

The Parish Church of St. John the Baptist, Wellington



Annual Report for 2024

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:-

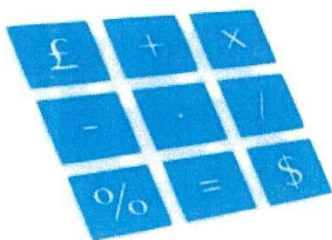
- Focussing on growing and nurturing the Christian community of St John, improving what we have in place at the moment, and building on what we do well
- Building St John's as a more visible Christian witness in Wellington by improving our existing links with the town and parish
- Being innovative within 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 2024, we had two representatives, William Brown and Diane Donohue.

MEMBERS ON THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL IN 2024

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
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 (resigned Jun 2024)
Ciaran Clapham	PCC Member	May 2023 (resigned Jun 2024)
Marilyn Neale	PCC Member	May 2022 (resigned Jun 2024)
Christine Hayes	PCC Member	May 2024
William Brown	Deanery Synod Rep	April 2020
Diane Donohue	Deanery Synod Rep	May 2022



Martin Arthur

*Unit 2A The Courtyard Craft Centre, Huntick Road,
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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 2024.

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.
21st February 2025



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 2024

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


Total Income	142,713.55
Total Expenditure	<u>140,720.35</u>
Surplus for the year	<u>£1,993.20</u>

As detailed in the Income and Expenditure account.

Approved by the Standing Committee of the Parochial Church Council on: _____

And signed on its behalf by:-


Chairman


Treasurer

The following two pages comprise the accounts.

CASH BOOK RECONCILIATION 2024

		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 2024	66,701.93	1,142.24	47.38	1,003.82	64,508.49
Bank as at 31st Dec 2024	31,803.36	3,153.44	47.38	1,043.96	27,558.58
Nett movement of funds	-34,898.57	2,011.20	0.00	40.14	-36,949.91

St John the Baptist Income and Expenditure Account 2024

Income

Regular Income

Donation not in Church Service	3672.26
Offerings in Church Service	8075.44
Planned Giving	48181.50
PCC Statutory Fees	3724.00
Gift Aid Reclaim	14398.99
VAT Reclaim	842.67
Legacies	1000.00

Other Income

Fundraising	4486.63
Sales	85.70
Interest	164.94
Lettings	13864.37
Concerts	1202.15
CBF Deposit Fund	39500.00
Hospitality In	3486.92
Flower Fund	103.70
Grants	-75.72

Expenditure

Administration

Bank Charges	370.85
Insurance	2712.69
Licences and Subscriptions	805.57
Telephone	1016.76
Office Running Costs	1228.25
Professional Fees	572.00

Buildings

Grounds Maintenance	2166.00
Office Equipment	1117.89
Cleaning	2494.60
General Repairs	6694.03
Utilities	4071.76
Quinquennial Inspection	1215.00

General

Learning Community	5483.78
Fundraising Costs	1505.46
Hospitality	2262.07
Mission	124.00
Service Costs	1112.75
Flowers	122.08
Gifts and Donations	0.00
PCC Expenses	0.00

Staff

Clergy Expenses	2150.54
Salaries & Wages	13269.40
Income Tax and NI	1307.09
Pensions	1281.28
Parish Share	84266.00
Organist	3370.50
Fees	0.00

142713.55

140720.35

**The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners
for the Election of Churchwardens 2024
and the Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting for 2023
of the Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Wellington
held on Sunday, May 5th at 11.00 a.m. 2024**

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)

The meeting started at 11.00 a.m. and Colin began with a prayer.

1. **The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners which took place on Sunday, May 14th 2023** had been circulated before the meeting. There were no objections so the minutes were accepted as a true record.
2. **Election of Churchwardens.** Colin had received two completed nomination forms for the post of two Churchwardens which had been properly proposed and seconded. These were from Andrew Maddocks and Joanne Leigh. There were no objections to this. Colin was happy to announce that they were duly re-elected.
3. **Chairman's Remarks.** Colin thanked Andrew and Jo for the support that they have given him since he arrived in October and also for their continuing service.

