



St Andrew
STAPLEFORD

Annual Meetings 2024

St Andrew's annual meetings this year will follow on from the 10.30 am morning services on 3 March 2024. The timings below are therefore approximate.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

The annual meeting of parishioners will be held in St Andrew's Church, Mingle Lane, Stapleford, CB22 5SY on Sunday 3 March 2024 at 11.30 am for the purpose of electing churchwardens.

Those resident in the parish whose names are on the local government register of electors and those on the electoral roll of the church are entitled to attend and vote.

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in St Andrew's Church, Mingle Lane, Stapleford, CB22 5SY on Sunday 3 March 2024 at 11.35 am.

Those on the electoral roll of the church are entitled to attend and vote.

NOTICE OF PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

A Parochial Church Council meeting will be held after the conclusion of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Table of Contents

AGENDAS	1
A. MEETING OF PARISHIONERS.....	1
B. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING.....	1
C. PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING.....	1
A. DOCUMENTS FOR MEETING OF PARISHIONERS	2
ITEM 1: MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS HELD ON SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2023 AT 11.45 AM.....	2
B. DOCUMENTS FOR ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING	2
ITEM 1: MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2023 AT 11.53 AM.....	2
ITEM 4: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & REPORTS.....	14
4.1: Treasurer’s Report.....	14
4.2: Financial Statements For the year to 31 December 2022.....	15
4.2.1: Statement of Financial Activities.....	15
4.2.2: Balance Sheet.....	16
4.2.3: Incoming Resources.....	18
4.2.4: Resources Expended.....	19
4.2.5: Funds.....	20
4.3: Budget for 2024.....	21
4.3.1: Notes.....	21
4.3.2: Summary.....	22
4.3.3: Johnson Hall Fund.....	22
4.3.4: Estate Fund.....	23
4.3.5: General Fund.....	24
4.3.6: Magazine Profit & Loss Account.....	26
4.3.7: Verger’s Cottage Profit & Loss Account.....	27
4.4: Gift Aid.....	28
ITEM 5: INDEPENDENT EXAMINER.....	28
ITEM 6: PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2023	28
6.1: Annual Report of the PCC.....	28
6.2: Proceedings of the PCC.....	31
6.3: Safeguarding.....	33
ITEM 7: ELECTORAL ROLL.....	34
ITEM 8: REPORTS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PARISH.....	35
8.1: Churchwardens’ Report.....	35
8.2: Curate’s report.....	36
8.3: Ministry In & Around Stapleford.....	37
8.3.1: Pastoral Care.....	37

8.3.2: JOY.....	37
8.3.3: Community Warden Scheme	37
8.4: Ministry Beyond Stapleford.....	38
8.4.1: St Andrew's Stapleford Nachingwea Link.....	38
8.4.2: St Andrew's Children's Society Partnership	39
8.5: Children & Young People.....	40
8.5.1: Children & Families	40
8.5.2: Youth Groups	41
8.5.3: Little Fishes.....	41
8.5.4: Shelford & Stapleford Youth Initiative	42
8.5.5: YouthInc	43
8.6: Music	43
8.6.1: Choir.....	43
8.6.2: Treble Time!	44
8.6.3: Tower Bells.....	44
8.7: Home Groups, Study Groups & Prayer Groups	44
8.7.1: Wednesday Evening Home Group	44
8.7.2: Exploring Faith, Life & Prayer (Women's Group)	45
8.7.3: Tuesday Evening Bible Book Group.....	45
8.7.4: Friday Prayer Group	46
8.7.5: One-off Courses	46
8.8: Eco Church Project	46
8.9: Church Flowers.....	46
8.10: St Andrew's Men's group	47
8.11: Lunch Group	47
8.12: St Andrew's Display Board	48
8.13: Stapleford Mothers' Union.....	48
8.14: Friends of St Andrew's.....	49
8.15: Stapleford Messenger	50
ITEM 9: BUILDINGS, CHURCHYARD, GOODS & ORNAMENTS.....	51
9.1: Church Building	51
9.2: Inventory of Goods & Ornaments	52
9.3: Johnson Hall & Verger's Cottage.....	52
9.4: Churchyard	52
ITEM 10: GRANTA DEANERY SYNOD	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

C. DOCUMENTS FOR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING .. **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

ITEM 1: MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2023 AFTER THE APCM.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

AGENDAS

The meetings will be opened with prayer.

A. MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Minutes of 2023 meeting
2. Election of two churchwardens

B. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Minutes of 2023 meeting
2. Election of members of the laity to serve on the PCC

Note: Our Deanery Synod representatives are in post until 2026. The retiring lay members of the PCC are Sarah Kastner and Valerie Powell. There are four vacancies, each for three years.

3. Election of two assistant churchwardens
4. Financial statements & reports
5. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2024
6. Parochial Church Council Reports
7. Electoral Roll
[A copy of the roll is available for inspection]
8. Reports on the activities of the parish
9. Buildings, churchyard, goods and ornaments
10. Deanery Synod
11. Parish Priest's Report
12. Any other business

C. PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Note: the minutes of the meeting in 2023 after the APCM have already been approved at a subsequent PCC meeting, but are included for convenience.

1. Appointment of Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and any consequential co-options
2. Appointment of Electoral Roll Officer
3. Confirmation of date of next meeting

Note: the composition of the Standing Committee will remain as Parish Priest, Churchwardens, Secretary and Treasurer and two additional lay members until confirmed or changed at the next PCC meeting.

A. DOCUMENTS FOR MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

Item 1: MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS HELD ON SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2023 AT 11.45 AM

Simon Taylor welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

PRESENT: Revd Dr Simon Taylor (Chair), Felicity Cooke (Lay Vice Chair), Nicky West (Secretary), Chris Bow (Treasurer), Revd Lucinda Howard (Curate), Gillian Sanders (Minutes Secretary), Ben Barton, Rachel Bousfield, Sue & Stephen Brown, John Bryden, Kirsty & John Campbell, Ollie Challis, Zoe Clayton, Kay Coe, Mary Cooper, Christi Deaton, Chris Everitt, Stephen Ford, Sarah Hackett, Margaret Hebden, Nell Jerram, Joan King, Judith Lee, Trish Maude, Jackie Nettleton, Bill & Valerie Powell, Frances Richardson, Romie Ridley, Anne Roberts, Jill Ward, Peter & Christine Wenham, Judith Whale, Derrick Wren

APOLOGIES: Jeannie & Peter Green, Gillian Halliwell, Fiona & Alan Holliday, Alastair MacGregor, Anand Pillai, Hilary & Peter Street, Lizzie Taylor

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes were approved and signed.

Election of Churchwardens

Alastair MacGregor was nominated by Romie Ridley and seconded by Sue Brown to serve as Churchwarden for the coming year. There being no other nominations he was elected to serve as Churchwarden for 2023-24.

Simon Taylor thanked Alastair for his hard work during the past year. There is a casual vacancy for a churchwarden.

The meeting closed at 11.52 am.

B. DOCUMENTS FOR ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Item 1: MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2023 AT 11.53 AM

PRESENT: as at the annual meeting of the parishioners

APOLOGIES: as at the annual meeting of the parishioners

1. Minutes of the 2022 APCM and Matters Arising

- The Minutes had been circulated in advance
- The Minutes were approved and signed
- There were no matters arising

2. Election of two Deanery Synod representatives

Felicity Cooke (proposed by Romie Ridley, seconded by John Bryden) and Lizzie Taylor (proposed by Jill Ward, seconded by Felicity Cooke) were elected Deanery Synod Representatives for a period of three years.

3. Election of Lay Members of the Parochial Church Council

Simon Taylor thanked retiring members Anand Pillai, Sue Brown and Jeannie Green for their service.

Rachel Bousfield (nominated by Alastair MacGregor, seconded by Zoe Clayton), Fiona Holliday (nominated by Alastair MacGregor, seconded by Margaret Hebden), Anne Roberts (nominated by Chris Everitt, seconded by Lisa MacGregor) and Nicky West (nominated by Romie Ridley, seconded by Felicity Cooke) were elected to serve as lay members of the PCC for a period of three years. There is a casual vacancy for one year.

4. Election of Assistant Churchwardens

Margaret Hebden (nominated by Romie Ridley, seconded by Sue Brown) and Romie Ridley (nominated by Sue Brown, seconded by Margaret Hebden) were elected to serve as Assistant Churchwardens for 2023-24. Simon Taylor thanked Margaret and Romie for their hard work in 2022-23.

