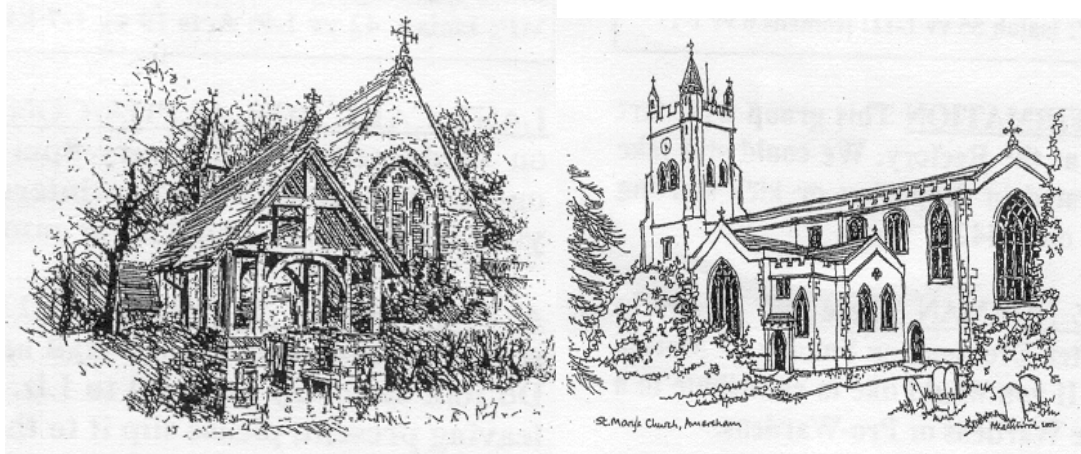


THE PARISH OF AMERSHAM WITH COLESHILL



Annual Report 2023

**Come to the Annual Parish Meeting
on Sunday 23rd April 2023 at
11.50am in St Mary's Church**

**To discuss the past year and elect
Churchwardens and PCC members**

All welcome

Rector's Report - APCM

The annual report is not only an opportunity to report on all that has been happening in the parish but also to celebrate how we see God moving within our community. There is much to celebrate as we reflect on the past year as a parish. I believe I can summarise the year of the parish with one word: presence. This past year saw the world move into the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic where many have struggled with a lack of emotional presence in their lives after months of lockdown. As the world begins this new stage, the church needed to be present in many different ways to support its local community and I believe the parish of St Mary's and All Saints has truly stepped up to deliver.

While many feared that the pandemic accelerated church decline - our numbers in church week by week are continuing to look positive as they steadily increase to pre-pandemic levels. Although many suspected that the church's presence is no longer relevant, our attendance levels suggest otherwise. This is equally true of major festivals across the year such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Over Advent and Christmas, we had 2,758 people in our churches including our school Christmas services. Holy Week and Easter, although a shorter period, still boasted positive numbers of 1,203. In these seasons of busyness there is much to grab people's attention, yet many have chosen to be with the church as it is present in their lives which is wonderful news for us as a parish.

As a parish we have also gone further in being present for children in our new All-Age services, school assemblies & governance, our parish Parent and Toddler groups and our safeguarding procedures. The church is called to be present for everyone, no matter their age, and I am immensely proud of what the church is doing for the lives of children in the parish. Many say children are the church of tomorrow, but they are very much the church of today!

An often over looked aspect of the church's ministry is baptisms, weddings and funerals. These special offices are significant ways the church is present in people's lives and these must be celebrated. As a parish, we have been blessed with many opportunities to be present for people in both times of joy and times of grief. There have been 13 baptisms, 14 weddings and 38 funerals. The clergy will no doubt agree that these offices are a huge privilege for us to officiate as people invite us into their lives to share in these moments of deep significance.

Naturally, I need to talk about finances - this is an important part of church life and significantly impacts how, as a church community, we can be present in people's lives. With a steep rise in energy prices, the finances of the parish have entered a trying time which is being managed wonderfully by Graeme our treasurer. The situation several months ago was looking bleak, to say the least. However, now we have arrived at the

year's end the situation is not as bad as we first thought. This is largely down to the generous giving of those in the parish which we are incredibly grateful for. Although we will be ending with a deficit this financial year, we are hopeful that we can continue in the positive direction we are currently taking. The previous financial year saw a deficit of £19,000 and we have managed to reduce this to £1,200 which is a significant achievement. Thank you to everyone who has given their time or resources to enable this improvement in our financial situation, the church cannot be present for people without it.

The above are just a few examples of how the church is present for people in a whole host of different ways and there is much for us to celebrate as a parish. Of course, this APCM marks a personal milestone for me, as it is the last 'first' in the parish as my first year draws to a close. All I want to say on this is: thank you. Thank you to everyone who has supported the life of the church in my first year. The support from so many has been so greatly appreciated - it is difficult to put it into words. Bishop Alan said that St Mary's & All Saints is a Rolls Royce parish, and my first year has only proved that to be true. So, thank you to everyone who makes the church what it is.

Parochial Church Council Secretary's Report, April 2023

The priority in 2022 was the process of appointing a new Rector. Reverend Jonny Rapson having been appointed, PCC returned to dealing effectively with the usual important concerns in the parish.

Not counting the very brief PCC meeting to elect officers immediately after the 2022 APCM, the PCC met formally in June, September and November 2022, and in February 2023. The minutes of all PCC meetings are available on request from the Parish Office. The average attendance at PCC meetings has been sixteen of the twenty-two members. The names of the members of the PCC for the period since the last APCM appear at the end of this report.

The Chairmanship of the new Rector has seen a marked improvement in the time spent at PCC meetings talking about topics where a written report would have been all that was needed. This change of tack produced a remarkably productive meeting in February which despite covering many matters, lasted one minute under an hour – *The Guinness Book of Records* was duly notified.

The members have risen to the challenge of getting to the point more quickly, presenting a written report where that was the more productive option, and discussing topics at PCC meetings only when there was confusion or disagreement. Happily, though there has

been the usual measure of the first (I speak for myself here), there have been only mild examples of the second and resolutions soon found.

