



St Bene't's
CAMBRIDGE

**The Parish Church of St Benedict, Cambridge
Annual Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 12 May 2024
11.30am at St Bene't's Church**

AGENDA

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

1. Apologies
2. Election of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the Meeting on 14 May 2023
 - i) Approval
 - ii) Matters arising
2. Electoral Roll
3. Committee and Group Reports:

20s&30s Group	Bellringers
Children's Group	Communications
Deanery Synod	Diocesan Synod
Eco-Church	Fabric
Mission Committee	PCC Secretary
The Besom	Social Committee
Safeguarding	Warm Space
Youth Group	
4. Treasurer's Report and 2023 Annual Accounts
5. Appointment of Independent Examiner
6. Churchwardens' Report
7. Interim Priest-in-Charge Report
8. Election of Members of the PCC
9. AOB
10. Date of APCM 2025

REPORTS

Contents

1. Minutes of The Annual Meeting and APCM, 14 May 2023	Page(s) 3-6
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Reports

2. Electoral Roll	6
3. 20s&30s Group	7
4. Bellringers	7-8
5. Children's Group	8-9
6. Communications	9-10
7. Deanery Synod	10
8. Diocesan Synod	10-11
9. Eco-Church	11-12
10. Fabric	12-15
11. Mission Committee	15-16
12. PCC Secretary	16-17
13. The Besom	17
14. Social Committee	17-18
15. Safeguarding	18-19
16. Warm Space	19
17. Youth Group	19-20

Parochial Church Council
Annual Meeting and Annual Parochial Church meeting
Sunday 14 May 2023
11.35am at St Bene't's Church

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

The meeting was chaired by Deputy Churchwarden Nicolas Bell.

1. Apologies. Apologies were received from: Andrew Kennedy, Penny McClean, David McClean, Julian Barker, Neil Petersen, Alec Bell.

Attendance: 49.

2. Election of Churchwardens

Joy Parke	Proposed: Frances Dolan	Seconded: Felicity Macdonald-Smith
Geoff Maitland	Proposed: Andrew Kennedy	Seconded: Joy Parke

Both were **unanimously elected** as Wardens and were thanked for standing again.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The meeting was chaired by Churchwarden Geoff Maitland.

1. Minutes of the Meeting on 15 May 2022

- i) Minutes were approved and signed as a correct record.
- ii) Matters arising: Community Groups had been set up during the pandemic to support each other and have not reconvened since then, although there has been some informal group support during the last couple of months.

2. Electoral Roll

There are 186 members on the roll, up from 172. A complete revision of the roll will take place in April and May 2025.

3. Group and Committee Reports

Reports had been made available before the meeting on the church website and in church. Geoff Maitland thanked all the groups for their commitment, for the richness and diversity of their work, and for preparing the reports: -

20s&30s Group	Bell Ringers
Children's Group	Communications and Marketing
Deanery Synod	Diocesan Synod
Eco-Church	Fabric Committee
Mission Committee	PCC Secretary
Safeguarding	Social Committee
The Besom	Warm Welcome
Youth Group	

There were no questions or comments on the reports.

4. Treasurer's Report

A full report and the 2023 Accounts from Jon Young, Treasurer, had been provided on the website and had been on display in the church before the meeting.

Jon Young took on the Treasurer's role in mid-202 and provided a summary page and pie charts for income and expenditure. When considering just our day-to-day services and activities (covered by the General Fund), our 2023 income was £128,000 whereas 2022 expenditure was £135,000.

So, in 2023, expenditure was higher than income giving a deficit of £7,000 which unfortunately is similar to the situation over the last few years. Whilst income has been higher than 2022, with a legacy of £30,000 received and a VAT rebate on the North Aisle roof project, expenditure has been higher than the previous year due to various increased costs. We need to consider increasing income and how to reduce expenditure.

There are assets in long-term funds totaling £1.5M. The Giddy Fund (currently £1.1M) can only be spent on the fabric and maintenance of the building whilst other designated accounts have funds allocated by the PCC for specific purposes such as ministry and education. Investments have fallen by about £200,000 as 2023 has not been a particularly good year for the stock market, alongside needing to cover our net deficit of -£29k.

The annual Parish Share was £78,000 and this figure is unaffected by being in a Vacancy, and still needs to be paid monthly.

Jon was thanked for this report and his diligent work on the accounts, and questions were received.

Questions:

£7,000 deficit: how to address this?

There has been an annual deficit since the pandemic in 2020: before then, we were still not breaking even as we sought to increase giving to cover the increased costs of moving from a half-time to full-time vicar in 2018-19. There has been a turnover of congregation since 2020 as well. Cash collections are no longer taken during the service, so we need to encourage people to give by the card machine, and put information on collections/donations in Tidings. It was suggested that if every member on the electoral roll could give an extra £1 a month each, if they can, then this would considerably help the deficit. The PGS allows people to annually increase their donation in line with inflation automatically.

Claiming Gift Aid on small unplanned donations (by cash or card) is capped at £8,000 per annum by HMRC (Gift Aid Small Donations GASD) which is another reason for regular members of the congregation to join PGS and contribute to Gift Aid personally outside this cap.

The planned solar panels project, paid from the Giddy Fund, would offer significant savings on electricity bills.

The Financial Planning Group will consider how to address the deficit, including any possible fund-raising activity (although St Bene't's policy is to fund raise for mission and charities, and not for itself).

ACTION: FPG

The 2023 Accounts have yet to be approved by the Independent Examiner but were **unanimously approved** by everyone. Proposed by Jon Young, seconded by Gini Allbutt.

Geoff Maitland thanked everyone for their work on finances and especially Jon for his clear explanation of the accounts which enabled a rich discussion.

5. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Jeremy Wong was **approved unanimously** to continue to do this at a fee at £300.

Proposed: Jon Young Seconded: Andrew Welchman. The PCC will review the fee for the External Examiner.

ACTION: PCC

6. Churchwardens' Report

Geoff Maitland and Joy Parke presented their report to the meeting.

The wardens reflected on the past twelve month and expressed their extreme sadness following the tragic death of Anna Matthews on 8 March 2023. As individuals and as the church community, the wardens recognised that we have suffered a significant shock and are suffering an enormous grief. Geoff and Joy expressed their thanks to Anna for all that she had given to St Bene't's, and thanked God for Anna.

The welcome at St Bene't's is an important part of the church and the wardens thanked the community for welcoming others, and generously giving with their talents, time and money. They particularly thanked a number of people and groups.

