

Annual Report for APCM

Wednesday 14th May

Meeting is 7.30 pm for 7.45pm in Tring Church



Electoral Roll Report

This being a six year review we have seen a very significant decrease in our Team Electoral Roll. The decrease falls into several categories.

1. Those who have died
2. Those who have moved into care homes (often closer to family)
3. Those who have moved away
4. Young members of our congregation no longer living in the family home
5. Those who regularly attend but who forgot to re join the electoral roll (we shall slowly get them back on)
6. Those who have never attended so didn't re-join the electoral roll but we still have good contact with them and they remain supportive of the parish and those who have never attended and don't seem to have any contact with the parish (this is why there is a 6 review)
7. Those who still attend regularly but have made an active decision they don't want to be counted as a member of the Church of England in its current state (but are very happy to be part of our parish)

Finally there is a significant group which needs to be acknowledged.

8. Those who used to worship with us regularly and are still around but no longer worship with us. This is in line with much of the Church of England.

On a more positive note, this group is balanced by

9. A an equally significant group of new members who are playing a vibrant role in the life of our parish and we welcome them.

Deanery Synod Report

There have been three meetings of the Deanery Synod, each beginning with Holy Communion.

1. 18th June St Peter's Berkhamsted. Fr Stuart our new Rural Dean introduced himself and shared his experience as an Area Dean in London and asked us to consider how we could work together.
2. 6th November St Peter and St Paul Tring. We focussed on the Diocesan Year of Spiritual Renewal and Wellbeing. Revd Ollie Blease came and presented to us the work which he is coordinating (Ollie is Team Rector is Sarah's new parish) and Tim James presented to the Deanery the work which we are doing on promoting Quiet Days and creating a spiritual hunger. As part of the "business" we elected Edmund Booth to represent the laity on Diocesan Synod.

3. 12th February St Michael and All Angels, Sunnyside. We heard from local churches about how they are trying to improve their environmental impact. Sunnyside spoke to us about their building development. Little Gaddesdan spoke about their churchyard. From our parish Janet Reeve and Edmund Booth spoke about decarbonisation at Bishop Wood School, with a particular emphasis on the work being done with the children.

We also welcomed Reverend Ben Brady to the Deanery. Ben was installed as Team Vicar at Potten End on 15th June. Our new rural dean has been very keen for the clergy of the deanery to meet monthly for a meal. This has been successful apart from when Stuart was on extended study leave and we were left to our own devices and did not meet.

Consolidated Fabric Reports

ST. CROSS WILSTONE

Structurally St.Cross is reasonably sound but does suffer increasingly from damp during periods of prolonged cold wet weather. This is particularly noticeable in the Vestry and items likely to suffer in this environment are moved to drier areas for the duration of the winter.

There is evidence of paint flaking off the lower level of the East wall, but as this was never intended to be an outside wall the level of protection from the weather is limited. Once again, this may be due to an ingress of damp. The upper level of the wall is in good condition, including behind the Altar 'Curtain', an area that was recently checked for signs of deterioration. Wilstone has a very high water table, hence no burials in the church yard, and with climate change increasing, damp is likely to be an ongoing problem.

The annual Ecclesiastical Slips and Trips Review highlighted the need to make clearer definition of the steps in to the Vestry but everything else was fine. Although not mandatory this document is a very good check-list for every day risk assessment.

Sadly the candelabra, which hung from the roof rafters in the church, needed new fittings, but the cost of these and the expense of re-hanging proved prohibitive.

Still outstanding from the Quinquennial list of urgent needs is the repair of the bell turret. After an 18 month delay with S.K.Wright, despite accepting their quote, it has been decided to seek an alternative builder. Slates have fallen from the turret and during periods of heavy rainfall water leaks in to the church. The Friends of St. Cross had committed to fund this repair but resources are limited, so the new estimate is awaited with some concern. Hopefully the matter can be resolved fairly quickly.

Alison Cockerill

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, PUTTENHAM

All seems to have been good and, therefore, very little to report.

The stonework does not show signs of dampness and it still good after our latest major refurbishment/upgrade which covered two Quinquennials in one operation (Covid delayed the earlier Quinquennial)

The five-year electrical test was carried out satisfactorily, including having the spent chandelier light bulbs replace. These were LED bulbs, but their life span seems to have been quite short compared to the hours of being lit.

The heat pump for the underfloor air-source heating was also serviced and produced clean clear water which was good.

The organ was serviced and tuned and was given an improved report from last year, which again was also good.

All other "services" were given their regular check, i.e. fire extinguishers, lightning conductor and gutters etc.