This concluded the Annual Meeting of Parishioners

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting for 2023

(Only those present that are on the Electoral Roll are allowed to vote)

1. **Apologies** were received from Barbara Allen, John and Angie Massey, Ken and Christine Winhall, Ann and Martyn Hooper, Judith Dufour, Jane and Adrian Exell, Andrew Norris and Fiona Brown.
2. **Minutes of the APCM of the 14th May 2023** were sent out before the meeting and there were no matters arising for these. Colin asked that they be accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed them.
3. **Presentation of the Electoral Roll.** 3 people have been added – Richard Elloway, Valerie Nuttall, and Diana Smith, 5 people died – Margaret Bowen, Pamela Elloway, Frank Figg, Daphne Swan, and Joy Grant, 3 people moved away – Grahame and Alison Woodward, and Patricia Short. Total is now 140, was 145. Maralyn Norman was thanked for her work as Electoral Roll Officer.
4. **Presentation of the Annual Parish Report.** The Annual Report contains the Annual Accounts and reports on the activities, including safeguarding, the fabric, and the inventory. Colin said that he would take it section by section to see if anyone had any questions.
Churchwarden's Report – no questions. Andrew wanted to let people know that the Quinquennial is taking place in June.
Occasional Offices – no questions.
Sacristan Report – no questions.
Intercessions – no questions. Colin asked for his thanks to be recorded to those who offer their contributions to this each week, whilst not diminishing his thanks to all.

Prayer Ministry – Diane Donohue said that she thought the prayer ministry offered is too public and asked if we could have a screen. Alison Norris thought this might be a safeguarding issue to which Colin replied that we could just have the person receiving the prayer behind the screen.

Church Flowers – no questions. Lenore asked for Julie Morton to be added to the list of people who help.

Midweek Communion – Colin wanted to record his thanks to Ian Brierley for leading this valuable service each week.

Care Home Communion Group – Diane Donohue said that she has offered to help with this but no one has got back to her.

St John's Churchyard – Colin said that we need to look into having the flag pole base removed, this had been highlighted as a trip hazard on the recent insurance visit.

Pastoral Companions – no questions. Colin said that he would arrange another opportunity for the companions to meet soon.

Concerts – no questions.

Hall bookings – Tessa stated that the Warm Spaces session is no longer held on a Friday morning but on a Friday lunchtime instead.

Fairs – Lenore said that only the two fairs which had been held in the church were mentioned but two had also been held in the hall.

Talking Café – Maggie wanted to tell everyone how much she and others value attending the talking café each week.

Babies and Toddlers – Ciaran said that we need more volunteers to help with this and this should be advertised outside St John's, maybe with Churches Together.

Tea@3 – a couple of people mentioned that this had been cancelled the last two times. Sharon said that this was due to lack of volunteers so Colin asked for more volunteers to come forward.

Warm Spaces – no questions.

Women's Refuge – no questions.

Foodbank – James asked to stress that demand is increasing at the Foodbank and our donations have never recovered to the extent that they were before covid when giving was put on hold.

Bible Reading Notes – no questions.

Morning Prayer – Colin asked to record his thanks to Ian and those who come to this.

Open the Book – no questions.

School Chaplain – Colin said that Helena does a wonderful job and we should encourage her work with our links to the school.

Bellringing – Diane Donohue asked if the bellringers could play a tune instead of just ringing. Colin explained that we only have 5 bellringers so this would be impossible as you would need a team of about 12. He asked if anyone would like to learn a new skill, they should let the churchwardens know. Christine Hayes wanted to record her thanks to the bellringers as she loves to hear the bells.

Tone Deanery Synod report – no questions

Safeguarding Report – Colin said he will be offering safeguarding training sessions in the church now that he has completed the 'Train the Trainer' course.

Thank you – Colin asked to record his thanks to everyone without whom the church couldn't operate, from those making the tea to others offering prayer.

5. **Finance** – Colin realised that we hadn't discussed finance yet and asked if anyone had any questions about the figures included in the annual report. Someone asked what 'other income' was, Henry replied that this was money from refreshments offered at various activities. Jackie Buttrick asked what the Learning Community Fund covers. Colin replied that there is very little left in this but the PCC would be looking at this. He then asked Henry for his comments. Henry said that we need to generate more income as last year we were £10,000 short on our parish share and this year we are already shorter than that. Colin explained that we need to pay our parish share as the Diocese runs at a loss of £1.8m a year and lost a quarter of its staff last year. We have been trying to fund our ministry rather than pay the parish share but this can't go on for much longer.

William Brown said that the next round of the Diocesan consultation on the Parish Share is taking place in Taunton and people need to attend this. Patrick Clarke asked Henry if he had a figure in mind of what people should give each month. Henry replied that the figure given by the Diocese is £600 per person, per year so £50 per month. The Church of England recommends that people give 5% of their disposable income i.e. the money people have left after paying all of their bills and necessary monthly expenses. This will, of course, differ from person to person.

