



Annual Tring Team Parish Reports

**For the Annual Meeting
on Wednesday 15th May
7.15pm for 7.45pm start
in Tring Church**



Deanery Synod Report

This has been a quiet year for the Deanery Synod. The major news is the Reverend Jonathan Gordon, Vicar of Northchurch, has come to the end of his time as Rural Dean. Jonathan has maintained a wonderful enthusiasm and positivity as our rural Dean. The new Rural Dean, Fr Stuart Owen, Vicar of Berkhamsted, was installed as Rural Dean on Sunday 14th April at a service of evensong in St Peter's Berkhamsted. At Synod meetings we discussed Diocesan priorities of Growing Younger and more diverse, and Church of England priorities of achieving Carbon neutral.

Revd Huw Bellis

Fabric Reports

St Peter and St Paul Tring

Fabric Committee St Peter & St Pauls, 3rd May 2024

Fabric issues for St Peter & St Pauls Tring were discussed at various meetings held throughout the year. Priority items from the last Quinquennial report have largely been progressed to address defects and recommended maintenance actions. The next quinquennial inspection is due in 2025.

Structural Issues

The Vestry continues to suffer movement which has been monitored by Batram Associates. Ongoing movement has been recorded in most areas and a report in March 2024 recommended measures to stabilize the structure and carry out knock on internal repairs caused by the ongoing movement. This included a proposal to underpin locally recommended by Structural Engineer, Robert Tucker at a total cost of circa £40,000.

Several new and enlarged cracks were noted to external walls and some internal partitions, and a condition report was commissioned to investigate further and record areas of concern. Some of these relate to the ongoing vestry movement and shrinkage due to the ground being subject to two very hot dry summers.

At the east end to the rear of the altar, a vertical crack at the high level of the midpoint of the wall has been noted. Although not noted on the 2020 quinquennial, it is evident this crack has been previously repaired. Since the area of the wall is relatively weak due to the limited depth of the masonry and proximity to an opening, it was recommended a helical bar is inserted in this area to provide more support for the wall and stitch the masonry together.

Repairs were effected to falling plasterwork around the Lord's Prayer monument at a cost of £350.

Recent quinquennials have started to identify long term issues now on the horizon for the church. All of the metal sheet roofs have reached their minimum life expectancy.

Estimated renewal periods and costs for renewal are given below.

- Main nave roof renewal within 15 years (cost circa £300k)
- Both Side aisle metal sheet renewals within 25 years max (cost circa £300k)
- Tower lead roof renewal within 10-15 years (cost circa £80k)

The external walls have been repaired, and only maintenance issues arising are anticipated until the next inspection.

Water Ingress - Tower

Water ingress has been encountered in the roof of the tower into the Bell Chamber. During heavy rain a steady drip was noted to occur 1m in from the west wall of the tower.

An inspection of the tower roof noted that the lead continues to show the underlying support board “grinning through” which is caused by general creep and the age of the materials. For health and safety reasons it was recommended, that foot traffic is limited and that sheeting is covered with rubber matting, and no stepping on rolled core details should be permitted.

Rainwater was also seen to be pouring in from the centre of the roof – dripping down onto various timbers and steps down the stairwell, requiring renewal of this section of roof. Cost estimated to be circa £15k.

Health & Safety

A proposal by the bellringers to install a tubular handrail at a cost of £1,816 was considered by the fabric committee, and reviewed by the church surveyor, but rejected on the grounds that it was impractical to install and posed an additional health and safety risk.

To reduce the risk of trip hazards and electrical shock at outdoor events, a proposal for an outdoor electrical socket contained within a cast iron bollard was considered. Whilst there were no objections in principle, the cost of £2533.00 + vat appears prohibitive and has therefore not been proceeded with.

To address health and safety concerns over the numbers of people in church at busy services such as those over the Christmas period, a plan showing the maximum capacities (including where the lady chapel and refreshment area are in use) was prepared.

General

The Terrier, Inventory & Log was identified as requiring updating and a new owner to undertake this task was identified (Fabric committee chair).

The Eco-church rating questionnaire was reviewed in preparation for resubmission.

Proposals and concept designs for internal church reordering were reviewed and approved the fabric committee. A draft statement of need was prepared to support a potential future faculty application.

Camera wiring was re-routed and the old wiring was removed.

It was identified the flagpole needs to be re-rope as the rope had worn away against the wall and a planned repair is to be effected shortly.