The churchyard continues to look attractive, and our thanks must go to the Puttenham Trust who fund the upkeep of the grass, hedges etc.

We are also grateful to the Puttenham Trust for covering the cost of our £7000 deficit to the Tring Team Parish in last year's budget, together with all the quinquennial repairs costs. Having the benefit of the Trust means that we do not have any financial worries for repair/upkeep costs etc.

Christine Rutter, Churchwarden

St John the Baptist

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

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

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

Significant actions arising:

1. Quinquennial report dated 2022

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

- A couple of stone blocks were rotating in the inner doorway between the church and Chapter house. They were pinned in / lime pointed as follows;
 - o Remove damaged / loose stone at base of chapter house door, repair damaged cavity, repair stone, refix with two steel dowels, lime mortar around as specified in the Quinquennial.
 - o On other side of door, refit stone that had been poorly repaired previously and refit with single steel dowel.
- There were also some minor lime render repairs in the church
- The eye bolt was fixed into the stone pocket above the Chapter House door as follows;
 - o Extract old lead from overhead eyebolt holder, treat eyebolt with rust inhibitor, refix with modern resin (hot pouring lead wasn't a viable option)
- Parvis roof hole – inspection & work ongoing
- Wall plaster spalling – advised to leave & monitor for now
- Chapter house entrance floor tiles – Option to dig up and check if we have a leaking pipe by the chapter house door and to repair floor there – see damp report in section 1.1
- Majority of lamps changed to LED, e.g. all spotlights along the Nave at high level
- Aisle roof leaks – using drone investigations, noted previous damage during attempted theft of church led;
 - o Initially a temporary mastic repair to stop the leaks
 - o Checked if you can you braze / weld on copper patches to copper roof sheeting
- Discussions held on use / inspection of SmartWater for led sheets identification as a small deterrent for theft (has previously been applied ~20 years ago).
- Chapter House WC repaired & new water heater fitted

1.1 Tower damp survey report

Recommendations issued;

Phase A:

- Carry out repairs to aprons
- Lift and rebed staffordhsire blue channels bricks bedded back in a sound haunch base, and point, to ensure free flowing rainwater collection
- Renew all six gulleys with heavier duty (not domestic) grilles, and add in silt trap buckets, that would be lifted out at times of maintenance
- Gully G4 at base of tower to be opened up to see where it feeds to – it used to be at the base of a pipe down from the Tower roof. It is debatable whether a downpipe should be installed against the north Tower wall down to this gully, but given the reasonably small roof area that discharges from the projecting roof castellations we would suggest make sure the lower apron channels are overhauled to collect water off to the rebuilt nearby gully G5.

- Where rainwater pipes RWP1 and RWP2 are located form a direct gully below them with an upstand – connect these two new gulleys to the as existing surface drains nearby:

This enables all the north and south aisle rainwater disposal to go straight into the ground drainage and not be spread over failing aprons and localised ground, soaking the walls of the church.

Phase B:

If soakaways are on the point of blocking this would then start to show, as the new improved grilles and silt traps would also start to back up.

Most of the surface water pipes are actually draining away still and not fully clogged with debris, as yet. However, concerned that gulleys G5 and G6 when opened up locally might show up silting pipes.

So, suggest a minimal intervention strategy - ie try and stop the ground being soaked and with good channels and new gulleys (fully protected against silting up) then the balance may be restored.

If new drain pipes off to new soakaways need to be installed then they can be effected using new harvester crates in the (good free draining) soil – this work would be quite invasive in the surrounding graveyard and would need to be carefully planned and investigated in detail, with a designed out plan and specification of the works required, as well a faculty and archaeologist to hand when the work is effected.

SUMMARY:

The report recommends a two phased approach.

The next stage would be to do a detailed specification using the research carried out to date to see building prices. Our suggestion would be to a specification to include two new soakaways, and have priced as Phase A and B – if after gulleys are properly taken apart it is found one or two soakaways are needed then the cost of which will be know at the outset, so a contingency fund is known / ie maximum expenditure before the initial Phase A only order is placed.

- the damp by the internal door leading into the chapter house where the lifting tiles are is an isolated issue, which SK Wright has been asked to open up and review. Will Yendell has done the stone repairs to the sides of the door & will chase up Steve to see if he can effect the repairs to the floor early in January
- Next step to “go ahead and specify work around the Tower” and then go out to tender on the full works, but split into phase A & B costs as noted in the report

- When the tenders are back the Church can then apply for a faculty, inc. applying for a grant from the Diocesan “stitch in time” grants, where the Church may be eligible for 50% of the project as long as it is under £10k

Note: FOAC was asked to dedicate a volunteer to check the gulleys both sides of the chapter house regularly, and are always clear of vegetation and sodden leaves, to ensure during flash flooding water isn’t allowed to stand around the base of the walls.

