



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Annual Parish Vestry Meeting
followed by
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 14th May 2023 at 11.30am
in the Church

St Mary the Virgin, Linton

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1. AGENDA FOR 14TH MAY 2023

Part A - Vestry Meeting

1. Prayers
2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Vestry Meeting held on 8th May 2022
3. Election of Two Churchwardens

Part B - Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 8th May 2022
3. Matters Arising
4. Parochial Church Council Report 2022 - 2023
5. Electoral Roll Report
6. Financial Report followed by appointment of Independent Examiner
7. Fabric Report
8. Deanery Synod Report
9. Election of Deanery Synod representatives and PCC Members
10. Reports from Groups and Activities
11. Rector's Report
12. Questions from the floor
13. Closing Prayers

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2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISHIONERS' VESTRY MEETING, SUNDAY 8TH MAY 2022

The meeting held in the church, began with prayers at 11.30 and was chaired by Dr David Parry-Smith, Lay-Chair of the PCC. David explained that the Incumbent would usually chair the meeting but as we were in a Vacancy or Interregnum, the role fell to him as the Lay-Chair. Thirty-seven parishioners were present.

Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parishioners' Vestry Meeting of Sunday 23rd May 2021 were accepted as a correct record.

Election of Churchwardens

There were two nominations for Churchwarden: David Watts and Charlotte Ellis. They were unanimously elected for a year. David was first appointed in 2017 and Charlotte in 2021.

David Parry-Smith thanked both churchwardens and said that we were very grateful for all that they do for the parish, especially during the Vacancy.

It was noted that at the March 2017 PCC meeting, members had agreed that the normal term of office for a churchwarden at St Mary's should revert to being 3 years, with the option of extending to a maximum of 6 years if wished; and still to be elected annually in line with the guidelines in the Churchwardens Measure 2001.

3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING, SUNDAY 8TH MAY 2022

Apologies

Nanette Blackmore, Margaret Cox, Helene Evans, Brian and Janice Grey, Charlotte and Mark Hays, Glynis and Michael Younger.

Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of Sunday 23rd May 2021 were accepted as a true record.

Matters arising

There were none.

The reports presented to the 2022 meeting are summarised below and can be found on the church website www.stmaryslinton.org.uk. Look under Resources and APCM reports.

Parochial Church Council Report May 2021 – April 2022

The pandemic was still part of everyone's lives in spring 2021. The 3rd national lockdown was gradually relaxed from April 2021 and the first service back in church was on Easter Sunday. Covid measures were discussed at each PCC meeting in order to comply with the appropriate guidance. The Sunday 10am service continued to be offered as a Zoom alternative. This was made easier once the phone line to the church had been installed and

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Wi-Fi was available. Paper copies of worship material continued to be delivered weekly to some 20 households unable to access online information.

The Revd. Canon Dr Maggie Guite's last service was at the beginning of July. It was a joyous occasion, held in the churchyard to maximise numbers yet still observe social distancing and singing was also allowed. An evening outdoor picnic with presentation of gifts took place later in July. We wished Maggie and Malcolm a happy retirement but saw them leave with some sadness as we entered the Vacancy.

The PCC set up a sub-group at the July meeting to work on the Parish Profile, prior to advertising for a new Rector. This was a Team document and Molly Warrington generously offered to compile and edit the contributions.

The PCC met via Zoom for four of the five scheduled meetings until March 2022 when we chose to meet in church. Regular agenda items included reports from the churchwardens (in lieu of a Rector) and the four main PCC committees: Finance & Stewardship, Fabric, Children & Families and Events. Reports were also received from the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Ministry Team for worship and spiritual initiatives, St Mary's two Deanery Synod representatives and the Chair of Governors at Linton C.E. Infant School. Aspects from the seven objectives in the Mission Action Plan were included in discussions. Extending Children and Families ministry was a particular focus and saw the start of Linton Make Lunch Club.

Financial Review – to 31st December 2021

Income of £134,381 and expenditure of £124,727 resulted in a surplus for the year. However, Sue Ellis, Treasurer, pointed out that was due to a successful Gift Day and some legacies. The regular outgoings are kept to a minimum but still exceed the regular income, including gift aid refunds. The Parish Share, paid to the Diocese, is a significant sum and is beyond our control. Other expenses are closely monitored. Sue mentioned two additional ways to raise funds – by using Give as you Live or Amazon Smile for online purchases. The church then receives a percentage refund with no cost to the individual – see details on the finance page of St Mary's website. Sue commented that a deficit budget had been set for 2022 and there are ambitious plans for future projects.

Sue Ellis proposed that Kate Sargeant be reappointed as Independent Examiner; seconded by David Watts and agreed by those present.

David Parry-Smith thanked Sue Ellis for being treasurer with calm equanimity and efficiency and added that a stewardship officer is still required. David thanked Suzanne Darkins for chairing the Finance and Stewardship committee. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Sarah Thorne, seconded by Lawrence Powell and agreed by those present with no one against and no abstentions.

Electoral Roll Report

The report from Jo George, Electoral Roll officer, stated that four people had been removed from the Roll and one new name added so the number was recorded as 126. New lists were displayed on the internal notice board by the church door. The Electoral Roll was completely revised in March 2019.

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Fabric Report

Richard Tonry's report listed minor work undertaken and described proposals for future work, such as repairs related to the Quinquennial report and a major re-lighting project for the church. Tenders had been received and the Faculty application submitted.

Deanery Synod Report

Andrew Gore and David Parry-Smith had been elected to represent Linton on the Deanery Synod from the APCM in October 2020 until 31st May 2023. The Synod met three times during the year. Meetings usually start with a one-off presentation, followed by business discussions. Linton involvement remained strong as Michael Younger continued to be Deanery Treasurer, Anne Parry-Smith was Secretary and Andrew Gore was Lay-chair. In addition, the Bishop invited Michael Wilcockson to succeed Simon Talbott as Rural Dean.

Election of Parochial Church Council members

Continuing members on the PCC were confirmed as:

Elected in 2020: Sue Ellis, Sue Mudge, Patricia Scofield, Michael Younger.

Elected in 2021: Helene Evans, Sarah King, John Organ, Richard Tonry, Molly Warrington.

Churchwardens (ex-officio): David Watts, Charlotte Ellis.

Jacqui Burge and Gill Powell, both elected in 2019, had served their three year term of office. Ed Andrade, elected in 2021, had moved from Linton. Thus there were 3 vacancies.

The electoral roll number allows for up to 12 elected members. One nomination had been received for Sarah Nickolls. Jacqui Burge had indicated her willingness to be re-elected and was proposed and seconded at the meeting. Andrew Cornell-Webb also offered to stand and was proposed and seconded. These three people were duly elected.

The requirement for retiring members to stand down for at least a year had been removed from the updated Church Representation Rules 2020.

Reports from Committees and Organisations

Reports from the following groups were included in the 2022 APCM booklet in paper form and on the website:

Beacon Youth Trust; Bell ringers; Events committee; Flower Ministry, Linton C E Infant School; Church links with Linton Heights Junior School; Children and Families Ministry; Together with God and Space for the Spirit services; Mothers Union; Music Ministry; Pastoral Group; The Friends of St. Mary's; The Monday Gang.

Additional comments were made and some questions taken from those present at the meeting.

Beacon Youth Trust – Trustees from St Mary's were very pleased to have Cynthia Mukoko appointed to the youth work role in November and anticipated that the youth work would really grow within the village, especially as Covid restrictions had mostly ended.

Bell ringers – David Parry-Smith thanked Stephen Croxall, Tower Captain, and said that it was wonderful to hear the bells ringing for Wednesday practice and on Sunday mornings.

Events committee – thanks to Charlotte Ellis for her leadership.

Infant School – thanks to Nicola Collard and the Foundation Governors for their time and guidance to help the staff and pupils in all aspects and especially to promote and maintain the Christian ethos.

Linton Heights Junior School – Covid measures had limited the children's visits to the church. However Gill Powell commented that she was currently Chair of Governors and personally had strong links.

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Together with God services, Space for the Spirit by Zoom, the activities of the Mothers' Union and visits from the Pastoral group all enriched the spiritual life of church members.

Music Ministry – David Parry-Smith asked anyone who would like to make a donation to the cost of the new hymn books to speak to him or to Sue Ellis.

Friends of St Mary's – Chris Morse noted that the Friends had agreed to underwrite the cost of £114,000 for the proposed QI works and re-lighting the church, but the PCC had been asked to source some grant funding. Chris asked how that was being approached and recommended that someone be asked to coordinate the task. Two names were mentioned of local people who had success in raising money and who could be a source of information.

Monday Gang – continued to maintain the churchyard but with a dwindling group of volunteers. David Parry-Smith drew attention to the recent damage caused in the Peace Garden and destruction of a bench.

Churchwardens' report

David Watts and Charlotte Ellis had produced a comprehensive report which was read at the meeting and then added to the church website. They wished to thank the many people involved in the life of St Mary's who, by doing their part, also made the role of churchwarden run more smoothly and included the various members of the Ministry Team. David thanked Charlotte for being willing to be elected a year ago and for her refreshing 'can do' attitude. Charlotte in turn thanked David for sharing his knowledge and experience.

There were no further questions.