5. Financial Statements and Reports

These were presented by Chris Bow. Simon Taylor thanked the finance team consisting of Chris Bow, Sue Brown, Lisa MacGregor and Clare Kerr.

5.1 & 5.2 Treasurer's Report & Financial Statements for 2022

The extract from the Treasurer's report explains key figures in the accounts. The overall position of the PCC remains satisfactory.

The Nachingwea fund, Warden Scheme, Children's Society and Estate fund are all restricted funds. All other funds are unrestricted and the money can be used at the PCC's discretion. Broadly speaking, church expenditure has matched income. The large amount of money in the restricted funds is due to significant money received from the Feoffees, the Nachingwea fund, donations and from reclaimed VAT. There is a paper loss of £15,000 approx from investments due to the drop in the financial markets, but our investments are safe and generate good interest.

The funds are as shown in the accounts. The Estate Fund is in good position to provide for repairs to the church when necessary. The General Fund is broadly speaking for church activities.

Jackie Nettleton asked about funds for the church roof repair. Stephen Brown commented that the Faculty we obtained in 2021 to permit netting to be put in place required the church to put in place plans for a definitive repair within 5 years. £80,000 is estimated to be the cost to repair the roof. Chris Bow confirmed we have capital to go

towards those costs and the PCC will decide how they will be covered; likely a combination of fund-raising and existing resources.

5.3 Budget for 2023

The notes show the key assumptions made. Inflation is assumed to be 8% and an increase in giving to the church to be 5%. The church is in the fortunate position that energy contracts were fixed for three years meaning that costs for 2023 are known.

Johnson Hall Fund

The Johnson Hall surplus is broadly the same as last year.

Estate Fund

Some income from the Feoffees is anticipated.

General Fund

Because of increased giving and income from the Magog Trust's renting a room in the Verger's Cottage, the deficit has halved since last year, but nonetheless a deficit of over £5,000 is anticipated, even with an assumed 5% increase in giving.

Messenger

The magazine is generating a good return each year.

Summary

Chris Bow proposed the budget, Simon Taylor seconded, agreed unanimously.

5.4 Gift Aid

The report from Lisa MacGregor was noted. Simon Taylor expressed gratitude for all donations but asked people to give via the Parish Giving Scheme (which facilitates administration).

Before moving on to other matters, thanks were expressed to Chris Bow, Sue Brown, Clare Kerr and Lisa MacGregor, who together manage our finances.

6. Independent Examiner

Simon Taylor expressed his thanks to Keith Haddow, the independent examiner, for his work in 2022.

Chris Bow proposed his re-appointment for 2023, Simon Taylor seconded, agreed unanimously.

7. PCC Reports for 2022

7.1 & 7.2 Annual Report of the PCC & Proceedings of the PCC

These were taken as read and there were no questions. Grateful thanks were extended to everyone on the PCC.

7.3 Safeguarding

St Andrew's has been chosen to pilot a trial on reporting via the Diocesan hub. Thanks were expressed to Rob Needle, Parish Safeguarding Officer, and to Gillian Sanders for administrative assistance.

8. Electoral Roll

The membership of the Electoral Roll is now 127. Romie Ridley was thanked for her work as Electoral Roll Officer in the past, to Felicity Cooke, the current Electoral Roll Officer, and to Gillian Sanders for her assistance with administration.

9. Reports on the Activities of the Parish

Thanks were expressed to all who had provided reports. The reports are as follows.

9.1 Churchwarden's Report

Alastair MacGregor was thanked for his report and hard work.

9.2 Curate's Report

Lucinda Howard was thanked for her report and hard work. Lucinda is being ordained priest at 5 pm on Saturday 1 July at Ely Cathedral.

9.3 to 9.15 Reports of Committees and Organisations

Thanks were expressed to all who had contributed in so many ways. The reports were presented in groups as follows, with comments made at the meeting included.

- **Ministry in and around Stapleford**

- Pastoral Care

Thanks were extended to Romie Ridley, Clare Coates and Lucinda Howard.

- Community Warden Scheme

Mary Cooper and Jackie Nettleton, our representatives on the steering group with the Age UK team, were thanked.

Jill Ward expressed her appreciation of the Warden Scheme.

- JOY

Thanks were given to Romie Ridley and Lucinda Howard.

