

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED

England & Wales · Charity number 1159874

Details

Other names Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted PCC

Status Registered

Legal form Previously excepted

Registered 2015-01-09

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 18a Tiptree Road
Wickham Bishops
Witham
CM8 3NB

Phone 01621893180

Email grstreasurer@protonmail.com

Website <http://www.churchinwickhambishops.org.uk/>

Activities

Objects: PROMOTING IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH THE WHOLE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

Activities: Regular public worship open to all. The provision of sacred space for personal prayer and contemplation. Pastoral work. Teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups. Promoting the whole mission of the Church through provision of activities for senior citizens, parents and toddlers and other special need groups. Supporting other charities in the UK and overseas.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Essex

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£81,453	£81,758	-	-
2024-12-31	£126,323	£180,806	-	-
2023-12-31	£102,365	£97,491	-	-
2022-12-31	£124,228	£89,170	-	-
2021-12-31	£125,406	£89,171	-	-
2020-12-31	£74,983	£124,240	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Barry John Cousins		2025-03-23
Catherine Ann Dawson		2019-03-17
Christine Mary Bealer		2018-04-15
DOROTHY JEAN KERR		2019-03-17
Elizabeth Joslin		2025-03-23
GRAHAM RICHARD SPEARMAN		2019-03-17
John Michael Gilbert		2019-03-17
Margaret Ann Drewett		2025-03-23

Accounts



ANNUAL REPORT

2025

Parish of St. Bartholomew's
Wickham Bishops with
St. Nicholas' Little Braxted

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH
MEETING**

Sunday 26th April 2026

at 12 noon

in St. Bartholomew's

Church Hall



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Welcome to the Annual Report for the year 2025

The agenda for the meeting, together with last year's minutes are available as separate documents, along with the Accounts and nominations for the election of PCC members and Churchwardens.

Our thanks go to all who have contributed to this report.

Thanks too to those who have given so generously of their time and skills in supporting the work of our two churches during a second challenging year of interregnum.

There are many unsung heroes to thank, not least our flower ladies, those who clean the church, look after our altar linen, make the coffee, manage our numerous rotas and many more!

Additional volunteers are always welcome..

THANK YOU
volunteers


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Administrative Information

The Parish of St Bartholomew Wickham Bishops with St Nicholas Little Braxted is situated in the Witham Deanery, part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. It has responsibility for two principal places of worship - St Bartholomew's Church, the Parish Church, which is situated in Church Road, Wickham Bishops and St Nicholas Little Braxted. St Nicholas is situated in Witham Road, Little Braxted. Information about the churches in Wickham Bishops and Little Braxted is also available at - www.churchinwickhambishops.org.uk and also on A Church near You website

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Wickham Bishops with Little Braxted is a Registered Charity No. 1159874.

Witham Deanery is undergoing a period of transition and strategic engagement focused on sustaining ministry and mission beyond 2026. The restructure has been in process for 2 years and can only come into practice when the Legal process has taken place.

The Parish has been in interregnum since April 2024 and with the restructure we are now moving into a United Benefice of 18 parishes. Within that Benefice we are part of a new 'Cluster' of churches called the Beacon Parishes. This comprises, our two churches, Great Totham, Little Totham and Goldhanger. There will be 4 clusters within the 18 parish Benefice, each with a full-time stipendiary priest.

The new priest may reside either in the Wickham Bishops Rectory or the Great Totham Rectory. The post will come under the leadership of a Team Rector who will be based in Tiptree. We will also have the

services of a paid Benefice Administrator who will take on enquiries for Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals.

Geraldine Spearman
PCC Secretary

PCC Members

Officers as at January 2026

Priest in Charge:	Vacant
Priest with Permission to Officiate:	Revd. Derek Clark
Churchwardens:	Vacant Position x 2

Elected Representatives

To April 2026

John Baker
Kate Dawson

To April 2027

Dorothy Kerr
Maggie Drewett
Barry Cousins
Elizabeth Joslin
Graham Wingrove

To April 2028

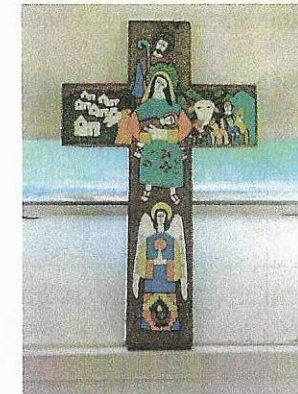
Graham Spearman
Francine Cope (Standing down 2026)

Ex-officio

Geraldine Spearman - PCC Secretary

Deanery Synod Reps

Christine Bealer
John Gilbert (standing down 2026)

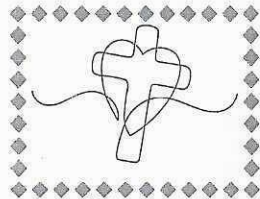


Other Officers

PCC Vice-Chair & Treasurer:	Graham Spearman
Safeguarding Officer:	Brian Joslin
Safeguarding Training:	Francine Cope
Electoral Roll Officer:	Mary Brown
Deputy Churchwarden:	Graham Wingrove
Pastoral Assistant:	Christine Bealer

Sidespersons:

Kath Adkins	Norma Hayward	Kate Dawson
Lester Firkins	Dorothy Kerr	Stuart Parish
Wendy Firkins	John Kerr	John Wratten
Francine Cope	Denise Yelland	Dick Yelland
Geraldine Spearman	Vivienne Lodge	
Chris Baker	Allan Baker	



If you're interested in becoming a Sidesperson or reading one of the lessons at the services, please speak to Dorothy Kerr.

Electoral Roll

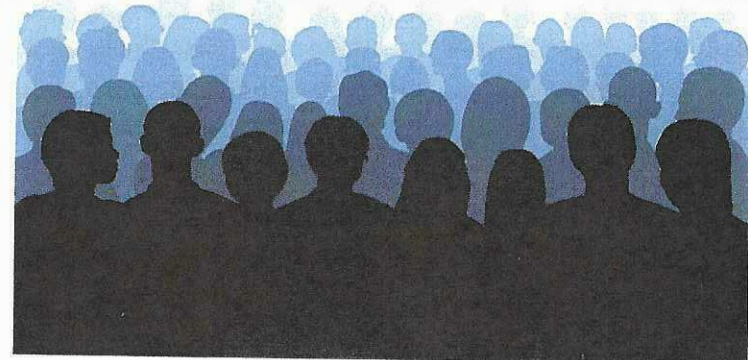
This is Year2 of the fully revised Electoral Roll and requires that all members are contacted to ascertain whether they wish to remain for 2026. No form filling this year. Emails/some letters were sent out, and some phone calls were made. I am grateful for the speedy responses.

In total there are 98 people on the 2026 Church Electoral Roll; of these 74 live in the Parish, and 24 are non-resident.

One member requested removal from the Electoral Roll and one member has sadly died during the last year. Three of the members who did not return their form last year (and were removed from the 2025 Roll) have asked to be reinstated, and their forms have now been received.

Thank you to everyone for your co-operation in preparing The Roll for 2026.

Mary Brown, Electoral Roll Officer



Vice Chairman's Report

Whilst I am writing this report I must acknowledge that I have only held this role since November 2025. I wish to thank my predecessor John Gilbert for all his hard work and contributions during most of 2025.

Well here we are 2 years having passed without an Incumbent.

I hope everyone agrees that we have done well in maintaining our pattern of worship which is what the PCC agreed following Reverend Hilary's retirement. This is largely down to Barry Cousins and an extraordinary amount of effort he puts in to find clergy to officiate. Please see Barry's report on this topic. I wish to re-iterate his thanks to Reverend Derek who has enabled us to continue with our Eucharistic services at St Bartholomew's. It is great for us that Derek has indicated that he is prepared to continue with the same arrangements.

Unfortunately Barry's job is getting increasingly difficult. Two clergy have been lost from the Deanery, Reverend Ann- Marie Renshaw and Reverend Natasha McMichael having moved away to new posts in other parts of the country. This will be compounded with Rev Noah Cockett applying for posts now that he is coming to the end of his Curacy at St Nicolas Witham. Hence there are fewer clergy to call on.

As well as our services we have maintained our Bible Study Groups, Womens Christian Fellowship, Drop In and Edward Bear. We need to recognise and thank all those who work so hard to enable these events to happen.

The proposed new Benefice of 18 Parishes, 19 Churches, seems to be moving very slowly. In early March we received from the Diocese the

Draft Proposals for creation of the new Benefice to be known as "the Blackwater Benefice." Views on the draft proposal are asked to be forwarded to Canon Nathan Whitehead at the Diocese as soon as possible and not later than midnight on 8 May 2026.

If anybody wants to know more please talk to me.

I can also advise that the vacancy for Team Rector Designate, to be based at Tiptree, is now being advertised.

The advertisement for a Team Vicar for our Cluster, to be known as the Beacon Cluster was due to be published in March.

We are meeting with the other three Parishes in our Cluster and thanks to Maggie Drewett who has started a monthly prayer group as well as a Prayer Chain for our own Parish.

Where we are now is only because there are so many people who have contributed a lot of effort so often quietly in the background I am reluctant to name names because inevitably I will miss someone out. You all know who you are so thank you.

Whilst I must acknowledge my bias, we really do need to say a huge thank you to our PCC Secretary, Geraldine. She has worked very hard on all the Parish administration for the past two years. Hopefully some of this is going to be taken on by the Administrator of the current Blackwater Group. That said we have some reservations because of the lack of local knowledge which is so often necessary.

We do not know what the future holds but I do think that we have a healthy and supportive congregation as well as being recognised in the village community. Whatever happens in the coming months your PCC will do it all it can to sustain our Parish Life.

Graham Spearman
Vice-Chairman



PCC Report

The PCC members are Charity Trustees and have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the church is solvent and well run. Our Electoral Roll membership in 2025 entitled our Parish to 9 laity PCC members plus 2 Deanery Synod Reps. Rev. Derek Clark and Secretary Geraldine are both ex-officio members. The post of Churchwarden remains vacant. The Standing Committee, which decides on the PCC agenda items, is comprised of the Chair, Secretary, Pastoral Assistant and Deputy Churchwarden. Rev. Hilary retired in April 2024 and the Parish has been in interregnum since this time.

We have had our usual PCC meetings six times this year with the addition of extra ones to discuss the proposed re-organisation and re-structure of the Benefice. These included attendance from Bishop Roger, the Area Dean and Archdeacons. John Gilbert valiantly stepped in as Vice-Chair, in the absence of a Priest in Charge and latterly, Graham Spearman has taken the Vice-Chair's role.

Safeguarding and Finances are standard agenda items for discussion along with reports from the 4 committees. The Parish Safeguarding Officer has attended meetings to give regular updates. The re-structure has understandably become the focus of some of our meetings and the changes that are ahead, as we move into the new Beacon Parish cluster of 5 churches and the 18 Parish Benefice. We have tried to maintain 'business as usual' and PCC members have taken on additional responsibilities to ensure that services and other activities could continue without too much disruption to our church life. PCC members have also been invited to attend additional meetings of the Cluster, the Benefice and presentations of the new structure plans and the Legal aspects required.

We are hoping to benefit from the services of one of the Benefice Administrators to take on some of the tasks which currently are

carried out by myself as PCC Secretary. This will come into place once the funding of the role has been confirmed.

The PCC is to be thanked for their increased workload and commitment during this time and thanks again to members for their support and patience throughout 2025.

Geraldine Spearman
PCC Secretary



CLERGY COVER DURING VACANCY

Thank You We approach a third year in Vacancy; it is two years ago that Rev Hilary moved on into retirement! We have been blessed with many and various ordained ministers, both serving and retired who have valiantly stepped up to maintain our regular and occasional services. We are and remain extremely grateful for their services week in and week out. [and I'm not sure that many if any, have claimed their fiscal dues]. The list is quite long, and most would not want to see their names in print, but I believe that there are a few stalwarts that deserve to be honoured for their unstinting and regular support. Sparing his blushes we must especially thank Rev Derek for his valiant support dashing from an earlier service at Ulting Sunday after Sunday. Very regular support has come from other retired priests, especially Rev John Chandler and Rev Rose Braisby.

There are many others currently in service in the Diocese. Archdeaconry and Area Deanery who have provided frequent and/or occasional support in their busy lives – we are grateful for their continuing help and happily polish their halos!

Barry Cousins



Safeguarding

Norma Hayward had worked for many years as the Parish Safeguarding Officer for St Bartholomew's Wickham Bishops with St Nicholas Little Braxted. I am very grateful to Norma for the guidance that she continues to give to me as her successor in that role.

The Church of England (CofE) prioritizes safeguarding as an integral part of its mission, aiming to create a safer church for children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Key measures include robust policies, mandatory training, safer recruitment (DBS checks), and collaboration with statutory authorities. The National Safeguarding Team oversees these, with local responsibility held by parishes.

My role as a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is to:

- *Work closely with the incumbent (and in the absence of an incumbent, the PCC) to advise within the parish on all safeguarding matters relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults;*
- *Receive, with the incumbent, any concerns about children or adults in the parish and make sure that proper advice is sought and proper referrals are made;*
- *Report all matters relating to concerns and allegations of abuse against church officers, in liaison with the incumbent, to the DSA [Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser] who will liaise with the statutory agencies, as required. Concerns about the incumbent should be raised directly with the DSA;*
- *Ensure that any ex-offenders with offences against children or vulnerable adults known to be in the church community are notified to the DSA and contribute to managing Safeguarding Agreements;*
- *Promote safer practices in all activities and make any recommendations required taking into account the particular arrangements of the parish;*

- *Seek to ensure that Safer Recruitment practice is followed, with the support of diocese.*
- *Attend diocesan safeguarding training at least every three years;*
- *Maintain safeguarding records;*
- *Complete national, diocesan and parish safeguarding self-assessments as required;*
- *Contribute to the annual review of parish safeguarding arrangements;*

I regularly report on safeguarding in the parish. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at each PCC meeting.

I am also responsible for:

Being the DBS Administrator [within the Diocese of Chelmsford we use the term Registered Recruiter]

Supporting other church officers who work with children or vulnerable adults;

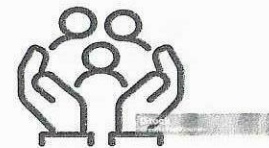
Providing or arranging provision of safeguarding training safeguarding learning and development modules for parish workers (both volunteers and paid staff, in liaison with Francine Cope..

Displayed around the Churches in Wickham Bishops and Little Braxted are a variety of safeguarding posters which give contact details for safeguarding concerns. I try to ensure that these are kept up to date.

Each of the two churches has a supply (on prominent display) of our Safeguarding Policy and Useful contact details for safeguarding – contacts both within and outside the Church of England.

The Diocese of Chelmsford has a Safeguarding Dashboard which I regularly access to ensure that the policies and procedures we have in place are regularly reviewed and brought up to date.

Brian Joslin
Parish Safeguarding Officer



Deanery Synod

A deanery is part of the governance structure of the Church of England, linking to the Diocesan Synod and to General Synod through elected representatives. Meetings are chaired by the Rural Dean, in our case Rev. Simon Garwood and a Lay Chair, Simon May. Synod meetings are held up to four times a year and regular business includes updates on the Deanery's Parish Share payments, events and activities in the Parishes and perhaps a session on a matter of interest. A report of the latest meeting of the General Synod can also be circulated.

The word "synod" comes from a Greek word meaning "assembly" or "meeting".

A Deanery Synod consists of all the clergy licensed to a Benefice/parish within the Deanery and elected lay members - each parish is allocated a number of lay places on the Deanery Synod based on the size of their electoral roll. Deanery Synod members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to serve a three-year term.

What does a Deanery Synod do?

The Deanery Synod makes decisions at a deanery level. It acts as an intermediary between the parochial church councils of each parish and the synod of the diocese as a whole. Deaneries also have the power to bring proposals and motions to Diocesan Synod for debate.

What do Deanery Synod lay members do?

Deanery Synod members are invited to attend four Deanery Synod meetings per year. These are held at various locations in the Deanery, and are generally approximately two hours long. The agenda and papers about matters to be discussed are circulated to members in advance. Some decisions are put to the vote. Deanery Synod members are also automatically members of their parish's Parochial Church Council (PCC), and so attend those meetings as well.

During the last year, presentations at our Deanery meetings were as follows:

February 11th 2025 :

Introduction to the Strategic Mission & Ministry Investment Board by Wendy Lidgate.

Deanery Plan Restructuring presentation by Rev.A-M Renshaw

June 18th 2025:

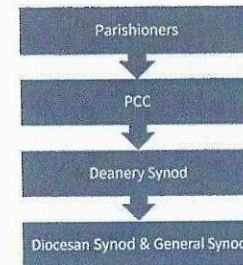
Developing Lay Ministry by Caroline Harding

Progress on the new Central Benefice

October 22nd 2025:

Generosity, Giving & Diocesan Support by Michelle Cottis & Becky Hills. Update on the New Central Benefice

Christine Bealer & John Gilbert



Fabric

After the extensive redecoration of St Bartholomew's completed by Baker's last year, activity levels have been quieter.

Rick Smith stepped down as Chairman of the Fabric Committee in January, his contributions were deeply valued.

In May, the Committee welcomed Allan Baker who assumed the role and has proven to be a great asset.

John Popham, a valued member of the Fabric Committee, sadly passed away this year. His kindness and active participation greatly benefited the church and community.

....Fabric Report
continued



ST BARTHOLOMEW'S - June 8th saw the return of the superb biennial Wickham Bishops Garden Festival and the Garden Festival Concert held in September. In November proceeds from the festival funded the porch renovation. The porch along with three doors were stained and treated by Ollies Garden Services, greatly enhancing the entrance's appearance. The light at the front entrance of the porch was also replaced. During last year's interior refurbishment works the choir stall heaters were disconnected. Sigma restored the connection earlier this year and the heaters are working again. The fan heaters in the church hall stopped working because of a faulty switch, however Sigma repaired the switch and the heaters are back in operation. Drainage/Foul water - Following Jiggin's annual inspection of the pump and chamber a fault in the float stop was located and a temporary rig installed, the replacement float was installed in February. Following the Open Gardens event in June a routine cleaning of the pump chamber and jetting of pipes was carried out; however a tangled lead was left in the high-level pump chamber causing a false alarm, this was remedied by Jiggins. The cleaning of the gulleys and valleys was deemed necessary as they tended to become blocked and overflow causing dampness to penetrate the walls. This year it was arranged for DNPS Building Contractors to carry out an inspection and clean the gulleys and valleys twice a year. There had been problems with the pulpit light. When the pulpit light was turned on the lights in the

vestry went out. The fuse was removed and a temporary LED portable light used instead. The light has been fixed by Sigma with replaced circuitry and reflector. Lighting protection, PAT testing, and fire extinguisher inspections were all completed in 2025.

The Community Payback team do a splendid job in keeping the churchyard grounds tidy. Beth Lunn from the Probation Service annually reviews the documentation to ensure a thorough and up to date risk assessment. This year the new agreement form was written in more detail, Beth Lunn forwarded the documents to the Fabric Committee for review. The Memorandum of Understanding and Risk Assessment were reviewed and agreed by the Fabric Committee Meeting and then forwarded to the PCC for sign off and approval at the October 2025 meeting.

The maintenance of the churchyard and graveyard is managed by dedicated volunteers, who are organised on a rota by Dick Yelland. Additionally, two scheduled clean-up efforts in March and November have ensured that the area remains well-kept and presentable. Also undertaken this year was the cutting back of the laurels along the border of the neighbouring property at the rear of the church.

ST NICHOLAS - The replacement Corona at St Nicholas was completed last year and a Dedication Service held December 2024 at the carol service. Quinquennial inspection undertaken by Hilary Brightman. Quotations for works have been received, and Lodge and Sons will be recommended to the PCC. Rainwater hopper/valley and gutter clearing carried out by DNPS twice a year. Works to collapsing gravestone have been completed.

Thanks go to Jonathan Aldis for keeping the church grounds in good order.

Maggie Grice
Committee Secretary



Finance Report

For a full report please see the published accounts.

There are some important points to be reiterated in this report.

Once again we did not pay our Parish Share in full. The amount paid was £41,000 down from £46,000 paid last year. Unfortunately, due to ill health as well as other changes the Magazine Advertising income was significantly reduced which together with a small reduction in planned giving our overall income to General Funds was lower. The PCC remember that Parish Share is an entirely voluntary contribution. Unfortunately the Diocese are saying that if Parish Share is not met in years to come then the number of clergy will have to be reduced.

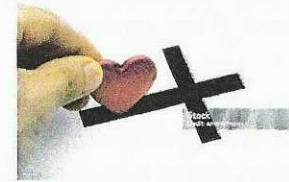
Another major cost is maintenance of the Fabric. The Quinquennial report for St Nicholas was undertaken last year and having obtained three quotes, we have instructed Lodge and Sons to undertake the work. When we redecorated St Bartholomew's we were able to reclaim the VAT. That scheme has now been withdrawn by the current Government so we are going to have to pay an additional 20% from the St Nicholas Fabric Fund. Luckily, that fund has benefitted from a generous bequest so there are sufficient funds to pay the bill.

I am pleased to report that both Restricted funds are in a relatively healthy state. St Bartholomew's fabric fund benefitted significantly from the Gardens Festival and once again thank you to Stewart Adkins and his committee. I understand that the event will take place again in 2027 under the Chairmanship of Wendy Wallace.

Once again I must express my thanks to John Baker for his continuing work as Gift Aid Secretary which reduces my workload. John's efforts have resulted in an additional £10,860.

Furthermore John has stepped up to deal with the Magazine Advertising revenue for this year. John, as my predecessor in this role, has also been of great support and guidance as a Mentor. To close thank you all for your giving but please keep the amount you contribute under review. If anyone would like to join the Parish Giving Scheme please come and talk to me.

Graham Spearman
Treasurer



Worship

The Service Planning Group consists of a small group of people who have continued to try and work together to take the lead in arranging the service schedule and content for the two churches in our parish, whilst the search for a new team vicar continues. They are;

Choir and Music lead for St Bartholomew's Church - Graham Spearman.

Morning Praise Lead - Lester Firkins

Morning Praise Music Lead - Ben Southgate

Acting Deputy Church Warden - Graham Wingrove

Authorised Local Preachers - Barry Cousins, Elizabeth Joslin, John Gilbert and Christine Bealer

Having only met twice during the last year the group have remained united in maintaining the usual consistent pattern of Eucharistic and non Eucharistic services (8am and 10.30am at St Bartholomew's Church in Wickham Bishops and 9am on third Sundays at St Nicholas' Church in Little Braxted, previously offered before the interregnum started.

In order to accomplish this pattern, our sincere and grateful thanks go to Barry Cousins, who continues to devote many hours looking for and chasing down priests to cover our Eucharistic services. Special thanks also goes to Rev Derek Clark, who has consistently found his way up to St Bartholomew's Church on several Sunday mornings each month, quietly joining us part way through the service to take the Celebrant role for our Eucharistic services. Without his support, we would have found it very difficult indeed, if not entirely impossible, to continue our usual pattern of services.

Graham Spearman, has also, amongst his many other duties, been tireless in acquiring organist support - special thanks go to Richard Overill, Gillian Ward-Russell and Stuart Wilks for their ongoing support.

The changes made earlier in the interregnum will continue, as we endeavour to make our Eucharistic services more welcoming and accessible to those who are immune-suppressed or otherwise medically vulnerable, or have mobility issues and find navigating steps difficult.

As we continue to bring God's word to the inhabitants of our village, we are mindful to try and welcome the very youngest newcomers into our church family and look forward very much to the future and/or the new challenges and changes that may bring.

Christine Bealer
Chair - Worship Committee



Choir



As a reminder this is how I opened last year's report. "The purpose of the Choir is to lead the congregation in Worship. That may be either leading the hymns and Eucharist settings or performing a piece of music to lift the congregation."

The Choir continued to provide leadership throughout the year and also sung an Anthem on Easter Sunday as well as providing a service of 9 Lessons and Carols at Christmas. This was, as ever, well supported by the village with a congregation of about 120. This was only achieved with the help of visiting singers to augment the regular choir and visiting musicians to play and conduct.

Once again I must express our thanks to Steven Rumsey who took numerous practices, particularly for the Christmas and Easter music.

I would also like to express my thanks to our visiting Organists, Stuart Wilks, Richard Overill, Gillian Ward-Russell, Jonathan Turner and Brian Fletcher who played for our 9 Lessons and Carols service. I should also say Thank you to Jayne Jennings who plays at St Nicholas and from time to time at St Bartholomew's.

The choir is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) who have sadly disbanded area committees and so area events. However, Emma Gibbins, Director of Music at Chelmsford Cathedral, organise a Diocesan Choral Evensong Festival which a few of us attended in 2025. This event is being repeated in May and a few of us will be attending again.

I make no apology for repeating what I said last year. Sacred music at Parish level is sadly in decline and I am very pleased that at St Bartholomew's we have, so far, been able to maintain the

tradition which is a major part of our culture. There was a most enlightening article by the Precentor of Chester Cathedral on the importance of music in Worship in Parish Churches as well as Cathedrals. If anyone would like to read it please ask me for the article.

It is an ongoing challenge to find musicians to play and singers to sing for our regular services as well as at major festivals. So, if any one would like to sing or play or knows people in the village who sing and or play please contact me.

Graham Spearman - 07721 505296



St. Nicholas

ST NICHOLAS' LITTLE BRAXTED in the parish of Wickham Bishops with Little Braxted.

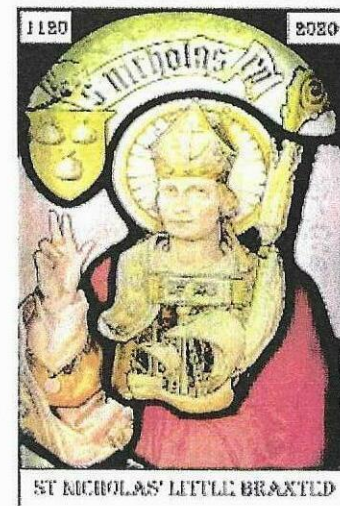
The Parish continues to maintain this ancient and spectacular church in both structure and for worship. The building is designated as a Chapel of Ease with a licence as a wedding venue. During this Interregnum or 'Vacancy', services of Holy Communion using the Prayer Book style of 1662 have been maintained, monthly and, as a 'Festival Church' additional worship and praise has been offered at special times such as Good Friday, Easter Sunday, St Nicholas' Day and at Christmastide.

For the regular monthly services congregation members come mainly from Gt Totham, some from Wickham Bishops with others from Chelmsford and Witham. It is noticeable that there are no, or hardly ever worshippers from the civic parish of Little Braxted although there may be one or two on the Electoral Roll.

Thanks are due to the many and various 'stand-in priests' who preside at our services while the parish remains in Vacancy. We are extremely grateful to Jayne Jennings for playing the organ at both regular and special services. Many thanks Jayne! The church is always decked out with fresh flowers, and we must thank Elsie who continues to supply them despite moving to Great Totham and having to rely on taxis or lifts. Elsie and Donald also ensure a Poppy display for Remembrance time and have provided a wonderful array of strings of battery lights for the Patronal Festival, the mid-week Carol Service and Christmas Eve Midnight Mass.

The church is clearly well known across the globe for its decoration and wall paintings and remains open most days of the week. It is evident from the Visitor Book that there is a continuous flow of 'pilgrims' from far and wide and especial thanks are due to Trudy and Kit for daily unlocking and locking over so many years. As they move into their new home 'up-the-road' we look forward to Beth and Daniel maintaining the family tradition as they move into the 'Hall' next door.

Barry Cousins



Pastoral

The committee supports the pastoral care in the church and local community. This includes visiting the sick, lonely and bereaved; Drop In sessions, Welcome Packs, Parish Magazine, Edward Bear, Services at Little Oaks and Home Communion.

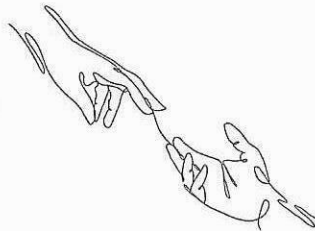
The Parish magazine has continued to be delivered to every household during the year. We were delighted to welcome Helen and Louis as the new editors after Elaine stepped down in readiness for her move. We are so thankful to her for stepping in and taking the magazine forward. We are very grateful to the willing band of helpers who ensure the delivery of the magazine and are always looking out for new people to join the ranks. Welcome packs have also been delivered to newcomers to the village by our Welcome visitors.

We once again organised the delivery of cyclamen plants to the sick and bereaved at Harvest time and these were much appreciated. We also assisted with the planning of the Service at All Souls and provided refreshments.

We continue to visit Little Oaks once a month for a short service with Holy Communion and to chat with the residents. Christine, in her role as Pastoral Assistant, does a wonderful job in regularly visiting and taking Holy Communion to many in the parish as well as supporting the Edward Bear Club at their weekly meetings.

We all, with members of our church family, try to lend support where we can to the bereaved, the elderly and those not so well.

Jayne Jennings
Chair - Pastoral Committee



Drop-in Sessions

Drop In sessions are on the second Monday of each month and are free. The Parish magazine has details and a contact number. Drop In provides refreshments, friendship and a sympathetic ear if anyone wants to talk in confidence. The Christmas party in December is always popular. There are seasonal snacks, Secret Santa presents, crackers, carols and lots more.

Attendance in 2025 was between 9 and 21. There is a dedicated and small hardworking team who have Safeguarding qualifications. Two people lead the session each month. The helpers are Geraldine, Christine, Jayne, Kate, Kath, Maggie and Sue.

Sue Clements

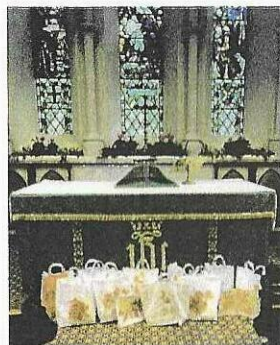


COMMUNITY

Foodbank

We continue to support the work of the Trussell Trust Foodbank with a permanent collection box in St. Bartholomew's and also working in conjunction with the village One Stop Shop. The Manager and staff of One Stop are very supportive, promoting the collections and providing additional items at Christmas and Easter from their Community Fund. We're very grateful to them.

Once again there was a splendid Harvest Collection of food delivered to the church and shop by members of the congregation and the wider Parish, The children of Wickham Bishops Nursery made a special visit to the church with their Harvest gifts presented in prettily hand painted paper bags. They took part in a special prayer and were told how some people needed extra help to provide food for their families.



The food is delivered every month to the Trussell Trust



Geraldine Spearman

Warehouse in Braintree from where it is distributed to the Witham area as well as Halstead and Braintree. People can collect food parcels at the Witham Methodist Church in Guithavon Street. Vouchers are provided by GPs and Social Care providers.

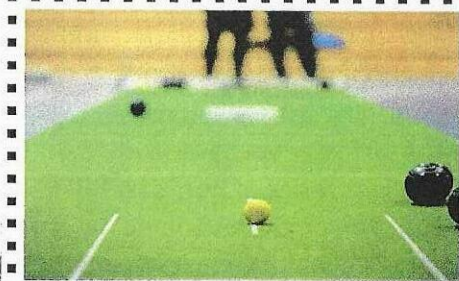


Bowls Club

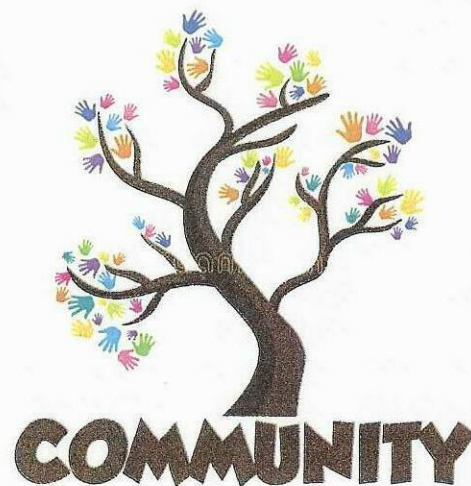
Another good year for the St. Bart's Outreach Bowls Club. As members are becoming a little older, the lifting of the mat is often an issue and we are looking at ways to rectify this.

The club enables people to meet and socialise, whilst learning to play bowls. There is always a break for tea, cake and chat! All are welcome. Contact Cindy or Gillian if you would like to come along and give it a try.

Hopefully we can still continue in 2026.



Cindy Baker



Discipleship



Bible Study Groups

Monday afternoon

Our Monday afternoon Bible studies continue on the first and third Mondays of the month with an attendance of between 10 and 13 regulars. Our topics are varied and we are blessed with the range of conversations and knowledge that we have from those who come along, finishing with group prayer.

Over the last year we have studied 'Journeying through Lent' from the New Daylight series of books by BRF; 'Resurrection' by Kristie Berglund; 'Advent for Everyone' by Tom Wright and now looking at 'In and Out of Caves', a Lent study written by a Methodist Minister from Nassau in the Bahamas. Do come along and join us, we would love to see you. We start at 2pm.

Gillian Wingrove and Maggie Drewett



Tuesday evening

The group meets twice a month and currently 10 people attend. All are welcome and anyone interested in attending should speak to Christine Baker for more details. We meet in a different home each time and take it in turns to facilitate the evening, although there is no requirement for anyone to offer to host or lead the group but would still like to attend.

We focus on a book of the bible. (This past year we have studied the Gospel of Mark and are currently studying Paul's Letter to the Romans). We have very wide ranging discussions relevant to our Christian lives and current events to help us in our daily living. The group is very welcoming, relaxed, friendly and open to hear everyone's views and sharing of experiences of God's goodness and our daily walk with Him.

Steve Carter

Womens Christian Fellowship

The group has had another good year with varied speakers and activities. The membership has stayed around 30 with average attendance about 20. and we have had the pleasure of a few gentlemen at meetings which have interested them.

Talks have included a local locksmith, Colchester Zoo and a speaker from The National Garden Scheme

Added to this our annual Daffodil Walk at Oliver's Garden Centre, Summer Afternoon tea and Christmas lunch.

Refreshments are always served at the end of the meetings leaving plenty of time for, tea, chat and plenty of company.

Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month in the Church Hall at 2.30pm and are open to everyone.

Denise Yelland

Prayer group

In November we started a prayer group, meeting on the first Saturday in the month at different churches across the Beacon group, from 9.30am to 10am (coffee/tea from 9am). This came out of one of the meetings that the PCC had with the other churches in our new Beacon group of churches, us, and St. Nicholas with the Parish churches in Little and Gt. Totham and Goldhanger. We pray for our communities whilst getting to know each other more.

We have now launched our email prayer chain:

prayer@churchinwickhambishops.org.uk This is for anyone who wants those on the prayer chain to prayer

for them or their circumstance. An addition to the prayer request cards that are in the church for folk to come in and complete. If you want to join the prayer chain then please let

Maggie Drewett know via the email address above.



Fund Raising & Social

In 2025 we were fairly active, coordinating a reasonable number of fund raising and social events, as well as making a significant contribution to the extremely successful Garden Festival in June and supporting the Concert in September.

Our three fund raisers were the Quiz in February (£536), the Spring Coffee Morning in March (around £832) and the Christmas Market in November (approximately £1,842). All were enjoyable, well supported occasions as well as financial successes.

One of our purely social events was the Harvest Festival Bring and Share Lunch in October, which was a pleasant and reasonably well attended occasion with a plentiful and varied selection of food. Next was the decoration of the Christmas Tree by the uniformed groups at the beginning of December. This was a successful evening and better supported than the previous year. Our committee provided refreshments for the young people, which were very well received, as were the seasonal ones we provided after the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols later in the month.



All in all, a good year! Our committee of eight couldn't achieve what it does without the support of others within the Church family and the wider community, for which we are most grateful. We hope we can count on that continuing throughout 2026 and that it will be an enjoyable and successful year.

Kath Adkins
Chair - Fund Raising and Social
Committee



Garden Festival & Concert

The Garden Festival, held on June 8, 2025, was a wonderful celebration of community spirit and teamwork.

We welcomed 800 visitors and raised an impressive £14,600 from the Festival itself and an additional £2559 from the associated concert held on September 20 and attended by 160 people across the two performances.



At the heart of our success were more than 80 dedicated volunteers. Their tireless efforts—whether setting up gardens, running stalls, guiding visitors, making and serving food and drinks, or organizing the Scarecrow Trail—created a warm and welcoming atmosphere that truly set our festival apart. The camaraderie and joy shared by everyone involved was inspiring, and we are deeply grateful for each volunteer's contribution.

This year, we introduced a taxi bus service and enjoyed a fantastic potting demonstration by Perrywood Garden Centre, which brought fresh interest and new faces to the event. Our ever-popular Scarecrow Trail featured over 40 imaginative entries, delighting families and visitors in the run-up to the festival. The continued support from sponsors, donors, and local residents—much of it secured before the event—was crucial in ensuring both the festival's financial success and its inclusive, welcoming spirit.

Under the leadership of incoming Chairperson, Wendy Wallace, a new committee will be formed, comprising some former committee

members and a few new faces. They will organise the next event in June 2027.

If you'd like to join the team or share your suggestions, please contact Wendy Wallace at wendywallace146@gmail.com. Together, we can continue to grow this wonderful tradition and make the 2027 Garden Festival even more special!

