

The Parish Church of St. John the Baptist, Wellington

**In the
Wellington & District Team Ministry**



Annual Report for 2023

Priest in Charge: **Reverend Colin Simpson**

Churchwardens: **Andrew Maddocks
Jo Leigh**

PCC Treasurer: **Henry Richbell**

PCC Secretary: **Sharon Chorley**

The Parochial Church Council and Church Officers

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St John's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:-

- Focussing on growing and nurturing the Christian community of St John, improving what we have in place at the moment and building on what we do well
- Building St John's as a more visible Christian witness in Wellington by improving our existing links with the town and parish
- Being innovative within the town and parish, emphasising more social action, in these difficult current times
- Working with St John's Primary School, which is a church school

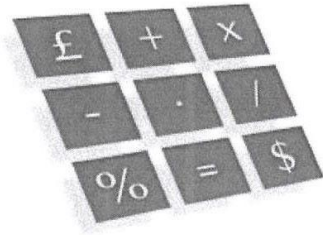
To facilitate our work we must maintain the fabric of the Church.

There are three places for members of the PCC to sit on the Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. In 2023 we had two representatives, William Brown and Diane Donohue.

MEMBERS ON THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL IN 2023

| NAME | POSITION | FIRST ELECTED |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Rev'd Colin Simpson | Priest in Charge | Licensed October 2023 |
| Andrew Maddocks | Churchwarden & Deputy Chairperson | May 2023 |
| Jo Leigh | Churchwarden | May 2023 |
| Henry Richbell | PCC Treasurer | May 2022 |
| Sharon Chorley | PCC Secretary | Appointed May 2021 |
| Sue Rackley | PCC Member | May 2021 |
| Judith Dufour | PCC Member | May 2022 |
| Julie Morton | PCC Member | May 2022 |
| Lenore Clarke | PCC Member | May 2022 |
| Barbara Allen | PCC Member | May 2022 |
| John Young | PCC Member | May 2023 |
| Ciaran Clapham | PCC Member | May 2023 |
| Marilyn Neale | PCC Member | May 2022 |
| William Brown | Deanery Synod Rep | April 2020 |
| Diane Donohue | Deanery Synod Rep | May 2022 |

Independent examiners certificate



Martin Arthur

*Unit 2A The Courtyard Craft Centre, Huntick Road,
Lytchett Minster, Poole, Dorset, BH16 6BA*

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**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
St John the Baptist Parish Church, Wellington Somerset.**

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of St John the Baptist Parish Church

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the St John the Baptist Parish Church (Charity) for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity, 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 Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I confirm that there are no other matters to which your attention should be drawn to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Martin Arthur
FMAAT, FFA, FIPA, FFTA, MIH, ACIE.
6th March 2024



Martin Arthur is licensed and regulated by the Association of Accounting Technicians to provide services in accordance with License No. 2208 details of which are displayed at the registered address shown below.

Owner: Martin Arthur FMAAT, FFA, FIPA, FFTA, MIH, ACIE

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, WELLINGTON
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023


The following accounts have been prepared on an Income and Expenditure basis and produce the following totals:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Total Income | 109,070.56 |
| Total Expenditure | <u>108,904.17</u> |
| Surplus for the year | <u>£166.39</u> |

As detailed in the Income and Expenditure account.

Approved by the Standing Committee of the Parochial Church Council on: 27 Feb 2024
And signed on its behalf by:-


Chairman


Treasurer

The following two pages comprise the accounts.

CASH BOOK RECONCILIATION 2023

| | | A | B | C | D |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Total | Current | Restricted | Deposit A/C | Deposit A/C |
| | Funds | A/C | current A/C | unrestricted | Restricted |
| | | NatWest | NatWest | CBF | CBF |
| Reconciled Bank at 1st Jan 2023 | 70,556.22 | 975.85 | 112.98 | 972.64 | 68,494.75 |
| Bank as at 31st Dec 2023 | 66,701.93 | 1,142.24 | 47.38 | 1,003.82 | 64,508.49 |
| Nett movement of funds | -3,854.29 | 166.39 | -65.60 | 31.18 | -3,986.26 |

St John the Baptist Income and Expenditure Account 2023

Income

Regular Income

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Donation not in Church Service | 5300.89 |
| Offerings in Church Service | 6936.50 |
| Planned Giving | 48682.17 |
| PCC Statutory Fees | 2095.00 |
| Gift Aid Reclaim | 8385.53 |
| VAT Reclaim | 0.00 |

