



APCM Report 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024
The Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Strensall

We are here to worship, praise and thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
In the power of the Holy Spirit to take Christ's love and peace into our community.

Incumbent (Retired September 2023)

Rev. Martin Harrison. The Vicarage, 10 York Road, Strensall, York YO32 5UN

Assistant Curate: (Curacy ended March 2023)

Rev. Katharine McBride. The Barn, 72 The Village, Strensall, York YO32 5XA

Distinctive Deacon:

Rev. Dot Hicks. 111 Moor Lane, Strensall, York YO32 5UG

Additional Minister with PTO:

Rev. Dr. Judith Palmer. 6 Portisham Place, Strensall, York YO32 5AZ

Chair:

Janet Mountain. 49 Wilkinson Way, Strensall, York YO32 5ZA

Treasurer:

Pauline Chambers, 11 Netherwoods, Strensall, York YO32 5WE

Independent Examiner:

Ruth Prins. 21 Chaucer Lane, Strensall, York YO32 5PE

Church Architect:

Andrew Wiles. Wiles and Maguire Ltd. The Danesmead Wing, York YO10 4PB

Parish Safeguarding Officer:

Jane Atkinson. 1 Brunswick Close, Strensall, York YO32 5ZT

Parish Administrator:

Victoria Haworth. c/o The Vicarage, 10 York Road, Strensall, York YO32 5UN

Bank:

Santander UK plc. Account Number 95929403. Sort Code 09-01-51

The following served as PCC members as from the APCM 2023:
(For a list of those who served before the 2023 APCM, see the APCM Report for 2022)

Rev. Martin Harrison	Vicar and Chair (Appointed September 2001, retired September 2023)
Rev. Katharine McBride	Assistant Curate (From July 2019, resigned March 2023)
Rev. Dot Hicks	Distinctive Deacon
Rev. Dr. Judith Palmer	Additional Minister with PTO

Margaret Berg	Churchwarden (Re-elected at APCM 2023)
Gordon Moore	Churchwarden (Re-elected at APCM 2023)

Janet Irish	Deanery Synod (Elected 2023)
Gordon Moore	Deanery Synod (Elected 2023)
(1 vacancy for the Deanery Synod)	

Jean Cooper	(Elected 2021 for 3 years)
Terry Atkinson	(Elected 2021 for 3 years)
Pauline Chambers	Treasurer (Elected 2021 for 3 years)

Andrew Alexander	Electoral Roll Officer (Elected 2022 for 3 years, resigned March 2024)
Pauline Pillai	(Elected 2022 for 3 years)
Wendy Robinson	(Elected 2023 for 2 years)

Janet Mountain	Vice Chair until September 2023, Chair since September 2023 (Elected 2023 for 3 years)
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Shirley Bamford	PCC Secretary (Elected 2023 for 3 years)
Jane Atkinson	Safeguarding Officer (Elected 2023 for 3 years)

Those elected to the PCC at the APCM are on a rolling 3-year term.
Three councilors are to be elected each year with a total of 9 elected members.
Any ex-officio and co-opted members will be in addition to this figure.

Members ***ARE*** eligible for re-election at the end of their term of office.

For re-election in 2024 Jean Cooper; Terry Atkinson; Pauline Chambers

For re-election in 2025 Wendy Robinson, Pauline Pillai, 1 vacancy

For re-election in 2026 Janet Mountain; Shirley Bamford; Jane Atkinson

It has been agreed that Victoria Haworth, our Parish Administrator, should act as a minute secretary for the PCC. Victoria does not have any right to vote at a PCC meeting.

Deanery Mission Partnership

In 2017, the Deanery Mission Partnership was entered into and means that all clergy in the deanery are issued with licences enabling them to officially minister in all parishes of the deanery. This legally means that each PCC in the deanery acquired new clerical members.

It was agreed that these additional clerical members will not attend any PCC meetings other than those in the parishes they are directly responsible for. These clerical members also agree to forfeit any voting rights.

All future clergy licensed in the deanery will be appointed on the same basis of cross licensing. Names of these clergy will not be recorded in APCM Reports.

