



**St Bene't's**  
CAMBRIDGE

**The Parish Church of St Benedict, Cambridge  
Annual Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
Sunday 14 May 2023 at 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 15 May 2022
  - i) Approval
  - ii) Matters arising
2. Electoral Roll
3. Reports:

PCC Secretary	Deanery Synod
Children's Group	Diocesan Synod
Youth Group	Mission Committee
20s&30s Group	Bellringers
Fabric Committee	Social Committee
Safeguarding	
4. Treasurer's Report and 2022 Annual Accounts
5. Appointment of Independent Examiner
6. Churchwardens Report
7. Election of Members of the PCC and Deanery Synod
8. AOB
9. Date of APCM 2024

# REPORTS

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**Parochial Church Council**  
**Annual Meeting and Annual Parochial Church meeting**  
**Sunday 15 May 2022**  
**11.20am at St Bene't's Church**

**ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS**

The meeting was chaired by the Reverend Anna Matthews

**1. Apologies.** Apologies were received from: Paul Spiers, Laurie and Mary Boorman, Sheila Rozeik, Harriet Phillips, Deborah Wilde, Jane Hunt and Elizabeth Walser.

Attendance: 49

**2. Election of Churchwardens**

The election of Wardens:

Joy Parke	Proposed: Nicolas Bell	Seconded: Andrea Harrison
Geoff Maitland	Proposed: John Harrison	Seconded: Felicity MacDonald Smith

Both were unanimously elected as Wardens. Anna Matthews thanked both Joy and Geoff for standing again.

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

The meeting was chaired by the Reverend Anna Matthews

**1. Minutes of the Meeting on 16 May 2021**

- i) Minutes were approved and signed as a correct record
- ii) There were no matters arising not otherwise covered by the reports

**2. Electoral Roll**

There are 172 members on the roll.

**3. Reports**

Reports had been made available before the meeting on the church website:

20s&30s Group	Bell Ringers
Children and Young People	Communications
Deanery Synod	Diocesan Synod
Eco-Church	Fabric Committee
Mission Giving Group	PCC Secretary
Safeguarding	Social Committee

The reports were tabled.

Susan Jourdain expressed some concern on the proposed solar panels on the South Aisle roof in the Fabric Committee Report, and felt a more environmentally friendly contribution would be a single solar panel on the east side of the North porch roof. Geoff Maitland advised that her proposal was discussed at the PCC meeting of 16 November 2021, and that energy usage calculations showed that one panel on the porch would not be sufficient for the energy requirements of the church. Exact details of the proposed use of solar panels on the South Aisle and connecting to the grid are still being researched, and nothing has been agreed as yet.

Anna expressed her thanks to all those who had written the reports and who served on committees, and for all the work this represented in supporting St Bene't's.

**4. Treasurer's Report**

A full report and draft 2021 Accounts from Jonathan Cribb, Treasurer, had been provided on the website and had been on display in the church before the meeting.

The Treasurer reported that the Accounts were similar to those in 2020, in that there was a small deficit in the General Fund and giving is not at pre-pandemic level. Investments had been strong with good dividends, and the Giddy Fund had increased in value.

The 2021 Accounts have yet to be approved by an Independent Examiner.

Further considerations include the effects of higher inflation on products and services, and an increase in the Parish Share. This was not increased in 2020 and by only 1.5% in 2021, so it likely to be higher next year.

#### **Questions:**

Ethical investing:

The funds held in CCLA follow the Church of England ethic guidelines, and those at St James' Place are also ethically invested funds.

Are investments used paying for the day-to-day running of the church:

With two years of deficit, c. -£7,000, the PCC is drawing on the General Fund (including investment income) but this cannot continue indefinitely. Some general savings can be implemented, but the most important and highest expense is the Parish Share, currently c.£75,000 p.a., and this should not be defaulted on. The gas contract was renewed for two years earlier in 2022 before price increases. Income will need to increase to stabilise funds, and a new fixed contactless machine is planned to be installed in the North Aisle which should generate more donations from visitors.

Anna Matthews thanked Jonathan Cribb for his work in getting the accounts in order. Anna also thanked the Financial Planning Group.

#### **5. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Jeremy Wong was **approved unanimously** to continue to do this, with the fee at £300.

#### **6. Vicar's Report**

Anna Matthews presented her report to the meeting.

Anna reflected on the difference between Easter 2021, with restrictions in place including strict social distancing and limits on attendance which had to be pre-booked, over three separate services, and the Easter 2022 when restrictions had been lifted and the church was full. In 2022, although we have been emerging from the pandemic, and though Covid is still with us, the effects of lockdowns remain with us as individuals, as a community, as a society. Coming out of the pandemic will take some deliberate recovering of what was lost, as well as a holding onto what we have learned.

Anna spoke of a sense of recovery in what we have learned, or relearned: that we need each other: that we are not made to live solely individual lives; that we need community, friendship, support, the encouragement and nourishment of others. We have also have learned that we are more capable of creativity and adaptation than we'd thought, but as we emerge from the pandemic, we need to resist the temptation to think everything can now go back to how it was. It can't, because life is different and we are different, and that can be seen by looking round the congregation: new people have joined; some older members come less frequently now, or are not able to come at all.

