



# ANNUAL REPORTS 2023-2024

**The Parish of Ashburton**

with

**Buckland-in-the-Moor and Bickington**

(The Benefice of Ashburton, Bickington, Buckland-in-the-Moor,  
Holne, Huccaby, Ilsington, Leusdon, Postbridge  
and Widecombe-in-the-Moor)



# ANNUAL REPORTS

## 2023-2024

### Background

P.C.C. Membership

Team Rector Right Reverend Dr Mark Rylands Chairman  
Ex-officio Member of all P.C.C.s

Team Vicar Reverend Canon John Bennett  
Team Vicar Reverend Ross Hathway

Curate Reverend Jenny Weigel

Mission & Family Development Worker Mrs Heidi Lewis

Licensed Lay Ministers Mrs Chloe Axford  
Mr Mackenzie Robinson

Churchwardens Mr Francis Parffrey (Elected 2020)  
Mrs Joyce Arscott (Elected 2023)

Deputy Warden Mr Nick Axford – now retired

Deanery Synod Mr William West (Elected 2020 for 3 years)  
Mrs Jane Ashton (Elected 2020 for 3 years)

Diocesan Synod Mr William West (Elected 2018 for 3 years)

Elected Members Mr Nick Axford (Elected 2020)  
Mrs Barbara Dunball (Elected 2018)  
Mrs Jean Histed (Elected 2019)  
Mr Brian Lewis (Elected 2018)  
Mrs Eve Nutley (Elected 2021)  
Mr Francis Parffrey (Elected 2018)  
Mrs Rachel West (Elected 2018)  
Mr William West (Elected 2020)  
Ms Liz Wood

Vacancies

Co-opted Members

Ex-Officio Members Mr Peter Warren Deputy Warden, St. Mary's, Bickington

Lay Chairman Mr William West

Treasurer Mr William West

Non-voting Officers Mrs Gill Sheridan, Secretary

Benefice Safeguarding Officer Mrs Judy Southcombe

Parish Safeguarding Representative Mr Francis Parffrey

Accountant Clare Lillington – Barrett’s Chartered Accountants, 22 Union Street, Newton Abbot. Devon. TQ12 2JS

Independent Examiner Ian Barrett / Senior Partner – Barrett’s Chartered Accountants, 22 Union Street, Newton Abbot. Devon. TQ12 2JS

### **Aims and Purpose**

St. Andrew’s P.C.C. has the responsibility with the Team Rector and Team Vicars within the Ashburton and Moorland Team Benefice, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole missions of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The P.C.C. is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church.

### **Objectives and Activities**

The P.C.C. is committed to enabling as many people as possible to access worship at our Churches within the parish of Ashburton with Buckland-in-the-Moor and Bickington either in person or online, and to become part of the parish community. The P.C.C. maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish, and our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, the Team Rector and the P.C.C. have considered the Commission’s guideline on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable everyone to live out their faith as part of the parish community through:

### **Worship and Prayer**

#### **The provision of pastoral care**

#### **Outreach to the wider community**

To facilitate this work, it is important that the fabric of the three churches is maintained.

St. Andrew’s P.C.C. and the respective D.C.C.s have the responsibility of co-operating with the Team Rector in promoting the whole missions of the Church as previously defined, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical in the parishes of Ashburton, Buckland-in-the-Moor and Bickington, and the Ashburton and Moorland Team Ministry. It also has the maintenance responsibilities for the Church of St. Andrew’s, Ashburton, Devon.

The P.C.C. affirms the vision set out by Bishop Robert in his keynote address to the Diocesan Synod in March 2016 for the Diocese of Exeter (full details can be found at <http://exeter.anglican.org/who-we-are/vision-strategy/>), and seeks to promote and apply them at a local level, namely:

**‘I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.’ Jeremiah 29.11**

**We seek to be people who together are:**

### **Growing in Prayer**

We want to grow in prayer, living a life close to God. This means taking risks as we become more honest with ourselves and more honest with God. Prayer opens up deep places within us to God’s grace which is why it is such a life-giving activity. Growing in prayer is essential if we are to witness to God’s Kingdom and become the people God has called us to be.

## **Making New Disciples**

A disciple is someone who follows Jesus Christ. With Him as our companion and guide we can travel through life differently, and we hope others will share the adventure with us. We want to be more faithful in our discipleship and allow God to shape our priorities and values. The Christian gospel is good news and we need to find new ways of telling the story, of explaining the faith and giving a reason for the hope that is in us.

## **Serving the People of Devon with Joy**

We want to make a difference in the world and witness to God's love and justice, especially in the communities and schools where we live. Working in partnership with others who are transforming lives, we seek to address the global issues confronting our generation so that everyone may flourish.