Andrew Kinsey, chair of Tring Fabric committee

St John the Baptist Aldbury.

Produced by Ian Munro (on behalf of Jane Brown, Churchwarden)

Fabric issues for St John the Baptist was discussed throughout the year at informal Parish PCC level communications and at regular StJtB DCC committee meetings. As part of the wider team parish PCC process, discussion & agreement on actions that impact the fabric & physical entities of the church & churchyard were made.

The following items were discussed & various actions were identified / cleared. It is noted that the fabric committee continues to seek a volunteer to lead the team.

Significant actions arising:

1. Quinquennial report dated 2022

The latest QQ survey report was received in September 2022. Agreed QQ action items (including actions continuing on from the previous report in 2017/2018) that have been progressed in the last 12 months;

- M.Batram has been instructed to conduct a ground damp survey around the area at the base of the tower to define ground levels and a possible long term solution for removing ground water from the area
- Church masonry – Lynn Mathias completed the repairs to the external church walls, following the scope of works produced by M.Batram
- Rainwater goods, gutters & downpipes – M Lynn Mathias completed the repairs to the external rainwater goods, following the scope of works produced by M.Batram
- Gutters – these were cleared by Clive Welling in Jan and included some repairs
- A meeting was held (21/2/24) between FOAC & the DCC representatives to better understand the process of addressing the scope of works coming from the QQ report and how they are to be scoped, instructed and funded
- DCC to removing flaking plasterwork to enable the masonry to ‘breath’ – extent to be identified by M.Batram
- Heating system – serviced and adjusted on several occasions

2. General Fabric items (not QQ related)

- A programme of replacing ‘blown’ lamps for LED fittings in the aisles was concluded. LED lamps are being replaced as/when the few remaining existing filament lamps need replacing, e.g the external porch lantern
- Gas meter – a new meter was installed in April ‘24
- The lych gate roof was repaired – inc. new guttering
- M.Batram inspected the Nave & Aisle roofs to continue the previous inspections on occasional leaks from these roofs. A key issue was to clear & repair the high level gutters

The following works are currently being scoped & quotes being sought;

- Fix the Chapter House entrance doorway stone block
- Investigate and repair the floor tiling cracks in the Chapter House entrance doorway

- M.Batram to speak to Graham Warner re looking at woodworm issues – hoping to review in July

It is noted that the following works are currently on-hold & will be reconsidered in future months;

- Vestry refurb
- Progress potential scope & works re the tower clock face refurbishment

3. Work Packages – defining a process to follow

Reminder for the agreed process for the maintenance work packages that are identified for StJtB church or churchyard (primarily for the more significant items that require contractors to provide formal quotes for);

- define scope (usually extracted from the QQ)
- obtain approval from DAC to proceed (usually under an archdeacon's letter)
- produce a works package to obtain quotes
- issue works package out to contractors (min 3 hopefully) & chase for responses
- issue summary of responses & make recommendation to DCC/FOAC on who to appoint
- discuss works with the contractor
- if needed view the work periodically (or more commonly at completion)
- list out any snags/defects to be rectified
- advise on final payment to contractor when complete

4. Church Welcoming

Rear of church & entrance – enlivening the entrance area. Quotes were received from 3 contractors, all within the available legacy fund. M.Batram has been asked to instruct S K Wright to undertake the work.

The proposals have addressed comments from the Victorian Society and the DAC and has approval for the works to proceed. The proposals were presented in an open meeting on the 23rd May 2023 to the community and a series of comments were received and responded to formally by an appointed counsel.

5. Churchyard & hedges

- The end of the churchyard wall bounding the school drive was knocked over by a delivery van. This was repaired under an insurance claim
- Autumn working parties were held on 18th & 25th Nov 2023, focussing on;
 - Addressing the self-seeded tree sapling growth around the churchyard, particularly within graves, using a 'tree popper' borrowed from the Forest of Dean volunteers
 - Continuing to trim the Northern and Eastern boundary hedge to keep the resulting growth in control
 - Remove the debris & clear the rainwater drainage system around the base of the church & apron
 - Colin Chambers conducted a follow-up tree survey in the churchyard. Lower level maintenance items were undertaken to

- 'Lift' the trees (removing the lower branches) where they overhang the road along the edge of the churchyard
- Remove specific small diameter branches where they had been hit by traffic

Colin to refresh his tree survey report re scopes of work to address the more significant tree management works at high level (removal of deadwood in the main)

Fabric Report, All Saints, Long Marston, Tring Team Parish 2024

The Quinquennial report of last October highlighted significant defects in the building, which will cost very large sums of money to put right, from tens of thousands to possibly six figures. In the meantime basic maintenance, for example pointing and guttering, will prevent further rapid deterioration, until a more permanent decision is made. However it is said to be structurally safe to use for twenty to thirty years.