In conclusion, Gill Powell welcomed the list of reports from groups but also wished to point out that the spiritual side of church life is strong – indicated by the study groups which followed the 'Living in Love and Faith' course, the recent Lent course entitled 'Difference' and the forthcoming 'Thy Kingdom Come' for the period between Ascension Day and Pentecost. Gill was fortunate to have had dinner with the Archbishop of Canterbury recently at Lambeth Palace. She had talked to others present and was startled to find that they had little knowledge of these initiatives. Gill asked a question of the Archbishop and he seemed surprised to hear of these St Mary's activities. In spite of the Vacancy, we continue to grow and develop our faith – in line with one of the aims in the Mission Action Plan.

The meeting ended with prayer at 12.30.

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4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL 2022 - 2023

Administrative Information

St Mary's Church is situated in Church Lane, Linton. It is part of the Diocese of Ely within the Church of England. The correspondence address is 4 Bakers Lane, Linton, Cambridge, CB21 4NF. The registered charity number is 1138508.

PCC members who have served from the APCM in May 2022 until this report are:

<i>Incumbent</i>	Rector - Vacancy until Revd Paul Seaton-Burn installed in February 2023 The Revd Michael Wilcockson, Curate from July 2019, Associate Priest November 2021	
<i>Churchwardens</i>	Charlotte Ellis David Watts	
<i>Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs)</i>	Sarah Thorne Cathy Watts	Children and Families Minister Safeguarding Officer
<i>Representatives to the Deanery Synod</i>	Andrew Gore David Parry-Smith	from October 2020 - 31.05.23 from October 2020 - 31.05.23
<i>Elected members</i>	Jacqui Burge Andrew Cornell-Webb Sue Ellis Helene Evans Sarah King Sue Mudge John Organ Sarah Nickolls Patricia Schofield Richard Tonry Molly Warrington Michael Younger	from APCM 2022 from APCM 2022 from APCM 2020 - Treasurer from APCM 2021 from APCM 2021 from APCM 2020 - Secretary from APCM 2021 from APCM 2021 from APCM 2022 from APCM 2020 from APCM 2021 from APCM 2021 from APCM 2020

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules, updated in 2020. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Objectives and activities

The PCC of St Mary the Virgin has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for St Mary's Church and for the Pavilion adjacent to the Church.

Numerical performance in 2022 - 2023

With the continued easing of Covid restrictions throughout 2022, we have seen more people return to the church despite being in vacancy throughout the year. Easter saw the biggest increase with the numbers attending double that of last year. Christmas Eve and Christmas

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Day were 40% up on the previous year. This brings attendance at both services back to pre-pandemic levels.

Our regular attendance during the week has shown some improvement and is back to pre-pandemic levels with the gradual reintroduction of services at Symonds House, Nichols Court and the Friday School Service. The Sunday 8am congregation is back in size to what it was pre-pandemic. The 10am service has seen some growth in numbers with new faces but is still below pre-pandemic levels in size. Behind all this is a hidden worshipping community who are provided with paper copies of the services taking place each Sunday to use in worship at home. Other regular weekly services, Thursday communion and Friday evening prayer, draw a steady number of worshippers.

Review of the year to April 2023

This has been another challenging year after the two previous years which were hugely affected by Covid lockdowns and subsequent restrictions on worship and other aspects of our lives. Covid measures in church generally were enforced immediately when announced, but then were slow to be removed; requiring discussion, risk assessments and due consideration of each other's needs and concerns. Some practices still remain in our worship, such as nodding to each other when giving the Peace rather than shaking hands and some people prefer to accept only a wafer at Communion and not share a chalice. Numbers at Sunday 10am services often seem to be fewer than three years ago and some members may now find it difficult to be physically present. Members of the Pastoral Group visit people regularly on behalf of the church.

Another aspect which took additional time at PCC meetings was the impact of having to continue for a further nine months without a Rector, giving eighteen months in total for the Vacancy. The recruitment process took longer than desired and the position was advertised three times. We were very pleased to welcome Revd Paul Seaton-Burn at his Collation and Induction service in February. It is said that a Vacancy can be a catalyst for change but there have been several items discussed at PCC where it seemed prudent to wait and consult the Rector before making longer term decisions. The Mission Action Plan spanned five years from 2017 – 2022 and is now in need of a thorough review to consider current and future priorities.

The appearance of scaffolding in church from January to March 2023 heralded the major scheme to undertake repairs specified in the five-yearly inspection, to completely re-design the lighting system which had been ineffective for years and to paint the plasterwork. This meant that the church was closed during the week and most of the furniture had to be moved around. The Infants' School had to relocate their Friday assembly service to the school hall and Thursday 10am communion was held in the pavilion. David Watts and helpers spent a great deal of time cleaning and rearranging chairs at the end of each week so that Sunday services could continue along with some of the social events; coffee mornings and two talks accompanied by afternoon tea. We also managed to hold the Collation and Induction service for Revd Paul midweek, after discussing whether the service ought to move to one of the Team churches if we could not accommodate enough people in Linton. Contractors kept to their schedule and the scaffolding was all removed by Easter. A deep clean is required and there is still some sorting out to be done, especially in the Resurrection Chapel, but the improvements should be immediately visible. Fabric projects seem to involve such a lengthy process with potential for many delays before work can start. We are indebted to The Friends of St Mary's for funding the project. It was hoped to acquire some grants to help fund the work but this has not been possible for a variety of reasons.

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Services by Zoom had been developed during Covid times and continued to be offered until the autumn with a break during August. Issues were experienced with connectivity. A trial was run using better equipment but given the overall deficit budget, it was decided that we could not support the expenditure of around £9,000 and therefore Zoom services were suspended. The number of people engaging with the Zoom services was very low, often only one person – unlike the experiences of some churches where Zoom participants had helped the overall congregation to grow.

Since March 2022 the PCC had met in person in the church, rather than by Zoom. The church was preferred as it was more spacious than the pavilion but it was very difficult to hear each other when members were spread out and the lighting was very poor in the evenings. The meetings reverted to the pavilion in January 2023. The PCC had the usual six meetings during the reporting year, with the Standing Committee able to confer on specific items between meetings. The September meeting was on the evening of the 8th, just when the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had been announced. As news unfolded over the following few days, it became apparent that forthcoming events should be cancelled: namely the monthly coffee morning, a talk and afternoon tea, the harvest supper, a Mothers' Union meeting and the open meeting for Linton and Bartlow people to discuss the Deanery Development Plan. It was to have been a busy eleven days. The Linton Book of Condolence was placed in the church for anyone to sign during the period of national mourning.

St Mary's responded to the perceived need for warm hubs to help people cope with higher fuel bills. David Watts registered our interest and attended online meetings. A number of volunteers offered to help and Liz Hunt co-ordinated a rota. Our hub was in the pavilion on Thursday morning after the 10am service and complemented the others in the village, which were held at the Free Church, library and football pavilion. See the summary in section 9.10.

Every PCC meeting includes a report from Cathy Watts, Safeguarding Officer. All PCC members are required to be DBS checked and have taken online training. The PCC upholds the House of Bishops policies of 'Promoting a Safer Church' and 'Protecting all God's Children'. The Ely Diocesan website has an extensive safeguarding section. It includes a Parish Dashboard which gives excellent advice and allows us to ensure that we are compliant with current policies and procedures. There is safeguarding information on the home page of St Mary's website and also displayed in church.

Reports were received at each PCC meeting from various PCC committees and activities within the church community: the Children and Families team, the Pastoral Group, the Ministry Team, the Chair of Governors at Linton C E Infant School, the Events committee, the Fabric committee, the Finance and Stewardship committee, the Deanery Synod, the Beacon Youth Trust. More can be found about all these activities and others later in this document in section 9.

Church finances are not good as can be seen in Section 6. We approved a deficit budget for 2022, had to transfer funds from reserves and we are in a similar position for 2023. This cannot be sustained in the long term and severely restricts further development of projects for mission and other initiatives. Income does not cover the current expenditure; a large proportion of which is the Ministry Share paid to the Diocese and thus out of our control. The PCC has spent time discussing the financial situation and considering how it might be

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improved while also being mindful of the general financial pressures experienced by everyone.

The Events committee was formed to develop the social life within the church and aims to provide a wide range of activities, as well as hospitality after special services. It is a bonus when events make a profit and any surplus generally goes into the church funds. Sometimes an event will be dedicated to a specific charity such as the May coffee morning which is the main village fundraiser for Christian Aid and replaces the previous door to door collections. Lent Lunches were organised again by Celia Fisher at different people's homes and money is raised for a different charity each year. Collections from Christmas services are dedicated to specific charities.

Many residents in the village appreciate having the church available at different times in their lives. People enjoy the churchyard during the changing seasons and the Peace Garden, developed and maintained by volunteers. It was very sad when the benches in the Peace Garden were destroyed by unknown people. Seating has not yet been replaced. A small group of Village College pupils has been witnessed being disruptive in other ways.

We are grateful to all those people who willingly give their time and skills to help with the mission and outreach of the church – for example the Foundation Governors for the Church Aided Infant School, the Trustees representing St Mary's for the Beacon Youth Trust, the volunteers who help with the Children and Families Ministry under the guidance of Sarah, the Pastoral visitors, the various committee members working behind the scenes planning and enabling the activities of our church family and of course members of the Ministry team for their spiritual guidance and leading services. We especially thank David and Charlotte, our two churchwardens, for all that they have done during the Vacancy and Revd Michael Wilcockson for being so willing to take regular services along with help from other clergy.

