

ANNUAL PARISH CHURCH MEETING 2025 AGENDA

'Worship God, love our community, grow in faith'

Holy Trinity, and the Mission Church, Street
Thursday 10th April, 2024 7pm in the Parish Church

Vestry Meeting 2025

This part of the evening can be attended by anyone on the electoral roll or resident in the Parish of Street.

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 18th April, 2024
4. Matters arising.
5. Election of Churchwardens.
6. AOB.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2025

This part of the evening may be attended by members of the electoral roll for the parish.

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 18th April, 2024 Matters arising.
3. Brief reflections on the life of our churches and ministry and mission across the parish.
4. Electoral Roll Officer's Report 2024.
5. Election of Electoral Roll Officer.
6. Annual Parochial Church Council Report 2024.
7. Treasurer's Report 2024.
8. Appointment of Independent Examiner.
9. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church.
10. Election of Parochial Church Council Members 2025/2026 and Deanery Synod representatives
2025 / 2026.
11. AOB *please let the Rector or the church office know of any items in advance.*
12. Closing Prayer.

Minutes of Street Parish Vestry and Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCM) 18 April 2024 in the Parish Church

The Rector Rev'd Ana Lawrence (AL) chaired both meetings.

21 people attended the meetings.

Copies of both the Agenda, minutes and reports document and Annual Report and Financial Statements document were made available electronically and in hard copy on request in advance of the meetings.

Vestry Meeting 2024

1. AL opened the meeting with a reading of Ephesians 4:1-3 and prayer.
2. Apologies for absence. Received from Linda Wilson and David Hatrey.
3. Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on Thursday 20 April 2023. Proposed by Edd Reeve and seconded by Roger Harmsworth.
4. Matters arising. None.
5. Election of Churchwardens. Edd Reeve agreed to stand for re-election but expressed a wish for others to stand to help relieve pressures of the role. Proposed by Susan Ripley and seconded by Martin Kennard. Elected.
6. AOB. None. Vestry meeting closed at 7.09 pm but was briefly re-opened during the APCM to allow a vote on approval of Vestry Meeting minutes, see item 2 below.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024

1. Apologies for absence. As for Vestry meeting.
2. Minutes of Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Thursday 20 April 2023 and Extraordinary APCM held on Sunday 14 May 2023. AL read out the minutes of the Extraordinary APCM that had been omitted from the documents made available prior to the meeting. Minutes of the APCM were proposed by Kevin Lawrence and seconded by Diane Gray; minutes of the Extraordinary APCM were proposed by Susan Ripley and Kay Savage.
A member of the meeting pointed out that approval of the minutes of the Vestry Meeting had not been voted on. AL re-opened the Vestry Meeting and the minutes were approved. Minutes of both the APCM and Extraordinary APCM were also approved.
3. Matters arising. None.

4. Brief reflections on the life of our churches and ministry and mission across the parish. A transcript of AL's comments is in the appendix to these minutes. The Rector's report is on pages 4 to 6 of the Agenda, minutes and reports document.
5. Electoral Roll Officer's Report 2023. Presented on page 15 of the Agenda, minutes and reports document. There are 89 people on the list.
6. Election of Electoral Roll Officer. Angela Reeve agreed to stand for re-election. Proposed by Jane Tompsett and seconded by Susie Williams. Elected.
7. Annual Parochial Church Council Report 2023. Agenda, minutes and reports document now includes a PCC report on page 14. The Annual Report and Financial Statements document should include Martin Kennard as an elected PCC member on page 3.
8. Treasurer's Report 2023. Presented on pages 4 to 10 of the Annual Report and Financial Statements document. The Treasurer brought attention to the poor financial state of the parish and encouraged more regular giving.
9. Appointment of Independent Examiner. Edward Howell Associates Wells were proposed by Sonia Beaty and seconded by Brian Moreby and duly appointed.
10. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church. Presented in the Churchwardens report on page 14 of the Agenda, minutes and reports document. All in generally good order. There were questions from the floor regarding the state of the chairs in the Mission Church and whether a display screen could be put up in the Parish Church similar to that in the Mission Church. The current financial situation prevented the purchase of new chairs or screen. Refurbishment of the existing chairs would not be ideal due to their weight and inability to stack.
11. Election of Parochial Church Council Members 2024/2025 and Deanery Synod representatives 2024/2026. Jane Tompsett is standing down from the PCC and Deanery Synod and Linda Wilson is standing down from the PCC. AL thanked both of them for their service. Tim Hindle was proposed for membership of the PCC by Martin Kennard and seconded by Diane Gray. Elected. There were no nominations for a Deanery Synod representative and AL reiterated the need to appoint one in view of the forthcoming reduction in Stipendiary Ministers. There are now 4 vacancies for the PCC and 1 for the Deanery Synod. AL reminded the meeting that people can be co-opted to these positions throughout the year.
12. AOB. None. Edd Reeve thanked AL on behalf of those present for her hard work throughout the year.
13. Closing prayer. Meeting closed with prayer, blessing and the Grace.

Meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

RECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT ON THE BENEFICE 2024

As I look back on the year that has passed, I continue to be grateful for you all in our three communities and beyond for helping to make our churches the places they are.

I am so grateful to God for sustaining and upholding me in my ministry as we move forward together as partners in the Gospel working to make Jesus known in our respective communities.

My heart and prayer is that our mission statement 'worship God, love our communities, grow in faith' continues to underpin all that we are and do within the life of the benefice of Street, Walton and Compton Dundon.

Reflecting on the past year, I am mindful of the numerical growth we have seen in each of our churches. We have welcomed significant numbers of new people into our worshipping community which has been a joy, a delight and an answer to prayer. The presence of growing numbers of the under 16 age group has been particularly encouraging not least because our outreach to this age group has felt fragile for a number of years. My heart is very much to invest both in our younger people but also to cherish 'what we already have' regardless of chronological age. Swelling numbers has made some things feel and seem far more possible than perhaps in previous years. Our numbers at Christmas show an upward trend in people attending our Christmas services and this outreach remains a critical part of our ministry and mission within the wider community.

I have heard members of the church family describe SWCD Churches as 'busy', 'there's a lot going on' and yes, there is from week to week. There are many activities across our 3 parishes which broadly reflect aspects of our mission statement. Activity, however, for its own sake has little or no value. Surely, rather, what we should be about as a worshipping Christian community is being active for the gospel, seeking to reach those who don't yet know Jesus.

We do also face challenges in resourcing what we do and there is always more that could be done! Ministry areas require money and people in order to make things happen and these are often in short supply in our church life.

But it's not just about 'activity'. I also sense a growing depth in faith with church family seeking to 'go deeper' in their faith journeys. Two well attended weekly prayer meetings, house groups, Celebrate@6 services are just some examples of this. Let's continue to want to go deeper and see what God will do in our midst.

Finally, are we dreaming dreams for the future? Are these dreams big enough for God or do we need to dream bigger? What this might mean is a conversation for a reflection on the future, but I hope you share with me a desire to do more for God in this place.

Thinking about our church family, as well as welcoming new members, we have also bade some sad farewells as we mourned the deaths of amongst others Delyth Wride (Street), Liz Sowerby (Street), Sheila Taylor (Compton Dundon), Brenda Bergner (Street), Jenny Hall (Street). These faithful Christians will leave a huge gap.

I am grateful to our Parish Safeguarding Officers who undertake an administrative role to ensure that all are both kept safe and up to date with ongoing training requirements. Thanks go to Sonia, our benefice administrator, who works tirelessly, flexibly, and often well beyond her contracted hours.

I want to pay tribute to our wardens, Edd Reeve (Street), Pat King and Gill Williams (Compton Dundon), Sandra Gristock (Walton), our Treasurers, Sonia Beaty (Street and Walton), Julie Gordon (Compton Dundon) and the PCC. A huge 'thank you' to all those who lead and preach at our Sunday and Midweek Services: licenced Readers, Lay Worship Assistants, intercessors, welcomers, and readers. I want to also thank my clergy colleagues, Sister Rachel Pengelly & Rev'd David Hatrey for their support, commitment and partnership as we lead our churches together.

And yes, I know that in writing this last paragraph, inevitably I will have missed someone. I believe that we are all called to serve and so however and wherever you serve, thank you.

Ana Lawrence, Rector

2024 APCM REPORTS

BENEFICE REPORTS

Safeguarding Report

Street, Walton and Compton Dundon.