PCC Meetings in 2023

The full PCC met 8 times in 2023. This includes the first meeting of the new PCC which was held immediately after the APCM. All meetings were in person.

In 2022, the Standing Committee met once in person.

There were two PCC groups that continued to meet regularly, these were the Environment Group and the Finance Group.

Background

The PCC at St Mary's Church Strensall has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, the Rev Martin Harrison, in promoting the work of the Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Strensall with Towthorpe. This responsibility includes financial management of the church and the care and maintenance of church buildings and fabric and the wider mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. During 2023, Rev Martin Harrison was on sickness absence before retiring in September 2023.

Membership

The PCC (The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Strensall with Towthorpe) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission. Registration Number 1162095. (First registered 10th June 2015). Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the APCM in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

The Incumbent, along with any other licensed clergy to St. Mary's and the Churchwarden(s) are ex-officio members of the PCC. It is agreed that no more than 9 members be elected to the PCC on a proportional three year rotating basis. Any members of St Mary's Strensall who are elected as members of the Deanery, Diocesan or General Synods are automatically members of the PCC for the duration of the Synod.

The PCC may appoint co-opted members in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee comprises of the Incumbent, Churchwarden(s), Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice Chair. This committee of the PCC is required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the PCC between meetings subject to any direction given by the council.

Safeguarding Statement

St Mary's PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Our Safeguarding Group meets regularly in order to support our safeguarding officer and to ensure we are up to date with current practices related to safeguarding.

Fundraising

Fundraising is the responsibility of the full PCC.

Electoral Roll and Church attendance

Membership of the electoral roll is open to all lay people who are baptised, over the age of 16 and have signed a declaration that they are either a member of the Church of England or of a church in communion therewith and:

Resident in the parish OR

Not being resident, has habitually attended public worship in the parish during a period of six months prior to enrolment, OR

Is a member in good standing of a church which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (not being a church in communion with the Church of England) and also prepared to declare themselves to be a member of the Church of England having habitually worshipped in the Parish Church for a period of six months prior to enrolment.

St. Mary's Church Electoral Roll Report from Andrew Alexander, Electoral Roll Officer

The Electoral Roll prepared for the APCM in 2023 was 113 members.

Since the APCM the following members of the Electoral Roll have died:

Ralph Plant

Mabel Thomson

In 2019, we were required to prepare a completely new Electoral Roll as governed by the Church Representation Rules. The renewal of the Roll happens every 6 years. During all other years the Roll is only reviewed in preparation for the APCM.

Numbers on the Electoral Roll for the year are as follows:

At start of year	113
Number leaving the Roll during the year	3
Deaths	2
Number added to the Roll during the year	2
Number on Roll	110

The following reports are presented to the APCM:

Statutory Reports

- PCC Chair
- Treasurer
- Independent Examiner
- Churchwardens
- PCC Secretary
- Deanery Synod

Non Statutory Reports

- Safeguarding
- Parish Administrator
- Bell Tower
- Little Fishes
- ACTS 435
- Open the Book Assemblies

**PCC Chair Report
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024**

This has been a very challenging year for the PCC and my grateful thanks go to every member who has worked tirelessly to provide leadership and support during some demanding and sometimes stressful situations. I also thank Victoria who has in her usual dedicated manner supported the PCC alongside her other church commitments

Staffing

Changes in staffing relate to the early retirement of our incumbent Rev. Martin Harrison in September 2023 after a long period of ill health. Also, the resignation of Rev. Katherine McBride as curate in March 2023

Services and Ministries

We continue to be grateful to Rev. Dot Hicks Distinctive (Deacon) and Rev. Judith Palmer (Additional Minister with Permission to Officiate) for their dedicated efforts to ensure services are provided and to Judy Smith (Eucharistic Minister) in her support of them. Many thanks also to all who support the services.

Rev. Dot Hicks renewed her licence in March 2023 for a further two years.

Janet Mountain was admitted as an Authorised Lay Minister in September 2023. This being a transferred role from that of Registered Parish Assistant. This will be reviewed in three years.