Sue Mudge
PCC Secretary

5. ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

The Electoral Roll is the Parish Church's register of electors, who are therefore qualified to attend and vote at the Annual Parish Church meeting where the elections take place for membership of the Parochial Church Council, and the Deanery Synod.

Last year the number on the Roll was 126. Six new names have been added giving a total of 132 people.

You can be added to the Electoral Roll if you have been baptised, and are over 16, and either 'live in the parish', 'live outside the parish and have attended St Mary's for six months' or 'are a member in good standing of another church and have attended St Mary's for six months'.

If you would like to be added to the Electoral Roll or have any questions, please do contact me – jo.george@stmaryslinton.org.uk

Jo George - Electoral Roll Officer

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6. FINANCIAL REVIEW TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022

Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of St Mary's, Linton

This report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2022, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and s.43 of the Charities Act 1993 ("the Act").

Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the Examiner

As members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and section 43(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43(7)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, SORP 2005 edition, issued by the Finance Division of the Archbishops' Council. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements – to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and – to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Kate Sargent

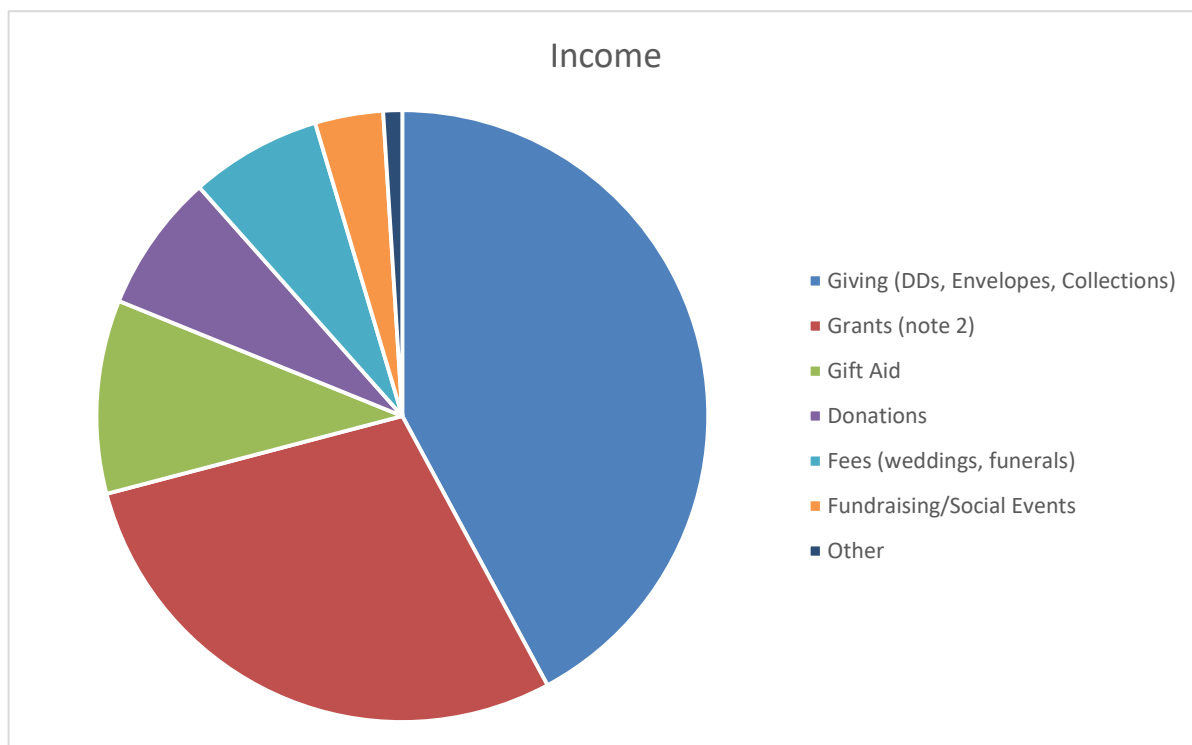
16/3/23

Independent Examiner

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Financial Review 2022

In 2022 an income total of £140,758 was received by St Mary's. This compared with expenditure of £163,111, **leaving a deficit of £22,352.**



Giving (the largest element of income), increased a little, although regular giving through direct debits fell slightly. This source of income, particularly through the Parish Giving Scheme¹, is particularly important as it is fairly predictable from year to year. Tax recovered through Gift Aid is also a significant part of income, and this also fell slightly in line with the reduction in tax-efficient giving.

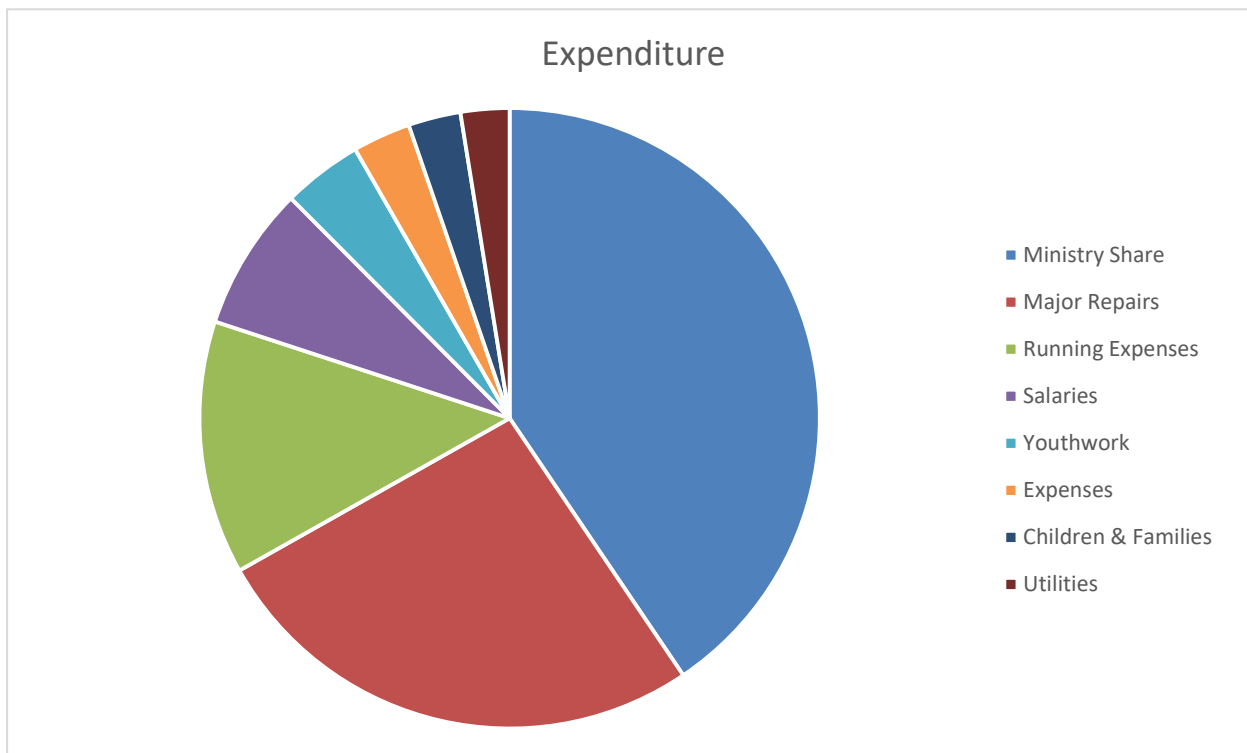
Grants are another important part of income, and we are extremely grateful to the Friends of St Mary's for a grant of £36,389 towards major repairs. The PCC would also like to thank the Anderson Trust and Parish Council for their continuing generous support. All grants, and some donations, are for specific purposes.

It's worth noting, too, that a proportion of fees income from weddings and funerals is sent to the Diocese, and not retained in the parish.

¹ Please ask the Treasurer for more information.

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The largest item of expenditure, as always, was the amount contributed to the Ministry Share. This is the sum sent to the Diocese, to enable us to have a full-time Rector, as well as



contributing to some central administrative and mission costs. The PCC has committed to paying the Ministry Share in full; however, it is unable to cover this from regular giving.

As the graph shows, the second biggest chunk of expenditure was the sum paid for capital expenditure in the form of major repairs. A large proportion of this was covered by grants from the Friends of St Mary's. Similarly, a proportion of expenditure on Children and Families work was supported by grants.

Though the PCC has managed to trim general running expenses, the church must be maintained in good repair, and we aim to provide a welcoming and well-maintained space for everyone. Other priorities include supporting the valuable work of the Beacon Youth Trust, which took most of the PCC's allocation to charitable giving. Other charitable donations, despite being augmented by special collections, represented too small a proportion of expenditure to show on the chart.

Providing some administrative support for clergy, as well as covering their expenses, are other PCC priorities, and a 5% cost of living increase was agreed to the payments covering Administrator, Children and Families Minister, Director of Music and organists.

Other, smaller items of expenditure, including pavilion running costs, outgoings for social events and training costs – though important - are too small to include in the chart above.