### **+ Robert Exon**

The Feast of the Epiphany 2016

## **Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.**

The Council has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding & Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The method of appointment of P.C.C. members is set out within the Church representation rules. At St. Andrew's, Ashburton the membership of the P.C.C. consists of the Team Rector, Churchwardens and 12 members elected by those of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the Church, and an additional 3 representatives for the Deanery Synod. All those who attend our services or are members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the electoral roll and stand for election to the P.C.C.

In addition to the P.C.C. at St. Andrew's, both St. Peter's, Buckland-in-the-Moor and St. Mary the Virgin, Bickington have an elected D.C.C.

The P.C.C. 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 P.C.C. are to be spent.

### **Committees**

The P.C.C. operates through a number of committees which meet between full meetings of the P.C.C. which are held on a bi-monthly basis. The Priest-in-Charge and Churchwardens are Ex-officio members of the committees.

**STANDING COMMITTEE:** This is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact the business of the P.C.C. between meetings, subject to any directions given by the P.C.C.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** The Finance Committee oversees the financial dimensions of the work of the Church by managing income and expenditure, budgeting, advising on Church giving to good causes, reviewing P.C.C. charges, and advising on increasing income through gift days, appeals to the congregation and other events. In addition to preparing accounts in accordance with the directions of the Diocese of Exeter, the Committee distinguishes income and expenditure in four areas: Ministry, Church Buildings, Church Hall and Churchyard.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:** The Buildings and Grounds Committee attends to work on the fabric of the church building including routine maintenance, Quinquennial Inspection, repairs and new works, liaising as necessary with the appointed Diocesan quinquennial architect, the Diocesan Advisory Committee and contractors. The Committee also has responsibility for the maintenance of the Churchyard and Church Hall.

**MAGAZINE COMMITTEE:** The Magazine Committee is currently being re-organised.

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE:** The Social Committee organises social and fund-raising events including those which follow services at Harvest and Christmas, and also Sunday morning coffee after the service. This is also being re-organised.

## **CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

Church Statistics as given to the Diocese for 2023—as submitted to the Statistics for Mission Survey.

**St. Andrew's** Total in the worshipping Community: 75:  
(6 children, 5 young people, 64 adults)  
weekly attendance: 55 adults, 6 children/young people  
Number of communicants: 52

Number of Weddings held in Church – 2  
Number of Funerals held in Church - 15  
Number of Baptisms - 8

**St. Peter's** Weekly attendance: 10  
Number of communicants - 8

**St. Mary's** Regular attendance - 15

**THE CHURCH LANDS CHARITY** (Exclusive of Education Foundation) – Charity Number 236038, following the sale of No 32 West Street, Ashburton, has invested the sale proceeds. The income from the property, after deduction of running expenses and maintenance of the property, is used for making grants for the maintenance of the fabric of St. Andrew's Church, Ashburton, Devon. The Trustees of the Charity meet approximately four times a year to oversee the investment of the funds, and to consider grant requests made by the Parochial Church Council.

#### **Report of Churchlands Trustees 2023 -24**

Since the last annual report given in April 2023, the trustees have met on 3 occasions to discuss the sale and the investment of proceeds from the sale 32 West Street, Ashburton which form the assets of the charity. (Due to the extremely high costs of maintenance, and without sufficient funds to make good, the Trustees, since 2020, had decided that the best course of action was to sell the property and reinvest in a more sustainable property.)

The proceeds of the sale are currently invested with the CCLA.

The Trustees are looking to purchase two suitable properties in Ashburton to be rented to local people.

The trustees comprised the Rector (Rt. Rev'd. Dr. Mark Rylands), two churchwardens of St. Andrew's Church (Mr Francis Parffrey and Mrs Joyce Arscott) with six elected trustees, namely Mr William West, Ms Valerie Colliver, Mrs Barbara Dunball, Mrs Janet Lockwood-Lee, Mr William Shapley and Mrs Valerie Smale. Mrs Judith Lewis stood down from being a Trustee in August, 2022.

The governance of the charity is defined by the scheme dated the 25th July 1919, and as varied by schemes of 9th January 1925, 18th September 1964 and 17th February 2004.



Rt. Rev'd. Dr. Mark Rylands, (Chair)

#### **TEAM RECTOR'S REPORT St Andrew's Church, Ashburton 2023-4**

We live in times of uncertainty and upheaval. The hostile invasion of Ukraine is still being perpetrated by Russia; Hamas' terrorist attack and mass murder of hundreds of Israeli citizens -children, women and men - on 7<sup>th</sup> October, with the taking hostages, has led to a war in Gaza; Houthi rebels attack shipping and disrupt trade between the East and Europe; the plight of refugees and economic migrants from across the planet has been brought to our shores and become our concern. This has all contributed to high inflation and a cost-of-living crisis continuing in the UK.