The PCC is also indebted to a team of visiting clergy who have supported and upheld the spiritual wellbeing of the church during this time.

Thanks to our Churchwardens whose efforts have enabled the ongoing provision of services alongside organising marriages, funerals, and baptisms.

We have said farewell to a number of our congregation this year and our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

I would also like to thank those who have dedicated themselves to prayer throughout this year both through our dedicated prayer teams and in overseeing prayer requests.

Home Groups

Our Home Groups continue to meet and successfully support many of our congregation through bible study, prayer and social conversation. Thanks to all those who lead and organise these.

Children's Ministry

Little Fishes continues to be well attended and supported by many families. Our Open the Book Team, together with the Methodist Church, continue in their ministry to local schools including Robert Wilkinson Academy. Whilst not exclusively for children, our joint Nativity and Christingle service was well supported by Little Fishes families with many taking a part in the nativity scene.

Events

With the help and support of church members we have organised some successful events not least of all an outstanding Light Trail which saw up to 300 children attending

The joint Nativity and Christingle service ended with over 50 people sharing refreshments and making their Christingles in Spearehead Hall. We are grateful to have Spearehead Hall. Many thanks to all who were involved in these and other Fundraising events.

Environment

Our Environment Team has continued to look after a range of practical, ecological and environmental issues, with a number of these being both costly and challenging and thanks goes to all who have supported them.

Challenges

The diocesan initiative, 'Living Christ's Story' continues to progress with the completion of the Deanery Plan. The PCC took the decision not to write our Ministry Unit Plan in 2023. This enabled us to focus our efforts to write the Parish Profile which took precedence. PCC members have continued to attend Deanery training days

Finance

Our Treasurer and her support team have met a great many challenges this year and have worked hard at looking at the various options that may help us meet this issue in the future. Grateful thanks go to them. (See Treasurer's Report)

The Vacancy

From September 2023 we entered a time of Vacancy which has required us to meet certain criteria in connection with appointing a new incumbent. We have been advised in these matters by the Archdeacon and will continue to follow the process laid down by the Church of England. Responsibility for the Vacancy lies with the Church Wardens supported by the PCC.

Please continue to pray for the PCC members that we will know God's will and purpose going forward. We need discernment and wisdom in our decision making the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we move into a very important year ahead.

Thank you all for your support for myself and the PCC

*Report prepared by Janet Mountain, PCC Chair
April 2024*

Financial Report for Year End 2023
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024

The Finance documents are included over the next 4 pages. They are:

- St. Mary's Accounts 2023 (page 7)
- St. Mary's Current Bank Reconciliation 2023 (page 8)
- Treasurer's Report for APCM 19th May 2024 (page 9)
- Budget 2024 (page 10)

Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Strensall with Towthorpe
St Mary's Church, Strensall, York
For the Period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total Funds	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Planned giving	47,401		1,511	48,912	48,184
Collections and Other giving				-	-
Other Voluntary Receipts	1,862		576	2,438	1,805
Gift Aid Recovered	16,604			16,604	-
Bequests	-			-	25,000
Grants Received	1,270		500	1,770	1,020
Other Receipts			869	869	2,473
Activities for generating funds	10,521			10,521	5,635
Investment income	652		1,405	2,058	291
Receipts from church activities	8,718			8,718	3,341
Total Receipts	87,028	-	4,862	91,890	87,750
Payments					
Cost of generating funds	85			85	323
Missionary and charitable giving			1,287	1,287	1,297
Parish Share	60,000			60,000	60,000
Clergy and staffing costs	7,232			7,232	7,685
Church running expenses	15,584		678	16,262	9,383
Hall running costs	2,565			2,565	3,315
Church repairs & maintenance			6,766	6,766	1,697
Hall repairs & maintenance				-	-
New building work	900			900	-
Total Payments	86,367	-	8,731	95,098	83,700
Excess of Payments over receipts before	661	-	-3,869	-3,207	4,050
Transfers					
Gross Transfers between funds - in	7,526			7,526	-
Gross Transfers between funds - out			-7,526	-7,526	-
Excess of receipts over funds	8,187	-	-11,395	-3,207	4,050
Net Movements in Funds	8,187	-	-11,395	-3,207	4,050
Reconciliation of Funds					
All Assets at 01 January 2023	20,772	13,003	48,985	82,760	78,709
All Assets at 31 December 2023	28,959	13,003	37,590	79,552	82,760
Represented by	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total Funds	Total Funds
Unrestricted General Fund	28,959			28,959	20,771
Operation Reserve		13,003		13,003	15,250
Youth and Childrens Work			17,975	17,975	17,296
Building fund				-	2,900
Childrens Society			224	224	-
Collection for Nepal Childrens Home			-	-	56
ACTS 435			-	-	190
Little Fishes (Restricted in Gen Account)			958	958	935
Maintenance Fund			18,433	18,433	25,473
	28,959	13,003	37,590	79,552	82,760