Anna asked everyone to make the effort to get to know new people and help them feel welcome, and that this is a place they can belong. She asked people to let her know if anyone is unwell or unable to get to church, as well as looking out for one another. Anna touched on a collective grief that has yet to be fully expressed as hundreds of thousands who have lost people to Covid across the country. Shaping the future as we emerge from Covid also includes the situation in Ukraine and the spiralling cost of living.

Support for the Besom Project has grown thanks in particular to John and Andrea Harrison. Anna thanked the congregation for volunteering for projects involving cleaning, decorating, or gardening in the homes of vulnerable people, and for donating monthly items for starter packs which helps those being rehoused get on their feet.

Anna thanked those who supported the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project over the winter season, practically, prayerfully, or financially. This year that was based at Crossways, a temporary hostel in Chesterton, which meant that safe and secure accommodation was able to be offered to people 24 hours a day, rather than just overnight. This has been a success and it's hoped will be repeated for Winter 2022/23. Over the summer it's hoped that Crossways will be used as temporary accommodation for refugees, and there will be opportunities to support this.

Anna thanked people for their help and support:

- The PCC has committed to working towards being an Eco Church including reducing the carbon footprint of the church building and looking at our lifestyles and choices so that we live more

responsibly as stewards rather than exploiters of God's creation. Anna thanked those who are willing to help us think and plan through what this will involve.

- To the many people involved in contributing to our worship, including those who read, intercede, serve, cantor, officiate at Evening Prayer in church or online, play the organ, ring the bells, operate the live-stream, arrange the flowers, act as sidespeople, and make the coffee afterwards.
- To Rosemary and Sally-Marie who keep things ship-shape in the sacristy, and to those who share in preaching and presiding.
- To Eona and Andrea who did a sterling job of offering weekly resources to families when we weren't able to gather in person, and to Rosemary for keeping in touch with them. After several years of leading the older children's group, Eona stepped down from this role and new leaders have been willing to take on leadership of that group from among the young adults in the congregation, under the co-ordination of Andrea Harrison.
- To Sally-Marie and Shanti, co-leaders of the 20s and 30s group, for providing a wonderful way for people in this age group to get to know one another better, explore and deepen their faith, and find a place to belong.
- Our learning and formation programme got going more fully in person again this year, with a programme of study mornings, reading groups continuing to meet online, a parish retreat, and Lent groups. My thanks to all those who have engaged in this, and especially to Olga, and to Hannah, one of our ordinands on attachment, for their leading of the Wednesday reading group. For the next academic year we are going to join together with Little St Mary's for the programme of study mornings.
- Bishop Dagmar presided at a service last June that included baptisms, confirmations, and the licensing of Andrea Harrison as Licensed Lay Minister to St Bene't's. As well as her work overseeing the older children's group and as a deputy warden, Andrea chairs the Social Committee and with the other members brings care and imagination to this important aspect of our life, planning events that help build and rebuild a sense of community among the congregation.
- In July we celebrated Olga's priesting and first Eucharist. Our congratulations to her on that, and to her and Simeon on the birth of their son, Theo. Olga will begin a staged return from maternity leave to St Bene't's from June, and has been appointed to a new job as Tutor in Old Testament and Admissions Tutor at Ridley Hall, which will start in September, and will continue her curacy alongside this.
- Last May we welcomed Sophie Young on placement for a month, and were very pleased to welcome her back in November, when she moved to St Bene't's to complete her curacy. She's been a great addition to the team and has completed her curacy to the diocese's satisfaction. Sophie also holds the role of Bishop's Officer for Homelessness, which sees her serving as a chaplain among the homeless community, and she will be taking up that role more fully and staying on at St Bene't's as a priest as she does that. This will provide her with a base and some rootedness for that important ministry, and also help us to support her and engage with the homeless community more fully ourselves.
- To Katherine Stevenson, our Communications Officer, who plays a really important role not only in design work for publicity for events but in keeping the website up to date and sending out the weekly email.
- To Philippa, Parish Administrator, working behind the scenes and enabling things to run smoothly.
- To the PCC for their wise, supportive and committed approach. Thank you in particular to those who are stepping down: to Gillian Baker, John Harrison, Sally-Marie Osborne, Harriet Phillips, and Paul Spiers. And to Jonathan Cribb, who steps down as Treasurer.
- Thanks to the wardens, Geoff and Joy, who are brilliant representatives of the congregation whose care for this place and its people is demonstrated every week, and are wise and supportive colleagues.

Anna emphasised the importance of caring for one another, and especially those who are more vulnerable mentally, physically, emotionally or spiritually as a result of the pandemic. The inviting of others to belong isn't simply so that the pews are full, or that the future of St Bene't's is secure, it's so that they can come to know the breadth and height and length and depth of the love of God, and to know that this love is for them, too.

### **Questions:**

Community groups in the Pandemic: It was felt that these worked well as a way of keeping people in contact with each other, but it is noted that not everyone from the various groups has returned to services. Anna will consider options to look into this.

**ACTION: AM**

Livestreaming: This is not always working well for services. Geoff Maitland advised that an internet upgrade is being considered.

Masks: It was asked how long the use of masks will be in place. Anna advised that any restrictions are regularly discussed at all PCC meetings, and that use of masks is advisory for now: individuals can make their decision as to whether to wear a mask, or not.