PSO Meetings:

The PSOs for Street, Walton & Compton Dundon met regularly this year, continuing our ethos of mutual support and information sharing relative to DBS checks, Dashboards and Safeguarding Hubs. In early 2025 this gave the group an opportunity to say goodbye to Sandra Gristock from the Walton Parish after many years of service in this and related roles. Though this was a sad event for us all, we were very happy to welcome Pauline Hatrey to the group to take on this role at Walton!

Steve is currently investigating the systematic review of church policies held by our Benefice and including them on the swcd-churches website.

Parish Safeguarding Hubs:

As the Compton Dundon Dashboard has recently been 'promoted' to Level 3, full access to the Parish Hub software has been granted. Steve will trial the 'HR' aspect of the hub that looks at staffing, recruitment and certification in order to report back to Pauline and Jenny.

Safeguarding Focus Service – 23rd March:

As the Safeguarding focus service forecast for December 2024 was postponed by Walton and Street parishes due to a clash with a large Baptism Service, this will now be rescheduled for the 23rd March 2025.

INEQE audit and the future of Safeguarding within the Church of England:

There have been various calls made across the Benefice through announcements and publications encouraging our parishioners to complete the on line questionnaires produced by INEQE. We keenly await the Nationwide result of this audit.

With concerns regarding Safeguarding within the Church of England at the highest level, there are moves to allow us to build on the work of parish safeguarding officers, diocesan safeguarding teams, clergy, churchwardens and others. This will take the form of:

1. An independent body to provide scrutiny of the Church of England's safeguarding activities.
2. A scrutineering body which will be governed by an independent board overseen by an independent chair. Its staff will not be employed by the Church of England but will be employees of a separate organisation.

Pauline Hatrey, Sandra Gristock, Jenny Martin, Steve King.

Prayer Support Group

It is a privilege to report on the work of the Prayer Support Group for 2024.

During 2024 the Prayer Support Group has again prayed for over 30 people or situations that have been brought to our attention and where there has been a variety of prayer needs. We have prayed promptly and in the strictest of confidence. We know from various feedback that our prayers have been heard, and that God has stood in those situations to bring comfort and support to those in need.

The Prayer Support Group is composed of a few Church members from across the Benefice who are dedicated to praying for the needs of others. We are not a closed group and would welcome others with a similar heart to join us – if this is an invitation to you, please contact me.

I make a second invitation to the Benefice at large. It is simply this - please do not be shy about bringing your prayer needs to our attention. The words of a hymn encourage us to take everything to the Lord in prayer and the Prayer Support Group is there to help you do that. Your prayer need could be something for yourself, a family member or friend or about a situation. Whatever it may be; it will be treated confidentially – whatever is shared with the Prayer Support Group stays in the Prayer Support Group.

Prayer requests can be made by anyone, and not just by those who make up the group – all you need to do to ask for prayer is to simply email me at prayers.street@gmail.com or telephone me and provide an outline of the particular prayer need you want to share.

Jeff Brewer – February 2025 (mobile: 07970 881779)

Coffee, Chat and Snacks.

Due to a grant from the Parish Council for the running of the building (electricity and heating) and an anonymous donation we have been able to continue our warm space this year.

Coffee, chat and snacks has been open to our community throughout the year to anyone who would value a warm space, a hot drink and good conversation from 10.30 - 12noon on Saturday mornings in the Mission Church. From 30th November, there were some changes including the offer of a simple lunch. We have been welcoming on average fifteen guests to our warm space each week. We have our regulars and recently have been able to welcome some new faces during the colder months. We have been building community and friendships and tackling loneliness in our community.

We have had quite the diverse menu from Pasties to pasta! All with a pudding.

We have had some wonderful feedback, such as this space is a 'lifeline for us' and 'I would be sat alone on a Saturday morning,' and it is clear that the space has been invaluable to our older members of society. The space has promoted friendships and intergenerational conversations.

During October and November, we had Poppy with us who was working towards her silver Duke Of Edinburgh award, she was an asset to our team and proved that teenagers and our more senior guests can converse and learn from each other. We have been blessed with piano players to entertain us. In December we enjoyed a Christmas Buffet and carol singing and this was an enjoyable morning for us all.

We have two new volunteers beginning with us in the Spring, we continually ask for your prayers as we continue to grow.

