & Team Rector

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1 Basis of Accounting

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

In Receipts & Payments the closing cash balance reported in the accounts is:

- the cash balance on the last day of the financial year (December)
- plus any money received before the end of the year but only banked in the following year
- less any cheques written or other payments made before the end of the year but not cleared through the bank until the following year.

2 Accounting Policies

The accounting policy is Receipts and Payments basis of preparation.

Restricted Funds represent donations or grants received for a specific object or invited by the PCC for a specific object.

The funds may only be expended on the specific object for which they were given.

Any balance remaining unspent at the end of each year must be carried forward as a balance on that fund. The PCC does not usually invest separately for each fund.

Unrestricted Funds are the General funds which can be used for PCC ordinary purposes. The PCC on occasion Designates some of their General funds, earmarking them for a specific purpose. These funds are still unrestricted.

The format of the accounts is the official Diocesan Parish Return.

3 All other giving including special appeals

	Unrestricted	Restricted	
General Donations (not Gift Aided)	£ 2,445		
Little Pebbles donations	£ 557		
Coffee Pig	£ 477		
Freewill Offering	£ 455		
Audio-Visual equipment		£ 250	
Childrens' Society		£ 1,116	Friday Lunches & Carol Singing
Furniture appeal for reordering		£ 4,438	
Special collections		£ 758	
Organ Scholarship		£ 125	
Youth Work		£ 350	
LLHS Teas		£ 105	To Family Space
TOTAL	£ 3,934	£ 7,143	

4 Income from fundraising activities

See Note 3 above	£ -
TOTAL	£ -

5 Income from Trading

	2023	2022
Flower income	£ 1,430	£ 856
Magazine income	£ 894	£ 1,482
Other income (eg. Printing, Book Sales)	£ 1,314	£ 1,462
Church & Cottage lettings income	£ 6,260	£ 7,270
TOTAL	£ 9,897	£ 11,070

6 Mission & Evangelism Costs		Unrestricted	Restricted
Little Pebbles		£ 2,458	
Youth Project		£ 1,823	£ 350
TOTAL		£ 4,281	£ 350

7 Church Running Expenses		2023	2022
General Church Running Expenses		£ 10,954	£ 11,440
General Church Maintenance		£ 3,991	£ 4,039
Churchyard Maintenance		£ 10,994	£ 8,920
Music costs		£ 10,695	£ 8,450
Administration costs		£ 82	£ 206
Insurance costs		£ 5,568	£ 4,902
TOTAL		£ 42,284	£ 37,957

8 Cost of Trading			
Flower costs		£ 1,556	£ 1,210
Magazine costs*		£ -	£ -
TOTAL		£ 1,556	£ 1,210

* The Magazine is now produced in-house so the costs are incorporated in 'Running Expenses' and 'Salaries'. The total estimated costs are £764.

9 Major capital expenditure		Unrestricted	Restricted
Sanctuary Furniture & Gifford Barrier (1/3 deposit, Waywood)		£ 7,176	
AV Installation deposit (Hilltop)		£ 12,163	
Credence Tab/Barrier balance (Waywood)		£ 4,627	
Gifford Tomb Barrier (Waywood)			£ 2,500
Radiator removal etc (Tradecraft)		£ 2,175	
Wifi Equipment (General)		£ 366	
AV Installation completion (Hilltop))		£ 15,985	
Removal of pews (J A Baxter)		£ 1,028	
AV Installation completion (Hilltop)		£ 2,587	
Power feed (Watkins-Iles)			£ 511
Sanctuary Carpet (50% deposit, Rapport)		£ 2,893	
Tender review (Bartosch)		£ 716	
TOTAL		£ 49,717	£ 3,011

10 Other Incoming/Outgoing Resources

Incoming		
Sale of Church Bench		£ 50.00
Total incoming		£ 50.00
Outgoing		
South Cheltenham Team costs		£ 606.00
Transfer of Harvest Loaf to Flower Fund		£ 56.00
Total outgoing		£ 662.00

11 Grants		Unrestricted	Restricted
Energy Grant from Diocese		£ 1,206	
Donation for Giffard Memorial (GHCT)			£ 2,500
VAT refund for Reordering		£ 534	
TOTAL		£ 1,740	£ 2,500

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE
ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST PETER, LECKHAMPTON**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts (attached) of the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Peter, Leckhampton (the Trust) for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those 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:



Name: D G Evans ACIB

Address: 13 Leckhampton Views, Leckhampton, Cheltenham GL53 0AR

Date: 25th January 2024

St Peter's Leckhampton Reordering Project – February 2022 - March 2024

Peter Marlow, Treasurer

The reordering project at St Peter's Leckhampton has finally completed! Long in planning, work started in February 2022 and was completed in March 2024. The total cost was £160,000 as detailed below. The funding came from generous donations, grants and reserves built up over many years from legacies. Our Reserves are still healthy but we are looking to rebuild them to fund more projects. **It's still possible to donate to the Reordering Fund**, perhaps by funding one of the fine acolyte chairs (two have already been funded and dedication plaques provided). Please contact me if you would like further details.