Worship

- All those who lead and enable worship including all the clergy and clergy colleagues, and those who preach: Ed, Olga, Sophie and Richard as well as Matt Bullimore, Jonathan Soyars, Andrew Hammond, James Crockford and Philip Murray, and ordinands Hannah and Mary
- All those who take part in services: to the servers, readers, intercessors, cantors and livestreamers
- Those who lead and host our daily Evening Prayer, in church and online
- Sally-Marie for all she does behind the scenes and for covering the sacristan duties post-Covid

Service

- Sidespeople providing a Sunday morning welcome to those that pass through the doors

- Coffee makers and servers on Sunday mornings providing refreshment and conversation
- Flower arrangers in providing additional beauty to the church
- The social committee, led by Andrea Harrison, that provide a range of events that serve to further build a sense of community

Groups

- Sally-Marie, Shanti, and Ed, for the ongoing care and creativity that goes into sustaining and supporting the 20s and 30s group, and maintaining it as a safe space where friendships and faith can be built.
- Leaders of the children's and young people's groups, especially Rosemary and Andrea, representing a commitment and care for the children, young people and their families.
- Leaders of the Credo course for teaching and nurturing those growing their faith and particularly Ed and Hannah as well as Anne Strauss, Chaplain at Trinity.
- Ed and Olga for guiding the weekly Reading Groups and to Judith Miller for hosting the Contemplative Prayer group.
- Our organist, Ralph Woodward for always being there and directing our *ad-hoc* choir who sing on special occasions.
- Bellringers under Tower Captain Sam Johnson, for their skill and sustained commitment to our services and marking special occasions with peals at the birthplace of change ringing, especially to mark Anna's funeral and the Coronation.

Administration

- The PCC for their wisdom and commitment and who serve to support the well-being of St. Bene't's both practically and spiritually, and to those who are stepping down: Neil Petersen, Andrew Welchman, Eleanor Peers, Shanti Daffern, Gavin Koh and Sam Fitzgerald.
- Philippa, our administrator, for her commitment to a wide range of administrative responsibilities and for all that she does to support St. Bene't's.
- Katherine Stevenson, our former Communications Officer, and to Felix Blake, our current Communications Officer for their marketing work.
- Our deputy wardens, Andrea and Nicolas, for their help to the wardens in sharing responsibilities and providing excellent support, both practical and spiritual.
- Andrew, parish safeguarding officer, for his knowledge and skills in ensuring the sound principles of safeguarding are implemented to keep all, particularly the most vulnerable, safe.
- Jon, our treasurer, who has worked diligently in overseeing the financial matters to promote both the vision and implementation of God's mission at St Bene't's.
- To the many at St Bene't's, nearby and far away who are continuing to hold St. Bene't's in their prayers.

Developments

The wardens explained that now we are in a vacancy that we should be careful not to do too many new things, but also neither should we just stand still. The Archdeacon has reassured the wardens that we can continue with plans in the pipeline as long as these are in the long-term interests of the ministry of St Bene't's and its congregation.

The wardens and PCC have adopted two main guiding principles to maintain a good and sound church for the next incumbent:

- a) To honour Anna's legacy and to continue to build where we can on the solid foundations and growth points that she so lovingly established.
- b) To maintain the pattern of daily service provision, the quality of preaching and liturgy, and our commitment to outreach and ministry to the marginalised, all of which Anna embraced and expanded. This is part of St Bene't's daily life and will also attract candidates of the very highest calibre to be the next incumbent.

The wardens explained that it would have been difficult to follow Anna as vicar at St Bene't's, even if she had moved on in normal circumstances. Given what has happened, becoming the next vicar will be even more challenging. To enable the congregation and our community to move on from Anna's tragic death, St Bene't's needs to have a lengthy interregnum, to come to terms with what has happened and to be more able to accept that whoever follows Anna will not be Anna and will probably be very different, whilst embracing all that St Bene't's is and stands for.

It is expected that a new incumbent will not be in place before Autumn 2024, and this would be a long time not to have anyone overseeing ministry here. Curate Ed Green is the only full-time paid clergy and will be

priested in July, Sophie Young is on sick leave until June and Curate Olga Fabrikant-Burke is part-time and has duties at Rideley Hall. We have been reliant on visiting priests to see us through the past couple of months, and particularly thank Matt Bullimore, Chaplain of Corpus Christi College, who has been very supportive with practical and spiritual help. Matt and the College Choir have joined St Bene't's at the 10am Parish Eucharist in the Easter Term which has provided much valued and needed continuity with the Sunday worship.

The PCC will develop the Parish Profile as part of seeking and selecting a new vicar and will consider the way forward on other projects including the Development Action Plan and congregational conversations. Work on building projects will be assessed. The replacement of lead on the south aisle roof and installation of solar panels on it will continue, whilst other projects will be paused: re-ordering the Chancel and St Anne's Altar areas with more stone and less carpet and providing a disabled toilet in the organ area. The learning and formation work with joint Study Mornings with LSM, the CREDO and reading and prayer groups will continue, in line with Anna's vision of St Bene't's being a centre of Teaching and Learning for central Cambridge. St Bene't's work as a caring congregation with ministry to the marginalised and excluded will continue, maintaining a focus on the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project and Crossways, supporting the Besom with donations and practical projects, providing a warm space in the winter, and keeping St Bene't's open as a calm, spiritual haven for all to visit, pray and spend time in the building.

The wardens thanked the congregation for their support and for prayers since Anna died, and the many offers of help. They will take up as many of the help offers as possible, but it may take a while to consider everything.

Questions:

Will the new incumbent be full-time?

Assurances have been given to the wardens that the post will remain full-time.

The congregation thanked the wardens for all their hard work.

7. Election of members of the PCC

The following nominations were received for PCC members:

Jenny Harris	Sally-Marie Osborne
Julian Cooling	Nicolas Bell
Gillian Baker	

All nominees were elected unanimously.

Deanery Synod: Anthony Weale

Elected unanimously.

10. AOB

Andrea Harrison thanked Geoff Maitland and Joy Parke on behalf of the congregation for all their work and their commitment to St Bene't's, and gifts were presented.

The meeting ended at 12.36pm with the Grace.

The meeting of the next APCM is on Sunday 12 May 2024 at 11.15am

ELECTORAL ROLL

The Church Electoral Roll is your parish's record of those qualified to attend the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) and to vote in elections to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the Deanery Synod. If you enrol on the Electoral Roll, you become a voting member of the Church of England and so help to ensure that the PCC, your Deanery Synod, the Ely Diocesan Synod and the General Synod are fully representative of the Church's members.

The new Electoral Roll for 2024-25 has 186 members. Two members has been taken off the previous year's Roll due to death, and we have added 2 new members. In 2023, the total number on the Roll was 186. A complete revision of the roll will take place in April and May 2025.

Philippa Pearson, Electoral Roll Officer, May 2024

20S AND 30S GROUP

The St Bene't's 20s and 30s have had a busy and exciting year, with four themed term cards and a number of different kinds of activities, some of which have been new for the group.

After Easter following Anna's death, the committee met and agreed it would be best to have a term-card which would not involve a lot of extra research and planning, so we decided to read a book of the bible together. We settled on the epistle of James because it had five chapters, and quickly found ourselves wrestling with some difficult theology, ably assisted by our curate and group chaplain Ed Green, and ordinand Mary Brown.

At the beginning of the summer, we threw a party in the church to say goodbye not only to Ed but also to group leader Shanti Daffern, committee member Sam Fitzgerald, as well as Catriona MacKenzie and others who were leaving us at that time. This is when Jenny Harris stepped in as group co-lead with Sally-Marie Osborne, and the committee welcomed new members Liam Plimmer, Cecily Fasham and Katy Lawrence. The new committee met and agreed to spend the summer reading *Wholehearted Faith* by Rachel Held Evans, alongside some socials.