Sister Rachel Pengelly

House Group report 2024

During 2024 there were 3 house groups meeting across the Benefice:

The Explore@Monday evening group which meets at the Mission Church on Monday evenings (the group has 8 members)

The Walton group which meets via Zoom on Tuesday evenings during school term times (the group has 7 members).

The Wednesday evening group which meets at the Mission Church on Wednesday evenings (this group normally has between 8 and 10 members attending)

During 2024 plans were made for a fourth group and that group started in early 2025 (meeting in the Mission Church on Thursday mornings).

All groups are open to anyone from any of the churches in the Benefice. The groups provide a chance for members to socialize together, to study and discuss topics related to our faith, and to pray together. For some parts of the year all the groups studied shared topics which were related to our sermon series (e.g. the "Meals with Jesus" sermon series) or other themes (e.g. friendship in the book "The Best of Friends"). At other times each group chose their own topic or book of the Bible to study.

The contacts for the groups are as follows:

The Explore@Monday evening group – Steve King (Compton Dundon)

The Walton group - Sonia Beaty (Walton)

The Wednesday evening group - Kay Savage (Mission Church) or Vanessa Adams (Walton) or David Hatrey

The Thursday morning group - Mike Bergner (Mission Church)

Ian Jones (Mission Church)

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod met 3 times during 2024, in different venues in the Deanery. Discussion has centred around a range of issues:

Shared local Ministry plan

This refers to the organisation of parishes and deployment of priests and those involved in lay ministry across the Deanery.

Deanery Mission Plan

The focus up to September 2024 was 'Tend.'

We have heard encouraging examples of how 'Tend' was put into practice across the parishes, including the Saturday Coffee, Chat and Warm Space at the Mission Church in Street.

From September 2024 to September 2025 the focus will be 'Tell.'

Revd Richard Tweedy is the Deanery Champion leading this.

Thrive

This is a collection of resources to enable churches in a multi-parish Benefice to evaluate where they are, and to help them to flourish further.

We were introduced to the Thrive course and materials, with a view to representatives from each Benefice beginning to meet in 2025.

Parish Share

During 2024 there has been a consultation process taking place on the new Parish Share methodology. This will continue in PCC meetings in 2025.

Finance

We thanked Peter Sage for his work as Treasurer over the past 7 years.

Sonia Beaty has kindly offered to be our new Deanery Treasurer.

Online banking has been set up.

Personnel

David MacGeoch has moved to a new position after 14 years as Vicar of Glastonbury.

Ana Lawrence is our Area Dean, with Jane Durham as Assistant Area Dean.

There are still vacancies for Deanery Synod members in our Benefice, and we would love to hear from you if you are interested in being part of the team.

Pat King, Sandra Gristock, Hilda Grint

Charitable Giving

During 2024, SWCD Churches continued its tradition of supporting a range of local, national and international charity partners as recommended by church members and selected by our PCCs. In addition to the ongoing support we also responded to a number of emergencies, as well as holding fund raising events such as a Macmillan coffee morning in Walton and collections at special services such as for the Royal British Legion.

In total, over the year, our three parishes gave nearly £xxx to these organisations, a result of which we can be very proud in the context of the significant financial challenges we face as a church family.

This year, in response to difficulties engaging our congregations with the organisations we support, we reduced the overall number and asked church members from each of our parishes to act as a 'champion' for one of the chosen charities. News from the charities was shared in Life magazine, prayer requests were included in Sunday intercessions and we also welcomed a speaker from Tearfund in January 2024 to our Street churches. We would love to do more to encourage church members to engage with the charities that we support financially.

Our financial challenges in Street during the year forced us to pause our tithed giving. This was a deeply difficult decision and one we hope not to have to repeat in future years.

Kevin Lawrence

Alpha Course

Alpha is a series of group conversations that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment. Everyone's welcome.

Each session covers a different topic of faith, either in a short talk or video. The Alpha episodes are designed to engage and inspire conversation. They're about thirty minutes long and explore the big issues around faith and unpack the basics of Christianity, addressing questions such as Who is Jesus?, How can we have faith? and How does God guide us?

From September to early December, a group of around eleven people met on Monday evenings to share a meal, watch a video and discuss issues of faith. The group comprised people of faith, people new to faith and people exploring faith.