The congregation thanked Anna for all her hard work.

## **7. Election of members of the PCC**

The following nominations were received for PCC members:

Sarra Facey	Proposed: Andrea Harrison	Seconded: Sally-Marie Osborne
Samuel Fitzgerald	Proposed: Sally-Marie Osborne	Seconded: Andrea Harrison
Gavin Koh	Proposed: Geoff Maitland	Seconded: Judith Miller
Judith Miller	Proposed: Sally-Marie Osborne	Seconded: Jenny Harris
Alex Osborne	Proposed: Thorsten Wahl	Seconded: Nicolas Bell
Anthony Weale	Proposed: Geoff Maitland	Seconded: Nicolas Bell

*(Who was co-opted in November 2021)*

All five were **elected unanimously**.

## **10. AOB**

The Wardens thanked Anna on behalf of the congregation for all her work, both spiritually and practically, and her commitment to St Bene't's. A gift was presented.

The meeting ended at 12.05pm with the Grace.

## **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 2023-24 has 186 members. Two members has been taken off the previous year's Roll due to death, and we have added 13 new members for this year. In 2022, the total number on the Roll was 172.

*Officer*

*Philippa Pearson, Electoral Roll*

*May 2023*

## **PCC SECRETARY**

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

In November 2022, the PCC had an away day at Madingley Village Hall where the Development Action Plan was reviewed and considered, and aspects further discussed in greater detail at PCC meetings following the away day.

After our APCM in May 2022, we welcomed new members Sarra Facey, Sam Fitzgerald, Gavin Koh, Judith Miller and Alex Osborne. Anthony Weale was co-opted in November 2021 as Deanery Synod Representative, and formerly became a member of the PCC in May 2022. Eleanor Peers, Deanery Synod representative, moved away from Cambridge and left PCC in November 2022 Members leaving after the APCM on 14 May this year as they are moving away are Sam Fitzgerald, Gavin Koh and Shanti Daffern. Thank you for all your input over the last year.

Financial affairs have been considered at every meeting and we have heard about the work of the Deanery and the Diocesan Synods, Safeguarding information and the work of the Mission Committee. The Standing Committee has met five times to discuss matters in between PCC meetings and to recommend items that need to be discussed by the PCC.

In March 2023, the PCC met with Archdeacon of Cambridge, Alex Hughes, soon after Anna's untimely death to discuss and consider many aspects of life of St Bene't's, and how we could approach the way forward for some of these.

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, and for members to be fully informed on matters.

*Philippa Pearson, PCC Secretary, May 2023*

## **CHILDREN'S GROUP**

The Younger Group sessions take place weekly during the Sunday 10am Eucharist in the downstairs Ramsey Room. In the summer and early autumn, in good weather we spill out in to the garden where the Response Materials are displayed. Some children chose to stay in the garden to work. Others prefer to work indoors. The team is led by Rosemary with Dora, Naomi, Harriet and Anna (Cieslik) as regular leaders of the Sessions. All leaders are DBS checked. Yuko is also DBS checked and is available to step in when required. Andrea has led sessions during the year which is beneficial as she is an experienced Godly Play Leader/Advocate. Rosemary and Andrea meet 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 deeper in their relationship with God, alongside their parents and other adults within a safe and nurturing environment. The children are part of the Body and receive their own Ministry of the Word. 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's year and the different themes of the festivals and seasons. Materials are regularly provided for use at home. We have carried out a Health & Safety assessment of the Ramsey Room, in line with the St Bene't's Church Health & Safety Policy. Adjustments have been made to the ordering of the Room, 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 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.

There have been two Baptisms this past year with a couple more in the pipeline. Two babies have been born over the past year and others are now toddlers and pretty active! The space under the Tower is working well for them. Older pre-school children come in to the Group with a parent for part of or all of the session. We are hoping to offer Preparation for First Communion sessions in the near future to those ready to take this next step on their journey of faith.

As is the pattern at St Bene't's, several families have moved away from Cambridge at the end of the academic year, while others arrived. This year, we 'broke even' with those leaving and those joining! There was the usual period of time when new families to Cambridge try out what is on offer at the city centre churches. Some have asked to receive our regular Family Emails & pdfs with activities to use at home. These are a way of keeping in touch with families.

I suffered a fall which resulted in a fractured pelvis and my being out of action for a lengthy period of time. I wish to thank the other members of the Team for stepping in to keep the Sunday Sessions running smoothly during the Advent & Christmas/Epiphany period, including the Advent Wreath in church. I was able to provide the objects for the 'stations' for The Journey to Bethlehem service on Christmas Eve, led by Anna. Helen came to play the organ as she has done for a number of years. After the service, I was visited by some who had attended to tell me how special the service was. More recently the Lent activities in the home and in the Group culminated in The Journey to the Cross service on Good Friday. Thank you to those who helped me prepare things for the service, and especially Ed for leading it and all those who helped in other ways. Anna had requested that we

returned to the format of service with 'stations' around the church. Hot Cross Buns were back as was gluten free Matzos! It was a special joy to have Alec as the organist. An Easter Garden made by the children is in church once again this year. Thanks again to those who helped on Holy Saturday to put it together.