At the end of the summer, the committee agreed on a term card for the autumn focusing on Jesus' parables. We also agreed to begin a WhatsApp group in addition to using Facebook and email to communicate with group members, and 35 people have currently joined. After beginning the term with a delicious and well-attended group meal cooked by Sally-Marie, we welcomed some new session leaders including George Palmer, and continued to ask for help from the group with bringing snacks, washing up and leading compline. We were also delighted to welcome Andrea Harrison, who led us in an inspiring session of Godly Play around the parable of the Good Shepherd. Another exciting addition to our autumn term-card was an invitation from Little St Mary's Food and Faith group for a pre-advent liturgy and social with carols, which was very well-attended and much enjoyed by those who came.

At the beginning of 2024, Sally-Marie, who had co-lead the group since founding it with Oli Marjot in 2019, communicated her intention to step down as leader to focus on her other church responsibilities and growing family. The group owes its existence to Sally-Marie, as well as so much of what makes it a nurturing environment that gives us space to grow our faith, and we are all immensely grateful to her and continue to embrace her as one of our own while wishing her the very best in the future. Committee member Fiona Dobson agreed to step into Sally-Marie's shoes as co-leader with Jenny from Easter.

For our first term card of the year, mindful that the anniversary of Anna's death would fall within this time period, the committee settled on a theme of the Fruit of the Spirit as set out in Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter 5. This allowed us to explore a variety of approaches, including bible study but also prayer stations for the theme of 'faithfulness' and creativity and crafts, and leaving us with sessions on the 'gentleness' and 'kindness' we felt we would all require in early March. We also experimented with integrating the socials into the theme, reflecting on 'joy' with a trip to the Tivoli pub to play mini golf, and on 'patience' during our Shrove Tuesday pancake social. Having been approached by John Harrison about raising funds for the Kyangala Trust, on 3rd February this year we held a bake sale which raised just over £400.

The 20s and 30s are now looking forward to a spring term-card on the Beatitudes, socials including a walk to Grantchester, hearing from some exciting invited speakers, and participating in the Alban Pilgrimage. The group continues to be a source of spiritual and personal support for its members, a place to make friends and grow in faith. We welcome your prayers that we go on from strength to strength in the future, working together with our new vicar.

Jenny Harris and Fiona Dobson, May 2024

BELLRINGERS

Ringling has continued in much the same vein as last year. Numbers have remained high thanks to the current strength of the Cambridge University Guild and the increasing number of graduated student ringers who have remained in Cambridge. Ringling has continued throughout the year apart from a couple of Friday practices in the summer when most of the ringers were on holiday simultaneously.

The student ringers continue to make up the bulk of those attending practices during term time, and we have been regularly having over 20 people attending term time practices. Sunday numbers have been lower, though we have almost always had enough ringers to ring all 6 bells before the service. While numbers are lower outside of term time, they are much stronger than they have been in the past and we are regularly able to ring all the bells on Sundays (in past years we've frequently had only 4 or 5 ringers available).

We have also been running teaching sessions for beginners before most of the Friday practices, in conjunction with the University Guild. Overall, nearly 70 ringers have attended at least 1 teaching session (either at St Bene't's or Great St Mary's) since October, with about 10 still regularly attending – the numbers are very similar to last year. The big difference is that we've got a core group of around 7 learners who have been developing together at an impressive rate and have already progressed far enough to be able to regularly take part in the Sunday ringing.

As well as the usual practices and service ringing, there have been 12 successful quarter peals rung since last year and 2 peals (the first peals since 2015). There has also been wedding ringing for at least one wedding, and a number of bands from other parts of the country have visited on outings.

The bells were inspected back in June – no major issues were observed, and the usual annual maintenance was performed. New ropes have recently been ordered and are expected to arrive in September – this will allow us to replace the stretchy rope on bell number 4 which has been causing issues and will ensure we should have enough ropes for quite a long time.

Samuel Johnson, Tower Captain, May 2024

CHILDREN'S GROUP

Sessions take place in the downstairs Ramsey Room during the Sunday 10am Eucharist. In the summer and early autumn, weather permitting, we spill out into the garden. Some children choose to stay in the garden to work. Others prefer to work indoors. There is an adult available to ensure that each Group of children is safely supervised.

The team is led by Rosemary with Dora, Naomi, Harriet and Anna as regular leaders. Yuko steps in when required, usually during holiday times. All leaders are DBS checked. Naomi deputises for Rosemary if she is unavailable to fulfil her leadership role. Rosemary and Andrea meet regularly to share ideas and thoughts and coordinate the link between the two Sunday Groups.

Our aim at St Bene't's is to provide a space where children and young people may worship and grow in their relationship with God, alongside their parents and other adults within a safe and nurturing environment. The children are part of the church in their own right and receive their own Ministry of the Word during the weekly session. We take children and young people's spirituality seriously and seek to provide activities which allow us to reflect together on big questions without anyone being pressurised to give the 'right' answers! A rich pattern of teaching is used, which covers liturgy as well as biblical stories. It is based on the 'Godly Play' approach. The room is multi-purpose and at the same time fitted out to be a Godly Play Room with shelving for the materials so that they are more readily accessible to the children.

We follow the pattern of the Church Year and the different themes of the festivals, seasons and issues such as Eco Church, caring for the environment and what it means to be part of the worldwide church. Materials are regularly provided for use at home. The Advent home materials culminated in the Journey to Bethlehem service on Christmas Eve and during Lent the home materials led to The Journey to the Cross service on Good Friday. At the end of both services there are refreshments to be enjoyed by all! The Advent Wreath is in church during Advent and each Sunday a child lights one of the candles and another reads the special prayer for that day. This year, on Palm Sunday the children prepared the Easter Garden and on Holy Saturday it was placed near the font and the finishing touches were added. It remains in church until Ascension Day. In September we kept the Creation Season when we used the biblical Creation stories, thought about why and how things went wrong as they still do and the part we need to play in 'saving the planet' for future generations. The Creation Season ends with a celebration of St Francis Day on October 4th. Throughout the year we include environmental issues and what it

means to be an Eco Church. Questions, such as 'Can this be recycled?' 'Which bin do we use?' are asked and many others too!

We carry out a Health and Safety assessment of the Ramsey Room, in line with the St Bene't's Church Health & Safety Policy, termly. Adjustments are made to the ordering of the Room, when needed to ensure a safe environment for those using the room on Sundays and others who do so during the week.