Our world, country and community continue to face severe challenges and the Church cannot be disconnected from this. Our worship of God incarnate means that we look to reflect his nature in the world: we are trying to be there for people, particularly to be with and alongside those with whom we live, and supportive of global neighbours, too. Jesus' commandments to 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' and 'love one another as I have loved you' are even more apposite and relevant. The introduction I have written to our The Ashburton and Moorland Team, posted

on the website, tries to capture what we are about as a Church:

**'For hundreds of years the Church has been engaged in bringing to residents of our town and villages the good news of the love of God, revealed in Jesus Christ. In a society where there is much bad news, loss of common values and a sense of being adrift, we try to embody and share the good news of God's care for everyone. We follow someone who said he is 'the Light of the World' and 'the Way'. However, we've not arrived- we are still on the way.**

**With the wider family of the Church of England in Devon, we are trying to grow in prayer, make and grow disciples and serve the people of Devon with joy. We gather to worship and learn not because we think we are good enough but because we know our need of God. We are attempting to be the people God wants us to be by trying to joyfully and honestly live the good news we proclaim. Come and join us on the journey.'**

At St Andrew's, we are trying to be a Church for the community where everybody is welcome. It's what our notice board says and it's what we are trying to live out. Some would say St Andrew's is a 'middle of the road' church. However, we want to celebrate the diversity of our gifts to the full; to savour *all* the flavours and to highlight *each and every* colour -not just be a muddle in the middle. Of course, being one in Christ, as brothers and sisters, means being generous with one another. Learning to see Christ in someone with whom we disagree is hard but it is our calling as disciples of Christ. If we cannot learn to love one another as Christ has loved us, what have we to say to a community and world with its disagreements and divisions?

We have much to celebrate. Not least the involvement of a large and diverse group of people in the life, service and witness of St Andrew's Church in the community. The growing number of lay vocations to ministry, preaching and pastoral care is something for which I give thanks to God and our partnership with the Methodist Church is to be treasured.

#### **Some significant events in 2023/4:**

- 29<sup>th</sup> April: St Andrew's Tower and Church Open Day
- 7<sup>th</sup> May: Coronation of King Charles III Celebration Service in St Andrew's
- 11<sup>th</sup> June: Thanksgiving Service – pledging increased giving to resource the church's work and mission.
- 1<sup>st</sup> July: Ordination at Exeter Cathedral of our Curate, Jenny Weigel, as Deacon
- 23<sup>rd</sup> July: Retirement of Rev Geoffrey Fenton as Team Vicar
- 26-29<sup>th</sup> July: Children's Holiday Club at St Andrew's
- 30<sup>th</sup> July: Commissioning of our Mission and Family Development Worker, Heidi Lewis, as Church Army Evangelist
- 26<sup>th</sup> Sept: Interview and appointment of Rev. Ross Hathway as Team Vicar in the Ashburton and Moorland Team.
- 15<sup>th</sup> Oct: Harvest Festival
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct: Start of Moor Worship – monthly contemporary worship service at 7pm.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Nov: United Mission Community and Covenant Service at Holne with the Methodist Church.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Nov: All Saints and Souls Day Memorial Service
- 12<sup>th</sup> Nov: Remembrance Sunday Service
- 19<sup>th</sup> Nov: Confirmation Service
- 25<sup>th</sup> Nov: St Andrew's Christmas Fayre
- 26<sup>th</sup> Nov: Commissioning of Anna Friends and affirmation of Anna Chaplains
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec: Portreeve Service with the High Sheriff, Rt Reverend Nick McKinnel, as our preacher.
- 16<sup>th</sup> Dec: Confirmation Service and Carols by Candlelight
- 19<sup>th</sup> Dec: Appointment of Robin Stubbs as the Wyn Warwick Music Director of St Andrew's Church.
- 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> Dec: Christmas Midnight and Day Communion Services
- 31<sup>st</sup> Dec: United Mission Community Service at St Andrew's, Ashburton
- 8<sup>th</sup> Jan: Start of the Alpha Course for those enquiring about the Christian Faith.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Feb: Pancake Race on Shrove Tuesday in St Andrew's Church (featured on BBC Spotlight)
- 14<sup>th</sup> Feb: Ash Wednesday Ashing in Ashburton, Service in Ilsington and start of Lent Course
- 20<sup>th</sup> Feb: Licensing of Ross Hathway at St Pancras Widcombe, as Team Vicar
- 2<sup>nd</sup> March: Vision Day at Ilsington: 'This is My Story'.
- 17<sup>th</sup> March: United Mission Community Service and Team Lunch at Widcombe
- 25<sup>th</sup> March: Start of Holy Week Pilgrimage: online Night Prayer
- 28<sup>th</sup> March: Dinner, followed by Ecumenical Commemoration of the last Supper and watch at St Andrew's