Ground level gutters all around the church cleared in March.

2. General Fabric items (not QQ related)

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

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

Review held with Ecclesiastical Insurance to discuss;

- A discussion around the usage of buildings and activities on site.
The points raised were about attendances and activities etc specific to SJB. This included the use of the Chapter House and the Churchyard.
- Risk assessments
Discussed risk assessments. Only one issue cropped up on Fire Risk - EIG have had claims from people who have slipped/tripped when participating in Fire Evacuation Drill. Mr Peters said there was no requirement on the part of EIG for evacuation drills to be carried out.

Records of routine inspection and maintenance of the buildings and grounds, including:

- Date of last fixed electrics inspection (‘5 year inspection’)*
Details taken from Maintenance Log
- Lightning conductor maintenance
Explained that as Team this was centrally managed
- SmartWater and protection of external metals
Unknown if we had registered SJB for Smart Water. However the key issue raised was on having a roof alarm. Although the cost of the roof metals was estimated by Mr Peters as about £250,000, plus costs of refitting, payment for loss or damage was restricted to only £7,500 because there was no roof alarm. This would be raised in the report together with potential suppliers and possible grant providers
- Types of heating installed on site (e.g. gas, oil, electric) and details of maintenance/service arrangements
SJB details provided from Maintenance Log
- Asbestos Management
Happy with arrangements
- Health and Safety Policy
Took details from latest H and S policy approved by PCC. No issues arose.

General fabric maintenance dates;

- Aldbury electrical testing done in March 25 by GH electrical
- Gutters – to be undertaken in Sept or Oct

- Clock was looked at in March 25 – Church clock repairs undertaken following maintenance visit
- Lightning Conductor check is due Oct 25
- Sound system requires checking – seeking an ‘expert’ to advise.
- New lock for the ladders to keep them secure in the bell tower.
- Installation of new thermostat in November 2024.
- Looking at a new handrail for support up the steep steps to the bell ringing area.
- Major church spring clean held in March over 2 days – both high level & low level cleaned.

2.1 EcoChurch

Energy matters passed on to Barbara Anscombe, to contact the energy supplier to check if it's their green tariff or not for current contract.

Re LED lighting, ALL bulbs in the main church are now LED. Once the bulbs in the Chapter House require break / fix, we will replace all with LED, but not before then due to cost (~£250). Hence unable to achieve Silver rating just yet.

Note: Smart thermostat to optimise the boiler/heating operation installed. There is now a single thermostat controlling both time and temperature located in the Leeds Chapel. It will keep church overall at 7 degrees all the time. It will turn on Sundays from 6am to 16 degrees till 11am.

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

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

3. Work Packages – defining a process to follow

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

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

4. Church Welcoming

Rear of church & entrance – enlivening the entrance area. Quotes were received from 3 contractors, all within the available legacy fund. M.Batram instructed SK Wright to undertake the work.

Completed works are excellent and surpass the vision & aims for this area.

Reordering costs:

Main Contractors tenders:

£ 13,115+vat - Temple Complete

£ 13,700+vat – Roberts Carpentry

£ 9,914+vat – SK Wright

Projected costs;

£ 10,024+vat – SK Wright

£ 9,630+vat – Finesse of Thame

£1,340+vat – Paul Elliott

£ nil cost – AH Joinery

£2,353.25 – Dan Floors

Total; £23,347.25+vat

Notes:

- ~£3k under budget

- £185+vat of nave roof temporary repair in SKW invoice

Investigated BREEAM assessment for Welcoming Project but was cost prohibitive.

Pews carefully removed & offered to the community (x4). All were taken & re-housed (many were in a very poor state of woodworm decay!). Bookshelves also re-housed after some efforts to find owners.

5. Churchyard & hedges

- Cleared branches away from Chapter House gutters and low hanging branches overhanging the road & road signs
- Formal tree survey conducted in September (Colin Chambers). Discussed an appropriate replacement for the purple leafed struggling Purple Cherry Plum tree. A grant application was submitted to the parish council for this work. Further tree survey held in February with only 3 minor amber works classification (for trees T013, T019 & T021). Pruning required with a ground based pole saw. Any branches impeding the highway will also be addressed.
- Sought to update the 2015 version of the StJtB graves list – ongoing.
- Churchyard working parties held throughout the summer with a wider community engagement event arranged in August and a bonfire to clear all the cuttings in September. A grant application was submitted to the parish council for a contractor to come in & clear up the graves areas. David Gooch was instructed to do this work. Grass cutting may come under the parish council's responsibilities in future.