The discussions were wide-ranging, often challenging and sometimes moving, as we shared our experiences of walking with Jesus as well as searching for him. The hard questions were not avoided and we were honest about not having all the answers.

Every session was wrapped in prayer. Those leading the sessions met weekly online to pray for the participants and for the forthcoming session.

The feedback from those who took part was positive. One participant, a regular church attender, enjoyed being able to re-examine the basics of faith and felt free to ask questions in a 'safe space'. Another found it helpful in rediscovering faith and also appreciated being able to explore ideas and issues without fear of judgement or disapproval.

Both participants and leaders found the 11-week course challenging and inspiring and we are particularly thankful for those faithful servants who provided us with such wonderful food each week. Meeting together over a meal provided us with a great time of fellowship and helped us to get to know each other before watching the videos and discussing them each week.

I would encourage anyone curious about Alpha to keep an eye out for the next course and to be prayerfully considering who they could invite along.

Gill Williams, member of the Alpha leadership team

School engagement

During the year, we have worked with a number of our local schools across the benefice.

Brookside Academy: Sister Rachel has been regularly supporting the school with RE. She has been in most year groups during their lessons helping to answer some big questions, such as 'did God intend Jesus to die'? It has been wonderful to hear their questions, and they have many! The children are keen to learn and understand how scripture is relevant to life today.

Compton Dundon School: the school now has strong links with St Andrew's. They have attended different services, and we have been invited into the school to support the boys. The boys come and help at CAMEO (the village coffee morning) giving them vital life skills in communicating with the public. They also help at the church with basic maintenance such as gardening. We look forward to making our links even stronger.

Walton VA Primary School: during the year we have taken whole school collective worship on a number of occasions and continue to support the school through our two foundation governors, Vanessa Adams and Rev David Hatrey, who replaced Kevin Lawrence in September 2024. Growing links have included children performing at the Walton Coffee morning a couple of times a term, more children coming to Messy Church and regular whole school services in Holy Trinity including Christingle which was a particular highlight.

Elmhurst Junior School: As well as through RE support and leading a traditional school Remembrance service, Rev Ana Lawrence is involved as a community governor. The school also come to Holy Trinity, Street for Christmas carol services and an Easter event retelling the Easter story.

Ana Lawrence & Rachel Pengelly

Open the Book

We have enjoyed another successful year sharing the Bible stories in the Primary and Junior schools in Street and Walton. We are a dedicated team of nine volunteers who give our time to this important children's outreach and mission.

Within the past year we held a regional training event led by Rachel Cully, the Open the Book lead nationally. It was an enjoyable afternoon which gave us inspirational ideas of how we could deliver the stories as well as ideas for resources. We are now the proud owners of a pop-up tent, complete with teeth, to become the whale in the Jonah story. So exciting because the children playing Jonah can pretend to be inside the whale!

Open the Book volunteers have to update this training every three years, so this year our whole team is up to date with information about protocol as well as safeguarding. With the new system of members registration with Open the Book we are proud to say we are fully paid-up members.

We share the Bible stories in Walton, Elmhurst, Hindhayes and Brookside Schools either weekly or fortnightly depending on the school. Our storytelling sessions are met with real enthusiasm from the school communities, children and adults alike. The children so enjoy dressing up and acting out the story as well as singing the action songs. We have even had a teacher take part this year! The school communities are always very pleased to see us and are very welcoming. We feel it is a real honour to be able to share

the Bible stories with the children, who probably would not hear them otherwise. As a team we support each other well with prayer, care and love.

Pauline Hatrey, Open the Book leader Street, Walton and Compton Dundon

Bereavement Café

Bereavement Café continues to meet on the first Sunday of each month in the Mission Church and welcomes all who have been bereaved of a loved one, be that a life partner, husband, wife, friend or family member.

We welcome those looking for regular support and connection with others who have experienced the pain of loss and grief, and also those who visit to explore what might be available.

The Bereavement Café Team aim to facilitate a warm and welcoming space for those who are struggling or searching in their grief. This hospitality allows the Team to reflect the love of Jesus and provide a human connection, which is important as bereavement can be an isolating experience for some.

Due to the vulnerability that may be present for those experiencing grief, there is a regular framework for each session. This gives a familiar feel and sense of safety to sessions.

