

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF THURSTON

England & Wales · Charity number 1201053

Details

Other names	THE PCC OF THURSTON
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	2022-11-17
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Church Road Thurston Suffolk IP31 2QR
Phone	01284787554
Email	revdbenjaminedwards@gmail.com
Website	https://www.greatbartonandthurston.org.uk/

Activities

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

Activities: Activities include regular public worship is provided free of charge and open to all. Other activities include:teaching and learning; taking assemblies; donations to other charities and our own projects provide public benefit in the relief of poverty and need, often for minority groups with particular needs such as the elderly.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Religious Activities
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Suffolk

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£39,057	£43,256	-	-
2023-12-31	£62,060	£56,642	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Rev Benjamin Edwards	Chair	2021-10-01
Margery Ashford		2022-04-24
Patricia Sadler		2022-04-24

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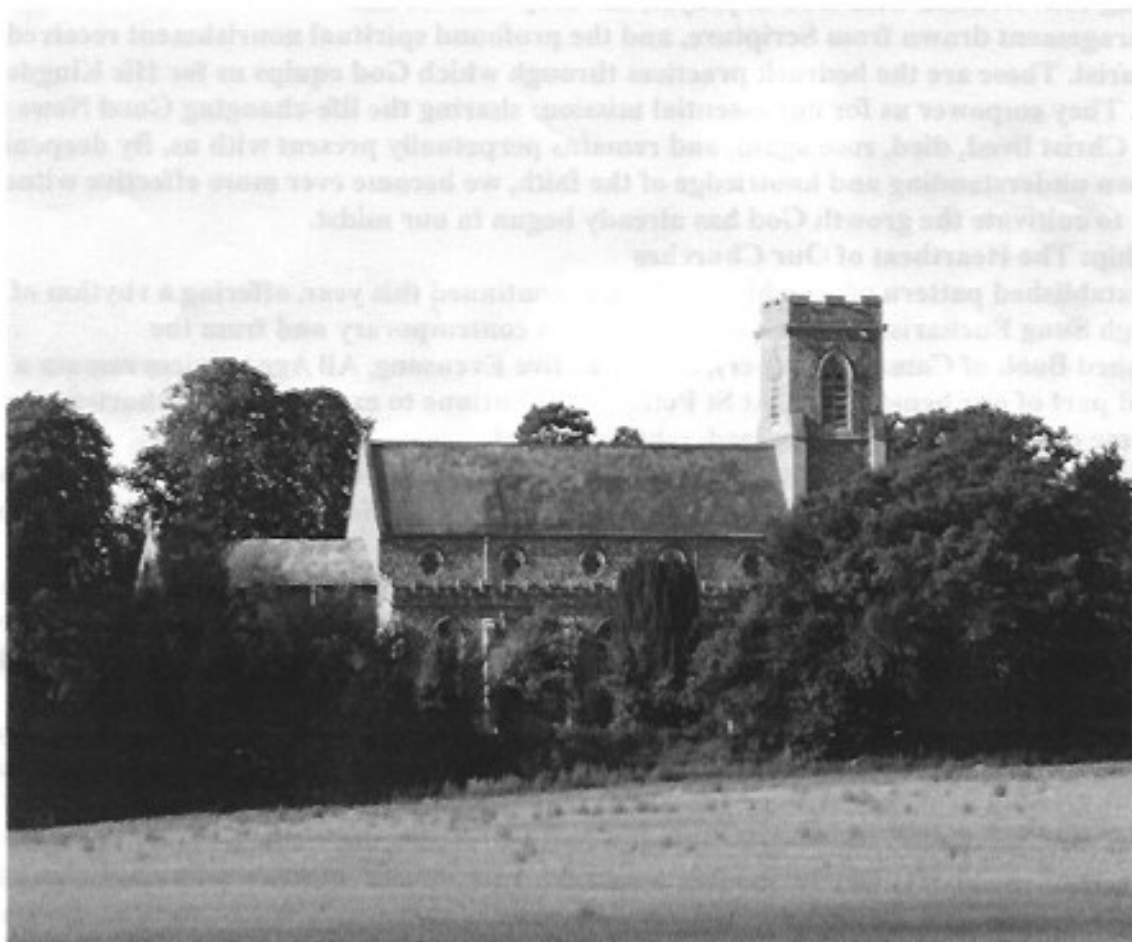
Accounts

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the

Parochial Church Council of
St. Peter's Church, Thurston

For the year ended 31st December 2024



St Peter's & Holy Innocents APCM Reports 2025
Reflections from the Vicar, The Rev'd Fr Benjamin Edwards

Grace and peace to you all.

This past year has been a season of intentional reflection for our benefice, a time of leaning into God's call for holy rest. As we navigate changes within our Parochial Church Councils (PCCs), we acknowledge that this period has brought transition. Several dedicated members have concluded their season of service on the PCCs, and we extend our sincere gratitude for the time, wisdom, and energy they invested in the governance of St Peter's and Holy Innocents. Sadly, some transitions were due to age or illness, and it is with heavy hearts that we have also bid farewell to faithful servants who have since entered eternal rest. Our prayers rise especially for the souls of Christopher Wells, Charles Gorer and Pat Sheppard, all steadfast members of our PCCs in years past. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Despite this quieter period in terms of outward activity, the Spirit has undoubtedly been at work among us, yielding many blessings. The vibrant fellowship enjoyed after our services continues to be a source of great personal joy and encouragement. This warmth and genuine connection has been instrumental in welcoming many newcomers into our church family, making them feel truly seen and valued. This spirit of positivity shines through in our welcome and our invitation to others to share in the life of St Peter's and Holy Innocents. This is a strong foundation upon which we can confidently build in the year ahead as we begin discerning and planning our outreach and mission anew.

Building upon this period of consolidation, our focus now gently shifts towards charting our course forward. At the heart of all we do, we must cherish and nurture our spiritual core: our ongoing conversation with God in prayer, the deep wisdom and encouragement drawn from Scripture, and the profound spiritual nourishment received in the Eucharist. These are the bedrock practices through which God equips us for His Kingdom work. They empower us for our essential mission: sharing the life-changing Good News that Jesus Christ lived, died, rose again, and remains perpetually present with us. By deepening our own understanding and knowledge of the faith, we become ever more effective witnesses, ready to cultivate the growth God has already begun in our midst.

Worship: The Heartbeat of Our Churches

Our established pattern of worship has largely continued this year, offering a rhythm of grace through Sung Eucharist, Holy Communion (both contemporary and from the cherished Book of Common Prayer), and reflective Evensong. All Age services remain a valued part of our benefice life. At St Peter's, we continue to explore non-Eucharistic formats for these occasions, enabling lay leadership by gifted individuals such as our Reader, Kathy Drakes, and others authorised to lead worship. Our recent Mothering Sunday service and Harvest Festival, both Services of the Word, were well-received examples of this approach.

Christmas once again saw our churches filled, with services across the benefice experiencing encouraging attendance. I received particularly positive feedback following the Crib Services, which many families from Great Barton, Thurston and beyond now consider a cherished part of their Christmas tradition – a wonderful connection with our wider community.

This year's Easter services were thoughtfully adapted based on previous attendance patterns, and we saw an encouraging response. While acknowledging that Easter is often a precious time for families to gather, we also gently hold the profound significance of this holiest of seasons for Christians – the journey into the Passion, death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. As St. Paul writes in Galatians 2:20: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. This powerful verse speaks of a radical identification with Christ's sacrifice, leading to a transformed existence where Christ Himself becomes our life source. It echoes our deepest longing to know Christ intimately, sharing in

His death so we might also share in the power of His resurrection life. To truly enter into this mystery, we must journey together! Perhaps, in the year ahead, we can encourage one another more intentionally to embrace this sacred pilgrimage and even invite visiting family and friends to walk alongside us.

Finally, heartfelt thanks are due to all who make our worship possible. Our dedicated Churchwardens work tirelessly behind the scenes. Our Reader, Kathy Drakes, consistently enriches our understanding with her excellent preaching and insightful teaching, offering fresh perspectives on the Gospels and faithfully exercising her ministry across both villages. We are also deeply grateful for the continued support of our retired clergy, Reverend Canon David Crawley and Reverend Mark Hunt, who readily make themselves available for services and occasional offices. Furthermore, we have been blessed by the ministry of The Rev Canon Stephne van der Toorn, kindly assisted by her husband Joop. A joyful footnote: Coco the guide dog has now officially retired, hanging up her harness after a special retirement blessing at St Peter's. We continue to delight in her presence (and occasional gentle snuffles!) during our services!

Ministry & Mission: Serving Our Community

Our outward-facing ministry remains consistent, with a continued focus on investing in the young people and families within our parishes. Plans to enhance the Children's Corner and the Prayer Corner at St Peter's have unfortunately been paused this year as we seek a new Treasurer. This challenge of filling key roles is sadly familiar across the wider Church of England, but we remain hopeful

and prayerful that we can make progress on this project in the coming year. Our engagement with local schools continues to be a highlight. I greatly value my weekly visits to Thurston Primary School and Great Barton Primary School to lead assemblies, and it is wonderful that our Reader, Kathy Drakes, has also begun contributing her gifts there. Pat Sadler continues her valuable service as an active governor at Thurston Primary School. I have stepped back from my governor role at Thurston as part of practising healthy self-care amidst my various parish responsibilities – a reminder of the importance of not spreading ourselves too thinly!