Stewart Adkins

Chair of the Garden Festival Committee (2020-2025)

EDWARD BEAR CLUB

Edward Bear Club is a welcoming, energetic, and thriving group that meets at the church every Monday during term-time. Our club consists of children from birth to four years old, who attend with their special grown-up. The Club is run by Emma Turner, with help from Stella Scrivener and Christine Bealer providing the backbone of support and lead us in prayer each week.



Edward Bear Club is built upon the core Christian values with emphasis on love, respect, and kindness. Each session is based upon a key theme which is structured around the Christian and wider annual calendar of events; whereby craft activity and book mirrors this theme. For example, we have celebrated National Roald Dahl day making dream catchers and marvellous potions, Martin Luther King Day in learning to love and respect everyone, story of Nativity and recently learning about the Winter Olympics with our own races and medal presentation.

The sessions are built around structure but also open play; whereby the children thoroughly look forward to going into the church to sing and find the hidden bears. Spending time in the church allows the children to ask questions about who God is, the furnishings, stained glass windows and lay-out of a church.

During the colder months we spend our time in the hall extension, however when the weather warms, we move to the outside area where the children continue to learn, ex-



plore, play, and value the Christian values. We remain thoroughly grateful to the church for their continuous support for our annual 'Christmas' party and 'School Leavers' party.

The group has grown in the last 9-months gaining new members and a lifeline to their 'special grown-up' for example who is new to the village, a first-time parent, an older carer providing childcare or just in need of a safe space for children to play and them to enjoy company of others around them.

Emma Turner

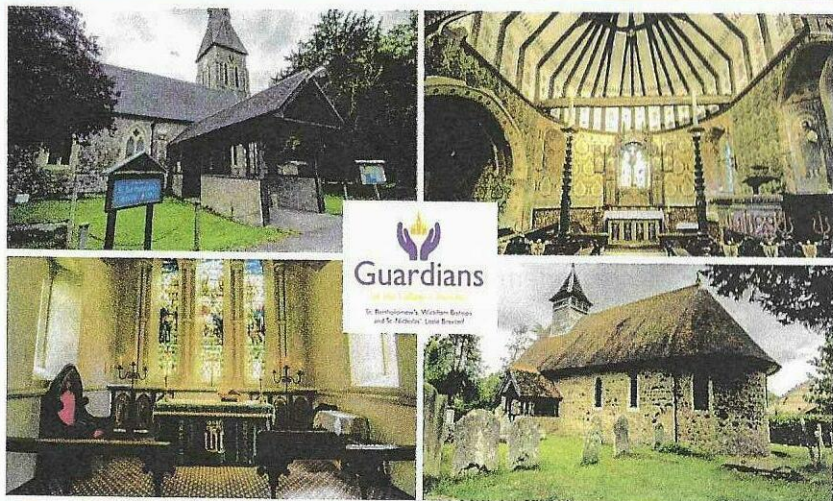
Edward Bear Lead

Guardians of the Village Churches

With the increasing cost of repairing and maintaining our historic churches, The Guardians of the Village Churches was established to address the challenge of ensuring that these beautiful buildings are preserved for the next generation – to secure their future as multi-use resources and returning them to the heart of the communities they serve.

Regrettably, in the absence of an incumbent, the Guardians committee is currently dormant. It is hoped that when the time is right the committee will be reactivated and we will be happy to hear from anyone who wishes to be part of that group to share their energy and ideas to start the ball rolling once again!

Graham Spearman



Parish Contacts

Priest in Charge	Vacant	
Acting Vice - Chairman and Treasurer	Graham Spearman	07721 505296
Rev. Derek Clark Permission to Officiate	The Leas Farm Wickham Bishops Road Hatfield Peverel CM3 2JL	01245 380627 07860 235778
Pastoral Assistant	Christine Bealer	07958 263128
General Enquiries	admin@churchinwickhambishops.org.uk	07544 973705
Churchwardens	Vacant	
PCC Secretary	Geraldine Spearman gspearmanpcc@gmail.com	07870 166008
Church Hall Bookings	Kath Adkins kathrynadkins57@gmail.com	01621 891143
Drop In	Sue Clements	01621 892032
Prayer Chain	prayer@churchinwickhambishops.org.uk	
On-Line Worship	Via Facebook	
Churches open	Daily from 9.30am to 4pm	
Church website	www.churchinwickhambishops.org.uk	
Parish Magazine	magazine@churchinwickhambishops.org.uk	

Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted PCC

Registered Charity 1159874

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31st December 2025

**WICKHAM BISHOPS AND LITTLE BRAXTED
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2025 which are set out on pages 4 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

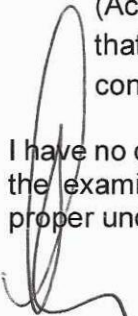
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records or
- 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 have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Barnes FCA
Independent Examiner
30 Coombe Rise
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 7DG

13 April 2026

Treasurer's Report

In respect of our General Funds, notated as Unrestricted funds, which cover day to day running costs we have experienced a downturn to our financial position. The Diocese continue to request what I consider to be an excessive sum by way of Parish Share particularly when we compare our figure against similar parishes. In 2024 we paid £46,000 to the Diocese in respect of Parish Share against a request for £53,208. This resulted in a reduction to our General Fund of some £9,300. For 2025 we were asked for a contribution of £53,476. The PCC has continued with our agreement to withhold any payment of Parish until the financial year end when we could ascertain what we could afford. Unfortunately, we have seen a reduction to the Planned Giving Scheme together with lower amounts in collections and donations. Furthermore, there was a delay in collecting fees for advertising in the Parish Magazine although this has been energetically rectified by John Baker to whom I am so very grateful. At the PCC meeting in January 2026, it was agreed that a payment of £41,000 be made. So, at the financial year end General Funds were reduced to £42,102 down from £50,308. Hopefully this will be largely rectified by the 2026-year end as we should see £14,000 advertising revenue included in this year's income. As Trustees of our own Charity, we are expected to make responsible financial decisions and hold sufficient funds to cover 6 months of expenditure. With annual expenditure approaching £90,000 I am anxious to maintain a reserve of £45,000 to £50,000.

Turning to Restricted funds both fabric funds are in a relatively healthy state. St Bartholomew's fabric fund benefitted significantly from the Gardens Festival and once again thank you to Stewart Adkins and his committee. The St Nicholas Fabric fund is in a healthy position and hopefully we will be able to undertake most of the work required in the quinquennial report.

The scheme for repayment of VAT has been running since 2001. Unfortunately, this scheme is ending at 31st March 2026. Whilst a new scheme is being launched which includes churches it is being suggested that we will have to cover VAT on any future works. This is obviously going to be a significant burden as we will have to raise 20% more than we did previously.

While saying thank you, a particular thanks to John Baker for his continuing work as Gift Aid Secretary. John's efforts have resulted in an additional £10,860 of income. John, as my predecessor in this role, has also been of great support and guidance as a Mentor.

To close thank you all for your giving but please keep the amount you contribute under review. If anyone would like to join the Parish Giving Scheme please come and talk to me.

Graham Spearman 26/01/2026

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Planned giving	£32,316.89	-	£32,316.89	£36,554.84
Collections and other giving	£1,601.50	-	£1,601.50	£3,303.26
Other voluntary receipts	£4,393.32	£62.31	£4,455.63	£43,280.90
Gift Aid recovered	£10,859.90	-	£10,859.90	£23,974.60
Other receipts	£4,814.50	£2,022.46	£6,836.96	£5,981.92
Youth Club	-	-	-	-
Receipts from church activities	£12,537.80	£19,162.77	£31,700.57	£14,480.38
Total income	£66,523.91	£21,247.54	£87,771.45	£127,575.90
Missionary and Charitable Giving	£651.50	£267.50	£919.00	£1,729.88
Parish Share	£41,000.00	-	£41,000.00	£46,000.00
Clergy and Staffing costs	£4,028.59	-	£4,028.59	£3,558.16
Church Running Expenses	£27,908.04	£2,468.31	£30,376.35	£27,494.82
Youth Club	-	-	-	-
Hall Running Costs	£1,981.54	-	£1,981.54	£1,916.91
Church Repairs & Maintenance	£279.00	£5,761.32	£6,040.32	£100,714.66
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	-	-	-	-
New Building work	-	-	-	-
Total expenditure	£75,848.67	£8,497.13	£84,345.80	£181,414.43
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(£9,324.76)	£12,750.41	£3,425.65	(£53,838.53)
Gross transfers between funds - in	£190,956.63	£221,092.12	£412,048.75	£36,816.97
Gross transfers between funds - out	(£181,854.74)	(£230,194.01)	(£412,048.75)	(£36,816.97)
Gains/losses on investment assets	(£7,882.84)	£7,882.84	-	£7,882.84
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	(£8,105.71)	£11,531.36	£3,425.65	(£45,955.69)
Total funds brought forward	£50,307.64	£44,913.75	£95,221.39	£141,177.08
Total funds carried forward	£42,201.93	£56,445.11	£98,647.04	£95,221.39
General fund	£42,201.93	-	£42,201.93	£42,424.80

Guardians Restricted Funds	-	-	-	-
Ukrainian Refugee Fund Cash In Hand	-	-	-	-
Wickham Bishops Deposit CB3022304	-	-	-	-
Bowls Club Restricted Funds	-	£843.14	£843.14	£843.14
Guardians Restricted Funds	-	£14,710.46	£14,710.46	-
Guardians Restricted Funds Cash In Hand	-	£19.80	£19.80	£9,221.20
Little Braxted Fabric Fund CB3022306	-	£36,139.94	£36,139.94	£36,018.96
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund	-	£245.36	£245.36	£506.48
Ukrainian Refugee Fund Cash In Hand	-	£0.94	£0.94	-
Wickham Bishops Fabric Fund CB3022305	-	£4,485.47	£4,485.47	£6,206.81
Total funds		£42,201.93	£56,445.11	£98,647.04
				£95,221.39

Balance Sheet detailed

Class and code	Description	As at 31/12/2025	As at 31/12/2024
Current assets			
6501	Co-op Bank current account	£1,944.17	-
6502	CAF Cash Account 00022245	£36.88	£11,753.05
6503	CAF Gold Ukrainian Refugees	£0.94	£506.48
6504	CAF Gold Guardians	£14,710.46	£9,221.20
6505	CCLA deposit account608143001D	£41,041.38	£39,264.44
6506	Co-op Bank Ukrainian Refugee Fund	£245.36	-
6510	CCLA deposit account Church Restoration	£4,485.47	£6,206.81
6515	CCLA deposit St Nicholas Fabric	£36,139.94	£36,018.96
6590	Cash in hand	£22.64	£133.29
6591	Cash in Hand Guardians	£19.80	-
	Total Current assets	£98,647.04	£103,104.23
Liabilities			
6601	Loans received	-	-
Z04	Accounts Payable	-	£7,882.84

	Total Liabilities	-	£7,882.84
	Net Asset surplus (deficit)	£98,647.04	£95,221.39
Reserves			
	Excess/(deficit) to date	£3,425.65	£28,327.96
Z01	Starting balances	£95,221.39	£59,010.59
Z02	Gains/(losses) on reval of fixed assets	-	£7,882.84
	Total Reserves	£98,647.04	£95,221.39
	Represented by Funds		
	General (Unrestricted)	£42,201.93	£50,307.64
	Designated	-	-
	Restricted	£56,445.11	£44,913.75
	Total	£98,647.04	£95,221.39

Analysis of income and expenditure

	Total			
	Unrestricted	Restricted	This year	Last year
RECEIPTS				
Planned giving				
0110 - Envelopes	-	-	-	£90.00
0201 - planned giving	£32,316.89	-	£32,316.89	£36,464.84
Planned giving Totals	£32,316.89	-	£32,316.89	£36,554.84
Collections and other giving				
0301 - collections	£1,586.50	-	£1,586.50	£3,188.26
0501 - Gift Aid Envelopes	£15.00	-	£15.00	£115.00
Collections and other giving Totals	£1,601.50	-	£1,601.50	£3,303.26
Other voluntary receipts				
0302 - Charity Collections	£616.90	-	£616.90	£641.88
0550 - Other Giving	£360.00	-	£360.00	£360.00
0551 - Donations	£3,353.42	-	£3,353.42	£3,971.25
0553 - Flower Fund	£63.00	-	£63.00	-
0554 - Music Fund	-	-	-	£81.50
0701 - Legacies/Grants	-	-	-	£38,105.11
1000 - Friends of Little Braxted	-	-	-	£66.16
1001 - Guardians	-	£62.31	£62.31	£55.00
Other voluntary receipts Totals	£4,393.32	£62.31	£4,455.63	£43,280.90
Gift Aid recovered				
0601 - Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	£10,515.24	-	£10,515.24	£9,876.60
0602 - Tax Refund - Church Restoration Fund WB	£344.66	-	£344.66	£14,098.00
Gift Aid recovered Totals	£10,859.90	-	£10,859.90	£23,974.60

Other receipts

0901 - Other funds generated	£351.56	-	£351.56	£100.00
0914 - Trading Income	£98.06	-	£98.06	£22.30
1020 - Interest - General Fund	£1,838.13	-	£1,838.13	£2,061.31
1021 - Interest WB Church Restoration Fund	-	£226.95	£226.95	£1,420.04
1022 - Interest LB Fabric Fund	-	£1,621.02	£1,621.02	£1,103.52
1024 - Interest Ukranian Refugee Fund	-	£7.32	£7.32	£22.06
1025 - Interest on Guardians Account	-	£167.17	£167.17	£275.50
1500 - In/Out	£2,526.75	-	£2,526.75	£977.19
Other receipts Totals	£4,814.50	£2,022.46	£6,836.96	£5,981.92

Receipts from church activities

0909 - Fund Raising - Open Gardens Flower Festival	-	£19,162.77	£19,162.77	-
0910 - Fund Raising	£3,054.02	-	£3,054.02	£4,227.06
1100 - Fees to Diocese	£1,206.34	-	£1,206.34	£428.66
1101 - Parochial Fees for weddings and funerals	£3,244.00	-	£3,244.00	£1,699.02
1103 - Memorial Book Income	£60.00	-	£60.00	£10.00
1210 - Greeting Cards sales	£70.60	-	£70.60	£68.15
1240 - Church hall lettings	£3,763.25	-	£3,763.25	£4,082.50
1241 - Tea/Coffee	£309.59	-	£309.59	£260.69
1250 - Magazine income - advertising	£830.00	-	£830.00	£3,675.00
1337 - Drop In Donations	-	-	-	£29.30
Receipts from church activities Totals	£12,537.80	£19,162.77	£31,700.57	£14,480.38
Receipts Grand totals	£66,523.91	£21,247.54	£87,771.45	£127,575.90

PAYMENTS

Missionary and Charitable Giving

1801 - Charity Donations	£651.50	-	£651.50	£785.88
2336 - Ukranian Refugee Expenditure	-	£267.50	£267.50	£944.00
Missionary and Charitable Giving Totals	£651.50	£267.50	£919.00	£1,729.88

Parish Share

1901 - Parish Share	£41,000.00	-	£41,000.00	£46,000.00
Parish Share Totals	£41,000.00	-	£41,000.00	£46,000.00

Clergy and Staffing costs

1104 - Fees to Diocese	£1,212.00	-	£1,212.00	£428.00
2001 - Other Clergy Expenses	£361.59	-	£361.59	£496.63
2050 - Wages Honoraria & Support	£2,455.00	-	£2,455.00	£2,480.00
2130 - Rectory expenses	-	-	-	£153.53
Clergy and Staffing costs Totals	£4,028.59	-	£4,028.59	£3,558.16

Church Running Expenses

1730 - Costs of Fundraising	-	-	-	£163.10
1733 - Costs of Fundraising- Open Gardens	-	£1,184.28	£1,184.28	-
2301 - Insurance - Wickham Bishops	£2,662.84	-	£2,662.84	£2,572.27
2302 - Insurance - Little Braxted	£1,273.69	-	£1,273.69	£1,208.84
2330 - Church maintenance WB	£2,717.63	£310.00	£3,027.63	£4,701.70
2331 - Church Maintenance - LB	£169.78	£620.04	£789.82	£276.78
2337 - Pastoral Care	£150.43	-	£150.43	£169.88
2339 - Children & Youth Work	£485.12	-	£485.12	£194.00
2340 - General Costs	£1,815.33	-	£1,815.33	£2,227.26
2341 - Flowers for Church	£692.16	-	£692.16	£239.04
2343 - Music Fund	-	-	-	£108.94
2350 - Upkeep of churchyard WB	£884.04	£353.99	£1,238.03	£1,750.35
2351 - Upkeep of Churchyard LB	£680.00	-	£680.00	£510.00
2360 - Administration	£859.45	-	£859.45	£639.46
2401 - Church running - Utilities WB	£6,254.53	-	£6,254.53	£6,300.44

2410 - Church running - Utilities LB	£286.85	-	£286.85	£535.30
2501 - Magazine expenses	£5,940.00	-	£5,940.00	£4,864.93
2510 - Greetings Cards costs	£135.60	-	£135.60	£47.20
2521 - Tea/Coffee Costs	£192.54	-	£192.54	£256.33
2601 - Governance costs examination/audit fee	£120.00	-	£120.00	£120.00
4000 - In/Out	£2,588.05	-	£2,588.05	£609.00
Church Running Expenses Totals	£27,908.04	£2,468.31	£30,376.35	£27,494.82
Hall Running Costs				
2520 - Hall running costs	£1,981.54	-	£1,981.54	£1,916.91
Hall Running Costs Totals	£1,981.54	-	£1,981.54	£1,916.91
Church Repairs & Maintenance				
2701 - Church major repairs - structure	-	£3,478.03	£3,478.03	£2,020.80
2702 - Church Major Repairs - Structure St Nich	-	£200.00	£200.00	£2,816.28
2703 - Guardians Costs	-	-	-	£9.59
2710 - Church major repairs - installation	-	-	-	£1,852.80
2711 - Capital Expenditure	£279.00	-	£279.00	£499.00
2720 - Church interior and exterior decorating	-	£2,083.29	£2,083.29	£93,516.19
Church Repairs & Maintenance Totals	£279.00	£5,761.32	£6,040.32	£100,714.66
Payments Grand totals	£75,848.67	£8,497.13	£84,345.80	£181,414.43

WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED P.C.C. ASSETS

ASSETS

General Fund:

CAF Bank:	£ 36.88
Co-Op Bank:	£ 1,101.03
CCLA:	£41,041.38
Petty Cash:	£ 22.64
Total:	£42,201.93

Restricted Funds

Bowls Club Restricted Fund (held in General Funds)	£ 843.14
Guardians Restricted Funds	£14,730.26
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund	£ 246.30
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration	£ 4,485.47
Little Braxted Fabric Fund	£36,139.94
Total:	£56,445.11

Bookstall Stock: £ 600

Church Hall	£500,000	Step Ladder	£ 109
Tables & Chairs	£ 3,000	Lawnmowers	£ 2,000
Kitchen Equipment - Storage boxes, Urn, Cutlery, Microwave etc	£ 1,500	Strimmer	£ 150
Crockery & Glasses	£ 500	Hedge Trimmer	£ 150
Vacuum Cleaners	£ 200	Shed X 2	£ 1,500
Video, Sound System, Heaters	£ 1,600	Piano X 2	£ 2,700
Choir Robes	£ 1,500	Projector	£ 430
Dishwasher	£ 1,500	Floristry equipment	£ 2,000
Mevo Camera	£ 350	Photocopier	£ 2,500
WiFi Router & booster	£ 120		

**WICKHAM BISHOPS AND LITTLE BRAXTED
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2025 which are set out on pages 4 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

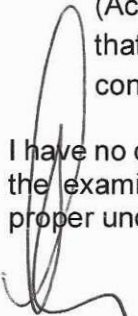
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records or
- 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 have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Barnes FCA
Independent Examiner
30 Coombe Rise
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 7DG

13 April 2026

Accounts

There are many ways in which you can help to maintain the village churches.

If you feel you would like to offer help with any aspects of our church life, please talk to one of the PCC members or the Chairmen of the various committees.

All volunteers are welcomed and valued!



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

**Parish of St. Bartholomew's
Wickham Bishops with
St. Nicholas Little Braxted**

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH
MEETING**

Sunday 23rd March 2025

at 12 pm

**In St. Bartholomew's
Church Hall**



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

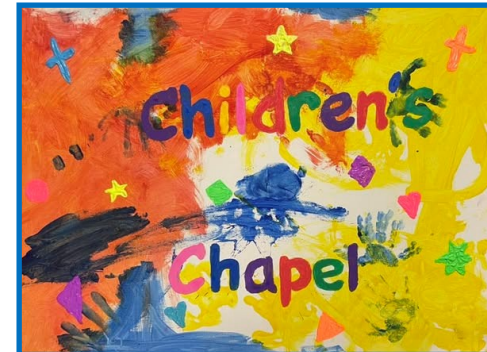
Welcome to the Annual Report for the year 2024

The agenda for the meeting, together with last year's minutes are available as separate documents, along with the Accounts and nominations for the election of PCC members and Churchwardens. Our thanks go to all who have contributed to this report.

Thanks too to those who have given so generously of their time and skills in supporting the work of our two churches during a challenging year.



*A Special mention to
our
fabulous flower ladies
who decorate the
church and enhance
our worship each
week.*



EDWARD BEAR CLUB

Edward Bear meet every Monday morning during term time for fun and faith with friends. Our congregation is made up of children aged 0-5 and their special grownups. Stella Scrivener runs the group with help from Leanne Goddard. Christine Bealer provides pastoral support and leads us in prayer each week.

The group focus on core Christian values of love and acceptance. We spend time in the church as well as the hall helping the children become familiar in that space and thus able to treat it as their own.

During warmer weeks we play outside and year round the children are helping support local wildlife at home and in the church yard. The children enjoy crafts, stories and songs together. They help to choose songs and participate with the story each week, helping them gain confidence and become more articulate.

We have two parties a year and are grateful for the church support with these. There is one for Christmas where each child receives an illustrated Christmas Story which is based on the nativity. In the summer we have an end of term party and children leaving for school receive their own Edward Bear to commemorate their time at the club. The group also have annual self funded trips. On previous years, we have visited Abberton Nature Reserve, a local soft play facility and later on this year will be going to a local beach.

Stella Scrivener

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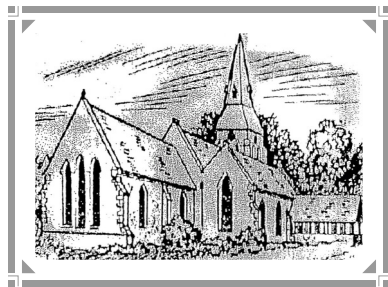
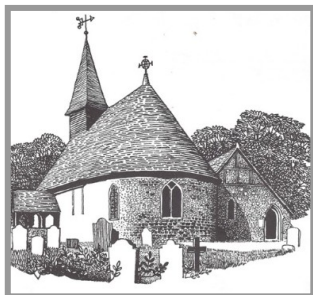
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**ADMINISTRATIVE
INFORMATION**

The Parish of St Bartholomew Wickham Bishops with St Nicholas Little Braxted is situated in the Witham Deanery, part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. It has responsibility for two principal places of worship - St Bartholomew's Church, the Parish Church, which is situated in Church Road, Wickham Bishops and St Nicholas Little Braxted now a Chapel of Ease, but licensed for weddings. St Nicholas is situated in Witham Road, Little Braxted. Information about the churches in Wickham Bishops and Little Braxted is also available at - www.churchinwickhambishops.org.uk.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Wickham Bishops with Little Braxted is a Registered Charity No. 1159874.

The Parish has been in interregnum since April 2024. Plans are currently in place for a re-organisation of the wider Benefice. This Parish will become a 'cluster' with Great Totham, Little Totham and Goldhanger.



Summer Fayre, Christmas and the ever popular cake stall !



Guardians of the Village Churches

Regrettably, in the absence of an incumbent, the Guardians committee is currently dormant. It is hoped that when the time is right the committee will be reactivated.

Graham Spearman

Officers continued ...

PCC Vice-Chair:	John Gilbert
Safeguarding Officer:	Norma Hayward
Safeguarding Training:	Francine Cope
Electoral Roll Officer:	Mary Brown
Deputy Churchwarden:	Graham Wingrove

Sidespersons:

Kath Adkins	Norma Hayward	Kate Dawson
Lester Firkins	Dorothy Kerr	Stuart Parish
Wendy Firkins	John Kerr	John Wratten
Richard Latham	Francine Cope	Denise Yelland
Geraldine Spearman	Vivienne Lodge	Dick Yelland
Chris Baker	Allan Baker	

If you're interested in becoming a Sidesperson or reading one of the lessons at the services, please speak to Dorothy Kerr.

We have also previously looked at the book of Nehemiah. We are open to looking at relevant issues and topics that help us in our Christian lives and understanding of the Bible.

Recently we had a session led by one of group looking at the current situation with the occupied West Bank area of Palestine. This was very helpful in helping all to understand the current issues in that region and how this relates to the biblical context in passages in Mark's Gospel.

The group is very welcoming, relaxed, friendly and open to hear everyone's views and sharing of experiences of God's goodness and our daily walk with Him.

Elizabeth Joslin and Steve Carter

Women's Christian Fellowship

The Fellowship has had a good year with membership at 30 and an average attendance of 20 and at some meetings we have welcomed several gentlemen when the subjects have interested them.

We had talks on "Living with Facial Disfigurement" Climate Change" and "Memories of a Magistrate in the East End" among others and presentations from Perrywoods and Colchester Zoo. In March we had what has become an annual event, the Daffodil Walk at Oliver's Nursery. Added to this an afternoon tea and Christmas Lunch, bringing lots of fun and friendship.

Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month in the Church Hall at 2.30pm and are open to everyone.

Denise Yelland

DISCIPLESHIP

Bible Groups

Monday afternoon

We continue our Bible studies on the 1st and 3rd Monday afternoons in the month with 13 regular attendees. Our aim is to keep it relevant for today and encourage everyone, who wants to, time to say what they feel. Sometimes this leads us way off the course material but gives us an interesting opportunity to explore avenues that we perhaps hadn't thought about and we always end up back on track!

Over the last year we have covered books that showed us who the 'Bad Boys of the Bible' were; 'Forgiveness'; 'Thoughts of God'; 'O Come O Come Emanuel' and we are currently studying 'Journeying Through Lent'.

We aim to choose varied studies so as not to stagnate but to challenge positively, concluding with group prayer.

Do come and join us, we start at 2pm.

Gillian Wingrove and Maggie Drewett

Tuesday evening

The group meets twice a month and currently 10 people attend (although more are welcome if we can fit everyone in to our homes!). We meet in a different home each time and take it in turns to facilitate the evening.

We focus on a book of the bible (at present we are working through the Gospel of Mark).

ELECTORAL ROLL

Every six years The Church Electoral Roll is completely renewed in line with the Church of England regulations. Forms were sent to all parishioners on 2024 Electoral Roll inviting them to renew their application and Data Protection details.

In total there are now 97 people on the 2025 Church Electoral Roll; of these 74 live in the Parish, and 23 are non-resident.

There are 7 new members, but I also report that 5 members requested removal from the Electoral Roll and 1 member is moving away from the village. Sadly 2 members have died during the last year. Also 8 previous members will be removed from the 2025 Electoral Roll either because there has been no contact from them or they are not eligible.

Thank you to everyone for your co-operation in preparing The Roll for 2025, and we extend a warm welcome to our 7 new members.

Mary Brown, Electoral Roll Officer
wblbelr@gmail.com



Chairman's report

A living and growing body or a presentation set of Ferrero Rocher – choose your analogy!

Well, that was an interesting year!

Hilary's introduction for last year's APCM booklet started with "Surviving to thriving" as a theme from the Diocesan Well-being Day. We are nearly a year into the vacancy (interregnum in the old days, but that rather depends on whether you think clergy rule...) and a lot has happened. Thanks to the dedication of so many people within and without the congregation it has seemed pretty much like business as usual – where business as usual includes growth and change.

We have a newly redecorated and reordered church building, giving us a more welcoming and inclusive space.

No more flaking paintwork, brighter lighting, open spaces at the front of the main body of the church and a dedicated space for wheelchair users in the body of the congregation, not shoved off into a side aisle. Thank you to everyone in the church, in the village and donors beyond who have been so committed over the years to raise the money for the transformation.

Not only has the space been made to look more welcoming, we have made use of the new space to make our services more welcoming and inclusive. As reported elsewhere, we have changed how some of our services operate to make things a whole body of Christ together experience. But physical change is only a part – it is an outward expression of

COMMUNITY

FOODBANK

We continue to support the work of the Trussell Trust Foodbank with a permanent collection box in St. Bartholomew's and also working in conjunction with the village One Stop Shop.

Once again the Harvest Collection of food delivered to the church and the shop was well supported. The children of Wickham Bishops Nursery made a special visit to the church with their Harvest gifts all presented in prettily hand painted paper bags. They took part in a special prayer and were told how some people needed extra help to provide food for their families.

One Stop generously used their Community Fund to donate bags of food items at Easter and Christmas. We're grateful for their continued commitment.

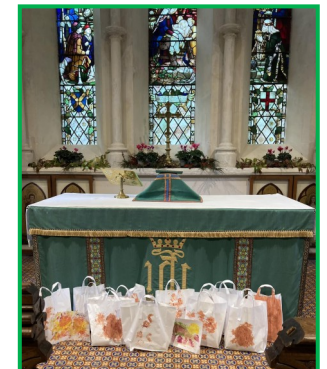
The local Warehouse covers the Witham area as well as Braintree and Halstead. People can collect food parcels at the Witham Methodist Church in Guithavon Street.

Vouchers are provided by GPs or Social Care providers.

Geraldine Spearman



*The Nursery Harvest
food bags at the
Altar*



UKRAINIAN FRIENDS

During 2024, our friends, the Smolynet family moved away from the village and were re-housed in accommodation in Ipswich.

We welcomed them in to our congregation when they came to the UK at the beginning of the war in 2022. It was a joy to embrace them as part of the church family and encourage them to take part in our activities, including Edward Bear. We were sad to see them leave.

Through funds that were raised whilst they were in Wickham Bishops, we were able to buy them a much needed washing machine for their new home

They are always welcome back at St. Bartholomew's and we wish them luck for their future and continue to hold them in our prayers.

Geraldine Spearman

BOWLS CLUB

Another good year for the St. Bart's Outreach Bowls Club.

As members are becoming a little older, the lifting of the mat is often an issue and we are looking at ways to rectify this.

The club enables people to meet and socialise, whilst learning to play bowls. There is always a break for tea, cake and chat! All are welcome. Contact Cindy or Gillian if you would like to come along and give it a try.

Hopefully we can still continue in 2025.

Cindy Baker

what is happening inside. As Hilary said in previous years, people come to the service, but stay because of the fellowship. Church doesn't just happen in the body of the building in a service, church happens with the coffee and the crock pot lunches afterwards. Ministry doesn't just happen on a Sunday, it happens at the bible study groups, at the Drop-in, at the WCF, at the house groups. Importantly, all of these ministries depend not on the presence of a priest, but the presence of the Spirit in an obedient and caring congregation. Everything that everybody does matters and makes a difference. It is not only those that organise things (and goodness knows they do an outstanding job), but the people who come and make the events what they are.

If this vacancy has shown anything, it has shown what a lively, thriving and committed body of Christ this church community is – and that makes it attractive. It's the day to day caring and concern for one another and those with whom we come into contact. It's the smile and the welcome for anyone coming into our church. God lives here amongst us and each of us plays our part.

That rubs off on the physical space, so that people feel able to come and just sit and be in a quiet and welcoming safe space – a space that has been prayed in and worshipped in and made attractive.

We have so many things and people to be grateful for, not least the support we have had from ordained priests that has enabled us to carry on with our pattern of services. Bishop Roger has been a strong support, not just in the background producing visiting clergy seemingly out of a hat, but also stepping in himself and with his wife Sally, enabling us to have a full set of Christmas services. Here a special mention needs to go to Rev Derek Clark who, despite being "retired" has given us unstinting support and commitment, while also building up the church body in Ulting. We wish Derek well with his recovery.

As we look forward to this year, it is with both interest and expectation as a deanery reorganisation will hopefully lead to the recruitment of a priest to serve the group of parishes around Beacon Hill of which we will be part. Whatever happens on that front, we know that God has His hand on us and will not fail us.

I cannot close without a special mention for Geraldine as PCC Secretary and Elizabeth Joslin, keeper of the “burner phone” to field calls from outside the church. With grace, quiet commitment, efficiency and caring concern, they have been absolutely amazing in handling the immense volume of stuff that comes from outside the church, which we never see. Thank you.

John Gilbert

John, Rev. Derek and Rev. Hilary at her retirement party in April .



Bishop of Colchester, Rev. Roger Morris presiding at the Thanksgiving Service following the re-decoration n July.



Drop-in Sessions

Drop In sessions are on the second Monday of each month. The Parish Magazine has details.

Drop In provides refreshments, friendship, fun and a sympathetic ear if you need to talk to someone in confidence. If possible, transport is arranged for those who otherwise could not get to Drop In. Attendance in 2024 varied between 12 and 25 people at the 12 sessions. Everyone is welcome. The Christmas party in December is always well attended with Christmas snacks, crackers, carol singing, secret Santa presents and much more.

There is a dedicated and hardworking team who have Safeguarding qualifications. 2 people lead the session each month, the team is Christine, Geraldine, Jayne, Kate, Kath, Maggie D, Maggie G and Sue.

Sue Clements



Cakes and Carols at Drop-in



PASTORAL

The committee supports the pastoral care in the church and local community. This includes visiting the sick, lonely and bereaved; Drop In sessions, Welcome Packs, Parish Magazine, Edward Bear, Services at Little Oaks and Home Communion.

The Parish magazine has continued to be delivered to every household during the year. We were delighted to welcome Elaine as the new editor after Peter's retirement at the end of 10 years remarkable service. We are very grateful to the willing band of helpers who make this possible and are always looking out for new people to join the ranks. Welcome packs have also been delivered to newcomers to the village by our Welcome visitors.

We held a coffee morning in September to say thank you to our volunteers and it was much enjoyed by all who attended.

We once again organised the delivery of cyclamen plants to the sick and bereaved at Harvest time and these were much appreciated. We also assisted with the planning of the Service at All Souls and provided refreshments.

We continue to visit Little Oaks once a month for a short service and chat with the residents. Christine and I have been joined this year by Kate and we are delighted to have her support.

We also, with members of our church family, try to lend support where we can to the bereaved, the elderly and those not so well.

Jayne Jennings
Chair - Pastoral Committee

PCC REPORT

The PCC members are Charity Trustees and have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the church is solvent and well run. Our Electoral Roll membership entitles our Parish to 12 laity PCC members plus 2 Deanery Synod Reps. Rev. Derek Clark and Secretary Geraldine are both ex-officio members. Rev. Hilary retired in April.

The PCC has met 6 times this year. John Gilbert stepped in as Vice-Chair, in the absence of a Priest in Charge. Our Agendas have very much focused on the interregnum and the challenges that we face.

Following Rev. Hilary's retirement, the PCC met during the year with the Bishop of Colchester, the Archdeacon and the Area Dean to discuss future plans for our Parish and the proposed re-organisation of the Deanery.

Safeguarding and Finances are standard agenda items for discussion and consideration was given to new ideas for the prayer list, use of the common cup, Parish Magazine production, maintenance of the Rectory and the new sound system. Proposals are put forward with sometimes lively debate!

A 'burner' phone was introduced to take General Enquiries and bookings for baptisms, weddings and funerals. Members stepped up to take on additional tasks ensuring that services and other activities could continue without too much disruption to our church life.

The PCC are to be thanked for their increased workloads and commitment during this time. Thank you to members for their support and patience during 2024.

Geraldine Spearman - PCC Secretary

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding checks

These checks, also known as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for the Church of England continue to be carried out and run by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) generally known as 31:8. with the Diocese of Chelmsford providing help and support.

There are two types of checks available to Parishes:

Enhanced: limited to certain roles such as those working with children and vulnerable adults, lay readers, churchwardens and PCC members. It is recommended that at least 3 PCC members are checked.

Basic: For those who do not qualify for an Enhanced check, for example:

Authorised Local Preachers, Eucharistic Assistants, Servers, Musical directors of adult choirs etc. These checks are **not a requirement** for people holding these roles but can be advised to applicants as best practice. Two have been carried out in the Parish in the last 12 months.

Checks have to be repeated every 3 years.

The Parish safeguarding officer is now notified by 31:8 of checks that are due for renewal.

DBS checks for ordained clergy are carried out by the Diocese.

I am very grateful for the work organising Safeguarding Training undertaken by Francine Cope, a very important part of the process. Please contact Francine for further information on Safeguarding training courses. francinecope@hotmail.co.uk

Norma Hayward - Parish Safeguarding Officer.

jhaywa@globalnet.co.uk

01621 852010

The church is opened daily courtesy of our neighbours and as can be witnessed by the Visitor Book there is a regular flow of visitors both locally, nationally and indeed globally.

Especial thanks are due to the many volunteer Priests who have attended and enabled us to maintain services during the continuing Interregnum.

Barry Cousins

The new Corona at St Nicholas, dedicated in memory of Roy Tracey



ST. NICHOLAS

Regular Services have continued throughout the year on the 3rd Sunday of each month with additional services on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. There are a small number of regulars at these congregations supplemented by occasional visitors, although rarely any from the village residents.