The Balance Sheet summarises the funds of the church. Some sums within this figure are 'Restricted', in that they have been given for a specific purpose only. Other sums are

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‘Designated’; these have been set aside by the PCC for specific purposes. The ‘unrestricted’ General Fund amounted to £30,412 at the end of 2022 (£11,060 less than last year).

What is the PCC doing about this?

The PCC had already trimmed its outgoings and sought to increase income, for example through a Gift Day in 2021. Faced with a projected deficit at the end of 2022 and a deficit budget in 2023, the PCC took the decision not to proceed with proposed new equipment for Zoom services at the present time and not to initiate or support fund-raising for any new projects until such a time as income and expenditure were more closely aligned.

In order to address income, the PCC agreed also to try to stimulate increased giving from the parish. In particular, it will encourage membership of the Parish Giving Scheme which prompts participants to agree a giving increase each year linked to inflation. It agreed further to appeal to the wider community, stressing the place of St Mary’s within the community.

Summary

Despite an apparently healthy-looking balance sheet, the funds of the church are precarious, with expenditure in excess of income by around 16%. In 2022 the deficit was financed by reserves. If the current situation continues, the church’s reserves will have run out in less than two years, forcing the PCC to reassess priorities and to take ever more difficult decisions to keep costs down.

Reserves Policy

In 2022, the PCC continued with its reserves policy; to retain a sum of £22,500 for urgent repairs and as contingency cover.

Financial Statements

The financial statements which follow comprise:

A statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) for the year, showing all resources made available to the PCC and all expenditure incurred by it, and reconciling changes to funds.

A return of Parish Finance which shows the same information but gives a breakdown of income and expenditure.

A Balance Sheet showing assets, liabilities and funds.

Accounting Policies

These accounts have been prepared under the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and in accordance with the Charities SORP (2005) and applicable standards. The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission under the name of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Linton, Diocese of Ely, charity registration number 1138508.

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St Mary's Linton Statement of Financial Activities

For the period from 01 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Incoming resources					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income	122,793	1,707	—	124,501	117,435
Activities for generating funds	4,224	841	—	5,065	5,705
Investment income	468	25	—	493	6
Incoming resources from charitable activities	10,698	—	—	10,698	11,233
Other incoming resources	—	—	—	—	—
Total incoming resources	138,184	2,574	—	140,758	134,381
Resources used					
Cost of generating funds	—	—	—	—	91
Cost of generating voluntary income	—	—	—	—	—
Fundraising trading cost of goods sold and other costs	1,044	—	—	1,044	232
Charitable activities	160,942	1,124	—	162,066	124,325
Governance costs	—	—	—	—	—
Total resources used	161,987	1,124	—	163,111	124,649
Net incoming / outgoing resources before transfer	(23,803)	1,449	—	(22,353)	9,731
Transfers					
Gross transfers between funds - in	11,461	191	—	11,653	—
Gross transfers between funds - out	(11,122)	(531)	—	(11,653)	—
Net incoming / outgoing before other gains / losses	(23,464)	1,110	—	(22,353)	9,731
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains / losses on investment assets	(1,180)	—	—	(1,180)	—
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	(24,644)	1,110	—	(23,533)	9,731
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	90,859	4,631	—	95,491	85,759
Total funds carried forward	66,215	5,742	—	71,957	95,491

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St Mary's Linton Return of Parish Finance for year ending 31 December 2022

Incoming Resources	2021 £	2022 £
Voluntary Income		
Tax efficient planned giving:		
Gift Aid - Bank & Parish Giving Scheme	49,793.89	49,553.94
Gift Aid - Envelopes	1,220.00	1,125.00
Total tax efficient planned giving	51,013.89	50,678.94
Other planned giving	4,596.80	4,333.00
Loose plate collections	1,951.83	4,282.43
Regular Gift Days	6,106.00	
Giving through church boxes	518.26	557.09
One off Gift Aid gifts	5,795.00	1,210.00
Donations, appeals, etc (note 1)	5,901.05	8,522.74
Tax recovered through Gift Aid	15,373.56	14,405.81
Legacies	16,000.00	
Non-recurring one off grants (note 2)	10,178.89	40,511.29
Total for voluntary income	117,435.28	124,501.30
Activities for Generating Funds		
Other funds generated (note 3)	2,572.62	795.89
Summer Event		
Christmas Events	885.15	
Social Events (note 4)	2,247.43	4,269.35
Total for Activities for Generating Funds	5,705.20	5,065.24
Bank and building society interest	6.87	493.87
Church Activities		
Fees for weddings and funerals	10,908.00	9,788.00
Pavilion lettings	325.75	910.00
Total for Church Activities	11,233.75	10,698.00
Total for Incoming Resources	134,381.10	140,758.41

St Mary the Virgin, Linton

St Mary's Linton Return of Parish Finance for year ending 31 December 2022

Resources Expended	2021 £	2022 £
Costs of Generating Funds		
Summer Event Costs		
Christmas Event Costs	91.83	
Costs of Social Events (note 4)	232.38	1,044.86
Total for costs of Generating Funds	324.21	1,044.86
All Mission Giving and Charitable Grants & Donations (note 5)		
Giving to missionary societies	718.50	778.50
Secular Charities	1,785.30	1,157.78
Youth Inc	300.00	300.00
The Beacon Youth Trust	6,500.04	6500.04
Total for All Mission Giving etc	9,303.84	8,736.32
Church Activities		
Ministry Share	65,032.83	66,322.187
Salaries (note 6)	11,373.11	12,268.30
Expenses (clergy, pastoral staff, etc)		
Working expenses of Incumbent	480.00	480.00
Rector's telephone	52.50	
Children and Families Ministry (note 7)	3,182.66	4,463.11
Total for Expenses	3,715.16	4,943.11
Parish Training and mission	48.00	423.27
Regular Church running expenses (insurance, cleaning, admin)		
Visiting speakers/ locum	149.20	
Church running - insurance	3,359.76	3,493.34
Organ / piano tuning	0.00	235.00
Church telephone/Wi-Fi	2,394.50	201.22
Church maintenance	5,115.32	3,273.12
Cleaning	0.00	18.98
Upkeep of services (note 8)	10,156.98	11,957.61
Upkeep of churchyard	45.50	205.91
Administration	2,224.37	2,174.66
Flowers (note 9)	257.60	47.00
Total for Regular Church running expenses	23,703.23	21,606.84

St Mary the Virgin, Linton

Resources Expended	2021 £	2022 £
Church utility bills (gas, electricity, water)		
Church running - electric	647.28	1,401.90
Church running - gas	2,830.75	2,718.77
Church running - water	41.84	42.96
Total for Church utility bills	3,519.87	4,163.63
	2021	2022
Costs of trading Pavilion		
Pavilion running - electricity	259.67	522.25
Pavilion running - maintenance	358.59	440.33
Pavilion running - water	41.84	42.93
Total for Costs of trading	660.04	1,005.51
Total for Church Activities	92,457.84	110,309.57
Total for Resources Expended	108,052.24	120,090.75
 Major Capital Expenditure	 2021	 2022
Church major repairs	6,752.41	43,021.08
Peace Garden	294.19	
Total for Major Capital Expenditure	7,046.60	43,021.08
Total Expenditure	124,726.89	163,111.83
 Total Income	 134,381.10	 140,758.41
 Total Expenditure	 124,726.89	 163,111.83
Balance	9,654.21	-22,352.42

St Mary the Virgin, Linton

Balance Sheet As of: 31 December 2022

	2021 £	2022 £
Fixed Assets		
Pavilion (note 10)	500	500
Investments (note 11)	<u>10,000</u>	<u>28,819</u>
	10,500	29,319
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in-hand	<u>95,672</u>	<u>48,825</u>
	95,672	48,825
Current Liabilities (note 12)		
LCHT	6,510	2,693
Linton Parish Charities	<u>4,250</u>	<u>3,494</u>
	10,760	6,187
Net current assets less current liabilities	84,911	42,637
Total Assets less current liabilities	95,411	71,957
Total net assets less liabilities	95,411	71,957
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
Unrestricted – general fund	41,472	30,412
Designated		
Designated – Contingency	22,500	22,500
Designated – Mission action plan	10,722	
Designated – Pavilion (note 10)	500	500
Designated – Children and Families Ministry (note 13)	15,587	12,804
Restricted		
Restricted – Anderson Trust	757	64
Restricted – bells	1,412	1,422
Restricted – Churchyard (note 14)	344	238
Restricted – music	2,117	1,518
Restricted – Organ fund		2,496
Funds of the Church	95,411	71,957

St Mary the Virgin, Linton

Notes to Financial Statements

Return of Parish Finance

1. Donations include monies given through the good box and our new Payaz. It also includes donations made to the organ fund and for the new hymn books.
2. Grants received this year include £460 from the Anderson Trust, £100 from the Parish Council, £36,389 from the Friends of St Mary's, £602 from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, £600 from Ely Diocese to help towards heating bills. For Children and Families Ministry: £650 from Transforming Lives for Good, £370 from the Anderson Trust, £500 from Tesco and £400 from Warburton.
3. The income from other funds generated includes £32 from the book stall, £50.23 from 'Give as you Live' and £38.36 from Amazon Smile. We also received £63 from the Ride and Stride, £150 from Church bookings and reimbursement from the diocese for our visiting priests.
4. Social events include refreshments after services as well as organised events. Costs were higher this year as ticket money was refunded for both the Harvest Supper and Ely Cathedral tea and talk which were both cancelled following the Queen's death.
5. Charitable giving this year includes £500 to USPG, £500 to Haverhill Foodbank, £94.50 to Friends of the Holy Land, £350.93 to the Poppy Appeal, £120 to C M J and £64 to toilet twinning. Also £300 to Youth Inc and £6,500.04 to support the work of the Beacon Youth Trust. In addition to this the May coffee morning and afternoon tea and Quiz organized by Pam Richardson raised over £1,500 which was sent directly to Christian Aid.
6. Salaries relates to payments made to our organists and parish administrator. It also includes an honorarium for the enormous amount of work carried out by our Children and Families Minister.
7. Children and Families covers all expenses relating to young people, including Boxes of Hope and Make Lunch costs.
8. Upkeep of services includes fees paid to Ely and Non-Stipendiary priests for taking weddings and funerals.
9. Flower costs have largely been covered by separate collections and the generosity of the flower arrangers.