There have been two meetings so far, one with a consultant surveyor from the Diocese and a member of the DAC, then with the Diocesan Church Maintenance Officer. These meetings were to find out the Diocesan view of the situation and what grants might be available.

Because of the low congregation numbers, presumed village apathy towards the church and the fact that there is a substantial Village Hall in the centre of Long Marston, it is necessary to ask the congregation and community directly for their views on the future of the church, when given the facts.

It has been suggested that there is a meeting firstly with the Parish Council, then a whole village survey, based upon one carried out in the Ely Diocese. Following the results of that, it is then proposed to hold a village meeting in the village hall.

Despite all that, there is a significant number of people who worship there and greatly appreciate the church, its facilities and surroundings.

Judith Weatherill

Fabric Report for St. Cross Wilstone for APCM May 2024.

Fortunately the basic structure of St. Cross remains sound. A quote has been accepted from S.K.Wright to repair the bell turret, and reset the adjacent ridge tiles, the expense being met by the Friends of St. Cross. Hopefully this will also fix the small water leak in the roof, where the aperture for the bell rope has widened. The remaining outstanding issues from the Quinquennial centre on the flintwork and the need to secure the areas where it is working loose. The base of the church walls are regularly cleared of vegetation, mainly ivy, which penetrates the flintwork and aggravates the problem.

Safety strips have been fixed to the edges of the decking steps, which became difficult to distinguish in wet weather.

It is many years since St. Cross was decorated and the paint is starting to flake off the bottom of the east wall. The rest of the interior is in good order. There has been slight damage to the altar carpet, apparently by carpet moth, but this has been treated and the whole carpet will be cleaned later in the year.

The grounds continue to be maintained by Tony Bonham, with the boundaries left uncut to allow wildflowers to grow and seed.

Alison Cockerill.

FABRIC REPORT – St. MARY’S, PUTTENHAM

Double Quinquennial Repairs:

After long delays, Mathias Restoration finally started work on the church, starting with the roof to the chancel and also repairs to the north wall. We had hoped that the scaffolding would be taken down in time for Christmas but, with further work delays due to bad weather, it remained in place for some time.

While repairs were in progress, it came the time for our next quinquennial, and so work for the completion of the earlier report and the current report were all carried out at the same time, while scaffolding was in place! It was decided that the old broken cross at the east end of the chancel roof should be replaced (the old one was held together with cable-ties). A further delay while the new cross was made and installed, and what a stunning cross it is, too. The scaffolding was finally removed and re-erected at the west end of the tower, for further repairs to stonework.

While the initial repairs were being carried out, our organ was tuned, and it was due to our Tuner that the inner side of the north wall was discovered to be very damp. It transpired that a drainpipe was not only blocked but split, causing water to seep into the wall and penetrate through to the inner skin. The pipe has now been replaced and the wall has dried out.

Other matters: Most disappointingly, many of our LED bulbs on the chandeliers have failed. A new supply has been purchased and will be installed during the process of our fixed-wire testing. The bulbs are too high up for a regular ladder to reach.

Mark Battram, the Team surveyor, is working towards reducing the draughts that run through the church, especially from the tower and ill-fitting doors. This work is still to be dealt with.

With the under-floor heating (via air source) and the overhead heaters when necessary, St. Mary’s becomes a very comfortable “warm space” regardless of draughts on very windy days.

Our grateful thanks to the Puttenham Trust for funding the double-quinquennial repairs. Without the Trust, St. Mary’s would not be in the good condition it is today.

Christine Rutter (Churchwarden)

District Churchwardens reports

St Peter and St Paul District Report

Worship is what we do?

At the heart of our church are the regular pattern of services: 8 am and 10 am every Sunday with baptism offered at 12 noon on the 1st and 3rd Sundays and midweek services on Tuesday and Thursday. Congregations have certainly been down a little but we have welcomed significant

numbers of new members who we hope are settling into our parish life. I am grateful to Mike and Grahame who help take communion to those at home or in homes. For me other highlights are:

- It is great to have Tring Park back with us regularly.
- Our children's activities (and those leading them) are a real plus.
- The role of "sidesman" has been totally replaced by that of "welcomer" Thank you to our team of welcomers who are doing a great job.