Other Income

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Fundraising | 3577.09 |
| Sales | 41.63 |
| Interest | 86.36 |
| Lettings | 17013.00 |
| Concerts | 1182.10 |
| CBF Deposit Fund | 6000.00 |
| Hospitality In | 3977.14 |
| Flower Fund | 183.32 |
| Grants | 5609.83 |

109070.56

Surplus/(Deficit for Year)

£166.39

Expenditure

Administration

| | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Bank Charges | 341.57 |
| Insurance | 2550.41 |
| Licences and Subscriptions | 884.28 |
| Telephone | 1183.70 |
| Office Running Costs | 953.12 |
| Vacancy Costs | 753.23 |
| Professional Fees | 526.90 |

Buildings

| | |
|---------------------|---------|
| Grounds Maintenance | 0.00 |
| Office Equipment | 662.50 |
| Cleaning | 2358.50 |
| General Repairs | 6108.20 |
| Utilities | 3302.58 |

Programmes

| | |
|---------------------|---------|
| Learning Community | 7186.09 |
| Fundraising Costs | 97.66 |
| Hospitality | 1648.82 |
| Mission | 288.90 |
| Service Costs | 411.41 |
| Flowers | 37.86 |
| Gifts and Donations | 66.90 |
| PCC Expenses | 0.00 |

Staff

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| Clergy Expenses | 156.13 |
| Salaries & Wages | 12445.80 |
| Income Tax and NI | 0.00 |
| Pensions | 1290.86 |
| Parish Share | 63068.75 |
| Organist | 2580.00 |
| Fees | 0.00 |

108904.17

**The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners
for the Election of Churchwardens
and the Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting for 2022
of the Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Wellington
held on Sunday, May 14th 2023 at 11.00 a.m.**

Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens

(This meeting was open to all residents in the parish and those on the Electoral Roll)

Meeting started at 10.55 am with a prayer from church warden Christine Winhall (CW).

2 parts to this meeting.

- 1. Meeting of parishioners and election of church wardens**
- 2. Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

The first part is open to anyone resident in the parish.

Minutes from last year's Election of Churchwardens meeting – Lenore Clarke (LC) proposed, William Brown seconded. Majority in favour.

Election of church wardens – Andrew Maddocks (AM) and Jo Leigh. No need to vote as only two applications for the two posts. CW declared them as new church wardens.

AM presented a speech praising CW's 6 year service as church warden at St John's, followed by flowers from LC and a thank you card from the congregation.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting for 2022

Part 2 of meeting – apologies from Dean and Jane Bowden, David and Julie Banham, James and Ciaran Clapham, Ken Winhall, Giles and Barbara Godber, Ann Fry, Jackie Buttrick, Sue Rackley, James and Tessa Bradnock, Sharon Chorley.

Minutes from last year's APCM. Julie Morton proposed acceptance, seconded by William Brown

Matters arising from last year– Sylvia Waymouth asked about bumps in the drive – it is now fixed.

Lenore Clarke asked about the mess in the church hall and surrounding areas last year – improvements now made by being more tidy and organised with big plastic containers holding items like toys, angel obelisks and electrical items. Managed to reorganise the choir vestry. The churchyard has more defined area for wilding.

Finance – always flagged up. But a finance sub-committee has been organised to raise awareness for the congregation.

So, we have dealt with most of the questions raised last year.

Presentation of the electoral roll by Maralyn Norman. 145 on electoral roll last year. 9 names have been removed. 7 deaths and 2 people moved away. And 9 new names have been added so the number stays the same.

Presentation of the Annual Parish Report including reports on the fabric and inventory. Available in the office to peruse. Included in the report are summaries of what people are doing.

Christine Winhall opened the floor for questions, reminding parishioners it was a good year. Sylvia Waymouth praised Christine for her work and said it had been a happy year.

Election of Electoral Roll Officer – Maralyn Norman continues with the role and supported and much appreciated by parishioners in attendance.

Elections to the PCC. This year Kieven Yim, John Massey and Fiona Brown are leaving after their 3 (4 year because of COVID) years of service. Thank you from Christine Winhall for their service. 3 spaces available with 2 filled by John Young and Ciaran Clapham. Unanimous approval from the floor.