Balance Sheet

10. Pavilion at cost £77,031. This has been depreciated and is shown at a nominal value of £500.
11. Investments: The CBF Church of England Investment Fund - Accumulation Shares. The value at 31/12/22 was only £28,819 despite having invested a total of £30,000.
12. Liabilities represents funds held for the Linton Community Help Team and Linton Parish Charities.
13. The Children and Families Ministry category is money donated specifically for Children and Families Ministry.
14. The Parish Council gave us £500 in 2020 to cover on going expenses of the Monday Gang.

Sue Ellis, Treasurer

St Mary the Virgin, Linton

7. FABRIC REPORT

The Fabric Committee met in June and December 2022

Works to the fabric of the church

QI works to the exterior of the Church commenced in November 2022 with installation of scaffolding to access the east belfry light for repairs to the stone tracery, and to the vestry and chancel for roof cleaning and tile replacement. Minor repointing of open stone joints and repainting of window bars was also done, along with lifting and replacement of badly cracked and delaminated pammments to the nave floor. Following lengthy discussions with the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and their Architectural and Environmental advisors, during which they initially suggested the nave roof should not be lit to save the PCC money which then got twisted to be a contribution to the Diocese and C of E drive for Net Zero, the proposals for the relighting were approved in full by the Chancellor on Friday 13th January, just in time for the work to start as programmed on Monday 16th January. The lighting scheme and redecoration of the interior were completed within the original contract end date of 31st March. Extra works included the levelling of the floor in the south aisle, and repairs to the opening lights in the north clerestory windows which were found to be badly distorted. There is outstanding conservation work to the columns and floor at the entry to the Resurrection Chapel which is due to be carried out week commencing 15th May.

Fixed installations and services

NG Bailey has so far proved more responsive and reliable than Kershaws, and the heating system has been running well. The time clock in the old control unit failed before Christmas meaning the boilers had to be controlled manually for a time, but a Hive thermostat was installed on 8th February, and Nanette can now control the system remotely using her phone. A leaking pipe was discovered by the decorators when moving furnishing at the base of the tower, and NG Bailey were able to repair this promptly in time for the Installation of Revd Paul Seaton-Burn.

The roof alarm system continues to work as expected. The only notifications received continue to be because of minor power cuts.

The contract for the fire security installations has been maintained.

Church furnishings

Other than movement of pews and chairs to accommodate the scaffolding, there have been no changes since the last APCM.

It is still hoped to replace of some of the remaining pews with chairs like those in the nave, although the DAC Advisors suggested that we may not get permission to dispose of the pews. This and other elements of the proposed re-ordering, such as the provision of a new oak storage area in the north aisle, will be contingent on finance and DAC approval.

The Churchyard

The resurfacing of the paths in the Churchyard, by Parish Council contractors, was finally carried out late last year, but there is a tendency for a puddle to form outside the north door after heavy rain. The PC contractors are due to return and install a drainage system to rectify this.

We are grateful to the Monday Gang for their continuing commitment and care of the churchyard.

Other land

As reported to the 2021 & 2022 APCM, the land between Church Cottage and the previous Rectory was retained by the Diocesan Board of Finance when the Rectory building was sold. Andrew Gore has obtained quotes for resurfacing the section of Church Lane and works to the parking area. The PCC has agreed that Andrew should negotiate with the Diocese on funding of this work.

St Mary the Virgin, Linton

Relationship with the Friends

The Friends agreed last year to underwrite the considerable cost of the QI works, redecoration and re-lighting, but expected the PCC to apply for any grant funding that may be available towards the cost; unfortunately no grant applications have been successful so far. To date the Friends have provided funding of £83,000 for the works with a further £23,000 due shortly. Will anyone not already a member of the Friends please consider joining, and, if possible, contribute to the appeal for donations as outlined in recent issues of the Linton News.

Richard Tonry.

Chairman, Fabric Committee, on behalf of the Churchwardens

8. DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

The Synod of the Deanery of Granta met on three occasions during the year, at St Mary's Bartlow on 6th July 2022, on 7th November 2022 at St Mary Magdalen Ickleton, and on 14 March at St Mary the Virgin Great Shelford. David Parry-Smith and I have continued to represent St Mary's on Synod.

At the start of the Synod Year, we were completing our work on Living in Love and Faith. From the responses received about opinion in the parishes and from informal conversations it seems that most parishes in the Deanery either welcomed the decision of the Bishops, as approved by the General Synod, to permit the offering of blessings to people who are in a same-sex partnership, or at least feel they can live it, whether they think it a misstep or that the Church should have gone further. One conservative parish in the Deanery deprecates the decision. The officers of the Deanery consider for their part that their responsibility is to acknowledge the differences that exist and to try to maintain amity within the Deanery.

The year has been dominated by work on the Deanery Development Plan. This is intended to be a realistic plan for the life of the church in the Deanery over the next 5-10 years. After presentations to the clergy and laity by Bishop Stephen and Bishop Dagmar, it was decided to establish a lay planning group comprising one member from each benefice. A series of meetings was held with the laity of each parish or groupings of parishes to facilitate the process and we are at a point where the planning group has produced a draft report which is now being discussed between the Rural Dean and members of the clergy. We hope a final proposed plan can be approved by the first meeting of the new Synod on 12th July. We hope to see some new initiatives taken during the plan period, such as chaplaincy work at the various research institutes in the Deanery. It seems possible that a small number of parishes may need to transfer to "festival" status during the plan period. We hope this can be avoided, both so as to maintain a full Christian presence in every parish and because when a church becomes a festival church, a greater financial burden falls on the other parishes in a benefice.

During the year, Revd Paul Seaton-Burn was instituted as Team Rector of the Linton Group of parishes, Revd Dr Julie Norris as half-time Vicar of Great Shelford and Revd Mandy Flaherty as half-time Vicar of the Harston/Hauxton/Newton group of parishes. Whilst Julie's appointment represents a reduction in the Great Shelford role, Mandy's appointment represents an increase in the Harston role, her predecessors having held the post on a House for Duty basis. It is a pleasure to record that at the date of this report, the Deanery has a full complement of clergy in post and we pray that stability will be carried through into the early years of the new Deanery Development Plan.

Youth Inc, which exists to promote work with young people across the Deanery, has continued to flourish under its recently appointed youth worker and its Chair is doing great work developing provision for young people in the many parishes which cannot afford a paid youth worker of their own, but its continuation depends on financial support from all the parishes of the Deanery. The

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proceeds of the Spring Fair in 2022 went to Youth Inc. it is hoped to hold the Fair again in 2024, with the proceeds again going to Youth Inc.

More people have been trained for the Mental Health First Aid Group in the Deanery.

Anne Parry-Smith retired from the post of Deanery secretary at the end of 2022 after 7 years and we are all very grateful to Anne for her dedication and commitment to the Deanery during that time. Michael Younger, who filled the role of Deanery Treasurer for over 5 years, also stood down in December. Michael made the Deanery finances, which had previously been opaque, clear for everyone to understand. He also held the finances together during the difficult period of Covid.

Not all parishes within the Deanery have been able to pay their parish share in full following the Covid outbreak and it seems unlikely we will get back to 100% collection in the foreseeable future. This has consequences for the Deanery. Our only source of income is interest earned on our reserves, which during the period of low interest rates was insufficient to cover our day to day expenses. The Deanery is very grateful to those parishes like Linton which even in hard financial times meet their commitment to the Diocese in full.

Andrew Gore, Deanery Synod representative for Linton and Deanery Lay Chair.

9. REPORTS FROM GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

The following are reports from Church activities, including some services. Thanks to all those who have contributed reports. The text has been left in the original style provided by the author. The named individual can provide further information about any aspect.

9.1. BEACON YOUTH TRUST REPORT

The following is an extract from the BYT end of year report from Cynthia Mukoko, Youth Development Worker:

'Beacon Youth Trust (BYT) has engaged **315 young people in total** from April 2022 to March 2023 with **172 being regular participants** who have attended BYT Youth clubs and activities in the community or school more than once. This has been achieved through **515 face to face youth hours** including youth clubs, 1:1 mentoring, alternative education provision (art, music and home cooking), holiday activities, and detached in schools and in the community. It has taken a dedicated team of **4 members of staff**, a board of Trustees, **29 volunteers** and support from partners and funders.