The Standing Committee of core PCC members is empowered to take decisions, within guidelines agreed by the full PCC, on specific issues when no PCC meeting is imminent. Its decisions are always reported, and occasionally reviewed, at the next PCC meeting. Standing Committee is authorised to spend a maximum of £5000 if an emergency requires it and no PCC meeting is imminent. If an acute need arose, £200 may be spent without reference to other members of the committee. This allows action to be taken in an emergency, but such a situation would always be thoroughly examined by Standing Committee or the full PCC at the next opportunity. Examples of this were the need for an assessment of the damage to the east window at St Mary's, and to remedy the inadequate lighting on Rectory Lane, and in the churchyard, after a PCC member following a meeting in the church rooms, had a nasty fall in the dark.

The Wardens of both churches give a report at every PCC meeting, as does the Treasurer; updates on Safeguarding and Data Protection are also mandatory agenda items. The PCC receives regular reports on Charitable Giving, Mission, our two schools and the Almshouses. There is a report from the Deanery Synod, if a meeting has recently taken place.

Some matters discussed by the PCC in 2022-3

1. One permanent agenda item is Fabric and Property in both churches, the main aspects of which are covered in the Church Wardens' reports, and which are the constant concern of our Treasurers.
2. Concern over utility charges which amount to an extra £30 per day to keep the parish running.
3. The live streaming of services at St Mary's proving popular, especially since the switch from Facebook to YouTube.
4. The success of All-Age Services, the restoration of Toddler and Parent Group and Sunday School.
5. The implications of the agreed Social Media Policy, particularly the extent to which the church can police or prevent misuse of photographs taken at church events.
6. Fund Raising for Charitable Giving.

Steve Johnson,
PCC Secretary.
April 2023

Amersham with Coleshill PCC

Annual Treasurer's Report

For the year ended 31 December 2022

I am pleased to provide you with our annual accounts and this Executive Summary:

Key objectives for 2022 were to:

1. Embed Parish Finance Simplification Strategy in order to support financial sustainability that will future proof the finances of the parish.
2. Provide finance and strategic guidance & controls to support day to day cashflow & support Mission and Fabric proposals across our Parish

As reported at our quarterly PCC meetings, the workings of the parish and our finances have been significantly impacted by the macro-economic environment of high inflation, high interest rate, market volatility, cost of living crisis with large increases in utility bills taking centre stage in both media and more locally our cashflow. In turbulent times there are always winners & losers but unless you were in specific sectors such as med tech, oil companies etc then the majority of businesses / organisations have found the post Covid "Road to Recovery" littered with potholes.

Summary of Financial Performance for the year ended 31 December 2022:

- Good news - Across the unrestricted and restricted funds there is only a small deficit of £1.2k (before investment movements) which shows a significant improvement from the 19k deficit last year on a like for like basis. The unrestricted funds show a £13.5k deficit this year, this is largely to do with the covering of expenditure from restricted funds where the specific fund lacked sufficient reserves to pay the expenditure.
- Even given a difficult year the PCC is still well endowed and has nearly £201k on unrestricted funds as at 31 December 2022. Funds also exist for the maintenance of both churches although Mercer Lewin do not have enough information to assess whether these funds are adequate to meet predicted maintenance needs. However, on the basis that as a Parish, we significantly invested in our 3 main assets in recent years following last Quinquennial inspections we are not foreseeing high level of fabric expenditure in next FY.
- The reason for the significant drop in the overall funds carried forward is due to the drop in investment value. This is a paper deficit and has not impacted the cash reserves of the PCC which sit just over £186k. Auditors confirmed they have seen this drop in investments value across the board for several other PCCs and does not cause them any concern.

- Income has remained largely comparable with 2021, showing a small drop of c2.5%. Expenditure has decreased again this year; this is mainly due to a drop in repair costs and other church maintenance.
- Tax Recoverable up 5.5k – largely due to our efficient process of claiming everything we are entitled to – this is one of the key financial processes that does benefit from a single parish approach.
- Income from Church Activities increased to £67,758 (up 9%) due to Parish / Church Rooms reporting surplus £21k. It is fair to say there is some expenditure (eg cleaning, utilities) that gets mopped up by main expenditure but it does show this is still a valuable asset & contributor to both PCC & the community. Bear in mind previous year (Covid impacted), Income £6,948 vs Expenditure £4,305.
- Piggotts End Property - Surplus reduced to £5.5k from 14k previous year. Overall good result as we were aware of the significant fabric spend required early 2022 on roof repair and a new water tank. Thanks to Sue Pounce for all her efforts on helping Piggotts End run smoothly.
- The Piggotts End property is reserved asset held in trust with an ongoing debate whether this should be included in accounts at 89k or at current market value). With the valuation of the property we are allowed to take one of two different approaches. First and the current policy is to take the cost value and leave as is in the accounts without any revaluation, this was allowed during the transition period to the new reporting standards and can remain in place if we choose. Second option is to revalue the property and then undertake regular valuations to ensure that the correct market value is shown in the accounts, the valuation should be prepared by a professional. I am taking this to PCC and will update on those discussions through the usual channels.
- For third year running, our Parish Share was reduced by £3,411 to £86,720. We continue to pay our Parish Share in full every year.
- Balance Sheet: down up £43.6k (6.8%) to £596,230 547 from £639,784 – again, important context on balance sheet increase is the significant decrease in valuation of our investments.

It is important to understand when analysing Parish Finances that there are 3 types of Funds:

- Unrestricted Funds – general funds for general objectives of the church – Day to day operational cash flow but does include unrestricted assets– decreased by £21,035 to £204,495 of which £89,000 is the Piggotts End property.
 - Therefore, the PCC is well endowed and has c£111k (not incl PE fixed Asset value) on unrestricted funds as at 31 December 2022. Funds also exist for the maintenance of both churches.

- Restricted Funds –can only be used for the specific purpose for which they have been given eg Fabric – decreased by £1,404 to £216,400.
- Endowment Funds – represent endowments where capital must be maintained and the dividend income used only for the restricted purposes specified in the establishment of the endowments – decreased by £23,204 to £173,246.
- **Good Box 2020 -2022** Comparison - Good Box has become an important revenue generator - also being used for Bookstall & Marquee Hire.

| | ASC | StM | Plant / Book Stall | Total |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 2020 (FY) | 64 / £493 | 228 / £1,168 | 0 / 0 | 292 / £1,661 |
| 2021 (FY) | 182 / £1,412 | 740 / £3,733 | 188 / £904 | 1110 / £6,049 |
| 2022 (FY) | 217 / £1,350 | 1024 / £5,329 | 141 / £755 | 1382 / £7,434 |

- 22% increase YoY in usage / revenue across the Parish (note Good Box in administration) after provider charges credited £7,042.27
- All Regulation - Charities Commission, Diocesan return, HMRC, RTI and Pension Regulator fully up to date.
- The cashbook & general running of our finances has now been combined for both churches as a result of Parish Financial Simplification Project which has made the accounts process simpler and from our perspective has allowed the auditors to carry out their independent examination more smoothly.
- Auditors have expressed no concerns during their independent examination to the way we are running our finances.