Election to the Deanery Synod. This year is the new triennium for the Deanery, so fresh people have to be appointed. 2 places filled – William Brown and Diane Donohue. Unanimous approval from the floor.

Appointment of Independent Examiner/Auditor. Henry Richbell, St John's treasurer proposed that Martin Arthur to be auditor again next year with seal of approval from the floor.

Any Other Business

Christine Winhall says a big thank you to all PTO colleagues. 2 of whom are present at the meeting Rev Andrew and Alison Norris. All have helped tremendously. End is in sight with hopefully a new incumbent will come in very soon. Also a big thank you to Martin Kirkbride who looked after us in 2022.

Andrew Norris remarked that Christine has done an amazing job for St John's. Privilege to serve, it has become a happier place and taking St John's to a better place in the future.

He closed the meeting with a prayer.

Meeting finished at 11.20 am.

Annual Report from the Priest in Charge

This short report covers the period from my licensing in St John's on 5th October until the end of the church year on 31st December 2023.

My abiding memory of the first few months of my time with you is the Spirit-filled welcome that both Sandie and I received as we moved to minister among you. At the licensing service itself there was a palpable feeling of the presence of the Holy Spirit infusing the service and the hospitality afterwards with joy. This continued in the succeeding months, and we would both like to thank you all for your individual and collective part in that welcome.

My ministry to date has been focussed on getting to know and understand the two parishes and presiding over significant festivals and celebrations. I have been privileged to preside at several funerals and our time together at Christmas, when we played host to so many people for whom church is not a regular part of their life, was a time filled with hope for the opportunities we are going to have to 'Live and tell the Story of Jesus' in the coming years.

It has already become clear that within the parishes (and the wider deanery) there is a need for the healing of past wounds, being open about their causes and remedies, and agreeing a way of being a church that minimises the risk of these things happening again. This is unlikely to be very easy, but I am looking forward, in the months and years to come, to spending time together thinking about our places in the church and our community, (individually as people and in each parish but also as a benefice) in the hope of developing a shared understanding of our roles in the service of God and the communities which surround us.

The welcome I have received and the dedication and commitment of the members of the congregations in the benefice give us a strong base from which to grow into our stated aim of 'Sharing Joy and Hope in our communities'.

With Every Blessing for our future together,

A handwritten signature in a cursive script, reading 'Colin'.

The Reverend Colin G Simpson
Priest-in-Charge, St Mary, West Buckland and St John the Baptist Wellington

Churchwarden's report

Changes

Christine Winhall stepped down at the last APCM after holding the position of Churchwarden for six years and handed the reins to Andrew Maddocks and Joanne Leigh. Interim Team Rector Martin Kirkbride's term came to an end, and we began the process of finding a full-time Minister. The recruitment process took us to October when we held the Licensing Service for the Reverend Colin Simpson as Priest-in-Charge of the proposed new Benefice of St John's and St Mary the Virgin, West Buckland. It is hoped that soon His Majesty the King will confirm the establishment of the Benefice. Despite Bishop Michael being unable to conduct the Licensing Service on health grounds, it was a most joyous occasion with the Hosting team laying on a fantastic spread for everyone afterwards.

Buildings and Churchyard

There were no building works carried out in 2023 but we did have several large trees pruned that posed a hazard to the public footpath and a neighbour's grounds to the west of the church drive. Maintenance tasks such as testing of the lightning conductor, servicing of the various boilers for both heating and hot water, and testing the roof alarm have been completed. There have been some minor repairs to the security lighting, an upgrade of the Wi-Fi, and the installation of new display shelving for leaflets. An important survey was completed in January when an historic conservation company was asked to examine the roof area after several incidents of water ingress. The two-man team cleared enormous amounts of tree debris that were having a severe impact on the gutters and drainpipes to cope with rainwater dispersal. It is felt that regular inspections of the church roof and the dampness of the walls must now take place.

All works are recorded in the logbook, and this can be viewed upon request.

The Church Inventory

The church inventory has been checked and remains mostly unchanged from last year. We have purchased soup-makers for the Warm Space Team, some additional hot water flasks and a replacement kettle. New leaflet display stands have been sited near the office and the Wi-Fi system has been upgraded.

Much needed chairs with armrests and a chair storage rack have been purchased with a very generous donation from Christine Hayes.