We take Safeguarding seriously in line with the St Bene't's Safeguarding Policy. Naomi Stevens is the Children's Advocate, Andrew Kennedy is the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

There are 20+ children with current Parental Consent Forms on the Younger Group Register. Attendance has been around the 7 to 10 mark most weeks, sometimes more. Not all children attending church join the Group each week - some are Servers or acting as a Boat Boy/Girl. Others stay with a parent, especially if they have been unwell or do not yet feel ready to join the Group. Others may come to the Group for the story or the Response Time only. Parents may stay with their child if this is helpful. On such occasions they sign the Adults Register as required in the St Bene't's Church Health and Safety Policy. Two boys from the Younger Group joined the Youth Group in September. Most families with young children or babies sit in the area under the Tower where there is room to 'spread out'. Toys and books are available. There is easy access to the Ramsey Room and garden from the area under the tower. We are planning to re-introduce the Book/Activity Bags which Eona made for parents to use with their small children.

We need to review why numbers are static. This is underway!

A highlight of this past year was when Oliver, Emil, Austin and Lily, after Preparation given by James and supported by Rosemary, made their First Communion on Sunday February 4th. Sarah and George, both adults, were baptised that day. It was a very special day.

Rosemary Farren, Younger Children's Group Leader, May 2024

COMMUNICATIONS

Felix Blake held the post of Communications Officer until end-September 2023, whereupon this role was split into two collaborating roles.

Design and Social Media Officer - Benji de Almeida Newton

Starting in October, I have designed posters and term cards in line with the house style (devised by predecessors) in an effort to maintain consistency and unity across St Bene't's branding, then published them via our three official social media channels: Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram -the latter set up in December 2023. I monitor all these channels regularly and re-advertise when necessary.

Instagram: This account currently has 18 posts and 92 followers. The Advent Reflections were posted as a series of daily 'Stories' which reached a wide audience. In the last 90 days, we have reached 100 separate accounts and Instagram users, consisting mostly of churches around the UK plus a strong contingent of younger individuals in the Cambridge community.

X (formerly known as Twitter): Here we have a wider follower base, with 1,083 followers, consisting mostly of clergy members and Christian communities from across the UK, as well as a large number of older graduate students and academics from Cambridge and beyond.

Facebook: Our greatest social media impact is on Facebook, with 788 followers and 687 likes of our Page. In the past 28 days alone, the number of users reached was 369 and the number of reactions, comments, shares, and clicks on our posts was 42. The two posts with the highest impact since January 2024 were the first Holy Week poster circulation (with 265 users reached) and the Year's Mind for Anna Matthews, which reached 403 users and 118 instances of post engagement.

Website Manager – Joseph Tucker

My goal is to keep our website attractive, easy to use and up to date, with requests for website updates coming from the Priest-in-charge, churchwardens and parish administrator.

Home page: The livestream link (Sunday 10am Eucharist) and Latest Update link (current Tidings) are updated every Saturday. On a typical Sunday our livestreamed service has 40-45 viewers. Posters

designed by Benji for the seasons of Christmas and Easter were added to show our list of services and the header image also changes to reflect a seasonal theme.

Weekly updates: The latest Tidings plus a message from the Priest-in-Charge are emailed to 288 subscribers with an “open” rate of between 65 and 75%.

Upcoming events: This section of the home page aims to show all parish activities, with links to parish groups and term cards as appropriate.

Advent reflections: These were published via a temporary page showing an Advent calendar.

Parish profile: The first step was designing an online questionnaire and publishing it on our website then passing the results (33 responses) to Joy Parke. Later, the completed Parish Profile plus the Diocese of Ely advert were added to our website.

Sermons: The Resources page provides an easy-to-use archive, showing the preacher together with an excerpt.

Who’s Who: Several updates to this page, for example addition of Safeguarding Officer and Deputy churchwarden.

Benji de Almeida Newton and Joe Tucker, May 2024

DEANERY SYNOD

The Cambridge South Deanery Synod has held three formal meetings (July and October 2023 and February 2024) since the last APCM. St. Bene’t’s is represented on the synod by Neil Petersen (by virtue of his membership of the diocesan synod) and by Anthony Weale. The following have been the major items of business.

CCHP

The synod has agreed to support the post of Bishop’s Officer for the Homeless to the tune of £25K per annum for three years. The synod has a bank balance of c.£89K, largely made up of annual rebates from the diocese in recognition of the full payment of the deanery’s parish share and it was the very clear view of the synod that the bulk of this should be used for CCHP purposes. (Deaneries as well as individual parishes are entitled to such rebates.)

The Revd. Kristian Hewett, at present on the staff of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Arbury, has now been appointed to this post, with effect from September 2024.

Deanery development planning

A plan has been submitted to the diocese. It focuses in particular on the need to minister to the major new housing developments within the deanery and on the development of ministry to children and young people, including relationships with schools.

Parish good news stories.

Meetings have continued to exchange information on successful activities and initiatives, all of which show the vigour of parishes within the deanery. Examples include the growth of work with children and young people (St James), provision of Warm Spaces, use of church kitchen by Cambridge Community Foods (St Philip’s) and a street party (LSM).

Eco-Church etc.

Information has continued to be exchanged on parishes’ work in environmental issues, including progress towards securing Eco-Church awards.

Anthony Weale, Deanery Synod Representative, and Neil Petersen, May 2024

DIOCESAN SYNOD

The Diocesan Synod has met three times in the past year.

Diocesan Synod: 14 October 2023 A question (raised under standing orders) on proposals for blessing same sex marriages received the reply that the Bishop’s staff support freedom of conscience and acknowledge that there is no unanimity across the diocese on the proposals.

Bishop Dagmar (who was absent) provided a video address. She said the Vacancy in See is a time of transition for all, that the process of finding the next Bishop of Ely is under way but that an appointment

should not be expected until the latter part of 2024. She focussed largely on the situation in Israel/Palestine which had erupted only a week before. She said all are losers in war, escalating violence is not the way of the Kingdom and asked that the situation be held in our prayers. On blessing of same-sex marriage she said that the proposals are too far for some, not far enough for others. We must pray that this issue does not divide the church.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor gave a brief update on safeguarding issues and the National Safeguarding Standards which are being implemented over a 3-year period to formulate strategy going forward.

The Diocesan budget for 2024 was presented for approval. The deficit for 2023 is expected to be £100,000; in 2024, £200,000. Ministry share in 2024 would increase by 4%. In 2025 a balanced budget is expected, spending to be reduced by £125,00 via efficiency measures.

There was an environmental presentation, emphasising the church's target of net zero carbon by 2030. Synod was cautioned not to get too far ahead of technology and parishes should always take specialist advice about carbon reduction.

Diocesan Synod: 14 June 2023 There was an update on the move of the Diocesan Office from Bishop Woodford House Ely to Lancaster Way, Ely. A presentation was given by the archdeacon on Deanery Development Planning.

Diocesan Synod: 9 March 2024 The annual safeguarding report for 2023 was received. The recently published report for General Synod by Prof Alexis Jay considered options and recommendations for a new independent safeguarding and scrutiny body and how further independence of safeguarding might be achieved. Ely is well served by its safeguarding team and any criticisms in the Jay report do not reflect Ely performance.

Bishop Dagmar's address noted the work of the Church and Young Persons Team, especially in schools. This contrasted with the general feeling in the country of breathlessness and a frozen state. There is a sense of secular apocalypse which is profoundly un-Christian. Aggression is all around us, a state of polarisation where an opponent becomes not a dialogue partner but an enemy. We need to have a vision of God's Kingdom which is always ahead of us. Democracy cannot be progressed by aggression. We need to listen and hear each other, and build relationships, a shared identity in Christ who died to inspire growth, hope and faith.

