

Combined District Churches report

District Report for St. Cross for 2022 APCM May 2023.

The main item of note was the replacement of the old decking entrance to St. Cross. The original two year timeframe became four, firstly due to the pandemic and then the loss of key members of the congregation and fundraising team. However, with the practical support of Rev'd Huw and Parish Advisor John Whiteman, and the very generous financial donations gifted to the project in 2022, there was sufficient money to go ahead and the work was completed in November.

There had been concern, and considerable cleaning, generated by the spilt wax from the Easter and Altar candles. Although expensive, the congregation decided to invest in oil candles and these have proved to be well worth the money. The new candles were funded by the Friends of St. Cross.

During the summer there was a major review of all the documents and paperwork relating to the church, re-filed to record office standards where possible. These documents are now ready to be deposited at the Hertfordshire Records Office. For future reference, a record has been compiled of the items being sent for safe storage and this listing is kept in the church.

In July, the Quinquennial Inspection took place-details in the Fabric Report.

After a two year break St. Cross hosted a Lent lunch in the Village Hall, and then in September combined the patronal and harvest celebrations into one service, followed by a lunch in the church. Both events were well attended. In December the Ridgeway Chorale gave an Advent Concert to a full church, a fund raiser for the Friends of St. Cross.

Local choir, Sing Wilstone, continue to use the church for their weekly meeting and in September gave a concert raising funds for Ukraine and Rennie Grove Hospice. Whilst not a direct outreach from St. Cross, hosting the concert allowed the church an input to fundraising which would otherwise be very difficult.

As ever thanks are due to many people whose support enables St. Cross to continue as a Christian presence in Wilstone. Olga opens the church every day, and we are aware of the number of people, often walkers, who call in as they pass through the village. Tony continues to look after the grounds-the expenses for the mower are met by the Friends of St. Cross. The church is clean and welcoming and much appreciation goes to all who make it happen.

Finally, a big thank you to the Team, whose financial support allows St. Cross to function, and especially to the clergy team who facilitate worship at St. Cross; their generosity of time is hugely appreciated.

For St. Cross,
Alison Cockerill.

All Saints Long Marston APCM Churchwarden's Report 2023

Unfortunately we still have very small congregation numbers, although there are quite a few 'regulars' who can be called on for support at any time.

At the moment we have four services per month and are extremely grateful to Revd

Canon Jane for all her hard work, care and friendship and also to those who step in from time to time. Refreshments are provided after all 10am services.

All Saints is now left open constantly and no problems have appeared so far.

We have signed up to Eco Church and currently have Gold, Silver and Bronze medals, for Worship, Land use and Building, respectively.

Sadly September saw the death of Her Majesty the Queen and a Book of Remembrance was placed in All Saints, along with a photograph of Her Majesty and flowers.

There have been a number of special services during the year, including one very well attended funeral and also a baptism.

Cakes and hot dogs were provided for children and families doing Trick and Treating at Halloween and a good many turned up. The other social event was a Christmas Coffee Morning with Bring and Buy etc.. It was enjoyed by a few and would be nice if it could be a regular event for the village and better supported.

The 'Beer and Hymns' evening was held at All Saints instead of Tring last year and was in place of our Harvest Thanksgiving. It was very well attended and thoroughly enjoyed. Other services were the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial in Long Marston, Advent Service, Good Friday Service, Christmas Day Service and a celebration of Jane's birthday after a 6pm service in December. It was decided to join with St Cross, Wilstone for the Easter Service, but All Saints was still decorated for Easter Day with flowers and an Easter Garden.

Judith Weatherill
Churchwarden Designate

ST.MARY'S, PUTTENHAM DISTRICT REPORT

We have been very pleased that congregation attendance has returned to normal and, in some cases, improved. The Evensong service is going well and a long-awaited 8.15 a.m. Holy Communion on Easter morning was well attended. We hope this may be the first of future 8.15 a.m. Communions, allowing us to return to our previous, pre-covid pattern.

Our Cecilia Tea Rooms are back up to full attendance, with over 50 people attending the last one at the very end of March. Our next Tea Rooms will happen in early July.