In place of the usual St Nicholas' Day Service on the Sunday nearest 6th December we held a joint Advent, St Nicholas Day and Carol Service sponsored by our neighbours Mr and Mrs Speakman especially for workers on the farm and in the offices complex. Held on a Wednesday evening in December the church was packed with over 40 in the congregation.

The Service also included the dedication and blessing of the replacement Lighting Corona in memory of long serving Church Warden Roy Tracey. The Corona of *led* lights, chosen by Marion, Roy's widow, and funded from Roy's legacy, replaced the 'condemned' Corona of candles erected in the 1970s. We are grateful for the work making this all possible by Rev Hilary, Marion and the Parish Fabric Committee.

The usual Christmas Candlelit Midnight Mass, supplemented by the dimmed down Corona was attended by more than the usual small congregation with children helping the Rev Sally Morris [wife of our Area Bishop], filling in while the Parish remains in a Vacancy. Especial thanks are due to Elsie and Donald in providing extra candles and 'fairy' lights for the occasion, and also for providing fresh flowers before each monthly service.

DEANERY SYNOD

The word "synod" comes from a Greek word meaning "assembly" or "meeting".

A Deanery Synod consists of all the clergy licensed to a Benefice/parish within the Deanery and elected lay members - each parish is allocated a number of lay places on the Deanery Synod, based on the size of their electoral roll. Deanery Synod members are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting to serve a three-year term. A deanery is part of the governance structure of the Church of England, linking to the Diocesan Synod and to General Synod through elected representatives. Meetings are chaired by the Area Dean, in our case Rev. Simon Garwood and a Lay Chair, Simon May. Synod meetings are held up to four times a year and regular business includes updates on the Deanery's Parish Share payments, events and activities in the Parishes and perhaps a session on a matter of interest. A report of the latest meeting of the General Synod can also be circulated.

What does a Deanery Synod do?

The Deanery Synod makes decisions at a deanery level. It acts as an intermediary between the parochial church councils of each parish and the synod of the diocese as a whole. Deaneries also have the power to bring proposals and motions to Diocesan Synod for debate.

October 2024:

Parish Nurse in the Blackwater Benefice
Net Zero Carbon Goal & Eco-Church Update
The role of the Diocesan Rural Ministry Adviser and
Agricultural Chaplain
Safeguarding

What do Deanery Synod lay members do?

Deanery Synod members are invited to attend four Deanery Synod meetings per year. These are held at various locations in the Deanery, and are generally approximately two hours long. The agenda and papers about matters to be discussed are circulated to members in advance. Some decisions are put to the vote. Deanery Synod members are also automatically members of their parish's Parochial Church Council (PCC), and so attend those meetings as well.

During the last year, presentations at our Deanery meetings were as follows:

Feb 2024:

Being a Parish Nurse in four parishes

Lay Funeral Ministers

Living in Love and Faith, where are we now?

June 2024:

Presentation on Diocesan Finances and the Parish Share.

Deanery Plan: where is it at the present time?

Living in Love and Faith, the way forward.

Eco-church plans

Christine Bealer

Deanery Synod Rep



Sadly, sacred music at Parish level is somewhat in decline and I am very pleased that at St Bartholomew's we have, so far, been able to maintain the tradition which is a major part of our culture. It is an ongoing challenge to find musicians to play and additional singers for the services at major festivals. So, if any one would like to sing or play or knows people in the village who sing and or play please contact me.

Graham Spearman - 07721 505296



St. Bartholomew's Choir singing at the re-opening Thanksgiving service and below at Rev. Hilary's last service.



CHOIR

The purpose of the Choir is to lead the congregation in Worship. That may be either leading the hymns and Eucharist settings or performing a piece of music to lift the congregation.

2024 saw the retirement of Reverend Hilary. This event was the week after Easter, known as Low Sunday. I suppose it was low for us as a church community as we said farewell to our Priest in Charge. It was pleasing that we were able to sing an Anthem for Hilary's last service having sung an Introit and Anthem at the Easter Sunday Eucharist service the week before.

An Anthem was also sung when Bishop Roger presided at the Service of Thanksgiving in July.

At Christmas we were able to offer a service of 9 Lessons and Carols which was, as ever, well supported by the village with a congregation of about 120. This was only achieved with the help of visiting singers to augment the regular choir and visiting musicians to play and conduct.

I am extremely grateful to all those who have given their support during the year. Particular thanks must go to Steven Rumsey who took numerous practices, particularly for the Christmas music.

The choir is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) and we try to participate in their Music Sunday event. This year was singing the top 10 Hymns as voted for by Affiliated Choirs. We had a good attendance for this event and raised funds for the RSCM and our own music event. I am thinking that for this year we could have an event singing our congregations top 10 favourite hymns.

FABRIC

It has been something of a fragmented year for the Fabric Committee with two meetings being held.

During the year two significant bequests were received which were attributed to the respective Fabric Funds. It was one of these which enabled us to instruct Baker's to commence the redecoration project.

St Bartholomew's

The major project was the internal redecoration and lighting upgrade of the Nave. This was undertaken by Baker's of Danbury and was completed on time and on budget. Our Architect Hilary Brightman was most helpful during this project and kept the contractors to the contract specification. The lighting upgrade has made a huge difference. We now have spotlights as well as uplighters and these can be used separately or together. This gives flexibility on the level of lighting depending on the nature of the service.

Also during the year Sigma Electrical completed all the work required under the five yearly Electrical Inspection report some of which was able to be completed whilst Bakers had the scaffolding in place.

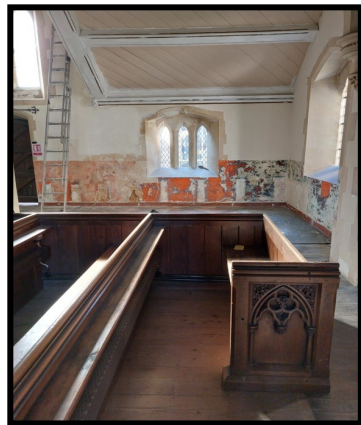
The sound system in the church was also upgraded and funded as part of the restoration project. Although the ideal was to install screens and a projector the cost of this upgrade was beyond our means.



Scaffolding towers during the re-decoration in 2024



We continue to develop our worship services to make our church welcoming to all. With that inclusivity in mind, we changed the logistics for the 10:30 service, to take advantage of the extra space at the front of the church post-redecoration. First, we made the nave altar a standard part of our services. Those with mobility challenges, whether wheelchair users or with other aids, no longer have to negotiate 2 sets of steps, or have to wait to the end for pew service to partake of the sacrament. Second, we changed the order of distribution of the elements, so that those who are immune-suppressed or otherwise medically vulnerable receive the wine first or from specific individual chalices (while maintaining the common cup) to keep them safe. Through these small changes, members of our community have been able to partake of the full sacrament and, importantly, both to feel and be seen to be completely included in our services. In one instance over Christmas, one longstanding member of our church said it was the first time that they had been able to take full communion in St Bartholomew's for years.



The Lady Chapel ceiling - repainted and a lot brighter!



As usual, behind the appearance of the well-oiled machine, there is a lot of furious activity going on. Special thanks are due to Barry who has devoted many hours seeking out and chasing down priests to cover the Eucharist services – we would have been lost without him. He is even emailing from his hospital bed in Broomfield! Graham Spearman has, amongst his many other duties, been tireless in acquiring organist support – special thanks to Richard Overill and Gillian Ward-Russell, for their consistent support. Lester and Ben have stepped forward to bring some new life and approaches into the Morning Praise services – including Ben ministering through preaching as well as music.

So we continue to develop all our services and ministry as a lively and maturing church community – “while the cat’s away...!” **John Gilbert**

WORSHIP

In normal times, the primary purpose of the Worship Committee is to assist the minister in their role in deciding on and leading the services across the year, in both church buildings and in public services where the church has a leading role in organisation.

However, as we have not been in normal times, the Worship Committee members have taken the lead in arranging the service schedule and content for the church, with more frequent meetings and very active email trails! We changed the name to Service Planning Group, since it gives a better description of what we actually do. The members of the Group are:

Authorised Local Preachers: Christine Bealer, Barry Cousins,
John Gilbert, Elizabeth Joslin.

Choir and Music lead for "Big Church" services:

Graham Spearman

Morning Praise Lead: Lester Firkins

Deputy Churchwarden and purveyor of common sense:

Graham Wingrove.

In the vacancy, we set ourselves the goal of keeping a consistent pattern of Eucharistic and Non-Eucharistic services (8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. at St Bartholomew's and 9:00 a.m. third Sundays at St Nicholas'). We also wanted a consistent small set of people leading the services to minimise "who and what is happening this week" syndrome. This supports continued church development (particularly for the 10:30 a.m. services), and ensures that our small, but faithful, 8 a.m. community is served each week.

Fabric continued

Other issues dealt with during the year were the waste disposal pump. This will need to receive further attention during this year. It is also necessary for a contract to be set up to clean the drain gullies and downpipes. These tend to get blocked and overflow and then dampness penetrates the walls.

Our church yard has continued to be kept in good order thanks to Dick Yelland organising his band of merry men. We have also benefitted from visits by the Community Payback team. A young man has been working hard cleaning some of the grave-stones as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award. He's doing a great job! Two churchyard clear-ups have taken place during the year and thanks to those willing volunteers.

The new hall chairs arrived during the early part of the year and I hope have been well received.

Installation of Solar Panels has not progressed for the simple reason that it is very difficult to get an appropriate meter installed. This is because our electricity supply is three phase and so standard Smart Meters are not appropriate. There is currently a request with our energy supplier for the installation of a suitable meter but I am not holding my breath!

Thanks must go to Maggie Grice who acts as Secretary and to all those who undertake practical tasks to keep both the building and the churchyard in order.



The Church has Re-opened!



Thank you display to the Village for their support and generous donations

St. Nicholas

The second bequest was from a former resident of Little Braxted. The Quinquennial report at St Nicholas is due this year. The Architect who has previously undertaken this has retired.

Hilary Brightman has agreed to take this on and seems to be delighted to be dealing with this historic church.

Fortunately due to the Bequest received last year there should be sufficient funds to cover the costs that may arise.

In the St. Nicholas report by Barry Cousins further on in this booklet, there is reference to the installation of the new Corona. This is a gift made from the bequest of Roy Tracey. This installation has overcome the Health and Safety concerns arising from the old corona.

Graham Spearman

TREASURER

For the detail please see my report in the published Accounts.

The most significant point to note is that for the first time during my tenure as Treasurer we did not pay the Parish Share in full. Also, for the second year in succession we have been unable to pay contributions to International, National and Local Charities. We have however made donations from our Christmas services to The Children’s Society and Crisis for Christmas. Sadly, I cannot see this situation changing as energy costs continue to be high and the Diocese are forever requesting higher amounts of Parish Share. I would just comment that despite the pressure placed on us Parish Share is a voluntary payment.

So, at the year end the financial situation of our General Fund was maintained at roughly the same level as we started with.

You will note that the Ukrainian Restricted Fund has reduced as we purchased domestic appliances for two Ukrainian families.

In respect of the Fabric Funds the St. Bartholomew’s fund has a low balance following the redecoration project and improvements made to the sound system. I am sure that the Gardens Festival Committee, to whom I am very grateful, will see the fund significantly increase. The St Nicholas Fabric Fund is in a very healthy situation having benefitted from a significant bequest. This should stand us in a good position with regard to the Quinquennial Report which was undertaken on 18th March.

Looking at the current year I must again emphasise that we need to keep a very close watch on our expenditure.

Graham Spearman—Treasurer

Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted PCC

Registered Charity 1159874

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31st December 2024

**WICKHAM BISHOPS AND LITTLE BRAXTED
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2024 which are set out on pages 3 to 7.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

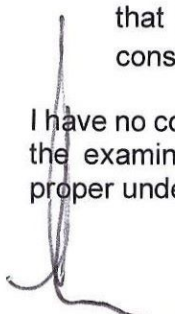
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records or
- 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 have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Barnes FCA
Independent Examiner
30 Coombe Rise
Broomfield
Chelmsford
CM1 7DG

18 February 2025

Treasurer's Report

What a year 2024 turned out to be! Reverend Hilary retired and the redecoration of the Nave was completed.

In respect of our General Funds, notated as Unrestricted funds, which cover day to day running costs we continue to have to watch our expenditure very closely. The Diocese continue to request what I consider to be an excessive sum by way of Parish Share particularly when we compare our figure against similar parishes. The PCC agreed to pay Parish Share in full for 2023 in the hope that would stand us in good stead for recruitment of a new incumbent. Sadly, that decision does not appear to have had any impact. As a result in 2023 there was a reduction to our General Fund of some £9,300. So this year, your PCC agreed to withhold any payment of Parish Share for 2024 until the financial year end when we could ascertain what we could afford. In the event a payment of £46,000 was made in early January which was 86% of the amount requested. This has meant that we have been able to maintain the balance of our General Funds at around £50,000. Why you may ask do we need to maintain such a balance. As Trustees of our own Charity we are expected to make responsible financial decisions and hold sufficient funds to cover 6 months of expenditure. With annual expenditure approaching £90,000 we can demonstrate that we are meeting that requirement.

Turning to Restricted funds we did receive two bequests during the year. One was of £18,105.11 for St Bartholomew's fabric fund which enabled us to undertake the redecoration project. The other of £20,000 was for St Nicholas Fabric fund which stands us in a good position for the quinquennial report which is due in 2025.

The St Bartholomew's Fabric fund has reduced significantly primarily due to the costs of the redecoration of the Nave which amounted to some £80,000 net including fees and ancillary costs. Fortunately, we were able to recover the VAT which amounted to £13,443 and as we held sufficient funds we were able to cover this amount from our General Fund. The scheme for repayment of VAT has been running since 2001. Unfortunately the current Government has only extended the scheme until March 2026 and has also limited the amount that any one church can reclaim to £25,000 a year. Hopefully that will not impact us immediately but I am concerned as to what the position may be after March 2026. Clearly this will have a major impact in our Cathedrals and Great Churches which many of us like to visit. The current situation is that St Bartholomew's now has only limited monies in it's Fabric fund and we must hope that no major fabric issues arise. That said later this year on 8th June we have another Gardens Festival with concerts in September. Please encourage relatives and friends to attend. I am extremely grateful to Stewart Adkins and his committee for all their hard work that they have put into the event already and will continue to do so.

While saying thank you, a particular thanks to John Baker for his continuing work as Gift Aid Secretary. John's efforts have resulted in an additional £9,900 of income. John, as my predecessor in this role, has also continued to be of great support and guidance as a Mentor.

To close thank you all for your giving but please keep the amount you contribute under review. If anyone would like to join the Parish Giving Scheme please come and talk to me.

Graham Spearman 26/01/2025

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Receipts					
Planned giving	36,554.84	—	—	36,554.84	36,815.55
Collections and other giving	3,303.26	—	—	3,303.26	3,040.95
Other voluntary receipts	5,054.63	38,160.11	—	43,214.74	7,410.02
Gift Aid recovered	23,974.60	—	—	23,974.60	9,715.19
Other receipts	1,077.19	22.06	—	1,099.25	3,702.79
Youth Club	—	—	—	—	141.68
Activities for generating funds	12,340.52	66.16	—	12,406.68	34,209.99
Investment Income	2,061.31	2,799.06	—	4,860.37	3,085.07
Receipts from church activities	2,067.16	—	—	2,067.16	5,421.61
Total income	86,433.51	41,047.39	—	127,480.90	103,542.85
Payments					
Cost of generating funds	210.30	—	—	210.30	2,392.92
Missionary and Charitable Giving	785.88	944.00	—	1,729.88	4,139.40
Parish Share	46,000.00	—	—	46,000.00	51,049.00
Clergy and Staffing costs	3,558.16	—	—	3,558.16	5,726.77
Church Running Expenses	22,818.64	4,395.13	—	27,213.77	30,489.32
Youth Club	—	—	—	—	—
Hall Running Costs	1,916.91	—	—	1,916.91	2,109.60
Church Repairs & Maintenance	13,940.70	86,773.96	—	100,714.66	2,676.95
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	—	—	—	—	—
Governance Costs	120.00	—	—	120.00	120.00
Total expenditure	89,350.59	92,113.09	—	181,463.68	98,703.96
Gains / losses on investment assets	7,882.84	—	—	7,882.84	—
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	4,965.76	(51,065.70)	—	(46,099.94)	4,838.89
Transfers					
Gross transfers between funds - in	16,046.82	53,321.76	—	69,368.58	4,424.77
Gross transfers between funds - out	(21,524.52)	(47,844.06)	—	(69,368.58)	(4,424.77)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	(511.94)	(45,588.00)	—	(46,099.94)	4,838.89
Total funds brought forward	50,675.33	90,501.75	—	141,177.08	136,338.19
Total funds carried forward	50,163.39	44,913.75	—	95,077.14	141,177.08
Represented by					
Unrestricted					
General fund	50,163.39	—	—	50,163.39	50,675.33
Restricted					
General Fund re Bowls Club	—	843.14	—	843.14	843.14
Guardians Restricted Funds	—	1,338.36	—	1,338.36	27,952.20
Little Braxted Fabric Fund CB3022306	—	36,018.96	—	36,018.96	17,653.46
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund	—	506.48	—	506.48	1,428.42
Wickham Bishops Fabric Fund CB3022305	—	6,206.81	—	6,206.81	42,624.53

Balance sheet

	Total funds	Prior year funds
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	95,077.14	141,177.08
	95,077.14	141,177.08
Net current assets less current liabilities	95,077.14	141,177.08
Total assets less current liabilities	95,077.14	141,177.08
Total net assets less liabilities	95,077.14	141,177.08
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
General fund	50,163.39	50,675.33
Restricted		
General Fund re Bowls Club	843.14	843.14
Guardians Restricted Funds	1,338.36	27,952.20
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund	506.48	1,428.42
Wickham Bishops Fabric Fund CB3022305	6,206.81	42,624.53
Little Braxted Fabric Fund CB3022306	36,018.96	17,653.46
Funds of the church	95,077.14	141,177.08

Analysis of income and expenditure

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Designated</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Total</u>	
					This year	Last year
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
Planned giving						
Envelopes	90.00	—	—	—	90.00	875.00
planned giving	36,464.84	—	—	—	36,464.84	35,940.55
Total	36,554.84	—	—	—	36,554.84	36,815.55
Collections and other giving						
collections	3,188.26	—	—	—	3,188.26	2,872.95
Gift Aid Envelopes	115.00	—	—	—	115.00	168.00
Total	3,303.26	—	—	—	3,303.26	3,040.95
Other voluntary receipts						
Charity Collections	641.88	—	—	—	641.88	1,081.51
Other Giving	360.00	—	—	—	360.00	476.73
Donations	3,971.25	—	—	—	3,971.25	3,510.78
Gemma Fraser	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flower Fund	—	—	—	—	—	20.00
Music Fund	81.50	—	—	—	81.50	27.75
Legacies/Grants	—	—	38,105.11	—	38,105.11	1,000.00
Recurring grants	—	—	—	—	—	—
Non-recurring one-off grants	—	—	—	—	—	—
Roof Repair Appeal	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guardians	—	—	55.00	—	55.00	1,272.91
Alpha Donations	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ukrainian Refugee Donations	—	—	—	—	—	20.34
Total	5,054.63	—	38,160.11	—	43,214.74	7,410.02

Gift Aid recovered

Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	9,876.60	—	—	—	9,876.60	9,715.19
Tax Refund - Church Restoration Fund WB	14,098.00	—	—	—	14,098.00	—
Tax refund - LB Fabric	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tax Relief Guardians	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	23,974.60	—	—	—	23,974.60	9,715.19

Other receipts

Resources from Diocese	—	—	—	—	—	1,520.00
Other funds generated	100.00	—	—	—	100.00	141.59
Braxted Gazebo Hire	—	—	—	—	—	—
Interest Ukranian Refugee Fund	—	—	22.06	—	22.06	20.72
Insurance claims	—	—	—	—	—	—
Surplus - sales of fixed assets	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bowls Club	—	—	—	—	—	843.14
Little Braxted General Transfer In/Out	977.19	—	—	—	977.19	1,177.34
Total	1,077.19	—	22.06	—	1,099.25	3,702.79

Other receipts - Youth Club

Youth Club Income	—	—	—	—	—	141.68
Total	—	—	—	—	—	141.68

Activities for generating funds

Fund Raising - Open Gardens Flower Festi	—	—	—	—	—	16,343.83
Fund Raising	4,227.06	—	—	—	4,227.06	2,820.75
Braxted Fete Income	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fund Raising - Golf Day	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fund Raising - May Ball	—	—	—	—	—	—
Trading Income	22.30	—	—	—	22.30	15.25
Friends of Little Braxted	—	—	66.16	—	66.16	65.45
Fees to Diocese	428.66	—	—	—	428.66	2,052.33
Church hall lettings	4,082.50	—	—	—	4,082.50	5,164.38
Magazine income - advertising	3,580.00	—	—	—	3,580.00	7,748.00
Little Braxted Fabric	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	12,340.52	—	66.16	—	12,406.68	34,209.99

Investment Income

Interest - General Fund	2,061.31	—	—	—	2,061.31	1,207.40
Interest WB Church Restoration Fund	—	—	1,420.04	—	1,420.04	1,323.65
Interest LB Fabric Fund	—	—	1,103.52	—	1,103.52	554.02
Interest/Dividends	—	—	—	—	—	—
Interest on Guardians Account	—	—	275.50	—	275.50	—
Total	2,061.31	—	2,799.06	—	4,860.37	3,085.07

Receipts from church activities

Parochial Fees for weddings and funerals	1,699.02	—	—	—	1,699.02	4,303.00
Gravespoil	—	—	—	—	—	210.00
Memorial Book Income	10.00	—	—	—	10.00	50.00
Greeting Cards sales	68.15	—	—	—	68.15	155.47
Tea/Coffee	260.69	—	—	—	260.69	338.42
Drop In Donations	29.30	—	—	—	29.30	364.72
Total	2,067.16	—	—	—	2,067.16	5,421.61
INCOME TOTAL	86,433.51	—	41,047.39	—	127,480.90	103,542.85

EXPENDITURE

Cost of generating funds

Braxted Gazebo Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
Costs of Fundraising	163.10	—	—	—	163.10	20.00
Cost of Fundraising - May Ball	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cost of Fundraising - Braxted Fete	—	—	—	—	—	—
Costs of Fundraising- Open Gardens	—	—	—	—	—	2,233.83
Guardians expenses	—	—	—	—	—	84.89
Greetings Cards costs	47.20	—	—	—	47.20	54.20
Trading Goods	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	210.30	—	—	—	210.30	2,392.92

Missionary and Charitable Giving

Charity Donations	785.88	—	—	—	785.88	1,175.46
Ukrainian Refugee Expenditure	—	—	944.00	—	944.00	2,963.94
Total	785.88	—	944.00	—	1,729.88	4,139.40

Parish Share

Parish Share	46,000.00	—	—	—	46,000.00	51,049.00
Total	46,000.00	—	—	—	46,000.00	51,049.00

Clergy and Staffing costs

Fees to Diocese	428.00	—	—	—	428.00	1,886.00
Locum Costs for re-imbusement	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other Clergy Expenses	496.63	—	—	—	496.63	247.35
Gemma Fraser payments	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wages Honoraria & Support	2,480.00	—	—	—	2,480.00	2,340.00
Clergy expenses of incumbent	—	—	—	—	—	498.42
Rectory expenses	153.53	—	—	—	153.53	755.00
Total	3,558.16	—	—	—	3,558.16	5,726.77

Church Running Expenses

Resources from Diocesan Grant	—	—	—	—	—	—
Insurance - Wickham Bishops	2,572.27	—	—	—	2,572.27	2,476.47
Insurance - Little Braxted	1,208.84	—	—	—	1,208.84	1,158.23
Church maintenance WB	673.35	—	4,028.35	—	4,701.70	3,131.65
Church Maintenance - LB	—	—	276.78	—	276.78	241.80
Pastoral Care	169.88	—	—	—	169.88	191.84
Children & Youth Work	194.00	—	—	—	194.00	158.25
General Costs	2,276.51	—	—	—	2,276.51	3,530.79
Flowers for Church	239.04	—	—	—	239.04	526.08
Upkeep	—	—	—	—	—	30.00
Music Fund	108.94	—	—	—	108.94	32.61
Upkeep of churchyard WB	1,750.35	—	—	—	1,750.35	1,107.50
Upkeep of Churchyard LB	420.00	—	90.00	—	510.00	540.00
Administration	639.46	—	—	—	639.46	339.73
Church running - Utilities WB	6,300.44	—	—	—	6,300.44	8,143.53
Church running - Utilities LB	535.30	—	—	—	535.30	350.50
Magazine expenses	4,864.93	—	—	—	4,864.93	7,070.76
Tea/Coffee Costs	256.33	—	—	—	256.33	246.50
Alpha Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
Journal Write Off	—	—	—	—	—	(175.32)
In/Out	609.00	—	—	—	609.00	1,388.40
Total	22,818.64	—	4,395.13	—	27,213.77	30,489.32

Church Running Expenses - Youth Club

Youth Club		—	—	—	—	—	—
Total		—	—	—	—	—	—

Hall Running Costs

Hall running costs		1,916.91	—	—	—	1,916.91	2,109.60
Total		1,916.91	—	—	—	1,916.91	2,109.60

Church Repairs & Maintenance

Church major repairs - structure		—	—	2,020.80	—	2,020.80	2,280.00
Church Major Repairs - Structure St Nich		—	—	2,816.28	—	2,816.28	—
Guardians Costs		—	—	9.59	—	9.59	—
Church major repairs - installation		—	—	1,852.80	—	1,852.80	—
Capital Expenditure		499.00	—	—	—	499.00	396.95
Church interior and exterior decorating		13,441.70	—	80,074.49	—	93,516.19	—
Total		13,940.70	—	86,773.96	—	100,714.66	2,676.95

Hall Repairs & Maintenance

Hall + major repairs - structure		—	—	—	—	—	—
Hall + major repairs - installation		—	—	—	—	—	—
Hall + interior and exterior decorating		—	—	—	—	—	—
Total		—	—	—	—	—	—

Governance Costs

Governance costs examination/audit fee		120.00	—	—	—	120.00	120.00
Total		120.00	—	—	—	120.00	120.00

EXPENDITURE TOTAL		89,350.59	—	92,113.09	—	181,463.68	98,703.96
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GRAND TOTAL		(2,917.08)	—	(51,065.70)	—	(53,982.78)	4,838.89
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WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED P.C.C. ASSETS

ASSETS

General Fund:

CAF Bank:	£10,765.66	
Barclays:	Account closed	
CCLA:	£39,264.44	
Petty Cash:	£ 133.29	£50,163.39
General Fund re Bowls Club		£ 843.14
Guardians Restricted Funds		£ 1,338.36
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund		£ 506.48
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration		£ 6,206.81
Little Braxted Fabric Fund		£36,018.96

Bookstall Stock £ 600

Estimated Values

Church Hall £ 500,000
Tables & Chairs £ 3,000
Kitchen Equipment, Storage Boxes, Urn, Cutlery, Microwave Etc. £ 1,500
Crockery & Glasses £ 500
Step Ladder £ 109
Vacuum Cleaners £ 200
Video/Television, Sound System/Heaters £ 1,600
Choir Robes £ 1,500
Lawnmowers £ 2,000
Strimmer £ 150
Hedge Trimmer £ 150
Piano x 2 £ 2,700
Shed x 2 £ 1,500
Projector £ 430
Floristry equipment £ 2,000
Dishwasher £ 1,500
Photocopier £ 2,500
Mevo Camera £ 350
WiFi Router £ 90

**WICKHAM BISHOPS AND LITTLE BRAXTED
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2024 which are set out on pages 3 to 7.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

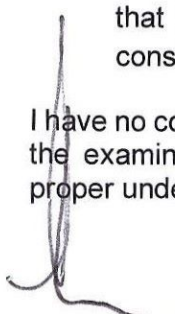
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records or
- 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 have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Barnes FCA
Independent Examiner
30 Coombe Rise
Broomfield
Chelmsford
CM1 7DG

18 February 2025

Accounts

Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted PCC

Registered Charity 1159874

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31st December 2023

**WICKHAM BISHOPS AND LITTLE BRAXTED
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2022 which are set out on pages 4 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

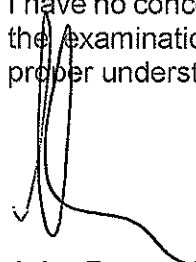
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Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
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I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Barnes FCA
Independent Examiner
Handel House
Roselawn Fields
Broomfield
Chelmsford
CM1 7GB

14.3.2024

Treasurer's Report

For the first time in 10 years as Treasurer I am having to report that in 2023 our General Fund expenditure exceeded income. We suffered a deficit of some £9,425.

This is primarily due to the increase in energy costs which have gone up £3,730 and the increase in Parish Share which went up by £4,410.

Furthermore, our Unrestricted funds total income fell by £2,434. Both Planned Giving and other giving have fallen slightly. This is despite most of our planned giving being through the Parish Giving Scheme and the majority being inflation linked. Thank you to everybody using the scheme.

At the beginning of the year the PCC agreed to reduce our Parish Share payments by the amount of the increase in the cost of the electricity. However, as we are now approaching an interregnum it was agreed that we should pay the Parish Share in full in the hope that this would put us in a stronger position when seeking a new incumbent to be resident in the parish. December 2023 saw the Christmas Fayre, the uniformed organisations decorating the Christmas Tree, Christingle, Crib Service, Nine Lessons and Carols in addition to the usual services all being held in Church. As a consequence, the December Electricity bill was some £1,500. We have now switched to a slightly cheaper tariff.

The Fabric funds for both churches are currently in a satisfactory position. However, the redecoration of St. Bartholomew's will be commencing on 4th March. Furthermore, we are incurring costs of remedial work required following the 5 yearly electrical inspection report, an upgrade to the Lightning protection and a new sewerage pump. These costs will deplete the St Bartholomew's Church Restoration Fund significantly. That said we are fortunate that we can afford to have all these works undertaken and maintain the fabric and security of our church building.

Much of this is due to the success of another Gardens Festival last June and the concerts in September, the proceeds of which are included in the Gardens Festival income. So, a very big thank you to Stewart Adkins and his committee for the Gardens Festival and also to Paul Strong and his colleagues for the concerts.

The fund-raising committee continue to do sterling work and their contribution is greatly valued.

I would like to thank John Baker for his continuing work as Gift Aid Secretary and his most efficient processing of these claims every month,

The Guardians committee supported the Gardens Festival by running the catering at the Village Hall and also arranged a most interesting fund raising talk on the Stained Glass windows of Essex churches.

So, as we enter an Interregnum, we are going to have to be very careful with our expenditure which we must do all we can to keep to essentials.

Graham Spearman

30/01/2024

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Receipts					
Planned giving	36,815.55	—	—	36,815.55	37,573.42
Collections and other giving	3,040.95	—	—	3,040.95	4,003.57
Other voluntary receipts	5,116.77	2,293.25	—	7,410.02	39,447.32
Gift Aid recovered	9,715.19	—	—	9,715.19	10,036.92
Other receipts	2,838.93	863.86	—	3,702.79	3,639.30
Youth Club	141.68	—	—	141.68	—
Activities for generating funds	18,130.71	16,079.28	—	34,209.99	21,867.17
Investment Income	1,207.40	1,877.67	—	3,085.07	1,210.70
Receipts from church activities	5,421.61	—	—	5,421.61	6,450.55
Total income	82,428.79	21,114.06	—	103,542.85	124,228.95
Payments					
Cost of generating funds	75.20	2,297.72	—	2,372.92	510.11
Missionary and Charitable Giving	1,175.46	2,963.94	—	4,139.40	2,667.90
Parish Share	51,049.00	—	—	51,049.00	46,638.96
Clergy and Staffing costs	5,726.77	—	—	5,726.77	4,976.15
Church Running Expenses	30,247.52	241.80	—	30,489.32	27,486.83
Youth Club	—	—	—	—	—
Hall Running Costs	2,109.60	—	—	2,109.60	1,373.94
Church Repairs & Maintenance	396.95	2,280.00	—	2,676.95	10,472.00
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	—	—	—	—	—
Governance Costs	120.00	—	—	120.00	110.00
Total expenditure	90,900.50	7,783.46	—	98,683.96	94,235.89
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	—	—	—
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(8,471.71)	13,330.60	—	4,858.89	29,993.06
Transfers					
Gross transfers between funds - in	1,735.99	2,688.78	—	4,424.77	63,043.67
Gross transfers between funds - out	(2,688.78)	(1,735.99)	—	(4,424.77)	(63,043.67)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	(9,424.50)	14,283.39	—	4,858.89	29,993.06
Total funds brought forward	60,119.83	76,218.36	—	136,338.19	106,345.13
Total funds carried forward	50,695.33	90,501.75	—	141,197.08	136,338.19
Represented by					
Unrestricted					
General fund: CAF:	£ 11,846.96				
Barclays:	£ 1,467.62				
CCLA:	£ 37,285.40				
Petty Cash: £	95.35				
		50,695.33		50,695.33	60,119.83
Restricted					
General Fund re Bowls Club	—	843.14	—	843.14	—
Guardians Restricted Funds	—	27,952.20	—	27,952.20	13,290.39
Little Braxted Fabric Fund CB3022306	—	17,653.46	—	17,653.46	17,275.79
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund	—	1,428.42	—	1,428.42	4,351.30
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration CB3022305	—	42,624.53	—	42,624.53	41,300.88

Note: Interest on the CCLA Accounts for December was not credited until January.