29<sup>th</sup> March: Good Friday service and Walk of Witness in Ashburton (featured on ITV West Country)

31<sup>st</sup> March: Easter Family Communion followed by Egg Hunt in St Andrew's, Ashburton

The Churchwardens, in their report, have thanked almost everyone who contributes to our life together so I will not repeat but, instead, wholeheartedly endorse all their thanks and tributes to these kind and dedicated individuals. We are very fortunate to have the benefit of their gifts, time, presence and service. I am hugely grateful to my colleagues in the ministry team – Cassie Long, Heidi Lewis, Gillian Parker, John Bennett, Jenny Weigel and now Ross Hathway; the Licensed Lay Ministers- Chloe Axford, Mack Robinson and William West; and the retired clergy, in particular: Amanda Rylands, Denise and Tony Yeldham, David Witchell and Nick Shutt.

Much of the burden of leadership in a parish church rests on Churchwardens. Together with the Incumbent, they oversee the mission of the church. We have had a blessed trinity of wardens this year – different and complementary. Amongst his many other responsibilities, Nick Axford, as Deputy Churchwarden, has given help in a variety of areas -particularly in heading up our response to reducing St Andrew's carbon footprint. He is now taking a step backwards and I am most grateful for his contribution and the wise advice he has given me over the past 4 years. Francis Parffrey and Joyce Arscott have formed an excellent partnership as Churchwardens this past 12 months and I am most grateful for their hard work, awareness, care and concern for God's Mission through St Andrew's Church. They are both active and present in a great many areas of church life and a huge encouragement and support to me.

We live in challenging times and we are not immune to those challenges ourselves as a Church. May we continue to grow in 'loving one another', 'loving our neighbours as ourselves' and serving the people of Ashburton Parish with joy.



Rt. Rev'd. Dr. Mark Rylands,

#### **CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT 2023-2024**

To start this report, we would like to share with you that our ministry as Churchwardens is to witness God's work in our Church and daily life. We deal with many challenges while trying to make sure that everything is working to an agreed plan, although sometimes we have to ask God for help and guidance. As a team Francis and I endeavour to be helpful, kind, welcoming and always ready to listen and try and react appropriately to other people's needs.

We would like to thank the ministry team of Bishop Mark, Mandy, Heidi, The Revd John Bennett, The Revd Kevin Hooke of the Methodist circuit; and we welcome The Revd Jenny Weigel as our curate and newest member and thank her for her ministry.

We also welcome and congratulate Chloe and Mack to our ministry, now licensed lay ministers and a welcome addition to our team.

In addition, we recognize and welcome our new Anna Chaplains Eve, Alison and Jane, and Denise our Anna Chaplain friend who minister to the elderly and sick in our wider community. Congratulations, also, to Jane on the successful completion of her Theology degree course.

Many thanks to the members of the Parochial Church Council and a great deal of thanks to Gill Sheridan our PCC Secretary.

To Janet Lockwood-Lee, and her team of supporters, for providing coffee and teas and all refreshments after each service - much appreciated.

Grateful thanks to Nick Axford who has now retired from being our Deputy Warden: if anyone wants to put their hand up to join us, please speak to us!



Once again we must thank Jane Ashton and her team of banner makers namely Alison, Heidi, Julie, Margaret, Nikki and Pat for the new banners produced recently at Christmas and now at Easter. These beautifully created and thoughtful banners have given our church a warm and welcoming ambiance.

Much thanks to our team of flower arrangers who produce such beautiful arrangements and to our bell ringers who faithfully ring our bells on our religious occasions and weddings.

We also thank those who lead the varied worship music, Hannah Findley, Liz Wood and Denise Robinson. We welcome Robin Stubbs our new musical director for the St Andrews Choir for raising the standard of our choir and our appreciation of the music.

Most importantly we thank William West for his years of commitment to our choir as choir master and we wish him well in his ministry and pray that he will still join us when he can.

For the past twelve weeks we have had the privilege of holding an Alpha Course in our church hall, guided by the ministry team. This has been an opportunity to introduce our faith to new potential members. Our thanks must go to all the support staff in the kitchen for offering a choice of meals each week throughout the course.