I also continue to enjoy my visits to the SENDAT Special Education schools (Priory) in Thurston, leading sessions focused on the major Christian festivals. These are always rewarding times, filled with insightful questions and enthusiasm from the pupils. The children also visit St Peter's, as evidenced by the wonderful Remembrance artwork displayed in the church. This is a relatively light commitment, typically involving two or three visits annually. At Thurston Community College, I run a monthly group for Christian children, who come with lunch and we chat about our faith lives and various aspects of Christianity. There are currently a dedicated group of three boys who come, speaking enthusiastically about their faith. It has been some time since the church has had any input into Thurston Community College, so this is a particular blessing to be asked to run a group after several years of gentle engagement.

My role as Chaplain (or Padré) to the 863 (Thurston) Squadron RAF Air Cadets continues to be fulfilling. Leading sessions on Thursday evenings covering ethics, meditation, and teamwork provides opportunities for meaningful conversations. I have been particularly encouraged by cadets approaching me to discuss matters of faith. We were pleased to have an officer represent the Squadron at our Remembrance Sunday service, and permissions are being sought for a cadet detachment to attend formally in 2025. The Squadron's presence at the D-Day anniversary beacon lighting on the New Green was a credit to them and a poignant moment for the village. We anticipate a similar community event for VE Day in early May.

Ecumenically, we continue to enjoy good relations with the Benedictine Sisters at Montana. Freedom Church is undergoing some structure changes, one of which is their hope to engage with Thurston folk. I am hoping to initiate a monthly Minister's Breakfast where the leaders of faith communities in Great Barton and Thurston can pray together and encourage each other. Wherever Christians embrace each other's presence, despite minor differences, the Spirit lends all a hand, so do please pray for this to come together.

Pastoral visiting continues, though I confess I have had less time than I would wish for this vital ministry. However, I am encouraged by the development of a dedicated pastoral team across both churches and the imminent plan to advertise and offer Holy Communion at home for those unable to attend church services in person. These are all areas of ministry we seek to nurture and grow. I encourage everyone to keep sharing opportunities where our churches can offer support and care within our communities, schools, villages, and church families.

Transitions, Gratitude, and Remembrance

Firstly, I wish to express my profound thanks to our Churchwardens for their unwavering commitment and hard work throughout this year. Tim Frost, with invaluable help from Angela Pearce, ensures Holy Innocents remains a beautiful and welcoming space, while also contributing significantly to projects aimed at preserving and enhancing the church for future generations.

The wardens at St Peter's, Pat Sadler and Margery Ashford, have faced particular challenges operating without a Treasurer and with a smaller PCC. Their ability to keep everything running smoothly is a testament not only to the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit but also to their extraordinary dedication, Christian service, and deep love for St Peter's. A most heartfelt thank you to you both!

I must also extend another huge thank you to Peter Robinson for his steadfast support and assistance. Peter, your contribution to the smooth running of both churches and your support of my own ministry here is deeply appreciated. It has been a challenging period at times, and your encouragement has been invaluable.

Our Reader, Kathy Drakes, continues to flourish, blessing us with her insightful teaching, powerful preaching, and pastoral sensitivity. I know we have all gained immensely from Kathy's wisdom and her leadership in worship. We thank God for her energy, vision, and dedicated ministry among us.

There are many others to thank, and I should be listing names for pages if I did! But rest assured that I give thanks for you daily in my prayers, and again do so here – thank you for all that you do for our church community, it really does lift us all up in Christian love.

With sadness, we have also said goodbye to several dearly loved members of our church family this past year. The sting of grief remains, yet we hold their memories close. We grieve the loss of Charles Gorer, a wise former member of the Holy Innocents PCC, who remained active in church life until the end. A talented poet, his final composition for Remembrance Sunday was read last year, a particularly poignant moment. We will miss his dry wit, cheerful disposition, and gentle kindness. We give thanks for his friendship and pray for his partner, Annie Wallace.

We grieve the loss of Christopher Wells, a former Churchwarden and PCC member at St Peter's, among many other roles he undertook over the years Christopher's connection to St Peter's spanned generations – reflecting on his longevity, I recall him remarking around the time of the King's Coronation, "Of course, this will be my fourth coronation...". We will remember his wisdom, dedicated service, good humour, willingness to listen, and his deep passion for the church building, a legacy passed down through his family. We thank God for all Christopher gave to this parish and pray for his wife, Elizabeth. We also grieve for Pat Sheppard, a long-time faithful member of Holy Innocents, active in the Mothers' Union and

the choir in years past. Pat's kind and conscientious nature was appreciated by so many. We remember her husband David, and continue to hold him and their family in our prayers. These are but a few of the faithful souls from our congregations who are now with the Lord. There are many more stories and memories of their presence among us. I encourage us all to keep their memories alive, cherishing them as part of our church family, now participants in the heavenly communion of saints.

A Final Note: The Spirit's Gentle Growth

Despite the necessary focus on consolidation, there has been a tangible movement of the Holy Spirit within our churches. Perhaps less visible in the day-to-day administrative tasks, it is powerfully evident in the deepening friendships, the warmth of our welcome, and the overall atmosphere within our two worshipping communities – communities visibly growing in faith and fellowship. This gentle, persistent work of the Spirit seems to gather strength with each passing month. I sense it spilling out into conversations I have around the villages; there is a growing feeling that both St Peter's and Holy Innocents truly belong to their communities, and that our prayers are valued and felt.

This growing sense of belonging and spiritual vitality is the foundation I have fervently prayed for – a bedrock upon which we can continue to build Christ's church here in Great Barton and Thurston. Of course, nothing is ever perfect, and perhaps not every decision or style will suit everyone all the time. But, like the wider Church throughout history, we are finding a rhythm of worship, fellowship, and service that resonates with us and bears witness to our Christian faith for those around us.

From this place of quiet growth and hopeful expectation, we can now begin to discern together where God is calling us next. That is both an exciting and truly sacred prospect. Amen.

We are very grateful to Peter Robinson for keeping us up to date with General Data Protection Regulations, and to Kathy Drakes for overseeing Safeguarding requirements for us. Also, our thanks to Peter, for looking after our website and Facebook page. And we would like to thank Wendy Jones and all those involved with the flowers throughout the year. We all greatly appreciate their efforts and the beautiful vases of flowers, and it is difficult because they need more volunteers. And there are so many people who help in different ways.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At Holy Innocents the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar), the two churchwarden/s, currently two members of the Thingoe Deanery Synod and five other elected members of the electoral roll.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

Administrative information

St Peter's Church is situated on Church Road, Thurston IP31 3RU. It is part of the Benefice of Great Barton and Thurston, within the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich of the Church of England.

The correspondence address is:

The Vicarage, Church Road, Great Barton, Bury St. Edmunds, IP31 2QR

Churchwarden's Report for the APCM 2025

It is hard to believe that another year has passed in the life of St Peter's. For the wardens it has not been an easy one, as we have had to manage without a treasurer or permanent secretary, and with a much-depleted PCC. However, we have focussed on what's right in front of us, and not always what is ahead of us. We have kept going, and are extremely grateful for the help we have received.

Throughout the year we happily worked with our benefice church, Holy Innocents, and valued good fellowship between our congregations. At services we sang heartily together, prayed thoughtfully together and being an Inclusive benefice, we welcomed all.

As church life continued, we saw three couples married, several babies baptised and we conducted funerals and interment of ashes.

We welcomed Thurston Primary Academy for their Easter, Harvest, and Christmas Family Concert and Nativity. The ATC joined us for their annual Carol Concert. The Scout Group took part in our Remembrance Day service and later held their Carol Concert. It was a pleasure to welcome all these young people and their families and friends to St Peter's.

To the best of our knowledge the fabric of our church is in reasonable order. We are, however, overdue a Quinquennial Inspection and we need to address this. The gutters and drainpipes continue to be inspected and cleared twice a year. We were told that an asbestos drainpipe, has a crack in it, although not dangerous at present. This will be an expensive replacement and we hope to find the funds to carry out the work as soon as we can. Internal church repairs saw the replacement of two strip lights in the Sanctuary. The lights were replaced with low wattage LED lights which provide a greater light output, at reduced electricity usage.

One of our responsibilities is to maintain good order in the churchyard. This is an onerous task, but with the help of volunteers, who joined us for two work parties, the regular cutting of the grass for us, and with the help of the Beavers Scouts on three occasions, we were able to keep it reasonably tidy.

As an ECO church we leave a section of the graveyard uncut to encourage wildlife. In addition to this there are areas where logs and decaying wood have been left for the bugs. Following Margery attending a Churchyard Wildlife course, which was run by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, we welcomed them to survey our churchyard. We received a comprehensive report from them and will be formulating a Church Management Plan from advice given. Part of the churchyard plan will be to develop a wildlife area, (from a proposal, passed at recent PCC meeting), after the clearance of ground on the west side of the churchyard.

By far our biggest concern in the churchyard is the flint wall leading to the lower graveyard. A section of this has crumbled and in need of repair. We have received quotes for the repair, but have not yet secured funding for this.

The new hedging, which was replaced around the new graveyard, is now growing well. We are grateful to an anonymous volunteer who cuts the grass for us twice a year, and again, we leave some grass uncut to nurture wildlife. We also, thank the person who paid to have one of the oak trees trimmed and tidied.