Deposit Account: £500.03
Church Restoration Fund: £571.63
Little Braxted Fabric Fund: £239.43

Balance sheet

	Total funds	Prior year funds
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	141,197.08	136,338.19
	141,197.08	136,338.19
Net current assets less current liabilities	141,197.08	136,338.19
Total assets less current liabilities	141,197.08	136,338.19
Total net assets less liabilities	141,197.08	136,338.19
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
General fund	50,695.33	60,119.83
Restricted		
General Fund re Bowls Club	843.14	—
Guardians Restricted Funds	27,952.20	13,290.39
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund	1,428.42	4,351.30
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration CB3022305	42,624.53	41,300.88
Little Braxted Fabric Fund CB3022306	17,653.46	17,275.79
Funds of the church	141,197.08	136,338.19

Analysis of income and expenditure

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total	This year	Last year
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INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

Planned giving

0110 - Envelopes	875.00	—	—	—	875.00	1,210.00
0201 - planned giving	35,940.55	—	—	—	35,940.55	36,363.42
Total	36,815.55	—	—	—	36,815.55	37,573.42

Collections and other giving

0301 - collections	2,872.95	—	—	—	2,872.95	3,863.57
0501 - Gift Aid Envelopes	168.00	—	—	—	168.00	140.00
Total	3,040.95	—	—	—	3,040.95	4,003.57

Other voluntary receipts

0302 - Charity Collections	1,081.51	—	—	—	1,081.51	783.89
0550 - Other Giving	476.73	—	—	—	476.73	700.00
0551 - Donations	3,510.78	—	—	—	3,510.78	1,272.24
0552 - Gemma Fraser	—	—	—	—	—	—
0553 - Flower Fund	20.00	—	—	—	20.00	130.00
0554 - Music Fund	27.75	—	—	—	27.75	31.87
0701 - Legacies/Grants	—	—	1,000.00	—	1,000.00	22,000.00
0801 - Recurring grants	—	—	—	—	—	—
08A1 - Non-recurring one-off grants	—	—	—	—	—	—
0915 - Roof Repair Appeal	—	—	—	—	—	—
1001 - Guardians	—	—	1,272.91	—	1,272.91	8,353.23
1200 - Alpha Donations	—	—	—	—	—	—
1338 - Ukrainian Refugee Donations	—	—	20.34	—	20.34	6,176.09
Total	5,116.77	—	2,293.25	—	7,410.02	39,447.32

Gift Aid recovered

0601 - Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	9,715.19	—	—	—	9,715.19	10,036.92
0602 - Tax Refund - Church Restoration Fund WB	—	—	—	—	—	—
0603 - Tax refund - LB Fabric	—	—	—	—	—	—
0604 - Tax Relief Guardians	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	9,715.19	—	—	—	9,715.19	10,036.92

Other receipts

0555 - Resources from Diocese	1,520.00	—	—	—	1,520.00	—
0901 - Other funds generated	141.59	—	—	—	141.59	557.29
0908 - Braxted Gazebo Hire	—	—	—	—	—	—
1024 - Interest Ukranian Refugee Fund	—	—	20.72	—	20.72	—
1310 - Insurance claims	—	—	—	—	—	—
1320 - Surplus - sales of fixed assets	—	—	—	—	—	—
1336 - Bowls Club	—	—	843.14	—	843.14	—
1401 - Little Braxted General Transfer	—	—	—	—	—	—
1500 - In/Out	1,177.34	—	—	—	1,177.34	3,082.01
Total	2,838.93	—	863.86	—	3,702.79	3,639.30

Other receipts - Youth Club

0556 - Youth Club Income	141.68	—	—	—	141.68	—
Total	141.68	—	—	—	141.68	—

Activities for generating funds

0909 - Fund Raising - Open Gardens	330.00	—	16,013.83	—	16,343.83	1,789.70
0910 - Fund Raising	2,820.75	—	—	—	2,820.75	5,433.23
0911 - Braxted Fete Income	—	—	—	—	—	—
0912 - Fund Raising - Golf Day	—	—	—	—	—	—
0913 - Fund Raising - May Ball	—	—	—	—	—	—
0914 - Trading Income	15.25	—	—	—	15.25	12.00
1000 - Friends of Little Braxted	—	—	65.45	—	65.45	294.75
1100 - Fees to Diocese	2,052.33	—	—	—	2,052.33	2,640.99
1240 - Church hall lettings	5,164.38	—	—	—	5,164.38	5,006.50
1250 - Magazine income - advertising	7,748.00	—	—	—	7,748.00	6,690.00
1400 - Little Braxted Fabric	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	18,130.71	—	16,079.28	—	34,209.99	21,867.17

Investment Income

1020 - Interest - General Fund	1,207.40	—	—	—	1,207.40	499.09
1021 - Interest WB Church Restoration Fund	—	—	1,323.65	—	1,323.65	428.44
1022 - Interest LB Fabric Fund	—	—	554.02	—	554.02	224.13
1023 - Interest/Dividends	—	—	—	—	—	59.04
Total	1,207.40	—	1,877.67	—	3,085.07	1,210.70

Receipts from church activities

1101 - Parochial Fees for weddings and funerals	4,303.00	—	—	—	4,303.00	5,508.00
1102 - Gravespoil	210.00	—	—	—	210.00	315.00
1103 - Memorial Book Income	50.00	—	—	—	50.00	200.00
1210 - Greeting Cards sales	155.47	—	—	—	155.47	206.85
1241 - Tea/Coffee	338.42	—	—	—	338.42	189.25
1337 - Drop In Donations	364.72	—	—	—	364.72	31.45
Total	5,421.61	—	—	—	5,421.61	6,450.55
INCOME TOTAL	82,428.79	—	21,114.06	—	103,542.85	124,228.95

EXPENDITURE

Cost of generating funds

1729 - Braxted Gazebo Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
1730 - Costs of Fundraising	—	—	—	—	—	240.97
1731 - Cost of Fundraising - May Ball	—	—	—	—	—	—
1732 - Cost of Fundraising - Braxted Fete	—	—	—	—	—	—
1733 - Costs of Fundraising- Open Gardens	21.00	—	2,212.83	—	2,233.83	64.19
1734 - Guardians expenses	—	—	84.89	—	84.89	9.59
2510 - Greetings Cards costs	54.20	—	—	—	54.20	195.36
2511 - Trading Goods	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	75.20	—	2,297.72	—	2,372.92	510.11

Missionary and Charitable Giving

1801 - Charity Donations	1,175.46	—	—	—	1,175.46	826.57
2336 - Ukranian Refugee Expenditure	—	—	2,963.94	—	2,963.94	1,841.33
Total	1,175.46	—	2,963.94	—	4,139.40	2,667.90

Parish Share

1901 - Parish Share	51,049.00	—	—	—	51,049.00	46,638.96
Total	51,049.00	—	—	—	51,049.00	46,638.96

Clergy and Staffing costs

1104 - Fees to Diocese	1,886.00	—	—	—	1,886.00	2,402.99
2000 - Locum Costs for re-imburement	—	—	—	—	—	—
2001 - Other Clergy Expenses	247.35	—	—	—	247.35	282.50
2002 - Gemma Fraser payments	—	—	—	—	—	—
2050 - Wages Honoraria & Support	2,340.00	—	—	—	2,340.00	2,020.00
2101 - Clergy expenses of incumbent	498.42	—	—	—	498.42	270.66
2130 - Rectory expenses	755.00	—	—	—	755.00	—
Total	5,726.77	—	—	—	5,726.77	4,976.15

Church Running Expenses

2003 - Resources from Diocesan Grant	—	—	—	—	—	—
2301 - Insurance - Wickham Bishops	2,476.47	—	—	—	2,476.47	2,415.53
2302 - Insurance - Little Braxted	1,158.23	—	—	—	1,158.23	1,093.92
2330 - Church maintenance WB	3,131.65	—	—	—	3,131.65	2,820.95
2331 - Church Maintenance - LB	—	—	241.80	—	241.80	83.40
2337 - Pastoral Care	191.84	—	—	—	191.84	136.56
2339 - Children & Youth Work	158.25	—	—	—	158.25	310.00
2340 - General Costs	3,530.79	—	—	—	3,530.79	2,177.85
2341 - Flowers for Church	526.08	—	—	—	526.08	643.33
2342 - Upkeep	30.00	—	—	—	30.00	—
2343 - Music Fund	32.61	—	—	—	32.61	20.13
2350 - Upkeep of churchyard WB	1,107.50	—	—	—	1,107.50	838.20
2351 - Upkeep of Churchyard LB	540.00	—	—	—	540.00	529.00
2360 - Administration	339.73	—	—	—	339.73	746.15
2401 - Church running - Utilities WB	8,143.53	—	—	—	8,143.53	4,437.17
2410 - Church running - Utilities LB	350.50	—	—	—	350.50	327.18
2501 - Magazine expenses	7,070.76	—	—	—	7,070.76	7,596.40
2521 - Tea/Coffee Costs	246.50	—	—	—	246.50	155.54
2602 - Alpha Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
3000 - Journal Write Off	(175.32)	—	—	—	(175.32)	95.85
4000 - In/Out	1,388.40	—	—	—	1,388.40	3,059.67
Total	30,247.52	—	241.80	—	30,489.32	27,486.83

Church Running Expenses - Youth Club

2338 - Youth Club		—	—	—	—	—	—
Total		—	—	—	—	—	—

Hall Running Costs

2520 - Hall running costs		2,109.60	—	—	—	2,109.60	1,373.94
Total		2,109.60	—	—	—	2,109.60	1,373.94

Church Repairs & Maintenance

2701 - Church major repairs - structure		—	—	2,280.00	—	2,280.00	5,076.00
2702 - Church Major Repairs - Structure St Nich		—	—	—	—	—	—
2703 - Guardians Costs		—	—	—	—	—	5,396.00
2710 - Church major repairs - installation		—	—	—	—	—	—
2711 - Capital Expenditure		396.95	—	—	—	396.95	—
2720 - Church interior and exterior decorating		—	—	—	—	—	—
Total		396.95	—	2,280.00	—	2,676.95	10,472.00

Hall Repairs & Maintenance

2801 - Hall + major repairs - structure		—	—	—	—	—	—
2820 - Hall + major repairs - installation		—	—	—	—	—	—
2830 - Hall + interior and exterior decorating		—	—	—	—	—	—
Total		—	—	—	—	—	—

Governance Costs

2601 - Governance costs examination/audit fee		120.00	—	—	—	120.00	110.00
---	--	--------	---	---	---	--------	--------

Total		120.00	—	—	—	120.00	110.00
EXPENDITURE TOTAL		90,900.50	—	7,783.46	—	98,683.96	94,235.89
GRAND TOTAL		(8,471.71)	—	13,330.60	—	4,858.89	29,993.06

WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED P.C.C. ASSETS

ASSETS

General Fund:

CAF Bank:	£11,846.96	
Barclays:	£ 1,467.62	
CCLA:	£37,285.40	
Petty Cash:	£ 95.35	£50,695.33

General Fund re Bowls Club	£ 843.14
Guardians Restricted Funds	£27,952.20
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund	£ 1,428.42
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration	£42,624.53
Little Braxted Fabric Fund	£17,653.46

Bookstall Stock £ 600

Estimated Values

Church Hall	£ 500,000
Tables & Chairs	£ 2,000
Kitchen Equipment, Storage Boxes, Urn, Cutlery, Microwave Etc.	£ 1,500
Crockery & Glasses	£ 500
Step Ladder	£ 109
Vacuum Cleaners	£ 200
Video/Television, Sound System/Heaters	£ 1,600
Choir Robes	£ 1,500
Lawnmowers	£ 1,250
Strimmer	£ 150
Hedge Trimmer	£ 150
Piano x 2	£ 2,700
Shed x 2	£ 1,500
Projector	£ 430
Floristry equipment	£ 2,000
Dishwasher	£ 1,500
Photocopier	£ 2,500
Mevo Camera	£ 350
WiFi Router	£ 90

Accounts



2022Review Document
GSpearman 2/5/2023

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022

Parish of Wickham Bishops with Little Braxted



Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 14th May 2023
at 12 p.m.

St. Bartholomew's Church Hall

Welcome to the Annual Report for 2022

Once again we're pleased to present our review of the church year. We hope that you enjoy reading and reflecting on the various reports included. Following the last couple of challenging years due to the pandemic, 2022 enabled us once again to organise events and group activities and re-instate our regular Sunday services.

Our thanks go to all those who have contributed to this report.

The agenda for the meeting, together with last year's minutes are available as separate documents, along with the nominations for the election of PCC members and Churchwardens.



Snapshots of Church Life 2022/2023!



Index

We are looking forward to a trip to Abberton this summer for a Teddy Bear picnic and session led by Essex Wildlife Trust Education team. We will also be preparing for our older children to leave the club for school, which will also impact the volunteering team. The government has announced that next year the funding for children attending nurseries will be increased with more children getting funded support from age 2 instead of 3, so this may impact attendance.

Stella Scrivener



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Administrative Information

The Parish of St Bartholomew Wickham Bishops with St Nicholas Little Braxted is situated in the Witham Deanery, part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. It has responsibility for two principal places of worship - St Bartholomew's Church, the Parish Church, which is situated in Church Road, Wickham Bishops and St Nicholas Little Braxted now a Chapel of Ease, but licensed for weddings. St Nicholas is situated in Witham Road, Little Braxted.

The correspondence address for both churches is The Rectory, Church Road, Wickham Bishops CM8 3LA Tel. 01621 892867. Information about the churches in Wickham Bishops and Little Braxted is also available at www.churchinwickhambishops.org.uk.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Wickham Bishops with Little Braxted is a Registered Charity No. 1159874.

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC. A number of Committees are responsible for helping to manage and organise different activities of church life, maintenance and worship.

Objectives and Activities

St Bartholomew's Wickham Bishops and St Nicholas Little Braxted Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical issues. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the church centre complex of St Bartholomew's Church and Church Hall and St Nicholas Church, Little Braxted.

The end of term in July 2022 was extremely hot so we got outside with warm soapy water and the children washed lots of toys. Our end of term party had some complications due to the extreme heat so the planned bouncy castles were delayed a week. We took a well-deserved summer break returning to make Union Flags and sing God Save the King for the first time. Rev Hilary talked about Harvest to us all. We made a nativity bunting for display in the church over Christmas time and enjoyed a Christmas Party with visits from Father Christmas and entertainment from Teenie Rockets.

A big cupboard sort out took place in the Christmas Holidays and we reorganised making one crafting cupboard for the entire church to use and the toys taking up much less space in the cupboard/fire escape. We also got involved in cleaning and upgrading the Stay and Pray area in the church. The children worked together on a new art piece for the area using paints and canvas. The group run a small stall with children's crafts at the Spring Coffee Morning.

With Rev Hilary leading us we enjoyed making an Easter Garden during Lent and watching it start to grow we also made some banners for the church together to celebrate Easter. The cupboard had another major tidy out and toys got a good scrub ready for us to get together again after the Easter break.

We raised funds for Shine and Great Ormond Street over the year from cupcakes in October and Easter Egg hunting.



Edward Bear Club

The Edward Bear group runs from 10.00 to 11.30 am on a Monday morning during term time and is open to all babies and preschooler's. The session incorporates free playtime with various toys, a craft activity in the hall. We take the group into the Lady Chapel for singing, prayer and the children can explore the church environment searching for a bear. Back in the hall the children listen to a religious story with a biscuit before more playing and crafting continues. The craft activity and prayer each week link into the community and church calendar.

Stella Scrivener, Leanne Goddard, Christine Bealer and Francine have been running the group with Adele Joyner stepping down due to work commitments in December. Attendance fluctuates but a general reduction has been seen this year from averaging around 12 children to 8.

Last spring the children planted seeds donated by Maypole Garden Centre and the children enjoyed making a bug church in the church grounds supported by volunteers from the Wickham Bishops Biodiversity Group. Local Author Sam Scott came to read to the children one of her stories.



The bug church!

PCC Members & Church Officers

As at May 2023

Priest in Charge: Rev. Hilary Le Sève
Associate Priest: Rev. Derek Clark
Churchwardens: Graham Wingrove, Rick Smith
Members of the PCC: Members of the PCC are the Priest in Charge, Churchwardens, elected representatives (max 12) Deanery Synod representatives and any appointed ex-officio members.

Elected Representatives (max 12) as at 14/05/2023

Spencer Churchill (to 2025)	Lester Firkins (to 2025)
Wendy Firkins (to 2024)	Francine Cope (2025)
Dorothy Kerr (to 2024)	Lucy Traynor (to 2023)
Kate Dawson (to 2023)	Graham Spearman (2025)
John Baker (to 2023)	

Ex-Officio:

Geraldine Spearman, Secretary
Rev. Derek Clark, Associate Priest

Deanery Synod Reps:

John Gilbert (to 2024)
Christine Bealer (to 2024)

Treasurer:

Graham Spearman

Safeguarding Officer:

Norma Hayward

Electoral Roll Officer:

Mary Brown

Health and Safety:

Allan Baker

Gift Aid Secretary:

John Baker

Sidespersons:

[as at May 2023](#)

Kath Adkins	Norma Hayward	Kate Dawson
Lester Firkins	Dorothy Kerr	Stuart Parish
Wendy Firkins	John Kerr	John Wratten
Francine Cope	Geraldine Spearman	Dick Yelland
Denise Yelland	Vivienne Lodge	

Vergers: for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

Lester Firkins	Wendy Firkins	Kate Dawson
Tamsyn Clark	Dorothy Kerr	



The Annual Rogation Day service at St. Peter's Church .

Adele, Stella and Leanne have been modelling fabulous collaborative team leadership of Edward Bears with Francine Cope offering practical support and Christine Bealer proving to be an able story teller. Barry Cousins has worked closely with the Beacon Hill scouts to ensure St George's Day was marked and across the year scouting and guiding groups visited the church to earn 'Faith' badges, decorate the Community Christmas Tree and even polish the pews. Given all these wonderful encounters, the PCC is nevertheless not being complacent about its commitment to children and families and is taking time in 2023 to consider next steps in shaping this area of communal life.

Rev. Hilary Le Sève

Christingle Service and the annual Bonfire Party at the rectory.



Children and Families

Through occasional services (baptisms, weddings and funerals) we minister to families and children in numerous ways. Informally, attention has been brought to the ongoing consequences of the Covid 19 pandemic on the wellbeing of our children as families have had to learn to negotiate how to manage school attendance, social relationships and mental health impairment. With this in mind the closure of the Youth Group in December has been especially poignant as it served as a space for 'hanging out' on Friday evenings with peers (playing snooker, table tennis etc) in contrast to more organized youth activities. The excellent facilities are there still and with committed leadership the youth group could be resurrected.

Thanks are given for the small dedicated team of parent leaders who facilitated the group over so many years. Likewise Messy Church has now stepped back from providing a monthly gathering. Reverend Hilary supported by Sandra and Sheila from St Peter's found they were not able to run the group well on such a small team.

Notwithstanding, the eighth annual bonfire at The Rectory was a really fun evening as was the Good Friday Holiday Club and the Christingle / St Nicholas' service in Little Braxted.

The Nativity Service on Christmas Eve was wonderfully supported by the Edward Bears community with Mary Brown ensuring costumes were at the ready for those who turned up. It was a chaotic retelling of the Christmas story but poignant too.



Why not Volunteer ...?

Would you like to be a part of the team that keeps the wheels turning in our two churches! From making coffee on a Sunday morning to greeting people at the door, or mowing the grass, there are so many roles in which you can help to maintain the village churches as the welcoming places that they are.

***Sunday Morning Meeters and Greeters**

***Graveyard Mowers and Strimmers**

***Pew Polishers and Dusters**

***Reading the lesson at our services**

***Serving refreshments on Sunday mornings**

***Singing with our church choir**

***Helping and welcoming families at Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals**

***Arranging church flowers!**

... Or join our

- ⇒ **Pastoral team supporting people in the village**
- ⇒ **Our Fund Raising team- planning and running events**
- ⇒ **Our maintenance team - ensuring the fabric of the church is all in working order!**

***For more information and to chat about the roles, contact
Rev. Hilary Le Sève - Priest in charge
Geraldine Spearman - PCC Secretary***

Chairman's Report

"...we celebrate the church's involvement in homing refugees from war torn Ukraine and enabling social gatherings and the building up of new networks of relationships"



For so many years the village church has been here to care for the needy, marry lovers, minister to children and journey with the elderly. At the core of all this has been the enduring melody of worship - week in, week out - the heartbeat of faith bringing prayer into our midst, discipling us to be people of faith and encouraging us to share our lives with others. 2022 was no different.

Expressed in different ways for different needs, the main service of the week (10.30am on a Sunday) is varied but always followed by refreshments afterwards in the hall. Our authorised local preachers (ALPs John Gilbert and Christine Bealer) and their team, use the informality of guitar accompaniment for the monthly Sunday Praise. On other weeks Graham Spearman has been instrumental in encouraging the church choir and liaising with musicians. Barry Cousins (ALP) gifts his pastoral oversight

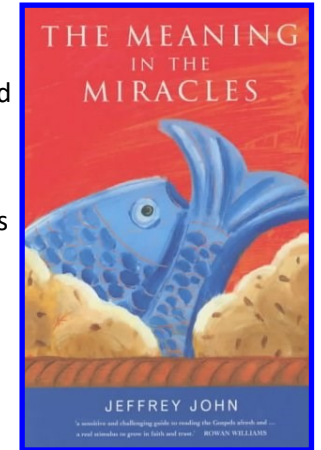


to the 8.00am congregation. At St Nicholas' Little Braxted the ancient Book of Common Prayer shapes the worship for the 9.00 am service with several children taking their part there.

Gathering again and again, we seek to unite our lives in prayer and with others, listen to God's word, be moved, hear the truth and feel the peace. In this way our church really can be a Doorway to Heaven. Rejoicing for our late

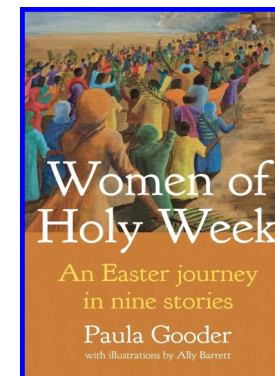
Bible Study Group

Meeting on the first and third Mondays of the month our numbers regularly range between seven and twelve, both men and women which really adds breadth to our discussions. We have been studying the 'Meaning in the Miracle's' by Jeffrey John which we have found challenging by taking the simple stories that we have known and giving a different slant. Whilst we haven't always agreed with Jeffrey's take on the stories it has made us think and expanded our thoughts to look at the wider context of what Jesus was doing and why.



Over Eastertide (2023) we shall be looking at 'Women of Holy Week' by Paula Gooder, following on with 'Bad Boys of the Bible', Barbara J Essex. All are welcome.

Maggie Drewett and Gillian Wingrove



DISCIPLESHIP

Women's Christian Fellowship

The past year has been a relatively successful one, with our membership increasing, but sadly not yet up to pre covid levels. We have had a wide selection of speakers and even welcomed several gentlemen to some of our meetings when the subject has interested them. The most popular being, 'Around the World on a Container Ship', 'Health begins in the Home not the Surgery' and a talk (with music) about the compositions of our wonderful English Composers.

The group served the refreshments after the Ash Wednesday Service and also had a summer party and a Christmas Lunch.

At the AGM in October we decided to change our meeting date from the fourth Wednesday in the month to the second Wednesday as we had heard that that may be a better date to attract some new members. This began in January this year and seems to be reasonably successful.

We have always tried to be a happy and welcoming Club and a letter received recently from one of our speakers backed this up.

We have a full programme arranged for the rest of the year and hope the Group can go forward with renewed vigour.

As with most Clubs we find it hard to recruit folk to the committee but with only four we just about manage, Dorothy, Valerie, Jill and myself. Although a small committee we fulfil each others roles when required but are always looking for additional help if any of us are away.

Denise Yelland - Secretary

Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June and then marking her death in September, our small but committed worship team were able to respond sensitively with prayers, music and the setting up of a prayer space for a Memorial Book.



Enhancing our worshipping life is the provision of spaces to gather in. We are incredibly lucky to have not just the historic buildings but also the use of car parks, good toilets, a hygienic well equipped kitchen and an airy hall (available for private hire btw). A very small team of volunteers (including Dick Yelland's team of Mowers and Gardeners) ensures, with the church architect, they are maintained and presented well. With increased fuel costs the decision was made to meet for the Sunday services in the church on two Sundays and in the hall on others over the winter, – creating yet more variety given the warmth and intimacy of the hall as a space. Graham Wingrove, now in his seventh year as churchwarden and chair of the Fabric Committee, has been instrumental in keeping church life flowing. He can be seen behind the scenes ensuring services go smoothly, then literally on his hands and knees shifting the blockages in the drains so the hall toilets can run freely! With Barry Cousin relinquishing his faithful service as churchwarden of six years, Rick Smith stepped in to offer himself. Together this team ensured worship took place over the summer when Reverend Hilary took extended leave/sabbatical time for three months – a time for prayerful reflection. PCC discussions have noted the remarkable service of our churchwardens over the years and the fundamental role they have in our village.

Given the impact of the covid 19 pandemic on mental wellbeing the restarting of the monthly Drop In has been welcome as an opportunity to build relationships and decrease isolation. The Edward Bears

group, Women's Christian Fellowship, bowling group, new home group and recently introduced monthly crockpot lunches are all ways in which the church creates social space. Sadly we have said goodbye to the long running Youth Group that met on Fridays in the hall. We hope that this is just for a season until new energy for it can be found and thank the parents that made it possible.

Partnering with the Welcome Ukrainian Friends group and Kindness in Mind we celebrate the church's involvement in homing refugees from



war torn Ukraine and enabling social gatherings and the building up of new networks of relationships. Practical support from the wider village in providing homeware, toys, furniture etc was humbling and made for a master class in generous giving. The continued enabling of

Foodbank collections is a reminder of the harshness of economic and social realities. Mention of the events staged by the fundraising team led by Kath Adkins (think Summer Fayre, the French Evening, Christmas Market etc) reminds us of life giving social events that raise funds for the running costs of the church. Caring for the church fabric, Guardians of The Village Churches (GOTVC) hosted a delightful fundraising Jubilee Ball at Braxted Park in June reinforcing a vision of spreading responsibility for the maintenance of these historic buildings across the wider community.



in traditional fashion.

On behalf of the Guardians Committee I would also like to express my admiration for HM Queen Elizabeth II and it was with great sadness that we received the news of her death in September of last year.

For the coming year several of our Committee will be supporting The Garden's Festival event which is organised by a separate committee led by Stewart Adkins who we know will continue to provide a superbly organised event for 2023. As many of you will understand we are a small group of volunteers and while we try and raise money for our two wonderful churches, we are impacted by many other worthy causes both locally and nationally. This means that we choose our fund-raising events carefully so as not to impact other local events and with this aim in mind we plan to hold a number of smaller events throughout 2023.

Finally, I would like to thank our Members, those who attend our functions and in particular our Guardians Committee for their commitment to helping us meet our primary goals. In addition, our Rev. Hilary deserves a special mention for all her hard work in 'gluing' our community together and helping us to support our splendid church buildings which are a central part of our community.

Nick Carter
Chairman

If you'd like to join Guardians of the Village Churches, visit the website:

guardiansofthevillagechurches.co.uk/

Or our Facebook page

GUARDIANS

The Guardians of the Village Churches

Regular committee meetings have been held in person since the lifting of Covid 19 restrictions and I would like to thank all our Committee Members for their continued support. Karen Strong as our new Secretary has made a substantial contribution to the well running of our group and I am delighted she joined us at the start of 2022.

I would also like to thank Peter Parkinson for his fine contribution to our cause but unfortunately Peter has for the moment stepped down in his role as Deputy Chairman and Guardians Committee Member. Graham Jacobs kindly agreed to step in to undertake the Deputy Chairman role for which I thank him.

With respect to fund raising throughout the year, we formed a small organising committee for the holding of a Platinum Ball held at Braxted Park on the 4 June 2022. It is with great pleasure that I can report a successful event with over 80 tickets sold and a profit from the raffle, sponsorship and other donations raising £2,219.83

I have three key people to thank in this endeavour namely: Pauline Haggerty, Karen Strong and Kath Adkins (seconded onto the Platinum Ball Organising Committee). Also our treasurer Graham Spearman deserves a mention for his continued support.

Overall, it was an excellent evening to celebrate our late monarch's 70 years on the throne and we were pleased we were able to toast her health



Picking up a pace are the preparations for the 2023 Garden Festival – a key fundraiser for maintaining St Bartholomew's and yet another occasion when the gifts of individuals in time and skills comes to the fore for which there is immense appreciation.

Given the centrality of good relationships at the heart of church life the importance of Safeguarding Training has been in the spotlight in 2022 as church officers, PCC members and group leaders updated their training including a focus on spiritual abuse, safer recruitment, the impact of trauma and domestic abuse. Norma Hayward, the Parish Safeguarding Officer reminds us that Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility not just hers. The whole story of Scripture offers us a vision of communities that prizes human dignity and enables flourishing, starting with the creation story in Genesis, and we all have a role in working towards that knowing that relationships can become unhealthy and broken.

The Diocesan Safeguarding team has provided support, enabling us to demonstrate good practice as a responsible church community and being unflinchingly honest about the ways in which church communities have failed in the past.

Reading through the reports accompanying this one, you will note the many hardworking and prayerful individuals who contribute so richly to our corporate life enabling us to travel well together. Getting older (and frailer in some cases) we are very mindful of our vulnerabilities as

a church community as we look to the future. Key church members have moved to new communities and we miss them. Others we remember with thanks are loved ones departed who gifted us with smiles, music, encouragement and faith.



Trusting in God's provision for the journey ahead the final word of this report is given over to a prayer which was printed in the pew sheet for much of 2022 from the Leading Your Church into Growth material:

*God of mission,
Who alone brings growth to your Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
Joy to our worship,
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,*



Christmas we arranged and served the usual seasonal refreshments after the Service of Nine lessons and Carols.

We achieved quite a lot in 2022, in spite of three members of our committee – Ruth Johnson, Anne Keatley-Clarke and Claire Gotts – stepping down for varying reasons. Fortunately, we have been joined by two new members, Mary Brown and Marion Houlding, but we would welcome more!

We are most grateful for the help we receive from people within and from outside the Church - we couldn't put on certain events without it - but we are struggling because of a dwindling membership and other pressures on members' time, so have decided to reduce the number of events in our



2023 programme. We hope, however, that it will still be an enjoyable year and that we can count on your continued support.

Kath Adkins





Unfortunately, the fancy dress competition was not very well supported, but was enjoyed by those children who made the effort. Overall, though, a very successful afternoon from an enjoyment and financial perspective, raising £1784.42.

Shortly after the Bring and Share Harvest Lunch at the beginning of October we somewhat reluctantly organised another food themed evening. This time we opted for a French style and it was a very popular choice as we sold out and had a waiting list! We raised £834. This type of evening is very well received by the attendees but is a lot of work for the organisers!

To round off the year we had the ever-successful Christmas Market (£1490.86 achieved) plus a

Christmas Concert a week later masterminded, once again, by Paul Strong and supported by the Beacon Hill Ensemble. Our committee took care of the publicity and refreshments, but there was no charge for admission, just a request for donations and, to



that end, we received £355.62. In December we also welcomed the uniformed groups into the Church to put their handmade decorations onto the Christmas Tree in the Lady Chapel, and they enjoyed refreshments and an informal act of worship led by Revd. Hilary. The Sunday before

We are thankful for our team of flower arrangers who continue to enhance church worship, seasons & ceremonies.



Electoral Roll Report

The Church Electoral Roll has been renewed this year in line with the Church of England regulations.

During the past year six members have sadly died. Three members have moved away, two have requested to be removed from The Roll and three have been removed because of ill health and non-contact over several years.

There are six new members added to the Electoral Roll.

In total there are 110 people on the 2023 Church Electoral Roll; of these 84 are parishioners who live in the Parish, and 26 non-resident parishioners.

Thank you to all members for their co-operation in preparing the Church Electoral Roll for 2023/24

Mary Brown
Electoral Roll Officer

The Electoral Roll is the register of those who worship regularly at our Churches.

If you would like more information and an application form, please e-mail our Electoral Roll Officer

wblberoll@gmail.com

Fund Raising and Social

In 2022 we were back to some sort of normality after the pandemic, although we delayed what should have been the first event of the year because of the high incidence of Covid in the local community. Once we got started, though, we had a busy, enjoyable and financially very successful year, raising just shy of £7000. This sum helps pay for the day to day running costs of our Church.

We started with the Spring Coffee Morning in March which was quite well attended, and using both the Church and Hall gave us more space, which was a positive. We raised a respectable £600. Later than originally planned we held a Quiz, at the beginning of April, and this was not quite as well supported as usual. The dreaded Covid was partly to blame, even preventing Ken Matten, who compiled the quiz, from attending! However, it was still an enjoyable evening and we made a profit of £413.

In May, Paul Strong, with the support of the Beacon Hill Ensemble, entertained a large and appreciative audience to music from Bond to Beethoven in the Church. Our committee organised the publicity, programme, ticket sales and refreshments. A fabulous £1513 was raised.

The following month we held the Summer Fayre with most of the stalls and activities on the field. Despite difficulties accessing the Church and field because of roadworks the event was well attended and there was a warm and convivial atmosphere.



Community

FOODBANK

We continue to support the work of the Trussell Trust Foodbank with a permanent collection box in St. Bartholomew's and also working in conjunction with the village One Stop shop.

As always the Harvest Collection of food delivered to the church and the shop was well supported, with Wickham Bishops Nursery also providing bags of items for this occasion.

One Stop has a Community Fund which they are able to award to a local cause couple of times a year. Again they used the fund to provide a large number of bags of food items at Christmas and then again in April with a supply of Easter Eggs. We're grateful for their continued commitment.

The local Warehouse covers the Witham area as well as Braintree and Halstead. The local centre where people can collect food parcels is based at the Witham Methodist Church in Guithavon Street.

Geraldine Spearman



Harvest food
collection at
the font



PCC Report

At the 2022 APCM we welcomed back Spencer Churchill, Graham Spearman and Lester Firkins onto the PCC for a further 3 year term of office and were pleased to welcome Francine Cope as a new member.

Our Electoral Roll membership entitles our Parish to 12 laity PCC members. In addition to those, the PCC consists of Chairman Rev. Hilary Le Sève, 2 Deanery Synod Representatives and two Churchwardens. The Secretary and Rev. Derek Clark (Associate Priest) both sit on the Council as ex-officio members. The Standing Committee, who meet to discuss upcoming PCC agendas, is made up of the Chairman, Associate Priest, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary and the Pastoral Assistant. During 2022 the PCC met 6 times, one meeting ably chaired by Graham Wingrove during Rev. Hilary's extended leave.

The meeting agendas focus on relevant and significant issues within the life of our two churches, reports from each committee are presented together with an update from the Treasurer. Items of Good News are always included.

In addition this year, the PCC met with Archdeacon Ruth Patten for a discussion on Diocesan and Parish issues. The Diocesan Youth Advisor attended in January to give advice on encouraging young people into our church. Succession Planning has also been an item for lengthy discussions this year, focusing on the need to identify people to take on the many commitments within our church. Welcoming Ukrainian refugees into our church family, anticipating their needs and ensuring their integration formed part of our conversations and planning.

We are fortunate to have a PCC who bring many gifts and talents. My thanks as always, to Rev. Hilary and the members for their continued support. **Geraldine Spearman - PCC Secretary**

Safeguarding Officer

Safeguarding Checks

The current online system for carrying out safeguarding checks for people working with children and adults in the church, known as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and run by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) set up in March 2018, is now well established and continues to work well. It is also known as 31:8 Checks now have to be repeated every 3 years instead of 5.

Once an applicant has completed the online form, I have to see evidence of identity and address in person. Once these details have been submitted to 31:8, the result of the check is sent both to the applicant and to me.

Three new checks have been carried out in the last 12 months and four renewals.

The Diocese also requires an application form which asks for references and a confidential declaration to be completed, even if a DBS check is not always possible.

Safeguarding Training. This is now supported by Francine Cope

I am pleased to report that, with only a couple of exceptions, everyone who needs to undertake the safeguarding training, has now done so and, apart from one person whose training is due for renewal this year, all are now covered for at least the next 2 years.

Francine Cope

Safeguarding Training Administrator

BOWLS

At the beginning of the year, due to unforeseen circumstances, the number of people attending decreased, but we have weathered the storm and now have a good number with others showing interest.

The Carpet Bowls Club is operated under the Church's Pastoral Care enabling people to meet and socialise. Whilst learning to play bowls, there is always time for tea, cake and a chat.

Cindy Baker



DROP IN

Drop in sessions are held from 2.30pm to 4pm on the second Monday of the month, unless this is Bank Holiday. Details and a contact number can be found in the Parish Magazine, everyone is welcome. The Drop In provides refreshments plus friendship and someone who will listen to you in private if needed. The sessions are lively and happy. Attendance last year was between 13 and 19 each month.

The sessions are run with dedication, care and love by a team of 7 who all have up to date Safeguarding qualifications. Two people lead the session each month, the team is Jayne, Kath, Geraldine, Maggie D, Maggie G, Sue and Christine.

Sue Clements



The Church of England continues to put a strong emphasis on safeguarding training, both for those who work with children and with vulnerable adults. The online training is now carried out through the Church of England National Safeguarding Online Training Portal and not the Diocese which means the whole system has changed. Any member of the congregation may undertake the Basic Awareness and Foundation courses and all PCC members are encouraged to as well as those working with children and adults.

For those in leadership roles, a further level of training is required. It is expected that the training will be repeated every 3 years.

The Church of England Parish safeguarding handbook “Promoting a Safer Church” has been adopted by the parish and can be accessed on the Church of England’s Website www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding.

The Diocese safeguarding team continue to support parishes especially with safeguarding issues.

Norma Hayward
Parish Safeguarding Officer

jhaywa@globalnet.co.uk

A copy of our Safeguarding Policy can be found on the board in the Church Porch and the hall noticeboard.

Further Safeguarding information is available on the Diocesan Website

[https://
www.chelmsford.anglican.org](https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org)

Treasurer's Report

“... the year ahead is going to be challenging and we need to continue to keep a watch on expenditure.”

2022 has, in fact, been a better year for the Parish Finances even though we started with a short closure as a result of a Covid outbreak following December 2021's Nine Lessons and Carols. I am pleased to be able to report an improvement to the balance of General Funds which are almost back to the pre-pandemic level. Income from Planned Giving is virtually static thanks to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) and collections and other giving have improved. Once again, I would encourage anyone who hasn't yet done so to join the PGS. This reduces the workload for both the Gift Aid Secretary and myself as Treasurer. Fee income for funerals and weddings fell in 2022 but the Fund Raising and Social Committee were able to return to a much more normal level of activity raising some £5,400.

Expenditure has once again been contained and total outlay reduced by £4,250.

However, there are significant challenges ahead. St. Bartholomew's electricity costs for 2022 amounted to £4,437. Our fixed rate tariff ended on 15th December 2022. Using 12 months actual meter readings it has been estimated that at the same level of usage the electricity bill in 2023 would rise to £21,700. Clearly urgent action is needed to contain this increase in cost. As you are aware we are moving some services into the Hall. This area is heated by underfloor heating which charges up overnight on the lowest tariff.

PASTORAL WORK

“We continue to lend support where we can to the bereaved, the elderly and those not so well.”

The committee supports the pastoral care in the church and local community. This includes visiting the sick, lonely and bereaved; Drop In sessions, Welcome Packs, Parish Magazine, Services at Little Oaks and Home Communion.

The Parish magazine has continued to be delivered to every household during the year. We are very grateful to the willing band of helpers who make this possible and are always looking for new recruits to join the team. Welcome packs have also been delivered to newcomers to the village by our Welcome visitors.

We held a soup lunch in February which, while low on attendees, was much enjoyed by those who came.

We once again organised the delivery of cyclamen plants to the sick and bereaved at Harvest time and these were much appreciated. We also provided refreshments at the Service of Remembrance.

We have resumed our visits to Little Oaks and it has been good to reconnect with familiar faces as well as getting to know new ones.

We continue to lend support where we can to the bereaved, the elderly and those not so well. We are few in number so are very grateful for the help of the wider congregation.

Jayne Jennings

ST. NICHOLAS

A quiet year at St Nicholas' has followed the busy 900th Anniversary celebrations spread over the past 'Lock-down' years. We have continued with the monthly Eucharistic service extended to every month of the year since 2020 with just the regular additional services on Good Friday, Easter Sunday and St Nicholas' Day. Christmas eve mid-night Mass is as usual a very atmospheric service with regular 'strangers' but welcomed attendees from 'out of town'. We look forward to the re-instatement or re-use of the 'Corona'.



We now have no regular cleaner but it is obvious that someone applies the vacuum cleaner especially in the porch now and again and we are particularly grateful to Elsie Rees for her regular flower arrangements. Special thanks are due to Jayne Jennings for playing the organ for most services.

With outstanding works from the past two Quinquennial inspections, there is a great need for a Church Warden/Caretaker/Manager to lead the regular congregation into the future.

As can be seen from the Visitor Book, the church continues to be very popular with casual visits from around the world. There have been no organised 'tour visits' this past year."