A Cardless machine for giving has been installed and is generating funds; and had already paid for itself! Please do encourage visitors to use it if you are in church. We must thank William for his tireless work as our Treasurer – he spends more time than we can know keeping us on the straight and narrow.

We would also like to thank those whose behind the scenes work and service is not readily seen, but greatly appreciated: Rachel West for keeping our linen clean and in good order; the Holy Dusters Janet, Val, Jean and Eve keeping us spotless; Eve for running the Church Hall so efficiently and, it has to be said, profitably.

As a re-newed churchwarden Joyce would like to thank Francis, fellow church warden, for his fulsome support this year. He never puts me under any pressure. He spends a great deal of time organising and communicating on church matters and I value his guidance.

*Francis Parffrey*

*Joyce Arscott*  
Churchwardens

## **YOUTH HANGOUT REPORT**

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

Youth Hangout, a space for our young people aged 12-14, started in September and has been going for two terms. We meet weekly during term time on a Thursday evening at Jenny's house. We currently have 4 people on the team which is just about enough to cover the evenings. The number of young people attending fluctuates between 5-9 as not everyone can make every Thursday. Most of them have a church background.

The purpose of youth hangout is to offer a space for them to be themselves, have fun and engage with Christian teaching. The evenings include games, eating together (pizza) and something topical. Each evening generally has a specific topic. This term we've been discussing 'big issues' like identity, social media, mental health, and the young people have been very engaged in these conversations. Next term we'll be looking at some biblical themes using the bible project videos.

My aim and hope for this next term is to grow the team of volunteers helping with youth hangout, and to grow the confidence of some of the older youth to lead parts of the evening. I'm grateful to the volunteers who have been helping with youth hangout. I think it's an important space to have for our young people to feel at home in church and to nourish and grow their faith and confidence in a Christian life.

*Rev'd. Jenny Weigel*

Curate



## **REPORT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WORK AT ST ANDREW'S, ASHBURTON**

### **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WORK**

The Children and Families work at St Andrew's has continued to grow and attract new people over the past year. Over the past few years, there have been some fundamental changes to how certain activities are approached and organised, and this year has very much been a time for 'embedding' these changes rather than a time for innovating anything new. This is in part because my role in Ashburton will be ending this coming July.

#### **Moor and Messy:**

Last year, we took the decision to combine Messy Church with Moor Church, so since September we have been meeting each month as 'Moor and Messy'. Previously, Messy Church alternated each month with Moor Church. To an extent, this worked well, but meant that we couldn't always make the best of the dry weather if an indoor Messy Church session was scheduled, nor could we easily swap to an indoor session if the weather was not good enough for Moor Church - now we have that flexibility.

We have kept the principles of Messy Church in place - being Christ-centred, all-age, offering hospitality, creativity and celebration - but have changed the overall structure of the sessions to make them more engaging for all who attend. Instead of offering many different activities, we now all do one activity together - this means that different generations can explore faith alongside each other, and learn from one another as we go. This has also made the planning of each session simpler and we are less reliant on having lots of adults preparing activities and resources beforehand. We do have a dedicated core team of people who attend each session, who are involved in the long term planning, and who also take turns in leading the celebration.

Attendance ranges from 35-50+ people, with a good mix of ages.

We always end each session with a simple meal - if you feel you may be able to help with preparing this occasionally, please speak to Heidi.

#### **Hedgehogs (9:30-11am every Friday):**

The Hedgehogs Toddler Playgroup continues to meet each week during term time on Friday mornings. Attendance varies between 7 and 12 children plus parents, but can be as high as 18-20 children plus adults if the weather isn't good. There are good routines in place which make the running of each session straight forward even when numbers are high. We have been able to buy some new equipment this year, and continue to replace some of the older toys with resources which parents might struggle to accommodate at home - such as soft play equipment, bouncy castle, den building and a range of ride-ons and outdoor play equipment for the summer.

We offer drinks and toast on arrival for adults and children, with an additional snack for the children in the second half of the session.

Through the group, we are in touch with 30+ families from the local area - and at Christmas time, many of them also attended the Crib and Christingle services. Several are showing an interest in Moor and Messy (for when their children are a little older) and some have already begun to attend regularly.

Hedgehogs remains a valuable first point of contact for young families, as well as providing a much need and valued service for the community.

#### **The Baby Group (10-12pm most Tuesdays):**

In September, I restarted the Baby Group on a Tuesday morning. There are 5-7 young mums who have met regularly since then, and they have formed some good friendships, organising to visit sensory play sessions and other 'baby' activities together. They are now beginning to return to work at the end of their maternity leave, and some have started to attend Hedgehogs as well.

Baby Groups can offer pastoral and practical support for new parents and this has certainly been the case for this group.