This year saw the first burial of ashes in the new graveyard.

Fund-raising is always a priority and we were able to organise several events to support our finances. Throughout the year we held two coffee mornings. We organised our 'Gift Day' to coincide with our Patronal festival. This was generously supported by members of the church and the wider community. The 'Teddy Bear Zipline' was revived with the expert help of Thurston Scout Group. It was an enjoyable occasion but not overly well attended due, we think, to competition from the annual 'Tractor Run' riding through the village. A recital was given by two young organists from St Edmundsbury Cathedral. Matthew McVey and Joe Lewis entertained us to an evening of wonderful music along with the singing of harvest hymns. This was a truly pleasurable occasion and we really appreciated Matthew and Joe giving up their time to play for us. The 'Suffolk Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride' took place where half the money raised went to St Peter's. Another musical event was held in October when 'Abbot Consort of Voices' presented a programme entitled 'Light.' The church was filled with beautiful music and there was a retiring collection in aid of St Peter's. Our usual Christmas Bazaar, with a variety of stalls including Christmas wreaths, was arranged for November. Again, with the generous help of people, this was a great success. The final event of 2024 saw the return of 'The Christmas Tree Festival'. We were enormously pleased with the response we received from local businesses, clubs, and schools, who took part. And we are thankful to the public who came to view the wonderful display of trees. As always, we thank those who volunteered in any way, to make this a truly successful event.

St Peter's would not exist without the people who help in the day to day running of it. We thank those who unlock and lock up for us daily; the ladies who clean weekly; those who clean the brasses; our flower arrangers who decorate the altar, and provide spectacular arrangements on special occasions; our regular organist, Joe, for his music, and we are grateful to our choir for leading the singing. To Barbara, who offers a listening ear for those in need of prayer, your help is greatly appreciated. We thank our faithful team of bellringers; those who help at our services, our welcomers, those who write and deliver the intercessional prayers, who read lessons, who serve at the altar, and who provide refreshments after the service. We apologise most sincerely if we have missed anyone out. To everyone, your help is absolutely essential, and we could not function without you. We really do appreciate your help.

We approach the coming year in the hope that our prayers will be answered, and someone will come forward to fill the roles of treasurer and secretary. This will lighten our load and give us more time to ensure that the life of our church runs smoothly.

Pat Sadler & Margery Ashford.

Choir Report

Both churches agreed to the purchase of a new anthem book for the choir. We have already sung anthems at church services over the year and are currently learning new ones.

Our choir, although small in number, are loyal and enthusiastic.

New members are most welcome. Rehearsals are at 7.30 on Friday evenings at Holy Innocents.

Chris Bartrop

Organist

Great Barton and Thurston Tower Bells 2024 – 2025

Another year has passed, and it's time to tell you about the happenings in our two Bell Towers.

Along with ringers from other towers, we have a practice at Great Barton on Thursday evenings from 7.30 – 9 pm, and then, on Friday evenings, we alternate our practice between Rougham and Pakenham.

On Sunday mornings we ring at either Great Barton or Thurston except on the third Sunday when we ring at Pakenham and Rougham. We have only missed three Sundays in the past year when we couldn't ring at any of the above towers, which shows the dedication of our group of ringers. I'm afraid we have to alternate ringing on Special occasions as I haven't got twelve or at a push, ten ringers, to be able to ring at both churches at the same time. On 10th March 2024 we rang at Thurston for Mothering Sunday, and on 30th March 2025 we rang at Great Barton for Mothering Sunday. The same happens for Easter, Harvest and Remembrance. We had a very busy Christmas Eve where four of us, with different plus two's, rang at all four Services – the crib services at 2 pm and 4 pm, the Midnight Services at 9 pm and 11.30 pm, and then stayed for Midnight Communion at Great Barton.

Over the year we rang for eight Weddings and one Christening at various churches. Three of these being at Thurston, one at Great Barton. We didn't enter the Guild Striking Competition this year as we had two Weddings, one at each Church, on that afternoon and couldn't guarantee to get back in time.

We had three visiting teams of ringers at Great Barton and one at Thurston, and several Quarter Peals were rung including one at each Church dedicated to the memory of Gill Rood, and one at Great Barton for the 80th Anniversary of D Day.

On Monday 1st April, 2024, we went on an outing to five towers in Norfolk with a Pub Lunch at the Old Bell in Saham Toney – it was very well supported with 32 sitting down for lunch, a very enjoyable day.

We have another outing arranged for Easter Bank Holiday Monday, and will be ringing for the 80th Anniversary of VE Day on the 8th May.

That concludes my report for this year.

Sally Veal Tower Captain

Electoral Roll

As 31.12.2024 there were 56 people on the Electoral Roll.
The roll is due for a complete six yearly renewal in April 2025.

Ann Reeve

Mother's Union

Thurston & Great Barton

Currently we have 22 members, including 4 indoor members. Since our last report, two of our longstanding members have died; Pat Humphry, who had been a member for about 60 years and Pat Sheppard, who led the Great Barton branch for many years until we joined together. Both are greatly missed.

We continue to meet on the second Tuesday of each month, but agreed to meet at 11.00am all year and in The Rock unless we need more space.

During 2024 we welcomed speakers on various subjects including The Holy Land, The Poems of John Betjeman, and the Rural Coffee Caravan.

We enjoyed making Easter cards with Sheila and Vonnice. We also shared in a Bible Study led by Kathy Drakes.

We welcomed Clare and Penny from the diocese who brought the M.U Enterprises Stall. Penny gave an informative talk about autism.

Some of us lunched at the Victoria in July and in September Father Ben led our Communion Service in Holy Innocents Church.

At our December meeting we made decorations for Christmas trees to be displayed in both churches.

We arrange the World Day of Prayer service, written by the Christian women of Palestine, held in The Rock in March.

We continue to advertise our meetings in the Great Barton and Thurston Village newsletters and in the church pew sheet, but numbers attending have dropped considerably in recent months due to illness and transport difficulties.

Gill Flower

GDPR

Very little has changed with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). However, we must continue to ensure that we do not share personal information, without prior written consent.

When sending an email to multiple addresses please use the BCC function. This way all addresses are hidden.

We should also remember that officers of the Church, e.g. Church Warden, Treasurer, Secretary, Electoral Roll Officer, Safeguarding Officer, all hold personal information. If they leave the church, or their position in the church, we must ensure that the information they hold is deleted from their computers and hard copies destroyed or returned to the Church. The Data Protection Co-ordinator must also receive confirmation from the member that this has been done. A copy of this confirmation should be held on file.

Benefice Website and Facebook

Our website and Facebook pages continue to be an important part of communication for our churches. Thurston is a fast-growing village, and most new residents will be young families, which look for their news and information online. So, to reach these new people, we must continue to utilise our Social Media pages and websites. We are receiving extremely good numbers of people viewing St Peter's Facebook, especially if we can include photographs of events such as the Flower Festival, social events, or concerts. We also share information on our news and events on the media pages of village organisations, which gives us a much wider coverage. We also share our events and special service on the Bury St Edmunds Community Noticeboard, as well as the Suffolk Noticeboard UK.

Our figures for views on the website continue to be encouraging, but we need to ensure that we continue to update our pages on a regular basis with new and exciting news and events. Please keep the information coming.

Peter Robinson

Safeguarding Report for the APCM 2024

There have been no Safeguarding issues during 2024 although there is a potential concern that Revd. Ben and I are monitoring. As has been said a number of times, it is important that you report any concerns to one of us. It may seem like something small to you but it can build a picture for us if we hear from more than one person. And remember, safeguarding covers more than just abuse, although that is the headline issue.

Getting training details and getting it up to date has been a problem during 2024. It has become important that we are up to date with the issues going on in the wider church. We are under continuous scrutiny and we need to get this right. I am pleased to be able to report that the majority of the PCC are now up to date on training. Thank you for your support in doing this. During 2025 I will be looking at other roles within the church that may need awareness training. I will try to get an event held at the Church Institute to make this easier for all concerned. I will also be looking at who need DBS now that I am registered with them to initiate checks.

We did have an issue with a group checking our signage and websites but we have now brought this all up to date. Thank you Peter for dealing with the on-line information. If you see anywhere that you think we need to display posters, please let me know.

On a final note, thank you for your support on Safeguarding. Whilst Revd., Ben and myself are the named contacts we can't do this without your help.

Kathy Drakes

Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Thurston

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

to the trustees of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2024

This report on the accounts of the church for the year ended 31st December 2024 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the s.145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and the examiner

The Church's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 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 general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the church 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 the 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 our examination, no matter has come to our attention:

1. which gives us reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
 - to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or

Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Thurston

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

to the trustees of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2024 (cont.)