Planned Giving & Gifts are our largest income source (c65%) and we must thank every one of our congregations for their continued support and contribution during another challenging year. Without ongoing Planned Giving and those generous “one offs” we simply cannot function. Thank you for what you donate now. If you are able to give more then, I can assure you, that we will put it to very good use and that every penny is accounted for and nothing is wasted.

In terms of Missionary & Charitable Giving, through the huge efforts of many of volunteers our overall total was £15,969 – down 3k from previous year but have to bear in mind economic headwinds mentioned previously. We will be working with the Mission Giving committee to ensure that we maintain the focus and impetus in 2023 especially given the inflationary pressure / cost of living increase leading to local hardship and the Ukraine situation then all monies we raise will be important to the good causes that provide support. I will also be working with the PCC & new Rector to define usage on Rectors Discretionary Fund (£14,081) that is defined in the accounts as support for “alleviation of need”.

Key Finance actions undertaken to address our key challenges and support delivery of sustainable 2022 financial Performance:

- All Regulatory (incl Diocesan, HMRC & Charities Commission) returns up to date including recent completion & update of bank mandates & KYC Due Diligence process.
- Auditors have given us a clean report in the way that we are managing our finances and regulatory obligations.
- Comprehensive Treasurers Report prepared and discussed at every PCC meeting.
- As reported at last year's AGM we would review our Parish Reserves and Investment Policy. Important to note, that you can always get a better return somewhere else in the market especially if you are willing to put elements of your capital at risk. However, we agreed at June PCC to retain our reserves & investments with the CCLA due to:
 - Funds only available to charitable trusts closely connected with the Church of England – 60+ years of investing responsibly & ethically
 - No1 UK Charity Asset Manager (Charity Finance Survey 2021 & 2020) - £13.1bn assets under management
 - Aims to provide high level of capital security
 - AAf/S1 rated by Fitch

Our 2022 cashflow showed that we needed £539 per day / £16,415 per month to run our parish, this is a significant amount of money that we need to raise just to stand still. It is vital that we continue with focussed, disciplined management of our finances. In terms of operational cashflow, there is very little margin for error, every penny is used and if it is not used for day to day operations then we need to ensure it is only used to support the main good causes both at local and national level.

The PCC is still well endowed with both unrestricted & restricted funds as at 31 December 2022 and as highlighted, funds also exist for the maintenance of both churches. With that in mind, we have one potential large project under discussion at St Mary's – West Window – Sue Pounce again leading on this and we will take necessary advice and look for any possible grants to support. As we did with the Lighting and decorating projects, we will need to plan and scrutinise the scope, scale and timings to ensure their affordability in line with the many other calls on our resources.

In summary, 2022 was another challenging year. However, despite everything and with phenomenal support of our congregation we were able to show continued signs of financial stability & sustainability.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the support from Rev Jonny Rapson (great to have new rector finally on board), Rev Tim Barnard, Rev Sue Gill, Peter Clackett, Loraine Hollett, Clare Atkinson & Dorothy Potter who work so hard to support the parish finances. In addition, the Church Wardens, & Parish Secretary Steve Johnson for giving me the time at PCC to report, discuss & debate key financial challenges that we are facing. Thank You.

Should you have any queries concerning the contents of this review or should you have any general questions about the parish finances, please do not hesitate to contact me via mobile 07703 963990 or email at treasurer-pcc@outlook.com.

Graeme Coles - PCC Treasurer
April 2023

PLANNED GIVING 2022

THANK YOU. As a parish we are indebted to all those who give to the Church; no matter what your contribution all gifts together ensure that we are able to serve our community.

This year, we again have seen an increase in those making their regular gifts via standing order whilst cash collections have decreased. Many of those giving via standing order have been able to increase their personal contributions; this has gone a long way towards ensuring that the Church has been in a position to weather the financial storm which is affecting us all. If you don't give via Standing Order, both cash collections and the GoodBox machines at St Mary's and All Saints enable us to claim gift aid and this year we have been able to claim the maximum £8000 donations from the tax man via the Gift Aid small donations scheme. Gift aid added over £23,000 in total to our coffers this year and I make monthly claims to ensure that we are able to ensure that the money reaches our bank account in a timely fashion.

As ever, I will be letting everyone who makes a regular gift know the amounts that we have received and claimed in gift aid shortly after the end of the tax year in April. Please bear in mind that collating this information does take me a substantial amount of time and I therefore am not in a position to get it to you on 6 April! I will do my best to do this as quickly as possible, but please do bear with me.

I remain indebted to Loraine Hollett who banks all of the cash gifts we receive, something which is getting ever more difficult to achieve as we see the demise of the bank branches – it's all a real team effort.

Clare Atkinson 26 February 2021

2022 CHARITABLE GIVING COMMITTEE (CGC)

Annually, the Charitable Giving Committee (CGC) proposes charities that have connections with our local community and meet the agreed CGC policy criteria. These charities approved by our PCC are asked to report back on how the money is used. Copies of the Charities thank you letters are put up in both Churches.

2022 was a very successful year for our Charitable Giving. Over £7,000 was raised following a number of fundraising activities including a successful harvest lunch, a soup lunch, flower workshop, book and plant sales, loaning of equipment, Heritage Day and our annual Parish fete. Our Parish fete raised over £4,000 of this sum.

All monies raised were divided between four charities: Ukrainian appeal (Disasters Emergency Committee), the local Multiple Sclerosis society, Salt of the Earth in India and the Lynda Jackson Cancer Memorial Fund at Mount Vernon.

In addition, over £2,600 was raised from our Christmas services for Crisis at Christmas.