#### **UpBeat Project:**

This has now come to an end, and we have said 'goodbye' to Letty. Letty has worked exceptionally flexibly and dedicatedly over the past 18 months in providing outreach through musical workshops and activities for children both in and out of school. We estimated that nearly 300 children have benefitted from her work.

### **Holiday Club:**

Preparations for this year's Holiday Club are underway and we have already had our first bookings! The theme is 'God's Wonderful World', looking at how science and the bible can fit together. We'll be doing a lot of experiments and there will be explosions and loud noises, as well as the usual round of crazy games, dances, songs and celebration.

Last year's club, attracted a total 37 children between the ages of 5 and 12 over the course of the week. The average attendance at each session was 22 children, with six 12-14 year olds helping prepare refreshments, run the AV and offering support to some of the younger children.

It was wonderful to see many of these children return for some of our special services and events at other times of the year.

### **Special Events, Services and Outreach:**

As well as our regular groups and activities, it is important to offer occasional 'one-off' events as part of our outreach to the local community. Examples this year have included: Pancake Day races in the church (as seen on BBC Spotlight!) and the 'not-Halloween' grotto which was created by Jenny and Chloe in the porch area of St Andrew's on 31st October. We received grateful feedback from several parents about this, thanking us for providing something 'not scary' for the children but which still felt like 'trick or treating' for them to engage with.

The Advent services which were specifically aimed at families were very well attended this year, and this reflects the hard work that our volunteers put into outreach throughout the year through the various groups and activities that we run.

### **Volunteers:**

Without a dedicated group of volunteers none of the activities and groups that we offer at St Andrew's could take place - thank you to everyone and anyone who has helped over the past year, however small you might feel your contribution has been. We really cannot function without you!

However, it is recognised that there is a national shortage of volunteers and unfortunately, it will be children's work in the future that will be hardest hit by this. For safe guarding and insurance purposes, whenever we do activities where parents are not present, we MUST work with the following ratios of children and adults:

0-2years	1 adult to 3 children	1:3
2-3years	1 adult to 4 children	1:4
4-8years	1 adult to 6 children	1:6
9-12years	1 adult to 8 children	1:8
13 - 18 years	1 adult to 10 children	1:10

NB: these are minimum ratio recommendations and do not take into account any children with SEND issues that we may have to accommodate. Additionally, we need a qualified first aider to be on site, as well as all adults present to be DBS checked and to have received up-to-date safe guarding training. Also, no adult should be working alone with children so there must always be another around, even if the group is small and technically only requires one adult.

Volunteering as a helper doesn't necessarily involve having to get messy with paint or down on the floor with toddlers. We need people who can help to prepare refreshments, tidy resources away, walk children up to the toilets, or be 'on the door' to meet and greet, just as much as we need people with inspirational craft ideas!

If you feel that you might like to support the children's work in any practical way, please talk with Heidi about it.

Heidi Lewis,

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Available separately.

*William West, Treasurer*

## NET ZERO

### Introduction

The group has met twice and worked through documents provided by the national Church of England to guide churches on achieving Net Zero by 2030. This includes the checklist attached to this report.

In addition, the company Inspired Efficiency completed an energy audit for the church (arranged by the Diocesan Net Carbon Zero Officer). The report is also attached to this report.

This short report draws on both documents.

### Summary of key points

We already do some of what we should be doing. For example, we maintain the roof and gutters, we hold PCC meetings in church hall to avoid heating the main building, the windows in hall/office are double glazed, we have smart meters, and we make and use our own compost.

Quite a lot of possible actions don't apply to us. For example, we don't have windows that need to be fixed, we don't need floor coverings in the church because the floor is well insulated, and we don't have uninsulated walls with a cavity.

However, there are quite a few actions we can take. These are ordered here in three categories according to how easy, cheap and quick they are likely to be (starting at the lower end):

#### **Category 1**

- 1a Draught-proof external doors in the main church building [BUILDING]
- 1b Turn off the heating for church services 15 minutes before the end of a service [HEATING]
- 1c Hold Sunday services in the hall during the coldest months [HEATING]
- 1d Optimise radiator use (e.g., anti-freeze, frost settings, TRVs) [HEATING]
- 1e Install LED fittings in church hall/office, outside lights, vestry and choir vestry [LIGHTING]

#### **Category 2**

- 2a Install a double-glazed door at the main church entrance [BUILDING]
- 2b Insulate the south aisle roof, bell tower, hall (additional insulation) [BUILDING]
- 2c Replace the church hall cooker with an A+++ appliance [OTHER]