Bank Accounts	CCLA	19,628
	Skipton Building Society	43,205
	Current Account	16,719
		<u>79,552</u>

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St Mary's Church Strensall PCC

Bank Reconciliation
Financial Year 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023

<u>Current Account</u>	£
Opening Bank Balance @ 1st January 2023	63,741.28
Opening Bank Balance @ 1st January 2023 CCLA	19,018.35
+	
Total Income	92,296.42
-	
Total Expenditure	95,503.64
Closing Bank Balance per Cash Book	79,552.41
Closing Bank Balance per Statement @ 31/12/23	16,719.08
Closing Balance per CCLA statement 30/09/2023	19,627.87
Closing Balance per Skipton statement 30/09/2023	43,205.46
Difference in Bank Balances	-

Treasurers report 2024 for APCM

At the beginning of January 2023, the balance in the Santander account was £63,741, and at the end of December 2023, was £16,719.08, with £19,627 in the CCLA (contingency) account and £43,205 in the Skipton Building Society (restricted) account. Both of the latter deposit accounts were receiving interest.

Income

24 people are giving regularly via the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), which is also used for one-off gifts and 14 people are giving by Standing Order (S.O.).

I would like to encourage everyone who can to use the PGS.
Please see me for more details or search www.parishgiving.org.uk

The "SumUp" card machine is being used regularly for transactions and donations. As only 3 people were using the regular envelope giving system, it was decided to use only the "yellow" envelopes which could be signed if claiming Gift Aid (GA).

Income figures in 2023 were given a boost by the receipt of £15,000 backdated Gift Aid reclaim from 2021 and 2022. Gift Aid and GADS is still to claim for 2023, but the figure received will be greatly reduced compared with previous years as the PGS claims GA in the same month the donation is received.

A grant of £500 was given from the Parish Council for upkeep of the churchyard.

Spearehead hall is well used for church and community events, bringing in a steady income stream and good-will. Thanks to those who ably manage the bookings.

Expenditure

Main areas of expenditure are the Free will offering, (reduced from £60k to £40k for 2024, but with a new incumbent, we would aspire to return to our previous level), energy bills, storm damage to trees - not covered by insurance, wages, cleaning and insurance.

The FWO was fully paid up for 2023.

During the year, St Marys Church has financially supported Acts 435, the Salvation Army, Christian Aid, York Foodbank, NewLife Church, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Regular expenditure continues to exceed regular income. There are reserves which will support us in the short term.

A special thank you to Denise Edmundson for her book keeping.

P Chambers 10th April 2024.

St. Mary's Church Strensall, Budget 2024

Expenditure					
	Budget 24		to 31.12.23		
Insurance	2112		2079		
FWO	40,000		60,000		
VH wages	6000		6000		
Vicar expenses	0		673		
Curate expenses	0		292		
Service exp	2000		1900		
Utilities (exc cleaning)	8600		8100		
Repairs / maint	6000		6000		
Funerals/ weddings	2000		2000		
Mission giving	1500		400		
IT services	500		460		
Cleaning.	3400		3300		
Miscellaneous	2000		2000		
Total	74112		93204		
Income					
Standing order	8000		25,500		
Other giving	2500		2000		
PGS	26000		17000		
PGS Gift Aid	6000		4000		
(Yellow) envelopes	Not used		1400		
GA envelopes	2000		3000		
SumUp giving	1000		in other giving		
Donations/ legacy	1000		1000		
Gift Aid SO	2000		to claim		
Gift Aid other	500		1000		
Hall income	7000		7000		
Weddings / funerals	5000		5000		
Fundraising	1500		1500		
Miscellaneous	3500		1920		
Total	66000		70320		