6. Election of Officers.

- a. *Electoral Roll Officer* – Maralyn Norman was very happy to continue this role.
- b. *Tone Deanery Synod* – no nominations for Synod additional people.
- c. *Elections to Parochial Church Council* – Colin said that he had received a nomination form, properly proposed and seconded, for Christine Hayes. She was duly elected as there were 3 spaces available. Two other people had expressed an interest in joining the PCC however they had not been on the Electoral Roll for the required period of at least 6 months.

7. Appointment of Independent Examiner – Martin Arthur was happy to continue this role, there were no objections.

8. Any other business

Diane Donohue asked how long you have to be on the Electoral Roll in order to join the PCC, Colin replied the rules on the form state 6 months. Richard Elloway asked if this makes sense when there are gaps on the PCC and people want to join but Colin said it's not a rule that he can waive, it's a CofE rule.

Diane Donohue asked about lack of parking at the church for people needing access to park when they have disabilities. Colin agreed that this is a problem and a challenge that the fabric and churchyard working group are already looking into.

Shirley Rayson asked if we are going to have a full-time organist. Colin replied that the PCC decided at the last meeting to have organists on a rota to give us flexibility for when they have other commitments.

There were no other questions.

9. Chairman's remarks. Colin wanted to record his thanks to all of the retired clergy – Alison, Andrew, James, Stephen and Ian. He thanked them for their ministry and their support. He also wanted to thank the people of St John's for their welcome, hospitality and commitment, it is a joy to be here.

10. Colin ended the APCM with the Grace.

PCC Meeting

(A brief meeting of the PCC took place after the APCM with just the PCC members)

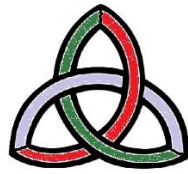
Colin asked if Henry was happy to continue as Treasurer. He was and there were no objections.

Colin asked if Sharon was happy to continue as PCC Secretary. She was and there were no objections.

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday, 25th June at 7.00 p.m.

Sharon said that she would email a proposal for future dates of meetings to all PCC members.

The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.



The Benefice of St Mary and St John the Church of England Churches of West Buckland and Wellington

A Year in Review

As I look back and reflect on my first full year as your parish priest, it strikes me as remarkable to think of all that we have achieved in 12 short months.

At the end of a long period without a priest, churches and the people who love them are often tired. People have to be found to complete the many things that happen unnoticed and the uncertainty surrounding the recruitment of a new incumbent weighs heavily on all involved. This is what I found when I arrived in October 2023. People were pleased to see me, but the relief brought with it a recognition of how hard the communities of our two churches had been working through the vacancy.

Since my first Christmas with you I have seen this hard work at first hand and my overwhelming emotion is one of gratitude for your continued efforts on behalf of the Kingdom of God. Thank you for not thinking 'we have a priest now, he can get on with it' but sharing in the joys and challenges of our common life together.

During this past year we have had our moments, and I have been deeply saddened by some of the things that have happened and things we no longer do. Although this often happens when someone new joins an established team, it has been a difficult time and I hope we can heal our wounds and grow from our experiences.

One thing that I have noticed growing throughout 2024 is a certain positive energy. It has come into our worship, your engagement with the 'Tea with the Vicar' exercise, some of the fruits of which you may have already seen and should see more around you at the APCM, and the willingness of people to join in with all manner of tasks. If I start to mention one or two, I am guaranteed to leave someone important out, but I hope you realise that I see what you have been doing, and I thank you for it all.

Our life as Christian communities continues to have its challenges, and there is much still to do, but as we worship and pray, study the scriptures and reach out in service to our community, that positive energy, even the Holy Spirit, will lead us to even greater things as we discern our Way with Christ together.

Every Blessing, Colin

The Reverend Colin G Simpson

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Email: rector.wawb@gmail.com

Phone: 01823 661451 or 07961613410



Churchwardens' report

BUILDINGS AND CHURCHYARD

Fabric

The mandatory Quinquennial Survey and Report took place in June and was carried out by Jonathan Rhind Architects, Rumwell, Taunton.

The report was received in December. It found that, in general, the state of the church building did not cause immediate concern. A copy of the report has been available for inspection in the noticeboard racks next to the Office. The Architect did identify aspects that should be attended to in the next two-year period, others that should be addressed in the following three and five-year periods. There are enormous cost implications.

We were already aware of certain water ingress problems, and to some extent, we have been able to act on these ourselves, such as maintaining the water channels to the drains and the drains themselves. It has been necessary to bring in specialists to clear our roofs and hoppers of tree debris, which is particularly bad in autumn months from the trees in the churchyard. We are advised that the roofs of the church should be cleared of debris twice a year.