*Rosemary Farren, Younger Children's Group Leader  
May 2023*

## **YOUTH GROUP**

The youth group meets during the liturgy of the word at the 10am Sunday Eucharist. We have a core group of young people who come regularly and some who come more occasionally. We've enjoyed meeting some new faces this year, and have a number of young people who will be at an age to join the group soon.

Since January, we have begun producing termcards for the group, with the hope that this will give the youth a sense of ownership over the group as an intentional space for them and their journey in faith, and motivate them to come along.

For our first series, we focused on the Bible, with weeks on, for example, 'the History books' and 'the Prophetic books'. We aimed to give the young people a sense of the diversity and complexity of the Bible, and the confidence to explore it for themselves. We decided to end that series with three weeks on 'living with the Bible' on topics of 'worship', 'interpretation' and 'ethics', to unpack more all that we'd been thinking about together. Our next termcard will focus on 'prayer' with different sessions on e.g. 'praying for others' and 'well-known prayers'.

We facilitate youth-led services once a quarter. It has been so good to see the youth trying new roles or becoming more confident in the roles they take on, from serving to reading to live-streaming to intercessing.

We continue to aim to spend time with the youth group outside of Sunday services, in social events or other activities. Last summer we had a 'pizza and faith questions' event where we invited the youth to quiz Anna (and some of us) on their difficult faith questions – ranging from questions about the incarnation and the Trinity to questions about time-travel! We also particularly enjoyed our Advent party, hosted at Little St Mary's parish centre, where the young people of St Bene't's came together with youth from Great St Mary's and St Paul's Hills Road for games and biscuit-making. There was a great response to this initiative from across the Deanery, including from other youth workers, so we'd hope to continue that, but have been more limited on our capacity recently to initiate this. The youth have also really enjoyed some trips to Aromi, as well as spending time with the wider congregation getting the church ready for Christmas and Easter.

Our response to Anna's death as youth group leaders has been steered by advice from the Wardens and the parish safeguarding officer, as well as our sense of what parents would like. Shortly after Anna died we met virtually with a child bereavement professional who gave us a useful sense of how young people in this age range can grieve and how to speak with them. We've also had books and web resources made available to us. The first time the youth group met after Anna died we did a reflective memory activity with painting stones. We are willing to facilitate more time for the young people to think about Anna, separate from the Sunday service, if we get a sense that this would be valued by parents. We have also wanted to give them a sense of stability and community so have resumed with our termcard.

Andrea Harrison oversees the youth work and is a great source of support, encouragement, reminders and ideas. Over the past year Phil McKeown and Hannah Swithinbank have joined as youth leaders, and Nia Moseley-Roberts and Cecily Fasham have recently joined too, alongside the existing team of Simeon Burke, Shanti Daffern, Sam Fitzgerald and Sally-Marie Osborne.

As youth group leaders, we really value the opportunity to walk with the young people of the congregation in their faith. One particular joy for us this year was seeing Maddie and George choose to be baptised in September 2022. It's great to see friendships growing in the group, for example when watching the youth cluster together in the area near St Anne's altar after services. It has been a privilege to spend time with them. It's often fun, insightful or funny, whether we are fielding questions



on the Bible or computing algorithms, encouraging them to get involved at church, or hearing what they've been up to over the previous week.

*Shanti Daffern (on behalf of Andrea Harrison, Simeon Burke, Cecily Fasham, Sam Fitzgerald, Phil McKeown, Nia Mosely-Roberts, Sally-Marie Osborne and Hannah Swithinbank) May 2023*

## **20s AND 30s GROUP**

The 20s & 30s group continues to meet regularly for study and activities together, as well as aiming to encourage members of the congregation in the 20s-30s age-range to participate more broadly in the communities and worship of St Bene't's. We continue to meet primarily on a Tuesday evening, with termcards based around a specific theme or book (each spanning a longer period than academic terms). We also meet for social activities, for example pub trips, walks, board games nights, movie nights or an excursion to play mini golf.

In the autumn of 2022, we formed a 20s & 30s committee for the first time, bringing Fiona Dobson, Jenny Harris and Sam Fitzgerald on board as committee members, alongside Sally-Marie and Shanti as co-leaders. Ed Green joined us as a curate, coming along to our evenings and providing pastoral and spiritual care for the group. Other members of the group play roles in bringing snacks for our sessions, leading discussion, clearing away, and leading Compline. This model has worked really well, especially as the group is growing. We now have around 40 people who come occasionally or more regularly, with c.15 people on a usual Tuesday evening, though a meal (or pancakes) always tends to attract a crowd.

On a Tuesday evening our usual model is still to meet at 6:30pm, though an increasing number of the group join for Evening Prayer beforehand. We then share snacks, conversation or play a game; have a guided session from 7-8pm, usually followed by a plenary; and then say Compline at 8:30pm. We introduced the time of plenary after the main discussion at the start of 2023, thanks to suggestions by Fiona and ordinand Mary Brown, and this tends to involve spending time in smaller groups reflecting on the past week or praying together more informally for those who wish.