With the help of the children from St John's Primary School and the planting work led by Julie Morton and the Churchyard Working Group, two thousand daffodil bulbs have been planted in the church grounds. These were kindly donated by David Dufour.

The full church inventory is kept in the office and is available for inspection upon request.

Jo Leigh and Andrew Maddocks

Churchwardens

Reports from various church activities

Occasional Offices

In 2023 we had 7 baptisms, 2 weddings, 4 funerals in church, 10 funerals at the crematorium and 5 burials of ashes in the memorial garden. There is a trend towards people going to the crematorium and not having a church funeral service. Also, more people are getting married at licensed venues rather than in church.

Sharon Chorley

Sacristan Report

The weekly Sacristan duties are the responsibility of Sue Rowley and Jennie Wilson who, together with Lenore Clarke, oversee all the Vestry jobs. Sue and Jennie's jobs incorporate responsibility for the laundering of the altar cloths, maintaining the candles by filling with oil, changing the wicks, etc., ordering the candle oil and the wafers used for Holy Communion and occasionally cleaning the silverware (candlesticks and crosses) for special services. Lenore organises changing the high altar frontals and Lady Chapel cloths as well as numerous other jobs including looking after the servers' robes, flower arranging, etc., to name just a few.

Since last year's report Lenore, Patrick, Fiona and Iris have continued their serving duties, in addition we are very pleased now to welcome Lois and Diane to the serving team. Our team of servers do a grand job and ensure that our Sunday Communion services run very smoothly, whilst Keith continues to carry out this job at the Thursday morning services. Our thanks go to them all.

Sue Rowley

Intercessions

We are a group of six who regularly lead prayers on a rota basis week by week. What are we doing? We bring the everyday situations of our world, its light and its darkness into the presence of God. On behalf of the congregation, we ask that he will soften the hearts and minds of those who have the power to shape His world. Where does our vision come from? We study the scriptures set for the day, the theme of the preacher, and follow the events of the week. Sometimes we are given the words we need, but it is never in our strength but in the strength of Him who leads us. There are many prayer book "helps" on which we can draw. Our aim? To express the voice of all God's children in St John's as we worship together week by week.

Judith Dufour

Prayer Ministry

We are a small Team who believe in the power of prayer and are available each Sunday in the Lady Chapel at the end of the service to listen and to pray with all who have a need, whether for themselves, a family member or a friend, or a situation. It is strictly confidential.

We pray over the names of all those who have been listed on the prayer board..

We pray before the service for those who are leading worship that God will speak through them to touch our lives, and for each person present that they may know God's love.

Judith Dufour

Church flowers

We are a small group of ladies from the church; Jean Kinch, Ann Fry, Joy McDermott, Jacquie Govier, Julie Morton and myself, who work to enhance the look of the church with suitable arrangements.

At certain times of the year, particularly Easter and Christmas, we ask parishioners to help by donating towards the cost of the flowers. At Harvest time we supply everything from our own gardens and the hedgerows. The rest of the year we make arrangements using fresh greenery and good quality silk flowers due to the cost of fresh flowers.

We would love it if other members of the church would come and join our happy band.

Lenore Clarke

Midweek Communion

This ancient service from the Book of Common Prayer 1662 has been said in our church for many years, I believe as far back as the early 1950s. It has only changed slightly in format for those many years and still, the attending congregation has not changed that much something in the region of 26 people attend every Thursday, sometimes more. Coffee is served afterwards and many stay and have a chat and catch up with news. We support the Women's refuge in Taunton with gifts and supplies and we also support Link Hope with Christmas shoe boxes that go to Eastern Europe, this year to Ukraine. Do come and join us if you can, you will be most welcome.

Reverend Ian Brierley

Care Home Communion Group

Alongside the weekly worship offered at St John's, a small and faithful team visit the Care and Nursing Homes around Wellington each month to lead worship. We bring a simple service of prayers and communion with traditional hymns to a group in their communal lounge. We are always struck by the power of a Christian memory; how a resident without sight can sing 'Praise my soul the King of heaven'; and how a resident unable to remember names and places can recite the Lord's Prayer. We also visit individuals in their rooms, if requested, to share prayer and conversation. There can be very real challenges faced by those leading worship in care home environments so do pray for our dedicated team who exercise this wonderful ministry. We encourage residents and staff to keep growing in their faith or, perhaps indeed, to find faith for the first time. And we would all say that our faith has grown through this ministry and we always leave blessed by those we worship among.