On the advice of the architects, a specialist company was engaged in surveying and reporting on the drainage system that is entirely dependent on soakaways built many decades ago. The report found the soakaways were inefficient due to blockages. The soakaways were systematically flushed. Again, the report on the drainage finding is available in the church.

The so-called 'Choir Vestry', next to the library and corridor, has long been used as a storage facility only. This has been due largely to the dampness from the outside wall, where it has been regularly drenched with rainwater. The external hopper and downpipe were incapable of coping with the increasingly heavy downpours we have been experiencing. In early February, a specially designed water deflector was added to the problem area, and this appears to have substantially improved the situation. The wall is beginning to dry out, and in the not-too-distant future, we hope that the internal conditions will allow the room to be redecorated and be a space useful for other things, such as meetings.

Security

Care of our church has long involved considerations surrounding security. The roof is alarmed with a 24-hour reporting system. Several incidents have necessitated a review of personal safety. A new Panic Alarm system has been installed, and consideration has been given to upgrading our ageing CCTV system. We invited a local security expert to survey our locks and our present CCTV.

Insurance

Our Church insurers asked to examine our insurance policy by visiting the church last Spring. They were generally happy with our attention to the requirements of the policy, but made several detailed recommendations.

Churchyard

The long and overgrown edge between the church hall and the neighbouring housing was eventually cut back by a contractor in the most appalling weather in December.

The grass cutting has been maintained by Wellington Town Council, and help was given by their grounds team in cutting back the foliage around the gravestones on the east boundary wall.

The memorial beds have been extended and maintained, and together with the bushes and foliage between the Hall and Church, thanks to our own brilliant team under the leadership of John Morton. The same team saw the fruition of their marathon daffodil-bulb planting task and wilding area during last Spring.

Some pruning was also carried out on the smaller trees, and work was needed to make safe several branches on the larger trees resulting from storm-damaging winds last winter.

Maintenance

Many acts of DIY have taken place on doors and cupboards by skilled individuals among our church members. To them, we extend our thanks and appreciation.

To all those who attend monthly cleaning sessions, and to Patrick Clarke who clears our rubbish bins for his weekly trip to the Recycling Centre, a big, big 'thank you' on behalf of all church members.

ACTIVITIES

2024 has seen some very positive progress with the regular church activities. Warm spaces secured a grant from Wellington town Council to allow them to continue their valuable service for another winter with the purchase of additional soup making machines, and attendance has increased. Our thanks go to Lois and Roger Webb and their team of volunteers for the hard work they put in to make this a fantastic provision.

Talking café is also growing in its success with many more people attending each week. They offer a vital service to the community, offering a safe space for people to come and chat, discuss their problems, and find support when things are troubling them over a cuppa and some biscuits. Thanks go out to all the volunteers who give up their time for this, lending support, being a listening ear, but never judging anyone.

Tea @3, held once a month, run by Judith Dufour, has developed into a well-supported and greatly enjoyed time.

The first Saturday of each month has now become Clean and Coffee time, when a merry band of volunteers come together to make sure the church is clean and tidy. Colin with his extended feather duster, Andrew with the trusty drain cleaners, Patrick with his paint, and many others with their dusters and polish, clean and dust for two happy hours sustained by cake and coffee. It's a great opportunity to do something practical for everyone of all abilities. Seated, standing, or up ladders. We have jobs for everyone, young and old.

Throughout the past 12 months, we have seen many coffee mornings and fairs. These are always well attended with the cake stall, Bric a Brac, and craft stall, a firm favourite for all. The funds raised are a very welcome addition to the church finances, and the events are loved by everyone. There is so much hard work that goes into the organisation of these events, and our thanks go to Lenore Clarke, Sue Rackley, and the many bakers who make the wonderful cakes and treats on sale. There is a waiting list of stall holders wanting space at future events, and we are hopeful that these will continue to be on the events calendar for the forthcoming year ahead.

Musical Events

Andrew Maddocks has arranged many events this last year, Recitals, choral events, and social gatherings. All have been much appreciated and well attended. It is his passion for music and fantastic organisational abilities that make these such a success, but the hard work that goes on behind the scenes often goes unnoticed. A huge thank you goes to Andrew for his tireless dedication to the church and its wider congregation. He is well on the way to arranging the next program of events, and we are all very excited to see what he will offer us this year.

On a sad note, 2024 saw the end of the Toddler group, which had been running since the end of Covid. This was a hard decision to make, but with insurance and the necessary legislative hurdles that need to be jumped to run such a service, it was not something that we felt was possible to be continued. The new St Johns Vision for the future will hopefully give more opportunities to reach out to the wider community in the coming years, and we will definitely be looking at where the church can best support the local community in other ways and it is likely that children and young people will be a focus of our ongoing mission, but this may not be in the ways we have previously worked. It is an exciting time for us all, and we are really looking forward to supporting more people in the community around Wellington.