Steve Poulson our mission partner, continues as a beneficiary through our ongoing links with Street Kids Direct (SKD) and the Church Mission Society. Steve works with Duncan Dyason's charity, Street Kids Direct (SKD) based in Guatemala and Honduras. Funds received by Steve support a successful mentoring programme set up for vulnerable young children in Honduras.

In 2022, our Charitable Giving came to £11,753 and an additional £4,216 was collected from Special Services making a total of £15,969.

Louise Baneke and Petrina Clackett

February 2023

Church Warden report for 2022/23 APCM

When we reported nearly a year ago, we had just appointed our new Rector. It seems unbelievable that Jonny has been with us almost a year. We are so thankful that our prayers have been answered and we consider ourselves most blessed to have Jonny's ministry. Most of our services and former patterns of worship have been fully restored.

As always we are very grateful to Loraine Hollett who has regularly carried out risk assessments. We are thankful that God has sustained us, as a church community, during the period of interregnum. Jonny has energetically picked up and developed Pastoral Care within our church community and his work with children and young people is also blossoming. We thank Simon Hollett our children's worker for his faithful service. He has worked hard with the Rector to build this important part of our mission. Our Parish Harvest lunch in aid of Ukraine proved extremely popular as did the Rector's tricky quiz.

During the interregnum, and beyond we have continued to be blessed to have our Honorary Associate Rectors, Rev'd Tim Barnard, Rev'd Sue Gill and our Licensed Lay Minister Sheila Shield to lead our worship. Sarah Ainsworth-Coles, Mel Jackson and

Edward Brown, our authorised preachers, have also inspired us throughout the year and we thank God for them.

Under the leadership of Anthony Brown and Martin Pounce the streaming of church services has gone from strength to strength and we welcome Stephanie Shinner to the team. During the year the streaming platform has been changed and a Social Media policy and Streaming Policy developed. As ever our thanks go to the team and to Dan Solomon from Terry Tew of Sound and Light for his on-call support in times of need.

Our Director of Music, Edward McCall continues to develop the musical life of the church. Our organ scholar has played competently and confidently at several of our services. We hope to encourage others to come forward. The church choir continues to grow and the wide range of Anthems sung during communion and the monthly services of Choral Evensong together with the wonderful voluntaries and postludes from Edward enhance our regular worship.

We were able to hold our annual Parish Fete led by Martin and Loraine Hollett. This and the book and plant stall brought in substantial additional income for our charitable giving. We are delighted that the Team led by Martin and Loraine Hollett are planning for our fete this year to be held on June 17th.

We are again, both humbled and encouraged by the generosity shown towards St. Mary's over the past year. Without the financial support so generously offered by you, our church would simply not be able to function in the way it does. On behalf of the PCC, we would like to thank you all for your faithful on-going financial support of the work of our parish. With the help of generous donations from the Parish, we were able to get our new Rector to plant a tree in the churchyard to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.

We are pleased to report that the buildings and fittings are in good order. A quinquennial inspection took place in November 2021 and although no matters of utmost urgency were noted, all recommended issues have been dealt with. All the regular checks are up to date (gas safety, electrical report, lightning conductor, fire extinguishers etc), and the organ has been serviced and tuned as per contract. We had to replace several of the spotlights in the churchyard and these have been upgraded to energy efficient LED lights. We have also had security lights put in outside the vestry door and the door to the Parish Office. We are pleased to report that the security system of the roof alarm recently deterred would be lead thieves.

The "Curate's House" at Piggott's End is privately let as it is not currently required for a Curate and brings in a useful income for the PCC. The tenants found by Hadlands have extended their tenancy for another year and the PCC have agreed to this. Our thanks must go to Amersham Town Council which has the responsibility to maintain the Churchyard. They carry out their duties so well.

We would like to thank all PCC members for their commitment throughout the year. The working teams, Standing Committee, Staff Meeting Team, our Sacristan Loraine, and

Dorothy, our Parish administrator who all continue to maintain the working dynamic of the Parish. The smooth running of the parish is the result of the tremendous support and assistance received from the many helpers within our congregation and parish throughout the year. This is, as ever greatly appreciated and our thanks go to all who contribute to the Church services as well as the regular tasks of cleaning the brasses by Val Royal, flower arranging led by Jo Coldham, management of noticeboards both internal and external by Karen Martin, bell ringing led by Jan Galloway and Mathew Johnson, the choir under the leadership of our Director of Music, Edward Mc Call and the careful stewardship of our finances by our Treasurer, Graeme Coles and Assistant Treasurer Peter Clackett. We are grateful to Clare Atkinson who manages the gift aid envelopes and stewardship details for both St Mary's and All Saints Churches and to our Electoral Roll Officer, Sarah Ainsworth-Coles. The Church as we know it would have difficulty functioning without all this, often unseen, work and we are truly grateful to everyone involved in its running. We would welcome more volunteers. If you are interested, more details can be found on the website under the tab 'about us' or please come and talk to us. We are very grateful to Michelle Caternach who designed and maintains our parish website so efficiently.

On the evening of May 24th the church was packed for the service of Institution led by Bishop Alan. Jonny was presented to the parish by our Patron, William Tyrwhitt Drake and inducted and installed by the Associate Archdeacon of Buckingham, Rev'd Canon Chris Bull. It was a wonderful time for the Parish to welcome our new Rector Jonny and his wife Jenna. We continue to put our trust in God, praying for Jonny, Tim, Sue and Sheila and for Sarah, Mel and Edward our authorised preachers. We remain thankful for the great spirit and shared purpose shown in their ministry.

Susan Pounce and Valerie Simmonds February 2023

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH
WARDENS' REPORT 2023

The report this year, which relates to the year ended 31st December 2022, was partially influenced by the interregnum, however, in May we welcomed our new rector, Rev. Jonny Rapson, at his installation.

After the end of lockdown, the Church was fully opened for Sunday communion services, although we still continue to instinct wine.

WORSHIP:

The pattern of services has remained generally as in previous years, with, where possible, the addition of a number of themed services.

Our house group, which is very ably led by Audrey Tridgell, continued to flourish. They meet every Wednesday, with members from both churches, averaging a total of 11 attendees.

Coffee (and a chat), immediately after Sunday morning service, was re-instated last summer and remains a firm favourite.