Phase 0 VESTRY RECONSTRUCTION

Reconfigure & Reconstruct Vestry (Tim Beck)	£	3,640	
TOTAL			£ 3,640

Phase 1 HEATING SYSTEM

Heaters (Electric Heating Solutions)	£	26,376	
3-phase provision (Western Power)	£	15,333	
Old heating system decommission (Tradecraft)	£	3,109	
Less Listed Places of Worship Grant	£	(7,470)	
TOTAL			£ 37,348

Phase 2 GIFFARD TOMB

Remove 2 rows pews (Baxter)	£	1,028	
Enclosure (Waywood)	£	5,355	
VAT on Enclosure	£	1,071	
Timeline printing	£	59	
Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust Grant	£	(2,500)	
Donation for Timeline	£	(50)	
Listed Places of Worship Grant	£	(171)	
TOTAL			£ 4,792

Phase 3 AV

Equipment Design & Fitting	£	30,735	
Wifi installation	£	366	
Donation	£	(250)	
Gift Aid Recovered	£	(63)	
TOTAL			£ 30,789

Phase 4 FURNITURE

Acolyte Chair (5 * £1,850)	£	9,500	
Priest Chair	£	2,250	
Credence Table	£	3,219	
VAT on furniture	£	2,994	
Plaques for Chairs inc VAT	£	288	
Upholstery Costs @ £85/chair inc VAT	£	612	
Funds donated & Gift Aid	£	(9,901)	
TOTAL			£ 8,962

Phase 5 FRONT

Works (Loxstone)	£	58,865	
Contractor 'hold-back' (payable March 2025)	£	1,509	
Altar Rails & Kneelers	£	11,100	
Sundaries (Fabric costs & Carpet Edging Frame)	£	690	
Carpet	£	5,242	
Sheeting & Unsheeting & Re-tuning Organ (Nicholson)	£	1,370	
Architect's fees (Bartosch)	£	6,235	
Electrical work (Watkins-Iiles)	£	594	
Listed Places of Worship Grant	£	(11,555)	
TOTAL			£ 74,051

REORDERING GRAND TOTAL **£ 159,582**

Churchwardens report for the 2024 APCM

Churchwardens: David Webber and Sally Marlow, Deputy Warden: Arthur Webb

David Webber continued as Churchwarden for a further year. Sally Marlow replaced Jennie Hawdon, who had expressed her intention to stand down having served as warden since 2018. Many thanks to Jennie for her commitment during those years.

David and Sally have met regularly with Rev Gary to discuss church policy, and this has given both them and Gary the opportunity to talk frankly and in confidence, and for them to offer him support, particularly in what has been a difficult year, and to pass on pastoral concerns that may have come to their attention. This is in addition to the more formal Standing Committee meetings. The PCC has also maintained its regular timetable of meetings. We have been pleased, as wardens, to be able to work with Rev Jacqueline and thank her for her ministry and support, and we wish her, and her family, well as she takes on a new role as team Vicar in the North Cheltenham Team. Several members of the congregation attended her service of Licensing and Installation.

During the year David and Sally participated in the interview panel which resulted in Gary's appointment as Team Rector and later in the year contributed to his 5-yearly Episcopal Review. One of our 'recommendations' was that he ensures that he takes sufficient time off for his own well-being and interests outside church life.

Other regular duties have included the completion of various surveys and official documents as required by the diocese. We attended the annual Archdeacon's Visitation service where the wardens were officially admitted to their office.

The altar servers have continued to assist with the smooth running of services. Thanks are due to them and to the readers, intercessors, welcomers, junior church leaders, bellringers, choir and organist who all make a valuable contribution to services, and to the flower arrangers for their inspirational displays. Thanks also to Liz in the office for keeping day to day life of St Peter's running smoothly. Following Simon Gibson's sudden and unexpected resignation a new Director of Music, Kit Perona-Wright, was appointed. In the relatively short time he has been with us he has developed the music of St Peter's and the choir has grown in numbers. We congratulate him on being awarded his doctorate.

The Church Building and Grounds

Regular checks, such as the emergency lighting, and fire safety have been carried out by the appropriate agencies.

Following concerns expressed by Ecclesiastical Insurance a safety rail was installed on the external steps leading to the tower, plus a safety gate at the top of the boiler room steps. (Both designed and made by a local blacksmith, a former pupil of Leckhampton School.)

The congregation are getting used to the under-pew heating system.

A faculty application for reordering was finally approved by the Chancellor and all of this work has now been completed. More detailed information will be given in a separate report. Bishop Rachel gave permission for the church to be closed during this period, and Archdeacon Phil gave permission for 'occasional services' to be held in the Glebe Cottages at 8.00am most Sundays. Members of the congregation were encouraged to attend other churches in the SC Team during the time of closure.

Following the completion of the reordering work a church cleaning morning was organised ready for reopening in mid-March, and further work party decorated the Cottages before new carpet was laid. It was heartening to see so many members of the congregation come and support both working parties.

We are grateful to Mohammed who continues to keep the churchyard neat and trim, and to Brad Coates and the churchyard maintenance team.

In March we welcomed Rev Jade Scholes who was licensed to the South Cheltenham Team as an associate priest on 27 February. Jade will worship at St Peter's and support Rev Gary on an occasional basis while continuing her nursing career.

Social activities continue to flourish at St Peter's from regular chats over coffee on Sunday mornings to refreshments served after occasional concerts in church, special services and celebrations of festivals. We are grateful to the catering committee, led by Helen Yates, who undertake the organisation of many of these events.