2. to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Gascoynes

Gascoynes
Chartered Accountants
Gascoyne House
Moseleys Farm Business Centre
Fornham All Saints
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP28 6JY

24th October 2025

Annual Return to the Charity Commission for England and Wales

From the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Thurstor Number 1201053

For the period from January 2024 to December 2024

Section A Receipts and Payments

	Unrestrict ed Funds	Restrict ed Funds	Endowme nt Funds	Total Funds	Last year
	To nearest £	To nearest £	To nearest £	To nearest £	To nearest £
A1 Receipts					
B/F Current Bank Account	468	12701	0	13169	8351
B/F CBF Deposit Account	9438	4230	0	13668	13068
Voluntary Giving	14936	1040	0	15976	26757
Gift Aid	4798		0	4798	5182
Net Parochial Fees	5745		0	5745	7599
Fundraising	2682		0	2682	5283
gift day	3220			3220	
Grants	1385	2830	0	4215	15033
Tiny Toes	0	1517	0	1517	633
Choir Fund	169		0	169	923
Bellringers Fund			0	0	51
Burial Plot	200		0	200	0
Interest on Deposit Account	369	166	0	535	600
Total Receipts	33504	5553	0	39057	62061
A2 Asset & Investment Sales	0	0	0	0	0
A3 Payments					
Parish Share	20000		0	20000	26873
Fabric & Furnishing	864	11528	0	12392	11903
Insurance	2827		0	2827	3706
Electricity & Water	2471		0	2471	2619
Churchyard Maintenance	0		0	0	59
Service support costs	1793		0	1793	6157
Vicar's Expenses	1157		0	1157	2076
Bank & Accountant Charges	295		0	295	443
Cost of Fundraising & Draw Club	303		0	303	303
Payments for Tiny Toes		868	0	868	974
Grants & collections for other Charities	429		0	429	780
Any other payments	721		0	721	748
Total Payments	30860	12396	0	43256	56641
Difference between Receipts & Payments	2644	-6843	0	-4199	5418
A4 Asset & Investment Purchases					0
A5 Transfers Between Funds	0	0	0	0	0
A6 Current Bank a/c @ Year End	0	0	0	8460	13169
B Assets & Liabilities					
B1 Cash Funds					
C/F Current Bank Account	8460	0	0	8460	13169
C/F CBF Deposit Account	11217	2986	0	14203	13668
Total Cash	19677	2986	0	22663	26837

B2 Other Monetary Assets

Receipts from December 2024 not yet in bank

	0	0	0	0	543
--	---	---	---	---	-----

Expected Gift Aid from Q4 2024	2500	0	0	2500	492
--------------------------------	------	---	---	------	-----

B3 Investment Assets	0	0	0	0	0
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B4 Assets for Charity's Use	0	0	0	0	0
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Total Assets	22177	2986	0	25163	27872
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B5 Liabilities

Un-cashed drawn cheques	0	0	0	0	2753
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Parochial Fees Return Q4 2023	2525	0	0	2525	16
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Total Liabilities	2525	0	0	2525	2769
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Signed by 2 Trustees for PCC

Signature Name in capitals Date of approval

Signature Name in capitals Date of approval

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF THURSTON

England & Wales - Charity number 1201053

Accounts

2023 Report and Accounts
The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Parochial Church Council of St Peter's Church, Thurston

Annual Report

and

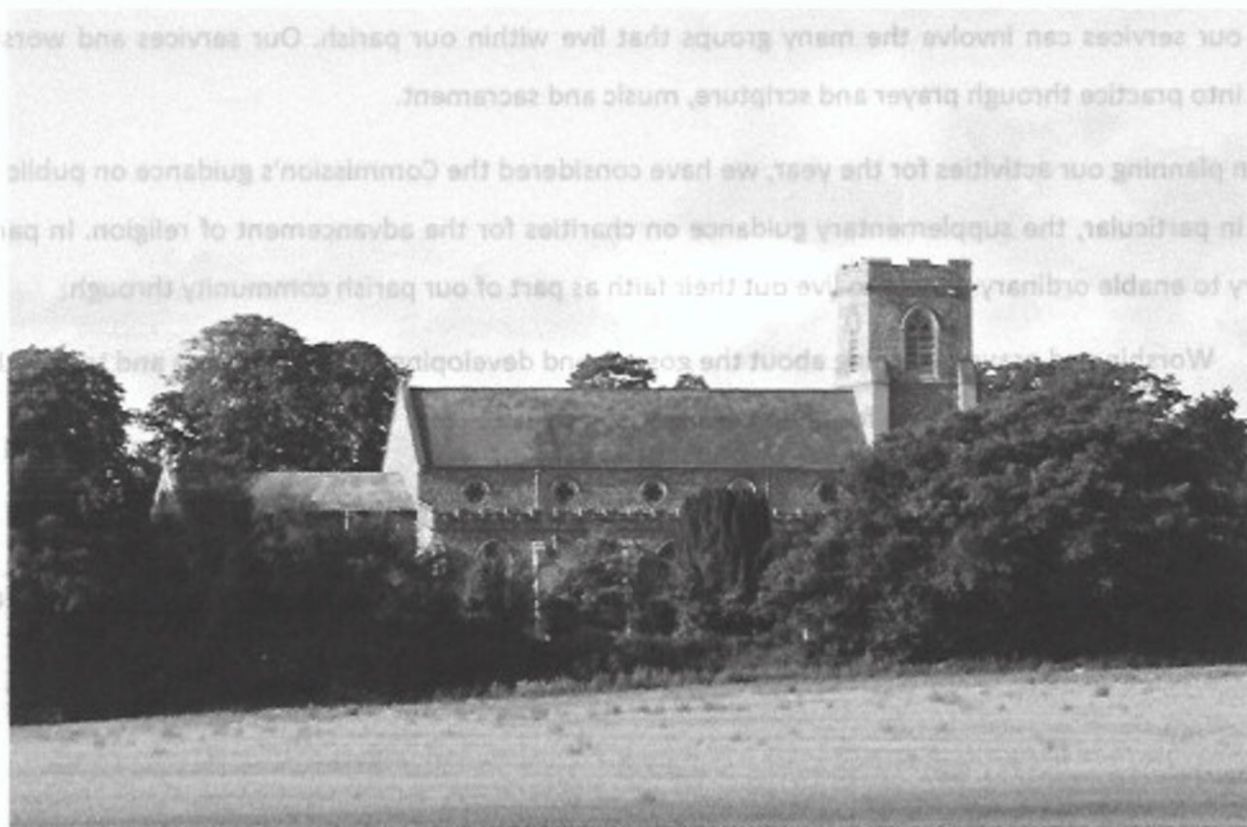
Financial Statements

of the

Parochial Church Council of

St. Peter's Church, Thurston

For the year ended 31st December 2023



Prepared under the Receipts and Payments Accounting Basis

2023 Report and Accounts

Parochial Church Council of St Peter's Church, Thurston

Aim and Purposes

St. Peter's Parochial Church Council (PCC) takes pleasure in its responsibility of cooperating with the Rev'd Benjamin Edwards. The members look forward to continuing to promote, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC cooperates with the PCC of Holy Innocents, Great Barton, within the Benefice of Great Barton and Thurston to share resources and fellowship.

Objectives and Activities

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

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate these objectives, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of St. Peter and we work closely with the Thurston Ecclesiastical Charity in the use of "The Rock" church building.

Reflections from the Reverend Benjamin Edwards

This year we have looked to the future of our benefice, especially at the aspects of renewing the interior of St Peter's and focusing on engaging with younger people, particularly in our connections with schools. We look to build on this in the year ahead, including revitalising our Children's and Prayer areas, as well as introducing All Age services.

There are many positives that have come out of the past year, even though it had difficult patches. I am particularly enthused by the fellowship after services, which has really been something to look forward to after our worship. It is beginning to generate real joy, which, as we know, is catching. Positivity shows through in our welcome and our invitation to others into the life of the church of St Peter's, and we are beginning to see people test the water, coming to services over Easter. We can most certainly build upon this in the years ahead.

Great foundations were built this past year, and it will be good to discern a path as we build on those foundations. We remember that underpinning all that we do for the Kingdom of God is our prayer, our communication with God, the encouragement and wisdom we receive from Scripture and the nourishment we receive in the Eucharist. This is how God equips us for the mission ahead – to bring Good News to all people, that Jesus Christ was amongst us, died for us, rose from the dead in the Resurrection and is with us now. Deepening our knowledge and understanding of the faith will enable us to be better equipped for that mission as we look to feed and water what we have grown.

Worship

We have maintained our pattern of worship for the most part this past year, with Sung Eucharist, Holy Communion and Evensong, as well as Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer. New service booklets have been produced for BCP Holy Communion and Evensong, to not only help those for whom the print in our BCPs is hard to read, but also for those who may chance upon these services to be able to easily engage and participate in them – there are large print versions available.

All Age services have started to become an established part of our service pattern – St Peter's will have a non-Eucharistic service every other time there is an All Age service. This will allow the service to be lay led, by our Reader Kathy Drakes or others who are permitted to do so. The last Mothering Sunday service was non-eucharistic, and consideration will be given to other services such as Harvest Festival, which may also be an occasion for a Service of the Word.

Christmas services were well attended across the benefice, particularly good feedback was given to me following the Crib Services we held, with really good engagement from Thurston families and other residents who consider the service “part of our Christmas”.

Easter services continue to be a mixed bag – our Palm Sunday Together Church service was well-attended and great fun, but slightly less folk engage with Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services. There may be a variety of reasons for this. I am keen to emphasize the importance of travelling with Jesus during Holy Week, through the joys and pain and despairs and sorrows, right through to the amazement and elation of the Resurrection. In Philippians 3:10-11 we hear Paul cry out. “I wish to know Christ and the power flowing from his resurrection likewise to know how to share in his suffering, by being formed into the pattern of his death. Thus do I hope that I may arrive at the resurrection from the dead.”