The Team is dedicated to the provision of a confidential space in which a person can speak freely, and each meeting is facilitated to allow those who attend the opportunity to engage in conversations around their experiences both past (what happened), and present, (how daily life is now managed).

The cakes and beverages, provided for the Café style sessions further extend the sense of hospitality, and thanks go not only to the Team but also those who bake and provide the refreshments.

Special thanks also go to Sue Ripley who, at Christmas, retired from serving with the Bereavement Café Team. Sue was a founder member of the Team and her input over the years has been a blessing to many.

Stephanie Shortland, member of the bereavement café team.

Eco Church

The Group met five times in the year, at least once in each of the four churches helping us to be aware of each situation. Much of our work was centred on working towards Eco Church Silver Awards, reviewing what was happening in our churches and congregations in the five key areas of Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and Local Engagement, and lifestyle.

A sermon series in Lent focused on green theology and the importance of being good stewards of creation. Talks at Lent Lunches, a Carbon Fast and Fairtrade presentations complemented this. We contributed regular articles to the parish magazine 'Life' promoting ethical, environmental behaviour.

Parishioners across the Benefice supported the setting up of the Street Repair Café and volunteered at the monthly sessions. In association with this, recycling opportunities have been promoted, this includes electronic devices (phones, tablets etc.) and candle ends. We monitored energy use in the Benefice churches by completing the Church of England's Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) with the aim of reducing our

carbon footprint which may have the added benefit of reducing expenditure, compared to what we would be paying at a time of increasing energy costs. We continued to review what was happening in our churchyards and actively participated in management of them in ways relevant to each local situation.

Towards the end of the year completed Eco Church surveys were submitted to A Rocha.

All four Churches in the Benefice were granted Silver Awards. Congratulations and thanks to the members of the group: Trish Cox, Helen Thomas (Compton Dundon), Sandra Gristock, Andy Savage (Walton, Suzie Williams (Street) and to all those contributing to this in any way.

Susan Ripley (Street)

Soulful Nature

Last December's Walk took us back to Ham Wall nature reserve where our walks began in the previous January.

The group initially met in the first session to discuss the chapter of the book we were following for the year, 'Soulful Nature' by Brian Draper and Howard Green. Followed a week later with a walk that followed the chapter. We enjoyed several walks in the local area looking at the big things as well as the little things, like mosses, plants/ferns that blossom in the cracks. We went in search of rare wildflowers and were blessed looking at butterflies. During the walks we had space to slow down, be mindful and pray.

We were observing God in nature and the effect on us nature plays. We looked at eco systems, how they worked and what happened when they break down. In the middle of our walks, we decided to put both talk and walk together and rebrand the group with a new title. This was due to low numbers attending but this was a real blessing to those who came.

We learned to saunter with God, and take beautiful photographs along the way. We learned to listen to nature's song and to be part of nature, not above it.

Sister Rachel Pengelly

SWCD Book Group 2024

The Book Group met six times, reading and discussing books that ranged far and wide; we began in fictional Barchester and ended in Bristol, visiting Syria, Afghanistan, the USA, Botswana and occasionally other places in between. Two books were biographies, the others novels in varying styles. Although not everyone read every one, sometimes starting a book and not finishing, sometimes not even starting, all listen and take part in the discussion. We reflect on the message and why we like or dislike a particular book.

The books we read this year were:-

- The Warden by Anthony Trollope
- The Beekeeper of Aleppo by Christy Lefteri
- Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin
- Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus
- How to Raise an Elephant by Alexander McCall-Smith
- The House in South Road by Joyce Storey

Thank you to everyone participating in 2024.

We would be pleased to welcome anyone who wished to join the group and suggestions of books we might read.

Susan Ripley (Street)

Stewardship

Money is one of those things that nobody really likes talking about in our culture, but Jesus had plenty to say on the subject and so we too, have not shied away from being open both about the financial pressures that we face as a church family and some of the Biblical teaching about giving and stewardship.

You will find full details of the 2024 financial position for your parish elsewhere in this report. During the year we have tried to keep these issues before the congregation through, for example, articles in 'Life' magazine. During the year we also introduced the 'Parish Giving' scheme and set up all our parishes on 'Easyfundraising,' an online portal that makes free donations when shoppers purchase online. To date, however, take up of these schemes has been limited, despite publicity. Contactless giving machines in three of our churches are increasingly used, despite ongoing technical difficulties! We have also begun to discuss how we can encourage more church members to set up regular giving schemes.