Jo Leigh and Andrew Maddocks
Churchwardens

Annual Treasurer's Financial Report 2024

The accounts have been duly examined, and the examiner's certificate is attached to this report.

On first glance, the accounts seem to be reasonable in that the bottom line shows a surplus of £1993.20 for the year, but this is far from the truth. In order to pay our parish share in full, we have had to use £ 39,500.00 of our savings.

If we compare 2023 and 2024, our regular income has little difference between the years, other than the fact that in 2024, we reclaimed some VAT under the Listed Places of Worship scheme, and we received a small legacy. In addition, we were able to catch up with the Gift Aid money.

With regards to what we call Other Income, the big difference was lettings, which were significantly down due to the health visitors relocating to the town library. In addition, we did not get any grants during the year, which further reduced our income. All other areas were slightly up in 2024, which is encouraging.

If we look at expenditure in the various categories:

Administration was only up by normal price inflation, and the vacancy costs we had in 2023 did not appear in 2024.

Buildings had a significant increase in that we had grounds maintenance costs in 2024 that we didn't have in 2023, mainly due to the hedge cutting that was necessary. Likewise, we had our Quinquennial undertaking, which increased the costs in the area.

General expenditure was higher in almost every area, but this was something we expected.

Staff costs were as expected, but we caught up with our tax liabilities after considerable difficulties getting the HMRC to give us online access. In the end, we settled the bill manually. Again, and as expected, we saw a significant increase in clergy expenses as Reverend Colin settled in.

As stated earlier, our savings took a hammering in order for us to fully pay our parish share and are now at the level where we would not be able to cover the shortfall in 2025 if normal incomes remain at 2024 levels.

Henry Richbell

Treasurer

Reports from various church activities

Occasional Offices

In 2024, we had 7 baptisms, 2 weddings, 13 funerals in church, 9 funerals at the crematorium, and 3 burials of ashes in the memorial garden. There has been a trend towards people going to the crematorium and not having a church funeral service in recent years; however, this year that seems to have changed, with more funerals taking place in church. More people are getting married at licensed venues rather than in church.

Sharon Chorley

Sacristan Report

The Sacristan duties are the responsibility of Jennie Wilson and Sue Rowley, who, together with Lenore Clarke, oversee all the Vestry jobs. These are done on a weekly basis and incorporate the laundering of the altar cloths, maintaining the candles by filling with oil, changing the wicks, etc., and re-ordering the wafers used for Holy Communion. Lenore takes responsibility for changing the high altar frontals, the Lady Chapel altar cloth, and looking after the servers' robes.

Since last year's report, there have been a few changes in the Vestry. The furniture has been changed around to facilitate better manoeuvrability for the serving team and to improve access to the clergy vestments and servers' robes. The very old, frayed curtains screening the cupboard have been replaced with fresh curtains, and the ancient candles have been replaced with new, modern ones, which are easier to maintain.

The serving duties are carried out by Lenore, Patrick, Lois, Diane, Fiona, and Iris, who do an excellent job and ensure that our Sunday Communion services run smoothly. Our thanks and appreciation go to them all.

Sue Rowley and Jennie Wilson

Intercessions

We are presently a group of five who lead the intercessions Sunday by Sunday at the 9.30 am service. On behalf of the congregation, we bring the everyday situations of the world into the presence of God.

Judith Dufour

Prayer Ministry

We are a small group who believe in the power of prayer and who are available each Sunday in the Lady Chapel after the service to listen and pray with those who ask for prayer. It may be for themselves or for friends and family for whom they have a concern. We pray over the names of all those who have been listed on the prayer board. All are welcome, and it is confidential.

Judith Dufour

Church flowers

We have a fairly small band of people who manage to decorate the Church beautifully on special occasions i.e. Easter, Harvest, Christmas, and Weddings. The flowers for these are all paid for with the money donated by members of the congregation.

At other times, we use the beautiful silk flowers which have been donated. We would welcome new people to join us.