For us to enter into the life, death and Resurrection of Christ, we must all take part in that journey! Perhaps we can encourage each other to enter into that journey together – some thought must go into perhaps an earlier Maundy Thursday service and a benefice Good Friday offering to make this even easier for people to engage in.

Finally, mention must go to not only our church wardens for their hard work in ensuring worship happens, but also our Reader Kathy Drakes, whose excellent preaching and insightful teaching has been invaluable not only to the congregations but also to me personally; not only to assist me but also to inspire me! Our retired clergy, Reverend David Crawley and Reverend Mark Hunt, who have once again made themselves available for various worship and occasional office duties, also deserve a thanks, as well as Rev’d Sharon Connell taking our Midnight Mass service. We look forward this year to The Rev Canon Stephne van der Toorn ministering to us, joining those excellent retired priests in their ministry to the benefice.

Ministry & Mission

Our ministry to the wider community continues to be consistent, especially when it comes to our focus on investing in young people and families in our community.

The white-washing of some of the walls in St Peter’s has been transformational – really lifting the atmosphere in the central body of the building and giving brightness and cheer – with thanks to some excellent fund-raising efforts, more on this later. This makes St Peter’s a more inviting space, removing some of its previous gloom due to the darker colour of the walls – it looks and feels more welcoming.

We look forward to making plans to transform the Children's Corner and the area known as the Prayer corner – none of which would have been possible without the efforts of the fundraising committee and the events that they spearheaded – The Voice Squad Concert, the Walkathon around the Thurston Primary School field, the Teddy Bear Zip line, the online auction and the fantastic St Martin's Voices choir concert and workshops, arranged by stalwart champion of choral music Bridget Read – the workshops particularly were enjoyed by the schools the singers visited; all of these events and more raised much-needed funds not only for church projects for young people, but also for the charity Nicky's Way, which supports young people grieving for the loss of loved ones. So many were involved in these excellent events, for which on behalf of the benefice I say a big 'thank you'.

Engagement with schools has been excellent – I attend Thurston Primary every week to deliver assemblies, and our Reader for the Benefice Kathy Drakes has also begun a ministry here. Pat Sadler is an active governor of the Primary School, and also helps to run the Together Church services, which happen mainly in the school hall. I was also invited into the Special Education school (Priory & Aspire) in Thurston to lead sessions about the major Christian festivals, which both the pupils and I thoroughly enjoyed; the pupils were full of questions and fun. I shall be working with their RE lead teacher to continue building a relationship between the school and St Peter's.

I also have become the Chaplain (or Padre) to the 863rd RAF Air Cadets in Thurston, leading various sessions on a Thursday Evening, including ethics, meditation and teamwork (building a tower out of spaghetti and marshmallows!), and am settling in to becoming part of the team there.

Vicar visits have been a particular joy – I have been dedicating more time to visiting congregation members and others in the parish, and have been bowled over by the warmth and welcome by many. I am keen for this to become a mainstay of my ministry here. We shall look to follow the lead of Holy Innocents in forming a small pastoral team, who can assist in discerning when a vicar visit might be desired as well as provide a contact with the church and a listening ear.

These are all areas upon which we will continue to focus on and build on the foundations we have established. So much has become eroded with the years of pandemic, but we are beginning to see not just green shoots but young plants for us to tend to and care for as best we can.

Endings, beginnings and thanks

Firstly, I wish to thank wholeheartedly our churchwardens for their continued hard work this year – your experience has been invaluable. I am pleased that our churchwardens are happy to continue in their roles –

good news for the whole church.

We say goodbye to Ann Reeve who is stepping down as PCC member. Ann has served the PCC for many years, and I shall certainly be sorry to lose her insight and challenge (which every good clergy person welcomes, honest!). Ann will continue to be Electoral Roll Officer for St Peter's.

We also say goodbye to Vicky Neale, who has been a more than capable PCC Secretary these past few years, and has been at the centre of our finance committee and a major fundraising force for St Peter's as well as Nicky's Way. We thank Vicky wholeheartedly for all she has done for St Peter's.

Christopher and Elizabeth Wells retire from the PCC this year too, after 30 years of service! We have all benefitted greatly from their wisdom and experience over the years, and thank them wholeheartedly for their dedication to St Peters and the PCC. Christopher has expressed that he'd still be prepared to share his wisdom and experience should our church officers require it.

Our treasurer and former secretary, Gillian Bush is also standing down this year after many years of sterling service to the PCC. We thank her for her dedication, strong sense of service and sheer hard work that has been invaluable to St Peter's.

As a member of the Inclusive Church national family of churches – an organisation that helps signpost folk who may not find a welcome elsewhere to our churches, especially LGBT+ folk, differently abled, from any racial heritage, neurodiverse etc, we deliberated as to whether to offer the Prayers of Love and Faith – a suite of liturgies to affirm same sex relationships as part of our regular worship patterns (when requested), which we decided as separate churches. Both St Peter's and Holy Innocents made the decision to offer these services to our parishes, further cementing our welcome of people who identify as LGBT+.

Whilst we do not necessarily expect a stampede of folk looking to take up this offer, it is a further message to the rest of the communities in our parishes that we are a welcoming and inclusive church that wants to draw all people to God's love. I am very proud of both our churches for the time and deliberation they took, both at PCC and congregational level, to consider this, and also for the compassionate and Christ-like responses I received from many. It may not be a roaring fire of change in our parishes, but it is a spark – and it may only take a spark to light a flame that others can see God's love by.

I'd like to offer another huge thanks again goes to Peter Robinson for his support and assistance. Thank you Peter for all that you do to support both churches and my ministry.

This past year saw the licensing of our Reader Kathy Drakes, a woman of much holiness who is now blessing us with her insights in teaching and preaching, as well as her pastoral excellence. I know that we all have gained much from being ministered to by Kathy, and I pray that her ministry here will go from strength to strength. Kathy led the Remembrance service in 2023, and reports were that she did a wonderful job of leading the community in that time of solemnity.

We sadly said goodbye to a wonderful Mother's Union leader, champion bell ringer and committed Christian woman in Jill Rood, who died this year. Jill had been unwell for some time, but never let this dampen her passion for life or for the Mother's Union – she ensured that things would carry on after she left us, and was truly inspiring; a model of how to face our final journey with dignity, peace and love. Thank you Jill for all that you gave to our community, both St Peter's and Thurston. The number of people who came to send you off at your funeral service is a testament to all the lives that you touched. We also saw the funeral of Brenda Garrard, previous member of St Peter's choir.

Final Note

There has been much growth and hope for the future of the benefice and for St Peter's this year. There is a new buzz to our fellowship, a vibrancy, which seems to be echoed by the new lightness of the building. There is a growing sense that the ground is improving and becoming more fertile week by week, thanks to all the efforts of our church members. It is a changing parish, many new people arriving and bedding in to a community that has a church that increasingly is reaching out to it. Those voices of invitation are beginning to be heard, the identity of this church is becoming clearer to those around us. I truly believe that God will burst forth from this congregation into the community around it, that we can radiate the new found joy we find in Jesus Christ's presence with us – and who doesn't want to be part of that joy? Let us focus on all that gives joy in our church community and lift it for all to see, the glory of God shining through the darkness. Christ, be our light!

Amen

Achievements & Performance compiled by the Churchwardens

It has been another eventful year in the life of St Peter's Church, Thurston. Our main focus has been to fundraise to improve the fabric of our church and to improve areas in our church to make it more welcoming for the younger generation and for generations to come. We were all about concentrating on getting the youth involved and in making known to the wider community that St Peter's is an all-inclusive church and is there for them.

A detailed account of all fundraising that took place is included as a separate report. From this you will notice that there were many occasions throughout the year when it was a privilege to be entertained by young people and the quality of the performances was excellent. It must also be said that the concert by St Martin's Voices, was one hour of superb singing, which reflected on themes of love, hope, joy and peace. It was a first-class performance and one, which we will not forget. It certainly raised the profile of our church, being well attended by those near and far. The children's area and space for the youth in our church remains a work in progress and is foremost in our future plans.

One of our biggest achievements was in having some of our interior walls lime washed. We hope you will agree that this has resulted in brightening up our church and is aesthetically pleasing. We do thank you for your patience while the work was being completed as the scaffolding did restrict our movement. And a heartfelt thank you to all of you who helped prepare for the lime washing to be carried and to those who cleaned up after completion of the work.

To summarise our fundraising, we would like to say a huge thank you to our secretary for the tireless work she put in to enable the events to happen; we owe her so much. We thank her for obtaining grants and dealing with all the paperwork involved; and to the rest of the committee and volunteers, we thank you your support, which was invaluable.

The weekly routine of our services remained much the same as we continued to work with our benefice church, Holy Innocents, to provide Holy Communion, Sung Eucharist, Book of Common Prayer, Common Worship, Evensong and a monthly 'Together Family Church' held at Thurston Primary Academy. During the year it was a pleasure to welcome eleven children for baptism and to witness the marriage of three couples. These are always joyous occasions and fill us with hope that our congregation will grow younger. Sadly, we saw five burials and five burials of ashes.