The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance reported that 95% of ministry share for 2023 had been received.

A motion (by St. Paul's Church, Cambridge) inviting the House of Bishops to issue a further statement on the Gaza conflict was carried. Part 2 of the motion failed.

Neil Petersen, Diocesan Synod Representative, May 2024

ECO-CHURCH

St. Bene't's set up an eco-church committee in 2020-21, but pressure of other business and then Anna's death have prevented progress. The committee has now been reconvened (in March 2024), with the following membership: Gillian Baker, Geoff Maitland, Sally-Marie Osborne, Neil Petersen, Sheila Rozeik, Anthony Weale (chair).

'Eco-Church' has come to be used as a helpful shorthand phrase to describe all church activities and aspirations related to the environment. More narrowly, it refers to the scheme run by A Rocha, an international Christian conservation and environment charity, under which churches can obtain bronze, silver or gold awards for their work in, and approach to, environmental matters. These awards are obtained through the completion of a detailed questionnaire. Many Cambridge churches have already obtained them, in the context of the decision by the Church of England nationally to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

Against this background, the committee has agreed the following remit:

- (a) to develop a comprehensive approach to environmental matters within the parish and amongst parishioners;
- (b) in the first instance to seek a bronze award using the A Rocha questionnaire.

The committee has held two meetings so far and has taken the following action.

- (a) Some work had already been done on the A Rocha questionnaire by the earlier committee. The current committee has reviewed this and has updated the answers. From these, it is clear that the parish is almost eligible to apply for the bronze award. The questionnaire is divided into five sections and in four of these (Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and Global Engagement) the parish reaches the bronze level. It falls narrowly short in the fifth (Lifestyle).
- (b) The work necessary to cross the Lifestyle threshold will flow from 3(a) of the committee's remit above. The Lifestyle section is chiefly concerned with the extent to which the church explicitly encourages the congregation to practise sustainability in their daily lives. Almost certainly, there is already a high level of recognition amongst the congregation of the importance of environmental matters, and of the need to try to live sustainably, and an equally high level of good practice. The church itself does not, however, exhort this in a comprehensive way. The committee wants to develop this aspect of parish life and widen congregational participation in these matters so that environmental issues become embedded in the life of the church, much perhaps as support for the homeless has done. The A Rocha questionnaire should be regarded as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself, valuable though it is for checking progress and stimulating thought.
- (c) In the first instance, therefore, on 2 June there will be a sermon on caring for God's world and its resources, followed after the Eucharist by a congregational information session and discussion, in the manner of the former Sunday supplements. This will cover eco-church in every sense of the phrase and will begin to explore how the parish can develop this part of its ministry.
- (d) Following from that, it is proposed to mark Creationtide (1 September-4 October) more explicitly than hitherto.
- (e) Beyond this, the new incumbent will shape and influence progress.

Anthony Weale, Chair, Eco-Church Committee, May 2024

FABRIC COMMITTEE

The main focus of the Fabric Committee during 2023 has been progressing the **solar panel project**, plans for which were initiated in late 2021 and progressed to a near final design in 2023. The project consists of:

- Removal of near end of life lead roofing on the south aisle roof
- Reinforcement of the underlying ridge beam to take the additional weight of new solar panels and ensure the structural integrity of the building
- Installation of new lead roof, over support blocks and spigots to which the solar panels will be fixed
- Installation of solar panels

F.A Valiant and Sons were appointed as the main contractors and charged with sourcing both the solar panels and all sub-contractors for the roof replacement and panel installation to obtain best value for money. The solar panel system selected, after discussions with several potential suppliers, meets our requirements of maximum coverage of the roof, generating sufficient power to cover our electricity (mainly lighting) needs, with some spare capacity to partially power decarbonised electrical heating (e.g. a heat pump) at a later date. In summary the system consists of:

- A 10 kW photovoltaic (PV) system comprising 24 x 414 W black panels arranged in two rows, giving a 9.96 kW solar array estimated to generate 8.7 MWh per annum assuming a typical weather cycle. St Bene't's average electricity consumption (principally lighting) is about 11.2 kWh per day or 4.1 MWh pa. There may therefore be an excess generation of about 4.6 MWh pa which can be fed into the grid to make a small contribution to green electricity or in the future contribute towards the electrification of the current gas heating system, which consumes about 40 MWh pa.
- A 8kW hybrid DC to AC inverter
- A 10kWh, 400V battery, to be housed in the tower cupboard, to store excess power from sunny days to use at night and on cloudy days.
- The overall final cost of the roof project (April 2024) is £187,603, with £34,384 of this covering the solar panel installation. All costs will be covered by the Giddy Fund.

- The energy payback time for our proposed system is 1.1 years. The embedded carbon in the solar panels (the CO₂ emitted in their manufacture and transport from China to the UK) is 4.8 te CO₂ and the carbon payback time is estimated to be 2.1 years.

In March of last year, the project was put on hold for a few months following the death of Anna Matthews. The status of the project at that stage was that provisional approval had been obtained from the City Council Planning Department, Corpus Christi College, the Diocese DAC and Historic England. The architect was finalising the full specification ready for the tender process and provision of cost estimates for the overall project ready for PCC approval prior to initiating a planning application to the Council and a Faculty application to Diocese.

The project was resumed in earnest in June 2023, with some minor adjustments in the design and confirmation that the roof reinforcement was adequate to take the full load of the new panel system. A planning application was submitted in September and the diocese (DAC) given sight of the plans for comment at this stage. Helpful comments from the DAC architect were received leading to some minor design modifications prior to the submission of a faculty application in November. A response was received in early December giving permission in principle subject to us answering a few queries, which were fully addressed by year end.

There then followed a frustrating period of silence and inaction during the first quarter of 2024, with no response from the diocese and some late concerns from the Council Conservation Officer about the location of the storage battery and associated fire risks. These were resolved by adding fire-resistant doors and heat-rise sensors to the storage cupboard and planning permission was finally granted on 4th March 2024. The DAC finally recommended the project to the Registrar/Chancellor on 25th March, triggering a month-long public consultation process which was completed on 26th April. The Registrar expects that the Chancellor will be in a position to formally grant a faculty by the end of May. We have agreed Monday June 17th as the start date with the contractors, with the project running until Friday September 20th. This should keep us well clear of exams and start of the new university year. The South Aisle will be out of action for the duration of the project, cordoned off floor to roof right up to the vestry door. Access to the vestry will be next to the south choir stall. Valiants and the sub-contractors will use the upper Ramsey room for storage and break-out space. They will keep the lower Ramsey Room in good order...this will be available and safe to use for the younger children's group on Sundays. The youth group will need to use the Corpus McCrum Theatre space or Aromi, both opposite us on Bene't Street, if they meet during this period.