Lenore Clarke

Midweek Communion

This ancient service of Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer 1662 continues to be said in our church on Thursday morning, continuing a tradition which goes back 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 enthusiastic congregation, slightly less than last year, something in the region of 22 people attend every Thursday, sometimes more. Coffee is served afterwards, and many stay and have a chat and catch up with news. We also support the Women's Refuge in Taunton with gifts and supplies, and we also support Link Hope with Christmas shoe boxes which 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

On behalf of St John's, a dedicated and faithful team visit the Care and Nursing Homes around Wellington each month to lead worship. We hold a variety of services, ranging from Communion to Services of the Word, accompanied by songs and hymns. 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. If requested, we visit individuals in their rooms, to share prayer and conversation and to offer prayers at the end of life. Ministry in care home environments is challenging and full of surprises and the unexpected, so do pray for those who exercise this valued ministry. We encourage residents and staff to keep growing in their faith or to find faith for the first time. And we would all say that our faith has grown through this ministry as we always leave blessed and our lives enriched by those we worship with.

Reverend Canon Stephen Bowen

St John's Churchyard Report

The Memorial Beds have been regularly tidied up and maintained. One of the beds has been extended by 2 metres. The hedge at the rear of the churchyard has been reduced in height and trimmed. The shrubs in the shrubbery have been cut back to a manageable size. The paths and patio adjacent to the hall have been weeded and tidied up. The driveway has been cleared of tree debris and leaves as and when necessary. The wildflower area is still a work in progress.

Julie Morton

Pastoral Companions

A number of “Companions” are each responsible for a small group, keeping in contact, sending birthday cards and visiting as and when needed. We are at the moment working to refresh and relaunch the Pastoral Companions to make sure everyone is included and no one is forgotten.

Judith Dufour

Concerts and Events

Concerts and Events by organisations hiring the church:

- Wellington Choral Society
 - November 30 Requiem Mass - Mozart
 - March 29 Oratorio: Elijah - Mendelssohn
- Wellington Film Festival
 - April 5 & 19
- Blackdown Community Choir
 - July 11
 - December 5
- Somerset Youth Orchestra and Somerset Youth Concert Band
 - July 23 & 24
- Wellington Silver Band Concert
 - December 6
- JW3
 - December 14
- Collegium Singers
 - December 16
- Blackdown Early Music Project
 - August 24

Charity

- Pamela Elloway Memorial Concert
 - April 6

Concerts and Events promoted by St John's

- An Evening with Hazel Prior the author
 - July 12
- Duo Correa (flute & guitar Colombian music)
 - October 12
- Fairs and Coffee Mornings
 - Coffee June 22; November 16
 - Fairs Autumn; Winter February 15

Special Sung Services

- Patronal Festival Evensong sung by In Ecclesia
 - June 23
- Parish Candlelit Carol Service with the Wellington Silver Band
 - December 17
- Service of Nine Lessons and Carols sung by The Popham Voices
 - December 23
- Choral Evensong sung by In Ecclesia
 - January 12

Special thanks:

All the Stewards who helped to welcome the audiences

Sue Rackley, Lenore Clarke, Jo Leigh, Andrew Maddocks for Management

Sharon Chorley for Administration

Andrew Maddocks

Hall bookings

St John's Hall and church bookings have been going well this year, generating a good sum of money for the church. Sadly, we lost a regular booking from the Health Visitors in September as they moved to brand new council-funded facilities. This left a big hole in our finances as they had used the church three days a week. However, new groups are starting to enquire, and we now have a regular Slimming World Group as well as occasional block bookings from the local NCT Group and a diabetes care group. Other local groups use the hall now and then, such as the Wellington Twinning Association or Wellington Choral for their AGM.

Sharon Chorley

Coffee Mornings

We had two fundraising coffee mornings in 2024 in the hall at St John's. The first was held in June and had a gardening and plant theme. The second was held in November and had a Christmas theme. There were a number of stalls at both of them for which people donated things, baked cakes, and made craft-themed gifts. Volunteers from the congregation helped to organise the day and man the stalls. Both were very well attended by church members and people from the wider community. Over £1000 was raised at each one, bringing in vital funds for the running of the church.

Lenore Clarke

Fairs

St John's hosted one Spring Fair in April 2024. It was well supported, and we raised an amazing £1350. We have improved the marketing of these events, and we also have a reliable and efficient team who volunteer to set up and serve on the day. We have no expenditure to deduct because we have 10-12 stallholders who pay £10 per table, and this money buys various provisions for the refreshment stand and hot food. Also, we offer £10 towards ingredients for 4 main bakers, and any left over goes into the takings. These events are great fun, and everyone pulls together. I think it would be a good fundraiser for the church to host at least 3 of these per annum.

Sue Rackley

Talking Café

The Tuesday morning Talking café continues to go from strength to strength. We regularly have upwards of 25 customers. It has developed into a real community where people come to find friendship and support as well as refreshments and information. Some even find the confidence to join us for church services, which is a real bonus. We continue to serve "good" coffee, tea, and biscuits. Recently, people have been bringing cakes when it is their birthday – a real treat. We have Moyra to gently play the piano in the background, including Happy Birthdays! We did try to have a sing-song once – it did not end well, but we had fun!