Special services held throughout the year involved many young people. Thurston Primary Academy visited for their Easter and Harvest services and their carol concert. 1st Thurston Scout Group took part in the Remembrance Day service, and in December held their annual Christingle service. We also welcomed the ATC for their Carol service. It was heartening to see the number of parents and carers who came along to

support their children on these special occasions. A special service in May was held to mark the Coronation of King Charles 111 and the Mothers' Union came for their annual meeting to include Holy Communion. This year, due to a grant, we were able to renew our church path, which was in need of much repair. This has greatly improved the appearance to the entrance and is well used by the many who daily walk through our churchyard. We were also fortunate enough to receive an anonymous donation, which enabled us to do minor repairs to our wall, and to have the stones re-laid at the threshold to the porch. We are very grateful to this generous person. General maintenance was carried out to keep things tidy for visitors and the usual area to encourage wildlife remained uncut until the autumn. As an ECO church we continue to discourage the use of any plastic in our churchyard, which could endanger wildlife.

The new graveyard now has a more natural boundary with the replanting of hedging, following the loss of many plants due to the extreme hot weather in the summer. We are grateful to those who supplied the plants and to the many who did the re-planting and mulching. The mulching was done to suppress weeds and retain moisture in the hope that the hedging flourishes. Two hawthorn trees were also planted at either side of the entrance to the graveyard having been kindly donated by the W. I. and the Brownies, who were celebrating 50 years of being in Thurston. We are thankful for these trees, which define the entrance to the graveyard. Our new graveyard is a work in progress but, with the new hedging and trees, is growing into a valuable habitat for wildlife, which, as an ECO Church we strive to encourage.

As always, we have many people to thank you for their help throughout the year. We thank the PCC and in particular our secretary, treasurer and electoral roll officer; the choir for their joyful singing and, in the absence of a permanent organist, those who have played for our services; and to the many who take part in our services; the readers, welcomers, intercessors, servers and those who serve refreshments; your participation is highly appreciated.

We are grateful to the volunteers who keep the inside of our church looking splendid. We thank those who clean the church weekly, those who polish the brasses, arrange flowers for the altar and for special occasions during the churches calendar year. We are also indebted to those who join our working parties to keep the churchyard tidy.

To all helpers, many of you who are unseen, your efforts do not go unnoticed. Thank you one and all.

Pat and Margery.

Electoral Roll

At the end of December 2023, there were 61 on the Church Electoral Roll.

Deanery Synod

Two members of the PCC currently sit on the Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with Diocesan Reports and is an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. Clergy wellbeing and welfare is constantly under discussion.

Building

The building is Grade II listed since 15 November 1954 and its English Heritage Building ID is 281245. It is medieval, but virtually rebuilt in 1861 by J H Hakewell following the collapse of the medieval tower onto the nave. The chancel was restored in the mid 19th Century. During 2023, the porch was lime washed and new oak noticeboards were installed. The aisles were also lime washed and new curtains were fitted in the Lady Chapel. The roof alarm system continues to work well. All electrical inspections are up to date. The first burials have taken place in the new churchyard and the hedging around it is now planted.

Financial Review

This has been another challenging year financially and we ended the year with our budget showing an in-year deficit to carry forward to our plan for 2024.

We are extremely grateful to all those who continued to make donations through the Parish Giving Scheme, regular standing orders, weekly envelopes at services and the Gift Day. We are also grateful to the Thurston Ecclesiastical Charity for its continued vital support.

We thank all those who helped with the organisation of our fundraising events and those who supported them. A separate report on fundraising is included later in this report.

During 2023 we were able to meet the Parish Share requirements from the Diocesan Board of Finance. We are grateful that a reduced share was agreed with the Deanery.

Once again we were not able to add to our reserves in 2023. However in line with our Reserves Policy, the amount in the undesignated general fund in the deposit account at year end still just equates to roughly two months' estimated running costs.

As she steps down from the role, we are especially grateful to Gillian Bush who has worked so hard as our Treasurer.

Thurston Ecclesiastical Charity

The Charity is connected to St Peter's Church with Trustees being the Vicar, the Churchwardens and two additional members elected by the PCC, currently Mary Fawcett and Christopher Wells. Income is applied for furthering the religious and other charitable purposes of the Church of England in the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Peter's, Thurston.

The Charity owns The Rock building, which provides excellent facilities for St Peter's. It gives a warm venue for coffee after the main services and is used regularly for Church meetings, informal worship, coffee mornings and activities run by the Mothers' Union. In addition the Charity owns the Church Field and the Cottage.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is exempted by order from registering with the Charity Commission. However it registered with the Commission in 2022.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St. Peter's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our vicar, when we have one), churchwarden/s, currently two members of the Thingoe Deanery Synod and others elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services and are members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

During the year the St Peter's PCC met five times.

Administrative information

St. Peter's Church is situated on Church Road, Thurston. It is part of the Benefice of Great Barton and Thurston, within the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich of the Church of England.

The correspondence address is:

The Vicarage, Church Lane, Great Barton, Bury St. Edmunds, IP31 2QR

PCC members who have served at any time from 1 January 2023 until the date this report was approved are:

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent: Benjamin Edwards

Churchwardens: Mrs Margery Ashford

Mrs Pat Sadler

Deanery Synod Members: Mr Christopher Wells

Mrs Elizabeth Wells

Elected members: Mrs Gillian Bush (Treasurer)

Mrs Irene Churchus

Mrs Vicky Neale (Secretary)

Mrs Ann Reeve

Mr Peter Robinson (co-opted)

Approved by the PCC on 14th April 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Signed



Dated 23/4/24.

Reverend Benjamin Edwards, Chairman



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

St Peter's Church, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds

On accounts for the year ended

31 December 2023

Charity no
(if any)

Set out on pages

1

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31.12.2023.

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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 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 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 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.

Signed:

Linda Trollip

Date:

12 April 2024

Name:

Linda Trollip (AAT license number 20217160)

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body (if any):

MAAT

Address:

38 Howes Avenue, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 3PY



Independent examination of charity accounts checklist (CC32a)

St Peter's Church, Thurston, Bury St Edmunds
Year ended 31 December 2023
12.04.2024

Directions and documentation		Comment
Direction 1: Check whether the charity is eligible to have an independent examination		
Checked the charity audit threshold applying to the accounts to be reviewed	✓	
Checked an audit is not required for any other reason	✓	
Confirmed the charity is eligible for independent examination	✓	
Confirmed the amount of the charity's income to figure shown in the accounts (including any branches) and confirmed that income and assets are below the audit threshold or, if applicable, obtained a copy of the letter from the Commission approving an audit dispensation	✓	
If the charity's income is more than £250,000 confirmed that the examiner is a member of one of the listed bodies	n/a	
If applicable, informed the trustees that the charity is not eligible for an independent examination	n/a	
If receipts and payments accounts have been prepared, checked that the charity's gross income is less than £250,000 and that it is not a company	✓	
If receipts and payments accounts have been prepared, check that there is no requirement to prepare accruals accounts in the charity's governing document or for any other reason	n/a	
If applicable, informed the trustees that the charity is not eligible to prepare receipts and payments accounts	n/a	
Direction 2: Check for any conflict of interest that prevents the examiner from carrying out their independent examination		
Confirmed that there are no close personal relationships with the trustees that compromise independence	✓	
Confirmed as having no day to day involvement in the administration of the charity	✓	
If providing other services to the charity then confirmed that all the criteria in Direction 2 necessary for independence are met	n/a	
Identified that there are no circumstances in the examiner's judgment that would reasonably lead to the perception that the examiner is not independent	✓	

Directions and documentation		Comment
Considered whether sufficiently skilled to carry out the examination and, where required, confirmed membership of a listed body	✓	
If applicable, informed the trustees that you are not eligible to carry out the independent examination	n/a	
Direction 3: Record your independent examination		
File of working papers prepared to document the work undertaken (see the Direction for guidance on key working papers)	✓	
Evidence of appointment on file	✓	
If issued, letter of engagement signed by the trustees on	✓	
Documentation of steps required by Direction 1 are all done	✓	
Documentation that steps required by Direction 2 are all done	✓	
Analytical review documented	✓	
Areas of concern identified and noted whether these were resolved or if unresolved and significant have included them in the examiner's report	✓	
Verification and vouching procedures undertaken and any checks made are on file	✓	
Copy of approved accounts on file		To be provided after PCC meeting?
Copy of trustees' annual report on file		
Copies of information relied upon as part of the examination	✓	
If applicable, copies of written assurances given	✓	
Recorded the conclusions drawn as an outcome of the independent examination that support the examiner's report are on file	✓	
Recorded any matters of material significance about which a report must be made direct to the Commission	✓	
Recorded whether to exercise discretion and report on relevant matters direct to the Commission	n/a	
Direction 4: Plan your independent examination		
Obtained an understanding of the charity's constitution, objectives, organisational structure, the funds managed, its activities and accounting records and	✓	
Noted any implications for the examiner's report and for separate reporting to the Commission	N/a	