- Members of the community have offered to 'own' a patch of the churchyard to keep it cleared.
- Further churchyard working parties held in November (23rd & 30th).

6. Fabric Overview

Highlighted items to be confirmed.

Maintenance Item	St John the Baptist, Aldbury
Quinquennial	Sept 2022 (next one due 2027)
Quinquennial done by:-	Batram Associates
Major projects	Entrance opening up/welcoming scheme
Sum insured	£4,423,247
Listing status	Grade 1
Insurer	EIG
Current premium (2012)	£2,475
Fire extinguishers	
- Contractor	Complete Fire Protection
- Date last serviced	8.10.24
Electrical test	
- Contractor	G H Electrical
- Date last serviced	26.3.25
Gutters cleaned	Clive Welling – 28.2.25 Ground level gutters cleared by Jane Brown 5/2/25
- Contractor / church	Clive Welling
- When does it get done?	On a defined basis TBA with FOAC
PAT testing	
- Contractor	Seaward Electronic Limited (via Tring Team)
- Date last serviced	5/9/24
Spring Cleaning	
- Contractor / church	Church
- When does it get done?	Every 1 - 2 years!
Organ Tuning	
- Contractor	Andrew Stevens

Maintenance Item	St John the Baptist, Aldbury
- Date last done	Aug 24
Boiler Service	2 boilers in vestry and 1 in Chapter House serviced
- Contractor	Brad Sinfield
- Date last done	31/1/25
Tree inspection	
- Contractor / church	Colin Chambers
- Date last done	Jan 13 2024 (follow up survey/work in Spring 24)
Emergency Lighting	Tested 26/3/25
Asbestos	Asbestos survey & removal on 26/03/2019 Document check 31/1/23
Tower clock	Repair to winding mechanism and service
- Contractor	Smith of Derby
- Date last done	17/2/25
Lawn Mowers	
- Contractor	George Browns Ltd
- Date last done	Ride-on mower & Mountfield push mower bought 4 & 10/4/24
Lightning Conductor	Annual Test
- Contractor	Roddells
- Date last done	Due 2025 (via Tring Team)

All Saints Long Marston Fabric

The church is still standing, if not exactly upright. We have had visitations from just about everyone at the Diocese to look at the building

- Emma Critchley – secretary to the DAC. Emma brought with her a consultant architect / structural engineer who reviewed Mark Battram’s Quinquennial survey and commended it as a very pragmatic document.
- Liz West – Church Buildings Maintenance Officer
- Ann Wise – Historic Church Buildings Support Officer.
- The Venerable Charles Hudson – Archdeacon.
- Kate Marchant – Historic England

No practical help has been forthcoming from these visits.

There is now a committee of villagers who are working on keeping the Old Tower going. They are working with the diocese on this, and keeping me in the loop.

St Peter and St Paul

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

Structural Issues

Repairs to the tower were commenced from late 2024, with scaffolding erected in October 2024. A review of a preliminary repair schedule was carried out with a specialist lead contractor and masonry expert in attendance.

The stone castellations were found to be generally structurally sound, however about 20% of the joints required lime repointing to make them safe.

Code 6 lead sheeting was used for the stair turret coverings (a heavy-duty lead sheet that is used to protect buildings that are subject to severe weather exposure). For flashings and small lengths Code 4 lead was used. All leadwork was installed to conform to the Lead Contractors Association guidelines and all lead used conformed to BS EN12588 (Lead and lead alloys. Rolled lead sheet for building purposes)

Missing mortar between stone castellations and stone to flint junctions, where there is a greater than 5mm gap, was repointed using a 1:3 binding agent (3.5 Astier hydraulic lime) to aggregate (a well blended mix of sharp sand well washed and graded). Any defective pointing in the way was removed carefully using hand tools to a minimum depth of 20mm. Joints smaller than 6mm wide were filled with prepared lime putty.

At the East End, structural engineers recommended the installation of a Cintec anchor. A faculty application was recently applied for.

Roof

Leaks to the roof and its general condition continue to be a concern. A leak in the turret roof and main roof tower above the bells required urgent maintenance, which was part funded by the Parish Grants committee who provided a grant of £2,750.

Aside from repairing the leaks, the main aluminium roof is coming to the end of its design life, and significant sums of money will be needed to carry out urgent pre-emptive repairs to our heritage building.

Heath & Safety

Extension leads were PAT tested. The Audio System has not been PAT tested but as fixed equipment will be included in the next scheduled 5 yearly test.