A social church

There is often a hubbub of activity in church. The 8 o'clock team arrive ever earlier to have coffee together as we gather to worship. Coffee on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays brings people together. We now have over 40 people on the books for our 1st Saturday lunches. Craft and Cuppa keeps growing on Tuesday afternoons. Piano and More provides beautiful music on a Sunday afternoon as well as tea and cake. It will be good to find even more opportunities to share our lives together.

Church Officers

The role of church warden is daunting and Church Representation rules seem somewhat outdated and unhelpful. At P&P we have been actively moving to having a wardening team. Originally this was built up as a group of people to support Roy as a sole warden. It was sad (but right and necessary) to accept his resignation after many years service. I am very grateful to the wide range of people who take responsibility for many areas so we could survive without a warden for half of the year. I am even more delighted that we will be bringing two candidates to the AGM for next year. We still have a lack of people to be "duty warden" at services and concerts, vergers for weddings and funerals, and assistants on the sound desk. Of the group who support the warden some have specific responsibilities (along with many other things they do in the parish):

Barbara Anscombe – in charge of all things heating and the parish hall

Barry Anscombe – in charge of the gardening team

Peter Child – in charge of the sound desk

Maria Lashley – in charge of the welcomers team

Kate Stratford – in charge of rota for duty warden, sound desk and chalice assistant

Janet Goodyer – purchasing and sacristan

Elaine Winter – fabric committee secretary

Andrew Kinsey – fabric committee chair

Mike Watkin – coffee rotas and reading intercession rotas

Trish Dowden – in charge of foodbank team

The full list of those who help is too long but thank you to everyone who does things in our church.

A church for the future.

At the request of previous AGMs we have been thinking about how we can open up the church to make it fit for the present and the future. The plans are not ready to be shared yet but key principles have informed the re-ordering considerations:

1. The proposals are designed to enhance our Church Mission. Our first priority is to be welcoming and inclusive for all, accessible and comfortable as a place of assembly and worship for young, for old, and for those with disabilities alike.

2. We seek to enhance the worship experience, providing a more focused setting for smaller services and additional flexible worship space for non-traditional services. Our all-age worship services, often entailing a number of stations of interaction, are severely hampered by the fixed pews and narrow aisles. Our innovative service formats (e.g. 'Beer and Hymns') are designed to foster interaction and fellowship which cannot happen effectively in rows of pews. We were obliged to abandon a midweek toddler group trialled after the pandemic, for lack of a child-friendly warm space.
3. We aim to protect the essence of the heritage asset, whilst enhancing the sustainability of the church in the future. At present the building is heated by fan-assisted radiators, using hot water from gas boilers; this is noisy and inefficient, interfering with the worship of those with hearing challenges, and struggling to provide a comfortable temperature. We would like to install underfloor heating, driven by heat pumps.
4. Strengthening and promoting small worship, study and social groups is a second mission priority for the parish, and the church building should be a natural central venue, within walking distance for most Tring inhabitants. The building currently lacks spaces for small groups to gather in comfort. We do our best within the confines of the coffee area (cum baptism space) but it is cramped and cold.
5. We want to forge new relationships within the community by providing a flexible and appropriate space for a wider range of activities. The building would lend itself to a number of cultural activities, including small concerts of classical or contemporary music. Our ability to stage activities to engage with a wider demographic – e.g. a wedding fair - would be greatly enhanced by a flexible layout for the building.
6. We use St Peter and St Paul to celebrate holy days and civic occasions and we enjoy sharing a meal together. At present we do not have the preparation, the serving, or the eating space to do this properly. We hold wakes after funerals of parishioners but cannot go beyond a cramped offering of sandwiches with inadequate space for people to mingle. We dream of having a space to hold wedding celebrations, linking the reception with the marriage service and providing a more affordable venue than the few local hotels.

This re-ordering initiative builds upon a constructive meeting with members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) in January 2022, exploring potential options to enhance the space and transform the experience of worshippers and visitors.

Revd. Huw Bellis

St John the Baptist APCM 15/5/24 Churchwarden's Report

It's been a busy year.