Directions and documentation		Comment
Direction 5: Check that accounting records are kept to the required standard		
Checked that accounting records have been kept are complete	✓	
Asked the trustees about how they ensure the accounting records are complete	✓	
If corrections made or records created during the examination, the trustee approval for these has been sought and obtained	✓	
Asked the trustees if they carried out a review of the charity's		Suggest a review of cash treatment for future
Noted any implications for the examiner's report and for separate reporting to the Commission	n/a	
Direction 6: Check that the accounts are consistent with the accounting records		
Compared the accounts with the underlying accounting	✓	
Checked some entries from the listing of transactions of income and expenditure to vouchers such as invoices, bank statements, and receipts.	✓	
If applicable, confirmed that the trustees have taken the necessary steps to ensure that restricted or endowed funds are correctly reported in the accounts	✓	
Direction 7: If the accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and one or more related party transactions took place the examiner must check if these were properly disclosed in the notes to the accounts		
Checked that the disclosures required by the SORP have been made and are complete	✓	
Considered whether there are any implications for the examiner's report and reporting to the Commission	✓	
Direction 8: Check the reasonableness of the significant estimates and judgments and accounting policies used in accounting for the types of fund held and in the preparation of the accounts		
Checked with the trustees that the separate funds of the charity have been correctly accounted for and reported correctly in the accounts	✓	
Checked the reasonableness of any significant estimates or judgments that have been made in preparing the accounts	✓	

Directions and documentation		Comment
Where accruals accounts are prepared, checked that the accounting policies adopted are consistent with the SORP and are appropriate to the activities of the charity	✓	
Where accruals accounts are prepared, checked that the accounts were prepared on a going concern basis	✓	
Noted any implications for the examiner's report and for separate reporting to the Commission	✓	
Direction 9: The examiner must check whether the trustees have considered the financial circumstances of the charity at the end of the reporting period and, if the accounts are prepared on an accruals basis, check whether the trustees have made an assessment of the charity's position as a going concern when approving the accounts		
Asked the trustees whether they expect the charity to be able to settle outstanding invoices, bills and commitments as and when they fall due	n/a	
Asked the trustees about the reserves policy and the adequacy of the level of reserves held	n/a	
Where accruals accounts are prepared, checked that the trustees' have made an assessment of going concern and that their assessment is reasonable given the information available	n/a	
Where accruals accounts are prepared, checked that the SORP's disclosures about going concern have been made	n/a	
Noted any implications for the examiner's report and for separate reporting to the Commission	n/a	
Direction 10: Check the form and content of the accounts		
Where receipts and payments accounts have been prepared, checked that the charity can lawfully prepare such accounts, that all the accounting statements are present and that the funds of the charity are correctly identified	n/a	
Where accruals accounts are prepared, checked that they comply with the SORP and applicable accounting standard	✓	
If the charity is a company, checked that the accounts also comply with the applicable company law requirements	n/a	
Noted any implications for the examiner's report and for separate reporting to the Commission	n/a	
Direction 11: Identify items from the analytical review of the accounts that need to be followed up for further explanation or evidence		
Carried out an analytical review	n/a	

Directions and documentation		Comment
Following the analytical review, selected material items in the accounts for further explanation or supporting evidence	n/a	
If the accounts could be materially misstated, additional checks were undertaken and the examiner is satisfied that the item(s) identified were satisfactorily explained and correctly included in the accounts	n/a	
Noted any implications for the examiner's report and for separate reporting to the Commission	n/a	
Direction 12: Compare the trustees' annual report with the accounts		
Checked that any figure for reserves quoted in the trustees' annual report is not materially inconsistent with the accounts	✓	
Compared the trustees' annual report with the accounts for any material inconsistency	n/a	
Noted any implications for the examiner's report and for separate reporting to the Commission	n/a	
Direction 13: Write and sign the independent examination report		
Reviewed the conclusions from the independent examination	✓	
Considered whether the examination has identified a matter of concern that should be reported in the examiner's report	✓	
Checked that the examiner's report covers all of the matters required	✓	
If relying on the work of others in undertaking the independent examination, the examiner is fully satisfied with their work and that work has been fully documented	n/a	
Signed and dated the examiner's report	✓	
Reported matters of material significance direct to the Commission	n/a	
Exercised discretion and reported relevant matters direct to the Commission	N/a	

ST PETER'S CHURCH, THURSTON

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
		General	Designated			
Current	Note	£	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS						
Receipts from Donors						
Planned Giving	(i)	10251.78			10251.78	12024.40
Collections at services		5066.72			5066.72	5090.35
Gift Day		2895.00			2895.00	5225.00
All other giving/voluntary receipts		996.54		870.46	1867.00	16067.45
Gift Aid recovered	(ii)	4865.18		316.81	5181.98	5244.25
		24075.22	0.00	1187.27	25262.48	43651.45
Fund Raising	(iii)	4181.92	1101.50	6676.22	11959.64	3374.82
Investment Income		414.01		185.67	599.68	169.94
Transfer from Deposit account		0.00			0.00	743.04
Church Activities						
Parochial Fees (net)		7599.28			7599.28	6409.33
Tiny Toes Group				632.76	632.76	1490.22
Grants		5019.60		10013.30	15032.90	57.49
Bellringers' Fund			51.00		51.00	151.00
Other Income						
Choir Fund			922.50		922.50	608.00
Total Receipts		41290.02	2075.00	18695.22	62060.24	56655.29
PAYMENTS						
Church Activities						
Diocesan Parish Share		26873.00			26873.00	31195.00
Clergy costs	(iv)	2076.46			2076.46	1533.89
Interregnum costs		0.00			0.00	0.00
Church running expenses	(v)	14998.14		9889.20	24887.34	15261.97
Any other payments		0.00	609.20		609.20	13.50
Outreach (inc Tiny Toes)				974.41	974.41	997.16
		43947.60	609.20	10863.61	55420.41	49001.52
Mission giving and donations	(vi)	0.00		780.46	780.46	1775.09
Cost of Generating Funds						
Draw Club			303.25		303.25	301.50
Extra Payments						
Honoraria		0.00			0.00	0.00
Extra Parish Share		0.00			0.00	0.00
Capital Payments						
		0.00				0.00
Total Payments		43947.60	1050.76	11644.07	56642.43	51078.11
Excess (Deficit) of Receipts over Payments		-2657.58	1024.24	7051.15	5417.81	5577.18
Transfers between funds						
Cash in current a/c 1 January		1825.04	7000.00	7129.05	8350.94	3001.19
Cash in current a/c 31 December		468.03	2651.30	10049.74	13169.07	8350.94
Assets						
Receipts in December 2023 but not in bank until January 2024 + gift aid for Q4		1001.02	0.00	25.00	1026.02	1020.40
Deposit a/c at year end		9438.07	0.00	4229.73	13667.80	13068.12
Liabilities						
Payments owing in December, but not cleared through bank until 2024.		2651.30	46.00	56.00	2753.30	651.40

Note (i)	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	General	Designated			
	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts from Donors					
Standing Orders + Parish Giving Scheme	10251.78			10251.78	12024.40
Offerory Box	1984.53			1984.53	65.73
Other collections cash	1058.33			1058.33	264.50
Other collections cheques not eligible for Gift Aid	195.50			195.50	399.75
Other transfers eligible for Gift Aid	0.00			0.00	3522.39
All other giving/voluntary receipts	996.54		870.46	1867.00	16067.45
SumUp	205.36			205.36	14.82
Gift Day	2895.00			2895.00	5225.00
Envelopes eligible for Gift Aid	1623.00			1623.00	12847.56
	19210.04	0.00	870.46	20080.50	38407.20

Note (ii)	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	General	Designated			
	£	£	£	£	£
Gift Aid Recovered in 2023					
Parish Giving Scheme	1661.99			1661.99	1695.23
Claims outside Parish Giving in 2023					
Q4 2022	786.29			786.29	465.37
Q1 2023	610.81			610.81	865.25
Q2 2023	896.32		16.66	912.98	566.37
Q3 2023	909.76		300.15	1209.91	1652.03
Total outside Parish Giving in 2023	3203.18	0.00	316.81	3519.99	3549.02
Total with Parish Giving Scheme	4865.17			5181.98	5244.25

Note (iii)	Fund Raising		Balance 2023	Net Profit 2022
	Receipts	Payments		
	£	£	£	£
General Funds				
Draw Club	1101.50	303.25	798.25	764.45
Coffee Mornings	488.13		488.13	289.30
Flower Festival	961.01	138.31	822.70	0.00
Christmas Bazaar	1295.85		1295.85	1079.13
Jigsaw Puzzles Roundabout	179.89		179.89	196.10
Jam Jar Collections	50.86		50.86	3.01
Easter Activities	199.40		199.40	363.00
Concerts	148.90		148.90	131.50
Sponsored Bike Ride	0.00		0.00	10.00
Sale Trail	0.00		0.00	228.00
Ride & Stride	75.00		75.00	150.00
Hymns & Pimms	0.00		0.00	254.00
Christmas Tree Festival 2022	119.50		119.50	288.06
Jumblebee	663.38		663.38	0.00
Totals re General Funds	5283.42	441.56	4841.86	3756.55
Coronation Restricted Fund less grants	6676.22	9889.20	-3212.98	0.00
Total Fund Raising	11959.64	10330.76	1628.88	3756.55

Notes to the Accounts

Note (i)	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
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St Peter's APCM Report

Safeguarding

We are pleased to report that no safeguarding issues have been reported as yet to our new safeguarding officer, Kathy Drakes.

At the time of writing Claire Mackichan remains assistant safeguarding officer for the benefice.

Safeguarding training opportunities for those whose training has lapsed and for new PCC members will be arranged in the usual way – we do prefer for that training to be face to face, and thus may share training sessions with others in the Deanery.

This year my Leadership Safeguarding training as priest is to be renewed.