Further proposals for installation of a handrail to the staircase in the bell tower were considered, but were considered impractical given the lack of available room and the suitability of fixings for the wall type.

Re-ordering

Proposals for church re-ordering have been considered and consultations were undertaken with various bodies including the Victorian Society, the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings and Historic England.

The feeling by these groups was that proposed changes should be phased to allow time to demonstrate that it was all going well. There was also scepticism regarding the inclusion of the mezzanine. The Victorian Society were also against the pews coming out. The option of putting some of the side pews into the Chancel was discussed and leaving some of the main pews around the centre aisle.

A redundant lectern that was stored by the high altar was removed and sold at auction raising approximately £1000.

Organ

An electric organ was installed at the end of 2024. The old organ remains in place until a faculty can be agreed for it's removal and disposal.

Church WIFI

Proposals were obtained via Parish Buying from Daisy Communications for high speed Wi-Fi in church, with installation in April 2025.

Churchyard

A Church Working Party was held in September 2024. Approximately 12 people attended and much of the over grown hedgerows at the sides of the church grounds were cleared.

Following a grant application, the DAC approved (case ref 032621-0724J), the installation of a cast iron bollard to be painted with black rust resistant paint, like the one shown right, housing a twin 13 amp RCD protected socket with 100m of steel wire armour cable. This was installed in 2025. The lockable electric outlet improve safety as it will avoid the need for trailing power cables across the churchyard during outdoor events and services.

Consolidated District Churches Report

ST. CROSS WILSTONE

After a couple of polite but critical comments in successive Archdeacons Reports following the annual Visit, we are pleased to report that all the Registers and Documents relating to St. Cross, which should have been deposited at the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office many years ago, are now in their safe custody. The oldest document, dated 1873, related to the proposed establishment of the church, the newest the minutes of the DCC in 2012. The Diocese is very keen that as much as possible should be sent to HALS, as modern media and communication means so much of current church life is no longer in written format.

To commemorate the service of a long standing member of the congregation and DCC, the Friends of St. Cross purchased two sets of Communion Linen. This was a first for Wilstone, as existing linen had originally come from other churches.

Weekly services continued, alongside seasonal ones for Harvest and Christmas, and we are really pleased that people of other denominations and faiths joined us, an example of commonality as an antidote to the troubles of the world.

St. Cross once again hosted a Lent Lunch, which was well supported by the village, and provided a means of outreach and support to connect with other churches in Tring and raise funds for Christian Aid. We would like to record our thanks to Wilstone Village Hall Committee, who continue to provide the Hall free of charge for this event.

St. Cross is open every day and many visitors comment on the peace to be found within the building. Many thanks are due to Olga Martin for undertaking this daily task, and also for supplying the candles for the Votive Candle Stand, probably the most popular and important non-essential item the Friends of St. Cross ever purchased.

General cleaning, and deep cleaning, continued last year, focusing on the altar and the vestry. Mercifully the annual invasion of Cluster Flies did not materialise but carpet moth proved a problem and required several treatments to control numbers. Cedar wood discs are now in place around the edges of the carpet, to hopefully repel further problems.

Thanks go to everyone who helps maintain and look after St. Cross, and especially to the clergy, who understand the congregation so well and encompass their faith in the different services each week.

Alison Cockerill

ST PETER AND ST. PAUL TRING

We had a new 'Makin' digital organ installed in early November. Further rebalancing has taken place to adjust the speakers. Everyone seems to be very positive about it. Cliff continues to welcome any comments or questions about it.

We also have a new card reader which makes it easier to apply Gift Aid.

There was scaffolding around the tower for work to fix the turret on the roof, which had been discovered to be leaking.

In November we held a parish study soup lunch discussion on assisted dying, led by Sarah Stanley, prior to the assisted dying bill debate in Parliament. 'A truly exceptional conversation about dying' was how Huw reviewed it.

Our Youth Cafe (and some more mature friends) slept out for Dens, on a particularly horrible night, raising over £6600.

In February we observed Candlemas with a Festival Evensong led by Richard Grylls.

In March we held curry and Quiz night in Tring, which was very successful and raised over £1000, and will hope to become a regular event.

Vestry repairs, including underpinning and flint work is needed and will be carried in in due course.

In March, following a meeting with Bishop Alan, we had Archdeacon Charles Hudson to a Q and A session with regards to safeguarding concerns and how we can be reassured that matters will be dealt with in a timely and appropriate way.

Mothering Sunday services were held, including a new reflective 6pm service.