The other major fabric issue of 2023 was **the Quinquennial Inspection (QI)**, which the diocese requires us to carry out every five years to monitor the condition of the building (exterior and interior) and address any problems. The 2023 QI was carried out by the architect, Jerry Lander, on 2nd June and his report received on 24th July. In general, the building is in good condition with essential repairs and significant renovation having been carried out in the previous five years. The major concern for immediate attention was a damp area on the south aisle wall close to St Anne's Altar. The architect considered that this was due to a faulty downpipe on the outside wall, which needed repairing along with a few other downpipe/guttering maintenance issues. Other concerns were relatively minor, consisting of clearing and maintenance of some roof gutters and water downpipes, minor flaking of stonework on some windowsills, some minor repairs to the tiled sections of the flooring and the pointing of the front steps and rehangings of the pulpit door to ensure that it shuts fully. The estimated cost of urgently needed repairs was £1500; for those needed within two years £6250; £2000 within the next five years and about £2000 for other advised maintenance; the total estimate came to only about £12,000.

The remedial work is being carried out in two stages:

- A contractor has been engaged to carry out the minor repairs at ground level; this work is imminent;
- The high level internal and external work, mainly concerned with the downpipes and the sills, will be carried out as part of the Solar Panels project when scaffolding and high-level access systems are in place.

So, the QI remedial work will be completed by the end of 2024.

Other significant issues addressed in 2023-24 have been:

(a) Livestreaming and internet access

After about a six month delay due to planning and access issues, Corpus Christi College finally installed a high-grade wireless router in their room above the vestry to give St Bene't's high strength, stable internet access to several providers (Eduroam, UniofCam and Corpus Conference). This gives a good solution for high quality livestreaming of our services following the removal by Corpus of our BT landline during the pandemic lockdown of 2020 as they transferred to a digital telecommunications system, without realising that our hard-wired internet access was routed through the College. The new system has been in place for several months now and online attenders report generally high-quality sound and vision. We retain two mobile WiFi routers as back-ups for emergencies and continue to monitor the system to ensure that it remains reliable. We are grateful to the team of livestream operators that ensure that people unable to attend St Bene't's in person can still participate in our 10am Sunday Eucharist and other special services.

(b) Alarms

Archdeacon's List B Permission has now been obtained to install heat rise alarms in the vestry and near St Anne's altar, and an anti-tamper alarm to protect the monumental brass in the south aisle floor, (as approved by PCC in early 2023 but which was put on hold following Anna's death). These are due to be installed on 16th May.

(c) Nave and Tower Carpets

Whilst plans for a major re-ordering of flooring in the Chancel, the front of the nave and the St Anne's Altar area have been put on hold until a new incumbent is in place, the Committee have recommended to the PCC that since the nave aisle carpet is very worn and frayed and at times a trip hazard, it should be replaced, along with the matching tower carpeting. The PCC have agreed this in principle and a fabric sub-committee are investigating potential carpet types and colours, in keeping with the colours of the tiles in the nave and tower, to put a costed proposal to the PCC by mid-year.

(d) Ramsey Rooms

There is a safety concern about the risks of someone in the upper Ramsey Room possibly falling down the spiral staircase. This followed a 'near miss' during one of the Sunday Youth Group sessions. The Committee reviewed this and recommended that an iron gate, similar in style to the one downstairs made by Richard Hillam, be installed across the top opening of the staircase, which when needed can be secured open against the existing west-side rail at the top of the stairs to give access and closed during use of the room. The PCC have approved this subject to a suitable design and cost; the architect is progressing this with Richard Hillam.

The Committee has asked the architect to produce costed proposals for improving the sound insulation of the windows/door at ground level and of the upper-level windows. The carpeting on the lower level is in poor condition and will be replaced by existing better carpets held in store once these have been cleaned.

The Committee has continued to give some thought to a major outstanding disabled provision issue: the installation of a disabled toilet. The only option for this would be in the existing toilet/kitchen/organ area and discussions have been held with the architect about possible ways of modifying this space. The entrance door would need to be widened and provision of enough space would require reducing the footprint of the organ console and pipes. This would likely entail replacing the existing organ with a smaller modern pipe organ or an electronic instrument. Our organist, Ralph Woodward, who has some experience of high-quality modern organs, has been involved in the discussions along with other organ experts. Changing the organ would clearly be a major and sensitive decision and need to involve extensive consultation before any decisions were made. The Committee and the PCC have decided to delay such a major project until our new incumbent is well installed, and an informed consultation and decision can be made.

The upkeep of the church garden areas has continued with the help of the Corpus gardeners and a number of volunteers, to whom we are ever grateful. We also thank the volunteers who take on the job of keeping the churchyard free from litter, which is a continuing issue. Once the solar panels project

is completed, it is planned to carry out the re-planting of the rear garden, as agreed in 2020 with Corpus Christi College as a Millennium Gift from our patrons.

All of these issues continue to be overseen and progressed by the Fabric Committee, comprising Richard Ames-Lewis, Sarah Airriess, Gillian Baker, Keith Carne, Neil Petersen, Anthony Weale and Geoff Maitland (Chair); we are extremely grateful to them for the time, effort and expertise that they continue to give in this capacity. As well as meeting in church four times since the last APCM, the committee members also do significant work researching and advising on issues between meetings.

As ever, many other people have helped in different ways to keep the fabric of St Bene't's in good order, to whom we are most grateful. In particular, we thank those who care for the altar cloths and linens, those who clean the church and vestry on a regular basis and especially before Festivals and those who lovingly organise and arrange the flowers. A special thanks to our regular volunteer cleaner, Janice Moore, for keeping the church in such good order week on week and to Mark Rington for carrying out maintenance and repair jobs from time to time. We are grateful to all of you who help in any way at all to maintain the fabric of St Bene't's and ensure that the building remains a beautiful and welcoming place of worship and prayer for all who use it. This is all part of our ministry to visitors, both local and tourists, who explore the architecture and history of our ancient church and are able to share with us the peace and beauty of St Bene't's.

*Geoff Maitland, Churchwarden and Chair, Fabric Committee
May 2024*

MISSION COMMITTEE

St Bene't's commits to giving 10% of its annual income from congregation giving to charity. Our policy is that 70% of this giving goes to support the work of charities overseas (in 2022 charities working in Zimbabwe and Lebanon) for a fixed period of 3 years, renewable for a further 3 years. The remaining 30% is allocated annually, within the following guidelines:

- a) Funds should support organisations, not individuals
- b) Due diligence should be done to ensure that the money is well-used. For UK-based charities this will usually mean being registered with the Charity Commission. Overseas charities/organisations should be scrutinised as far as possible
- c) The 30% should be split between two or three charities each year, and the PCC asks the Mission Giving Committee to make a greater number of possible recommendations from which it can make a decision about the allocation.
- d) The Mission Giving Committee may wish to consider adopting a 'theme' for each year (refugees, mental health, etc., with monies going to support work in such areas both overseas and locally)
- d) At least one of the charities supported should be local (local in this instance means within the diocese, not just within Cambridge)

Proposal for 2023

The Mission Giving Committee met in February 2024 to consider the 2023 allocation and recommended the following to the PCC:

1. 70% of Tithes (£8953) (usually continued for a 3 Year period for long-term support)

- Support through USPG for **Church Community Mobilisation Projects (CCMP)** in the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland (£4,476), tackling HIV stigma and promoting income-generation projects in local communities, should continue for its third year as part of the 2023 tithe. The feeling is that this should not be continued for a second three-year period but this review will take place later in 2024. Concern for Sudanese refugees was mentioned as a potential new area for support from the 2024 tithe.
- Reinforced by the current situation in Gaza, to continue support for a second three-year term through **Embrace the Middle East** (£4,476) but broadened to cover the whole region, with a focus on needs arising from the current conflict. Aid to the Church in Need (part of the previous Lebanon donation) should not be renewed.