**Independent Examiner Report
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024**

**Independent Examiner's Report
To the Trustees of the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Strensall with
Towthorpe
Charity Number 1162095**

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to: examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act; to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect,:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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 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.

Name: Mrs Ruth Prins, FCPFA

Relevant professional qualification or body: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

Address: 21 Chaucer Lane, Strensall, York, YO32 5PE

Date: Monday, 15 April 2024

**Churchwardens Report
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024**

The Environment team has created a priority list of work to be carried out this year and the next, based on the report of the Quinquennial Inspection (QI) carried out in September 2022.

The annual inspection of the heating boiler was carried out in December 2023 and passed successfully. Remote access to control the heating system has been installed for both the church and the hall and is being used frequently. This is most effective during adverse weather conditions and occasional bookings in the Spearehead Hall because it reduces the need to travel to the church to manually turn on the heating.

The annual PAT inspections were carried out with no issues to report.

The 5 yearly electrical inspection of the church building has been carried out successfully.

Bookings for the use of the Spearehead Hall have continued to increase this past year and thanks to Jean and Penny for managing these.

Poppies Cleaners continue to clean both the church building and the Spearehead Hall every 2 weeks. Their standard of work has been most satisfactory.

The development of the churchyard as a wildlife refuge continues and the development of a Rest Area at the eastern end of the churchyard is taking shape. Two wild flower areas are now in their 2nd year with plans to develop a centrally located 3rd area underway.

Our thanks go to Peter and Alison Bayliss for their tireless work creating these. They, together with Sophie Allan, planted many daffodil bulbs around the main entrance areas of the church during late 2023 and these were a wonderful sight this springtime when they bloomed for the first time.

Thanks go to the environment team and the churchyard maintenance team for their hard work keeping access open to the churchyard and graves including the Commonwealth graves.

Thanks go to Mike Cawthorn for continuing to step up to handle projection duties at our 11am services.

We continue to enjoy live music in church. Thanks to Paul Blenkiron and Alison Bayliss for playing the organ at our services.

As this report is being written we're hopefully nearing the end of our Vacancy period during which time we've been very fortunate to have been able to continue our principal Sunday worship with support from several retired clergy. These clergy, together with our Authorised Lay Minister Janet Mountain, have also continued to hold our 11am Sunday services.

Our thanks go to all for their continued support and especially to our Churchwarden Margaret who efficiently organised the calendar for the visiting clergy.

Lastly, our thanks go to Margaret for holding down the Churchwarden role for the past 5 years.

*Report compiled by :
Margaret Berg and Gordon Moore - Churchwardens
April 2024*

**PCC Secretary Report
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024**

1. PCC Meetings and Organisation

The PCC met eight times in 2023. The Standing Committee met once.

PCC members have attended Deanery Training Days with another scheduled in April 2024.

The PCC identified some financial challenges for St Mary's and have addressed these in the short term.

The following areas continue to be covered by the PCC:

- Safeguarding
- Data Protection
- Fundraising

2. Key Achievements in 2023

Two Sunday services have continued to be held with the Primary Communion Service at 9.30am and the Informal Service held at 11am. Additional Services have been held as appropriate.

Other notable achievements are:

- The church continues links with York Foodbank and with various community groups, Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy and with other churches in Strensall churches
- We achieved Level 3 Status on the National Safeguarding Dashboard
- Support to Easingwold Deanery is ongoing
- St.Mary's ran a programme of services and events for Christmas 2023
- Fundraising events included the Carnival café, charity bag collections, Carols with the Salvation Army band. Over the year we raised much needed funds for St. Mary's, Christian Aid, Children's Society, Salvation Army and our friends in Nepal.
- Community events in 2023 included the very successful 'Light Party'
- Home Groups are established, currently 4 meeting regularly.
- The PCC supports the work of Acts 435

3. Future Challenges 2024/25

The PCC has identified the challenges of entering into a Vacancy period and will commence writing the Parish Profile in 2024.