The lights on the Christmas tree in the churchyard and round the lychgate during Advent have become a tradition. We are very grateful to Peter Davies who organises the lighting.

Brownies - 15th Cheltenham (St. Peter's, Leckhampton) Brownie Pack

Livvy Niblett

15th Cheltenham Brownies currently have 24 girls at the unit. We have been working towards both programme and challenge badges in some of our Brownie meetings. We have recently completed a food themed challenge badge. Our Brownies love any food related activities! We finished the Spring Term with a 'Bring and Share' picnic and enjoyed a lovely spread! This year we presented our unit's first Brownie Gold Award. This is awarded to girls who have completed all six Theme Awards from our programme. It is a huge achievement in Girlguiding!

We ran our own mini Christmas Tree Festival in December. The Brownies worked together in small groups to make decorations for a mini Christmas tree. We invited families along at the end of Brownies to vote for their favourite tree for a small fee. We were very pleased to raise a total of £60.00 for Winston's Wish and Deer Park Cowley.

We attended a District trip to Noah's Ark Farm Park in September 2023 and a cinema trip in January 2024. We are once again looking forward to making use of the outside space at the cottages and spending some meetings outdoors next term.

CCP (Caring for Communities and People) Donations

Gilly Whittingham

CCP relies on the generosity of supporters in the local community to donate food items for those living in poverty and struggling to provide food for themselves and/or their families. The demand for the CCP pantry has continued to increase over the last year, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis. Members of the congregation at St Peters have again, given generously to the foodbank over the last year. As well as the food and toiletry items left in the porch each week, I am aware that others make regular monetary donations. I visit CCP to drop off the donations, and I am always met with thanks by the staff members.

I endeavor to highlight, in the weekly newsletter, ways to increase donations at particular times of the year. The Lent appeal, which has now been going on for a few years, brought in a massive 143kgs of donations in 2023. At our Harvest Festival service in September the donations amounted to 111.2kgs. The Hamper Scamper appeal in the run up to Christmas brought in a further 24.6kgs. Together with the regular weekly contributions the total for 2023 amounted to 969.3kgs, only very slightly down on 2022.

A very big thank you to everyone who has donated, either with physical items or regular monetary donations.

Cheltenham Deanery Synod

Peter Davies

In the Church of England and other Anglican churches, a Deanery Synod is a synod convened by the Rural Dean (or Area Dean) and/ or the Joint Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod, who is elected by the elected lay members. It consists of all clergy licensed to a benefice within the deanery, plus elected lay members. Representing St Peter's Leckhampton with the Cheltenham Deanery are Peter Davies, Bradley Coates and Mike Riley.

The Area Dean for Cheltenham Deanery was The Reverend Gary Grady for part of the year and is now The Reverend Andrew Blyth. Reports containing minutes of deanery Synod meetings are regularly reported to the PCC at St Peter's. During 2023 meetings were held as follows:

- March 29 at St. Nicolas, Swindon Lane.
- July 19 at Christ Church, Malvern Road.
- November 22 at St. Matthews, Cheltenham.

2024 Meetings to date:

- March 7 at St Mary's Charlton Kings.

There is to be a Supplementary meeting at St. Christopher's, Warden Hill, on April 17 to learn about the new system of calculating Parish Share scheduled to be introduced in 2025.

Churchyard Maintenance

Brad Coates

This year we have joined by 2 new volunteers who are very welcome additions to our dedicated gang. We will be continuing to rewild as much of the churchyard as possible, so if you see the grass looking long, it is most likely intentional. Big thanks to all who continue to give up their time to keep our acre so beautiful.

Cottages Bookings

Liz Johnson, Parish Administrator

We have had steady bookings over the past year where the Cottages have been used by various church and community groups as well as private hirers. Church groups include Little Pebbles, Julian Group, Ladies Fellowship, the Choir and the Craft Group. Other hirers include private parties, primary school tuition, QiGong, other church's awaydays, Gloucestershire Spiritual Directors and Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council. We have Brownies and Rainbows each week during termtime.

To comply with our Eco Church ethos, I try where possible to order sustainable and fairtrade supplies for the Cottages. We encourage all hirers and church groups to use the recycling boxes and food bin in the Cottages: the recycling fairy (Liz) would welcome your help in this – please squash tins/plastic/cardboard where possible, only put clean items into the boxes and change the liner in the food bin after use.

Craft-T-Time

Helen Shill

We spent an enjoyable productive and creative year in excellent company making many craftworks! We made gift cards, knitted Baptism blankets for those getting baptised at St Peter's and premature babies clothes.

At Easter we knitted Decorative Baskets that could hold small Easter eggs for Care Homes nearby who look after the Elderly and were distributed by Anna Chaplaincy. We discussed and shared environmentally friendly cleaning products, embroidered, made window wreaths, paper card Easter cards and baskets which the children used to collect chocolate eggs in the Cottage gardens on Easter Sunday.

At Petertide, bookmarks were crafted and given to the Congregation. These were received with appreciation and reports of them being sent as far away as America and Australia to family members were made.