Since the last APCM, our termcards have covered topics including the lived Christian experiences of members of the congregation; water in the Bible; and a deep dive into the liturgy of our Eucharist services. We also invited the congregation to afternoon tea in the churchyard, hosted and catered by 20s & 30s. Following an initial discussion with the group as part of last summer's series, Julian Allwood also invited us to participate again as a focus group to read a first-draft of a book he had written with Andrew Davidson and pitch in with our thoughts. We'd love to continue to build on that sort of involvement with the wider parish. Via our mailing-list and Facebook, we also share updates on the wider church and encourage people to get involved in various ways, such as Credo and confirmation, supporting the Besom project or becoming a server or intercessor.

As a prelude to our January-April deep dive into the liturgy of our main Sunday service, in November we also hosted a 'Lunch and Liturgy' event which attracted 30 people to come along and think about the Eucharist over pizza at Gini Allbutt's house – thanks very much to Gini for hosting. This was especially welcomed by newcomers to St Bene't's' Catholic tradition, and set up the following term's topic well.

At the time when Anna died, we were preparing to go on a Quiet Day to Little Gidding (with 24 people) which Anna was due to be leading for us on the theme of 'the Roundabout Way through the Wilderness: Finding God in the Desert'. We decided to cancel this, but invited anyone who had been planning to attend to come to the Saturday Eucharist in church and pray silently together. That Tuesday on our termcard we had been planning to discuss the Eucharistic prayer, and so Richard Ames Lewis led us instead in a very moving, sad and beautiful celebration of the Eucharist for the group, with other space for conversation too. The following week, Jenny Harris closed our termcard with a beautiful session on 'sending out' in the liturgy and sacred music, focusing on giving space for reflective craft activities and time together. We heard that members of the group especially valued these times to be together, in quiet or conversation.

We have continued to keep the group updated and involved as the wider parish responds to Anna's death, and to think proactively about how to offer care to one another well and to ensure we are reaching all who may be affected by this. Thanks to Ed for his support and guidance on this. It is very moving to see the love, care, support and prayer given and received.

This coming termcard, as well as social activities, we have decided to explore the Letter of James, so we're looking forward to digging into it together.

*Shanti Daffern and Sally-Marie Osborne, May 2023*

## **FABRIC COMMITTEE**

At the last APCM on 15 May 2022, it was reported that the major maintenance concern was the state of the north aisle roof. Small but persistent leaks during winter rain had not been cured by replacement of some displaced slates and our architect, Mr Jerry Lander, recommended major repairs involving replacement of all the slate tiles on the south facing aspect of the north aisle roof. The PCC took the decision to replace with new, rather than re-used, tiles to ensure maximum longevity of this extensive repair. After a tendering process, the contract was awarded to Lodge and Sons Ltd and this time last year the project was about to commence. The installation of scaffolding at the front and on the west side of the church caused some inconvenience but little disruption to church use. The work took 12 weeks and was completed essentially on time by the end of July, at a cost of £51,978 (ex-VAT), which has been covered by the Giddy Fund. There has been no recurrence of the rainwater leak problems since the roof tiles were replaced. As part of the roofing project Smartwater security marking paint was applied to all leaded areas of the roof, as an additional detection system which also reduces our insurance premiums.

Over the past year, the main fabric focus has been on two projects:

- The installation of solar panels on the south aisle roof, for which considerable planning had been carried out in 2021-22;
- Carpet replacement, linked to re-ordering of the Chancel, which was in an advanced state of planning in 2019-20 but had been put on hold due to the pandemic.

The **solar panel project** has been through several iterations over the past year, mainly in finalising the number and arrangement of panels to optimise the power generated and in ensuring the structural stability of the roof. 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

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 spare capacity to 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
- A 5kW hybrid DC to AC inverter
- A 5.2kWh battery, to be housed in the tower cupboard, to store excess power from sunny days to use at night and on cloudy days.
- Cost £17K

The status of the overall project is:

- Provisional approval obtained from City Council Planning Department, Corpus Christi College, the Diocese DAC and Historic England.
- The architect is finalising the full specification ready for the tender process and provision of cost estimates for overall project.
- PCC will need to review tender process and approve accepted tender.

- At the same time a planning application will be made to the Council and a Faculty application submitted to Diocese
- Corpus Christi College and Historic England to be updated with the final plans
- Overall cost tbd, approx. £50K, paid for from the Giddy Fund
- The timescale agreed by the PCC was to obtain all permissions and PCC sign off by end June and to carry out the project in Q3, July to September 2023.
- This has inevitably been delayed by Anna Matthews' death but the PCC has decided to continue with the project with target completion by the end of 2023.

The **Chancel Project** consists of

- Removing the green carpet in the Chancel and cleaning the stone floor to restore it to a natural stone condition. We would see how this looked before deciding at a later date whether to move to applying a light stone pigment as earlier chosen by the PCC (2020).
- Replacing the current wooden altar plinth with a stone base
- Moving the communion rail back about 30 cm to align with the front arch pillars and reveal the full wording on the central ledger stone in front of it. This will result in a shortening of the rail by the width of about two people kneeling.
- The support pillars will be made uniform dark oak, incorporating the mouldings on the front of the current pillars.
- The removable central rail will be reduced in thickness and its weight reduced from 11 kg to 7 kg.
- The wooden platform in front of St Anne's Altar will be replaced by Ancaster stone on the same level as the South Aisle and Nave to improve disabled access to that area.
- The wooden boards in front of the choir stalls will be sanded and re-stained. Again we will wait for some time to see how this looks before making a final decision on whether to replace the boards with black and brown tiles linking in to those in front of the chancel step and in the nave aisle.
- The well-worn and fraying nave and tower carpets will be replaced.