Gill Kinsey, Churchwarden

St Mary's District Report

This year we were taking part in the 3-village combined Easter services. St. Mary's was responsible for the Good Friday service. Our faithful core congregation were present with one representative from Wilstone (Alison). The following week was our regular Evensong Service.

At our district AGM last Monday, it was noticed that part of the base of the sanctuary wall had developed "a bright fresh green growth" about 18" long. This is the higher part of the floor and not served by the underfloor heating. It is not visibly attached at the immediate floor level to the floor, and so a thorough external investigation is needed. Hopefully, it will be a simple problem, easily solved, but at the moment, it is literally a case of watch-this-space!

Christine Rutter

St John the Baptist Aldbury

Reordering

A key feature of this year has been the removal of 7 pews (or half-pews) from the SW corner of the church to create a 'welcome area'. Work started in September and was completed with an accessible ramp, new carpet, noticeboards and oak cupboards in place in time for Christmas. A table and chairs for this area are currently on order. Chairs brought in from the Chapter House have accommodated occasional extra demand satisfactorily. The work is generally considered a great success. The work has been fully funded by a generous legacy in memory of Katherine Allsworth.

Services

In addition to the weekly Sunday services, special services this year have included: our Patronal Festival, Harvest Festival; All Souls; Remembrance Sunday attended by 120; a 'Messy Church' Christingle attended by 60; Christmas services with record attendances (180 in the Carol service, 210 at the Crib service and 80 at Midnight Mass), including the Tring Station Iron Room Carol Service; Mothering Sunday with posies for all; well attended Holy Week services, especially the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday (40) and the Easter Sunday service (64).

DCC

The DCC has met 4 times over the year including the Team meeting with Archdeacon Charles in April, and the Annual District Church Meeting will have been held on 11th May.

Study groups

In Advent a group in Aldbury was led by Jill Timms to follow the BRF course 'Embracing Humanity' and in Lent we began a study of the Church of England course on The Lord's Prayer which will continue throughout June.

Young people

Sunday Club happens in the Chapter House on 2nd Sunday of the month during the morning service. 20 children are now registered; typical attendance is 5-10. Children's craft activities are offered during services on 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays in the Leeds Chapel. Thanks to Jane Banister for resources.

Muddy Church, an after-school club at the primary school, has led 4 Worship For All services. There have been 6 Aldbury School services in church over the year, and classes make visits as part of the RE curriculum. The display in church of children's work reflecting on aspects of faith is regularly updated.

Outreach

Events linking church with community include Patronal Festival BBQ, Bike and Hike, an Advent concert, Carols on the Green, Carols in the Iron Room (Tring Station) and pancake races.

Tuesday Morning Coffee is mainly attended by bellringers with 5 regular members from the community, and raises regular funds for the church.

Aldbury Toddler Group usually meets twice a month in the Chapter House, organized by Vicky Album.

A Welcome Pack Group has put together an envelope of local information and greetings which is handed to new residents in Aldbury and Tring Station, if we hear of them.

Giving

Regular pleas have been posted again this year in Aldbury Outlook asking for financial support across Aldbury and Tring Station. Funds for the Team have been raised at May Fair 2024 (£1900) a funeral in November and Carols on the Green (£166) for the church. May Fair 2025 will have raised more than last year. Other initiatives in the year have raised funds for RBL and DENS.

The Friends of Aldbury Church continue to provide valuable support. Trustees are currently Tony Tollinton, Neil Capp and Annie Eggar.

Eco-Church

In June we all had the opportunity to take part in the Count on Nature survey in the churchyard, and materials from that survey have been on display in the church since then. Work continues towards obtaining the A Rocha UK Eco Church silver award, working as part of the Tring Team Eco-Church group.

Fabric

Ian will deal with Fabric separately but, in addition to the new welcome area, a highlight for me has been the Big Spring Clean at the end of March. The last time we did this was 2018 so it was much needed and was carried out over two days by nearly 30 volunteers from across the community.

We now have a new thermostat, a new 'Church Open' A-board and the noticeboard next to the school drive has been repaired. Clock maintenance is now under an annual service contract with St Peter & St Paul. The chime mechanism has had a major repair. We have had to replace the instant hot water heater in the Chapter House, and the leaking toilet has been repaired.

Churchyard

Facebook and Outlook pleas to tidy the churchyard have effectively mustered volunteers from the village for a summer twilight scything party, bonfire groups, and 2 working parties in November for hedges and low-level gutter clearance. An Aldbury Parish Council grant will pay for the clearance of the overgrown area of very old graves to the west of the church which will be completed this week. 17 volunteers from across the community have come forward to adopt an area of graves for regular maintenance; there are 6 areas still to be adopted. The cost

of the regular mowing by Duncan McDermott is again partially covered by an annual grant from Aldbury Parish Council.