We began planning and preparing for Christmas in October, sewing and assembling Christmas tree decorations, making cards and knitting dozens of Christmas Stockings for local Care Homes, again for the Anna Chaplaincy . We even made our own ' Craft-t-time Christmas Pudding ' which we all stirred , let mature and ate together on the last week before Christmas which was jolly seasonal fun!

We were fascinated by Silk Painter Angela Tomkins , her display of finely produced scarves and paintings in February and were intrigued by her inspirational journey from unemployment during the pandemic to successful artist, surely bearing witness to God's wonderful creative intervention and love. Presently we are knitting 'springtime flower' coloured Easter Crosses which will be distributed to Care Homes for the Elderly within the next few weeks.

Having enjoyed sharing ; ideas, companionship and lively conversation along with a ' cuppa' , we are looking forward to more projects, welcoming newcomers and furthering interests.

EcoChurch

Richard Kerr-Wilson

The Ecogroup met six times during the year. We increased our numbers from eight to nine during this time. We had a talk to the group by Dr Peter Bonait from Bethesda Methodist church on how they had achieved their A Rocha Gold award, and a talk in church by Petra Crofton from A Rocha on 'Climate Change for All.' Articles were written in the Parish magazine on climate topics. Prayers in church are now included regularly for climate change and how it is affecting people, especially the poor.

The group continued to go through the A Rocha EcoChurch survey and discussed how we can progress to a Gold award.

In the church cottages, there is now an EcoChurch notice board. We agreed that we will install roof insulation, LED lighting and solar panels when funds are available.

In the churchyard, Ben Gilchrist carried out a second plant survey and we planted a rowan tree (*Sorbus acuparia*) in the southeast corner.

In future, we will be showing the film "The Letter – a message for our earth" in church on July 9th.

Thanks to all members of the group for their enthusiasm. New members are always welcome!

Electoral Roll Officer's Report

Eric Miller

The total number of names on the roll is 158, an increase of 13 on last year's figure. Further applications can be made at any time and regular worshippers are encouraged to add their names so that they can be contacted speedily with any important information. It is also the case than only those whose names are on the Roll may vote at the Parish Annual Meeting.

Flower Guild

Averil Murray

Well, this has been the first year under new management! I want to place on record my thanks to Kathy who is proving to be an exceptional secretary and to Sally for making the money situation so easy. Last year Veronica stepped down as co-ordinator after sterling years of service, but thank goodness she still interviews brides and deals with the weddings. As a mark of our thanks, we gave gifts of plants to Veronica and Margaret Kyffin who also resigned from the guild.

All our festivals went well and I particularly want to mention Advent. Putting the greenery into Oasis made it last longer and it had a better shape, so thank you everyone for your extra efforts. We are continuing to use the biodegradable Oasis, but since we have started using it, twice now Kathy and I have had to clear out mouse-induced mess where we have left old Oasis in black plastic bags. I think they like chewing it. We are going to have to find a hard plastic container with a lid to prevent the mice from having a field day.

We have now rationalised a lot of our flower mechanics, i.e. stands and vases, but it is still a tight fit and we need to be super tidy when putting stuff away in the cupboard.

I am pleased that the colour schemes have been adhered to throughout our festivals.

In conclusion, once again my heartfelt thanks to you all for your support and hard work, and I look forward to another successful year.

Julian Group

Jennie Hawdon

We have continued to meet together monthly in the Cottages. We are pleased to report that in the course of the year several new members have joined our original core group of four. There are now nine of us who come from all over Cheltenham to share a time of stillness and silence with God away from the clamour and demands of our busy world. As we come from different religious backgrounds and experiences, we have enjoyed some interesting discussions over tea and biscuits afterwards.

If you would like to join us, we meet in the Cottages on the first Thursday of the month at 2.30 pm. Contact: Jennie Hawdon for more details.

Junior Church

Liz Johnson

Junior Church provides activities for the children's area in church each week, with special activities for the 1st Sunday services. We continue to send out baptism anniversary cards which now contain an invitation to come along to 1st Sundays. We did not meet to make Christingles and Mothering Sunday posies as St Peter's was closed for these services due to reordering. We have still not resumed Sunday sessions, but intend to do so.

Ladies' Fellowship Group

Hermione Mason

It's been another enjoyable year for the Ladies Fellowship with more Ladies joining us. In April, Gary gave us an enlightening talk on prayer. Then in June we again visited North Cerney Gardens and while there were fortunate enough to see some Scottish dancing. Later in the year a group of us enjoyed an evening at the Tuckwell Theatre watching "The Great Gatsby" a good time was had by all. In December we had a lovely evening making Table Decorations, which due to the snow last year we'd had to cancel. As I write this report, tomorrow, for the first time, we are joining the Men's Group to play Skittles.

Leckhampton Bellringers

Stuart Tomlinson

This year we warmly welcome Ed Wicks and Jon Hill to our band. Ed started in September and will soon be ringing with us unaided in rounds. Jon is an experienced lapsed ringer and is proving very helpful at the top end of our band. I must also mention Peter Aylott, another experienced lapsed ringer. Although his home tower is Charlton Kings, he helps us out regularly at our Monday practices.

We continue to start our practice at 7pm with the focus being on our learners until soon after 7:30pm. This is working well. For the more experienced ringers, we aim to ring a different Surprise or Delight minor method each month.