The PCC accepted this recommendation and payments to these organisations were made in March 2024.

2. 30% Annual Tithe for 2023 (£3,837)

Two themes emerged to focus on for the 2023 giving: struggling families and children, especially in the context of the cost-of-living crisis, and care for refugees in Cambridge and the region, with events in Ukraine and the Middle East in mind. The Committee recommended the following organisations for support to the PCC:

- **Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign CRRC**

<https://www.cambridgerefugees.org/index.html> - works with other organisations in Cambridge to welcome refugees and those seeking asylum and to enable the people of Cambridgeshire to volunteer to help those newly arrived in the area.

- **The Red Hen Project** <https://redhenproject.org/> - a small local charity that works directly with children and their families, partnering with local primary schools to improve disadvantaged children's chances in life.
- **Blue Smile** <https://www.bluesmile.org.uk/> - specialist support for children in Cambridgeshire struggling with mental health issues, investing in family support and work with schools, including art therapy.
- **Abbey People** <https://www.abbeypeople.org.uk/> - a community charity based in Barnwell, working in the local community to provide anti-poverty support with food and fuel, as well as supporting access to education and employment.
- **Whitworth Trust** www.friendsofwhitworthhouse.org - provides support to homeless, precarious or vulnerably housed women in Cambridge (including at Whitworth House Hostel) through grants to individuals and partnership with other organisations working in this sector

The PCC was invited to choose two or three of the above to receive donations, with the Committee recommending support for the first three. The PCC decided to make the annual tithe donations to CRRC, The Red Hen Project and Blue Smile, each receiving £1,279 in March 2024.

The Committee noted that several of these projects, especially Red Hen, are always seeking volunteers and so, in addition to financial help, there are opportunities for members of the congregation to become involved personally. It also noted that Cambridge is a 'City of Sanctuary' and that with CRRC there is the opportunity to consider linking with 'The Faiths Stream of Sanctuary'. Currently twelve churches and other faith places of worship in Cambridge support the ethos of City of Sanctuary and work together to make Cambridge a place of safety and welcome for refugees and asylum seekers (see <https://cambridge.cityofsanctuary.org/cambridge-cos-faiths-group>). This link is being explored.

A focus for the Committee in the year ahead will be improving communication with the congregation about mission issues and greater engagement with the recipients of our giving, complementing financial support with practical volunteering where possible. There will be a display to publicise the organisations supported by St Bene't's mission giving, visits from people associated with them to give first-hand accounts of their work and the resumption of talks on our mission priorities after the 10am Eucharist (Sunday Supplements). In addition to the annual tithe, other charities will continue to be supported by specific collections/appeals and it is planned to resume 'Giving Sundays' in response to particular needs or emergencies.

Geoff Maitland, Chair, Mission Committee May 2024

PCC SECRETARY

The PCC has met seven times in person at Bene't's, and discussed and agreed a wide range of items, including fabric projects which have been considered and commented on in greater detail.

The main emphasis of our meetings has been to discuss the Parish Profile and how this will take shape, what information needs to be documented in. Discussions with the congregation considered, amongst other things, what key aspects people would like to see in a new vicar at St Bene't's and this information along with the feedback from the Parish Profile questionnaire in August 2023 formed the basis of further discussions at the annual PCC away day at Madingley Village Hall in September. Further meetings fine-tuned the details in the Parish Profile which was well-managed by our churchwardens

Geoff Maitland and Joy Parke and who, with help from some members of the PCC, produced the final version of this document in February 2024.

After our APCM in May 2023, we welcomed new members Gillian Baker, Sally-Marie Osborne, Jenny Harris and Julian Cooling, with Andrew Welchman and Neil Petersen being co-opted on. Felicity Macdonald-Smith will be leaving after the APCM on 12 May this year as her three-year term has ended. Shanti Daffern left us in June 2023 after her marriage at St Bene't's, and moving away from Cambridge.

Financial affairs have been considered at every meeting and we have heard about the work of the Deanery and the Diocesan Synods and Safeguarding information. James Gardom joined St Bene't's in July 2023 and has regularly given helpful reports and feedback at each meeting. Standing Committee has met six times to discuss matters in between PCC meetings and to recommend items that need to be discussed by the PCC.

I would like to thank all PCC members for their valuable input to every meeting, and to those who have produced reports and background information for the many projects that have been discussed which has enabled meetings to run smoothly, allowing members to be fully informed on matters. Thank you for all your input over the last year.

I would also like to thank Anthony Weale for taking the PCC minutes at meetings in my absence, and to Shanti for helping with these as well. Our churchwardens have excellently chaired meetings and expertly guided us through the complex details of putting together the Parish Profile.

Philippa Pearson, PCC Secretary, May 2024

THE BESOM

What is The Besom?

The Besom in Cambridge is a charity that helps Christians and churches to give their time, money and items to those in need in the city.

During the last year members of the congregation have continued, on the first Sunday of the month, to give items for kitchen packs that are delivered to people who are being re housed, often in very difficult circumstances. At Christmas we made up and delivered four hampers.

There have been three Saturday projects, where volunteers have undertaken decorating and gardening for a refugee family; a recovering addict and for someone with disabilities.

Those who have been involved during the last year are Peter Crawford, Geoff Maitland, Heather Boyd, Stephen Matthews, Heather Hutchings, Mark Rimmington, Antonia Grzedzinski, Sam Fitzgerald, Catrina McKenzie and John Harrison.

As Sam and Catrina have now moved away, it would be good to recruit some more volunteers. Perhaps we can then run more projects.

The Besom warehouse in Cambridge is open on a Monday and Wednesday and people give time to go there and help with putting kitchen and bedding packs together; delivering and collecting furniture and a host of other activities. John and Andrea Harrison are time givers at the warehouse and would be pleased if anyone else from the congregation felt they might like to give time too. It doesn't have to be every week!

John and Andrea Harrison, May 2024

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Members: Andrea Harrison (chair), Jacky Lui, Felicity Macdonald-Smith, Sally-Marie Osborne, Sue and Andrew Pitts, Deb Rimmington.

The committee meets via Zoom as and when required, to coordinate activities and to chat socially. We also had a little outing of our own to Saffron Walden, to get to know each other better.