Services

In addition to the weekly Sunday services, special services this year have included: our Patronal Festival, including a BBQ lunch in the vicarage garden; Harvest Festival, led by Mike Watkin and with bring and share lunch out in the churchyard; All Souls led by Huw; Remembrance Sunday again led by Mike Watkin; a 'Messy Church' Christingle attended by 94; very well attended Christmas services (120 in the Carol service, 120 at the Crib service and 60 at Midnight Mass), including the Tring Station Iron

Room Carol Service; Mothering Sunday with posies kindly provided by Tring Mothers' Union; well attended Holy Week services, especially Palm Sunday (55), the Easter Fire on Holy Saturday (34) and the Easter Sunday service (57).

Michelle was on sabbatical and away from church duties from 25 August until 1 December. Other clergy in Tring Team stepped in to lead a service for us every Sunday. Thanks to them, particularly to Mike Watkin who took special care in planning our Harvest Thanksgiving and the Service of Remembrance with the RBL.

Rev Janet Ridgway died in September and her funeral was held in Aldbury Church on 6th October. As a mark of our community's respect for her, the church and Chapter House were completely full and the service was streamed online to over 80 homes and to overflow venues at the Memorial Hall and St Peter & St Paul.

DCC

The DCC has met 3 times over the year in addition to two Open Church meetings and the Annual District Church Meeting held on 28th April.

Study groups

In Advent and Lent we Took a Closer Look at St John's Gospel. The group in Aldbury was led by Jill Timms using Huw's thought-provoking material for discussion and reflection.

Young people

Sunday Club restarted in September and has 17 children registered; typical attendance is 6-10. It usually takes place in the Chapter House on 2nd Sunday of the month. Children's craft activities are offered during services on 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays in the Leeds Chapel. Thanks to Jill Timms for running this and to Jane Banister for resources. Muddy Church, an after-school club at the primary school, is often involved in leading monthly Worship For All services, successfully introducing younger members and their parents to the church community. Thanks to Gemma Murphy for her work with this. There have been 4 Aldbury School services in church over the year, and classes make visits as part of the RE curriculum. The display in church of children's work reflecting on aspects of faith is regularly updated.

Outreach

As well as welcoming many people from the wider community to special services, events linking church with community include Bike and Hike, Carols on the Green and at Tring Station, pancake races and an Advent concert organised by Caroline Ellwood. Tuesday Morning Coffee is run by Shirley Chamney with Ann Denwood's support; it's mainly bellringers in regular attendance, and it raises regular funds for the church. Aldbury Toddler Group usually meets twice a month in the Chapter House and continues to provide an important meeting space to parents in the village; many thanks to Vicky Album and Annie Eggar for organising this.

Giving

Regular pleas and reminders have been posted in Aldbury Outlook asking for financial support across Aldbury and Tring Station, and for a trial period we have re-introduced offertory bags during morning services to encourage the congregation. Michelle led an Open Meeting in February to discuss the shortfall in our contribution to the parish share. In May 2023 we raised nearly £1500 for church funds at Aldbury May Fair and hope to have been even more successful at the May Fair earlier this month. The largest service collection was made as usual at the Remembrance Service and so went directly to the RBL. Other initiatives in the year have raised funds for DENS and the Hospice of St Francis.

The Friends of Aldbury Church continue to provide valuable support. Trustees are currently Tony Tollinton, Neil Capp and Annie Eggar. Tess Alps, a resident of the village who does not attend church, is taking on an unofficial marketing role to raise further interest and donations.

Technology

A new lectern mike has proved very effective and small children's voices can now be heard from the back of the church. Thanks to Michelle's perseverance and technical skills we now have a card reader up and running for donations from daily visitors and Sunday congregation.

Eco-Church

In June many of us took part in the Count on Nature survey in the churchyard, and materials from that survey have been on display in the church since then. Work has now started on obtaining the A Rocha UK Eco Church silver award.

Fabric

In May we held an Open Meeting in church for the whole community to have a chance to examine and discuss the plans for the reordering of the south-west corner of the church. Michelle presented the project and answered questions. Plans were then submitted to the DAC to obtain a faculty which was granted in October, taking into account objections from some parishioners and on condition that the work is carried out within 18 months. Steve Wright has been instructed to carry out the work and it is hoped that work will be started by late summer.