We have good attendance for Sunday Service ringing and usually have enough to ring on eight, which is great. Most Sunday evenings we attempt a quarter peal, with assistance from other local ringers.

At the end of September, most of us plus several ex-Leckhampton ringers and friends spent a long weekend visiting The Lake District, where we rang at 17 towers. The trip was a great success, and we rang a wide variety of bells in some amazing churches. Chris kindly wrote an article about this, which was featured in the Ringing World magazine.

Early in the year Keith and Stuart dismantled, cleaned, and re-greased all eight clappers. Now, all the clappers swing more freely. The back bells are easier to chime and now rarely go up wrong stroke.

This year we purchased and built a hearing aid loop. This means that Bob can hear instructions from whoever is wearing the headset, without them needing to raise their voice. Thus, creating a calmer atmosphere and with less confusion. Bob can also hear the striking more clearly.

Stuart continues to visit the belfry roughly every 6-8 weeks to do a visual check of the bells and fittings. Everything is in good order, and we don't anticipate any significant work being required this year.

Leckhampton C of E Primary School Foundation Governors report

Mark Hambling, Susan Laurence, Sue Marlow and Revd Gary

Jane Allison and Gilly Whittingham have now stood down from the role of Foundation Governor. They were both thanked at a ten o'clock service with a bunch of flowers. Mark Hambling and Susan Laurence have been approved by the PCC to take on the role.

The Foundation Governors attended various committees which meet regularly including the Main Governing Body meetings three times a year. We have also supported in interviewing process for a variety of posts in the school.

We also are responsible for a curriculum subject and we visit teachers and the children to see it being taught in the classroom.. This was then reported back to the Governing Body.

They celebrated King Charles' Coronation by wearing red, white and blue and receiving a commemorative pin badge from the school.



In July we attended a B/Q with the staff. It was our way of saying thank you for all they have done during the year.

In February this year a working party met to lay a few bags of gravel on the childrens' Ows, Wows and Nows Garden and it is hoped the special space would be open soon for them to use.

Once a week each class leads worship for the whole school. Pine Class told the story of A Hundred Dresses which helped to further develop the children's understanding of forgiveness. Hornbeam class showed how important it is to show encouragement to others.

Children support many charities such as Red Nose Day, Pens4Kids and The Animal Shelter.

Children are encouraged to be Agents of Change and projects have been litter picking, encouraging walking to school and encouraging reading.

In March '24 the school is supporting a special fundraising day for Blue Skye Thinking, a brain tumour charity, which was set up by parents of pupils at Leckhampton School.

Sue and Mark were invited to visit the school in February '24 to review the Christian Distinctiveness in the C of E school. They took part in Y5 and Y6 worship plus a Y4 class worship. They talked to the Pupil

Parliament and observed how Christian values are integrated into the curriculum, school policies and peaceful places within the classrooms.

Both Rev Gary and Rev Jacqueline regularly led assemblies during 2023, including special services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, and for the Year 6 leavers in July. It was also wonderful to welcome all of the new Reception Year pupils to St. Peter's in October for a special welcome service, during which each child placed a hand drawn picture of themselves onto the altar.

Men's Group

John Laurence

The Men's Group continues to meet every first Thursday of the month, alternating between an evening session and a lunchtime session. We usually have between five and ten members attending, as we share good fellowship in the Wheatsheaf Inn. It is a very informal gathering although church matters often come into conversation.

In 2024 a joint St Peter's Men's Group and St Peter's Ladies Group, skittles evening has been organised. Later in the year, John Laurence plans to give a talk about the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, to which the Ladies will also be invited.

Those of us who attend regularly value the group highly, although we would encourage other members to come along more often, work and family commitments permitting.

Music

Kit Perona-Wright, Director of Music

Having been appointed as Director of Music in July 2023, formally starting during August (when the choir does not sing) whilst planning and preparing for the new choir year to resume in September with regular rehearsals and services – I am unable to comment on the first part of the year since the previous APCM. However, I am aware that the musical tradition at St. Peter's continued for those few months due to the loyal dedication of the choir members, various visiting organists, and particularly Tabitha Gilchrist and Laurence Jemetta. I am grateful to them all.

Coming to St. Peter's and returning to a Director of Music post within a local church environment has very much felt like a vocational calling. The warmth of the welcome from choir and congregation alike has been tangible, and Emma, Molly, Toby and I all felt very much part of this wonderful community within a short period of time. My thanks to everyone for that.

The music tradition at St. Peter's is clearly strong. However, there is always work to do with choir recruitment (adults and children), and there are always new ways to approach the enhancement of liturgy through musical means. My aim is only ever to build upon the strengths of what already exists, and seek to improve it further.

In terms of recruitment, we have welcomed a number of new faces into the choir since September 2023 – both children and adults, and work is underway to attract and recruit additional members through various avenues/links. Both Gary and I are working closely together to build links with various schools in the hope that we may establish fruitful relationships which might lead to new choir members. This is an important area of growth for the whole church community (not just the choir), and all possible support is much appreciated!

With regards to the choir, the repertoire has been purposefully expanded with new communion settings and anthems appearing alongside familiar favourites. This has been appreciated by singers and congregation alike, and we will continue to introduce new items during the rest of the year. This has required additional investment by the church, and I am grateful to both Gary and Peter M for their support.