We still have the Village Agent to give support and advice on any topic - Jackie has developed good relationships with our regulars. At the end of 2024, a new initiative was introduced – The Spark Café. This is run by Dave, who is available to give advice and help to those who do not have access to digital devices or need a little extra help to get online and deal with things such as Blue Badge Applications or the NHS App. We also have representatives from the Job Centre, Nick, and Nicky, who come to us every few weeks. They give advice about employment and benefits.

Some of our customers have been referred to us from the local doctor's surgeries. I love the idea that talking café is on prescription!

We have had one major change this year. Unfortunately for us, we said goodbye to Dee in December. Dee had been leading Talking Café for a while and felt that it was time to retire. She has done an amazing job, and we thank her for her dedication, leadership, and service.

On a very sad note, we have lost two of our regular customers – Paul, who was an amazing inspiration to all of us, died of a stroke, and Barry, who passed away after a tragic accident. Both sadly missed.

Looking forward to 2025 – We are facing a reduction in our funding from CCS (the organisation that funds the Village Agents), because of their own funding cuts. ASDA, who provided our milk and biscuits, no longer have a Community Fund so have withdrawn their support. We will need to look for alternative funding sources, but we will keep going!

Finally, Talking Café could not run without the dedication and commitment of its volunteers. Thank you to everyone who has given up their time to make this such a successful, enjoyable, and special time of the week. As always, we are looking for more volunteers. If you feel you would like to join the team, please speak to Sandie or one of the other volunteers.

Sandie and the Talking Café Team.

Tea@3

This was established as we came out of the Covid lockdown to promote the rebuilding of friendships and conversation over tea and cake. It still continues to flourish on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month, September to June, in the Hall and is a welcoming space not only for Church members but also for the wider community.

Judith Dufour

Warm Spaces

This season, we continued our sessions from 12 pm to 2 pm every Friday, providing a Soup lunch with cake and coffee. We have had lots of new faces coming in regularly and staying for the full two hours.

This has enabled us to have 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, as well as those who have helped us with making sure we have the supplies we need. We are hoping we can be back in November 2025 for another session of Warm Space.

Lois Webb

The Women's Refuge

We have continued to support the Refuge throughout this past year. They are extremely grateful for all the donations we have been able to deliver. Donations have come from various other sources, including the Inner Wheel of Wellington and other people decluttering, as well as ourselves.

The need is ever-increasing as ladies find themselves seeking refuge for numerous reasons.

Good quality household items are always needed as they leave the refuge when they are safe and are rehoused. Please continue to give this very important charity your full support. Thank you very much

Lenore Clarke

Foodbank

The need remains significant and pressing. Stocks in the Taunton warehouse of the Trussell Trust are as low as they have been for a number of years. St. John's as a church community has contributed hardly anything for more than a year now; it is to be hoped that some contributions are being made at collection points in the main supermarkets in Wellington.

Each week, on average, some dozen or more people are being fed through the Wellington branch, and it remains the case that most of the volunteers are active members of the different church communities in Wellington. If you would like to join us please see James Bradnock.

James Bradnock

Bible Reading Notes

For many years, members of St. John's have found regular Bible reading notes helpful.

Bible Reading Fellowship publish various notes three times a year and everyone would find something to suit them, whether it's regular or large print copies of 'New Daylight' or editions of 'Bible Reflections for older people' amongst others.

C.W.R. have produced a hardback copy of 366 daily readings to replace their bi-monthly booklets.

If you would like to see copies of what is available, please let me know and I can let you see some samples.

Tessa Bradnock

St John's School chaplain

Thank you for all your support and your prayers as the exciting work at school continues. Please do read the children's reports on the noticeboard in church or my longer version.

Pupil Chaplains

- Regular weekly sessions: stories, prayer, Bible activities, preparation for events
- Presenting stories in assembly, e.g. Two Builders
- Acting the story of Daniel for reception class
- Helping with school services in church
- Preparing and delivering tea party for the elderly in church hall
- New cohort of 12 in September; training with Mike Haslam, commissioning
- Visiting the Old Vicarage to tell and sing the Christmas story

Reception class and year 1

- Godly Play sessions: creation, Noah, Abraham, the Good Shepherd
- Visit to church about baptism
- Interactive Easter story in class

Year 4

- Story of Zacchaeus and salvation
- Introduction to Easter
- Easter Experience in church

Year 5

- Sessions on incarnation, the birth of Jesus and of St John the Baptist

Year 6

- In-class version of the Easter Experience
- Transition sessions using *It's Your Move* booklet

General

- Whole-school day on the Two Builders story: hosting creative prayer room
- Attending training with staff on spirituality in school
- Preparing for and being in school during SIAMS inspection (September)
- Attending meetings of the school ethos group
- Being available to chat
- 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. We had several visiting teams of ringers throughout the year, including some from North Curry, Taunton, and Winkleigh in Devon.