Reverend Canon Stephen Bowen

St John's Churchyard Report

During the past year the churchyard at St John's has been kept tidy by a dwindling number of volunteers. The main attention has been to maintain the two Memorial beds and the shrubbery between the Church and hall. A specialist firm was used to trim and tidy up the large conifer hedge at the rear, and qualified tree surgeons dealt with some dead wood and branches in the lime trees overhanging a neighbouring garden and public footpath that was causing safety issues.

A "work in progress" is to develop a wild flower area in the front area thus encouraging biodiversity. With the help of some volunteers and children from St John's School 2000 donated spring bulbs have been planted around this area. To discourage parking on the grass No Waiting cones have been implemented.

It has not been possible to tidy up and clear an overgrown area in the far-right-hand corner of the churchyard – action on the green waste, broken flag pole and dead trees will be necessary this coming year.

Many thanks to all those who helped in the maintenance of the churchyard.

Julie Morton

Pastoral Companions

The Companions continue to look after their individual groups, to keep in touch by telephone, to visit and to pray with members as requested. We have lost two or three Companions this year, but have also gained two new ones. We plan to hold a thank you tea and thanksgiving service in early New Year when we look forward to the encouragement and a new working relationship with our newly appointed Vicar, Rector Designate Colin Simpson.

Judith Dufour

Concerts

In 2023, St John's hosted 2 Choral Society concerts, 2 Blackdown Early Music concerts, a Collegium, a JW3 and a new 'In Ecclesia' concert. Also, Popham Voices performed a 'Nine Lessons & Carols' service. As many choirs do not always stick to their timings, there is a need to scrutinise the booking forms in order for the church not to lose money. Also, better control of the number of tickets sold for the 'In Ecclesia' concert was required due to Health & Safety concerns. An Events team was started in November. As we were no longer part of a larger Team this meant fewer people attended the Nine Lessons as it was not advertised in St Giles, Stawley & Ashbrittle churches.

Sue Rackley

Hall bookings

The hall and church bookings for St John's have been going well this year, generating a good sum of money for the church.

The hall is used every day, Monday to Friday, by various groups, our main booking being the Health Visitors who now use it during the day on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Sadly, our regular yoga class ended at the end of 2023 as the instructor moved away. However, we now have a regular healthcare diabetes class on a Tuesday evening, several NCT courses booked throughout the year, and our warm spaces initiative on a Friday morning. Tea at Three use the hall every other Thursday afternoon. A local art group use the hall once a month to meet and paint. Other local groups use the hall now and then such as the Wellington Twinning Association or Wellington Choral for their AGM.

Sharon Chorley

Fairs

St John's held two Fairs in 2023, one in March and one in September. The Spring Fair was the more successful, raising over £1400 whilst the Autumn one raised over £750. This was because the spring one had far more volunteers and cake bakers as well as more time to market it on social media, school newsletters and town notice boards.

Sue Rackley

Healthy Community Hub & Talking Café

This Tuesday morning café continues to be popular and well-supported. Attendees appreciate the welcome, refreshments, inclusiveness, advice, help, support and friendship that they find at this drop in café. Some have developed meaningful relationships within the group. The Village Agents enjoy coming to St John's Church and value the peace they find here. All their clients are very appreciative of the help they receive and the opportunity to meet other people in a safe space. Dee leads this group with regular help from Jeannie and others. More helpers are needed for the rota. If you can carry a teapot, welcome people at the door, sit and listen, pray with people or play a musical instrument then your help would be appreciated. Ideally, we need six helpers each week to run smoothly and efficiently.

Marilyn Neale

Babies & Toddlers Café

This Wednesday group continues to thrive as new parents attend and toddlers are reluctant to leave! Children who have started school miss attending church and pop back during the holidays. The Health Visitors who are in the hall bring in any apprehensive parents to us to encourage them to join in. We block the Chancel area off with chairs which helps the babies to meet in the children's area and the toddlers to play in the South side of the church. Children are encouraged to use the toddler tables and chairs for their food and drink to minimize mess. We are grateful for the ongoing support of chair movers at 3 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. If you can move chairs, carry teapots, wash up, talk with parents, play with children or welcome people at the door we would be grateful for your help. Ideally, we need 6 helpers morning and afternoon to run smoothly and efficiently. The parents and health visitors really appreciate and value the support and encouragement they receive from this drop in café which gives people the opportunity to make new friendships and share any concerns they might have.