SPECIAL SERVICES:

We held themed services to encourage particular groups of people from the village and Winchmore Hill to join us, and we especially welcomed the children. Additionally, an All-Age service has been initiated by the rector and this has proved to be a successful service.

The children from the village Church of England school and their families joined us formally twice in the year – for Harvest Festival, and Christingle services (with congregations of 156 and 103 respectively). They continue to prove a great success. In addition, the school children visited the church at the end of each term. As normal, Bibles were presented again to school leavers at the end of the summer term. Rev. Jonny Rapson now holds assembly in the village school each Wednesday during term.

During Passiontide and Easter, we held a number of special services; on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday and on the Tuesday of Holy Week an evening meditation - Compline for the Parish. There was also a special service of hymns, prayers, meditation, and the lighting of candles on Good Friday, together with our regular 9.00am morning service on Easter Day.

Unfortunately, due to the death of Queen Elizabeth our "Pet Service" had to be postponed for 2022. It is expected that a Pet Service will be held in 2023.

Other themed services included bees, patronal celebration, baptism renewal, Remembrance, and Mothering Sunday.

We continue to publicise the use of All Saints' for weddings and three couples used the church for their weddings in 2022. In addition, one funeral, with an interment in the churchyard and two further interments of ashes took place.

We ended the year with our festive services, including our crib service (attendance 52), Christingle service (attendance 103) and the well-attended carol service of lessons and carols (a total attendance of 62).

MISSION ACTION PLAN:

We continued to hold regular monthly prayer meetings in church. These were held on the first Saturday of the month. The number of attendees remains encouraging.

PASTORAL CARE AND OUTREACH:

The village school continues to maintain a close relationship with the church that has been further strengthened by our new rector.

The Magpie Club for pre-school children has restarted with weekly meetings in the Village Hall. On average 10 children and parents come each week for a chat and coffee.

The Patch system which is designed to support those who are ill or need company, and to welcome newcomers to the village returned to meetings, held twice a year.

ACTIVITIES:

Other activities, like the normal Christian Aid week collection, walk, breakfast etc., did not take place this year.

In January the "Flower Ladies", held a coffee morning which included a drink & cake, a raffle and a bring & buy sale. The income was shared, equally between the Flower Fund, the school and Christian Eye Foundation giving £300 to each.

In May the churchyard was used to host a plant sale with a donation made to the church.

FABRIC:

Running repairs were made to the Church during the year following the observations of the Quinquennial inspection which took place in May 2021. The report did not indicate any further items of concern, however we did raise two Faculties, both of which were approved: The first, for installation of emergency lighting in the church and the second for removal of asbestos like materials from the porch roof. We have now completed the removal of the asbestos like material and are awaiting the completion of the alternative roof lining. The emergency lighting is awaiting the return of our electrician. We expect completion within the first quarter of 2023.

A "Parishioner Church Clean" took place in June, which helped keep the church looking at its best. We plan to organise a similar clean in 2023.

PARISHIONERS:

All Saints' is a beautiful 1861 Victorian rural church, designed by GE Street, which plays an important part in the community life of the village and surrounding parish.

The Church Committee met on two occasions during the year to discuss the upkeep and daily running of the church.

There are many people with specific roles and talents who keep our church in an attractive, open, and welcoming state by giving generously of their time:-

- We are fortunate that our worship is enhanced by having a fine organ, a consummate Director of Music, Ruth Murphy, and a loyal band of faithful singers, although we are still looking towards anyone else who would like to sing.
- One of the glories of All Saints' is the colourful and artistic floral decoration organized by Rosemary Valentine and assisted by the flair and hard work of the team of talented workers.
- Chris Wege, as well as being the secretary to the Church Committee, devotes a great deal of time and care to the maintenance of the churchyard, including a redesigned flower bed, which is admired by local people and visitors alike.
- Peter Clackett, our All Saints' treasurer, is responsible for ensuring financial controls are in place. In 2021 plans were put in place, by the treasurers for St Mary's and All Saints', to strengthen these by the combination of the finances of both churches. This was completed in 2022 and now all financial matters are now being run collectively.
- Jane Stefanovic has continued her duties as cleaner, and works very hard to keep the building spotless, shining, and clean, this is greatly appreciated by worshippers and visitors.
- Paul Evans ensures that the church is both unlocked and locked with the church remaining open to all during the hours of daylight.

The list is not exhaustive, and we are fortunate to have such a faithful team of sidespersons, readers, choir, as well as those who prepare the church for services. We also need to thank our lay preachers, Mel Giddings, Anthony Brown and Sarah Ainsworth-Coles.

We must especially thank those parishioners who provide regular financial support to the church and have continued to do so. The money they so generously provide helps keep All Saints' open and in good condition.

We need to register our huge thanks to our all of our clergy, Jonny Rapson (rector), Rev. Sue Gill (associate rector) and Rev. Tim Barnard (associate rector) for spiritually guiding us through the year.

Finally, we would like to thank our retiring Church Warden, Howard Pool, for his support, enthusiasm and work for the church during his time as Church Warden.

Petrina Clackett

St Mary's CE Primary School Report

Governors 2023

Introduction

Jacqueline Rouse leads the Full Governing Body as Chair and David Pollitt supports as Vice Chair.

Edward Staite (Foundation Governor) and Chris Monnington (LA Governor) chair the sub committees – Teaching, Learning, Pupil & Community (TLPC) and Finance Premises and Personal (FPP) respectively.

Governing Body Structure

The Parish continues to have strong links with St Mary's School, with seven of the governing body's 12 members being appointed by the PCC or the Diocese of Oxford. All the Governors have also been in post for at least one academic year.

The Governors currently are:

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rev. Jonny Rapson | Ex-officio Governor | Ex-officio |
| Jacqueline Rouse | Chair | Appointed by the PCC |
| David Pollitt | Vice Chair | Parent Governor |
| Chris Monnington | Subcommittee Chair (FPP) | Local Authority appointed |
| Steve Johnson | Governor | Appointed by the PCC |
| Frances Ford | Governor | Appointed by the Diocese |
| Ed Staite | Subcommittee Chair (TLPC) | Appointed by the PCC |
| Prina Mistry | Governor | Parent Governor |
| Edward McCall | Governor | Appointed by the PCC |
| Shanta Gilliott | Governor | Appointed by the Diocese |
| Nicky Norman | Governor | Staff Governor |
| Julie Hills | Head teacher | Ex-Officio |
| Martin Pounce | Governor | Appointed by the Diocese |

Committees

The two main Committees continue to meet once a term:

- The Teaching, Learning, Pupil and Community Committee
- The Finance, Personnel and Premises committee

These committees continue to drive clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. Through these committee meetings the Head teacher is held to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and the FPP oversees the financial performance of the school making sure its money is appropriately spent. The outputs of

these meetings are then communicated to the wider Governing Body at the twice termly Full Governing Body Meetings.