The status of the project in March 2023 was:

- The architect was finalising the design of the moved altar rail and preparing a full specification for whole project.
- The provisional cost estimate is £70K.

Following Anna's death, the PCC has decided to put project on hold until 2024. The architect will produce a final specification and tender document, ready to activate the tender process and faculty application in 2024.

Having improved disabled access to the church through the sloping path as part of our Millennium Entrance Project, and the intended levelling of the St Anne's Altar area as part of the Chancel Project above, the Committee has given 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 with the congregation before any decisions were made. The Committee and the PCC had intended that an outline plan would be developed during 2023 for extensive discussion with the congregation by year end, with a view to proceeding with a project for a disabled toilet, and maybe an extended kitchen area, if there was general agreement to proceed. However, this project will now be delayed for at least a year, although we will continue to research the options and perhaps test the congregation's appetite for such a change.

An on-going issue during 2022-23 has been the unreliability of our current wireless internet connection, which has frequently disrupted the quality of our livestreamed services. The need to use a wireless

system arose because Corpus Christi College inadvertently removed our BT landline, which was connected through the college, when they replaced their hard-wired phone system with a digital one during the Covid-19 lockdown. Once they realised what had happened, the college has been very helpful in trying to re-instate a high-quality internet connection for St Bene't's. However, connecting us to the remaining emergency BT landline in Corpus proved prohibitively expensive, as was installing a new line from the system that serves premises in Bene't Street. So Corpus have proposed that we be connected to the university internet system via the College by installing a router in the room above our vestry and connecting to it wirelessly or via a hard-wired connection through the ceiling. The College has approved the plan and is awaiting planning consent from the Council before they can install the new router and connect us to it, hopefully before July. Meanwhile we have switched to a different public wireless internet provider with improved signal in the vicinity of the church, in an attempt to improve livestreaming in the short term.

Plans to install a smoke sensor in the vestry and a tamper alarm on the monumental brass in the south aisle (which was stolen and then recovered some years ago) have been in place for some time. We are awaiting the contractors, E-Bound, to install these; installing a smoke sensor in the St Anne's Altar area is also under consideration due to the fire risk from unattended votive candles. A new GoodBox contactless donation unit has been installed near the main entrance, to replace our current hand-held device, secured to a purpose made light oak stand. This has increased both donations from visitors and also digital Sunday collection receipts.

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. Three trees (parotta, lilac and box elder) were pruned in October after the nesting season following a lengthy approval process by the Council. The 20s and 30s Group have agreed to take on the job of keeping the churchyard free from litter, which is a continuing issue.

The Quinquennial Inspection of the church building is due in 2023 and arrangements are being made with our architect, Jerry Lander, to carry this out over the summer period.

All of these issues continue to be overseen and progressed by the Fabric Committee, comprising Geoff Maitland (Chair), Richard Ames-Lewis, Sarah Airriess, Gillian Baker, Keith Carne, Neil Petersen and Anthony Weale and we are extremely grateful to them for the time, effort and expertise that they continue to give in this capacity. The Committee has resumed face to face meetings in church, with four meetings since the last APCM; it also does significant work 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 cleaner, Kaska Rynkiewicz, for keeping the church in such good order week on week. Thank you 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. It is good that we have so many daily visitors, both local and tourists, able to share with us the peace and beauty of St Bene't's.

*Geoff Maitland, Churchwarden and Chair, Fabric Committee  
May 2023*

## **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 in 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 four 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.

### **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 this 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 recently discussed, following feedback from the incumbents of these roles mentioned here, that these vital people (with a heightened workload and responsibility at present) feel they are being sufficiently supported by both the Diocese and the St. Bene't's Community.

Although the shock and pain of Anna's tragic and untimely death is still raw and everyone within our church community is dealing with it in their own way, PCC is taking care to ensure that those who need particular help are receiving it from the clergy, the parish community at large, or are being signposted to where specialist support can be sourced.

We are soon to be offering, following Anna's funeral, a series of Sharing and Listening Groups 'Conversations about Anna' as many of the congregation have said that they would find this useful as part of their own grief and support journey.

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 2023*

## **DEANERY SYNOD**

The Cambridge South Deanery Synod has held three formal meetings (July and October 2022 and March 2023) since the last APCM. The July meeting was joint with the Cambridge North Deanery. The St. Bene't's representatives have been Eleanor Peers (until November 2022) and Anthony Weale.

The following have been the major items of business.

### *1. Deanery Development Planning.*

Work on a development plan, as required by the diocese, has continued through the medium of a steering committee, informed inter alia by the results of a questionnaire circulated to parishes in the deanery in the summer of 2022. A draft plan is expected shortly. Priorities are likely to include addressing expected population growth and new housing areas, the homeless, and mutual support in evangelism and growing in faith.

### *2. Address by the Diocesan Director of Education, Mission and Ministry.*

At the March 2023 meeting, the Director, Canon Andrew Read, gave some useful background to the planning work, covering population growth, declining church attendance and the need to discern how the Church might address the spiritual needs of the growing population. The emphasis is likely to be on collaboration and probably more lay ministers. The comparative success and dynamism of this deanery might provide examples which could be followed elsewhere, or scope for collaboration.