Secondly, the Finance Committee considered, with great regret, that at the year end we would not make our usual charity donations.

Thirdly, a further issue is Parish Share for which the Diocese are seeking an 8% increase in our contribution. The PCC agreed that we would not, as we have done for many years, pay our Parish Share by Direct Debit but would pay, hopefully on a monthly basis, what we could afford after allowing for the increase in electricity costs.

Effectively we will pay less in the winter months and more in the summer months. I estimate we should pay 66% of our Parish Share plus any grants/subsidies we may receive from either the Government or the Diocese. This position is being taken as it is the PCC's view that above all else we should keep the church open.

So at the year end with £61,298 in General Funds we are in a comfortable situation. However, the year ahead is going to be challenging and we need to continue to keep a watch on expenditure.

The Fabric funds for both churches are in a satisfactory position having benefitted from further bequests.

I would like to thank John Baker for his most efficient processing of Gift Aid.

The Guardians committee held a fund raising ball to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee raising in excess of £2,000.

This year will see another Garden's Festival again being most ably chaired by Stewart Adkins and this should provide a further significant sum to the Church Restoration fund.

At present the Guardians fund and the Church Restoration fund amount to some £54,000 so hopefully we are 50% of the way to having sufficient funds to complete the redecoration of St Bartholomew's.

So, to conclude I am pleased to report that our Parish continues to be in a reasonably sound financial situation. But, there continue to be significant financial challenges ahead of us.

Graham Spearman, Hon Treasurer. 26/01/2023

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The accounts have been examined again this year by John Barnes, FCA (Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants).

The Examiner is appointed on a yearly basis and is required to be proposed, seconded and agreed by members at this meeting.

Proposer and Secunder are therefore required for John Barnes to continue for a further year.

A full set of the church accounts is available as a separate document.

For further information about

Parish Share, please contact

grstreasurer@protonmail.com

Following Paul Strong's appointment as Director of Music at All Saints' Springfield we have put together a new rota of organists to play on each Sunday, with some also taking choir practices before the 10.30 a.m. service.

Third Sundays continue to provide a service of Worship under John Gilbert's excellent direction.

I am extremely grateful to all the members of the choir, including those who augment when we have special services, for their support in maintaining the choral tradition at St Bartholomew's. Sadly I hear of other Parish Churches whose choir has ceased to exist and we should be grateful that we have, to date, been able to maintain our choral tradition at St Bartholomew's. We would always welcome additional voices and please do not hesitate to speak to me if you or anybody you know would like to join the St Bartholomew's choir.

Graham Spearman



The contribution of music to village life and wellbeing was again demonstrated through occasional concerts led by Paul and friends and we look forward to the Open Gardens concert in 2023.

The huge rise in energy prices put pressure on costs for heating the church in what was one of our colder winters and so we took the decision to move some of the services into the church hall. While saving cost, it also had the benefit of creating a more intimate and inclusive environment for services, which we will continue to test through 2023

John Gilbert

CHOIR

" ..we are grateful that we have, to date, been able to maintain our choral tradition at St Bartholomew's."

With the help of our rotating organists, Paul, Richard and Ed during 2022, we hope that the choir has helped to add to the worship at St Bartholomew's.

In addition to the usual services we are pleased to have been able to provide, in June, a service of Choral Evensong, for the Royal School of Music's Music Sunday, and also at Christmas a service of Nine Lessons and Carols. For both these services we augmented the choir and I am very pleased that for the most part these were from people who live in the Parish.

From time to time on Feast Days the choir has provided an anthem. There was also a service of readings and music for Advent which was well received and it is likely that similar services may be repeated.

Deanery Synod

Synod Representatives: Rev. Hilary Le Seve (House of Clergy), Anne Keatley-Clarke (to mid-2022), Christine Bealer, John Gilbert (House of Laity)

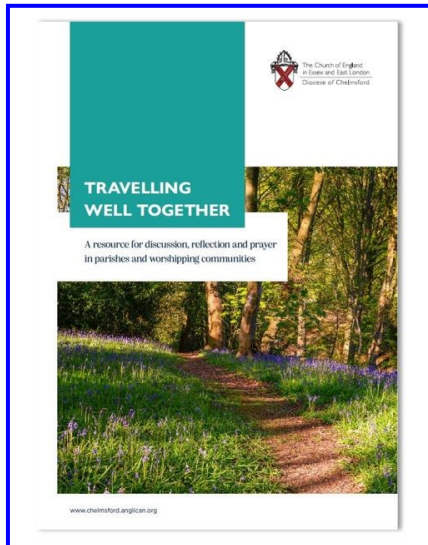
The Deanery Synod is part of the governance structure of the Church of England, linking to the Diocesan Synod and to General Synod through elected representatives. Meetings are chaired by the Rural Dean, in our case Simon Garwood as Rural Dean, and a Lay Chair, in our case Mike Robinson. Regular business includes updates on the Deanery's Parish Share payments, on Mission & Ministry Units, on events and activities in the Parishes and a session on a matter of interest.

It is a meeting that could be a great opportunity for sharing learning in our parishes. There are a lot of smaller parishes that struggled with the pandemic and do not appear to be blessed with the riches of skills and volunteering that we enjoy across the whole of our church family. We should remember them in our prayers. We say "could be" as it feels to us that Synod has lost its way a bit and 2022 was year when it seemed to be trying to find it. Sessions were held with discussions about issues facing parishes, but a firm plan of action has still to be developed – see below!

At its penultimate meeting of the year, the Synod welcomed Bishop Guli, who talked about her life story (very interesting and challenging for the comfortable Anglican in England) and introduced the "Travelling Well Together" values statement that we will be exploring.

She feels the diocese needs to stop focusing on “doing” (strategy and structure) and start focusing on “being” values and quality interactions) to give the Spirit a chance to lead. This will be especially important with the challenges of economics and staffing that the church faces we shall see how long we can resist the temptation to “just get on with it!” The last meeting took the form of a communion service, so maybe that’s a sign!

John Gilbert



Bishop Guli introduced her 'Travelling Well Together' values.



of services as we seek to enable all who come to find something to support their worship.

After the disruption to Christmas services at the end of last year caused by COVID, thankfully, 2022 settled down into a more stable pattern. The streaming of services to our Facebook page has continued after COVID restrictions were relaxed as it enables church members who cannot come for health or other reasons to engage with the services, although the usual technical issue occasionally disrupt delivery, notwithstanding investment in camera, broadband and wi-fi!

Easter saw a well-attended series of services, with a “last hour before the Cross” meditation service led by the Sunday praise team in St Nicholas’ (as we didn’t think the usual Third Sunday service would necessarily meet expectations for Easter Sunday!) and the dawn service followed by breakfast and a busy Easter day service. Following the unfortunate events of 2021’s Christmas service schedule (!), a full programme of services took place this year, with no (as far as we know) outbreaks of illness. The service of Nine Lessons and Carols was a high quality festival curated by Graham to kick off the Christmas season with a full church.



We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Graham Spearman, who has been the driving force behind the continuation and development of the choir and the maintenance of quality music provision on Sundays. He has a seemingly endless list of contacts to play the organ, drill the choir in new anthems and also selects the music for most of the services. We have benefitted from the services of Ed Sutton, Ashley Thompson, Jonathan Leese and Richard Overill through the year, with Ashley and Richard now being regular supporters and Jonathan also playing for a third Sunday service.

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

"We are working to develop our worship services to make our church an environment that is welcoming to all ..."

The primary purpose of the Worship Committee to assist the minister in their role in deciding on and leading the services across the year, in both church buildings and in public services where the church has a leading role in organisation. It acts as a means whereby the PCC can discharge its function of "co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical" in the area of public worship.



The Worship Committee, chaired by the minister, meets on average 3-4 times a year, as needed, to assist in planning the overall pattern of services (the detailed decisions are the minister's responsibility). It advises and supports in bringing resources and ideas together for specific special services, as God leads us to see opportunities in the Church and our own community calendar. We are working to develop our worship services to make our church an environment that is welcoming to all and where we are encouraged and assisted in coming closer to God and one another.

The Service pattern is now well established, with 8:00 a.m. Communion ably led by Barry Cousins at St Bartholomew's each Sunday, except 3rd Sundays, when there is a 9:00 a.m. Communion service in traditional form at St Nicholas. The weekly 10:30 am Service at St Bartholomew's has benefitted from a variety of churchmanship and formats within a cycle

Fabric Report

The Fabric Committee met 3 times this year. Before the first of these, Mrs Ruth Johnson resigned as Secretary. We thank Mrs Johnson for many years in this post and the meticulous records that she kept. Thus far, no replacement has come forward. If this is something you feel you would like to get involved with, then please do not hesitate to come forward. Mr. Roy Jones also stood down. We thank him also for his time on the Committee.

The headline this year has been the Quinquennial Survey of St. Bartholomew's. Hilary Brightman, our Conservation Architect carried this out in July. There were no surprises in her report and mostly identified items that we were already aware of and in need of attention.

So far on this list, Allan Baker and Lee Johnson have attended to the repair and redecoration of the large south window and the exterior doors of the church hall. Mark Parsley has attended to the urgent electricity items e.g. the emergency exit lights in the hall.

During the next 5 years, the other items on the list will need to be addressed.

In the church yard, Dick Yelland has once again co-ordinated the mowers/strimmer's. We are most grateful to him and all the volunteers who freely give of their time to keep both church yards looking the way they do. We also must recognise all the time and effort John Popham puts in as our Sexton.

During last Autumn following survey and, an Archdeacon's certificate, arboriculturists Just Trees attended both Church Yards and the car park and performed much needed surgery to a number of trees at £4000 this was quite an expenditure, but will keep the trees in good shape & health for number of years to come.

In early February this year, we also had the opportunity of having the "Community Pay Back" team. The Community Pay Back team are a group of people, usually around 6 plus their supervisor, who are serving part of a court ordered probation sentence and are given so many hours which need to be served as community service. They came for 2 Saturdays from 08:30 until 15:30 and did some really good work, among other things they replaced the rotten posts in the car park, clearing the rectory side of the field and bringing the garden by the church hall entrance back to looking neat and tidy.

There have been many comments regarding the excellent condition of the church yard and how well it is kept, which are always welcome.



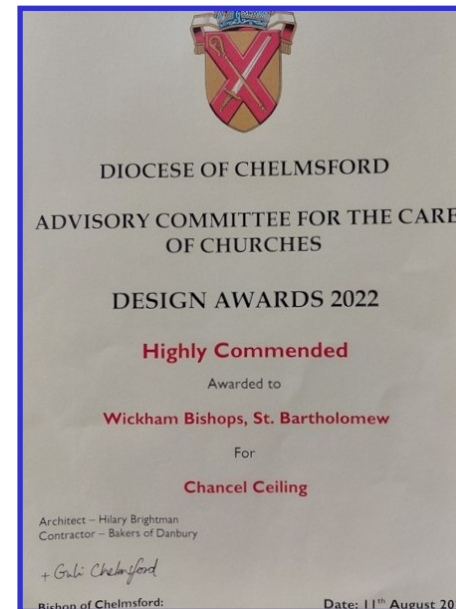
General maintenance and other compliance certificates have been renewed, although there are some questions regarding the current BS Standard are not being met re our lightening protection, which will need addressing in the not too distant future.

As I write, the clock dial on the east face is stuck at twenty to five. A. James of Saffron Walden have been contacted and will attend in due course.

As far as St. Nicholas is concerned, little has taken place to progress their Quinquennial repairs highlighted in the Purcell Report of 2021. The Corona is still in place although it must not be used as it contravenes current health and safety regulations. We welcome Jon Aldis to the group. Jon has a special interest in St. Nicholas and will focus his efforts there.

Finally, this will be my last report as Chair of the Fabric Committee, so I would like to thank all those who freely gave of their time and energy in the upkeep of our two buildings. After all, we are only custodians for the present to pass on to the future generations.

Graham Wingrove
Churchwarden



In July we were proud to receive a Highly Commended Design Award from the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the redecoration of the Chancel Ceiling.

Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted PCC

Registered Charity 1159874

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31st December 2022

WICKHAM BISHOPS AND LITTLE BRAXTED PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/12/2022

Registered Charity 1159874

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2022 which are set out on pages 4 to 12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

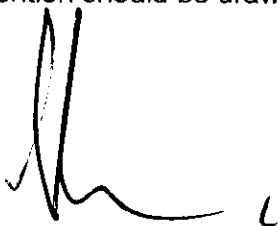
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records or
- 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 have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Barnes FCA

Independent Examiner
Handel House
Roselawn Fields
Broomfield
Chelmsford
CM1 7GB

Treasurer's Report

2022 has, in fact, been a better year for the Parish Finances even though we started with a short closure as a result of a Covid outbreak following December 2021's Nine Lessons and Carols. I am pleased to be able to report an improvement to the balance of General Funds which are almost back to the pre-pandemic level. Income from Planned Giving is virtually static thanks to the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) and collections and other giving have improved. Once again, I would encourage anyone who hasn't yet done so to join the PGS. This reduces the workload for both the Gift Aid Secretary and myself as Treasurer. Fee income for funerals and weddings fell in 2022 but the Fund Raising and Social Committee were able to return to a much more normal level of activity raising some £5,400.

Expenditure has once again been contained and the balance of General Funds has increased by £4,465.

However, there are significant challenges ahead. St. Bartholomew's electricity costs for 2022 amounted to £4,437. Our fixed rate tariff ended on 15th December 2022. Using 12 months actual meter readings it has been estimated that at the same level of usage the electricity bill in 2023 would rise to £21,700. Clearly urgent action is needed to contain this increase in cost. As you are aware we are moving some services into the Hall. This area is heated by underfloor heating which charges up overnight on the lowest tariff. Secondly, the Finance Committee considered, with great regret, that at the year end we would not make our usual charity donations.

Thirdly, a further issue is Parish Share for which the Diocese are seeking an 8% increase in our contribution. The PCC agreed that we would not, as we have done for many years, pay our Parish Share by Direct Debit but would pay, hopefully on a monthly basis, what we could afford after allowing for the increase in electricity costs. Effectively we will pay less in the winter months and more in the summer months. I estimate we should pay 66% of our Parish Share plus any grants/subsidies we may receive from either the Government or the Diocese. This position is being taken as it is the PCC's view that above all else we should keep the church open.

So at the year end with £60,119 in General Funds we are in a comfortable situation. However, the year ahead is going to be challenging and we need to continue to keep a watch on expenditure.

The Fabric funds for both churches are in a satisfactory position having benefitted from further bequests.

I would like to thank John Baker for his most efficient processing of Gift Aid.

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Graham Spearman, Hon. Treasurer. 26/01/2023

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Receipts					
Planned giving	37,573	—	—	37,573	38,337
Collections and other giving	4,003	—	—	4,003	2,924
Other voluntary receipts	15,793	23,654	—	39,447	16,036
Gift Aid recovered	10,036	—	—	10,036	10,417
Other receipts	3,639	—	—	3,639	1,702
Youth Club	—	—	—	—	—
Activities for generating funds	19,762	2,104	—	21,867	47,227
Investment Income	499	711	—	1,210	26
Receipts from church activities	6,450	—	—	6,450	8,733
Total income	97,758	26,470	—	124,228	125,406
Payments					
Cost of generating funds	500	9	—	510	4,967
Missionary and Charitable Giving	2,490	177	—	2,667	3,900
Parish Share	46,638	—	—	46,638	44,340
Clergy and Staffing costs	4,976	—	—	4,976	5,745
Church Running Expenses	25,959	1,527	—	27,486	26,225
Youth Club	—	—	—	—	—
Hall Running Costs	1,373	—	—	1,373	1,603
Church Repairs & Maintenance	5,396	5,076	—	10,472	2,279
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	—	—	—	—	—
Governance Costs	110	—	—	110	110
Total expenditure	87,445	6,790	—	94,235	89,170
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	—	—	—
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	10,313	19,679	—	29,993	36,235
Transfers					
Gross transfers between funds - in	15,378	47,664	—	63,043	11,955
Gross transfers between funds - out	(31,526)	(31,516)	—	(63,043)	(11,955)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	(5,834)	35,827	—	29,993	36,235
Total funds brought forward	65,954	40,390	—	106,345	70,109
Total funds carried forward	60,119	76,218	—	136,338	106,345
Represented by					
Unrestricted					
General fund	60,119	—	—	60,119	55,654
Designated					
Guardians	—	—	—	—	10,300
Restricted					
Guardians Restricted Funds	—	13,290	—	13,290	—
Little Braxted Fabric Fund	—	17,275	—	17,275	16,840
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund	—	4,351	—	4,351	—
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration	—	41,300	—	41,300	23,550

Balance sheet

	Total funds	Prior year funds
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	136,338	106,345
	136,338	106,345
Net current assets less current liabilities	136,338	106,345
Total assets less current liabilities	136,338	106,345
Total net assets less liabilities	136,338	106,345
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
General fund	60,119	55,654
Designated		
Guardians	—	10,300
Restricted		
General Fund re Bowls Club	—	—
Guardians Restricted Funds	13,290	—
Ukrainian Refugees Restricted Fund	4,351	—
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration	41,300	23,550
Little Braxted Fabric Fund	17,275	16,840
Funds of the church	136,338	106,345

Fund movement by type

	Opening	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Gains/losses	Journals	Closing
GRF - Guardians Restricted							
Restricted	—	1,524	9	11,775	—	—	13,290
Sub-total for GRF	—	1,524	9	11,775	—	—	13,290
URF - Ukrainian Refugee Fund							
Designated	—	6,024	1,664	(4,360)	—	—	—
Restricted	—	2	—	(2)	—	—	—
Sub-total for URF	—	6,026	1,664	(4,362)	—	—	—
URRF - Ukrainian Refugees R							
Restricted	—	165	177	4,362	—	—	4,351
Sub-total for URRF	—	165	177	4,362	—	—	4,351
General - General fund							
Unrestricted	55,654	84,863	80,385	(12)	—	—	60,119
Sub-total for General	55,654	84,863	80,385	(12)	—	—	60,119
Guardians - Guardians							
Designated	10,300	6,871	5,396	(11,775)	—	—	—
Sub-total for Guardians	10,300	6,871	5,396	(11,775)	—	—	—
CCLA004 - Wickham Bishops Church Restoration Fund							
Restricted	23,550	24,258	6,520	12	—	—	41,300
Sub-total for CCLA004	23,550	24,258	6,520	12	—	—	41,300
CCIA005 - Little Braxted Fabric							
Restricted	16,840	518	83	—	—	—	17,275
Sub-total for CCIA005	16,840	518	83	—	—	—	17,275
Grand total	106,345	124,228	94,235	—	—	—	136,338

Analysis of income and expenditure

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Designated</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Total</u>	
					<u>This year</u>	<u>Last year</u>
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
Planned giving						
Envelopes	1,210	—	—	—	1,210	1,657
planned giving	36,363	—	—	—	36,363	36,679
Total	37,573	—	—	—	37,573	38,337
Collections and other giving						
collections	3,863	—	—	—	3,863	2,878
Gift Aid Envelopes	140	—	—	—	140	46
Total	4,003	—	—	—	4,003	2,924
Other voluntary receipts						
Charity Collections	783	—	—	—	783	67
Other Giving	700	—	—	—	700	803
Donations	1,252	—	20	—	1,272	2,221
Gemma Fraser	—	—	—	—	—	—
Flower Fund	130	—	—	—	130	—
Music Fund	31	—	—	—	31	1,464
Legacies/Grants	—	—	22,000	—	22,000	—
Recurring grants	—	—	—	—	—	—
Non-recurring one-off grants	—	—	—	—	—	—
Roof Repair Appeal	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guardians	—	6,871	1,482	—	8,353	11,480
Alpha Donations	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ukranian Refugee Donations	—	6,024	152	—	6,176	—
Total	2,898	12,895	23,654	—	39,447	16,036
Gift Aid recovered						
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	10,036	—	—	—	10,036	10,013
Tax Refund - Church Restoration Fund WB	—	—	—	—	—	75
Tax refund - LB Fabric	—	—	—	—	—	25
Tax Relief Guardians	—	—	—	—	—	303
Total	10,036	—	—	—	10,036	10,417
Other receipts						
Resources from Diocese	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other funds generated	557	—	—	—	557	370
Braxted Gazebo Hire	—	—	—	—	—	—
Insurance claims	—	—	—	—	—	—
Surplus - sales of fixed assets	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bowls Club	—	—	—	—	—	—
Little Braxted General Transfer	—	—	—	—	—	—
In/Out	3,082	—	—	—	3,082	1,332
Total	3,639	—	—	—	3,639	1,702
Other receipts - Youth Club						
Youth Club Income	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—

Activities for generating funds

Fund Raising - Open Gardens Flower Festi	—	—	1,789	—	1,789	18,797
Fund Raising Braxted Fete Income	5,413	—	20	—	5,433	2,364
Fund Raising - Golf Day	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fund Raising - May Ball	—	—	—	—	—	—
Trading Income	12	—	—	—	12	17
Friends of Little Braxted	—	—	294	—	294	13,209
Fees to Diocese	2,640	—	—	—	2,640	3,290
Church hall lettings	5,006	—	—	—	5,006	1,400
Magazine income - advertising	6,690	—	—	—	6,690	7,784
Little Braxted Fabric	—	—	—	—	—	365
Total	19,762	—	2,104	—	21,867	47,227

Investment Income

Interest - General Fund	499	—	—	—	499	17
Interest WB Church Restoration Fund	—	—	428	—	428	6
Interest LB Fabric Fund	—	—	224	—	224	3
Interest/Dividends	—	—	59	—	59	—
Total	499	—	711	—	1,210	26

Receipts from church activities

Parochial Fees for weddings and funerals	5,508	—	—	—	5,508	7,415
Gravespoil	315	—	—	—	315	1,020
Memorial Book Income	200	—	—	—	200	10
Greeting Cards sales	206	—	—	—	206	182
Tea/Coffee	189	—	—	—	189	105
Drop In Donations	31	—	—	—	31	—
Total	6,450	—	—	—	6,450	8,733
INCOME TOTAL	84,863	12,895	26,470	—	124,228	125,406

EXPENDITURE**Cost of generating funds**

Braxted Gazebo Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
Costs of Fundraising	240	—	—	—	240	84
Cost of Fundraising - May Ball	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cost of Fundraising - Braxted Fete	—	—	—	—	—	—
Costs of Fundraising- Open Gardens	64	—	—	—	64	2,012
Guardians expenses	—	—	9	—	9	2,747
Greetings Cards costs	195	—	—	—	195	122
Trading Goods	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	500	—	9	—	510	4,967

Missionary and Charitable Giving

Charity Donations	826	—	—	—	826	3,900
Ukranian Refugee Expenditure	—	1,664	177	—	1,841	—
Total	826	1,664	177	—	2,667	3,900

Parish Share

Parish Share	46,638	—	—	—	46,638	44,340
Total	46,638	—	—	—	46,638	44,340

Clergy and Staffing costs

Fees to Diocese	2,402	—	—	—	2,402	3,277
Locum Costs for re-imbursement	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other Clergy Expenses	282	—	—	—	282	454
Gemma Fraser payments	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wages Honoraria & Support	2,020	—	—	—	2,020	1,525
Clergy expenses of incumbent	270	—	—	—	270	489
Rectory expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	4,976	—	—	—	4,976	5,745

Church Running Expenses

Resources from Diocesan Grant	—	—	—	—	—	—
Insurance - Wickham Bishops	2,415	—	—	—	2,415	2,385
Insurance - Little Braxted	1,093	—	—	—	1,093	1,038
Church maintenance WB	1,376	—	1,444	—	2,820	2,775
Church Maintenance - LB	—	—	83	—	83	929
Pastoral Care	136	—	—	—	136	88
Children & Youth Work	310	—	—	—	310	162
General Costs	2,177	—	—	—	2,177	2,591
Flowers for Church	643	—	—	—	643	97
Upkeep	—	—	—	—	—	238
Music Fund	20	—	—	—	20	1,471
Upkeep of churchyard WB	838	—	—	—	838	252
Upkeep of Churchyard LB	529	—	—	—	529	620
Administration	746	—	—	—	746	605
Church running - Utilities WB	4,437	—	—	—	4,437	4,914
Church running - Utilities LB	327	—	—	—	327	389
Magazine expenses	7,596	—	—	—	7,596	5,985
Tea/Coffee Costs	155	—	—	—	155	60
Alpha Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
Journal Write Off	95	—	—	—	95	(30)
In/Out	3,059	—	—	—	3,059	1,650
Total	25,959	—	1,527	—	27,486	26,225

Church Running Expenses - Youth Club

Youth Club	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—

Hall Running Costs

Hall running costs	1,373	—	—	—	1,373	1,603
Total	1,373	—	—	—	1,373	1,603

Church Repairs & Maintenance

Church major repairs - structure	—	—	5,076	—	5,076	—
Church Major Repairs - Structure St Nich	—	—	—	—	—	—
Guardians Costs	—	5,396	—	—	5,396	2,279
Church major repairs - installation	—	—	—	—	—	—
Capital Expenditure	—	—	—	—	—	—
Church interior and exterior decorating	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	5,396	5,076	—	10,472	2,279

Hall Repairs & Maintenance

Hall + major repairs - structure	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hall + major repairs - installation	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hall + interior and exterior decorating	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—

Governance Costs

Governance costs examination/audit fee	110	—	—	—	110	110
Total	110	—	—	—	110	110
EXPENDITURE TOTAL	80,385	7,060	6,790	—	94,235	89,170
GRAND TOTAL	4,478	5,835	19,679	—	29,993	36,235

WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED P.C.C. ASSETS**ASSETS**

General £ 57,142
Guardians £ 3,543
St Bartholomew's Church Restoration Fund £ 4,669
St. Nicholas Fabric Fund £ 4,731
Bookstall Stock £ 600

Estimated Values

Church Hall £ 500,000
Tables & Chairs £ 2,000
Kitchen Equipment, Storage Boxes, Urn, Cutlery, Microwave Etc. £ 1,500
Crocery & Glasses £ 500
Step Ladder £ 109
Vacuum Cleaners £ 200
Video/Television, Sound System/Heaters £ 1,600
Choir Robes £ 1,500
Lawnmowers £ 1,250
Strimmer £ 150
Hedge Trimmer £ 150
Piano x 2 £ 2,700
Shed x 2 £ 1,500
Projector £ 430
Floristry equipment £ 2,000
Dishwasher £ 1,500
Photocopier £ 2,500
Mevo Camera £ 350
WiFi Router £ 90

WICKHAM BISHOPS AND LITTLE BRAXTED PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/12/2022

Registered Charity 1159874

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/12/2022 which are set out on pages 4 to 12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

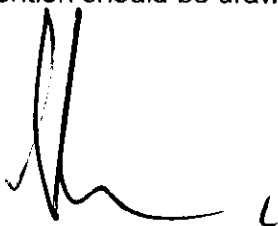
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records or
- 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 have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Barnes FCA

Independent Examiner
Handel House
Roselawn Fields
Broomfield
Chelmsford
CM1 7GB

Accounts



**Parish of Wickham Bishops
with Little Braxted
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**



**ANNUAL REPORT for 2021
&
AGENDA 2022
Sunday 20th March
at 12 noon
St. Bartholomew's Church**

Welcome to the Annual Report for 2021

Once again we're pleased to present our review of the church year. We hope that you enjoy reading and reflecting on the various reports included. This was another challenging year when some events were unable to take place, but as you will see, committees and groups continued with plans wherever possible and safe once restrictions were lifted. In the second part of the year our congregation was once again able to attend for gathered worship.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to this report.

You will find the Agenda for this year's Meeting to Elect Churchwardens and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on pages 7– 9



CONTACTS

Priest in Charge:

Rev. Hilary Le Sève

01621 892867

revhilary@btinternet.com

Associate Priest

Rev. Derek Clark

01245 380627

Churchwarden:

Graham Wingrove

07398 025442

PCC Secretary:

Geraldine Spearman

01621 893180

gspearmanpcc@gmail.com

Hall Bookings:

Kath Adkins

01621 891143

Kathrynadkins@btinternet.com

Church Website:

churchinwickhambishops.org.uk

Facebook:

**St. Bartholomew's Church,
Wickham Bishops**

ELECTIONS

PCC MEMBERS:

There are 4 nominations

Each for 3 years to 2025

Please see separate sheets for details.



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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Parish of St Bartholomew Wickham Bishops with St Nicholas Little Braxted is situated in the Witham Deanery, part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. It has responsibility for two principal places of worship - St Bartholomew's Church, the Parish Church, which is situated in Church Road, Wickham Bishops and St Nicholas Little Braxted now a Chapel of Ease, but licensed for weddings. St Nicholas is situated in Witham Road, Little Braxted.

The correspondence address for both churches is The Rectory, Church Road, Wickham Bishops CM8 3LA Tel. 01621 892867. Information about the churches in Wickham Bishops and Little Braxted is also available at www.churchinwickhambishops.org.uk.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Wickham Bishops with Little Braxted is a Registered Charity No. 1159874.

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC. A number of Committees are responsible for helping to manage and organise different activities of church life, maintenance and worship.

Objectives and Activities

St Bartholomew Wickham Bishops and St Nicholas Little Braxted Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical issues. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the church centre complex of St Bartholomew's Church and Church Hall and St Nicholas Church, Little Braxted.

attending is around 2 yrs old, and the older 3-4 yr olds we used to attract are most likely signed up to nursery (government funds children from the first term after they are 3) as they haven't had the chance to establish themselves in local groups in the last couple of years. We have a couple of babies and smaller children attending.

The group run a small stall with children's crafts at the Church Christmas Market. We connected with United In Kind and produced some hand print Christmas decorations that went into kindness gift bags that went to people across Maldon District who were struggling over the festive period. We were pleased to have a Christmas Party at the end of 2021, with Mini Melodies providing entertainment, the children also enjoyed a light lunch and visit and gift from Father Christmas.

So far this year the group have had a tidy out of the toy cupboard and some less used toys gifted to local families, and the children are enjoying new toys procured from some of the money raised by the weekly suggested donation of £1 a child.

Stella Scrivener



Edward Bear Club



The Edward Bear group runs from 10.00 to 11.30 am on a Monday morning during term time and is open to all babies and pre-schoolers. The session incorporates free playtime with various toys, a craft activity in the hall. We take the group into the Lady Chapel for singing, prayer and the children can explore the church environment searching for a bear. Back in the hall the children listen to a story with a biscuit before more playing and crafting continues. The craft activity and

prayer each week link into the community and church calendar.



Following the lockdown period the group reopened in April 2021 with outside play and bookable places, getting back indoors in May. It was wonderful in July to be back to "normal" and say goodbye to our little bears heading off to school. We also said a sad goodbye to our lovely leaders Ava Quilter and Amecia Wilkins.

New volunteers Stella Scrivener, Leanne Goddard and Adele Joyner have taken on running the group in September. The children attending have been born during the pandemic or spent most of their lives socially distanced. It is great to see them slowly learning social skills, making friends and playing once more. We have noticed that our average child

PCC MEMBERS AND OTHER OFFICERS

As at January 2022

Priest in Charge: Rev. Hilary Le Sève
Associate Priest: Rev. Derek Clark
Churchwardens: Graham Wingrove
Barry Cousins (to Jan.2022)

Members of the PCC: Members of the PCC are the Priest in Charge, Churchwardens, elected representatives, Deanery Synod representatives and any appointed ex-officio members.

Elected Representatives (max 12) as at 18/10/2020:

Spencer Churchill (to 2022)	Lester Firkins (to 2022)
Ruth Johnson (to 2022)	Wendy Firkins (to 2024)
Dorothy Kerr (to 2024)	Lucy Traynor (to 2023)
Kate Dawson (to 2023)	Anne Keatley-Clarke (to 2023)
Graham Spearman (2022)	Ruth Keatley-Clarke (to 2023)
John Baker (to 2023)	

Ex-Officio:

Geraldine Spearman, Secretary
Rev. Derek Clark, Associate Priest

Deanery Synod Reps:

John Gilbert (to 2024)
Christine Bealer (to 2024)

Treasurer:

Graham Spearman

Safeguarding Officer:

Norma Hayward

Electoral Roll Officer:

Mary Brown

Health and Safety:

Allan Baker

Gift Aid Secretary:

John Baker

Deputy Churchwardens: (from 2022 new title 'Assistant' Churchwardens)

Kath Adkins, Kate Dawson, Lester Firkins,
Wendy Firkins, Dorothy Kerr.

Sidespersons:

as at January 2022

Kath Adkins	Norma Hayward	Anne Keatley-Clarke
Sue Clements	Kate Dawson	Rosie Woodgate
Lester Firkins	Dorothy Kerr	Stuart Parish
Wendy Firkins	John Kerr	John Wratten
Francine Cope	Geraldine Spearman	Dick Yelland
Denise Yelland	Vivienne Lodge	

Vergers: for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

Lester Firkins	Wendy Firkins	Kate Dawson
Tamsyn Clark	Dorothy Kerr	
Kath Adkins	Christine Bealer	

If you're interested in becoming a Sidesperson please speak to Dorothy Kerr.

If you would like to become a Verger, please speak to Rev. Hilary.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

In addition to Edward Bears and the Youth Group, **Messy Church** has been meeting again enjoying the annual legendary Bonfire Party at The Rectory (for the 7th year!) and the Christingle/ Crib/ Children's Communion Service at St Nicholas'. The service at St Nicholas' was memorable attracting new families who had never been in the building and engaging them in a rich variety of activities, prayers and songs.

Messy Church is co-run with volunteers from St Peter's Great Totham – a lovely opportunity to make new friends keen to share Good News with children and their families. 'Pop-Up' Junior Church (10.30am) happens on 2nd Sundays of the month when resources are available. Harvest Festival was fun as children from Edward Bears joined in the service and made bug boxes to take home. Unfortunately Covid 19 led to the cancellation of the Nativity service on Christmas Eve for a second year .

All events are promoted on the parish Edward Bears and Messy Church Facebook groups. It is lovely to see families who bring their children for baptism (and those who do not) join in these services and events. Do come along.

Rev. Hilary Le Sève

*One of the cribs
at St. Nicholas'*



THE BIBLE COURSE

Following the very successful “Alpha” courses it was decided to hold a “next step” programme entitled *The Bible Course*.

Held at the start of 2021, it was an 8 week programme, obviously over ZOOM, and included videos and break-out group discussions. It was led by Rev. Hilary, Graham Spearman and myself.

The technology challenges were overcome with ease and we generally had about 10 – 12 people sign on each week.

In essence it was an exploration of the various books of the Bible and how they fit together. It is safe to say that everyone found something of interest and for many (me in particular) it explained a huge amount about this most important Book that I had never really appreciated.

An excellent exercise which may well be repeated in the future.

Lester Firkins

FRIDAY MORNING PRAYERS

During lockdown, as part of our continuing engagement, we started on-line “Zoom” meetings three times a week (Monday Wednesday and Friday) which was in addition to the streamed Sunday service.

These gave people, on the Zoom platform, the chance to talk to one another and share experiences – as well as having a simple act of on-line worship.

Because several people found this format a helpful way of having a week service, it has continued, albeit just on a Friday.

The gathering occurs for 40 minutes, starting at 10.15, and against a mail out invitation list of 15 people we regularly have 6 regular attenders.

If you would like to join us, then please write to lesterfirkins@mac.com or 07813919526 and he would be delighted to put you on the invite list

Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens

20th March 2022 at 12 noon

AGENDA

- 1. Opening Prayer**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting
21st March 2021 (see separate sheet)**
- 4. Election of Churchwardens

*Proposal that the Churchwarden can stand for a further year (in line with the Church Representation Rules)**
- 5. Any other business

(notified to the chairman in advance)**

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 20th March 2022 at 12 noon

AGENDA

1. **Welcome**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - held on
Sunday 21st March 2021 by ZOOM (see separate sheets)**
4. **Matters arising**
5. **Chairman's Report**
6. **Electoral Roll Report**
7. **Report on the PCC**
8. **Annual Financial Statements (Separate sheets)**
9. **Appointment of Independent Examiner**
10. **Safeguarding Report**
11. **Report on Deanery Synod**
12. **Churchwarden's report on Fabric, Goods and
Ornaments**

DISCIPLESHIP

Women's Christian Fellowship:

Sadly, like all other clubs, we were unable to meet for most of 2021 and our first meeting was in September, when we had a very informal gathering in the Church Hall for tea, cake and lots of chat.

In October, John Le Seve came and spoke to us on his Beekeeping journey, from making and siting his hives to collecting the honey. After this talk he also spoke of insect and bee friendly gardens and we were all able to make and take home a "bug hotel".

November brought us a talk by Mrs Wendy McWhirr who showed us her amazing skill in Quilting and Patchwork bringing many examples of her intricate work.

In December members and guests had a delicious Christmas Lunch at Peartree Pantry in Hatfield Peverel. At this meeting our Chairman Liz Hale gave notice of her resignation as she had now moved to Tiptree and we all wished her well along with the gift of a planter filled with spring bulbs.

Sadly not all members felt able to attend due to on-going Covid worries but we all hope that the new year will be a shining light at the end of a very dark tunnel.