Ian will deal with Fabric separately but highlights for me have been work on the lychgate, gutter clearance and repair, and the effective degunging of the heating pipes so that the pipes now become almost hot. We now have smart meters installed. Both lawn mowers are currently away being serviced and awaiting parts and we look forward to their return. Clock maintenance is now under an annual service contract with St Peter & St Paul. Philip Denwood continues to take care of the clock, supported by Simon Stacey, Ian Brown and Michael Pearce.

Churchyard

A Facebook plea to tidy the churchyard in time for Janet's funeral was amazingly effective, with volunteers from the village working on strimming and path weeding at all times of the day and night. Work on the churchyard continued through the autumn with regular bramble and seedling clearance and 2 working parties in November when hedges were trimmed and new compost heaps built in driving rain.

Music and bells

Jackie Robinson continues as regular organist with Tim French, Sarah Carter and myself standing in when needed. The Festival Choir has been mustered for Remembrance, Christmas and Janet Ridgway's funeral, and many local musicians took part in the Advent concert, including the Aldbury Morris Men. Our bellringers ring every Sunday with 2 mid-week district sessions and have a new tower captain, Sue Redford.

Rotas

for different roles are working well for flowers, coffee, reading and intercessions, and Michelle's flip chart table has encouraged 3 new volunteers, but we still need helpers on cleaning and serving. Thanks to Tim James for helping out as server.

Thanks to Pete Williams for being a constant source of level-headed wisdom, to Ian Munro for his work on the Quinquennial works schedule, to Michelle for her uplifting ministry and her encouragement of our young people and to all clergy and lay ministers for their input and support.

Jane Brown, Churchwarden

Churchwarden's Report All Saints, Long Marston, Tring Parish APCM 2024

All Saints continues to carry with slightly larger congregation numbers for the last few months. We also have children in three families, who attend now and again, which is heartening.

Lately, we have had two funerals with burial in the churchyard and more recently the Christening of a young child living in the village. On Palm Sunday we had her blessing.

There was no service on Mothering Sunday, but Jane provided a model tree with a box of cards for messages, to be hung on the tree and paper flowers for people to take away, refreshments were also available. Although well publicised, there weren't many visitors.

The school continues to have services every term in the church, with parents, family and carers all welcome. This term there was a Mothering Sunday Service and an Easter Service, at which everyone who wished was given a palm cross.

On Good Friday we had a well attended service at 6pm and Easter Day was at All Saints, but jointly with St Cross, Wilstone. Thank you to Alison for her help with service preparations and tidying.

During this last year Jane has battled on and been an example to us all. For this we are all very grateful, both at All Saints and the wider community.

I would also like to thank our many volunteers who clean the church every week and provide flowers and decorations when necessary.

Also for the upkeep and maintenance of the church grounds, sadly the recent heavy rains have flooded some of the graves at times.

Unfortunately the recent quinquennial, necessitates a serious look at the future of All Saints regarding the building and the means of worship in the village, which is discussed further in the Fabric report.

Judith Weatherill

District Report for St. Cross Wilstone APCM May 2024.

The pattern of worship every Tuesday has continued at St. Cross and our thanks go to the clergy team for their time and support. The Lent Lunch (in the Village Hall) and the Harvest Lunch (in the church) were well attended, and we are very grateful to the Village Hall Committee who allow us to use the hall without charge.

On Christmas Eve we were very pleased to welcome readers of different faiths to the Carol Service and hope this will be repeated in future years.

The annual Ecclesiastical Insurance Small Churches Slips and Trips review was carried out in May last year, as well as a fire evacuation exercise. PAT testing was completed last July. The five year electrical safety inspection is due this year.

The central heating boiler had a full service in March and is running more efficiently.

The gas supplier has been changed from SSE to British Gas for better value but electricity remains with SSE.

The programme of decluttering the church is now almost complete and many surplus items found a new home via the church stall at the Open Village event last summer. The Terrier and Inventory are up to date, and there is also a separate list of any items of interest not included in the official Cof E records.

Many thanks go to Olga for opening the church every day, and to her neighbour who takes responsibility for the church when Olga is away. We are aware of the number of visitors, partly through the visitors book, but also the use of votive candles. Olga also does a sterling job removing the (ground dwelling cluster) flies which infest the church at certain times of the year. This is a local problem and there is no permanent solution. Thanks also to Tony for housing and maintaining the ride-on mower and cutting the grass. Expenses for the mower, including the insurance, are met by the Friends.

For St. Cross, Alison Cockerill.