There is still plenty of room in our group, so if anyone wishes to join us, please contact me.

David Grabham

Tone Deanery Synod Report

There were Tone Deanery Synod meetings in February, May and October in 2024.

Personnel Changes/Election of Officers

The Deanery said farewell to Revd Alan Ellacott, team vicar, Wellington Team Ministry and Revd Martin Walker, Rector of Wivey and the Hills. And welcomed Revd Colin Simpson as vicar of the new benefice of Wellington and West Buckland), Revd Suzy Kirkham as incumbent of Deane Vale benefice and Bradford-on-Tone and Nynehead and Revd Andy Barton as incumbent of West Tone benefice.

Sue Levinge became the Synod Treasurer.

Dilly Bradley, William Brown, Tony Setter, Martin Valuks and Suzy Kirkham were elected to the Deanery Pastoral and Mission Group (DMPG) joining the Area Dean Helene, Lay Dean Charles, Secretary Sarah and Treasurer Sue.

Revd Colin Simpson was unanimously elected as the Clergy rep on Diocesan Synod and William Brown, Dilly Bradley and Charles Doble were re-elected as Lay Reps for the Deanery.

Major Discussion Topics

Early in the year, there was discussion about the shortcomings of the Stats for Mission and how it failed to reflect and understand our churches, their roles in the community, and the outreach that is done.

Discussion around the proposal to change from a Parish Share to a Benefice Share was a big topic of conversation during 2024. Synod members were urged to attend consultation meetings along with other PCC meetings, although many felt that the consultation was perfunctory. There were many concerns expressed about the new system, which was due to come into place in 2025. Actions suggested for PCCs included staying in touch with consultation process, getting involved with *Save the Parishes* (www.savetheparish.com), working on a cultural change to giving and discipleship. In the last meeting of the year, disappointment was expressed that figures payable for the Benefice had not been received.

Mandatory safeguarding training and using the Safeguarding Dashboard was another dominant issue. The Diocesan Safeguarding team have introduced a "Train the Trainer" scheme so that in-person training can be offered to small groups, which is particularly helpful for those for whom online training is too challenging. Concern was expressed that people may step down from leadership roles rather than do the training.

An inspiring talk on Growing faith with children, young people and families from Andy Levett and Helena Power (Schools Chaplain in Wellington and Rockwell Green) in the final meeting of the year shared lots of ideas of what is possible when working with young people and their families

Andy made two 'offers' of support from himself/the Go Team:

The Growing Faith conversation cards – a free resource for PCC discussions (one pack per parish)

The offer of a follow up visit from Andy to facilitate a benefice wide conversation.

The Synod agreed to support The Home Service on 10Radio with a £60 donation towards promotional materials.

Sarah Messenger

Safeguarding Report

Diocesan News

In March 2025, it will be the turn of Bath and Wells to be audited by the INEQE Safeguarding Group. The audit is part of a national programme, commissioned by the Archbishop's Council, to conduct an intensive and comprehensive review of safeguarding at each diocese and cathedral in the Church of England. This has led to a busy year across the diocese and within parish safeguarding teams. Bishop Michael says, "These audits have been beneficial in other dioceses by providing valuable insights into safeguarding practices and ways to further improve them." The diocese continues to be a great source of help and advice, and someone from the team has always been available throughout the year when I have needed to contact them.

Parish Dashboard

In his Ad Clerum, Bishop Michael advised that the use of Safeguarding Dashboards is now diocesan policy and must be completed by all parishes. I have been continually updating ours online and have found it a useful tool to keep up with safeguarding legislation. Our dashboard is currently 91% complete, so still a work in progress, but we are fairly up to date.

Training Update

It is now a requirement for all PCC members to complete Basic Awareness, Foundation, and Domestic Abuse Awareness safeguarding training. Most PCC members have completed both of the first two levels and most have completed the final one. Colin has provided training sessions in the church hall for PCC members and other volunteers to do this. He will be setting up more sessions through 2025 to try and provide all of the necessary training. I will also encourage those who can complete the sessions online to do so however, some do not have access to a computer.

Safer Recruitment

I have continued to safely recruit new volunteers to activities at St John's. Some of the activities that were in place have sadly closed this year due to a lack of leaders and volunteers.

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.*