Over the past year (May 2023 to April 2024) the following events have been held to fulfil our aim of bringing the members of St Bene't's into a closer community:

May / June

- No 'official' social events, but we welcomed Bishop Stephen to St Bene't's for confirmations, and a number of us went to Ely Cathedral for Ed Green's priesting.

July

- Patronal Festival lunch in the garden. Sandwiches provided by Bread & Meat, followed by deconstructed Eton Mess (strawberries, meringue and cream).
- James's licensing was one of several events over the summer celebrated with fizz and cake after the service.

September

- We had planned a 'bring-your-own' picnic on Jesus Green, but it was so hot that the venue was changed to St Bene't's, so we could stay in the shade!

Over the autumn

- 'Meet and Share' – various congregation members invited others to meals in their homes. Thank you to Katharine & Richard Ames-Lewis, Gillian Baker, Pamela Hill, Judith Miller, Deb & Mark Rimmington, for hosting.

October

- Walk to Grantchester, with welcome refreshments at The Orchard.

November

- Book swap: congregation members donated two books for a 'swap stall' at the back of church; £100 was raised for Christian Aid.

December

- Biscuits packed for distribution to local businesses, with a card giving times of Christmas services.
- The social committee assisted with providing and serving mince pies and mulled wine after Carols in the Churchyard.

January

- A very successful quiz was held in church, many thanks to the Kennedy-Jolly family who were all excellent quizmasters/mistresses. Participants were asked for donations, and £200 was sent to Christian Aid's Middle East appeal.

February

- A group of about 40 members of the congregation enjoyed a visit to Pembroke College Chapel and grounds, led by James.

March

- (Palm Sunday) Easter biscuits packed for distribution to local businesses, with a card giving details of Holy Week and Easter services.

Felicity MacDonald Smith, Social Committee member, May 2024

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding philosophy and culture

Safeguarding is at the heart of the Christian faith. The Church of England welcomes all people and has a particular regard for the most vulnerable.

The care and protection of people in our parish is a responsibility we all share, and any concerns over a person's welfare or behaviour should be expressed to a member of the clergy, to me, to the diocesan safeguarding team or to the local authority social services. Contact details are contained on our Safeguarding Policy (published on our website) along with an articulation of our commitment to safeguarding at a parish level.

Safeguarding posters with these contact details are displayed in the public areas of the church and also in discreet areas, such the back of the toilet door. Child-friendly safeguarding posters also exist and are similarly displayed. Embodying a safeguarding culture at St. Bene't's is important and there is regularly the following notice in Tidings:

St Bene't's Church is committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within our church community. If you have any concerns about the welfare of anyone in our church, or you want to talk to someone about something in our church that doesn't feel right, or has upset you, then please contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Andrew Kennedy.

Everyone at St. Bene't's, who holds a position of parish responsibility and authority has been appropriately vetted and has undergone safeguarding training relevant to their role. (Wardens, Deputy Wardens, Parish Administrator, those who lead public worship and church groups, Safeguarding Officer, PCC Members, Children and Young People Leaders, and those who visit members of the congregation in their own homes on behalf of the parish.)

Safeguarding concerns / incidents

From time to time, concerns about the welfare or behaviour of someone in our church community are made known to me and / or to the clergy and there have been two such referrals this year. These concerns were logged in the parish records and discussed at PCC with referrals made to statutory authorities and the diocesan safeguarding team, where appropriate.

Equally, we pay particular attention to safeguard those (clergy and laity) ministering to the public in the parish where, from time to time, instances of inappropriate behaviour experienced by clergy and laity have been considered by the PCC. There have been three such instances reported in the past year which, although sad to discuss, are always helpful so that we can consider and strengthen our lone-working procedures to safeguard those undertaking this important role.

Wellbeing support in the parish

As the accountable body for the parish, and as discussed above, the PCC takes very seriously the welfare of all in our church community, particularly during a time of shock and pain.

This includes the welfare of our Clergy, Licensed and Authorised Lay Ministers, Ordinands on placement, Wardens / Deputy Wardens and our Parish Administrator. PCC has discussed this year, following feedback from the incumbents of these roles mentioned here, that these vital people (with a heightened workload and responsibility at in the wake of Anna's death) feel they are being sufficiently supported by both the Diocese and the St. Bene't's Community.

PCC considered what support we could offer members of the congregation as we all processed the grief associated with Anna's tragic and untimely death 13 months ago. One such resource we offered was a series of sharing and listening groups entitled 'Conversations about Anna' which had healthy support and were helpful for the participants as part of their own grief and support journey. My thanks to all colleagues who support with the design and facilitation of these.

Please let me know if you have any comments or questions regarding anything in this report, or regarding any safeguarding issues more broadly.

Andrew Kennedy, PCC member and Parish Safeguarding Officer, May 2024

WARM SPACE

Once again, we offered a Warm Space in church this Winter, the second winter we have done this. Sessions ran on Wednesday afternoons from mid-November to the end of February. A group of nine volunteers worked in pairs: Petra Tucker, Ann Kettle, Sarra Facey, Geoff Maitland, Margaret Whittaker, Mark Rimmington, Felicity Macdonald-Smith, Gillian Baker, Andrea Harrison. Homemade biscuits and cakes were provided by Mark Bostock, the volunteer leaders and David Bell who baked cakes as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. We received a grant of £500 from Cambridge City Council for this provision. As happened last year, numbers fluctuated from between 0-11, with students, tourists, the homeless and those wanting company, coming along to sit and chat or work.

As volunteers our feeling was that Warm Space was worth doing in the future but that rather than rely on the Council's advertising, we should make our own flyer for distribution.

Andrea Harrison, May 2024

YOUTH GROUP

The Youth Group meets during the 10am Sunday Eucharist. Young people can join the group during their tenth year. Whilst numbers fluctuate, the average week has seen an attendance of between two and seven young people, with a solid core meeting during term time in the Upper Ramsey Room.

We have continued producing and circulating term cards, which has helped bring structure to the sessions. Following last year's focus on biblical literacy, we have returned this year to some more basic questions of faith. Our Autumn term card focused on the Lord's Prayer, examining it line by line to

explore what Jesus asked all his followers to pray for and how he asked us to behave. It was a fruitful term, with the youth learning about and engaging with many key Christian teachings (the resurrection of the dead was a particular surprise to some!). Since January, our term cards have been following the liturgical readings. This approach has worked well, as it has allowed the youth to trace the life of Jesus up to his death (so far), helped keep them broadly in line with the rest of the rest of the congregation, and provided a solid Biblical foundation for each session. We are sticking to this approach going into the Summer.

Andrea continues to be a brilliant overseer of youth work at St Benet's, capably leading a team of younger volunteers. Whilst Shanti, Hannah, Simeon, and Sam have moved on, George, Sarra, and Jenny have successfully joined the team. The youth seem to enjoy having younger Christians lead them; it gives them space to discuss their faith and develop it independently. In addition to this, several of the youth have expressed interest in being on the main rotas and thus more involved in wider church life. We are continuing to hold youth-led services, although their primary objective appears to have been achieved.

All in all, it has been another successful year of youth work at St Benet's.

Nia Moseley-Roberts, May 2024

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