DISTRICT REPORT - St. MARY'S, PUTTENHAM

St. Mary's:

We have continued to maintain a good attendance for our monthly Evensong service with approximately 16-20 in attendance per service.

The Carol Service was back to full numbers and Christmas communion was also well attended. Easter services also maintained their numbers. However, our Harvest service attendance was down on the usual numbers attending, although we still had a goodly number attending.

Our service pattern remains the same with a fourth Sunday Evensong, and Holy Communion at Easter and Christmas together with any other special days.

Our thanks to the Ministry Team for providing us with a minister at each service and for general support.

Also, a very grateful thanks to the Puttenham Trust for funding the quinquennial repairs and also taking the cost of maintaining the churchyard, and also clearing our annual deficit.

Cecilia Hall:

We were all shocked to find that the hall had made a substantial loss during the year. Something that has not happened before - the hall has always remained in profit. The increase in electricity costs together with unexpected maintenance costs were largely the cause. During the very cold winter a year back, and especially after the hall had not been used due to Covid 19, the taps had seized, the toilet bowl had become detached from the floor, and the major item was that due to the extreme cold, the ladies toilet floor suffered from substantial "heave". Floor tiles needed to be removed, the floor levelling and some new tiles fitted where necessary.

Bookings have been slow for this current year, and we shall be advertising the hall more widely.

Christine Rutter (Churchwarden)

Finance report. Please see separate Accounts and report

Safeguarding

SAFEGUARDING REPORT FOR THE PCC AGM WEDNESDAY MAY 2024

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer	Jeremy Hirst
Tring Team Parish Safeguarding Officer	Jon Reynolds
Assistant Tring Team Parish SO	Malcom Nobbs

The PCC has complied with its duty to have due regard to House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

- Malcolm Nobbs has agreed to act as Assistant Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- All our documents pertaining to Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults are up-to-date; the new churchwardens names and new date will be added to the policy after the APCM.
- A Parish Statement on Domestic Abuse is in place.
- The list of qualified first aiders displayed in St P&P, has been amended to include details of the nearest *defibrillators* – *on the Vestry Hall wall. In the New Surgery (when open) or locked up outside the police station.*
- Could Wardens check if a list of first aiders is displayed in all churches and let me know.
- The Diocese recommends that when a streamed service or other event is held in a church, we notify people with a sign at the entrance that the service will be streamed. This is in place at St P&P.
- We have also requested consents from worship leaders/soloists, etc, to have their faces broadcast.
- In March 2024 I completed the Safer Recruitment training course. My training is completely up to date.

Jon Reynolds. Parish Safeguarding Officer

07712 134370 safeguarding@tringteamparish.org.uk

GDPR

There have been no breaches of GDPR this past year.

Health and Safety

Trish is currently updating all the parish policies and creating new ones where necessary. Following the Bishop Wood School Christmas concert when there were more people in St Peter and St Paul's church that was comfortable and safe, the fabric committee has calculated the maximum number of people that can be seated in church for services / events and this will be communicated to the relevant schools and organisations and will be implemented at forthcoming events. The other churches will need to do the same exercise.

Churches Together in Tring

Relations between the churches in Tring continue to be good, and the committee remains the same as last year.

Tring Team take responsibility for organizing the Good Friday Walk of Witness, and a huge thank you to all those who helped with that, and High Street Baptist take on the Churches Together stall at the Carnival. Lent lunches continued this year – no final amount as yet.

The ministers are trying to meet regularly and we are also trying to make sure that we communicate well about events that are happening, but constraints of time and volunteers means that we will not be expanding what we do at the moment.

Please look out for information about a talk from a member of Mousalaha, which is a peace making organization based in Palestine.

For information – Fr Sean is now on personal sabbatical leave, so Fr Joseph from Berkhamsted now has oversight of Corpus Christi.

Tom Copperwheat is the new minister at Akeman Street but, as with his predecessors, will not be joining Churches Together.

Revd. Jane Banister

Chaplaincy

All continues well at Tring School, although it was not a year to bring in many new projects with one chaplain off sick and another on sabbatical.

We continue with recorded assemblies, and trying to make sure we cover topics that are relevant to the students, and these are seen in class which makes discussion easier. Live assemblies happen once a term, and intercession requests from the students are being brought into those.

Life skills lessons continue, but in the ten years we have been doing them, there is a difference in children's behaviour and attitudes, as noted by many teachers.