We have worked with Creative communities to deliver creative craft sessions which took place during the spring term. In partnership with the Anglia Ruskin University through Romsey Mill, an 8-week self-development programme from May to June engaging 20 young people online and face-to-face was delivered.

Beginning of the summer term young people from Linton nominated by BYT Youth Workers were recognized and acknowledged at the Youth Leadership Awards hosted by Romsey Mill. They received awards in front of an audience of 100+ people including their family and friends.

We also trialed new activities like basketball following the sessions at Linton Heights Junior School. Our Youth Development Worker identified a group of young people who enjoy basketball. This inspired the idea to trial basketball sessions during the summer holidays. There was a lot of interest, even from the older youths. 12 young people participated and we look to develop that once a volunteer basketball coach has been recruited.

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We were involved in the planning and delivery of The Queen's jubilee event in Linton where we were responsible for some of the children and young people's entertainment and activities with the help of 26 volunteers and 2 members of staff. We had 6 face painting stations, served teas and coffees to parents that were waiting and managed zorbing balls activities in the recreational ground.

End of 2022 our lead youth worker suffered from a family bereavement, leading to a period of time of absence for 2 months. The number of hours of delivery was affected but the rest of the youth work team and volunteers stayed committed and flexible to ensure that as many sessions as possible were still able to continue and that young people were able to access youth work support.

Beginning of 2023 Emma Slater, the youth support Worker moved on to lead Youth Work in Cambourne so recruitment for a new youth support worker is in progress.

It has been a year since the joint Churches together project was relaunched. This project is about local Churches in Linton and surrounding areas together with BYT uniting to work together to create a community of young Christians in the village. There is a weekly fellowship, bi-monthly youth church service, a youth band and 23 young people have attended both. They have explored biblical topics, had open discussions, prayed for each other, built strong relationships and they continue grow together in Christ.

The following paragraphs describe how two young people have benefitted from BYT.

** Sarah and James are not the real names of these young people.*

Sarah* has been involved with Beacon Youth Trust (BYT) since she was in Primary school at Linton Heights Junior School. She then, later, became a more regular attendee from April 2022 participating in the afterschool youth clubs and holiday activities. Her school referred her to us for more support, 1:1 mentoring support due to some challenges in school. She said she found school challenging because of the pressures of school work and having to stay concentrated. She also struggles with managing friendship groups and building positive relationships but her favourite times are when she goes on trips with her friends during half term/ holidays with BYT. Our Youth Workers have developed positive relationships with her mother and her head of year. They work together to give her the best support.

Sarah is very good at cooking, baking and cleaning so her 1:1 session has developed over the months. She is now doing a Bronze accredited Home Cooking award and she shares what she makes in those sessions with her family and friends reflecting her growth in confidence and positive progress. She would like to someday start her own baking business to share her passion and skills with the community.

In her own words Sarah said "I like that I can have someone to talk to whenever something happens. I feel safe, comfortable and free when I am here (BYT) and the toast is amazing."

James* has been involved in BYT activities since the summer of 2022. He was not a regular attendee until he was referred to BYT because of a managed move to another school which took 3 months +. The school wanted him to be in an environment he could improve his social skills since he was being educated offsite while waiting to be moved to another school. His first time attending a youth club he was very anxious but after a while we have seen him become very confident in interacting with others and building friendships. He even gets to the youth club very early out of excitement, and he looks forward to the evenings he is able to attend. Being a part of the youth clubs has helped him meet new people and develop his social skills even though he struggles with meeting new people he

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has improved tremendously. James will now be starting to receive 1:1 support with the new Youth Support Worker and we look forward to working with him and seeing him flourish.'

We are grateful for the partnership with Romsey Mill. As the official employer of the Beacon Youth Trust's youth worker, they took the lead in recruitment and also provide valuable management, networking and training support.

The Trustees from St Mary's are Hannah Foote, David Watts, Michael Wilcockson and Hugh Paton (treasurer), along with Stephen Munday (chair/secretary), Daniel Gilbert and Alasdair McBean from Linton Free Church.

9.2. BELL RINGERS

Ringling has continued over the past year with regular ringling for the 10am Sunday service and on Wednesday evenings for the weekly practice. Following a slight dip in numbers after the pandemic, we have benefitted from a ringer moving into the village as well as encouraging steps being taken by two new learners in recent months. Ringling stays at a more basic level, but the standard of this ringling is still high as evidenced by our recent triumph in our first match of the Gipson Trophy, a friendly striking competition involving other villages in the area. The year also saw us mark the death of the Queen with the ringling of fully-muffled bells over the 10 days following the announcement; a huge thank you to all involved.

We are always on the lookout for new learners, or for new ways to share what we do with the wider community. If you are interested in finding out more please contact our secretary Sue Ellis on sue.ellis@stmaryslinton.org.uk

Stephen Croxall
Tower Captain

9.3. EVENTS COMMITTEE

The Events committee has continued to run events across the past year. Our monthly coffee mornings are well supported. We have also had events such as a Seder meal, a play entitled Whiteblade, a harvest supper, the Hadstock Silver Band concert, a diary date raffle, a New Year's Eve party, an afternoon tea with the film Waterlight, an afternoon tea with a talk by Tim Breitmeyer and a games afternoon. We have also provided refreshments at special services such as Remembrance Day, the Carol service and at Paul's Collation service. The aim of the Events committee is to enhance the social life of the church and to cover the costs of running any event. We are very pleased to let you know that this year we have managed to make a surplus of over £4,000 for church funds. Thank you to our supporters and those who willingly offer cakes and other food when required.

Charlotte Ellis, Chair

9.4. FLOWER MINISTRY

This year we have four weddings booked and another yet to be confirmed. I am pleased to say that two of our arrangers have been asked to do the flowers at three of them.

We are blessed to have such talented arrangers within St Mary's and all will be doing a flower arrangement to celebrate the Coronation of Charles III on May 6th.

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I do hope that you enjoy the many floral arrangements that are displayed around the church. Last year I mentioned the cost of flowers and like everything else, these have gone up too. If you would like to give a donation or contribute towards the costs please let Sue Ellis know.

We are always looking for new people to join us so if you feel that you would like to give it a go, please speak to me.

Nanette Blackmore, Verger and one of your flower arrangers
nanette.blackmore@stmaryslinton.org.uk

9.5. LINTON C E INFANT SCHOOL

School life and wellbeing

As most of you will be aware, we were all delighted with the 'Good' judgement we were awarded after the school was inspected last July. We were in a strong position, with teachers feeling secure in their lead subjects/areas enabling them to talk about their practice with confidence and knowledge. This was a fantastic springboard to carry us into a new academic year.

From the start of the Autumn term until now, we have experienced a very high proportion of staff absence, owing to legitimate and varied reasons. For a small school, the impact is significant. This has led to a greater strain on teachers and TAs needing to cover and it has been an exhausting time for many. Despite the situation the school has kept the children safe and flourishing in their learning; a testament to such a strong team of staff.

Children continue to be well supported. Provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Pupil Premium (PP), and those with English as an Additional Language (EAL), and everyone in between are being well provided for and encouraged to achieve the best of their potential. We have good pastoral one-to-one therapies in place and a new sensory room, all of which support the mental health and wellbeing of our children. With so many children needing additional help, (34 Pupil Premium and 11 on the SEND register), the level of care we are able to provide, is something of which the Infant School is very proud.

Every member of staff was gifted an Easter posy of flowers, presented in decorated jam jars with a personal handwritten Easter Blessing. These were put together by myself, Jacqui Burge and Cathy Watts and were given on behalf of everyone at St Mary's. The staff loved them.

Curriculum

The curriculum continues to be rich and varied.

We have a new School Improvement and Development Plan in place for the year with six areas of foci. We have a Governor version, a parent version and even a children's version of it, so that everyone feels part of being involved in helping the school to achieve our vision.

We continue to see the Mastery in Maths develop further, reading and phonics benefiting from new approaches and a raised profile. The embedding of the new Emmanuel project for RE is going well and we have been presented with the new framework for SIAMS (School Inspection for Anglican and Methodist School) and continue to work closely with our Representative at the Diocese. Assessment has also been a focus across all areas and we have been looking at ways we can further improve our tools for measuring progress.

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Other activities and trips help to enrich the curriculum. The RA Art Competition has been one of the things which the whole school entered again this year. The school has enjoyed book theme days and the return of school trips like the Christmas pantomime in Haverhill, a visit to the Sedgwick Museum in Cambridge, and most recently a most wonderful performance of shadow puppetry and live music enjoyed by the Year 2 children at Stapleford Granary.

Governing Body

We managed to fill the Parent Governor Vacancy very quickly; Sian Payne took up her role in September and has been a valuable addition to the team.

Michael Younger will be stepping down as Foundation Governor in July. Michael has been a member of the Governing Body for many years and has brought so much to his role. He has been heavily involved in many areas of Governor responsibilities, sitting on various committees and panels over the time he has been with the school. Michael is both a professional and supportive friend to many Governors and staff and we will be sorry to see him go...but not completely!...Michael has very kindly agreed with me to sit as an Associate Governor, as his broader experience in Education will be very valuable to us on an as and when basis. I would like to take this opportunity to express huge thanks to Michael.