Anyone with any concerns about an individual, or about how we do things as a church, can contact Kathy Drakes or myself (Fr Ben) to report.

Reverend Benjamin Edwards

GDPR

Very little has changed with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). However, we must continue to ensure that we do not share personal information, without prior written consent. When sending an email to multiple addresses please use the BCC function. This way all addresses are hidden.

We should also remember that officers of the Church, e.g. Church Warden, Treasurer, Secretary, Electoral Roll Officer, Safeguarding Officer, all hold personal information. If they leave the church, we must ensure that this information is deleted from their computers and hard copies destroyed or returned to the Church.

The Data Protection Co-ordinator must also receive confirmation from the member that this has been done. A copy of this confirmation should be held on file.

Peter Robinson

Benefice Website and Facebook

Our website and Facebook pages continue to be an important part of communication for our churches.

Thurston is a fast-growing village, and most new residents will be young families, which look for their news and information online. So, to reach these new people, we must continue to utilise our Social Media pages and websites. We are receiving extremely good numbers of people viewing St Peter's Facebook, especially if we can include photographs of events such as the Flower Festival, social events, or concerts. We also share information on our news and events on the media pages of village organisations, which gives us a much wider coverage.

Our figures for views on the website continue to be encouraging, but we need to ensure that we continue to update our pages on a regular basis with new and exciting news and events. Please keep the information coming.

Peter Robinson

The Fundraising Report

The fundraising committee decided to use the Coronation Year to **raise the profile of the church in the community; to provide some opportunities for young people that had been denied them during the pandemic; to increase our mission giving and, of course, to raise funds for St Peter's.** The events were held largely around four key times: the Coronation Weekend; St Petertide; Harvest and Christmas.

Reverend Ben and the local scout group organised a **successful teddy bear zip wire** to launch the programme and this was followed by a special service to mark the Coronation at which our new noticeboards marking the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee were dedicated.

During St Petertide, we had a **lunchtime recital by local high school musicians; an evening concert from the local youth choir, The Voice Squad and a display from the history society at Thurston Community College** showing the history of our church. To coincide with our annual gift day, we also wrote to families who had been married and/or had their children baptised in St Peter's, asking them to donate to our appeal.

At harvest, we had our first **flower festival weekend** since before the pandemic. As well as a large number of excellent floral displays, we had two organ recitals from James Thomas, refreshments, cake and produce stalls and a raffle. **Our churchwardens** did a magnificent job leading us through such a huge undertaking.

To coincide with Harvest, we also organised a **walkathon at Thurston Primary Academy.** Although it took

place on the warmest September day on record, a dedicated group of walkers and some supporters of Norburn, St Nicholas Hospice's mascot ensured a good total towards our funds.

Throughout harvest, we ran an **online auction**. Thanks to the incredible generosity of local businesses, we had over forty lots, many aimed at families and young people. In September, we also had a very successful weekend with **St Martin's Voices**. This excellent young choir provided workshops at each of Beyton Sixth, Thurston Community College and Thurston Primary. They also ran a workshop at St Peter's for local choirs and gave a superb concert in our church.

At Christmas we introduced our **'bigger and better' annual bazaar**. This included Christmas wreaths made by members of the PCC and face painting and games for the young and not so young! We were delighted that a record amount was raised.

Throughout the year, we also applied successfully for a number of grants for specific projects.

At the end of the year, we had just exceeded our aspirational target of £30,000 by raising **£30,017**. As a result, we are delighted that our much loved St Peter's Church has a new path, a refurbished porch, new bespoke notice boards, new curtains in the Lady Chapel, newly lime washed aisles and a newly polished floor. Plans for the children's corner are progressing.

To coincide with St Nicholas Hospice's 40th year, and the 25th anniversary of its counselling and bereavement service for children and young people, 'Nicky's Way', we were also delighted to present **'Nicky's Way' with a cheque for £4,106**.

Throughout the Coronation year, we had fantastic support from the people of Thurston, the Benefice Congregations and local businesses and we thank them all.

The Fundraising Committee

The Draw Club

The Draw Club has continued throughout the year with monthly draws and a summer and a winter Grand Draw. As usual we held our summer Grand Draw as part of a strawberry and cream tea outside in the church grounds and the Winter Draw was held during the refreshments after the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. The annual profit raised for St. Peter's was £754, which was paid into the General Fund at the start of 2024.

Members have continued to be loyal and we have gained a couple of members but sadly have lost a few. This current year we have only 59 members, however thanks to some buying two numbers, we draw from 69, which should enable us to keep profits much the same.

Ann Reeve

Bell Ringing Report

This year I am writing a joint report for our two churches as Jill Rood, who used to do the St Peter's report, sadly died on the 24th January. She is already greatly missed. As well as being Tower Captain at Thurston, Jill, along with her husband Doug, was involved in Sunday Service ringing at Great Barton, Thurston, Pakenham and Rougham. They also took part in Striking Competitions, attended District Practices, meetings and outings as well as ringing for Weddings and Funerals when required.

On 30th April a Peal was rung at Holy innocents for the forthcoming Coronation of King Charles III. We also rang a Quarter Peal at Great Barton on the 4th May and at Thurston on the 5th May. On the 8th May, a group of us rang at eight towers where there is no regular ringing, culminating in a meal at The Victoria in Thurston.

On the 20th May, teams from both towers took part in the Guild Striking Competition at Troston. It was a lovely warm sunny day with a lunchtime barbeque. On 8th July, we went on a district outing to Cambridgeshire and Ely to ring at six towers. This was followed by a trip to ring at five towers in Norfolk on the 23rd September. Both days were very well attended and enjoyed by all.

Visiting ringers were in short supply this year with only two groups at Great Barton and one at Thurston.

We rang for nine weddings in total at various churches in the area. Included in these were three at Great Barton and two in Thurston.

Unfortunately, we were only able to ring for Remembrance Sunday at Great Barton this year. We rang for most of the services over the Christmas period but we couldn't manage Midnight Communion or Christmas morning, which was a shame.

We still hold a practice between 7.30 and 9.00 each Thursday evening and anyone who would be interested in joining us would be very welcome.

That covers our activities for the past year.

Sally Veal, Tower Captain

Benefice Choir Report

Last year was another busy year for the choir. With the help of organist, Chris Bartrop, the choir has sung and practised regularly at St Peter's for a range of services. These have included a monthly Choral Evensong, Sung Eucharists, weddings and funerals. Across the two churches in our Benefice, it is particularly noteworthy that we have sung twice on two Sundays each month. We sang at the special service to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. Most of the choir members have long standing experience of singing in church choirs and their commitment has been excellent. The choir has greatly appreciated the help of visiting organists including James Thomas, Dan Soper, Jeremy Harding and trainee organist, Logan Williamson, ex Head Chorister from St Edmundsbury Cathedral. James gave two organ recitals during the weekend of our Flower Festival and we are delighted that Logan has been appointed as an organ scholar at Chelmsford Cathedral during his gap year. We wish him every success.

One of the highlights of this year was the visit by St Martin's Voices in September. They led workshops at Beyton Sixth, Thurston Community College and Thurston Primary before giving an impressive concert in St Peter's. The following morning they gave a workshop in church for local amateur choirs, culminating in a short harvest service. Our leader, Bridget Read, worked extremely hard to make this weekend possible and we are grateful for everything she did for the musical life at St Peter's before stepping down at the end of the year.

The Mothers Union

We have 25 members including 4 indoor members.

This year was overshadowed by the loss of our leader Jill Rood. She had organised the whole of the programme and led us until October, when she became too ill to continue. She passed away in January.

We all miss her very much.

We have continued to meet on the second Tuesday of each month alternating between The Rock and The Institute. During the winter months from November to March we met at 11:00 instead of 2:30 to save members from being out on the dark afternoons.

We enjoyed a variety of speakers including Daloni Peel and Rev'd Sharon Connell, who both shared some of their memories with us, and John Robinson from Age U.K. with an informative talk on Lasting Power of Attorney.

In July we went out for lunch at the Victoria and in September Rev'd Ben led us in Communion at St. Peter's.

We enjoyed crafting sessions with Sheila and Vonnie. In November we made Stars for our tree, which was displayed at the Christmas Tree Festival at Gt. Barton and in December we made beautiful angels from old paperback books.

We donated £100 of vouchers to the Food Bank and £102 to overseas projects supported by the Mothers' Union.

We arranged the World Day of Prayer Service, held in Montana Care Home this year.

We continue to advertise our meetings in The Messenger and the Thurston Newsletter and would be pleased to welcome anyone interested in joining us.

Gill Flowers

Deanery Synod Meetings

This year all our meetings have continued to be face-to-face. Topics included finance and reports from General Synod and our Diocese. We also had local speakers and considered mission in Suffolk and beyond. The meetings always keep us updated on clergy posts that have been filled and address matters on Clergy Wellbeing.

Elizabeth Wells

The Fabric Report

The fabric of the church both outside and inside as far as can be seen from the ground looks to be safe and sound. The builder has done the annual cleaning and inspection of the gutters and down pipes on the church. He also gave a visual inspection of the whole roof. I am pleased to report that he found no problems. The asbestos drainpipe that was causing problems to the outer wall has now been replaced with a plastic one. During 2023, the aisles and the porch were lime washed and new oak noticeboards were installed. New curtains were fitted in the Lady Chapel.

Christopher Wells