Denise Yelland

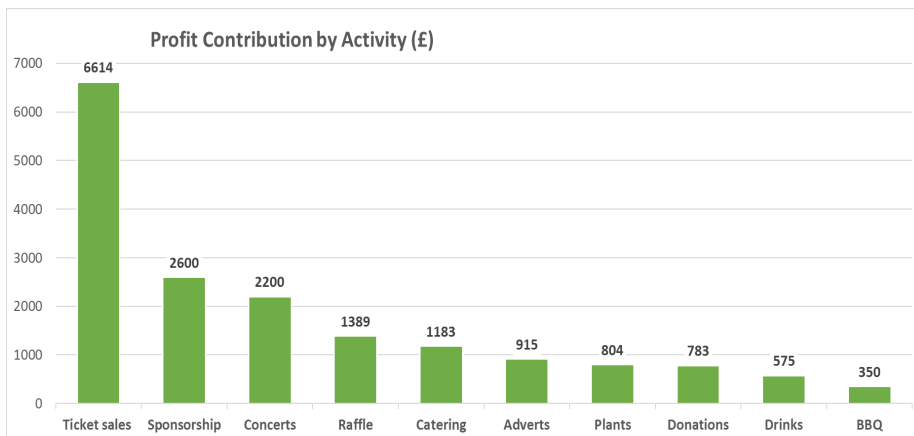
**WCF meets on the 4th
Wednesday of the month in
the Church Hall at 2.30 pm.
Visitors are always welcome.**

OPEN GARDENS REFLECTIONS

On June 13, 2021 residents and visitors alike enjoyed walking through the highways and byways of Wickham Bishops, visiting gardens, with a renewed sense of purpose after a succession of restrictions brought about by Covid had been lifted. Thanks to the contribution of around 100 volunteers, and around 1000 visitors, the village was buzzing with excitement and chatter, with those near the church also enjoying the childhood sounds of the fairground organ.

The goal was to make this an inclusive event that encouraged as many people as possible to enjoy the day - gardens, scarecrows, rickshaw rides, classic cars, photo and art exhibition, food and drink. From the point of view of community spirit we definitely achieved that, not just with visitor numbers and generous local sponsors but also with volunteers, many of whom have already offered to help next time. The funds raised, including the Garden Festival concert and the linked summer lunchtime. amounted to £16,784 after costs. What a wonderful tribute to the community's hard work and enthusiasm! If you would like to be involved next time, please let us know.

Stewart Adkins stadkins58@gmail.com



13. **WORSHIP**

St. Bartholomew's, St. Nicholas

14. **PASTORAL**

Including Drop-in

15. **COMMUNITY**

Foodbank, Bowls Club

16. **FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL**

FR&S committee, Guardians, Open Gardens

17. **DISCIPLESHIP**

Women's Christian Fellowship, Prayer Group, Bible course

18. **FAMILIES AND CHILDREN**

Edward Bear, Messy Church

19. **ELECTIONS**

See separate sheets for nominees

PCC members 4 nominations

20. **AOB / Any matters of urgency**

21. **Next Meeting — APCM: Sunday 12th March 2023**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

'For where your treasure is – there will your heart be also' (Matthew 6:21)

Looking back over 2021 we are reminded of the great treasure we have been given in Christ and of our response to that gift as we share that treasure one with another.

Gathering as a worshipping community, we are reminded weekly of the great feast of life and abundance in which we share through the words and actions of Holy Communion. It is however when this is reflected in the wider villages we are here to serve, that we see the fruits of such life. Events of the summer, as regulations from Covid 19 were relaxed, saw us gathering in good numbers to celebrate together - good weather, gorgeous gardens, ease of company, joyous music making, fabulous food and a long-awaited uplifting of spirits. Of course, I refer to the Scarecrow Festival, Open Gardens Festival, Open Gardens Concert and the wonderfully attended lunchtime concerts (with BBQ!). Open to all, volunteers emerged from across the local community regardless of any tie to the church giving us an opportunity to be together in fresh ways. Thanks must be expressed to the magnificent teams making all this

happen.



Rev. Hilary, John and Jean cooking bacon rolls before one of the Summer Concerts!

Regarding fund raising we have considered a number of functions and currently we have formed a small Organising Committee for the holding of a Platinum Ball to be held at Braxted Park on 4 June to celebrate our Monarch's reign of 70 years. This has been advertised locally and ticket sales are extremely encouraging. Overall, the Committee feel this serves a dual purpose, one through promoting a community form of celebration and the second financially supporting our two churches.

Other events are planned for the remainder of this year and of course we already have one eye on the Open Gardens festival scheduled for 2023. Excess of income over expenditure for 2021 is £9,202.47.

I would like to thank the Guardians Committee for their commitment, and we are looking forward to continuing our work throughout 2022 and beyond – we have a great team.

Nick Carter

Pauline promoting Guardians at the Christmas Market



If you'd like to join Guardians of the Village Churches, visit the website:

<https://www.guardiansofthevillagechurches.co.uk> to find out about the various membership options.

GUARDIANS OF THE VILLAGE CHURCHES



Despite the recent difficulties, as a committee, we have not been idle and have sought to plan for the future while maintaining a local presence throughout the past year. For example, we have held regular Committee meetings either virtually or more recently in person.

In addition, we have also been active with community engagements including the organization of a painting competition in conjunction



with the Great Totham Primary School – years 5 and 6 where we asked children to draw our two churches as part of a promotional exercise for the production of a limited range of merchandise. This was a great success with over 20 entries which we reduced to 2 winners, and a number of runners up. The Reverend Hilary Le Seve and I visited the school in November to award certificates and Amazon Vouchers to the children involved. We have used two of the drawings on a range of ceramic and china mugs which we exhibited at the recent Church fayre.

As a further community engagement, we reported on the competition in the Wickham Bishops Parish Magazine (November issue) – with a photograph of the successful finalists.

Postponed events and services for the 900th Anniversary of the founding of St Nicholas' Church in Little Braxted again brought us together to celebrate including county dignitaries and the newly 'seated' Right Reverend Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani (Diocesan Bishop of Chelmsford) along with the community for a special service in September. Especial thanks to our church warden of six years, Barry Cousins who masterminded it all.



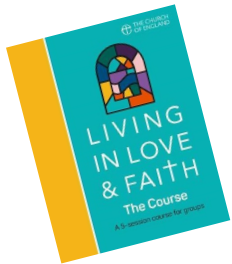
Bishop Guli with the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff outside St. Nicholas' Church

On a different note, pastorally informal and formal provision continued as in 2020 with families coming to the churches for services of baptism, marriage and funerals. Reunions after long periods of separation were especially poignant. The Commemoration Service for those who have Died was particularly moving this year as families processed the very challenging circumstances faced as they sought to journey with the terminally ill thorough hospitalisation and separation. Continued one-to-one engagement by the Pastoral Team made up for the suspension of the 'Drop In' as we observed guidelines mitigating the impact of the pandemic. With Safeguarding a top priority for our church, we are very thankful to Norma Hayward as Parish Safeguarding Officer

ensuring church officers and volunteers are up to date with their training and documentation.

Families and children have been very much in our thoughts and prayers as households and the local school have continued to juggle the demands of mental well-being, testing, schooling, work and family life. A small team working in this area looks to continued development and growth.

With church as a place of learning, in addition to weekly teaching as part of services, The Bible Course proved a welcome point of exploration using a handbook, group discussions and input through film footage



The five-week course on Living in Love on Faith held in the summer invited us to explore questions about identity, sexuality, relationships, and marriage and what it means to live in love and faith together as a Church – both courses to be repeated should there be the demand.

As ever, the presentation of our buildings has been to a very high standard thanks to the work of volunteer mowers and gardeners, cleaners and maintenance people and the Fabric Committee under the leadership of Churchwarden Graham Wingrove. The churches and the hall at St Bartholomew's offer excellent venues not just for services but a range of village wide events and it has been good to see the increase in bookings as pandemic regulations diminish. With a new Chair of The Guardians of the Village Churches (GOTVC) we are thankful for the enterprising spirit of the committee and their ability to navigate between the innovative and practical as they seek ways to raise funds to maintain and raise awareness of the two historic church buildings in our care.

The Parish Giving Scheme introduced in 2019 has proven to be a game changer as donations to sustain the worshipping life of the parish can now be easily set up online (and inflation proofed) offsetting the fall in

Refreshments were served and an informal act of worship was led by Rev Hilary. Although there were fewer young people than usual.

On the Sunday before Christmas the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols took place and our committee served the mulled wine, stollen and mince pies after the service.

Although the pandemic prevented us from holding as many events as usual, with a consequent loss of income, we were grateful to return to some sort of normality during the second half of the year and are happy with what we achieved. Our committee still has a membership of eight, plus Rev. Hilary who attends meetings as and when she can and is very supportive, as are so many others from within the Church family and the wider community. Feedback and suggestions are most welcome; we certainly need some new ideas!

We hope that we will be able to provide a full programme of events in 2022, unhindered by restrictions, and that it will be an enjoyable and successful year.

Kath Adkins

If you'd like to help with organising events like these, or have new ideas to share, we're always happy to welcome new people on to our committee.

Contact Kath 891143
kathrynadkins@btconnect.com

FUND RAISING & Social Events

Our 2021 programme was disrupted, once again, by the global pandemic. However, from June we were able to start holding events, albeit with some restrictions, and we managed to raise £1992.45 which goes towards the everyday running costs of our Church. We also played a significant role in the Open Gardens event in June and the Concert in September which together raised an incredible £16,500. Our contribution to that figure was £780.79 from the provision of refreshments in the Church Hall at the event in June.

A little later in the year we coordinated the Bring and Share Harvest Lunch – a purely social affair – which was quite well attended and offered a splendid variety of dishes. In October we also organised a food themed evening, once again, which we called Autumn Warmers. Even though the traditional British fare was enjoyed by those who attended, the numbers were down on previous years and, consequently, the amount raised (£524) was significantly lower. Perhaps it's time for a change!

At the end of November we held the Christmas Market in both the Church and the Hall and it was very successful. It was well supported, there was a great atmosphere and it raised a fabulous £1,468.45. It was still an enjoyable and worthwhile evening.

A couple of days later we welcomed a reduced number of uniformed groups into the Church to put their handmade decorations onto the Christmas Tree in the Lady Chapel.



cash offerings during services while in lockdowns. It is of note that in these straightened times parish giving to designated charities was maintained.

Part of the Deanery of Witham, Diocese of Chelmsford and Beacon Hill Churches Together, our church exercises a role beyond the local parish to engender links with neighbouring parishes and ecumenical partners. Ongoing conversations about financial viability and the growth of our churches give space to process thinking and wonder about our direction of travel and growth as we look to the future.

At this APCM on Sunday 20th March 2022, time will be set apart to give thanks for all that enables church in our villages to flourish. Individuals will be celebrated in the knowledge that there is much that is given unseen that is deeply woven into the warp and weft of this common life. If you are someone who has stepped up in some way or another to help out, then thank you and we look forward to working together again.

Rev. Hilary Le Sève





At Christmas, Sue, the shop Manager for One Stop used the community fund which was allocated to the store, to donate bags of food from the shop to the Area Foodbank. This was delivered together with the church collection to the Braintree Warehouse.



The picture shows Judy, one of the shop staff, with the many bags that were delivered.

The warehouse covers the Witham area as well as Braintree and Halstead. The local centre where people can collect food parcels is based at the Witham Methodist Church in Guithavon Street.

Geraldine Spearman



BOWLS CLUB

The Bowls Club, due to Covid, has had a difficult year and it has not been possible to play every week. Happily, with new members joining we are able to resume our normal playing in the Church Hall on Tuesday afternoons at 2.00 p.m.

New members always welcome, no experience necessary, no competitions, just a fun social afternoon with refreshment all for £3.00.

Cindy Baker

COMMUNITY



The village and church community has continued to support the work of the Trussell Trust Foodbank with generous donations of food items during 2021.

Once lockdown was lifted, we were again able to place a collection box back into the church and continue with the collections at One Stop.

The Harvest collection of food delivered both to the church and to One Stop was well supported.

Wickham Bishops Nursery also provided bags of items totaling over 13 kgs of food .



Collections of food bags in the church at the Harvest Service in October



Foodbanks supply a minimum of 3 days nutritionally balanced, tinned and dried food to families or individuals.

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

The Church Electoral Roll has been renewed this year in line with the Church of England regulations.

During the past year three members have sadly died. Six members did not renew this year and there is one new member.

There are 118 people on the 2022 Church Electoral Roll; of these 92 are parishioners who live in the Parish, and 26 non-resident parishioners.

I would like to thank all those on the Electoral Roll for their prompt responses to the requests for renewal /removal - it made the process run very smoothly!!

Mary Brown, Electoral Roll Officer

The Electoral Roll is the register of those who worship regularly at our Churches.

If you would like more information and an application form, please e-mail our Electoral Roll Officer

wblberoll@gmail.com

PCC REPORT

At the 2021 APCM we welcomed back Dorothy Kerr and Wendy Firkins onto the PCC for a further 3 year term of office.

Our Electoral Roll membership entitles our Parish to 12 laity PCC members. In addition the PCC consists of Chairman Rev. Hilary Le Sève, 2 Deanery Synod Representatives and two Churchwardens. The Secretary and Rev. Derek Clark (Associate Priest) both sit on the Council as ex-officio members. The Standing Committee, who meet to discuss upcoming PCC agendas, is made up of the Chairman, Associate Priest, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary and the Pastoral Assistant.

During 2021 the PCC met 6 times and were once again able to hold these in person from July, rather than via Zoom, ensuring that social distancing was adhered to.

Discussions took place on how to manage our services on return to gathered worship. Emphasis was also placed on attracting and encouraging people back to church after the extended lockdowns. A survey to gauge opinions on church life and preferences was compiled for the Parish.

The meeting agendas focus on relevant and significant issues within the life of our two churches, reports from each committee are presented and discussed together with an update from the Treasurer. Items of Good News are always included. During this year, we were also kept up to date with national Church of England Covid guidelines and completed the relevant Risk Assessments.

We are fortunate to have a PCC who bring many gifts and talents. My thanks as always, to Rev. Hilary and the members for their continued support during what has been another challenging year for everyone!

Geraldine Spearman
PCC Secretary

Visiting has been much curtailed this year but the committee has worked very hard, alongside members of the church, to keep in touch by phone with the elderly, isolated, sick and bereaved and anyone needing a little support in these difficult times. A big thank you goes to them all.

We were sorry to say farewell to Mary Rothero when she stepped down as chair of the committee his year. Mary has contributed immensely to the pastoral team over many years and we owe her a huge vote of thanks .

Jayne Jennings

DROP IN

The Drop-In restarted in October 2021 on the second Monday of the month from 2.30pm to 4 pm. Over the 3 sessions to the end of the year there were attendances of 15, 9 and 13.

The December meeting was our Christmas one with delicious finger food, Christmas crackers, Secret Santa presents for everyone, carol singing and much more. It was so good to have a happy time after the difficulties of the previous 18 months.

The Drop In is run with dedication, care and love by a number of people- Christine, Geraldine, Gillian, Hilary, Jan, Jayne, Kath and Sue.

Sue Clements



Drop-in members and helpers enjoying Christmas tea.

PASTORAL WORK

"The committee has worked very hard, alongside members of the church, to keep in touch with the elderly, isolated, sick and bereaved and anyone needing a little support in these difficult times."

The committee supports the pastoral care in the church and local community. This includes visiting the sick, lonely and bereaved; Drop In sessions, Welcome Packs, Parish Magazine, Services at Little Oaks and Home Communion.

We began the year with a soup lunch followed by an excellent concert arranged by Paul, our organist. There was a very good turn out and everyone enjoyed the delicious homemade soup provided by the committee, before settling down to some wonderful entertainment.

Sadly that was our only social event for the year due to Lockdown. We had hoped to have a coffee morning for all magazine distributors and Welcome Pack deliverers in September but this had to be postponed. However the magazine has continued, albeit sometimes on line only, and we are very grateful to all deliverers for their support during the year. Welcome Packs too continue to be delivered to welcome newcomers to the village.

We once again organised the delivery of cyclamen plants to the sick and bereaved at Harvest time and these were much appreciated.

Sadly we have been unable to visit Little Oaks for some time but have kept in touch and look forward to resuming services as soon as possible.

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Safeguarding checks

The current online system for carrying out safeguarding checks for people working with children and adults in the church, known as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and run by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) set up in March 2018, is now well established and continues to work well. It is also known as 31:8. Checks now have to be repeated every 3 years instead of 5.

Once an applicant has completed the online form, I have to see evidence of identity and address. After a year of accepting photocopies posted to me or emailed scans of documents because of Covid, I now feel I can see the evidence in person. Once these details have been submitted to 31:8, the result of the check is sent both to the applicant and to me.

Three checks have been carried out in the last 12 months and one renewal. Further renewals are now due.

The Diocese also requires an application form which also asks for references and a confidential declaration to be completed, even if a DBS check is not always possible.

Safeguarding Training

The Church of England continues to put a strong emphasis on safeguarding training, both for those who work with children and with vulnerable adults. The online training is now carried out through the Church of England National Safeguarding Online Training Portal and not the Diocese which means the whole system has changed.

Any member of the congregation may undertake the Basic Awareness and Foundation courses and all PCC members are encouraged to as well as those working with children and adults. For those in leadership roles, a further level of training is required. It is expected that the training will be repeated every 3 years.

The Diocese safeguarding team continue to support parishes especially with safeguarding issues.

The Church of England Parish safeguarding handbook “Promoting a Safer Church” has been adopted by the parish and can be accessed on the Church of England’s Website www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding.

Norma Hayward
Parish Safeguarding Officer
jhaywa@globalnet.co.uk

A copy of our Safeguarding Policy can be found on the board in the Church Porch and the hall noticeboard.

Further Safeguarding information is available on the Diocesan Website

<https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org>

The service was followed by a buffet reception in a wonderful lakeside setting, courtesy of Kit and Trudy Speakman, where the High Sheriff presented Elsie Rees with a High Sheriff’s Award Certificate marking Elsie’s service and dedication to the community and St Nicholas’ over so many years.

Also, in September An **Evening with Rev Ernest Geldart** [aka Dr James



Bettley]; James entered via the Vestry door took his place in the Pulpit and gave a dramatic first person rendering of the life of the former 19c Rector in an atmospheric, candlelit, packed church. Wine and nibbles were enjoyed during the interval before James completed his presentation. A year previously Dr James was interviewed

on camera in the church on the same subject which will in time form part of an Archival Film of many of the Commemoration events.

BHCT Songs of Praise was held in October with over 30 folk from the five churches in the Beacon Hill Together Group, enjoying favourite Hymns and songs chosen by a member from each congregation. We enjoyed some light refreshments afterwards. Thank you, Elsie and George, for your favourites and the St Bart’s choir for their welcome support.

An Exhibition of Home nativity/Crib sets took place

over the Patronal Weekend in December. We had a good number and variety of Nativity sets on display, although few visitors! The weekend also hosted the **Patronal Festival** combined Eucharist, Messy Church and Christingle Service complete with Amelia as the Child Bishop. With 20 or so Adults and over a dozen children it was a wonderful occasion marking the end of our Commemorations.



‘A combined effort’: Barry Cousins — edited by S & M Churchill

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

“2021 was another year of challenges with continuing lockdowns and the resulting limitations on what we could do.”

Coronavirus has continued to have an impact on the Parish Finance General Funds. Collections have recovered somewhat and income from the Parish Giving Scheme has increased. This is as a result of the majority of donors index linking their donations and new members joining. I would encourage everyone to join this scheme which also reduces the workload of the Gift Aid Secretary as well as the Treasurer.

Fee income for funerals and weddings has recovered and the Fund Raising and Social Committee were able to hold some events.

With the easing of lockdown, costs increased particularly electricity. Luckily we are on a two year fixed tariff which ends in December 2022. Hopefully the market may have settled by then but clearly there will be a significant increase in cost in 2023.

In 2020 our expenditure from General Funds exceeded income by £4,280 and in 2021 this figure was £1,507.27. So over the two years General Funds have suffered a decrease of £5,787.27.

Despite that we stand in a reasonably sound position with £55,654 in General Funds. However, we need to concentrate on raising more and spending less.

We await further on the legalities of operating the Corona and whether or not the PCC will want to fund work to comply with the Law subject to a Faculty.

DAY TO DAY CARE



It is with regret that Elsie Rees has had to give up her role as Caretaker/Verger/Sidesperson and unofficial Assistant Churchwarden. Elsie has been involved with St Nicholas' since being married there in 1959, as a PCC member, PCC Secretary and Churchwarden and continued 'unappointed' for the last ten years. Thank you Elsie, for all your dedication over so many years.

We must also express our thanks to Trudy & Kit for taking over daily unlocking on a full-time basis.

THE 900th COMMEMORATIONS 1120-2020

We were able to continue with some of the postponed events marking the founding of St Nicholas' some 900 years ago with Churchwarden Barry in the Chair:



A few cyclists visited the church, open for the annual Ride and Stride Day while we were preparing for The Celebration Eucharist with over 65 guests which was held the following day in September, a year later than scheduled. We were honoured that the Bishop Guli, Bishop of Chelmsford presided, just after her inauguration, presenting a plaque of



her Coat of Arms. This compliments the three Coats of Arms of former Bishopricks painted on the wall near the Rector's desk. Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, H.M. Lord Lieutenant of Essex

planted a Yew Tree to mark the occasion, and a near neighbour, Mr Simon Brice DL, High Sheriff for the current year also attended.

The good news of 2021 was the Gardens Festival and I wish to formally thank Stewart Adkins and his Committee for their vision and hard work. When the Gardens Festival Concert is added in, for which thanks go to Paul Strong, St Bartholomew's Fabric Fund received £18,878.51. The St Nicholas Fabric Fund is also in a reasonably good place having benefited from a bequest of £12,000.

I would like to thank John Baker for his most efficient processing of Gift Aid.

We have again met our parish Share in full. The 2022 share is increased by 5.18% to £3,886.57 per month.

I am pleased to report that The Guardians committee has expanded and, as mentioned last year, a significant Fund Raising Event has been planned. Unfortunately, due to Covid this has continued to have to be deferred a number of times and it is now hoped that this can take place in the Autumn. A Ball has also been organized to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This event has limited capacity but interest is at a good level.

With regard to the Parish Charitable giving I should explain that the donations given at the end of each year are based on 10% of our giving income the previous year. So in 2021 the figures were based on 2020 income which was inevitably reduced to Covid lockdowns. Hence those figures are lower this year.

In summary I am pleased to be able to report that our Parish continues to be in a reasonably sound financial situation. But, I must state that there are challenges ahead of us.

Graham Spearman
Hon Treasurer

The report and full copy of the 2021 accounts are available as a separate document.

ST NICHOLAS', LITTLE BRAXTED



SERVICES

Despite restrictions and regulations dictated by the Pandemic we were pleased that all regular monthly services took place since Easter. In the early part of the year, we like others were without music and singing but were really pleased when Jayne J was allowed to come on board and make the little organ sing for us! Attendance at services was at times depleted with the vagaries of Covid and other illnesses but we still have a faithful few who turn out for the regular services. In addition, there were a couple of Weddings and two funeral services and although no stranger to us we were pleased to formally welcome little Ruby Churchill at her Baptism in November. The annual midweek Carol Service was unfortunately cancelled due to Covid problems, but we did manage to go ahead with the candlelit Midnight Mass.



MAINTENANCE



Some urgent work was carried out with clearing gutters etc and wood worm infestation treatment by the Churchwardens. We were also delighted when the carved sign 'Watch and Pray' was discovered in an outbuilding, renovated, and replaced in its former position over the Porch door. Other remedial work has been carried out with 'oiling' of the porch and doors and renovation of the Notice Board. [Thanks Mr & Mrs C] We were also pleased to learn of a substantial legacy from the Estate of the late Roy Tracy, a former Churchwarden. When received, the money will bolster the Fabric Fund and allow further essential work.

have in the village and the generous support the church receives in people's time and efforts.

It was with sadness that we received in September Paul's decision to step back from being full-time organist; we are delighted he continues to play on the first Sunday of each month. God is gracious, however; what could have been a real setback became an opening to a new opportunity.

Graham Spearman (perfectly timed retirement) with his experience and knowledge of choral worship stepped up to take on the organisation of the choir and organist arrangements.

In addition to Paul's talents, we now benefit from the playing of Richard Overill, an experienced organist on second Sundays and Ed Sutton, Musical Director of the Harsnett Choir, a Cathedral trained organist for fourth Sundays and major festivals.

In addition, Ed has brought his extensive musical expertise, repertoire, razor-sharp coaching and irrepressible good humour to the development of the choir – raising standards beyond those which any in the choir would have thought possible. It is somehow fitting and also ironic that the choral year should have both culminated and terminated with the Service of Nine Lessons and Covid Carols on 19th December before Omicron took out the Vicar, the organist, half the choir and several leading members of the congregation resulting in the cancellation of services over Christmas. I believe the old saying is "No good deed goes unpunished!"

Hopefully 2022 will be a little less disrupted.

John Gilbert

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

To examine the year's accounts for 2021.

The Examiner is appointed on a yearly basis.

They are required to be proposed and seconded and agreed by the members at this meeting.

Our current Examiner is:

John Barnes

FCA

(Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants)

**If anyone requires information about the Parish Giving Scheme, Graham is happy to advise
grstreasurer@protonmail.com**

WITHAM DEANERY SYNOD

Our Synod Representatives:

Rev. Hilary Le Seve, Rev. Derek Clark (House of Clergy)
John Gilbert, Christine Bealer (House of Laity)

In the Anglican Communion, the model of governance is the 'Bishop in Synod', meaning that a diocese is governed by a bishop acting with the advice and consent of representatives of the clergy and elected representatives of the laity of the diocese.

Meetings are chaired by the Rural Dean, Rev. Simon Garwood and a Lay Chair, who is Canon Mike Robinson. Regular business includes updates on the Deanery's Parish Share commitments, on Mission and Ministry Units, on events and activities taking place within the Parishes. A report of the latest meeting of the General Synod is circulated and a session on a matter of interest.

It is still a meeting that could be a great opportunity for sharing learning and strategies that are working well within our parishes. There are clearly smaller parishes that have been struggling with the pandemic and do not appear to be blessed with the richness of skills and volunteering enjoyed within our own church family and they should be remembered in our prayers.

The Synod has had only one meeting in the last twelve months, the other one scheduled for July 2021 was cancelled at the last minute.

The special session was:

'Survival and Growth in a post COVID World' with input from Rev. Canon Phil Ritchie, held in October.

Christine Bealer

With the disruptions caused by Covid, we have extended access to our services with Facebook Live streaming of the 10am midweek communion and the 10:30am Sunday Services. These are available live on the Facebook page, but can also be accessed for up to a month after the service so anyone can use the service in their own devotions whenever and wherever is appropriate.

Notwithstanding the Covid disruption, this year has been both busy (in a positive way!) and event filled. With the return of choir singing in the Spring, we had a choral Evensong for Ascension Day with liturgy and Paul's usual inspired choice of music spanning 5 centuries.



Although congregational singing in church took somewhat longer to be allowed, we were able at least to sing our final hymns a Capella outside, which brought a whole new meaning to "graveyard session". The culmination of the delayed 900th anniversary of St Nicholas' church was a service presided over by Bishop Guli, with the choir in strong voice and a church at capacity.

The contribution of music in the church to the wellbeing of people in the parish was full demonstrated by the attendance and very positive reception of the short series of summer lunchtime concerts organised by Paul Strong and ensemble. This was reinforced with the Open Gardens concert organised by Paul in September, all showcasing the talent that we

PARISH WORSHIP

"We are working to develop our worship services to make our church an environment that is welcoming to all"

The primary purpose of the Worship Committee to assist the minister in their role in deciding on and leading the services across the year, in both church buildings and in public services where the church has a leading role in organisation. It acts as a means whereby the PCC can discharge its function of "co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical" in the area of public worship.

The Worship Committee, chaired by the minister, meets on average 3-4 times a year, as needed, to assist in planning the overall pattern of services (the detailed decisions are the minister's responsibility). It advises and supports in bringing resources and ideas together for specific special services, as God leads us to see opportunities in the Church and our own community calendar. We are working to develop our worship services to make our church an environment that is welcoming to all and where we are encouraged and assisted in coming closer to God and one another.

The Service pattern is now well established, with 8:00 a.m. Communion ably led by Barry Cousins at St Bartholomew's each Sunday, except 3rd Sundays, when there is a 9:00 a.m. Communion service in traditional form at St Nicholas. The weekly 10:30 am Service at St Bartholomew's has benefitted from a variety of churchmanship and formats within a cycle of services as we seek to enable all who come to find something to support their worship.



FABRIC REPORT

"We are hopeful to press on with the decoration of the remainder of the Church when funds become available"

Whilst Covid restrictions continued to a greater and/or lesser degree during the past ecclesiastical year, the upkeep of both St. Bartholomew's and St. Nicholas Church Buildings and Church Yards, has continued. The Fabric Committee managed just one in person meeting. I am grateful to Ruth Johnson for keeping a log of the jobs that have been done so that the record is complete.

At St. Bartholomew's

Following the completion of the re-decoration of the Chancel by Bakers of Danbury, the contract was signed off in the spring. As stated last year we are hopeful to press on with the decoration of the remainder of the Church and other things on the wish list. Not least more room at the chancel end of the nave and better access and accommodation for wheel chair users, all depending when funds become available.

The faculty re the phone line for our Broadband connection was granted. However, unfortunately the Open Reach engineer placed the cable to the Vestry in a manner that was not acceptable to the DAC. We were able to get Open Reach back to re-route the cable in the correct location, so all was well in the end. The broadband connection has greatly improved our online offering.

Following the donation of a tipper load of pea shingle from the builders who were working on a new house in Station Road, and in return for the use of our car park, I am grateful to Rick Smith and Richard Sceats

together with his tractor, for their help in spreading the shingle in the car park. It certainly made the job a lot easier and the end result a great improvement.

We also took the opportunity of “topping up” the Church paths as well.



A. James of Saffron Walden came to repair the clock chiming mechanism as it was mis-striking.

In early July the organ discus blower motor failed and had to be rewound. This work was undertaken by Gibbons Engineering of Tollesbury. The organ was kept playable whilst the motor was away for repair by hand blowing the bellows.

Our go-to electrician, Mark Parsley, has upgraded the lighting on the hall pathway and also replaced the street light sodium bulb and also the various up-lights in the church which had failed.

The customary certifications i.e. fire extinguishers and PAT testing have also been carried out.

The churchyard has been, as usual, well maintained by our volunteer mowers, strimmers and hedge cutters. We are extremely grateful to all of them and to Dick Yelland for organising the annual rota. We are also indebted to John Popham for his work around the Churchyard as our Sexton.

In addition, two Saturday morning working parties were organised, all in accordance with Covid rules. The spring working party being much better supported than the autumn date, but thanks to all those who did come along.

Also thanks to Ruth for providing the customary refreshments.

At St. Nicholas

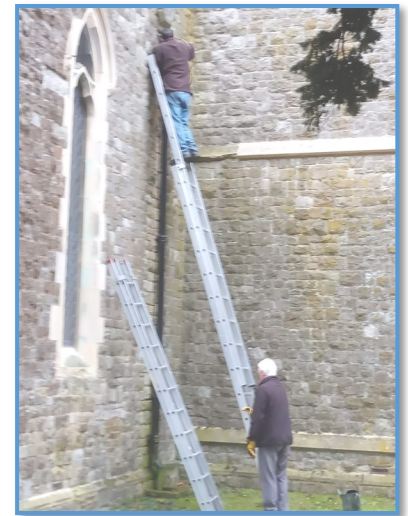
Woodworm treatment was carried out to vestry, cupboard and furniture to comply with one of the quinquennial urgent requirements.



My colleague, Barry Cousins, also undertook a good deal of general maintenance around the church in preparation for the rearranged 900th anniversary celebrations.

We are always looking for people to help look after the fabric and curtilage of our two historic buildings, particularly St. Nicholas where other quinquennial repairs are still needed to be arranged. So please do let me know if this is something you could help with.

Graham Wingrove



Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted PCC

Registered Charity 1159874

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31st December 2021

**WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2021 which are set out on pages 4 to 12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the 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 have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Barnes FCA
Independent Examiner
Handel House
Roselawn Fields
Broomfield
Chelmsford
CM1 7GB

11 February 2022

Treasurer's Report

2021 was another year of challenges with continuing lockdowns and the resulting limitations on what we could do. Coronavirus has continued to have an impact on the Parish Finance General Funds. Collections have recovered somewhat and income from the Parish Giving Scheme has increased. This is as a result of the majority of donors index linking their donations and new members joining. I would encourage everyone to join this scheme which also reduces the workload of the Gift Aid Secretary as well as the Treasurer. Fee income for funerals and weddings has recovered and the Fund Raising and Social Committee were able to hold some events.

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In summary I am pleased to be able to report that our Parish continues to be in a reasonably sound financial situation. But, I must state that there are challenges ahead of us.