We have performed a number of special services, which includes choral evensong for Harvest, 9 Lessons & Carols at Christmas (featuring brass quintet with organ and choir) and Stainer's Crucifixion on Passion Sunday (with James Gilchrist singing the tenor solo). We are also scheduled to sing evensong at Gloucester Cathedral in June 2024, which marks a new venture for the choir (performing at a Cathedral).

There are various exciting plans under discussion, ranging from considering new hymnbooks for the church, examining the possibility of commissioning a piece of music for the choir from a well-known composer, and reinstating some kind of music festival in the summer of 2025 (exact format to be decided in due course). There is enormous potential for the music at St. Peter's to not simply exist as it currently is – but to flourish and blossom into something truly special. I am very much looking forward to continuing this journey with the choir and church as a whole in the months and years to come.

Parish Magazine

David Webber, Editor

The Parish Magazine has continued to be published every month both in printed form and on the website. We have continued to maintain the integrity of the magazine by insisting that all articles are apolitical and, in accordance with Diocesan policy, the editor reserves the right to reject any contribution that he considers inappropriate.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the magazine, whether as a reader/subscriber, a contributor, distributor, deliverer or advertiser. As we print in-house costs are reduced and more colour has been used in the magazine. Although we have lost some advertisers the magazine accounts are in surplus. The value of the magazine is in its outreach and contact with the wider community. It remains a Church Magazine, not a Community magazine, though contributions from community organisations will be duly considered.

As a legal requirement, a hard copy is posted to the British Library.

An electronic copy is sent every month, at their request, to the Diocesan Press Office, and the editor makes a point of drawing their attention to any particularly noteworthy stories, just in case the magazine is archived without being read! Members of the Press Office staff have commented that they can always rely on the St Peter's magazine to have an interesting story.

Each year the magazines are bound into a hard copy, which is stored in the Parish Office and eventually in the Diocesan Archives.

David Webber remains as editor, Sue Marlow as Business Manager and Peter Davies as Distribution Manager, and Liz Johnson as printer.

Pastoral Team

Sally Marlow

The St. Peter's 'Pastoral Team' continues to support the clergy in the following areas:

- Keeping up to date with those who are ill, absent, or in need.
- Visiting the sick and housebound.
- Taking Home Communion to those unable to get to church in the short or longer term.
- Care Home ministry – leading a communion service (using the reserved sacrament) twice monthly at Hampton House and monthly at Middleton House and Lilleybrook Care Home. We resumed services at Lilleybrook in the autumn following the appointment of a new Activities Co-ordinator and have been encouraged by the warmth of the welcome we have received. Carol Services were held in all three homes this Christmas and were greatly appreciated and well attended.
- Bereavement visiting.

- Monthly Friday Lunch with Friends – restarted in September 2022 after a long Covid break and regularly brings 20+ people together for a shared lunch.

Wedding Preparation is now organised by the South Cheltenham Team. Baptism preparation is negotiated by Rev Gary with individual families.

The team meets every other month to share updates on all of the above areas and is made up of Rev Gary, Dereck Freeman, Jennie Hawdon, Penny Williams, Anne Webber, Steve Whittingham and Sally Marlow. We have been pleased to recently welcome Rev Jade Scholes to our group.

PCC Report

Chrissie Brown – PCC Secretary

Following last year's APCM, St Peter's PCC consisted of our Clergy, Readers, ten Lay members, one co-opted member and six Ex-Officio members. At our first PCC meeting following the APCM we elected our PCC officers. Rev. Gary Grady continuing in his role as Chair. David Webber and Sally Marlow elected to be our Church Wardens, Arthur Webb elected as Deputy Church Warden, Peter Marlow elected as Treasurer and Chrissie Brown elected as PCC Secretary. Richard Kerr-Wilson was co-opted onto the PCC to serve as our Eco Officer and has successfully steered St Peter's to achieve the Silver Eco Award.

Peter Davies, Brad Coates, and Mike Riley represent the PCC at Deanery Synod meetings and report any relevant information back to the PCC. Peter Davies and Helen Shill represent the PCC at South Cheltenham Team meetings and report any relevant information to the PCC. Helen Shill is also our Youth Representative.

The PCC have met five times during the last PCC year. At our meetings, the agenda has covered, building and ground maintenance, reordering, finance, safeguarding, a South Cheltenham Team and Youth update and Health and Safety. This year we have added a new agenda item of Eco Matters. Any other business can be added to the agenda as needed.

The highlights of the year have been the completion of a Lone Working Policy to enable people to work safely at St Peter's, welcoming our new Director of Music Kit Perona, endorsing the applications of Sue Laurence and Mark Hambling as Foundation Governors at Leckhampton School and finally endless discussions about the reordering project in church which has finally come to fruition. Melissa Webb also gave a presentation about St Peter's becoming Prison prayer champions for a six-month period.

The Standing Committee have met twice, and reports of any discussions were received by the PCC, discussed where necessary and recorded in PCC Minutes.

All PCC members have completed the Diocesan Safeguarding training.

Rainbows (37th Cheltenham (Leckhampton) Rainbows)

Maggie Ansell – Rainbow Leader

The Rainbows have now been at the cottages for 18 months and we are really enjoying having our weekly meetings here. We have had a busy time since Spring last year working on and completing unit meeting activities and skills builders which make up our Rainbow programme.