### 3. *Parish good news stories.*

The rural dean has encouraged parishes to share accounts of successful work and initiatives. These have shown the vigour of the church in this deanery and have illustrated a point made in the discussion of Canon Read's address, that despite the decline in church attendance, it continues to play a major role in helping local needs. Examples include support for Ukrainian refugees, warm hubs (many churches have proved these in this winter), help in addressing major development proposals and engaging with developers (Cherry Hinton), a site for modular homes (Christ Church, Barnwell), friendship and memory cafes, food banks and engagement with educational institutions.

### 4. *Eco-Church etc.*

Information has been exchanged on parishes' work in environmental issues, including progress towards securing Eco-Church awards.

### 5. *CCHP*

Sophie Young gave a presentation to the October 2022 meeting on the work planned for the winter of 2022-23. Continuing support for the CCHP and associated work is likely to emerge as high priority in the deanery plan (see 7. below).

### 6. *Finance.*

The parish shares have been paid in full, which entitles the deanery to a rebate. There is a balance of some £45K in the deanery account, which might increase significantly, depending on the outcome of various transactions related to the parish share. The use of some of the balance to support Sophie's work seem to command support, but no decisions have yet been made.

*Anthony Weale, Deanery Synod Representative  
May 2023*

## **DIOCESAN SYNOD**

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

**21 June 2022:** The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor presented her regular Update to the meeting. There were 117 referrals (increased from the 102 at the same date in 2021). The team continue to deliver the full House of Bishops training programme. A partner in the firm of Hays MacIntyre, the Diocesan auditors, gave a presentation relating to the 2021 Annual Accounts. No points of significant weakness were noted, and he confirmed that the audit was clean. He acknowledged the generosity of the parishes in these challenging economic times. There was an update on Project Lancaster (relocation of Diocesan Offices from Bishop Woodford House, to Lancaster Way, Witchford): the King's School is using part of the old building. In her Presidential Address the Bishop of Huntingdon (in the absence of the Bishop of Ely) reported that she had recently visited the Diocese's partner church, Nordkirche, in Germany. She wishes to invite a reciprocal visit.

**15 October 2023:** Ely Diocesan Board of Finance presented information on the Diocesan finances for the year to date. The Budget for 2023 reflects an anticipated increase in clergy stipend. Ministry Share requests were therefore proposed to be increased to 4%, with the balance being covered by investment income. Synod members approved the ratios for the election of laity to Deanery Synods at APCMs in 2023.

**11 March 2023:** Bishop Stephen invited all present to stand in silence in memory of Anna Matthews. The Safeguarding Update was given by Rebecca Boswell. There had been 42 referrals since the last Synod in October 2022. Bishop Stephen gave his Address. He acknowledged that Anna's death had impacted his ability to prepare his address as he would usually do. He read from a sermon Anna had preached at the golden anniversary of her training incumbent's ordination. She had said that a priest's heart had to be love-broken to become the heart of Christ. "When we are looked at by Love we are changed, we shall see God as He is and be changed into His likeness".

There was a report on the Living in Love and Faith debate in General Synod. Questions were answered by Bishop Stephen. He said work still needed to be done on the Prayers of Blessings for same-sex marriages. The College of Bishops is meeting on 23 March. In answer to concerns raised about the effect these Prayers, once authorised for use, will have on the Church's doctrine of Holy Matrimony, he said there was no change to the teaching on Holy Matrimony and that there would be protection for parishes that decided in conscience that these Prayers would not be used. He said there would be no discrimination against those coming forward for ordination who in conscience are not able to endorse these Prayers.

Deanery Planning aims to enable parishes and deaneries to think strategically and creatively about population growth in the diocese: the growth that has already taken place, and the projected growth – 33% - by 2050, and how the church will be able to meet the spiritual needs of this growth and serve the new towns and areas of new housing. Collaborative ministry is needed in which the whole church is resourced to be confident in faith and confident advocates for Christ. The age demographic of congregations needs urgently to be addressed: “we need to grow younger”. On finance, it was reported that parishes had met 95% of ministry share. The diocesan deficit overall was £131,374 on a turn-over of £11.5 million. The parishes were thanked for meeting ministry share to this extent in hard times.

*Neil Petersen, Diocesan Synod Representative  
May 2023*

## **MISSION COMMITTEE**

Mission Giving at St Bene't's starts with God and is our response to his love for us and the whole creation - see Mission Giving at St Bene't's Policy for details of how and why we give, how our giving is allocated & other types of giving we make.

During the past year, members of the congregation have continued to support the **Cambridge Churches Homeless Project**, which works to draw together churches in response to the needs of those experiencing homelessness in Cambridge – currently particularly through support of Crossways winter hostel through our agreement with 'Bread & Meat' for the use of the churchyard over the summer to raise money for them. Over the summer period £2800 was raised. In addition, there was a collection for CCHP at the Carol Service.

We have continued our support for the **Besom Project**, a local charity working to match volunteers with need. This takes the form of a monthly collection of items for the vulnerable who are being rehoused, as well as drawing together a team of volunteers for occasional painting/decorating/cleaning or gardening work. As the most unequal city in the UK in terms of income, this is an important way of engaging in and serving the city.