A spreadsheet showing the location of every grave has now been completed.

Music and bells

Jackie Robinson continues as regular organist with Tim French standing in when needed. The Festival Choir sang at Carols by Candlelight and many local musicians took part in the Advent concert. Our bellringers ring every Sunday with 2 mid-week district sessions and novice training on Saturday mornings. The bells are also often rung by visiting towers.

Rotas

for different roles are working well for flowers, coffee, altar linen and reading and intercessions, but we still need helpers on cleaning and serving. Thanks to Tim James for helping out as server.

Jane Brown, Churchwarden 1/5/25

All Saints Long Marston

It has been a quiet year. There are regulars at both the monthly 10am and 6pm, but it is difficult to develop further. Several regulars and supporters have moved or are moving away. There is a slow increase in the three villages supporting each other at services.

Judith is still doing a fantastic job of managing cleaning volunteers, and being the local person on the ground.

School services happen about twice a term, and are enjoyed by the children and on the whole well attended by parents.

Canon Jane Banister

PCC REPORT

The PCC has met 5 times since the last APCM in 2024. The PCC consists of the clergy, some of the lay ministers, the churchwardens, the Deanery Synod reps and the elected members from the district churches.

The subjects that are always on the agenda are updates about finance, reports from each of the five district churches, safeguarding and approval of faculties and other permissions. Generally we have a report from the EcoChurch group who are working on the next level of accreditation for A Rocha EcoChurch awards.

Faculties are permissions from the Diocese to do work on the church buildings and have to go through a process of approval, sometimes quite lengthy. We also have to approve applications for reservation of grave and ashes plots, and we have to give approval for some events on our land.

Annually we approve the church governors for our church schools and actively seek out new ones when replacements are needed. We review Health and Safety procedures and GDPR breaches if any. We approve the accounts and financial report before it is presented to the APCM.

Most of our discussions are wide ranging. This last year we have among other things:

Reviewed what we do at major festivals and Huw reports of items of interest. We keep abreast of actions and initiatives in the Church of England and St Albans Diocese and how these will affect our church life.

Spent a lot of time discussing the re-ordering of Tring Church and we've been updated on all the relevant meetings that have already been happening as we discern the vision going forward.

Discussed the purchase and installation of the new organ at Tring and the need for the old one to be removed.

As a result of the failures of Safeguarding in the church of England, John Whiteman and Linzi James requested a meeting with the Bishop of St Albans and following that meeting, Achdeacon Charles Hudson was invited to an open meeting to talk about safeguarding, women in the church and other frustrations that we have with the diocese.

Although we have the mandatory things we have to look at, our meetings are lively, interesting and informative with lots of ideas coming out as we seek to Live God's Love in our churches and communities. Come and join us and stand for election!

Janet Goodyer, PCC secretary.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

Jeremy Hirst

Tring Team Parish Safeguarding Officer

Jon Reynolds

Assistant Tring Team Parish SO

Malcom Nobbs

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

- All our documents pertaining to Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults are up-to-date.
- A Parish Statement on Domestic Abuse is in place.
- The list of qualified first aiders displayed in St P&P, has been amended to include details of the nearest defibrillators – on the Vestry Hall wall, in the New Surgery (when open) or locked up outside the police station.
- Could Wardens check if a list of first aiders is displayed in all churches and let me know.
- Our training record as a parish is good so I am now concentrating on renewing or acquiring a DBS for PCC Members and others involved in regulated activities. The Ministry Team DBSs are up to date. Three non-Ministry Team DBSs have been completed so far, others are in process. Once you have completed the online form you need to show proofs of identity to Malcolm or myself within 14 days. Details are in the accompanying documentation.
- Tring Parish has been promoted from Level 2 to Level 3 on the Safeguarding Dashboard! This means that as I have filled in lots of details about training etc I am now entitled to feed in even more.

Jon Reynolds

Parish Safeguarding Officer 07712 134370 safeguarding@tringteamparish.org.uk

Health and Safety and GDPR

The PCC has focussed on ensuring that our risk assessments are up to date for all activities involving young people and or vulnerable adults, along with safer recruitment processes and job descriptions. We will then turn to reviewing all other Health and Safety policies.

There have been no breaches of GDPR in the past year.

Churches Together in Tring

The Chair role has been handed on from Val Carr to Jane Banister.

We are continuing with the regular events in the diary, but not adding any more to the calendar.

Each church held a Lent lunch, but this will probably be changed for next year, as some had very few attendees.

The Good Friday Walk of Witness went very well: many thanks to Janet, Paul and the stewards, and Barney for all they did.