*Report prepared by Shirley Bamford (PCC Secretary)
April 2024*

**Deanery Synod
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024**

After our 2023 APCM Gordon joined me as a Deanery Synod representative and we have worked together since. This was particularly helpful when Gordon hosted an IT training session for the Deanery in our hall.

The Deanery are still looking for another the lay representative for the Diocesan Synod to join the two clergy and one laity member already committed.

Throughout the Deanery churches are continuing to work on Living Christ's Story to the best of their ability. Some of our churches are really struggling and it is looking highly likely that Sheriff Hutton will become a Festival church.

There is a theatre production by the Riding Lights group at the Galtres centre which has been widely promoted throughout the Deanery in an attempt to reach out to others to help them in their faith journey.

There will be a Deanery Development morning on 27 April with a theme of discipleship.

We at Strensall, are going to host a Hog roast on Saturday 13 July on behalf of the Deanery.

The Deanery has been aware for some time of the impending retirement of Bishop John and Gordon and I have details of relevant services in July.

Rev. Steve Whiting is standing down as Area Dean in November.

*Report prepared by Janet Irish, Deanery Synod Representative
March 2024*

**Safeguarding Report
APCM 2024
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Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) at St. Mary's

Our Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is Jane Atkinson. Jane was appointed to this role at the 2021 APCM. In 2022, Jane completed all the Statutory Safeguarding Training for her role as PSO.

Safeguarding Administration & Safer Recruitment at St. Mary's

Victoria Haworth has responsibility for the administration of Safeguarding and for ensuring that we follow Safer Recruitment guidelines as set by the National Safeguarding team. This includes safeguarding training and online DBS applications.

Safeguarding in Church of England

The Church of England's 'Promoting a Safer Church' safeguarding policy must be implemented and followed at all levels within the church.

Safeguarding in Diocese of York

The safeguarding team at the Diocese of York ensures that 'Promoting a Safer Church' and all associated central documents is followed locally. In parish churches this is to be managed through the PCC. Rob Marshall is the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA).

Safeguarding at St. Mary's Strensall

Our own safeguarding practice continues to be embedded and part of daily life at St. Mary's and we thank all volunteers for their support and acceptance of this vital part of our church life.

We continue to update and revise our safeguarding database regularly to ensure that it reflects current practice. To this end, all volunteers are recruited following Safer Recruitment guidance. All DBS certificates remain up to date following the change in validity from 5 to 3 years. The responsibility for the clergy DBS and safeguarding training remain with the Diocesan safeguarding team.

We currently (17.04.2024) have 46 people involved with safeguarding activities at St. Mary's. It is so encouraging to have such support for safeguarding.

Safeguarding remains a standing item on all PCC meeting agendas. Either Jane or Victoria shares information to ensure that the PCC remains up to date on current activity as well as any changes.

In 2023, we had eleven visits from visiting bell ringers who all completed the relevant safeguarding paperwork.

In 2024, we plan to update all safeguarding policies and documents prior to our internal audit. We did not complete the audit in 2023.

Following its introduction in 2022, we have worked hard to complete, and are forever updating, the 'Safeguarding Dashboard'. This nationwide project encourages all churches to implement the 'Church of England Safeguarding Handbook'. The Dashboard is divided into eight areas and then into several sub sections, each covering a certain aspect of the safeguarding policy, such as 'Training'. There are 3 Dashboard levels, all scored based on the traffic light system. We achieved the highest grading of 'Level 3 Status' in 2023 and remain at 99% complete. We are waiting for some external verification to complete the final 1%. This is a major achievement!