Working groups are also formed to focus on particular issues which then report back to the Governing body. We currently have working groups looking at communication including the engagement of St Mary's Staff, Pupils and Parents. This is assessed through an annual engagement survey. There is also an additional working party this academic year to consider 150 year anniversary of the School.

Overview of 2022-23

The school was pleased to have been able to return school full time following the disruption in the 2020 & 2021 Academic years due to Covid-19. As with many other schools St Mary's not only faced a number of challenges through the lockdowns but also following this and a 'Bounce Back' plan has been put in place over the last academic year to support all pupils to get them back to the pre-covid assessment levels. This has been highly successful throughout the school which was evident through the assessments at the end of the 2021-2022 academic year. This continues this academic year.

The school continues with good academic progress and attainment generally and continues to offer a wide range of sports utilizing our Sports Premium. The school continues to partake in interschool competitions in various sports, with much success. Daily extra-curricular activities are part of school life and include football, cross-country, gymnastics, dance, netball and Choir.

Whilst the school continues to be challenged with regards to the restricted Budget the Parent Voluntary fund has continued to build positively and the Friends of St Marys have been very active in fund raising for the school. The Governing Body have continued to take every opportunity to make Parents aware of the Voluntary Fund which has proved successful and we continue to consider all additional revenue streams to support the school.

Our Glebe land project is now complete and has been formally named '**Rectory Meadow**' following a naming competition within the School. Rectory Meadow is used by the School for many activities including PE and the annual school sports day. The Governing Body are now considering how Rectory Meadow could be used as a source of revenue for the school and how it is offered out to the wider Amersham community for use.

Our Nurture group and breakfast club still provides a fostering environment for our pupil premium children and SEN where needed.

The Governing body continues to appraise the parents of the key focus areas for the Governors through a termly newsletter. Later this year we will be providing parents with an update on the initiatives associated with the Governor 5-year vision from the School Development Plan.

As detailed above one of the largest areas of activity for this academic year is the preparation for the celebration of the 150 year Anniversary of St Mary's school. The Governors have a working party which is creating a plan on how to communicate to and engage the staff, pupils and parents of the school but also the wider community. In addition the objectives through this academic year are to firstly, raise £150,000 for the

school and secondly, to enable it to become a sustainable school into 2024. There is much work to do in in this regards.

Finally, the Governors continue to support the School on enabling the children to achieve their very best in a happy and safe environment.

Jacqueline Rouse
Chair of Governors
March 2023

COLESHILL CHURCH OF ENGLAND INFANT SCHOOL
REPORT SPRING 2023

We are pleased to see the days getting longer and the first signs of Spring! Our Reception and Year 1 children have been wrapping up warm and attending Forest School weekly in our amazing Forest School area. We always encourage the children to see the beauty of our surroundings and we are certainly very lucky in that regard being located in the stunning Chilterns.

This term, our whole school topic is “Fire and Ice” and we have been learning about areas of the world and different climates. We also have several themed weeks including Children’s Mental Health Week, Science Week and our annual Spirituality Week. We are also planning to have a visit from our local fire brigade this term. We have celebrated Chinese New Year with the children and have a workshop in March to learn about Holi Day.

The children have enjoyed some inter-school sports festivals, such as the gymnastics, football and multi-skills which enrich the children’s experience at school. We also had an excellent whole school trip to Brooklands museum last term, where we learned about our “Travel and Transport” topic. The children were able to take part in a workshop to build a glider and were able to sit in a formula one car. They loved being able to board a couple of aeroplanes and thoroughly enjoyed the bus museum where they were able to explore old and new buses.

From 7th March, we are very pleased to announce that we will be hosting a toddler stay and play in our dedicated Forest School area, encouraging children and their families to share outdoor adventures through nature inspired activities, imaginative play, music, crafts and a large dollop of muddy fun! Each week there will be new activities set up for you and your children to get hands on playing, exploring and learning together. Invitations to explore always include the mud kitchen, diggers, dinosaurs and mark making. Hot drinks will be available for adults and a

snack is provided for the children. Activities are aimed at children aged 18 months – 5 years but all are welcome. Please look out for more information!

More details of how to book will follow soon. In the meantime you can contact Bizi on bizi@discoverysprouts.co.uk or 07766 755 859 with any questions and follow along with our adventures @discoverysprouts on Facebook and Instagram to see what you can expect.

One of our local parents, Stella Gittins has set up “Quack Snacks” duck feeding station at the school. Duck food is now available to purchase for 50p from the school porch which will be dropped into an honesty box. All proceeds go to the school.

During Lent, we encourage the children to think about how to behave towards others, to have good manners and to be particularly kind and caring towards one another. We have a ‘Child of the Day’ every day from each class. They wear a special rosette for the day and have special privileges, such as being a group leader, or being first to come in and out of the playground. Everyone has to say something kind to the Child of the Day to make them feel loved and special. We have our Mothering Sunday service at All Saints Church in Coleshill on 19th March and our end of term service on 31st March.

Looking further ahead to hopefully warmer weather, our annual May Fayre will be held in the school garden, weather permitting, on Saturday 20th May

Sarah Hewat
Head Teacher

SUNDAY SCHOOL AT ST. MARY’S

Sunday school at St Mary's Church has been taking place most weeks in the Drake Chapel. 39 different children have attended at least once in the past year, with an average attendance of just over 5. Here's what some of the regulars say about it:

“I enjoy Sunday School because it is fun”

“Sunday School is a great place to be. We play games and learn stories, it is really fun”

“Sunday School is a great place to learn about God and Jesus. It is a nice place where we worship God in a playful way. There are fun games which makes it more interactive and you learn more about Christianity at the same time.”