Graham Spearman
Hon Treasurer
17/01/2022

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Receipts						
Planned giving	38,337.08	—	—	—	38,337.08	34,799.38
Collections and other giving	2,924.12	—	—	—	2,924.12	2,557.53
Other voluntary receipts	4,537.87	11,480.47	18.60	—	16,036.94	8,224.67
Gift Aid recovered	10,013.84	303.75	100.00	—	10,417.59	11,094.06
Other receipts	1,608.76	—	94.20	—	1,702.96	830.68
Youth Club	—	—	—	—	—	—
Activities for generating funds	14,855.63	—	32,371.96	—	47,227.59	12,627.88
Investment Income	17.64	—	9.32	—	26.96	212.77
Receipts from church activities	8,733.15	—	—	—	8,733.15	4,636.60
Total income	81,028.09	11,784.22	32,594.08	—	125,406.39	74,983.57
Payments						
Cost of generating funds	2,219.32	2,747.73	—	—	4,967.05	1,360.11
Missionary and Charitable Giving	3,900.00	—	—	—	3,900.00	4,000.00
Parish Share	44,340.12	—	—	—	44,340.12	43,845.12
Clergy and Staffing costs	5,745.25	—	—	—	5,745.25	4,143.48
Church Running Expenses	25,295.69	—	929.80	—	26,225.49	17,599.74
Youth Club	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hall Running Costs	1,603.98	—	—	—	1,603.98	1,684.57
Church Repairs & Maintenance	—	2,279.00	—	—	2,279.00	50,914.88
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	—	—	—	—	—	582.49
Governance Costs	110.00	—	—	—	110.00	110.00
Total expenditure	83,214.36	5,026.73	929.80	—	89,170.89	124,240.39
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(2,186.27)	6,757.49	31,664.28	—	36,235.50	(49,256.82)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds - in	679.00	5,638.11	5,638.11	—	11,955.22	—
Gross transfers between funds - out	—	(5,638.11)	(6,317.11)	—	(11,955.22)	—
Other recognised gains / losses						
Gains / losses on investment assets	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gains on revaluation, fixed assets, charity's own use	—	—	—	—	—	—
Net movement in funds	(1,507.27)	6,757.49	30,985.28	—	36,235.50	(49,256.82)
Total funds brought forward	57,161.60	3,542.76	9,405.27	—	70,109.63	119,366.45
Total funds carried forward	55,654.33	10,300.25	40,390.55	—	106,345.13	70,109.63
Represented by						
Unrestricted						
General fund	55,654.33	—	—	—	55,654.33	57,161.60
Designated						
Guardians	—	10,300.25	—	—	10,300.25	3,542.76
Wickham Bishops Deposit	—	—	—	—	—	—
Restricted						
Little Braxted Fabric Fund	—	—	16,840.31	—	16,840.31	4,733.54
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration	—	—	23,550.24	—	23,550.24	4,671.73

Balance sheet

	Total funds	Prior year funds
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	106,345.13	70,109.63
	106,345.13	70,109.63
Net current assets less current liabilities	106,345.13	70,109.63
Total assets less current liabilities	106,345.13	70,109.63
Total net assets less liabilities	106,345.13	70,109.63
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
General fund	55,654.33	57,161.60
Designated		
Guardians	10,300.25	3,542.76
Wickham Bishops Deposit	—	—
Restricted		
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration	23,550.24	4,671.73
Little Braxted Fabric Fund	16,840.31	4,733.54
Funds of the church	106,345.13	70,109.63

Statement of assets and liabilities

	General	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This year	Last year
Current assets - Cash at bank and in hand						
Bank current account -	(13,983.24)	(7,189.73)	22,176.78	—	1,003.81	783.39
CAF Cash Account 00022245 -	694.66	36,342.69	(29,030.34)	—	8,007.01	9,718.36
CAF Gold Account -	30,427.76	37,618.01	(57,061.24)	—	10,984.53	11,019.44
Guardians -	(414.00)	(42,281.75)	52,996.00	—	10,300.25	3,542.76
CCLA deposit account608143001D -	48,197.86	—	(12,548.46)	—	35,649.40	35,630.83
CCLA deposit account Church Restoration -	(9,438.24)	—	32,988.48	—	23,550.24	4,671.73
CCLA deposit St Nicholas Fabric -	(2,632.40)	(13,897.71)	33,370.42	—	16,840.31	4,733.54
Cash in hand -	(0.42)	—	10.00	—	9.58	9.58
Totals	52,851.98	10,591.51	42,901.64	—	106,345.13	70,109.63
Liabilities - Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year						
Loans received -	4,299.00	—	(4,299.00)	—	—	—
Accounts Payable -	(7,101.35)	291.26	6,810.09	—	—	—
Totals	(2,802.35)	291.26	2,511.09	—	—	—
Grand total	55,654.33	10,300.25	40,390.55	—	106,345.13	70,109.63

Fund movement by type

	Opening	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Gains/losses	Closing
General - General fund						
Unrestricted	57,161.60	81,028.09	83,214.36	679.00	—	55,654.33
Sub-total for General	57,161.60	81,028.09	83,214.36	679.00	—	55,654.33
Guardians - Guardians						
Designated	3,542.76	11,784.22	5,026.73	—	—	10,300.25
Sub-total for Guardians	3,542.76	11,784.22	5,026.73	—	—	10,300.25
CCLA001 - Wickham Bishops Depo						
Designated	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for CCLA001	—	—	—	—	—	—
CCLA004 - Wickham Bishops Chur						
Restricted	4,671.73	18,878.51	—	—	—	23,550.24
Sub-total for CCLA004	4,671.73	18,878.51	—	—	—	23,550.24
CCIA005 - Little Braxted Fabri						
Restricted	4,733.54	13,715.57	929.80	(679.00)	—	16,840.31
Sub-total for CCIA005	4,733.54	13,715.57	929.80	(679.00)	—	16,840.31
Grand total	70,109.63	125,406.39	89,170.89	—	—	106,345.13

Analysis of income and expenditure

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	Total This year	Last year
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INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

Planned giving

0110 - Envelopes	1,657.50	—	—	—	1,657.50	3,681.05
0201 - planned giving	36,679.58	—	—	—	36,679.58	31,118.33
Total	38,337.08	—	—	—	38,337.08	34,799.38

Collections and other giving

0301 - collections	2,878.12	—	—	—	2,878.12	2,327.53
0501 - Gift Aid Envelopes	46.00	—	—	—	46.00	230.00
Total	2,924.12	—	—	—	2,924.12	2,557.53

Other voluntary receipts

0302 - Charity Collections	67.61	—	—	—	67.61	154.78
0550 - Other Giving	803.68	—	—	—	803.68	900.00
0551 - Donations	2,202.58	—	18.60	—	2,221.18	1,399.29
0552 - Gemma Fraser	—	—	—	—	—	—
0553 - Flower Fund	—	—	—	—	—	—
0554 - Music Fund	1,464.00	—	—	—	1,464.00	—
0701 - Legacies/Grants	—	—	—	—	—	—
0801 - Recurring grants	—	—	—	—	—	—
08A1 - Non-recurring one-off grants	—	—	—	—	—	—
0915 - Roof Repair Appeal	—	—	—	—	—	—
1001 - Guardians	—	11,480.47	—	—	11,480.47	5,770.60
1200 - Alpha Donations	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	4,537.87	11,480.47	18.60	—	16,036.94	8,224.67

Gift Aid recovered

0601 - Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	10,013.84	—	—	—	10,013.84	9,636.56
0602 - Tax Refund - Church Restoration Fund WB	—	—	75.00	—	75.00	12.50
0603 - Tax refund - LB Fabric	—	—	25.00	—	25.00	107.50
0604 - Tax Relief Guardians	—	303.75	—	—	303.75	1,337.50
Total	10,013.84	303.75	100.00	—	10,417.59	11,094.06

Other receipts

0555 - Resources from Diocese	—	—	—	—	—	—
0901 - Other funds generated	276.76	—	94.20	—	370.96	39.01
0908 - Braxted Gazebo Hire	—	—	—	—	—	—
1310 - Insurance claims	—	—	—	—	—	—
1320 - Surplus - sales of fixed assets	—	—	—	—	—	—
1401 - Little Braxted General Transfer	—	—	—	—	—	—
1500 - In/Out	1,332.00	—	—	—	1,332.00	791.67
Total	1,608.76	—	94.20	—	1,702.96	830.68

Other receipts - Youth Club

0556 - Youth Club Income	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—

Activities for generating funds

0909 - Fund Raising - Open Gardens Flower Festi	—	—	18,797.21	—	18,797.21	210.00
0910 - Fund Raising	2,364.42	—	—	—	2,364.42	550.00
0911 - Braxted Fete Income	—	—	—	—	—	—
0912 - Fund Raising - Golf Day	—	—	—	—	—	—
0913 - Fund Raising - May Ball	—	—	—	—	—	—
0914 - Trading Income	17.21	—	—	—	17.21	15.00
1000 - Friends of Little Braxted	—	—	13,209.40	—	13,209.40	153.55
1100 - Fees to Diocese	3,290.00	—	—	—	3,290.00	2,739.33
1240 - Church hall lettings	1,400.00	—	—	—	1,400.00	1,376.00
1250 - Magazine income - advertising	7,784.00	—	—	—	7,784.00	6,984.00
1400 - Little Braxted Fabric	—	—	365.35	—	365.35	600.00
Total	14,855.63	—	32,371.96	—	47,227.59	12,627.88

Investment Income

1020 - Interest - General Fund	17.64	—	—	—	17.64	136.96
1021 - Interest WB Church Restoration Fund	—	—	6.30	—	6.30	19.48
1022 - Interest LB Fabric Fund	—	—	3.02	—	3.02	23.19
1023 - Interest/Dividends	—	—	—	—	—	33.14
Total	17.64	—	9.32	—	26.96	212.77

Receipts from church activities

1101 - Parochial Fees for weddings and funerals	7,415.40	—	—	—	7,415.40	3,246.00
1102 - Gravespoil	1,020.00	—	—	—	1,020.00	715.00
1103 - Memorial Book Income	10.00	—	—	—	10.00	50.00
1210 - Greeting Cards sales	182.68	—	—	—	182.68	230.53
1241 - Tea/Coffee	105.07	—	—	—	105.07	124.87
1337 - Drop In Donations	—	—	—	—	—	270.20
Total	8,733.15	—	—	—	8,733.15	4,636.60
INCOME TOTAL	81,028.09	11,784.22	32,594.08	—	125,406.39	74,983.57

EXPENDITURE

Cost of generating funds

1729 - Braxted Gazebo Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
1730 - Costs of Fundraising	84.47	—	—	—	84.47	96.00
1731 - Cost of Fundraising - May Ball	—	—	—	—	—	—
1732 - Cost of Fundraising - Braxted Fete	—	—	—	—	—	—
1733 - Costs of Fundraising- Open Gardens	2,012.61	—	—	—	2,012.61	200.00
1734 - Guardians expenses	—	2,747.73	—	—	2,747.73	825.60
2510 - Greetings Cards costs	122.24	—	—	—	122.24	238.51
2511 - Trading Goods	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	2,219.32	2,747.73	—	—	4,967.05	1,360.11

Missionary and Charitable Giving

1801 - Charity Donations	3,900.00	—	—	—	3,900.00	4,000.00
Total	3,900.00	—	—	—	3,900.00	4,000.00

Parish Share

1901 - Parish Share	44,340.12	—	—	—	44,340.12	43,845.12
Total	44,340.12	—	—	—	44,340.12	43,845.12

Clergy and Staffing costs

1104 - Fees to Diocese	3,277.00	—	—	—	3,277.00	2,742.33
2000 - Locum Costs for re- imbursement	—	—	—	—	—	—
2001 - Other Clergy Expenses	454.09	—	—	—	454.09	325.60
2002 - Gemma Fraser payments	—	—	—	—	—	—
2050 - Wages Honoraria & Support	1,525.00	—	—	—	1,525.00	655.00
2101 - Clergy expenses of incumbent	489.16	—	—	—	489.16	420.55
2130 - Rectory expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	5,745.25	—	—	—	5,745.25	4,143.48

Church Running Expenses

2003 - Resources from Diocesan Grant	—	—	—	—	—	—
2301 - Insurance - Wickham Bishops	2,385.19	—	—	—	2,385.19	2,322.85
2302 - Insurance - Little Braxted	1,038.36	—	—	—	1,038.36	1,016.49
2330 - Church maintenance WB	2,775.06	—	—	—	2,775.06	975.01
2331 - Church Maintenance - LB	—	—	929.80	—	929.80	1,672.94
2337 - Pastoral Care	88.31	—	—	—	88.31	234.95
2339 - Children & Youth Work	162.46	—	—	—	162.46	—
2340 - General Costs	2,591.34	—	—	—	2,591.34	2,259.54
2341 - Flowers for Church	97.08	—	—	—	97.08	26.40
2342 - Upkeep	238.00	—	—	—	238.00	312.00
2343 - Music Fund	1,471.98	—	—	—	1,471.98	78.00
2350 - Upkeep of churchyard WB	252.68	—	—	—	252.68	503.00
2351 - Upkeep of Churchyard LB	620.00	—	—	—	620.00	781.00
2360 - Administration	605.12	—	—	—	605.12	625.21
2401 - Church running - Utilities WB	4,914.78	—	—	—	4,914.78	2,615.97
2410 - Church running - Utilities LB	389.51	—	—	—	389.51	226.59
2501 - Magazine expenses	5,985.62	—	—	—	5,985.62	3,377.12
2521 - Tea/Coffee Costs	60.20	—	—	—	60.20	—
2602 - Alpha Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	—
3000 - Journal Write Off	(30.00)	—	—	—	(30.00)	—
4000 - In/Out	1,650.00	—	—	—	1,650.00	572.67
Total	25,295.69	—	929.80	—	26,225.49	17,599.74

Church Running Expenses - Youth Club

2338 - Youth Club	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	—	—	—	—	—

Hall Running Costs

2520 - Hall running costs	1,603.98	—	—	—	1,603.98	1,684.57
Total	1,603.98	—	—	—	1,603.98	1,684.57

Church Repairs & Maintenance

2701 - Church major repairs - structure	—	—	—	—	—	—
2702 - Church Major Repairs - Structure St Nich	—	—	—	—	—	—
2703 - Guardians Costs	—	2,279.00	—	—	2,279.00	50,569.29
2710 - Church major repairs - installation	—	—	—	—	—	—
2711 - Capital Expenditure	—	—	—	—	—	345.59
2720 - Church interior and exterior decorating	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	2,279.00	—	—	2,279.00	50,914.88

Hall Repairs & Maintenance

2801 - Hall + major repairs - structure	—	—	—	—	—	—
2820 - Hall + major repairs - installation	—	—	—	—	—	582.49
2830 - Hall + interior and exterior decorating	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	—	—	—	—	582.49

Governance Costs

2601 - Governance costs examination/audit fee	110.00	—	—	—	110.00	110.00
Total	110.00	—	—	—	110.00	110.00

EXPENDITURE TOTAL	83,214.36	5,026.73	929.80	—	89,170.89	124,240.39
GRAND TOTAL	(2,186.27)	6,757.49	31,664.28	—	36,235.50	(49,256.82)

Charitable Donations made 2021:

International

CMS	£375
Embrace the Middle East	£190
Bansang Education	£375
Yomelelani Trust	£375

National

National Churches Trust	£375
Remap	£375
Christians Aware	£375

Local

Friends of Essex Churches	£280
CHESS	£375
Replenish UK	£375
Dementia Adventure	£280

WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED P.C.C. ASSETS

ASSETS

General	£ 57,142
Guardians	£ 3,543
St Bartholomew's Church Restoration Fund	£ 4,669
St. Nicholas Fabric Fund	£ 4,731
Bookstall Stock	£ 708
Estimated Values	
Church Hall	£ 500,000
Tables & Chairs	£ 2,000
Kitchen Equipment, Storage Boxes, Urn, Cutlery, Microwave Etc.	£ 1,500
Crockery & Glasses	£ 500
Step Ladder	£ 109
Vacuum Cleaners	£ 200
Video/Television, Sound System/Heaters	£ 1,600
Choir Robes	£ 1,500
Lawnmowers	£ 1,250
Strimmer	£ 150
Hedge Trimmer	£ 150
Piano x 2	£ 2,700
Shed x 2	£ 1,500
Projector	£ 430
Floristry equipment	£ 2,000
Dishwasher	£ 1,500
Photocopier	£ 2,500
Mevo Camera	£ 350
WiFi Router	£ 90

This report dated: 17th January 2022

Accounts



Guardians
of the Village Churches
 St. Bartholomew's, Wickham Bishops
 and St. Nicholas, Little Braxted

Join today & get a free commemorative gift !

With the increasing cost of repairing and maintaining our historic churches and the 900th anniversary of the beautiful St. Nicholas' church fast approaching, the Guardians of the Village Churches has been established to ensure these beautiful buildings are preserved for the next generation. **We need to raise over £100K** to fund decoration, repairs and improvements to St Bartholomew's. If you'd like to help secure the future of our church buildings as multi-use resources at the heart of our community, then become a Guardian of the Village Churches today:



Help us raise £100,000!
Our Patron: Joanna Lumley

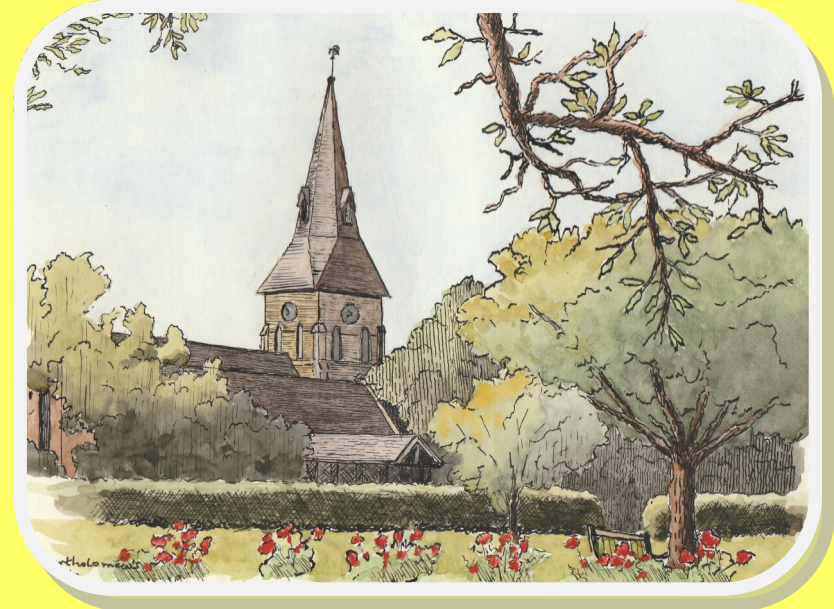
"There is no doubt that modern life has had an impact on community spirit, and initiatives like this which help to preserve our social spaces are *critical* in fostering a sense of togetherness. Please get involved in the Guardians of the Village Churches if you can".

Why become a Guardian?

- Help preserve the church buildings for future generations
- Meet with other members and share your views at the AGM
- Get advance notice of Guardians of the Village Churches events
- Gain discounts for future interest workshops and receive our newsletter

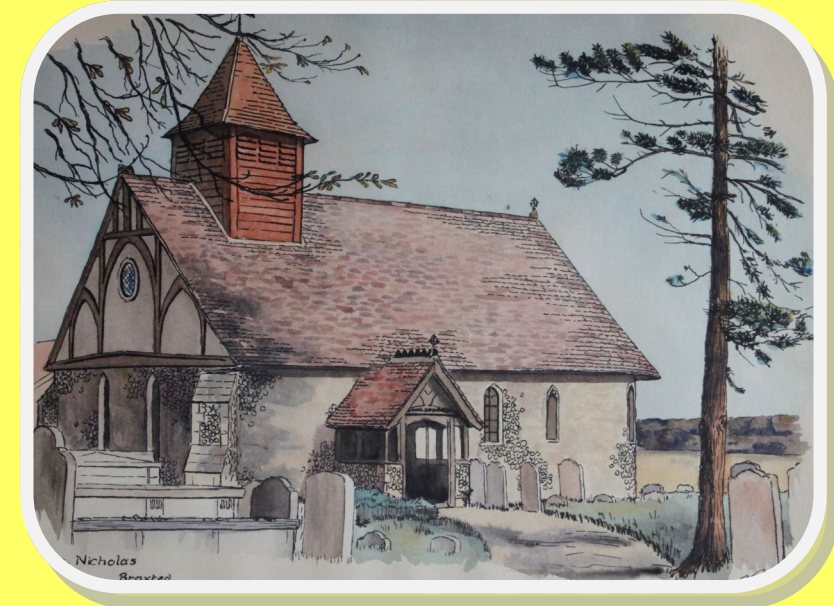
A free commemorative gift of a re-usable "Keep-Cup"

ANNUAL REPORT & AGENDA 2021



**PARISH OF WICKHAM BISHOPS WITH
 LITTLE BRAXTED**

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting
 SUNDAY 21st MARCH 2021 at 12 noon**



Welcome to the Annual Report 2020

We are pleased to present our review of the church year. This was a challenging time and we hope you enjoy reading and reflecting on the various reports included. Many activities were unable to take place, but as you will see, committees and groups did a great job, in as far as possible, continuing to provide support to the church and the wider community.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to this report.

You will find the Agenda for this year's Vestry Meeting and APCM meeting on pages 7 - 9.

Minutes of last year's APCM held in October 2020 are available as a separate document.



Our grateful thanks go to Bernie Rochester for the pen and ink drawings of our two churches on the cover of this report. Bernie is a local amateur artist whom we were very happy to ask to provide these pictures. The drawing of St. Bartholomew's he has produced specifically for this publication.

Looking forward for brighter times, we now have the added benefit of a very active Pub in the village , and we look forward to meeting once again.

In the meantime, if you would like to be kept advised of developments and put on the mail list please email me on

lesterfirkins@mac.com

ELECTIONS

PCC Members

For 3 years to 2024

3 posts

Deanery Synod Reps

For 1 year to 2022

2 posts

Appointment of Deputy Wardens:

Kath Adkins

Wendy Firkins

Ruth Johnson

Dorothy Kerr

Kate Dawson

Liz Hale

Lester Firkins

Elsie Rees (St. Nicholas)

We said goodbye to the leavers and wished them every success in the future and they then opened their presents with us online (an Edward Bear and card) that we had delivered previously.

Future plans

We hope we can open later in the year and we are currently seeking some funding towards cleaning supplies and PPE so that we can open in a safer manner. It would be good to get the group running again to help support the local families, which is probably needed more now than ever. This will also be my last year running Edward Bear because my youngest child will be starting school, so I will need to begin to recruit new volunteers to take over once we reopen.

Ava Quilter

COMMUNITY

Men's Assembly

Obviously we have been unable to meet over the past 12 months – but a “Whatsapp” group has continued where members share news, but more often “inspirational” messages and Videos.

From its inception, several years ago, there was no fixed Group structure or formality, but just the opportunity for men to meet every month and “put the world to rights” or reminisce about days gone by.

We continue to have a mail list of 50+ and the average monthly attendance before it was lapsed of about 15 - 20. Whilst it started from a very small number of men from the Church, being a wonderful idea by the late Ian Forward, this is far from an exclusive group and open to every man in the village ... and beyond.

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Parish of St Bartholomew Wickham Bishops with St Nicholas Little Braxted is situated in the Witham Deanery, part of the Diocese of Chelmsford. It has responsibility for two principal places of worship - St Bartholomew's Church, the Parish Church, which is situated in Church Road, Wickham Bishops and St Nicholas Little Braxted now a Chapel of Ease, but licensed for weddings. St Nicholas is situated in Witham Road, Little Braxted.

The correspondence address for both churches is The Rectory, Church Road, Wickham Bishops CM8 3LA Tel. 01621 892867. Information about the churches in Wickham Bishops and Little Braxted is also available at www.churchinwickhambishops.org.uk.

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Wickham Bishops with Little Braxted is a Registered Charity No. 1159874.

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church members are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC. A number of Committees are responsible for helping to manage and organise different activities of church life, maintenance and worship.

Objectives and Activities

St Bartholomew Wickham Bishops and St Nicholas Little Braxted Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical issues. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the church centre complex of St Bartholomew's Church and Church Hall and St Nicholas Church, Little Braxted.

Edward Bear Club

The Edward Bear group runs from 10.00 to 11.30 am on a Monday morning, term time only. The ages of the children range from 0-5 years. The group meets in the Church Rooms but we also use the Lady Chapel for our service and the church for certain activities. We update the Edward Bear Facebook page weekly to share upcoming events, crafts and themes with the parents. We currently have approx. 12 – 15 children attend every week.



What is Edward Bear Club?

The Edward Bear Service is extremely popular and the children enjoy playing musical instruments, singing and finding Edward Bear! We then have story time while the children have their drink and snack; we try to link the story to our theme that week. We also have a craft table and offer different craft activities each week. This is generally focused around the church calendar and we receive great support from Reverend Hilary in incorporating a Christian focus in the group. The 'Open the Book' group also visit us quarterly for a dress rehearsal of their upcoming school performances.

2020 (Jan – March)

We unfortunately only had a brief start to the year when we were forced to close due to the Covid 19 pandemic. We decided not to reopen again once restrictions were lifted and the schools returned in September due to containing ourselves in bubbles. We did not want to run the risk of having to isolate ourselves or our families for something that wasn't really 'essential'. We did however run two zoom Ed Bear sessions, which did prove difficult for that age group of children. We did run another 3rd session at the end of the summer term to say goodbye to our school leavers and have an online party.

To celebrate this event and make it more interactive we delivered a goodie bag to each household with a cake and some bubbles. On the zoom event we sang, danced and blew our bubbles, and then ate our cake with a story.

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Messy Church

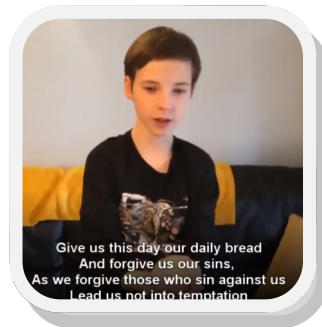
We met twice in 2020 before the pandemic took hold, for two super fun times led by Jenny Stott. One involved teddies and sticking plasters, the other duplo bricks and experiments. Both had us singing, praying, laughing and sharing a meal together thanks to Barbara's generous and imaginative hosting.

By Holy Week of course things were different. Amazing Easter Gardens were created by Messy 'Churchers' and left on display outside their houses for passing walkers to enjoy. A couple of tea time chats in April and May and in October Rosie gave us the opportunity for sharing a craft and story time in our homes for Harvest with the vicar telling a story.

There was lovely engagement from households watching the Christingle service; however it was the Home Movie Nativity involving numerous Messy Church households that gave our creatives a moment to shine, telling the great story of Jesus' birth for broadcasting on Christmas Eve on Facebook Live. Such a gift for the wider community.

What has been moving to note is the way our parents and children have had to adjust to the realities of home schooling, working and managing life differently. There have been challenges but wonderful spirit too.

Rev. Hilary Le Sève



PCC MEMBERS AND OTHER OFFICERS

Priest in Charge: Rev. Hilary Le Sève

Associate Priest: Rev. Derek Clark

Churchwardens: Graham Wingrove
Barry Cousins

Members of the PCC: Members of the PCC are the Priest in Charge, Churchwardens, elected representatives, Deanery Synod representatives and any appointed ex-officio members.

Elected Representatives (max 12) as at 18/10/2020:

Spencer Churchill (to 2022)	Lester Firkins (to 2022)
Ruth Johnson (to 2022)	Wendy Firkins (to 2021)
Dorothy Kerr (to 2021)	Lucy Traynor (to 2023)
Kate Dawson (to 2023)	Anne Keatley-Clarke (to 2023)
Graham Spearman (2022)	Ruth Keatley-Clarke (to 2023)
Allan Baker (to 2021)	John Baker (to 2023)

Ex-Officio:

Geraldine Spearman, Secretary
Rev. Derek Clark, Associate Priest

Deanery Synod Reps:

John Gilbert (to 2021)
Christine Bealer (to 2021)

Treasurer:

Graham Spearman

Safeguarding Officer:

Norma Hayward

Electoral Roll Officer:

Mary Brown

Organist:

Paul Strong

Health and Safety:

Allan Baker

Gift Aid Secretary:

John Baker

Deputy Churchwardens:

Kath Adkins, Ruth Johnson, Kate Dawson, Lester Firkins,
Wendy Firkins, Dorothy Kerr, Liz Hale, Elsie Rees (St. Nicholas)

Sidespersons:

Kath Adkins	Norma Hayward	Mary Rothero
Liz Hale	Anne Keatley-Clarke	Pam Fewell
Sue Clements	Kate Dawson	Lawrie Fewell
Lester Firkins	Dorothy Kerr	Stuart Parish
Wendy Firkins	Ruth Johnson	Rosie Woodgate
John Kerr	John Wratten	

Vergers: for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

Ruth Johnson	Lester Firkins	Wendy Firkins
Tamsyn Clark	Dorothy Kerr	Liz Hale
Kath Adkins	Christine Bealer	Kate Dawson
Francine Cope		

***If you're interested in becoming
a Sidesperson Please speak to
Dorothy Kerr***

***If you would like to become a
Vergers Please speak to
Ruth Johnson***

DISCIPLESHIP

Evening Home Group

Clearly, the Evening Home Group has been unable to meet across the last 12 months. However, many of the “members” have been active participants in the “Zoom” morning prayer meetings on Mondays and Fridays.

We are certain that when circumstances allow, a review of who meets where and when will be undertaken – subject to demand.

For any further information please contact Lester and Wendy Firkins on lesterfirkins@mac.com

Women's Christian Fellowship

Sadly, due to Covid 19, we were only able to meet on two occasions in 2020. In January we had an inspirational talk by Mr. Lester Firkins entitled ‘Can you tell Stork from Butter?’ which gave us much food for thought and discussion about how we decide what we believe and the choices we make.

In February, following our annual Corporate Communion Service on Ash Wednesday, we served coffee and hot cross buns as usual, and as our meeting was scheduled for the same afternoon, we also served a soup and sandwich lunch to those not wishing to return home between the two.

Our speaker was Sarah Connelly from the Guide Dogs Association, who was accompanied by Chipper, a golden retriever cross in training, who endeared himself to everyone, going between the chairs enjoying lots of attention from the members! Sarah gave us a wonderful insight into all that has to be learned in order to become a guide dog – apparently about 20% don't make the grade!

Since then, life has been on hold, but with most of our members having had *their jabs and Lockdown 3 hopefully coming to an end (at the time of writing)* we look forward in thankful anticipation that we may be able to meet again later this year.

Liz Hale

FUND RAISING

Owing to the global pandemic and the severe restrictions imposed by the government, 2020 was, inevitably, a very disappointing year for our committee. We started the year full of optimism and planned a full and varied programme of events. Sadly, however, we were only able to hold one of them, a quiz, at the beginning of February. Once again, this was compiled and delivered by Ken and Sue Matten and was a success both socially and financially, raising £560.

Our committee of eight benefits from the attendance of Rev. Hilary at most of our meetings and her support at all of our social and fundraising activities. We certainly hope that 2021 will be a better year than 2020 and we have already met to discuss a potential schedule of events, starting in April. However, it will depend very much on how successfully the virus can be controlled and what the government and the diocese allow us to do. We are cautiously optimistic!

Kath Adkins

Guardians of the Village Churches (GOTVC)

Raising awareness about the two churches in our care and raising funds for them, has been seriously curtailed in 2020. Nevertheless, the GOTVC committee continued to meet, postponing the Ian Gallagher evening, and seeking to work with The King's Singers in the months ahead. The recent on-line Race Night brought together members and non-members socially raising £267.00 for funds. Of course we were glad to see the Chancel redecorated at St Bartholomew's at a cost of £41,186 excluding VAT which was paid from GOTVC funds. VAT £8.335 was paid, but has now been recovered.

New people on the committee have brought fresh diversity and ideas to add to those of existing members. This bodes well for the future.

Rev. Hilary Le Sève



Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens (Vestry Meeting)

21st March 2021 at 12 noon

The meeting to be by ZOOM

AGENDA

- 1. Opening Prayer**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting 18th October 2020**
- 4. Election of Churchwardens**
- 5. Any other business (notified to chairman in advance)**



ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday 21st March 2021 at 12 noon

The meeting to be by ZOOM

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - held on Sunday 18th October 2020
4. Matters arising
5. Chairman's Report
6. Electoral Roll Report
7. Report on the PCC
8. Annual Financial Statements (Separate sheets)
9. Appointment of Independent Examiner
10. Safeguarding Report
11. Report on Deanery Synod
12. Churchwarden's report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

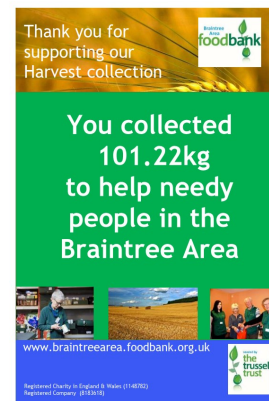
Foodbank



The village has continued to support the work of the Trussell Trust Foodbank with generous donations of food during lockdown. We are very grateful to the One Stop Shop who agreed that we could move the food donations box from the church to the village shop, whilst the church was unable to remain open during the pandemic and the re-decoration. This has proved a successful move with many bags being donated each week.

The Harvest collection of food delivered both to the church and to One Stop was generously supported by Parishioners and as you will see from the poster below, meant that we were able to donate an amazing amount of food.

Foodbanks within the Trussell Trust network have seen an 89% increase across their network during the pandemic. By continuing to support them with your donations you are continuing to support those most in need. **Geraldine Spearman**



Harvest collection boxes in the church porch



However the magazine has continued, albeit sometimes on-line only, and we are very grateful to all deliverers for their support during the year.

Welcome Packs too continue to be delivered to welcome newcomers to the village.

Unfortunately we have been unable to visit Little Oaks for some time but have kept in touch and look forward to resuming services as soon as possible.

Visiting has been much curtailed this year but the committee has worked very hard, alongside members of the church, to keep in touch by phone with the elderly, isolated, sick and bereaved and anyone needing a little support in these difficult times. A big thank you goes to them all.

We were sorry to say farewell to Mary Rothero when she stepped down as chair of the committee this year. Mary has contributed immensely to the pastoral team over many years and we owe her a huge vote of thanks .

Jayne Jennings

Drop In

The Drop In provides friendship with tea and cakes and someone who will listen if needed. There were 5 Drop In Sessions between January and March 2020 with attendances between 12 and 17. Since then 4 of our members have moved to care homes or similar, 1 to Witham and sadly 1 has died.

The Drop in is run with care and love by a number of people – Kath, Christine, Sue, Jayne, Geraldine and Gillian. The Pastoral Committee have provided support to members of The Drop In sessions and it is our hope is that in the future the Drop In will continue.

Sue Clements

13. **WORSHIP**
St. Bartholomew's, St. Nicholas, Music
14. **PASTORAL**
Including Foodbank
15. **FUND RAISING AND SOCIAL**
FR&S committee, Guardians
16. **DISCIPLESHIP**
Evening Home Group, Women's Christian Fellowship,
17. **FAMILIES AND CHILDREN**
Edward Bear, Messy Church
18. **COMMUNITY**
Men's Assembly
19. **ELECTIONS**
See separate sheets for nominees
 - PCC members
 - Deanery Synod members
 - Appointment of Deputy Wardens
20. **AOB / Any matters of urgency**
21. **Next Meeting — APCM: Sunday 20th March 2022**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

“We have been unable to say farewell to old friends in the way we would like as they have been taken into care”

It is in the context of the Covid 19 global pandemic that this Chairman's report to the 2021 APCM is written and it cannot be overstated that, consequently, our church is in a new missionary situation and discovering where the shifting frontline of God's Kingdom is placing us.

Grieving and growing, hurting and hoping, tired yet trying – we find ourselves bruised and battered. Gathered worship, community groups, Edward Bear, the Youth Group and Messy Church have been suspended. Our children are home learning, missing gathered school and contact with friends. Our parents are juggling home working with home schooling and domestic roles. Many have faced or face employment challenges, finding themselves furloughed and redundant. Exclusion has come into intense focus as we have become increasingly aware of individuals unable to access society more fully because of poor/ no access to technologies on which society is dependent and the human problems of racism, poverty and climate change – all impacting on mental health and general well-being. Families and friends long for physical contact. We have been unable to say farewell to old friends in the way we would like as they have been taken into care. Many of us lament the enforced separation of hospitalisation and grieve the death of loved ones and opportunities to mourn collectively. Baptisms have been postponed, weddings likewise and some even cancelled.

And yet we read in the Scriptures *‘The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.’* (Lamentations 3:22-23) We find ourselves taken back to a new intimacy with God and a more determined dependence upon God.

To mark the occasion, Paul put together a programme of music and readings entitled “Christmas Cheer” performed by the Beacon Ensemble.

The varied programme was compered by Stewart Adkins and included a wide range of music with instrumental and vocal arrangements of well-known carols and popular classics. In addition to the music we were treated to Rev. Hilary's rendering of John Betjeman's poem, “Christmas”.

The following week saw “A Quiet Service” held in the Church, with musical contributions led by Paul, cellist Naomi Poole and the church choir reduced in number to meet the COVID-19 restrictions.

The Advent Candle wreath, lit by Rev. Hilary to the accompaniment of the choir's Silent Night, was followed by reflective music, a Bach solo cello beautifully played by Naomi. The service ended on an upbeat note with the choir singing “Joy to the World”

Graham Cook

PASTORAL WORK

The committee supports the pastoral care in the church and local community. This includes visiting the sick, lonely and bereaved; Drop In sessions, Welcome Packs, Parish Magazine, Services at Little Oaks and Home Communion.

We began the year with a soup lunch followed by an excellent concert arranged by Paul, our organist. There was a very good turn out and everyone enjoyed the delicious homemade soup provided by the committee, before settling down to some wonderful entertainment.

Sadly that was our only social event for the year due to Lockdown. We had hoped to have a coffee morning for all magazine distributors and Welcome Pack deliverers in September but this had to be postponed.

Extracts from Graham Cook's Parish Magazine articles

Over 8 weeks in July and August, live music provided a backdrop to the Wednesday afternoon individual private prayer sessions at St. Bartholomew's. The opportunity to just sit in the church and relax for an hour each week was a welcome change for so many people during the pandemic restrictions.

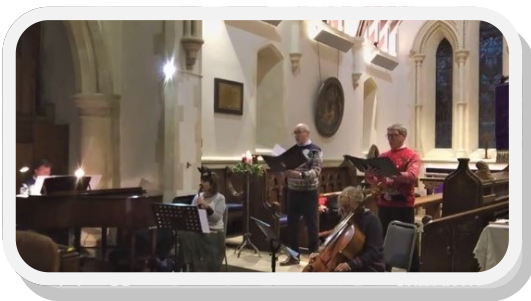
We were fortunate in having talented musicians to arrange and play the pieces for the Wednesday afternoons. Our church organist, Paul Strong, ably assisted by cellist Lucia Carnell and violinist Anne Bellett, put together an amazing range of music catering for all tastes across the 8 weeks.

In the early weeks Paul played reflective church organ music and piano pieces that perfectly fitted the church aim of providing the opportunity for private prayer. During August, the repertoire expanded from Bach to Lionel Bart, Ragtime and Blues, Leonard Cohen's 'Hallelujah' and Louis Armstrong's 'What a Wonderful World'.

Ideally more people would have been able to come, but the inevitable Covid restrictions and other commitments no doubt limited the actual attendance. Everyone able to come appeared to have had an enjoyable experience and appreciated the opportunity for some personal thought and reflection with the bonus of music.

Thanks must go to everyone involved, Paul, Lucia and Anne together with Rev. Hilary and the church stewards. It was a big undertaking to organise the 8 hours of music and making sure that all the relevant social distancing and related requirements were met.

For many people December 2020 will not rank as one of their most enjoyable months, but we did have something to look forward to and that was the re-opening of the church following the redecoration of the Chancel.



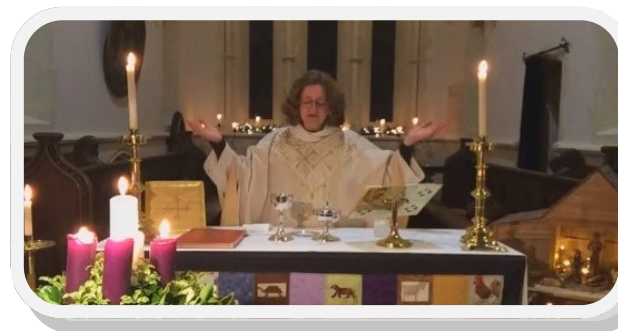
From the first week of the first lockdown Zoom drew those with the gift and need for collective prayer to gather online three times a week

This provision has continued deepening fellowship and our collective relationship with God. Archdeacon Ruth Patten led a reflective Away Day in July on the theme of 'Abiding'. Sunday Services went online (FB Live and now YouTube – once loaded) with content provided from across the worshipping community. Mark Roberts and Graham Spearman have proved invaluable in ensuring our technology is up to speed (we await the connection of our WiFi cable to the telecoms network) and we reach over 160 people through this medium. Churchwarden Barry Cousins faithfully produces the weekly newsletter and orders of service also bringing our attention to opportunities to join in national prayer programmes such as Pause, Pray and Remember and Thy Kingdom Come.

Upskilling ourselves, we are growing in confidence and are currently offering The Bible Course online – a welcome weekly point of exploration using a handbook, group discussions and input through film footage.

Gathering in the churches for worship between July and December, volunteers ensured risk assessments were adhered to so we could gather safely.

We valued especially the poignant Quiet Service just before Christmas with the brief gathering of our much-missed choir and cello accompaniment. Musical provision for private individual prayer over the summer was sensitively curated by our organist Paul Strong and talented musicians.