Marilyn Neale

Tea@3

We continued to enjoy Tea, Cake and Conversation on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month in the Church Hall from March to our Christmas special on 7th December when we were joined by John Young who played Christmas music and we all enjoyed "a good sing". We have several regular helpers who enjoy baking, and we are able to offer a variety of delicious cakes with tea or coffee in a warm room. New friendships have been made and we are encouraged by the visits of friends from the wider community. At the end of the afternoon everyone joins in to clear, wash up and tidy the Hall!

Judith Dufour

Warm Spaces

This season we changed the time of this group to 12 -2, providing a Soup lunch with cake and coffee. We have had more people coming in regularly and staying for the full two hours.

This has enabled us to have had conversations with them over the five months that we have been meeting. We have a great team that enables us to share preparation, kitchen duties and sitting and talking to people. There is always a hum of conversation going on and the atmosphere is warm and friendly.

I would like to say a personal 'thank you' to all our volunteers, for their commitment and willingness to help and their concern for those we have served, also those who have helped us with making sure we have the supplies we need. We are hoping we can be back in November 2024 for another session of Warm Space.

Lois Webb

The Women's Refuge

The ladies who run the refuge are always very grateful for our contributions, especially when they ask for something special and I put out a request in the newsletter and a list on the box, the members of the church are always very quick to help. They always need household items for when their clients go out to live in one of their safe houses, where they start to manage their own households again, with the help of the refuge ladies of course. They have recently acquired 3 more houses for this purpose. At the right time, they also need ladies' clothing, makeup and everything needed for themselves after losing everything. I would like to thank everyone for the support they have given me over the years as without it I wouldn't be able to help them.

Lenore Clarke

Foodbank

The Foodbank in Wellington is based in the URC hall and is open on Mondays and Thursdays from 1.00 p.m. - 3.00 p.m. It is a satellite of the Trussell Trust's centre in Taunton and therefore a part of the national network. This year has been busy although the difficulties caused by the change in financial support to Universal Credit have largely disappeared. Most weeks food is given to between 15 to 40 people and in addition to basic supplies, toiletries and other necessities are usually available.

The Foodbank relies on donations and the gratitude of many of those who receive the food is heart-warming, so if you are a regular giver, thank you, and if you are not please consider becoming one, either through a collecting point in a local supermarket or in the marked box by the font in St. John's. The need remains.

James Bradnock

Bible Reading Notes

Bible Reading Notes continue to be a helpful resource for members of our congregation.

The majority of people subscribe to Bible Reading Fellowship notes which are published three times a year, and everyone would find something to suit their needs whether it's ordinary copies or a large print version of 'New Daylight' or even 'Bible Reflections for Older People.'

C.W.R. (Crusade for World Revival) have recently ceased their bi-monthly booklet of 'Every Day with Jesus' readings and produced a 'forever' hardback copy of 366 dated readings priced at £19.99, a good investment! Please see me if you would like to see sample copies or need any more information. Thank you.

Tessa Bradnock

Morning Prayer

The Divine Office or, as it is more commonly known today, Morning Prayer has been said in our church for many years at 8.30 am each day for as long as I can remember. It was usually the responsibility of the Vicar to say prayers on behalf of his parishioners each day Morning and Evening, but due to many and varying commitments that is not always possible. A small group of us however are continuing this obligation on behalf of the church. It is now mainly said using the Zoom facility on our computers at home, every day Monday to Saturday, and I say Evening Prayer on my own on behalf of the church at home most evenings, not on Zoom. Our new Vicar Colin is happy for this arrangement to continue. If you would like to join us at any time you do not have to commit to every day, just give me a call on 01823 666101 and I can give you the Zoom link and any other information.

Reverend Ian Brierley

Open the Book

Open the Book has continued to be welcomed by the local schools. The OTB team has members from many churches in the Wellington area, so it really is a Churches Together outreach activity. The team are committed to bringing bible stories alive through drama to primary children and have had lots of good feedback from staff. Building on these relationships, it was a joy to involve many in the community in the making and distributing of knitted donkeys at Christmas, one for each class who know us through OTB. We hope they are being well cared for! Currently, OTB is brought to St Johns, Wellesley Park, Beech Grove, IKB and Langford Budville Schools.