#### **Category 3**

- 3a Completely revamp how the church is heated (replacing gas-fired system (radiators/boilers) with a combination of electric pew heaters / electric heated seat pads/cushions and non-glowing infrared wall panels where there is no seating for pew or set pads) [HEATING] (NB. Advice is not to replace boilers)
- 3b Switch electricity supplier to 100% renewable supplies (once current deal ends) [OTHER]

Additionally, the following actions are worth exploring:

- 4a Install solar PV panels on hall [HEATING AND LIGHTING]
- 4b Install an electrical vehicle charging point in the church car park [GROUNDS]

## **Recommendations**

R1 Complete all category 1 items as soon as possible (3 months)

R2 Obtain costs for category 2 and 3 items (3 months)

R3 Plan new heating scheme, to include possible purchase of some items in time for this winter (3-6 months)

R4 Explore costs and feasibility of category 4 items (3-6 months)

R5 When energy contract ends replace with one that is 100% renewables

R6 Meet with people who regularly use church premises to explain what actions can be taken to reduce energy use (ongoing)'

*Francis Parffrey*

## **CHURCH BUILDINGS REPORT**

The church fabric remains in a good condition but with a number of works needed which are described below and on the attached list. The building has coped with the excessive amount of rain very well, with the exception of the south aisle roof on occasions (see next paragraph).

The south aisle lead roof requires replacement because the lead is in a very poor condition. There have been frequent leaks which stop for a while and then re-occur. As a result quotations are being sought at present to replace the lead finish. This will include the lead valley gutter between the Nave and South Transept slate roofs and thermal insulation below the sloping South Aisle roof (a contribution to moving towards net zero carbon emissions). After the new lead finish is completed, there is still the possibility of installing solar panels but the capital cost compared with electrical savings has to be proven to be worthwhile.

Cleaning of roof parapet gutters and downpipes continues regularly. The roofs over the north porch, vestry and choir vestry have been cleared recently and the felt flat roof over the choir vestry inspected. The felt is old but sound at present and needs regular inspecting.

The external drainage channels around the church are in need of clearing of vegetation, which, hopefully the grounds working party will address.

The latest quinquennial report was produced in the summer of 2023 and reported the good condition of the church building. The main priorities for action are listed on the attached list, with budget costs.

The old gas boilers and heating maintenance has been carried out. The heating system needs replacing with a totally different type of heating. The investigation of this is being researched by the Net Zero Group.

The lightning conductor has been annually checked as has the tower clock, with no problems noted. There have been problems with the new projection screen which the installers have hopefully solved.

*Brian Lewis,*  
Church Building Architect

## **THE CHURCHYARD Working Party 2023-2024**

The Churchyard Project has now been going for some years. Twice, thanks to the valiant and loyal efforts of volunteers we have been recognised by Devon's Branch of the Countryside Charity (CPRE).

Our heyday was during the Covid lockdown when our volunteer band was regularly 20 or more. We are now a more modest number, around 10, but the cooperative working ethos remains high.

We have made a huge difference. We have 'deskirted' many hitherto unpruned trees and facilitated a better, lighter view through the churchyard, we have freed from oblivion many dozens of graves that were either inaccessible safely or invisible or hidden under moss and ivy [or both!]; we have maintained a clean path through for the many passers through; we have tried to spruce up the front of house for special services.



Much remains to be done. We are by no means on top of the situation. A bunch of volunteers cannot possibly get and stay on top. We are not 'the solution' but a bonus group. The ideal solution would involve a major blitz by contractors and then the services of a regularly employed paid grounds person.

There are several safety issues of concern: trip hazards [uneven paths and uneven ground], slip hazards [mossy paths and congealed leaves on paths], seriously leaning gravestones, dilapidated wall coping.

The churchyard offers a huge and exciting opportunity to someone of vision to develop it further as a centre of wildlife and plants.

Meanwhile the volunteers plan to go on meeting every second Saturday morning. See notice by the potting shed! Now that's encouraging!

*Geoffrey Histed*

### **PARISH MAGAZINE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**

We are sad to have to report that the church magazine as we know it has come to an end. Our Editor, Judith Lewis, has decided that it is time to retire from the responsibility of producing it each month. She has been carrying it forward for many years now and we are greatly indebted to her. It is all too easy to take such efforts for granted and we want her to know how much we have appreciated her work and that of her team of contributors.

In spite of being able to call upon the expertise and efficiency of Gill Sheridan, the magazine secretary, who has been preparing it for publication in collaboration with Judith, we could find no one willing or able to take it on, alas.

We have had many regular contributors. Always, of course, there would be a thoughtful article of a spiritual nature from one of the clergy or lay readers. Then, whether you were interested in gardening reports, recipes, news of clubs and societies or times of services in St. Andrew's, St. Mary's Bickington, and St. Peter's, Buckland in the Moor, you could always find something of interest or of use.