**Rev. Hilary
live-streaming the
Christmas
Midnight Service
from
St. Bartholomew's**

Networks, both informal and formal, have continued to evolve. Members on the Pastoral Committee volunteered for the local Covid 19 Support Network. Food has been and continues to be gathered for the Braintree Area Foodbank. Links with the local school have ensured that the challenges staff and families face are never far from our prayers. Doorstep gifts, socially distanced walks and telephone calls have reduced any tendency to isolation. Donations of over £4000 have been made to charities serving people in diverse contexts from a township in South Africa to families living with dementia locally. The parish magazine painstakingly edited by Peter Bates was suspended (going online only) in the first lockdown but it soon became apparent how important it is and so has been delivered since, thanks to Jayne Jennings and her team of volunteers.

With much of our church life taking place outside the buildings and Sunday Services, we nevertheless have responsibilities to ensure the fabric of the two historic buildings is maintained. Churchwarden Graham Wingrove and the Fabric Committee have ensured this is all done within the guidelines of the national church. A delightful concert in December enabled us to celebrate the long-awaited decorating of the Chancel at St Bartholomew's by Bakers of Danbury and we wonder how to take the rest of the re-decoration plan forward. Fundraising over the years built up the



resources to do the work along with generous donations.

With church fundraising curtailed we are seeking to be ready for when opportunities arise. The Scarecrow Festival in May, wonderfully coordinated by the Smiths and their team, is remembered for the creative

fun it brought and the sense of community cohesion. The Wickham Bishops Garden Festival Committee is now working towards Sunday 13th June 2021 to host this popular village wide event. The Guardians of the Village Churches (GOTVC) have plans in the pipeline for some rather special musical evenings. The Beacon Hill Ensemble likewise hope to offer their gifts at a lunch to raise funds for St. Nicholas' in what was to be its 900th anniversary year.

MUSIC

“Music can play a big part in keeping us motivated during these difficult times”

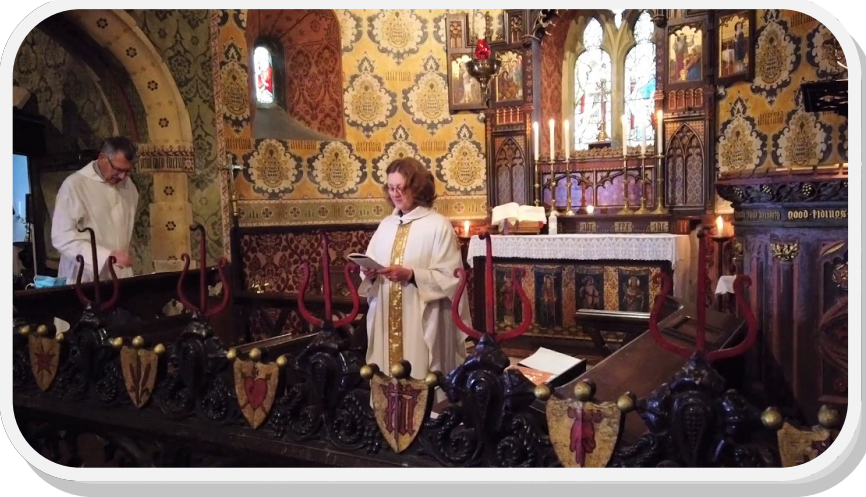
2020 was certainly a very different and difficult year for music at St Bartholomew's and St. Nicholas' compared to 2019! I am very grateful to the choir and other musicians, who, when circumstances allowed, performed music of the first order. The Choir sang some new Communion Services and frequently enhanced the worship by singing some beautiful Anthems during or after Communion.

On the next page are extracts from Graham Cook's excellent reflections on the Wednesday afternoon music to accompany Private Prayer and in addition to thanking Lucia and Anne for excellent cello and violin playing and the Stewards who opened the church and ensured compliance with Covid regulations, I wish to thank Rev Hilary and the Church Wardens for giving me rein to take some musical risks! When Lester requested we play, 'Green Onions,' with Hammond Organ, Anne playing the guitar riff on the violin and Lucia playing the cello 'double bass' style to accompany prayer, we were certainly taking a risk. These opportunities to play mid-week during the Summer months will be a feature of 2021 as soon as restrictions allow.



Turning to the music at Christmas, I can only reiterate Graham's words by personally thanking the musicians involved in 'Christmas Cheer': Colin & Anne Bellett, Kath & Stewart Adkins and Lucia Carnell. The Quiet Christmas Service was a very moving and a very different Service and I wish to thank the reduced church choir, (to comply with Covid Regulations) and Naomi Poole.

Looking forward to 2021 it would be good to hear more from these excellent musicians in St. Bartholomew's. Music can play a big part in keeping us motivated during these difficult times. **Paul Strong**

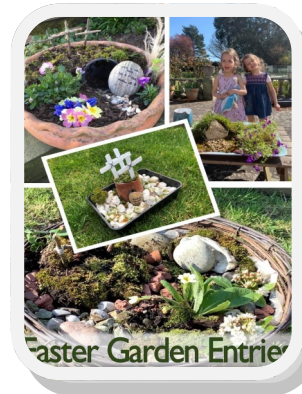


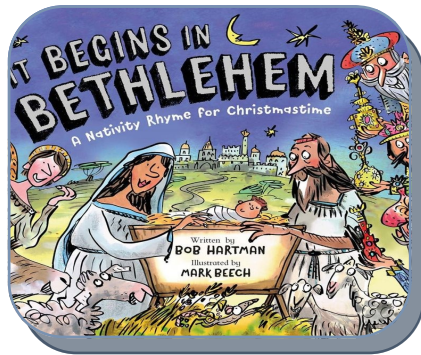
Behind the scenes there is the immense input of church officers not least Graham and Geraldine Spearman in their roles as PCC Treasurer and Secretary for which we are hugely grateful. Graham took a lead in transferring many of us to The Parish Giving Scheme and contactless giving – timely given the suspension of gathered worship. They are the tip of the iceberg of volunteers coming in to clean, arrange flowers, maintain the churchyards and carpark, ensuring safeguarding is uppermost in our practice and so much more. If the Kingdom of God is a community of people seeking to grow in the fruits of the Spirit (ie ‘love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control’ Galatians 5:22-23) and being agents of healing then our church is very much on the frontline and by God’s grace will continue to be so.

Rev. Hilary Le Sève

In hope we look forward to ‘staging’ many of the postponed events including, The Musical Meal Deal, a Celebratory Eucharist with the Bishop, a Songs of Praise and much more. [The full list was in the February 2021 Magazine].

Barry Cousins





Scenes from the Christmas Nativity video with some of the local 'stars'!



When, BRIGHT and white, an angel came
To light the night, a fiery flame.
The shepherds trembled where they lay,
The angel said, 'Don't be afraid.'



'And this will be a sign for you.
This is how you'll know it's true.
You'll find a baby wrapped in cloth,
Sleeping in a cattle trough.'



ST NICHOLAS' LITTLE BRAXTED

All plans were in place for a year of celebration, to mark the 900th year of St. Nicholas. special services and events. Archdeacon Ruth set the scene at the first service of the year with a sermon based on "Come and see" [John 1:39]. The service was followed by breakfast; bacon butties, tea and coffee.

Special descriptive notes have been placed around the church explaining the decorative work of Rev. Ernest Geldart mostly in his own words.

By the March Service we were, in biblical fashion, washing hands on arrival just before the country was in 'lock-down' because of the Covid-19 pandemic. With the ease of restrictions, monthly services resumed in the late summer, socially distanced, mask wearing and booking a Pew in advance. Just before the second 'lock-down' the Patronal Festival Eucharist took place but with the on-going restrictions in place including restricted numbers!

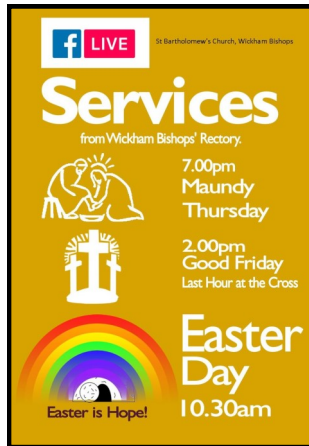
Some good news is that some filming has taken place including the first service of the year and the Patronal Festival and this will in time provide us with a visual archive of the 900th Celebrations...now extended into 2021.

There is also a stand-alone film now available to see on-line. Called 'A most Beautiful House' this short film gives us a taste for the upcoming Talk by Dr James Bettley. Film-maker Paul Desmond and Dr James met socially distanced; and you can view the film at <https://vimeo.com/4738399>



using Facebook Live, captured using a smart phone, tablet or a newly acquired digital camera. Members of the extended Le Seve household have played active roles in reading the lessons and prayers and there is a downloadable Order of Service online (via the church website) to enable people to join in from their own homes. The service is hosted by Hilary as the face of the church to the community. The content continues to have lay contributions to services via intercessions and occasional reflections, so that the burden of preparation is not falling exclusively on the minister.

We had an all too brief opportunity in the summer and early autumn to return to using the church buildings, with face-to-face services and weekday private prayer for a social distanced and masked congregation. While it was good to be able to get together and see people in person, the masking, requirements to disperse immediately after the service and the inability to sing, or even have a choir for some of the time, made for a very unusual feel to our worship.



The 3rd Sunday Morning Praise Team in action →



ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

The Church Electoral Roll was renewed in 2020 in line with the Church of England regulations, and last year's Roll had a total of 126 members.

Three members have sadly died since then.

There are 123 people on the 2021 Church Electoral Roll; of these 97 are parishioners who live in the Parish, and 26 non-resident parishioners.

Mary Brown
Electoral Roll Officer

The Electoral Roll is the register of those who worship regularly at our Churches.

If you would like more information and an application form, please e-mail our Electoral Roll Officer
wblberoll@gmail.com

PCC REPORT

At the 2020 APCM we welcomed 4 new members to the PCC to serve for 3 years - John Baker, Lucy Traynor, Anne Keatley-Clarke and Ruth Keatley-Clarke. Our Electoral Roll membership entitles our Parish to 12 laity members. In addition the PCC consists of Chairman Rev. Hilary Le Sève, 2 Deanery Synod Representatives, 2 Churchwardens. The Secretary and Rev. Derek Clark both sit on the Council as ex-officio members. The Standing Committee who meet to discuss upcoming PCC agendas, is made up of the Chairman, Associate Priest, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary and Pastoral Assistant.

During 2020, the PCC met 6 times, the majority of those being via zoom with good attendance as members became used to this new way of meeting. Discussions were often centred around Covid-19 National Guidelines and how we could implement safety precautions within the church, and stream services to those at home in order to continue providing safe means of worship.

We updated Risk Assessments as new guidance came through and members met as a working party in the church to put signage, handgels and safe distance markers in place.

My thanks as always, to Rev. Hilary and the PCC for their continued support during what has been a challenging year for everyone. We have all learnt new skills in managing the technology!

Geraldine Spearman
PCC Secretary

SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Safeguarding checks

The new online system for carrying out safeguarding checks for children and adults, known as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and run by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) was set up in March 2018. This organisation subsequently changed its name to 31:8 (from Proverbs – “Speak out on behalf of the voiceless and for the rights of all who are vulnerable”).

The diocese also requires an application form and confidential declaration to be completed, even if a DBS check is not possible.

Since last February, 2 checks have been carried out and one renewal – the Diocese requires the checks to be repeated every 5 years. Normally, for identification purposes, I have to see proof of identity documents in

PARISH WORSHIP

“.. while on-line delivery has attractions for many, it is not a complete replacement for congregating and celebrating in a physical environment.”

The Worship Committee assists the minister in their role in deciding on and leading the services across the year. This is how the PCC discharges its function of “co-operation with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical” in public worship.

The Worship Committee, chaired by the minister, meets 3-4 times a year (now by Zoom!), to assist in planning the overall pattern of services, advising and supporting in bringing resources and ideas together. Our worship services contribute to our church being a place that is welcoming to all, where we are can come closer to God and one another. The last year has presented both challenges and opportunities as we try to be true to this through the pandemic.

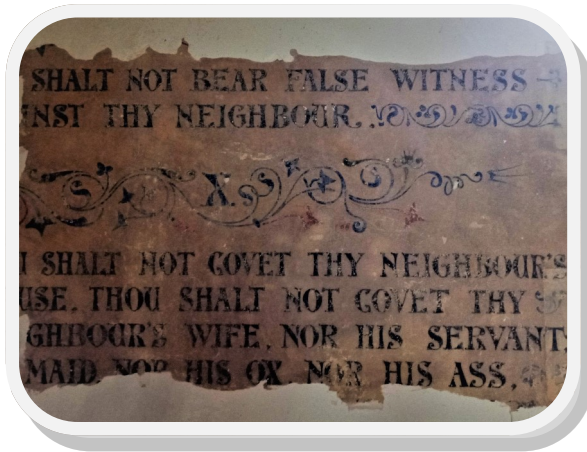
The “normal” Sunday service pattern is a 8:00 a.m. Communion at St Bartholomew’s each Sunday, except 3rd Sundays, when there is a 9:00 a.m. Communion service in traditional form at St Nicholas’. 10:30 a.m. Services at St Bartholomew’s are eucharistic (using Common Worship) on 1st, 2nd and 4th Sundays, with a non-Eucharistic lay-led morning praise service in the hall on the 3rd Sunday. There is also a mid-week Eucharist on Wednesday mornings.

Under lock-down, with the church buildings closed, this has been replaced with a weekly 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning and Wednesday Communion from the Rectory or church delivered

The usual general maintenance and certifications to the Church and Hall were also carried out during the year.

Following our services being streamed on-line we took the decision to get a land line installed to provide a broadband connection and greatly improve the transmission quality. At the time of writing a faculty submission is pending, as is the return of Openreach to complete the connection. We hope all this work will be complete by the time you read this report. Thanks to Graham Spearman, our treasurer, for all his research and work to make this happen.

During the re-decoration, this script depicting two of the Ten Commandments was uncovered.



At St. Nicholas Little Braxted, the Quinquennial survey was carried out in July, and needless to say, following receipt of the report, there are a number of urgent jobs which need to be addressed within the first 12 months, and a list of other issues which will need addressing within the next 5 years. We are looking for someone from the St. Nicholas church family to join the fabric committee to coordinate this work. If you feel that this is something you are able to help with, then please get in touch. Meanwhile, both of the church gates have been refurbished, and our thanks go to Allan Baker for arranging for this work to be carried out.

Finally, thanks to all those on the committee who have continued to ensure that things were done, despite all of the Covid restrictions, and to Ruth Johnson for recording the details.

Graham Wingrove

person but since Covid 19, I am able to request that they are either scanned and emailed or photocopied and posted to me. Having taken details from the documents, they are shredded

Since last February, 2 checks have been carried out and one renewal – the Diocese requires the checks to be repeated every 5 years. Normally, for identification purposes, I have to see proof of identity documents in person but since Covid 19, I am able to request that they are either scanned and emailed or photocopied and posted to me. Having taken details from the documents, they are shredded.

Safeguarding Training

Normally both online and face to face training are carried out by the Diocese. Online training can be done by any member of the congregation, but their completion is a requirement of anyone with safeguarding responsibilities or who has contact with children, young people and / or adults, even if the role does not require a DBS check. It should also be repeated every three years.

People with Leadership roles are expected to do the face to face training. However, this is currently not available, except by zoom for those who hold a clergy role, including Readers, licensed lay Ministers and those with permission to officiate. The Diocese is looking to deliver training to those with other leadership roles, but does not currently have the capacity. Please do let me know if anyone would like to do the online training

Norma Hayward

jhaywa@globalnet.co.uk

A copy of our Safeguarding Policy can be found on the board in the Church Porch and the hall Noticeboard.

Further Safeguarding information is available on the Diocesan Website

<https://www.chelmsford.anglican.org>

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

"...our Parish continues to be in a reasonably sound financial situation."

Please see the separate document for the full accounts
My report for 2019 stated that financially, 2019 was an interesting year.
Little did I know what was going to hit us in 2020.

The impact of Coronavirus has, not surprisingly, had a significant impact on the Parish Finances. Collections are down, fee income for funerals and weddings is down and the Fund Raising and Social Committee were unable to hold any events other than the Quiz in February. My thanks to Paul Strong who organised a concert to celebrate the re-opening of the Church following the redecoration of the Chancel and this raised £147.00 for the Guardians fund.

Fortunately, some of our costs reduced with less electricity being used and the saving from not printing the magazine. There is however likely to be a knock-on effect as Advertisers will receive a free period in 2021 to compensate them for the months their adverts were not seen.

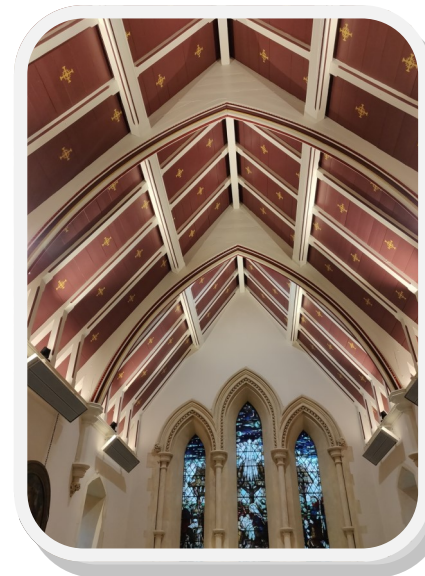
In my 2019 report I was able to advise that General Funds were some £12,000 higher than the previous year end. That stood us in good stead as this year our expenditure has exceeded income by £4,301. Despite that we stand in a reasonably sound position with £57,141 in General Funds.

Take up for the Parish Giving Scheme has been good and this eases mine and John Baker's administrative workload whilst giving us a regular and, in

Because of the first lockdown in March, tending of the churchyards did not get under way until those restrictions were lifted. However, thanks to all of our volunteers, the grounds were soon looking neat and tidy, and remained at their best for the rest of the summer. Thanks go again to Dick Yelland for coordinating all of this work and to all those involved for their time and energy. A special thanks is also due to our Sexton, John Popham, with his attention to the graves, inter alia, levelling and reseeding.

Two church yard tidy-ups were held in the year, which were both well supported. These were held with social distancing and being Covid compliant. Thanks to all those who gave up their Saturday mornings, it is very much appreciated.

The motif used on the chancel ceiling was picked out from the East Window.



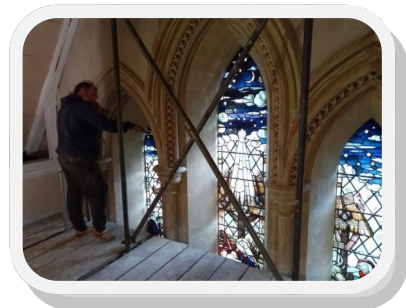
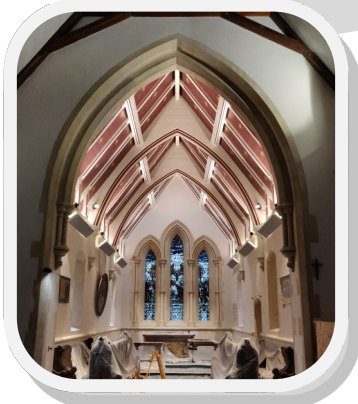
FABRIC REPORT

“Our ambition is now to raise further funds to complete the decoration of the remainder of the church.”

Due to the Covid 19 restrictions, the Fabric Committee has not met either in person or virtually this ecclesiastical year. However, this has not prevented the usual inspections, certifications and maintenance carrying on in respect of both Churches.

The main headline of this year was the redecoration of the Chancel and Chancel Arch at St. Bartholomew’s, which was contracted to Bakers of Danbury and overseen by our conservation architect, Hilary Brightman. After, the initial contract start date was put back as a result of Covid, the work commenced at the end of September, and was completed on the 11th December, except for a section between the floor and the dado rail in the sanctuary which is being left to dry out thoroughly before finishing off in the spring.

The re-decoration in progress



Following the above both the piano and the Organ were tuned by our go-to’ professionals. .Our ambition is now to raise further funds to complete the decoration of the remainder of the church. The other reordering wish list as

detailed in last years’ report has also been deferred until sufficient funds become available.

the majority of cases, an increasing income. My thanks to John for his most efficient processing of Gift Aid.

We have met our parish Share in full. The 2021 share is increased by 1.13% to £3,695.01 per month.

The major project in 2020 was the redecoration of and installation of new lighting for the Chancel. This has been funded by The Guardians of the Village Churches. We have submitted a claim for a VAT refund of £8,335. This should result in a balance of £11,878 in The Guardians fund towards the second stage of the project.

I am pleased to report that The Guardians committee has expanded and a significant Fund Raising Event has been planned. Inevitably, in the circumstances, this has been deferred twice now and we can but wait for the situation to be resolved.

Our Charitable giving has been maintained. I should explain that the donations given at the end of each year are based on 10% of our giving income the previous year. So in 2020 the figures were based on 2019 income. It remains to be seen what we will be able to donate at the end of 2021.

In summary I am pleased to be able to report that our Parish continues to be in a reasonably sound financial situation.

Graham Spearman
Hon Treasurer

**If anyone requires information about the Parish Giving Scheme, I'm happy to advise.
grstreasurer@proton**

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

To examine the 2020 accounts. The Examiner is appointed on a yearly basis.

They are required to be proposed and seconded and agreed by the meeting.



Don't forget to use smile.amazon.co.uk when shopping online with Amazon and register for your charity portion of all purchases to benefit our church. Our charity name is "The Parochial Church Council of Ecclesiastical Parish of Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted"

WITHAM DEANERY SYNOD

Synod Representatives: Rev. Hilary Le Seve (House of Clergy), Anne Keatley-Clarke, Christine Bealer, John Gilbert (House of Laity)

The Deanery Synod is part of the governance structure of the Church of England, linking to the Diocesan Synod and to General Synod through elected representatives. Meetings are chaired by the Rural Dean, in our case Simon Garwood as Rural Dean, and a Lay Chair, in our case Mike Robinson. Regular business includes updates on the Deanery's Parish Share payments, on Mission & Ministry Units, on events and activities in the Parishes and a session on a matter of interest.

It is a meeting that could be a great opportunity for sharing learning in our parishes. There are clearly a lot of smaller parishes that are struggling with the pandemic and do not appear to be blessed with the riches of skills and volunteering that we enjoy across the whole of our church family. We should remember them in our prayers.

The Synod has had 2 meetings in the last 12 months. The special sessions have been:

1. New Christian Communities, given by Dave Wade, Diocesan Head of New Christian Communities, Will Abbott, Pioneer Minister, Witham and Villages Team Ministry, Wendy Pagden, Pioneer Minister at Stanway and Lead for Mission-Shaped Ministry Course for Rural Areas (included in last year's APCM report)
2. "Future Direction of Travel" as Archdeacon Ruth Patten and Rev Canon Philip Ritchie (Diocesan Mission and Ministry Advisor) talked about the challenges of funding stipendiary ministry and what this meant for the Deanery Plan.

This year there were new elections for Synod representatives and John and Christine were re-elected as Lay members. Hilary and Derek continue as Clergy members.

John Gilbert

Wickham Bishops & Little Braxted PCC

Registered Charity 1159874

End of Year Financial Statements

Year ending 31st December 2020

**WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Church Council for the year ended 31 December 2020 which are set out on pages 4 to 11.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- 2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
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I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Barnes FCA
Independent Examiner
Handel House
Roselawn Fields
Broomfield
Chelmsford
CM1 7GB

Treasurer's Report

My report for 2019 stated that financially, 2019 was an interesting year. Little did I know what was going to hit us in 2020.

The impact of Coronavirus has, not surprisingly, had a significant impact on the Parish Finances. Collections are down, fee income for funerals and weddings is down and the Fund Raising and Social Committee were unable to hold any events other than the Quiz in February. I would thank Paul Strong who organised a concert to celebrate the re-opening of the Church following the redecoration of the Chancel and this raised £147.00 for the Guardians fund.

Fortunately, some of our costs reduced with less electricity being used and the saving from not printing the magazine. There is however likely to be a knock on effect as Advertisers will receive a free period in 2021 to compensate them for the months their adverts were not seen.

In my 2019 report I was able to advise that General Funds as at 30/12/2019 were some £12,000 higher than 30/12/2018. That stood us in good stead as this year our expenditure from General Funds has exceeded income by £4,280.

Despite that we stand in a reasonably sound position with £57,161 in General Funds.

Unfortunately in the Statement of Financial Activities the software does not differentiate between General and Designated funds. I can reassure you of the expenditure of £50,914 in Church Repairs £49,039 was funded from the Guardians account.

Take up for the Parish Giving Scheme has been good and this eases mine and John Baker's administrative workload whilst giving us a regular and, in the majority of cases, an increasing income. I would thank John for his most efficient processing of Gift Aid.

We have met our parish Share in full. The 2021 share is increased by 1.13% to £3,695.01 per month.

The major project in 2020 was the redecoration of and installation of new lighting for the Chancel. This has been funded by The Guardians of the Village Churches. We have submitted a claim for a VAT refund of £8,335. This should result in a balance of £11,878 in The Guardians fund towards the second stage of the project.

I am pleased to report that The Guardians committee has expanded and a significant Fund Raising Event has been planned. Inevitably, in the circumstances, this has been deferred twice now and we can but await for the situation to be resolved.

Our Charitable giving has been maintained. I should explain that the donations given at the end of each year are based on 10% of our giving income the previous year. So in 2020 the figures were based on 2019 income. It remains to be seen what we will be able to donate at the end of 2021.

In summary I am pleased to be able to report that our Parish continues to be in a reasonably sound financial situation.

Graham Spearman
Hon Treasurer
07/01/2021

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Receipts					
Planned giving	34,799	—	—	34,799	31,196
Collections and other giving	2,557	—	—	2,557	8,914
Other voluntary receipts	8,179	45	—	8,224	26,792
Gift Aid recovered	10,961	132	—	11,094	14,410
Other receipts	830	—	—	830	4,926
Activities for generating funds	11,664	963	—	12,627	30,251
Investment Income	170	42	—	212	333
Receipts from church activities	4,636	—	—	4,636	6,386
Total income	73,799	1,183	—	74,983	123,212
Payments					
Cost of generating funds	1,160	200	—	1,360	3,548
Missionary and Charitable Giving	4,000	—	—	4,000	5,496
Parish Share	43,845	—	—	43,845	42,492
Clergy and Staffing costs	4,143	—	—	4,143	5,670
Church Running Expenses	15,926	1,672	—	17,599	26,279
Youth Club	—	—	—	—	767
Hall Running Costs	1,684	—	—	1,684	1,232
Church Repairs & Maintenance	50,914	—	—	50,914	2,766
Hall Repairs & Maintenance	582	—	—	582	1,447
Governance Costs	110	—	—	110	110
Total expenditure	122,367	1,872	—	124,240	89,812
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	(48,567)	(689)	—	(49,256)	33,400
Transfers					
Gross transfers between funds - in	—	—	—	—	65,531
Gross transfers between funds - out	—	—	—	—	(65,531)
Other recognised gains / losses					
Net movement in funds	(48,567)	(689)	—	(49,256)	33,400
Total funds brought forward	109,271	10,094	—	119,366	85,965
Total funds carried forward	60,704	9,405	—	70,109	119,366
Represented by					
Unrestricted					
General fund	57,161	—	—	57,161	61,442
Designated					
General	3,542	—	—	3,542	47,829
Restricted					
Little Braxted Fabric Fund	—	4,733	—	4,733	5,464
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration	—	4,671	—	4,671	4,629

Balance sheet

	Total funds	Prior year funds
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	70,109	119,366
	70,109	119,366
Net current assets less current liabilities	70,109	119,366
Total assets less current liabilities	70,109	119,366
Total net assets less liabilities	70,109	119,366
Represented by		
Unrestricted		
General fund	57,161	61,442
Designated		
Guardians	3,542	47,829
Wickham Bishops Deposit	—	—
Restricted		
Wickham Bishops Church Restoration	4,671	4,629
Little Braxted Fabric Fund	4,733	5,464
Funds of the church	70,109	119,366

Statement of assets and liabilities

	General	Designated	Restricted	Endowment	This year	Last year
Current assets - Cash at bank and in hand						
Bank current account -	(16,423)	8,350	8,857	—	783	1,717
CAF Cash Account 00022245 -	4,298	20,767	(15,347)	—	9,718	24,242
CAF Gold Account -	30,426	37,653	(57,061)	—	11,019	47,829
Guardians -	(218)	(49,039)	52,800	—	3,542	—
CCLA deposit account608143001D -	48,181	—	(12,550)	—	35,630	35,480
CCLA deposit account Church Restoration -	(9,106)	—	13,778	—	4,671	4,629
CCLA deposit St Nicholas Fabric -	(2,808)	(13,897)	21,439	—	4,733	5,464
Cash in hand -	9	—	—	—	9	1
Totals	54,359	3,834	11,916	—	70,109	119,366
Liabilities - Creditors: Amounts falling due in one year						
Loans received -	4,299	—	(4,299)	—	—	—
Accounts Payable -	(7,101)	291	6,810	—	—	—
Totals	(2,802)	291	2,511	—	—	—
Grand total	57,161	3,542	9,405	—	70,109	119,366

Fund movement by type

	Opening	Incoming	Outgoing	Transfers	Gains/losses	Closing
General - General fund						
Unrestricted	61,442	66,691	70,972	—	—	57,161
Sub-total for General	61,442	66,691	70,972	—	—	57,161
Guardians - General						
Designated	47,829	7,108	51,394	—	—	3,542
Sub-total for Guardians	47,829	7,108	51,394	—	—	3,542
CCLA001 - Wickham Bishops Depo						
Designated	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sub-total for CCLA001	—	—	—	—	—	—
CCLA004 - Wickham Bishops Chur						
Restricted	4,629	241	200	—	—	4,671
Sub-total for CCLA004	4,629	241	200	—	—	4,671
CCIA005 - Little Braxted Fabri						
Restricted	5,464	941	1,672	—	—	4,733
Sub-total for CCIA005	5,464	941	1,672	—	—	4,733
Grand total	119,366	74,983	124,240	—	—	70,109

Analysis of income and expenditure

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Designated</u>	<u>Restricted</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Total</u>	
					<u>This year</u>	<u>Last year</u>
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS						
Planned giving						
Envelopes	3,681	—	—	—	3,681	10,456
planned giving	31,118	—	—	—	31,118	20,739
Total	34,799	—	—	—	34,799	31,196
Collections and other giving						
collections	2,327	—	—	—	2,327	8,183
Gift Aid Envelopes	230	—	—	—	230	731
Total	2,557	—	—	—	2,557	8,914
Other voluntary receipts						
Charity Collections	154	—	—	—	154	1,346
Other Giving	900	—	—	—	900	1,400
Donations	1,354	—	45	—	1,399	949
Flower Fund	—	—	—	—	—	150
Guardians	—	5,770	—	—	5,770	22,580
Alpha Donations	—	—	—	—	—	365
Total	2,409	5,770	45	—	8,224	26,792
Gift Aid recovered						
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	9,624	—	12	—	9,636	13,981
Tax Refund - Church Restoration Fund WB	—	—	12	—	12	—
Tax refund - LB Fabric	—	—	107	—	107	112
Tax Relief Guardians	—	1,337	—	—	1,337	316
Total	9,624	1,337	132	—	11,094	14,410
Other receipts						
Other funds generated	39	—	—	—	39	3,783
In/Out	791	—	—	—	791	1,143
Total	830	—	—	—	830	4,926
Activities for generating funds						
Fund Raising - Open Gardens Flower Festi	—	—	210	—	210	200
Fund Raising	550	—	—	—	550	7,989
Trading Income	15	—	—	—	15	10
Friends of Little Braxted	—	—	153	—	153	—
Fees to Diocese	2,739	—	—	—	2,739	1,883
Church hall lettings	1,376	—	—	—	1,376	5,392
Magazine income - advertising	6,984	—	—	—	6,984	10,290
Little Braxted Fabric	—	—	600	—	600	4,485
Total	11,664	—	963	—	12,627	30,251
Investment Income						
Interest - General Fund	136	—	—	—	136	267
Interest WB Church Restoration Fund	—	—	19	—	19	33

Interest LB Fabric Fund	—	—	23	—	23	21
Interest/Dividends	33	—	—	—	33	11
Total	170	—	42	—	212	333

Receipts from church activities

Parochial Fees for weddings and funerals	3,246	—	—	—	3,246	4,578
Gravespoil	715	—	—	—	715	235
Memorial Book Income	50	—	—	—	50	10
Greeting Cards sales	230	—	—	—	230	848
Tea/Coffee	124	—	—	—	124	364
Drop In Donations	270	—	—	—	270	349
Total	4,636	—	—	—	4,636	6,386
INCOME TOTAL	66,691	7,108	1,183	—	74,983	123,212

EXPENDITURE

Cost of generating funds

Costs of Fundraising	96	—	—	—	96	61
Costs of Fundraising- Open Gardens	—	—	200	—	200	—
Guardians expenses	—	825	—	—	825	2,449
Greetings Cards costs	238	—	—	—	238	619
Trading Goods	—	—	—	—	—	418
Total	334	825	200	—	1,360	3,548

Missionary and Charitable Giving

Charity Donations	4,000	—	—	—	4,000	5,496
Total	4,000	—	—	—	4,000	5,496

Parish Share

Parish Share	43,845	—	—	—	43,845	42,492
Total	43,845	—	—	—	43,845	42,492

Clergy and Staffing costs

Fees to Diocese	2,742	—	—	—	2,742	1,962
Other Clergy Expenses	325	—	—	—	325	660
Wages Honoraria & Support	655	—	—	—	655	1,855
Clergy expenses of incumbent	420	—	—	—	420	882
Rectory expenses	—	—	—	—	—	310
Total	4,143	—	—	—	4,143	5,670

Church Running Expenses

Insurance - Wickham Bishops	2,322	—	—	—	2,322	2,316
Insurance - Little Braxted	1,016	—	—	—	1,016	1,013
Church maintenance WB	975	—	—	—	975	804
Church Maintenance - LB	—	—	1,672	—	1,672	1,363
Pastoral Care	234	—	—	—	234	808
Children & Youth Work	—	—	—	—	—	363
General Costs	2,259	—	—	—	2,259	2,474
Flowers for Church	26	—	—	—	26	577
Upkeep	312	—	—	—	312	312
Music Fund	78	—	—	—	78	283

Upkeep of churchyard WB	503	—	—	—	503	1,086
Upkeep of Churchyard LB	781	—	—	—	781	425
Administration	625	—	—	—	625	751
Church running - Utilities WB	2,615	—	—	—	2,615	2,933
Church running - Utilities LB	226	—	—	—	226	372
Magazine expenses	3,377	—	—	—	3,377	8,215
Tea/Coffee Costs	—	—	—	—	—	218
Alpha Expenses	—	—	—	—	—	921
Journal Write Off	—	—	—	—	—	(22)
In/Out	572	—	—	—	572	1,060
Total	15,926	—	1,672	—	17,599	26,279

Church Running Expenses - Youth Club

Youth Club	—	—	—	—	—	767
Total	—	—	—	—	—	767

Hall Running Costs

Hall running costs	1,684	—	—	—	1,684	1,232
Total	1,684	—	—	—	1,684	1,232

Church Repairs & Maintenance

Church Major Repairs - Structure St Nich	—	—	—	—	—	240
Guardians Costs	—	50,569	—	—	50,569	—
Capital Expenditure	345	—	—	—	345	2,526
Total	345	50,569	—	—	50,914	2,766

Hall Repairs & Maintenance

Hall + major repairs - installation	582	—	—	—	582	1,447
Total	582	—	—	—	582	1,447

Governance Costs

Governance costs examination/audit fee	110	—	—	—	110	110
Total	110	—	—	—	110	110

EXPENDITURE TOTAL	70,972	51,394	1,872	—	124,240	89,812
GRAND TOTAL	(4,280)	(44,286)	(689)	—	(49,256)	33,400

Charitable Donations made 2020:

International

CMS	£400
Embrace the Middle East	£200
Bansang Education	£400
Yomelelani Trust	£400

National

National Churches Trust	£400
Remap	£400
Christians Aware	£400

Local

Friends of Essex Churches	£300
CHESS	£400
Replenish UK	£400
Dementia Adventure	£300

WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED P.C.C. ASSETS

ASSETS

General	£ 57,142
Guardians	£ 3,543
St Bartholomew's Church Restoration Fund	£ 4,669
St. Nicholas Fabric Fund	£ 4,731
Bookstall Stock	£ 708

Estimated Values

Church Hall	£ 500,000
Tables & Chairs	£ 2,000
Kitchen Equipment, Storage Boxes, Urn, Cutlery, Microwave Etc.	£ 1,500
Crockery & Glasses	£ 500
Step Ladder	£ 109
Vacuum Cleaners	£ 200
Video/Television, Sound System/Heaters	£ 1,600
Choir Robes	£ 1,500
Lawnmowers	£ 1,250
Strimmer	£ 150
Hedge Trimmer	£ 150
Piano x 2	£ 2,700
Shed x 2	£ 1,500
Projector	£ 430
Floristry equipment	£ 2,000
Dishwasher	£ 1,500
Photocopier	£ 2,500
Mevo Camera	£ 350
WiFi Router	£ 90

This report dated: 16th January 2021

**WICKHAM BISHOPS & LITTLE BRAXTED PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES
YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020**

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