“Everyone is treated equally and we welcome new people”

Developments this year include a rota of adults (and a big thank you to all who are on it), monthly all-age services and holiday parties. 15 children, some of which were from All Saints, attended the Christmas party, with more sad they couldn't make it due to illness. At time of writing, I'm just starting to plan an Easter party which will be open to the wider community.

Simon Hollett

MUSIC AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH

I would like to start by recording my thanks to the choir, who give their time so readily week after week, especially when there is a more intense pattern of services. Their musical leadership elevates the sense of worship no end. I have been grateful for their support, both musical and personal during another busy year. There is such a warmth and collegiate atmosphere it always makes the time together so enjoyable.

The choir has enjoyed (I hope!) the various pieces of new repertoire that have been introduced. Thankfully, they are becoming accustomed to me throwing new music at them on a semi-regular basis. It is so useful for choirs to be able to sight-read with ease and makes the process of exploring new music even more enjoyable. As always, I am hugely grateful for the commitment choristers make on a weekly basis to support the worship.

Anne Weatherall and Miriam Richardson have settled into their new role as the choir Librarians, and encouraging us to return music, no mean feat for choristers (and Directors of Music!) who love to archive choral scores. Thanks go to them for enabling us to function so smoothly in this regard on a weekly basis.

We have been very fortunate to have been able to benefit from Adrian and Andrew playing on Sundays as need be. I am very grateful to be able to call on them and their willingness to support, especially at a time when Organists are in short supply. In a similar vein, Harry, who has gone from strength to strength has continued to gain confidence, not only as a soloist, but as an accompanist. He has taken to this role very ably and it is wonderful to be able to rely on his ability so that I can conduct from time to time whilst having such skilfully played organ accompaniment.

Within the coming months, we hope to launch a chorister recruitment scheme, focusing on the primary age group. It is so important to inspire and encourage children to sing, and by doing so, gives the opportunity to bring families into the church. We still have a commitment to restore and enhance the Organ, which struggles to project down the Nave when the church is full, as well as the flexibility to subtly accompany the choir and to adequately play more than a relatively narrow range of repertoire effectively.

As always, my thanks go to the clergy team, and Jonny in particular during his first year. His overt support of all things musical has been excellent and it will be a pleasure working through longer term plans to enhance the music to higher levels.

Some projects have been delayed this year and so once again, a personal thanks to the clergy and choir for their support during a particularly busy period outside of church. I am looking forward to dusting off my project files in the summer and cracking on with plans for the church Music Department!

Edward McCall

MUSIC AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Restrictions imposed because of the Covid-19 pandemic were gradually lifted.

The singing of the Communion hymn by the choir was re-introduced in July and the wearing of masks has now become quite rare. We do continue to intinct the bread in the wine at the Eucharist.

On 24th May we welcomed our new Rector, the Reverend Jonny Rapson, at the service for his Induction and Installation. The Parish choir of 18 choristers sang Wood's 'O thou, the central orb' during the service.

When a choir is requested for a wedding or funeral our two church choirs work to ensure a good attendance. These are welcome opportunities for us to get together.

We currently have seven choristers but, despite the small number, we continue to provide a full Choral Evensong each month.

New members would be very welcome so do please be in touch with me if you are interested in joining us.

Many thanks are due to the clergy for their support, to Gerard Anderson for playing the organ once a month and to Dorothy Potter for always ensuring we are kept in the picture.

Finally, and not least, I am grateful to all members of the choir for their continuing interest, support and good humour.

Ruth Murphy

Bellringers Report 2023

At last things are getting back to normal after 3 years of disruptions. Most of our ringers are back to ringing regularly for Sunday services and practice nights. We are still a bit rusty on more difficult ringing so we now have a special practice on the first Thursday of the month to ring more advanced methods. We are helped at this by several experienced ringers from around the area, who kindly come to help us.

During 2022 five quarter peals were rung by members of our band, sometimes with help from ringers from other local towers. One peal was rung by a visiting band. We had general ringing and a quarter peal for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and also for her funeral in September. This was quite interesting. We had been prepared for some time for the eventuality of her death. The protocol for the death of a monarch is for the bells to be fully muffled with the tenor open at backstroke so we had purchased extra muffles. We were also able to lend some of our old muffles to two other local churches so they could also ring fully muffled. The tenor bell was tolled the morning after the announcement of

her death and again on the morning of her funeral. On both occasions, we finished with “Last man standing” where we ring the bells in rounds and then stand each bell in turn until there is only one bell, the tenor ringing. We all find this very moving.

A quarter peal was also rung on the Saturday just before the funeral. This was rung by 6 friends who all had significant birthdays in 2022 and was to have been an 80th birthday complement to my husband, Stuart. Under the circumstances we decided that the quarter peal should just be dedicated to The Queen.

Another quarter peal was rung in September in memoriam of Hugh Neill, a former member of the tower.

The band were sorry to lose one of our very competent ringers during the summer when he and his family moved to Devizes.

On Heritage Day in September we had a stall on the high street and arranged for more than 40 people of all ages to visit the tower. As a result we had several people who were interested in having a trial to see if they would like to learn to ring, Three of them are still learning and we hope will be ready to join us in “Ringling for the King” in May for the coronation. We are still keen to recruit more learners, so if you would like to have a taster session, please contact me via the website. You will be made very welcome.

We continue to ring for several carol services in December and weddings throughout the year.

Following the quinquennial inspection, it was suggested that we clean the belfry, to see if there was any new activity from woodworm and such like. One Saturday morning in January, several ringers duly turned up at the tower with dusters, brushes and vacuum cleaners. Two of our younger members did a splendid job around the bells, climbing around the frame and under the bells, which had been rung down to make sure all was safe. Others thoroughly cleaned the ringing room, swept the stairs and redid the seals on the windows. There is much less draught now.

I would like to thank all the band for their support this year, and the PCC for allowing us to ring these splendid bells

Jan Galloway Tower Captain.

Sacristan's Report 2023

My third year in this role has seen many changes; we have welcomed Jonny as the new rector; we have introduced specific order of services during the liturgical year, for example at Advent; and we have returned to offering communion in both kinds.

As the church has continued post-Covid we offer a blend of church and on-line services, but with more services in church now and the attendances in church showing a steady return to levels similar to those pre-Covid.