High Street Baptists organize a stall at the Carnival last year and will do so again this year.

The ministers are trying to meet regularly! Rev Rachael Hawkins is moving on the summer and her successor has been appointed.

Jane Banister

Chaplaincy Report

Tring School Chaplaincy Report for APCM May 2025.

The Chaplaincy in Tring School has continued to flourish this year as we work with this Church of England school of approx 1500 students and 200+ staff to:

- support the school in embodying its Christian ethos
- support the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of students and staff
- offer opportunities to worship and explore faith
- encourage students to connect with their spirituality
- build on the relationship between school and church

Ways we have achieved that this year include -

- leading weekly Collective Worship. We provide a recorded Collective Worship each week which is shown during Monday morning Tutor time. In addition, once every term we lead an in-person collective worship for each house, these now include intercessions requests made the week before by students and staff. Requesting intercessions has been a popular addition with a large number of prayer requests from across the school community for world issues as well as personal and school related concerns.
- leading the whole school in an end of term Christmas service in St Peter & Paul's (actually 4 services across one morning to fit everyone in)
- Leading Easter services for year 7s and 8s
- facilitating year 7 visits to St Peter & St Paul's for their extended learning day focusing on PRS (Philosophy and Religious Studies, previously called RE)
- Jane is leading a group of year 12s and 13s in Critical Thinking sessions
- Hosting and leading the school's carol service at St P&P, now combined with the church's carol service.
- Leading weekly morning prayer for staff.
- Delivering some of the Life Skills curriculum: sessions on Grief and Loss to all Year 7s and Year 9s, Family breakdown to all year 8s.
- Working with the Leadership Team in assessing and exploring further ways in which the Christian ethos of the school is embedded in the whole of school life, and so assisting the school in delivering the requirements measured by SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools).

- Being a Christian presence during the school week.
- Providing pastoral support to staff and students.

Michelle and Jane

Eco-Church

The key role of this team has been to register all of the districts onto the ECoChurch accreditation system however it has been slow going. The delay has in part with the challenges of collecting data on all of the churches and other buildings plus their services, I.e. water, electricity, gas, etc... most of which we now have, but more with the change in the way the accreditation data is documented in the remodelled survey which is the subject of outstanding questions raised with the A Rocha Eco Church team.

In the meantime we have been raising the profile of the ecological credentials of the Parish, in what we do within our buildings, churchyards and in our homes.

Key areas of activity have included:

- > Participation in initiatives like the Great Big Green Week and taking part in Count on Nature which will be repeated this year.
- > Reducing the use of pesticides and harmful cleaning products.
- > Management of the area behind the church? Cutting/scything and raking off to discourage coarser grasses and encourage biodiversity.
- > Use of reusable products including the wreaths placed on the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday.
- > Use of recyclable products like paper cups when washable ones are not appropriate.
- > Use of alternatives to Oasis when arranging flowers and sourcing sustainable flowers wherever practical.
- > Investigating alternative banking arrangements to move from those supporting fossil fuels. with good policy and practice on environmental issues.
- > Identifying potential speakers to lead Parish wide discussions on church and environmental issues which we hope will become at least an annual event.
- > Making sure our congregations are aware of opportunities to be more ecologically aware through regular additions to our pew sheets and magazines around the Parish.
- > Investigating the cost of installing bike stands outside the church, as an encouragement to using sustainable means of transport to church and more generally as a visible reminder of the importance of the issue.

> As part of our remit to encourage environmental messages within services we (mostly Caroline) prepared and delivered a harvest service at St Mary's.

Mike Watkin, Chair of the EcoChurch Group

Quiet Days

We are now in a third year of our Quiet Day programme which has developed an established pattern of reflective content, time for quiet and reflection and hospitality. At least one meal is always provided and there are homemade cakes and biscuits and on the annual Monastic Quiet Day breakfast, lunch and dinner are made available to sustain people for the longer than usual day. There is a programme for the following twelve months with a Quiet Day in late January / early February, another in late April, the annual Monastic Quiet Day in August, and the final Quiet Day of the year in November. In the past year we have welcomed Rev David Holloway, Rev Deborah Snowball, and the Dean of St Albans. In the coming year we look forward to welcoming Grahame Senior, welcoming back Rev Deborah Snowball (with another enigmatically titled day following on from G'day mate!) and welcoming the Dean of Southwark, Very Reverend Dr Mark Oakley (whom Linzi invited by email on an impulse and he accepted that invite!).

You may feel quiet days are not for you but we urge you to try part of a day as a taster – you might find you like it!

Tim James