The Parish Church Council is in the process of finding another way of keeping our parishes informed and entertained. We hope soon to have more news of developments. Meanwhile, our warmest wishes and thanks to Judith. She has done a splendid job and deserves a rest.

*Barbara Dunball*

### **ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH HALL**



The Church Hall Committee have decided that, due to other commitments, the committee would wind up. This being the case they would like to form a group called The Friends of St Andrew's Church Hall. This will enable the group to carry on doing fund raising events for the hall.

I would like to put on record my thanks to all those who worked on the committee. They carried out their roles with enthusiasm, vigour, and laughter. We raised some needed funds which has helped make the hall a lovely place for people to come to and to hire.

We carried out a number of events over the year which included a jumble sale which helped to buy our new cooker and a well-attended Christmas Fayre which, after expenses raised over £800.00. The committee decided that £400.00 of the takings would be donated to the church and the other £400.00 will go towards the hall funds.

My thanks also go to the many volunteers who have helped us with different events. They are too numerous to name but a letter of thanks will be placed in the hall and the church.

The pictures and frames are still being worked on by myself and Cassie. We hope to have them up in the near future.

Total amount invoiced:

£12965.04. £156.37 of which will be invoiced in April but are for events taking place in March.

Amount transferred to Hall Petty Cash Account: £225.00.

Total amount in Outreach: Monies made from events and coffee mornings etc. £204.97.

I look forward to the rest of 2024 with the hope that we can go on letting people know that the Church Hall is there for everyone and that it is used to its fullest potential.

*Eve Nutley* – Manager,  
St Andrew's Church Hall

### **THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, BICKINGTON CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT on the fabric and general Church Matters**

This year has been eventful in minor ways.

We continue with two Services a month, i.e. 9.00am Communion on the first Sunday and 10.30am Family Service on the third except for odd occasions.

Several people now contribute via Parish Giving and a retiring collection also takes place.

During this year we have been augmented by the Bickington Community Choir for Harvest and the Carol Service which has brought some extra congregation.

The Church building itself has suffered from the extra damp of this extraordinary winter in particular! The electrics have had a new switchboard fitted, but it seems to be so sensitive and reacts to the excessive damp even with the new dehumidifier on all the time.

A report on the Bells and their fixings and mechanism has resulted in work being necessary, a few rope wheels need repair or replacement owing to rain driving in through the louvres which are designed to let out sound, and new bellropes are needed, estimates are currently being sought.

We are still trying to sort out a more successful means of heating and hope to solve this during the summer.

Finally, Thank you to the District Church Council, the ladies who clean and carry out flower arrangements during the year, the Goodwill Community for their financial support and lastly to Michael Hext for his support and enthusiasm during this last year.

*Peter Warren*, Churchwarden

### **ANNUAL REPORT FOR ST. PETER'S CHURCH, BUCKLAND-IN-THE-MOOR, FOR THE YEAR 2023-2024**

Twenty two services, a tea party and a gathering with the annual statistics showing as increase in congregation numbers – up to an average of thirteen each service.

We continued to hold services specially in aid our four charities; Children's Hospice SW, Childrens Society, Royal British Legion and a Children's Home in Kenya. Donations to these charities being well supported.

A slow start to the year with much planning and obtaining estimates for addressing the quinquennial report findings.

St Peter's Day commemorated with a Thank You Cream Tea party for all our volunteers. Well over thirty sat down to a spread of both scones and cake; an afternoon which lasted a considerable length of time; a happy afternoon.

Summer holidays brought the usual number of holiday makers joining the congregation. Harvest Service followed by Harvest Tea was almost back to pre-covid numbers. Advent services also almost back to the usual pre-covid numbers with an excess of well over forty attending.

Agreed to continue the care of the churchyard for the coming year in the same way; the more recent areas in the normal trimmed manner, and the older grave areas left to re-wild for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of wild flowers. The Parish Meeting finance the care of the bank with its annual trim, whilst the hedges are given an annual cut financed from the Bastard Legacy.

Early November a card reader was installed. This was taken to the village hall for the Coffee Morning with its various stalls to browse and maybe make Christmas or other purchases. This morning gave the opportunity to show the parish records which are in the care of the District Church Council. The Tithe Map was much viewed as were various on-line records on the laptops. A nice sum was added to the church restoration funds as a result of this parish gathering. Time will tell as to the benefit of the card reader, which shows various views of Buckland Church besides inviting payment for the various leaflets or donations.

Christmas Day service was joyful, geared to all ages with fifteen small so well behaved children present, as well as almost forty adults.

*Pat Layley*