As is often the case with projects, times change, organisations amend regulations and volunteer availability is not always guaranteed so it becomes necessary to look at alternatives. We are currently looking at the future of OTB in the coming academic year, and how best to work alongside others who work with schools in the area.

As always, we welcome others who would enjoy participating in sharing the Good News the Bible brings to all ages.

Jackie Buttrick

St John's School chaplain

This has been another busy year, and I'd like to thank you for your support and prayers.

Pupil Chaplains

- Regular weekly hour: stories, prayer, Bible activities, preparation for events
- Two collective worships on school values
- What qualities would make a good rector?/Interview day
- Helping with school services in church
- Preparing and delivering tea party for the elderly in church hall
- Keeping church informed through PC noticeboard
- New cohort: promoting, selecting, training with Mike Haslam, commissioning
- Making Christmas cards for all staff

Reception class

- Godly Play sessions: creation; Noah; Advent and Christmas

Year 1

- Godly play session: Good Shepherd and Holy Family

Year 5

- Godly Play sessions: Great Family (Abraham); Exodus
- Easter story and activity session
- Accompanying children on school trip

Year 6

- Transition sessions with pairs of children using *It's Your Move* booklet
- Accompanying children to Year 6 pilgrimage gathering at Taunton Minster
- General
- Being around on playgrounds at lunchtimes
- Attending fetes, fundraisers, disco and Christmas dinner
- Making connections with parents at the church baby and toddler group
- Encouraging a new volunteer helper
- Supporting children and staff over sad loss of Olivia Foster
- Attending Chaplaincy gathering
- Meeting with Colin to review work

Helena Power

Bellringing Report

The bells at St. John's continue to regularly welcome people to Sunday morning worship, weddings and other special occasions thanks to the successful 'team' of ringers from the Wellington, Rockwell Green and Langford Budville churches. In May we rang at St. John's church on the morning of the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and in the afternoon we rang at St. Peter's at Langford Budville and All Saints at Rockwell Green. We were joined by octogenarian John Hill who had rung for the coronation of Elizabeth II and the christening of the present King Charles. We also rang for two weddings at St. John's in June and welcomed visiting ringers to our tower in September from Woodbury in Devon and a countrywide based band in October who rang a peal lasting over three hours. Colin our new rector was also warmly welcomed to St. John's with ringing taking place before his licensing service on the 5th October.

The bells themselves and ancillary equipment are at present in good condition and, thanks to the assistance of Darren Woodyer from the North Curry tower, we successfully replaced the existing unsafe handrail on the tower stairs. This year we are exploring improving the security of the tower entrance, the ringing chamber and the belfry and decorating the ringing chamber. Our numbers increased by one last year as we welcomed a new recruit into our group who quickly became a very useful and capable ringer. There is however still plenty of room in our group so if anyone wishes to join us please contact me.

David Grabham

Tone Deanery Synod Report

The Synod met three times in 2023: on 7 March at St Andrew's church, Wiveliscombe, on 21 June at St Mary's church, Bishops Lydeard and on 3 October at Holy Cross church, Hillfarrance. Synod met for its first meeting of 2024 on 1 February at St John's, Wellington.

After considering feedback/alternative plans, the Deanery Mission & Pastoral Group (DMPG)/ Leadership group presented the proposed pastoral plan to reduce the number of stipendiary posts from 7 to 6 as part of the five-year plan to the Deanery Synod for approval. That being given the plan was taken forward to the Archdeaconry Mission & Planning Group (AMPG) for consideration. Once approved, the deanery will have six benefices.

Synod continued to examine ways to improve communication at all levels from church members to deanery level. While there are many examples of good practice, improvement is needed in Living and telling the story of Jesus as well as more practical communication.

A new triennium began after the APCM season with a change in membership. Ian Aldridge stood down as Secretary and Alison Toogood as Treasurer. Both were thanked for their service. As were all reps who stood down from Synod. Including our own Ken Winhall, who has also been on the DMPG for several years. Sarah Messenger (Hillfarrance) was appointed Secretary and Sue Levinge (Chipstable) offered to be Treasurer. Charles Doble has remained in post as our Lay Dean. Our house of Laity representatives to Diocesan synod have also agreed to remain in post, Charles Doble, Dilly Bradley, William Brown. We have appointed a new house of Clergy representative to Diocesan Synod, Revd Colin Simpson.