*Report prepared by Victoria Haworth (Parish Administrator) and Jane Atkinson (PSO),
March 2024*

Parish Administrator Report
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024

Key achievements of the Parish Administrator in 2023 include;

- Working closely with the Parish Safeguarding Officer to ensure full compliance to the Church of England's 'Promoting a Safer Church' policy. (See also the Safeguarding Report for APCM 2024.)
- Organised and prepared all paperwork for PCC including meetings and attended PCC meetings to take Minutes.
- Organised and prepared all paperwork (excluding financial) for APCM and attended APCM to take Minutes.
- Ensure St Mary's policies are kept up to date. Manage all Current and Archived Documents files.
- Continued to manage and maintain St. Mary's systems to ensure compliance to GDPR and Data Protection Policy. This includes all correspondence and notices.
- Continued to use St. Mary's GDPR form for people to give permission for St. Mary's to contact them. Using these forms, our central database is updated and the previous issue is deleted. We only communicate with those on our database as per the Data Protection Policy.
- Respond to email enquiries sent via the website 'Contact Us' section.
- Provided efficient and ongoing support to the PCC and Churchwardens. Through email, telephone calls and face to face meetings.
- Maintained St. Mary's online Google calendar linked to the webpage.
- Leader of Little Fishes in Spearehead Hall (See separate 'Little Fishes' report), stepping in to run the group from September 2022.
- Organised two more successful charity bag collections for 2023, raising £125.50 for church funds. Thanks to Andrew and Anne Alexander for kindly offering to be the main collection point for both collections in 2023.
- Wrote St Mary's weekly 'Notice Sheet' and emailed it weekly to those who have requested to receive an e-copy. This is received currently by 97 people each week (as at 10.04.2024).
- Ensure that the church noticeboards are kept up to date with relevant information.
- I maintain and organise the files and filing cabinets in the vestry. During 2023, a second filing cabinet was brought over from the vicarage. I am still trying to merge the files to ensure a smooth transition for the new incumbent.

2023 has been an interesting year at St. Mary's for all manner of reasons. I am grateful to the Churchwardens and PCC for their ongoing commitment to my role. Many thanks also to everyone at St. Mary's for your continued support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require further information at this time.

Report prepared by Victoria Haworth, Parish Administrator
April 2024

**Bell Tower Report
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024**

In 2023 our band of five lady ringers managed to ring most Sundays for the early service, occasionally we were down to three or four ringers. If not enough to ring, one of the band usually chimed for the service. We rang the bells for two weddings during the year.

We no longer practice on a Monday night and have adjusted the entry in the Yorkshire Association of Change Ringers annual booklet, of which we are all members.

Our regular monthly visiting Ringers continue to enjoy ringing peals in our bell tower, which can last over two hours. They are very helpful in dealing with minor issues with the ropes, being very experienced ringers.

We have had no interest in anyone wanting to learn, they would however have to attend Huntington Church practice night as we are not able to teach.

We continue to enjoy ringing; long may it last!

*Report prepared by Anne Fieldhouse, Tower Captain
March 2024*

**Little Fishes Report
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024**

Little Fishes is a popular baby and toddler group that meets weekly on Tuesdays in term-time in Spearehead Hall. The session time is 9.15-10.45am. Whilst part of the children's ministry of St. Mary's, the group has more of a 'light touch' with the focus being on providing a safe space for children and adults, as well as showing God's love in a gentle way encouraging friendships, kindness and generosity of spirit. We do not provide a time of worship as such, but all come together at the end of the session for singing with children picking the songs from the 'song bag'.

We set up the room into different zones... baby area is cordoned off with chairs and then becomes the place where we gather for the end of session sing song, there is a craft table with the weekly craft (glue, paint or colouring), play kitchen, reading nook, puzzles for pre-schoolers and a tuff tray that we use for play dough, biscuit decorating or similar hands-on activity. In warmer weather we have toys for the outside area including sand and water trays.

We recognise special occasions such as Christmas, Harvest, Easter, Mothering Sunday, Valentine's Day, Father's Day, King's Coronation, Children in Need, etc and try to provide a linked activity such as card making, crown painting or decorating baubles at Christmas. We also keep the noticeboards in Spearehead Hall full with bright displays of the children's artwork. We hope that this inspires those looking at it to either come along to the group or, in the very least, know that we are there on Tuesday mornings.