We also, again, sent thank you letters to everyone in the church family for their financial support, which seems to have been appreciated. We also wrote to each member asking them to review their giving in the light of the financial challenges we faced, which encouraged a number of people to respond.

Our finances across the benefice remain under pressure, particularly with ongoing cost increases and a rising Parish Share. In Street, we hit a particular crisis during 2024 with the parish set to run out of money entirely by the end of the year on current trends. In response the PCC organized a series of presentations and requests for response over the summer and, as a result, increased giving dramatically improved the financial situation although we are far from out of the woods.

Kevin Lawrence

Communications

As a people who are called to share good news, we continue to work hard at communicating both internally, to the church family, and externally to the local communities whom we are called to love. Online, our Facebook presence continues to grow with over 290 followers at the end of the year and some posts getting over 1,000 views, whilst our website attracts around 3,000 hits per month. We have also set up an Instagram account but have more work to do to use this well. 'Life', 'Lifeline' and our church notice boards continue to be regular and valued sources of information and news from across the benefice and this year, and we have done particular work on improving the notice boards in the Mission Church, including installing a display screen. In addition, we have:

- Replaced worn out external notice boards at Walton and Street parish church.
- Used joint benefice services to share information about benefice wide ministries.
- Continued to work towards increasing consistency in our messages through using our logo etc.

- Shared events in one church with the others through posters, Life magazine, Facebook etc.

Kevin Lawrence

PARISH REPORTS

Churchwarden Report

Mission Church Street: the main entrance doors have been changed to open automatically (paid for by a donor) and to date just a couple of minor teething issues. Much appreciated by wheelchair users, mums with pushchairs etc.

A security camera has been fitted so that lone workers can know who is entering the building, part of our duty of care. Routine maintenance such as a gas check etc has been all that has been needed, no major problems.

Parish Church Street. A blocked downpipe in the north east corner caused water to run down the wall outside and has caused damp behind the organ. Drain pipe was cleared by ourselves (Thanks to Bob allowing us to use his ladder). Ellis the builders recommended that we used a dehumidifier to take the water out of the wall. They would come in the summer to paint the wall when it had dried out. A team of volunteers tidied up the graveyard and ivy etc growing up the walls outside.

A new notice board was erected by the front gate (by volunteers). Routine maintenance, Gas, clock service etc has been carried out.

With the help of an expert from Flourish House (Diocese of Bath & Wells), we have been experimenting with the heating and floor, which is a work in progress. The heating is now on for services, our apologies for those few cold Sundays.

Edd Reeve, Churchwarden

PCC Report

The PCC met four times in 2024 along with an away-day in May together with PCC members from Walton and Compton Dundon. Topics for discussion included maintenance of the Parish and Mission churches, safeguarding, Eco church, church finances, charitable giving, Deanery Synod, church services and involvement of children in the church. The away-day provided an opportunity to think and have ideas about the future of our churches and generated many initiatives.

Despite two giving campaigns the parish finances remain poor. A difficult decision was made to defer payment of the tithe due to financial pressures. Some of this may be paid in 2025 if the financial situation improves.

Copies of minutes are available on request to the PCC secretary.

Andrew Savage PCC Secretary

Children and Young People Street Mission Church

A children's group continues to run on the second and fourth Sunday of the month at Mission church with a rota of 5 wonderful helpers helping 2 at a time. Attendance has increased and is now usually 6-8 children. It is great to have more children, the age group ranges from 2-10 so finding suitable and engaging activities is a challenge, however it does not feel like enough children to look at dividing into 2 smaller groups yet. The first and third Sundays are all age services.

As we have had some new secondary school aged young people attending the Mission Church we have started some social events, namely pizza and games nights once a month. We have had 2 so far attended by about 6 then 4 young people.

An alternative Halloween party, 'Glitter and glow' was run in the Parish Church. About 8 children attended. It was a little difficult using this venue due to the limited toilet/kitchen facilities.

Hannah Hindle Mission Church

Little Stars

We have had another happy year with Little Stars. Families continue to come along on Friday mornings, 930am to 11am, during termtime.