As a C E Infant School, eight Foundation Governors are nominated by St Mary's PCC out of a total of fourteen governors. The other six are Jacqui Burge, Katherine Croxall, Moire Jarritt, Hannah Foote, Cathy Watts and Michael Wilcockson.

A good level of monitoring has been maintained despite the problem with staff absence. I very much feel we are in good communication with staff and that Governors are very much in touch with how the school is progressing and what their responsibilities are as 'Critical Friends'. Governors have dedicated much time and energy to attending training, Committee meetings, panels and visiting staff; we have much for which to thank them.

Budget

The school has been struggling with a deficit for the last three years, which is not uncommon given the broader picture. However, we have suffered particularly with low intake numbers, which is the biggest thing which has negatively impacted the budget. We have continued to monitor the budget closely and the financial team has done a really good job to do all they can to keep costs down wherever possible. We hope that with new housing in Linton and surrounding areas that this will change and we will see an upward turn in applications for 2024.

We are about to launch a Facebook page to help broaden marketing for the school. There are still people in our locality who believe the school to be at capacity! We are also going to make some additions to the school website, our 'shop window', and headline some of the many positive comments made by parents and quotes from the Ofsted report.

The growing popularity of clubs and the offer of before and after school clubs has been very successful and has been a major contributor of income for the school. The PTFA also continues to raise much needed funds, which go directly towards things like trips for the children.

Nicola Collard
Chair of Governors

St Mary the Virgin, Linton

Friday Church

Since the scaffolding went up in church, Sarah Thorne and I have been bringing Friday Church to the school building every week. While it's a shame that the children miss coming to the church building, it has worked well and has been lovely to be celebrating and learning together within their environment. A positive experience. We will be back in church after the Easter break.

Up until December in the Autumn term we told bible stories to demonstrate every one of the Fruits of the Spirit, which are the school values. Over the spring term after the story of creation and new beginnings, we went through the Old Testament and talked about people who were chosen to do special jobs for God, like Noah, Abraham, Samuel, Elijah and Moses. We even had a visit from Brian the Lion, mascot for the Linton Children's Book Festival!

Friday Church continues to be such a joy. We feel that the children are remembering and learning so much. They are given space to wonder and contemplate and to follow up a related challenge for the week. Questioning and discussion are products of some of the seeds sown! As is their nature, the children are wonderfully profound and at the same time beautifully simple in their thinking. We have a lot of fun too, enthusiastic song and prayer and help in telling the stories is something that the children really look forward to every week.

Nicola Collard LLM

9.6. CHURCH LINKS WITH LINTON HEIGHTS JUNIOR SCHOOL

The Heights held their Harvest celebrations at church for the first time in a while, which was lovely, Michael Wilcockson and I welcomed and ended with a prayer and blessing at both services. The school choir often sings at the bigger festivals and services at church as we are still in close contact with Emma Mason who leads music at the Heights.

Assemblies at school have still not been resumed. The head teacher has always been very open and supportive of the idea. However, it has simply been due to a lack of availability and time for those with skills to lead an assembly.

Nicola Collard LLM

9.7. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES MINISTRY

Rooted in God. Rooted in Community; We believe our ministry amongst the children of Linton and their families demonstrates both!

We support families from pre-natal stage to age 13 and aim to encourage families to make the journey of faith together.

Brief highlights from the past year include:

- Baby Steps course - a five-week baby spirituality course was held in November with another planned for May/June
- Tots in Tow - our 'open door' event for anyone caring for babies, toddlers or pre-school children continues to thrive
- Christenings. Rev Michael and Gill Powell have continued to work with families enquiring about christening, with 5 baptisms in the past year.

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- Linton Infants School 'Friday Church' - we have managed a full year without Covid breaks! Refreshments are now served to parents before the children arrive, which has been a very successful move.
- The children's area was well-used until the scaffolding was erected. We have secured funding from the Anderson Benefaction to purchase screens. These will be used to display children's art work and also to promote christenings and appropriate events.
- Messy Church - we celebrated 10 years of Messy Church in January. Sessions held in the village hall have been very well-attended.
- Make Lunch - the team have continued to serve a hot healthy meal during school holidays. We have been approached by Cambridgeshire County Council to register for the Holiday Activities and Food scheme, which will unlock funding for children whose family receives benefits.
- Platinum Jubilee - We were overwhelmed by the response at our activity tent during the Party in the Park, celebrating the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne.
- Christmas - we invited the whole Linton community to join our Advent Windows journey through the Christmas story. Books were given to all the children at Linton Infants School and those who attended the crib service or Christmas services.
- Easter - Linton Churches Together Easter trail brought people of all ages together. We also had a visit from a donkey, who appeared to enjoy the attention!

Thank you to all those who have played a part in the ministry with children and their families; to those who have played, baked, glued, washed up, encouraged and prayed for families. Please will you continue to hold the children and families of Linton in prayer, and those who work with them, as we move into the next year.

We seek to see where God is at work and join in!

Sarah Thorne on behalf of Children and Families Team



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9.8. TOGETHER WITH GOD

This more informal, contemporary service continues to add to the rich pattern of services we offer at St Mary's. Many of our congregation appreciate that a great deal of time and effort goes into preparing for this monthly worship, and the services have always been hugely appreciated and enjoyed by those who have attended.

During the year Nicola Collard felt it right to step down and Lindi Kent has taken up the reins in helping to plan and deliver the TWG services. I thank Nicola for all her hard work, creativity and wisdom; she is greatly missed.

Our focus has been on making the services accessible to new families whilst offering biblical teaching on a theme and allowing a good mixture of worship songs and more traditional hymns. Over the year we have continued to build on the good relationships built with our Tots, Messy Church, Make Lunch and baptism families.

We are very grateful to our pianists, to Jacqui, Tom and Russell, and our various singers and musicians who really add to the worship. Together they provide mostly contemporary, reflective and uplifting worship. We enjoy hearing other instruments played from time to time and the number of singers in this group has increased too! Huge thanks to them for helping to make our service what it is.

I'm very grateful to Sue Filby who has joined the team and who is full of creative ideas and so willing to share her expertise and faith during these services.

One feature has become the 'takeaway', a small token to take home as a reminder of the service and its message.

With a new incumbent there are plans afoot to widen the team with a focus on mission and outreach to the village.

Two recent standout moments; as a congregation we were able to wish Leslie a very happy 100th birthday during a service and Bella from the infant school came to celebrate her 'Courageous Advocacy' trophy and certificate which she had



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just been awarded from the diocese. She is the first pupil to gain this award; it was a special moment to have her and her family with us and to strengthen the ties with our church school.

TWG continues to be a service which allows for much creativity, inclusiveness and deep reflection in simple form. We are very much invested in how we shape these services and thankful for God's guidance and blessing each month.

Cathy Watts LLM

9.9. SPACE FOR THE SPIRIT

Space for the Spirit has continued to provide a short monthly space for peace and reflection. We meet by Zoom on the third Tuesday of most months at 7.30 pm for around 40 minutes and usually around 25 people attend.

Space for the Spirit takes the form of a set of Reflections, rather than a standard service. Each set of reflections contains a mix of secular and spiritual ideas, with music, poetry, readings, videos and images to think about. Every month we take a theme, with topics during the previous year including Doors, Stones, Listening, Power, Feet, Rain and Healing.

Space for the Spirit seeks to provide a calm, quiet and reflective time at the end of the day, with anyone of any age welcome to attend. You are not required to actively participate, and there is no chat afterwards. Do get in touch at sfts@stmaryslinton.org.uk for more information or for your name to be added to the monthly circulation list.

Molly Warrington

9.10. WARM HUB

We have run the warm hub in St Mary's Church Pavilion every Thursday from November 2022 to March 2023. It has been open from 10.30 -2pm (officially 11-2). The first hour had good attendance with up to with up to 13 people, many of whom stayed after the 10am service, but there were only 3 people attending for most of the opening hours including 1 person who used it as a flexible working space.

Volunteers and visitors were asked to complete a questionnaire in March in order to assess the impact and value of the initiative. The people who came enjoyed the facility and opinions vary on whether it should continue.

The volunteers enjoyed their roles, made new friends and were always willing to help. Some brought in soup, cakes or toasted sandwiches and this has been really appreciated by all. Everyone enjoyed talking to the attendees and we had 3 or 4 volunteers each session. We played games, did puzzles, some brought their knitting, poems to read, quizzes to solve. There were enough people on the rota so that no-one felt overburdened and there will no doubt be others that would join the team.

Having talked through the logistics we feel that there may be a need for a warm hub but it needs to be more central in the village and in a neutral environment. Some people may have been put off by the church setting and also the name as it could be seen as a comment that some people cannot afford their heating. Community café might be more appropriate and this name has worked well in other villages where there are fewer overall facilities but the café is always busy and very warm.

Advertising the facility would need to be really good to reach the people for whom it was intended and the central locality would also encourage this.

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There does not seem to be a comprehensive list of this type of facility across the village and it would be good to have this and advertise it so that people are aware of all that goes on. For example Nichols Court and Chalklands have coffee mornings; there have been warm hubs at both Churches and the Cricket/football pavilion; the library has different events and there are craft days etc. Once we know how many different things are happening, it might help with a decision as to whether there is an appetite for a “Hub” next year. Perhaps The Linton News could be approached to help?