Our theme for the Summer term was 'Live Smart', the Rainbows started to develop key skills in areas such as money management, personal safety, cooking, career development and DIY – they particularly enjoyed being safety superheroes and all the activities which involved food!! We ended the Summer term with a Teddy Bears Picnic in the garden.

At the start of the Autumn term we welcomed 6 new Rainbows and started working on our 'Communicate' topic, exploring how they communicate and develop a variety of verbal and non-verbal techniques for communicating their messages. We also had a go at signing a song for our campfire evening. We ended the term with a Christmas party and presentation of Pots of Gold for Rainbows moving onto Brownies.

We began the Spring term welcoming 5 new Rainbows, and a Rainbow from another unit which unfortunately had to close – we currently have 16 girls in the unit but hope to be back to 18 after Easter. Our theme for the Spring term was ‘First aid’ and we looked at ways of developing skills in areas such as First aid kit preparation and use, coping in an emergency and casualty care. We had lots of fun with some practical activities involving mending our friends - learning how to apply a plaster correctly, bandaging, washing hands correctly and playing a game learning how to treat different types of bites.

Throughout the year I have been able to present lots of interest badges, theme awards and Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. We have also been fortunate to welcome some new adult helpers to the Rainbow Team.

Safeguarding

Sally Champion

St Peter’s continues to be committed to the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. There have been no serious causes for concern. Any issues are brought to the attention of Rev Gary and the PCC. Safeguarding is a required agenda item for every Standing Committee and PCC meeting. The policies are reviewed annually in accordance with Diocesan policy. Sally Champion remains as Parish Safeguarding Officer. Liz Johnson continues to act as Evidence Checker.

Sally Champion, as Parish Safeguarding Officer, regularly reviews the list of volunteers and employees. All individuals who required a DBS check, or a renewal, have been notified and asked to follow the DBS procedure. A DBS tracker is kept by Sally Champion as Parish Safeguarding Officer and Liz Johnson as Parish Office Administrator. All written declarations are stored securely in the Parish Office and are only accessible to Rev Gary Grady, Sally Champion, Liz Johnson and the Diocesan Safeguarding Office.

Invites to complete safeguarding training continue to be sent out to those who carry out roles which require it. Liz Johnson as Parish Administrator keeps a record of all training completed. The training must be refreshed every three years if the role is maintained.

Sally Champion has been contacted by Andrew Mallin-Jones, Safeguarding Officer at St Philip and St James, regarding delivering the Basic Awareness Safeguarding Course. Mr. Mallin-Jones has recently trained to deliver the course face to face. A requirement of delivery is that a second safeguarding officer is present to support anyone who finds the content of the course distressing. Sally Champion has agreed to support Mr. Mallin-Jones in this role on 21st March 2024.

Social Committee

Helen Yates

The Social Committee continued to support the Church Calendar in 2023 – with the following taking place:

On Mothering Sunday 19th March – Suzy kindly made her beautiful Simnel cake once again which was enjoyed with coffee after the service.

Hot cross buns were served following the Good Friday service and on Easter Day “fizz” was served along with coffee following the 10 am service.

Sunday 7th May - we celebrated the King’s Coronation held the day before – Suzy made a wonderful celebration cake which was enjoyed outside in the sunshine – with “fizz” of course!

On Sunday 2nd July – “Petertide” was celebrated – this was a “bring your own picnic” at 12 noon with the committee providing strawberries (grown locally at Shurdington) and cream. The weather brightened up just in time for about 40 people to sit outside with their picnics.

An evening of “Hymns and Pimms” was held on Sunday 16th July – the committee providing refreshments after the singing.

Pimms again was served after the Choral Evensong for Harvest on 1st October.

The All Souls service on the 5th November was well attended and refreshments were served at the back of the church. Following this very moving service of remembrance all worshipers had the opportunity to socialise together along with both Rev Gary and Dereck.

On the 17th December we welcomed over 90 people in the cottages after the Carol Service – serving mulled wine and mince pies.

My special thanks to Ro, Anna, Sally, Andrea, Penny, Pat and Helen “S” and especially our talented “star baker” Suzy and not forgetting friends who help us out – Val, Anneliese, Averil, Jim, Peter & Duncan – plus all the mince pie makers. Our thanks to Rev Gary for his ongoing support.

Our committee like to play a part in the “Ministry of Hospitality” in welcoming our family of St Peters and visitors at various events.....which could include a glass of “fizz”!!

South Cheltenham Churches Team Council

Reverend Gary Grady

The South Cheltenham Team is made up of St. Peter’s, Leckhampton, St. Philip and St. James, Leckhampton, St. Christopher’s, Warden Hill, St. Stephen’s, Tivoli, and Emmanuel, Naunton Park, the latter of which is in partnership with Cheltenham Network Church (CNC), who hold a Bishop’s Mission Order (BMO) for the Cheltenham Deanery.

Our shared vision is:

‘Our team will be joyful, prayerful and engaged with our communities. We will be thriving, growing congregations reflecting a vivid mosaic of spirituality. Shaped by our communities and working together with our ecumenical partners, we will offer a prophetic, Kingdom challenge. As a result, South Cheltenham will know itself to be loved and supported. Intrigued by what we do, they will have a growing awareness of our team and our Churches as the spiritual hubs of inclusive communities.’