The meeting in October was briefed about the Diocese shortfall (£2million per annum) which is currently being financed by property sales and that discussion had begun on how to deal with this debt in a sustainable way. Bishop Michael is encouraging Parishes to share their thoughts and ideas on other ways to deal with the debt ahead of any change to the Common Fund plan during the ongoing consultation which is about to enter its second round. The Diocese Finance team will consider the input and produce a new model. There was a discussion about the impact of the proposed change and the challenges this represents to churches, most of whom are struggling to raise enough money to care for their church building and pay the existing Parish Share. Gary Watson – Diocesan Lead Giving & Funding Advisor talked about 'Encouraging Generosity' in the October meeting, where he outlined the ways that the Diocese can help individual parishes to examine ways to increase their income in relatively simple ways.

There have been several changes in the clergy:

- Rev Mark Hurley left the Benefice of Bishops Lydeard with Lydeard St. Lawrence, Bagborough, Combe Florey and Cothelstone
- Rev Colin Simpson was installed as Vicar of Wellington and West Buckland
- Rev Suzy Kirkham was appointed as Priest in charge of the Deane Vale Benefice and Assistant Curate at Bradford-on-Tone and Nynehead

The Diocese is currently in consultation on how to change the common fund plan. The current plan being developed from consultation is for the diocese the move from a parish share model to a benefice share model. I urge anyone who would like to attend consultation the diocese's consultation session as this is a big piece of work, which will affect how we finance our benefice and the diocese going forward.

William Brown

Safeguarding Report

Diocesan News

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team announced in 2023 that the Bath and Wells Diocese would be audited for Safeguarding in April 2025. The areas of particular focus are the new Church of England National Safeguarding Standards and how closely these align with our current work. This means that the Diocese has been and is still updating some of the information available on its website and has also been making changes to the Parish Dashboards to reflect these changes. The Parish Dashboard is now compulsory for each church to use so that the Diocese can use the information provided by each parish for the Safeguarding Audit. The safeguarding team for Wellington and West Buckland have been busy inputting information into this dashboard.

Training Update

It is now a requirement for all PCC members to have completed Basic Awareness and Foundation safeguarding training. ALL PCC members have completed both of these levels which is great, thank you to them! There is new legislation for 2024 which means that all PCC members must also complete Domestic Abuse Awareness training so we have been encouraging the PCC to complete this too, about half have done so. There was some confusion over whether PCC members needed to complete the training as the rules now state that they only have to do some of the levels if they are charity trustee members. St John's PCC are charity trustee members but St Mary's are not so different rules apply to both.

Safer Recruitment

The DBS check provider for the Diocese changed in 2023 and the procedure became more involved. The guidance over which roles need DBS and their relevant training also changed so Sharon made a start on defining each volunteer's role and making sure they have the relevant checks and training in place. She also took a training course in December to help with this. The change of DBS provider offered an opportunity to have someone else sign up to carry out DBS checks. Christine Winhall did so and is now authorised to carry out DBS checks.

Restructure of the team

With the arrival of our new priest-in-charge, Reverend Colin Simpson, the structure of our team changed. We were no longer a team of thirteen parishes and now consisted of Wellington and West Buckland. This meant that all of the other churches in the previous team were now responsible for their own safeguarding. Sharon compiled instructions on how to fill in the parish dashboards and updated all of these parishes with their existing records so that they could continue doing their own. She also informed the Diocese who was now responsible for the dashboard and safeguarding in each of those churches.

Safeguarding continues to be an item on every PCC agenda where I'll ask if anyone has any concerns about anyone or questions about safeguarding. This makes sure that we continually monitor our safeguarding situation. This is a huge part of caring for everyone who participates in our church, either as members of the congregation, visitors to church, people attending groups or volunteers who help us every day. Thank you to everyone for continuing to help make this possible.

As always if anyone has any questions or concerns, I'm here to help so please contact me.

Sharon Chorley, Parish Safeguarding Officer stjohns.wellington@googlemail.com 01823 665254

And finally

*The reports above are from people who have taken leadership roles in our church, but many others do little jobs quietly in the background, so a big **THANK YOU** to all.*