The Christmas services in particular had congregations greater than those experienced pre-pandemic, with the crib service having around 30 children dressing up and taking part.

The candle stand continues to be well used by both visitors to the church and the congregation.

There are several people who regularly assist with the sacristy tasks associated with the smooth running of the services and the church in general and I am grateful for their support. Of course, there is always room for anyone who would like to join the team, either to cover a specific activity or just to provide an extra pair of hands. If you are interested, then please talk to me after the 10:30 service.

Lorraine Hollett, Sacristan

St Mary's Church Flowers

The flowers have been arranged by all the ladies in the Flower Group throughout the year for the Sunday services and for funerals and several weddings.

On Mothering Sunday bunches of flowers were again prepared for the children to give to their mothers and other ladies in the church.

We were able to go ahead with the giving of lilies at Easter in remembrance of loved ones which is much appreciated.

In May the flower group did special white arrangements for Jonny's Induction Service and the following week we held a successful flower workshop to welcome Jonny and to raise money for the Lynda Jackson Memorial Centre.

A special arrangement was done for the Queen's Jubilee weekend.

Special flowers were arranged in white purple and gold for the sad death of Queen.

Various groups in the church were again invited to decorate a window sill to symbolise Harvest Thanksgiving.

The annual lunch party was a great success again this year. It was held at Shan Pearce's house. It seems to be a popular event and gives everyone a chance to get to know each other and have a good time.

In December and February the flower group held a cake stall to raise money to fund the Flower Festival which will be held in September.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed in any way and would love to hear from anyone who might be interested in helping us in the Flower Group.

Jo Coldham, Flower Co-ordinator 01494-725284

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH FLOWER TEAM

2022 was a very enjoyable year for the flower team with the usual festivals and our special celebration for the Queen.

Our year started with filling the church for Easter with lilies in memory of loved ones with their names on an attractive poster in the church porch made by Jane McNeilly. The windowsills were decorated with vases of spring flowers and Kristina Saunders created a beautiful Easter table with crosses, moss and flowers.

Our fun came in June with the flower festival for Queen Elizabeth's platinum jubilee. The title CROWNING GLORY set the scene for crowns, tiaras, beautiful hats, head scarves, handbags, sashes and jewellery, anything the Queen might have worn, as props for our arrangements. There was an abundance of colour and original displays for visitors to enjoy before they joined the street party.

As part of our annual village show there was a competition judged by villagers for arrangements in soft shades in a variety of containers. Catherine Watts won the Jackie Ferguson cup with her arrangement in a green jug.

Also Catherine installed in the porch a giant harvest art poster created by the village school children as a backdrop for their miniature handmade fruit and vegetable display. We are so lucky to have the school's involvement in our festivals.

The team decorated the church in time for the Christingle service with greenery and candles giving the church a magical touch for all the Christmas services.

We are also grateful to Andrew Davies editor of the Coleshill Newsletter as he makes a point of adding several colour photos of our arrangements to add to Judi Herbert's flower team reports. In each newsletter she tries to encourage new members but sadly at the moment with little success.

Andrew also designed the poster for our annual fundraising coffee morning which was held in the village hall on January 16th with about 55 attendees. It was excellently organised by Judi Herbert who offered to take over when my husband became ill. They raised over £800 from a raffle, bring and buy and entry fees to include coffee and cake.

The flower fund, the village school, Parkinson's UK and OneCan food bank in High Wycombe each received £200, a very successful event.

We now prepare for Easter again asking for £5 per Lily this year as prices for flowers has increased again.

Rosemary Valentine

Sunday Morning Get Together after the 10.30 Service

Since resuming coffee after the 10.30 service in February 2022, we have been able to continue doing this with no more stoppages for Covid outbreaks, thankfully !

The numbers of people attending church, and coffee afterwards, have slowly increased as the Covid threat seemed to diminish, and I can report that we now serve the same number of people as we did before the stoppages.

As I write, we have a full complement of helpers, but if anyone feels that they could help, as a reserve perhaps, please contact me. New hands are always most welcome.

We have been spoilt once or twice this year, as there have been several cake stalls arranged by others for charitable purposes or for the flower festival, and we have been able to purchase homemade cakes and biscuits as a treat to consume with our coffee.

We cordially invite any new members of the congregation to join us after the service for refreshments and half an hour of socialising and meeting new friends.

All are most welcome!

Janet Clayfield February 2023

SIDESTEAM REPORT

The Sides team are a great group of efficient, happy and enthusiastic members of the congregation. Being on the Sides team is a nice way to get involved at St Mary's and to get to know people. We cover all services including special services and support the Verger role for weddings and funerals. Everyone on the Sides team works well together in a caring and supportive way with each typically on duty two or three times a quarter. The team has the important role of welcoming people to the Church and the feedback received shows how well this is received and appreciated.

We adopted some new ways of working to keep people safe but have retained the warm welcome for which we are known at St Mary's. Thank you for being such a great team and if you'd like to join the team please speak to Howard Hughes.

Members of the Parochial Church Council, 2022 – 2023

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Reverend Jonny Rapson | Rector |
| Reverend Tim Barnard | Honorary Associate Rector |
| Reverend Sue Gill | Honorary Associate Rector |

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Petrina Clackett | All Saints' Churchwarden |
| Howard Pool | All Saints' Churchwarden |
| Susan Pounce | St Mary's Churchwarden |
| Val Simmonds | St Mary's Churchwarden |

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Graeme Coles | PCC Treasurer and Deanery Synod |
| Peter Clackett | All Saints' Treasurer |
| Lorraine Hollett | Sacristan |
| Steve Johnson | PCC Secretary |

Lay representatives

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Clare Atkinson | Planned Giving |
| Mark Paton | Church Rooms and Data Management |
| Louise Baneke | Charitable Giving |
| Sarah Ainsworth-Coles | Lay Preacher, Electoral Roll and Deanery Synod |
| Clare Samuels | Parish Safeguarding Officer |
| Lucy Hann | Parish Website |
| Karen Martin | Information Management |
| Mel Giddings | Lay Preacher and Safeguarding |
| Neta Foote | Pastoral Support |
| Bart Schmal | Streaming, Insurance |
| Rebecca Benn | Social Support |

Our thanks to these members, and to Roy Evans whose health meant he stood down from PCC mid-year.