The group continues to be run by Victoria Haworth. During 2023, two of the mums who attend the group with their children also joined as leaders and completed the full safer recruitment process. Emma Wingfield and Hannah Liddle now help to run the group. We are always happy for others to join us and in 2024 we will continue to ask amongst regular attendees. We are supported by other helpers who come most weeks to help set up, tidy away, sweep the floor, make drinks, prepare crafts and provide friendship and fellowship to everyone who comes.

We regularly have up to 20 families attending each week and approx 40 families who have completed registration forms. Some come each week whilst others just drop in as they are able. Everyone enjoys the warm welcome (and warm drink!).

We charge a nominal £2 per family group per session. Towards the end of 2023, we started to use the SumUp machine as an option for weekly subs payments. We are also still happy to take cash payments. This is paid into the bank account, via St. Mary's cashier, at the end of each half term. We have a restricted fund within St. Mary's bank account and are self-sufficient financially.

I am extremely grateful to the lovely team who come to help and support the group. Especially to Emma, Hannah, Caroline, Laura, Lauren, Jane, Jenny, Pauline and Bianca who all come to the sessions when they can.

*Report prepared by Victoria Haworth, Little Fishes Leader
April 2024*

**ACTS 435
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024**

Over the last year, in my capacity as an approved local advocate for this Christian charity, I have been able to help three individuals. Two were brought to my attention by a Haxby Local Area Coordinator and one via a request posted on St Mary's Website. Following my posting of needs on the ACTS 435 website, £200 was raised through generous donors for each request.

The types of needs were as follows:

- Car hire arrears following two years of cancer treatment – much of this during COVID lockdown and away from family (not eligible for sick pay due to only having been in a new job for less than 3 months).
- Death of baby and unable to afford grave headstone.
- Rendered homeless by severe flood and fall from a ladder causing spinal fracture. Required help with purchase of curtains and curtain poles for new accommodation.

I have brought these needs to the attention of St Mary's congregations as well as handing out information cards about ACTS 435. Most people are happy to go online but a few people have preferred to use the ACTS 435 envelopes available in church with the option to gift aiding their donation. These can then be posted to ACTS 435 using the address on the envelope.

Thank you to everyone who has donated in any way to this very worthwhile charity. I have been privileged to hear and see the difference these donations have made. Do remember, if you know anyone in need, please pass on my contact details as detailed on the ACTS 435 publicity at church and around the village.

*Report prepared by Linda Fee, ACTS 435 Advocate
April 2024*

Open the Book Assemblies
APCM 2024
Sunday 19th May 2024

Of the 18,000 Primary Schools in England and Wales, approximately 3,000 have teams delivering Open the Book (OTB) assemblies. The Bible Society, as the umbrella organisation overseeing OTB, provides ongoing training and excellent resources. Last year, in order to fund many new resources, the Bible Society requested that a small payment be made by each person delivering these assemblies. St Mary's agreed to cover the costs for this.

Currently, we have a wonderful, ecumenical team comprising 6 members from St Mary's and 1 from Strensall Methodists delivering assemblies at Crayke C of E School and Robert Wilkinson Primary School on a Thursday morning. On average, we visit Crayke fortnightly and Robert Wilkinson once every Half Term. It has been a joy to see the excitement on the children's faces as they enter the school halls. We dress up in costumes linked to Old and New Testament stories as well as having many props to set the scene. The children are so keen to be chosen to be part of the cast.

We are grateful to be able to store props at the Methodist church and have augmented what we have by making many new props. The impact these assemblies have is evident when we occasionally meet these children at Spearehead Café, Holiday Clubs, Light Trail and in shops when they recognise individuals and mime the OTB assembly hand action. We always receive a warm welcome from both schools and it is clear that the assemblies are much appreciated by children and staff alike.

Ideally, we could do with a few more volunteers to provide contingency for when members are on holiday or ill. Training is not onerous, and many parts are non-speaking. If anyone is interested or would like more information, please speak to Linda Fee.

*Report prepared by Linda Fee, Open the Book
April 2024*