The volunteers would be happy to continue with a centralised facility which had good uptake.

Liz Hunt

9.11. MOTHERS’ UNION

The Linton Branch of the Mothers’ Union normally meets on the third Monday of the month, at 7.45pm in the Church Pavilion. Everyone is welcome to attend. The programme for the year is on the Church website.

In May 2022 we enjoyed an entertaining talk ‘Make Do and Mend in the War Years’ and heard about the growth and summer travels of the Southend Children’s Choir from Katherine Fisher in June. July was time for our annual picnic in the Churchyard and in August we successfully repeated our MU run coffee morning, now a regular fixture in the church coffee morning schedule. Our September meeting was cancelled as it fell on the same day as the Queen’s funeral. In October we were treated to a fascinating talk about the ‘Female Ancestry of Jesus’. November was the AGM. Our Christmas party was found to clash with a concert in Church and was moved to early January. The current year started well with a return visit by Katherine Fisher to talk about the Choir at Christmas when they give several weekend performances at Claridges. Nanette Blackmore gave us ‘An Alternative History of St Mary’s: a Verger’s Eye View’, then Kathy Bishop shared a Lent mediation focusing on Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem and in April we were privileged to hear the background to Lindi Kent’s decision to train as an LLM.

Members offer each other practical support and prayer at difficult times in our lives and aim to uphold the worldwide Mothers’ Union Vision. Present in 84 countries, our members are not all mothers, or even all women. They are single, married, parents, grandparents, or young adults just beginning to express their social conscience. MU provides a network through which they can serve Christ in their own community. If you would like to know more about the Mothers’ Union, please don’t hesitate to contact Margaret Smith, Denise Thurston or Sue Mudge or check out www.mothersunion.org.

Sue Mudge

9.12. MUSIC MINISTRY

It is always interesting to look back and see what has been achieved over the musical and liturgical year. The choir sings regularly on Sundays for the Parish Eucharist, but also takes part in special services during the year e.g., for Remembrance and Advent and when requested for weddings and funerals. The music group provides for the Together With God service.

Several members of the choir sang (and helped with the administration on the day) in the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) choirs Festival at Ely Cathedral in May. Everyone appreciated the chance to make music together at this Festival after a long interval and it was encouraging to have a large and appreciative congregation. Music for the service was taken from the RSCM publication “God’s church for God’s world.” This contains much useful material which is being put to good use by the choir in services in Linton.

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David was Team Leader for the Ely RSCM during the difficult pandemic period and prior to that chair of the previous RSCM committee. Anne had been Secretary as well. A presentation was made to us both at the cathedral as we have now stepped back from these roles after several years' service.

Being equidistant from Ely and Bury St Edmunds Cathedrals is helpful, and several of us sang in another RSCM Choral Festival this time at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in October.

There was a large and enthusiastic choir for the Deanery Ascension Day Service. It was lovely to welcome singers from other parishes in Granta Deanery. It was good too to sing at the Patronal Evensong in Linton in October. The Carol Service attracted a very large congregation despite the poor weather and the earlier World Cup Final!

Other special occasions during the year have included the Collation Service for our new Rector in February.

We were very sad to report the death of our long serving and faithful choir member, Alan Clarkson at the end of 2022. The choir sang at his funeral and will play a major part at his Thanksgiving Service in April.

The choir has coped with great patience with the many changes in seating arrangements while the lighting works in church have been carried out. Friday rehearsals have been held at our house which has eased the situation and we will be glad to have our music room back! We are already appreciating the enormous improvement in the lighting in the chancel.

We have been pleased to welcome new choir members Anne and Tom, along with Lawrence. Being a fairly small group means being flexible in the music we sing. A couple of the altos have been exploring what it is like to sing the tenor line with Lawrence. If anyone else would like to sing in the choir, do let me know.

We are enjoying exploring the repertoire in the OUP Easy Flexible Anthem Book (surely a misnomer) and the OUP Flexible Anthem Book, the latter a very generous donation from the Clarkson family in Alan's memory.

The Music Group of singers and instrumentalists continues to provide the music for the Together with God Service and is led by Jacqui Burge, Russell Taylor or Tom Dodd.

I want to thank all musicians for their continued support during the year. According to St Augustine, in a very poor paraphrase, those who sing pray twice – and surely this also applies to instrumentalists as well. Preparation for worship takes time, prayer and commitment as well as disciplined practice. Unusually for a parish church, much of the music we use in our services is composed in the 21st Century with a significant representation of women composers, including Farrell, Rizza, McDowell and Forbes le Strange, whose anthem for the King – “The mountains shall bring peace” we shall be singing over the coronation period.

If you would like to donate to support the work of the music ministry do talk to me. Sets of music cost significant sums of money – contemporary music being more expensive.

David Parry-Smith, Director of Music, dom@stmaryslinton.org.uk

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9.13. PASTORAL GROUP

The group is made up of 8 members, all committed to extending the kindness and compassion to our community whilst upholding safe working practices. We usually meet, as a whole group, every two months to discuss the visits/contact we have made, support each other and share the responsibilities of extending the love beyond the boundaries of services at St Mary's. Pastoral partners have been introduced for the group members; the idea is to encourage contact with a named partner for support in addition to that gained from the whole group meetings.

The group discuss our training needs at each meeting. We undertake the safeguarding checks and complete the training required by the Diocese. In the last year we have agreed and reviewed a risk assessment to ensure continuity and safer practice. We also agreed that a signed and dated photo identification card could be made available to anyone who wanted to carry one.

Pastoral visits are made in response to requests from clergy or through family, friends or neighbours. The nature and frequency of contact is individually tailored to meet the needs of the individual. The group has collectively MANY years of experience. We continue to contact some people by phone, arrange face-to-face visits, Home Communion visits are offered too. It is wonderful to see the regular visits and communion happening at both Nichols Court and Symonds House again.

It is our desire to represent the church in our role, maintaining connections, develop relationships and sharing the love of Christ with those we visit.

Sue Filby, sue.filby@stmaryslinton.org.uk

9.14. THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S

"The Friends" is a secular charity, formed to help with the expenses associated with maintaining the church building, its fixtures and fittings. Currently there are about 80 members who pay a membership fee each year. In addition to a modest programme of social events we also administer the funds bequeathed by Richard Godel and make available any surplus from them in accordance with his wishes.

Historically the Friends have funded all of the costs associated with maintenance identified at the Quinquennial Inspection (QI) enabling the PCC to use their funds for other purposes.

Since April 2022 we have paid £83,000 for repairs highlighted by the QI, the lighting project and redecoration, and will soon be paying a further £23,000. This breaks down as follows: approximately £25,000 for QI work, £61,000 for lighting and £20,000 for redecoration. It is wonderful to see the improvement these works have brought to the church but it is unlikely that we will be in a position to offer a similar level of support for quite some time without a significant increase in our own resources.

Now that the church events committee is so active it may be that Friends events are less prominent in the life of the church in the future, though we will be hosting our traditional summer garden teas this year. Dates to be announced and listed on our new website at

<https://www.friendsofstmaryslinton.org.uk/> which we hope will help in recruiting more members

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from the church congregation and the wider community and which provides an easy way to donate to us!

We have sadly lost a few members of long standing this year, including the Venerable Alan Clarkson who, together with the late Dr Bruce Conochie, was instrumental in establishing the Friends in its current form as a charity in its own right.

I should like to thank all our committee for their work on behalf of the Friends, particularly our Treasurer, Mr Hugh Paton, who manages our finances so ably and Dr Margaret Cox who has recently stepped down as Secretary after ten years of cheerful commitment and hard work and latterly considerable patience with me. A hard act to follow but I am delighted to report that Mrs Judith Tonry has agreed to take over in that role, to be confirmed along with all our committee positions at our AGM on 17th May in the church pavilion.

We always welcome new members and encourage all who value the church building to join us.

Andrew King, Chair, The Friends of St Mary's Linton.

9.15. THE MONDAY GANG IN THE CHURCHYARD

Despite the weather challenges of the past 12 months – a prolonged drought and high temperatures in the summer and exceptionally low temperatures in the winter – the trees, shrubs and smaller plants in the churchyard seem to have survived. The spring flowers, the aconites, snowdrops, daffodils and wood anemones have done well and the cow parsley or St Anne's lace will shortly take over. It remains to be seen how many summer flowers will reappear and how well the grass will do.

The lime trees, lining the wall along Church Lane, had always been pollarded every other year. However, a tree officer had decided this should be done every three years, so the Monday Gang did not pollard in the winter of 2021/2022. The growth of branches was thus much greater by last autumn/winter and too much for our volunteers to be able to tackle. Furthermore, the branches were found to be fouling the telephone lines to houses in Church Lane – a Health and Safety issue. Fortunately, there was enough money in the Parish Council's churchyard fund to pay for the pollarding to be done and, after much delay it was carried out, just before the trees were due to sprout again.

There are now only four members of the Monday Gang, all enthusiastic and long-standing, but not all able to carry out the all tasks we did 20 years ago. We DESPERATELY need more volunteers. Working in the churchyard on Monday afternoons is enjoyable and would suit anyone who loves nature and has a few hours to spend – the recently retired for instance.

Margaret Cox