### **Allocation of Mission Giving money 2022-2023**

70% of the church's tithe is allocated to two major long-term projects.

- The first half is allocated to Christian projects in the Middle East, focusing initially on Lebanon, through the work of Embrace the Middle East and Aid to the Church in Need.
- The second half is currently allocated to Zimbabwe. We support the Anglican Diocese of Manicaland, through Church Community Mobilisation Projects to tackle HIV stigma and to kick-start income-generation projects in local communities, are being run. At a time of political instability and drought, CCMP is vital for communities to survive. The Anglican bishops of Zimbabwe welcome this work. USPG is able to get funds into Zimbabwe, through the Anglican National Church Office. (The money we send is labelled Restricted Income Funds to be used for a specific purpose - in our case the CCMP in the Diocese of Manicaland. There is a separate fund for the Vaccine Hesitancy Project.)

### **Allocation of the rest of the Tithe (30%)**

In November 2022, the PCC allocated the money between three charities:

**Abbey People:** This is 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. <https://www.abbeypeople.org.uk/>

**Romsey Mill:** works with young people, children and families in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, particularly those facing multiple disadvantages, to overcome disadvantage, challenge injustice, and promote social inclusion. <https://www.romseymill.org/>

### **Other types of giving**

In addition to the Tithe, we give away the proceeds from events such as the Christian Aid Book Exchange and other events already mentioned (e.g., CCHP) when special collections are taken. The PCC organises collections in church when the DEC (Disasters Emergency Committee) has an appeal. See Mission Giving at St Bene't's Policy for details.

- The Mission Committee continues to develop ways in which 'to IDENTIFY with, EMPATHIZE with, and also LEARN and RECEIVE from other communities. We will consider possible VISITS, and PRAY for and APPRECIATE one another.' Mission is much more than money.

We are considering how best to share information regarding our link with Zimbabwe and the Lebanon, so that it really is a two-way relationship. Several years ago, some members of the congregation visited Egypt and gained so much from this face-to-face experience. We received a message of sympathy and support from our Egyptian brothers and sisters, immediately they heard of Anna's death. A day later we received a similar message from our friends in Zimbabwe, letting us know we were in their thoughts & prayers.

*Rosemary Farren, Mission Committee  
May 2023*

### **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 while the number of ringers attending outside of term time has seen a promising increase (mainly driven by a number of recent students who have graduated and 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 now regularly able to ring all the bells on Sundays (in previous 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 practice, 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. Similarly, to last year, there are around 4 learners who have already progressed far enough to be able to regularly take part in the Sunday ringling. These are mainly student ringers, but there has been an increased amount of interest from the local community as well.

As well as the usual practices and service ringling, there have been 15 successful quarter peals rung since last year, and we have also provided ringling for 4 weddings. The annual Southern Universities' Association striking competition was held in Cambridge this year, and St Bene't's hosted the 6-bell contest (won by Cambridge University). We have also rung for more solemn occasions, with fully muffled quarter peals rung to mark the deaths of Queen Elizabeth II and Anna Matthews.

The bells were inspected back in June – no major issues were observed, and the usual annual maintenance was performed. We did have to carry out some additional maintenance during August to tighten up several bolts as the heatwave had led to some loosening as the wood dried out more than usual. We have had to replace two ropes and one stay in the last year – we still have a good number of replacement stays, but the number of replacement ropes is getting low. A couple of the current ropes are showing signs of wear and will probably need to be replaced within the year, so we'll likely need to procure some new ropes soon. There should be sufficient money in the bell fund for these purposes.

*Samuel Johnson, Tower Captain  
May 2022*



## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

**Members:** Andrea Harrison (chair), Margaret Whittaker, Deb Rimmington, Felicity Macdonald-Smith, Sally-Marie Osborne, Jacky Lui. Thanks are due to Gemma Donaldson for ad hoc help in biscuit packing!

Over the past year, from May 2022-April 2023, the committee members have become good friends through regular Zoom meetings and after-church chats. The following events have been organised to fulfil our aim of bringing the members of St Bene't's into a closer community:

### **May**

'Church crawl' round the Hinkledux churches. Hinxton and Ickleton, then lunch at the Plough in Duxford, followed by visits to both St John's and St Peter's Duxford. Adrian Powter, from the Churches Conservation Trust, told us lots about the history of the last two churches and even took some adventurous people up the tower of St Peter's!

### **June**

The 20s and 30s group invited the wider congregation to afternoon tea in the church garden.

### **July**

Patronal Festival hog roast lunch in the garden. Hog roast, pulled jackfruit for the vegetarians, followed by strawberries and cream.

### **September**

Bring-your-own picnic on Jesus Green.

### **October/November**

'Meet and Share' – various congregation members invited others to meals in their homes.

### **November**

Bring and Share lunch in church – contributions from locally-sourced ingredients, as far as possible.

Book swap: congregation members donated two books for a 'swap stall' at the back of church, donations to Christian Aid raised just over £300.

### **December**

Biscuits packed for distribution to local businesses, with card giving times of Christmas services.

### **February**

Team quiz night via Zoom.

### **April**

Easter biscuits packed for distribution to local businesses. Ed, Sally-Marie and Margaret delivered them during Holy Week.

*Felicity MacDonald Smith, Social Committee member  
May 2023*