The diseased Horse Chestnut tree which shed a massive branch (approx. one-third of the tree) has now been felled. This has opened up a wonderful clear vista across the fields to Long Marston. The massive cut logs we requested to be left are rapidly disappearing homewards to various awaiting log-burners! If you have the means for heavy wood-splitting, Puttenham churchyard is the place to come.

We are still awaiting the arrival of Mathias Restorations to carry out the pre-covid quinquennial repairs, but we are assured they will arrive before too long.

With all things positive, we look forward to the continuance of 2023.

Christine Rutter - Churchwarden.
April, 2023.

St Peter & St Paul, District Report for APCM 2023

This year was the first not to have Covid measures in place since 2019 so services pretty much ran as normal throughout the whole year, which was a great relief for many.

On 3rd June we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a tea party, followed by a service and then a BBQ, all of which were very well attended and enjoyed.

On 29th June 2022 Revd Sarah Marshall lead the St Peter & St Paul patronal service as her final service in the Tring Team Parish. On Tuesday 9th August a large contingent of people from across our team attended Sarah's licensing at 7:30pm at St Martin's Church, Shenley. Which was led by the Bishop of Bedford. Obviously, it was a service of mixed emotions for us as we lost an excellent curate but it was a joy to see Sarah enthusiastically welcomed to Shenley where she will no doubt do well and have a positive impact.

While streaming of services still takes place it was changed so that all 10am services at St Peter & St Paul are streamed except when Worship for All services take place and then the 8am BCP is streamed instead.

On Saturday 26th Nov the church was open in the afternoon and evening for the Tring Christmas Festival – the Christmas season had begun! On 3rd December 'Christingle in church yard' took place for the first time and was followed on 4th by a more traditional one indoors. Unlike last year when school services were cancelled, they all went ahead as planned. Over three thousand people attended school services in the run up to Christmas and quite a few of them said how nice it was to be able to be back in church this year – for the first time in three years for most of the schools. Most of the other Christmas services still seemed to have lower attendances than pre-Covid levels but were nonetheless enjoyed by those at them and some of the reduction could easily be due to the flu going round.

On 26th February St Peter & St Paul had the pleasure of The Right Reverend Dr Jane Mainwaring, Bishop of Hertford presiding over our 10:00am Common Worship service. It was the first church service that our new Bishop of Hertford had presided over since being appointed and it was lovely to have a good turn-out on this auspicious occasion.

Easter went ahead as normal with nothing noteworthy to report.

Throughout the year the Piano & More concerts have been enjoyed by many and also help supplement the church coffers as do the different, but equally popular, Blues Bar Concerts – a new innovation this year.

Currently preparations are also underway for the Coronation celebrations scheduled to take place in St Peter & St Paul on Monday 8th May.

Roy Hargreaves 25th April 2023

St John the Baptist APCM 10/5/23 Churchwarden's Report

Last year we seemed to be gradually getting back to normal after the pandemic, and a glance through this year shows we seem to have made it.

Services

In addition to the weekly Sunday services, special services this year have included: our Patronal Festival, including a bring and share lunch in the vicarage garden where we were entertained by the U3A Ukelele Band; Harvest Festival, again with bring and share lunch; All Souls; Remembrance Sunday; Christingle; Christmas services, including the Tring Station Iron Room Carol Service; Mothering Sunday with posies kindly provided by Tring Mothers' Union; Holy Week services and a very well attended Easter Sunday service.

Outreach

As well as welcoming many people from the wider community to these special services, events at which St John's demonstrate clear links with our community include Bike and Hike (a few people from St John the Baptist took part again this year, raising money for both Herts and Beds Historic Churches Trust and the church) and Carols on the Green. Tuesday Morning Coffee provides space for conversation and community and is now run again by Shirley Chamney with Ann Denwood's support; with the bellringers now in regular attendance, it once again raises regular funds for the church. Yvonne Hithersay and Carol Livingston have both been loyal members of this group, and we miss them. Aldbury Toddler Group meets twice a month in church and continues to provide an important space and welcome to parents in the village and many thanks to Caroline Parr and Annie Eggar for organising this.