A huge thankyou to Pam, Pat, Suzie, Eleanor, Darrell, Val, Glynys, Chris and Sandra who are all very appreciated members of our team. Thankyou also to Ana and Rachel who pop in from time to time to support us too. At Christmas in 2024 Roger (Dad) became chief elf at our Christmas Party and Julian (my husband) stepped up to take the part of Father Christmas. The party morning was enjoyed very much by everyone.

We had our 2nd Nativity Story Session to end the year, and this was well attended.

Throughout the year we seem to have an average of 20 children attending each week, with their grown-ups. This is a lovely number, meaning there is ample room in the Mission Church for them to play, and for their grown-ups to chat.

Thank you to everyone who quietly but faithfully supports us in prayer. Before every Friday session we gather and pray before the families come into the church for the morning. This sets us up for the morning, as we invite our father God to be at the centre of what we do each Friday morning.

We, as a team, hope God continues to bless the group, and that any new volunteers may come forward to join us. We will continue to support the lovely families in our community who gather at Little Stars at The Mission Church on Friday mornings.

Julie Day, leader.

Afternoon Teas/Connections@theMission 2024

All were welcome to this group that met every month, on the third Thursday at 2-30pm in the Mission Church Street, during 2024.

A name change was decided as the group evolved during the year. We still had tea, cake and lots of conversation. The difference was that the Christian Faith element was brought into the group as activities and speakers focused more on personal faith experiences. Some of the talks and activities included were a

quiz, Fair Trade information, craft afternoons, Street Pastors information, holiday memories, school governor information and messages from the clergy.

We have had speakers/activities from all four Street, Walton and Compton Dundon churches over the year, helping to make connections between the churches and others who have come along.

Pam Harmsworth (Mission Church)

Cox's Charity.

The charity was set up in 1865 by George Cox to the deserving inhabitants of Street. This generous gift that is overseen by trustees is able to alleviate 'temporary distress'. We have had applications this year for items such as transport costs to medical appointments, kitchen appliances and school uniform. As we meet applicants in their homes, it gives us the opportunity to compassionately see how they are living. We have made good links with Aster Housing Association and have been able to action works on their properties if they are required and we have permission to do this on behalf of the tenant.

In the future we are looking to working closely with Sleek Cleaning who recycle furniture, instead of it going into landfill.

Sister Rachel Pengelly

Electoral Role Report 2024

New on roll, 12, Died 4, Left 3 On roll 100

The electoral roll is due for full renewal in 2025.

Those on the electoral roll of the churches may apply for a free pass into Wells Cathedral. Contact Sonia Beaty in the church office for a form, which has to be signed by the church warden.

Angela Reeve Electoral Roll Officer

External use of the church buildings in Street

During 2024 we continued to welcome some regular users to the Mission Church. These included Health Visitors (ceased in April), Edge Acrobats (twice a week) and Street Sings using the main church space. The kitchen and upstairs meeting rooms were regularly used by a local counsellor, U3A (2 groups) and a baby massage group (twice a week). A new support group is using the kitchen once a month. There were also various other ad hoc bookings throughout the year.

Street Parish Church was used on one occasion for music recording, the annual Strode 'Unplugged' concert and a Crispin School concert. Elmhurst School visited at Easter and used the church for their Christmas Carol services.

Sonia Beaty

Trinity Handbells

In February we were all devastated by the death of Delyth Wride, who was one of the founder members of Trinity Handbells back in 1994.

Apart from our weekly practice sessions on Wednesday evenings in the Mission church, there is nothing to report until November when we did our annual Christmas Carol ringing: Firstly, outside St Johns church in Glastonbury for the Frost Fayre at which we enjoyed entertaining the many visitors to the Church. Then in December we went into the warmth of Southlawns where appreciation was shown by many residents who sang along with some of the carols. We were treated to tea and mince pies afterwards. Two days after we rang in the year 6 classroom at Avalon Special school in Street after an invitation to ring for them by one of the students. We felt much excitement from the class, of whom some of whom had a go. They invited us to go back in the Summer to play for the whole school. We were very encouraged by this worthwhile visit. At the Community Carols in the Parish Church, we played carols for half an hour before the 'service' and again afterwards whilst the congregation enjoyed tea and mince pies.

On Christmas day I played some solo rounds before and after the service with the church handbells, 4 in hand.

Roger Harmsworth