Morning Prayer happens with staff once a week, and there is a lunch club for students once a week. As always, time constraints are an issue.

Christmas services happened as usual.

We held a communion service for sixth form doing RE as a subject to attend so they could experience one.

One new addition was a pre Easter service in church for years 7 and 8 (one service for each) which worked well and we hope to continue with that.

Year 7 had a visit to church to look around.

We also respond to requests, such as questions about the Christianity aspect of A level RE; the meaning of Epiphany for the English department who were teaching a poem with that name; and input on the religious references in Macbeth.

The second hand uniform sales continue well and bring in finance for church as well as being a good way of meeting parents and new students.

And we continue to lurk and to keep the rumour of God alive!

Revd. Jane Banister

Eco-Church report

Since the APCM set the task of getting the Parish moving forward with the A Rocha surveys we have managed to get some of the churches in the Parish registered and accredited.

St John the Baptist, Aldbury - Bronze

St Peter and St Paul, Tring - Bronze

All Saints, Long Marston - In Progress with much of the data collated.

St Mary's, Puttenham - In Progress with the data collated and being reviewed and posted soon so should be at least Bronze.

St Cross, Wilstone - some progress in collating data.

This continues to be the main focus of the Eco Church team with all our other activities supporting that. It is hoped to move these forward significantly of the rest of this year, especially as:

- some of the criteria are being addressed as Parish activities that are open to all across the Parish.
- we are addressing some of the shortfalls through regular inclusions in the weekly 'pew' notices promoting the use of Eco Friendly products, reducing waste and recycling in our churches and in our homes, which will be continued over the year ahead including some information on the impact of cleaning products and the performance of alternatives.. Responses to these suggestions would be appreciated.
- Jill Timms has been sharing information on her work with sustainable flowers which s being used in St John the Baptist in Aldbury and will be promoted across the Parish. More information for Jill and at <https://suschurchflowers.com/>
- We also took part in the national Great Big Green Week and the Churches Count on Nature initiative across the Parish and report was made to 'Caring for God's Acre'. We intend on repeating this each year to ensure we are maintaining awareness of the opportunities we have in the resources in our churchyards.
- We wrote to our MP on behalf of the Parish to raise awareness of issues around ecology and published his reply.

- We have started discussions with the Parish finance team about ethical investment and what that means in practice.

- We are considering how we can use of Eco and nature based liturgy in our services.

- The finance team are also working to produce an Energy Footprint report for each of the churches in the Parish.

Thanks to the Eco team who have been working with me to move this forward.

Anne Nobbs, Caroline Hind, Edmund Booth, Janet Goodyer and Roy Hargreaves

And all who have been working in the individual church communities and across the Parish

Mike Watkin, chair of Eco-Church group

Quiet Day report

Parish Quiet Days 2023-2024

Since Celestria Bell spurred us to organising our first Parish Quiet Day we have now held four. They have varied in focus and event-length and have been a mixture of invited leaders and home-grown talent. The aim of the days is to provide space away from our “regular lives” to slow down, to wonder, to learn, to wander, to share and to look at things from a different angle. Each of the days is hosted at St Mary’s Church Puttenham, so it is possible for people to attend for part of the day as best fits their needs. Simple food (and extensive biscuits and cakes) is provided for bodily nourishment.

There is no charge for attending the days, but donations are sought to cover costs.

April 2023 – The Reverend Canon Alan Hodgetts led a day on ‘Cultivating Awareness’ which included bible study, teaching on ‘the wheel of awareness’, experiential meditation, poetry and the expectation of encounter with God.

August 2023 – A Monastic Quiet Day following the prayer pattern of Benedictine religious communities; starting with prayer before breakfast and ending with Compline after a shared meal in the evening. There was the possibility of a guided walk, crafts, reading and colouring during the afternoon.

January 2024 – Taizé and Tea. An introduction to the Taizé with singing some of the chants associated with the Community (led by Beth Townsend). A marvellous Puttenham Tea was provided by Christine Rutter.

April 2024 – G’day Mate; encounters with the Risen Christ was led by the Reverend Deborah Snowball. Using a mixture of guided meditation, music and short addresses we spent time thinking about what it means to be seen and loved by Jesus.

The following dates and leaders are booked:

17 August 2024 – Monastic Quiet Day

23 November 2024 – Leader: The Reverend David Holloway

8th February 2025 – Leader: The Very Reverend Jo Kelly Moore, Dean of St Albans

Linzi James