Study groups

In Advent we took part in the **Tenants of the King** course, with a group in Aldbury led by Jill Timms using the CofE material for discussion and reflection. Two **Lent groups** in Aldbury studied the Beatitudes. These groups were led by Jill Timms and Neil Capp, and by Michelle.

Young people

In July, 9 young people were admitted to receive **Communion before Confirmation** at the Sunday morning service. Aldbury School's after school club Muddy Church has been regularly involved in leading monthly Worship For All services, and this is successfully introducing younger members and their parents to the church community. The church has a display of their activities in the Leeds Chapel. Thanks to Gemma Murphy for her work in leading that after school club. The church and school maintain their strong link, and, in addition to weekly collective worship at school led by Michelle, the children came to church for their Leavers' Service last July, and for a Christmas service. Years 5&6 and Michelle were invited to the annual schools' harvest service at St Albans Cathedral in October. Aldbury School welcomed a new head teacher in September, Ms Jackie Moore. The children have collective worship in church once every half term, and make regular class visits for discussions with Michelle about various aspects of the Christian faith and church. The display in the south aisle of children's work reflecting on aspects of faith is regularly updated.

Fundraising

In May, after a 2 year break, we were back running church stalls at the May Fair, raising £1,200 for church funds. We hope the church stalls at the May Fair last week will have been just as successful.

The Friends of Aldbury Church continue to provide valuable support. Trustees are currently Tony Tollinton, Neil Capp and Annie Eggar as Shirley Chamney has now stepped down. A useful meeting with Mark Battram, Michelle, Ian Munro and myself was held in February when processes were clarified, and it is hoped this will be repeated.

Churchyard

In November two churchyard working parties and subsequent individual work sessions left the churchyard looking hugely tidier. A bountiful crop of saplings have been 'popped' (extracted roots and all) with a tree popper.

DCC

The DCC meets regularly. The Annual District Church Meeting was held on 26th March when all existing DCC members were re-elected en bloc.

Music and bells

Our organist Jackie Robinson has recently had hand surgery, but is recovering well and Tim French, Sarah Carter and myself have helped out. The Festival Choir has been mustered for Remembrance, Christmas and funerals and many took part in a performance of readings and music for Advent. There will have been A Concert for a King over the Coronation bank holiday weekend. Bellringers are back to ringing on a couple of days mid-week as well as Sundays, and ringers from across the district are involved every Tuesday. Philip Denwood continues to take care of the clock and has recently trained up Ian Brown, Simon Stacey and Michael Pearce to help him in clock-care duties.

Rotas

for different roles are working well for flowers, coffee, reading and intercessions, but volunteers have been slow to commit to serving and welcoming roles and a larger group of church cleaners is still needed.

Highlights

A farewell presentation was made to **Rev Janet Ridgway** in November following her move to Berkhamsted. In recognition of her many years of service to Aldbury Church during 54 years in the village, a generous collection was made and we gave her a large hamper of goodies and a voucher for afternoon tea. She presented the church with an oil painting by Frank Murphy RA depicting the forging of 3 new bells for Aldbury in 1984. This picture is now on display in the belfry.

Work on the masonry identified at the two last quinquennial inspections began on 7 November and has now been completed. This took longer than anticipated as stone has been difficult to obtain. The work is being carried out by Mathias Restoration and has been funded by the Friends of Aldbury Church. Work on guttering, especially round the Chapter House, still needs to be done and is in hand. For many years we have been considering **removing pews** from the southwest corner of the church to make it feel more welcoming and give us space. We heard in April that our plans have been agreed in principle by the DAC. It is hoped this work can now be progressed through the next year.

In February we were awarded the **Eco Church Bronze Award** which reflects the care we try to give the environment in areas of Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and Lifestyle. The certificate is displayed in the Chapter House. We are now encouraged to take steps to further improve how we care for our environment in order to win the Silver Award, and a DCC group will meet to plan this.

Thanks to Pete Williams for being a constant source of calm, level-headed advice, to Ian Munro for his work on the Quinquennial works schedule, to Michelle for her

uplifting ministry and her encouragement of our young people and to all clergy and lay ministers for their input and support.

Jane Brown, Churchwarden

10/5/23