During the past year, I have taken up the role of Team Rector, replacing Canon Nick Davies, who moved to be the new Vicar of Tewkesbury Abbey. We have also welcomed Revd Lauren Gate as the new Vicar of St. Christopher’s, Warden Hill, and Abbie Marsh as the new Youth Worker for the team.

At the time of writing, there is an advert in Church Times for a Team Vicar with responsibility for St Stephen’s and St. Philip & James; it is hoped that this post will be filled quickly in 2024.

The partnership between Emmanuel and CNC, part of the national C of E ‘mixed ecology’ strategy to enable neighbourhood and network churches to work together, has continued to flourish under the leadership of Revd Dr Sarah Haden.

The South Cheltenham Team Council meets quarterly, with representatives of each church working together to discern how we can share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in this area. Please continue to pray for the diversity and unity of the team, we are stronger together.

St Peter's Little Pebbles

Lara Skinner

Little Pebbles has been running well this year, we have a lovely community who attend on a weekly basis and occasionally we have new comers, or families that attend infrequently. We are looking forward to the summer weather when we will be able to free flow into the garden. Crafts we have done this year include cake decoration, bead threading, conker spiders and seasonal crafts (Easter/Christmas). The past few weeks it has been lovely to have Jade visiting and chatting to families – I think this is important in order to encourage church links/attendance.

Every school holiday I spend a couple of hours sorting and cleaning the toys and books, which we update from time to time.

We have a small group of volunteers but it would be wonderful if there is a couple more people willing to come along to help on an occasional basis.

Sunday Coffee

Ro Baillie and Joey Kerr-Wilson

Until 7 January 2024 when St Peter's closed for reordering the refreshments team have worked hard and conscientiously providing tea, coffee, squash, biscuits and sometimes cake every Sunday without exception. Our grateful thanks go to an excellent team of willing helpers. On occasions during the better weather a number of parishioners ventured into the lovely cottage gardens with their refreshments, relaxing in the sunshine and catching up on the week's news.

As always anyone who'd like to join the team please do get in touch with either Ro Baillie 07717 002752 or Joey Kerr-Wilson 07990 813122.

APCM Youth Update

Abbie Marsh – South Cheltenham Team Youth Worker

I started my role as youth worker in April 2023. Sarah H had done a brilliant job of caretaking and handing over the youth ministry to me. I had the privilege of being a part of the Confirmation classes on Tuesday evenings and the service at Pip and Jim's. This was a great way to meet many young people across the churches and an encouragement to see young people take this step in their faith.

I worked hard first of all to get our safeguarding up to date, and this has been an ongoing commitment across the past year. A recent safeguarding audit made us feel grateful for all the work we have put in!

One of the exciting projects that I have had the opportunity to be part of, is the new worship evenings starting in Cheltenham. Tim O'Leary from Trinity has set up a youth project called Fabric and as part of that has developed a steering group to lead regular worship nights. I am part of this steering group along with some brilliant local youth workers. We are in the process of preparing for our second event in March, and our South Cheltenham young people are looking forward to joining for the next one.

I had a meeting with Balcarras school just before the summer holidays last year, and they gave me permission to pull a team together to set up a CU at Balcarras. Since the autumn term we have meet meeting every Wednesday lunch time. Our group is mainly sixth-formers at the moment, a mixture of those who go to church and don't (or used to go but don't at the moment). I will be involved with year 6 services in the summer term, to engage with young people coming up from primary schools and letting them know about our work.

An exciting community project is in progress. I am a trained personal trainer, and currently taking two level 2 up-skill courses that will allow me to run fitness groups for young people. My vision is that, once trained, this will be a tool to meet a massive need for young people in our community at the moment which is around mental health and wellbeing.

I am really encouraged by the growth of the youth team and representation from across our churches. We have had some great times praying and meeting together and getting to know one another more. We could not do what we do without this fantastic group of people who are committed to loving and serving our young people, as well as reaching out to young people in our community.

We have had 37 young people on our register who have connected on a Tuesday or Sunday since the beginning of the Autumn term. We have 18 young people (same people from our number of 37) coming to the YFC weekend away at the end of February, which we hope will be a really special time.

We had two young people aged 16 do work experience over the summer. Thank you to those who got involved with this! As part of this, we ran a board game café for children and young people which gave us the opportunity to meet young people in our community for the first time.

One of the things I am really passionate about is young people being an active part of the church (should they wish to be). Across the team, we see this through young people being in choir, helping out in services, running tech, and helping to run community events such as the recent pancake day event. We hope that we can allow young people to grow in living out their faith and getting stuck into church life wherever they would like to.

We continue to have regular youth groups on Sunday at CNC/E and Pip and Jim's. We continue to have a weekly whole team youth group on Tuesday evenings. The friendships across our churches in the youth group are really special. We are trying to run a termly 'big social' to invite young people from our community to join us for. The last one was our Christmas meal and silent disco, and the next one will be an inflatables evening.

Please continue to pray for Sundays, Tuesdays, schools work, community socials, the weekend away, and the new community project. My biggest prayer is that the young people we have will continue to grow in faith, and that we will be able to engage with more young people in our community.