- **Ministry beyond Stapleford**

- St Andrew's Stapleford-Nachingwea Link

Thanks were expressed to Trish Maude for her leadership of the Link.

- Traidcraft

Thanks were expressed to Romie Ridley for running the stall. Romie thanked everyone for supporting Traidcraft over the years. Traidcraft has sadly ceased trading but its sister organisation, Transform Trade, is continuing similar work.

- St Andrew's/Children's Society Partnership
Thanks were expressed to Rob Needle and the team.
Sue Brown drew attention to Angels & Archangels, a scheme to provide guardians for children of refugees.
- **Children and Young People**
 - Children and Families
The team is led by Sue Brown together with Fiona Holliday and Lucinda Howard; grateful thanks were expressed to them and to the whole team.
 - Youth Groups
Zoe Clayton was thanked for giving a new lease of life to Youth Club with, amongst other things, a nativity play and a Christian away-weekend.
 - Little Fishes Toddler Group
Thanks were expressed to Fiona Holliday and Lucinda Howard and their team for continuing to run the toddler group.
 - Shelford & Stapleford Youth Initiative
 - YouthInc
- **Music**
 - Choir and SingPlus
Thanks were expressed to John Bryden and the choir, and to Frances Richardson for her help with SingPlus.
John mentioned the Sing Along Messiah coming up and appealed for altos and basses.
 - Tower Bells
Thanks were extended to Tony Smith for his continuing leadership of the team. Simon Taylor said that the bells were very much appreciated, and it would be good if we could get back to all six bells being rung each week.
Felicity Cooke suggested Tony and the bellringers should be encouraged to link up with diocesan and national bell ringing training assistance and activities.
- **House Groups, Study Groups and Prayer Groups**
Thanks were expressed to all the leaders of our groups, and to Fiona Holliday for initiating the Bible Book Club and one-off courses.
 - Bible Book Club
 - Tuesday Evening Women's Bible Group
 - Wednesday Evening Bible Study and Prayer Group
 - Exploring Faith, Life and Prayer (Women's Group)
 - Friday Prayer Group

- **Men's Group**

The Men's Group report was not included in the booklet of reports in error. David Tidsall and Alan Holliday have been instrumental in setting up the group which met six times over the last year with 14-19 attendees on each occasion. Thanks were expressed to them for their initiative and leadership.

- **Eco Church Project**

A couple of small improvements have been made, though the project has been relatively quiet this year. The communion wine is now from a Fairtrade source. Thanks were expressed to Sophi Berridge for her leadership.

- **Church Flowers**

Jackie Nettleton and the team were thanked for their lovely floral work.

- **Lunch Group**

The group is very well supported and Chris Everitt, with help from others, was thanked for organising the group.

- **St Andrew's Display Board**

Judith Lee was thanked for organising the display board.

- **Stapleford Mothers' Union**

Hilary Street was thanked for her continued leadership.

- **Friends of St Andrew's**

This has been a good fundraiser in the past and optimism was expressed that its activities will resume. Thanks were expressed to Tony Hore for his continuing leadership.

- **Stapleford Messenger**

Martin Ginger leads the Messenger production team with assistance from many others; the team was thanked.

10. Buildings, Churchyard, Goods and Ornaments

- **Church Building**

Stephen Brown, Chair of the Fabric Committee, Chris Cooper and Ollie Challis were thanked for everything they do to maintain the building. Chris has worked particularly hard to get the boiler repaired and certified.

- **Inventory of Goods and Ornaments**

The inventory is available for inspection.

Thanks were expressed to Alastair MacGregor and Mary Cooper for re-newing it this year.

- **Johnson Hall and Verger's Cottage**

Gillian Sanders was thanked for her administration of bookings and other matters. Martin Ginger is now chair of the Johnson Hall committee, which has resumed its oversight.

- **Churchyard**

Chris Cooper and the team of volunteers, particularly John O'Boyle, were thanked.

11. Granta Deanery Synod

Lizzie Taylor and Felicity Cooke were thanked for representing us.

12. Parish Priest's Report

Simon Taylor had circulated in advance his report in written and video form. The full text of his report for **2023** was as follows:

This is included here as part of the minutes of the APCM held in 2023.

This is my eighth annual report. It feels as though we have barely finished with Christmas and here we are at our APCM. We have been gradually moving our annual meetings to a bit earlier in the year, but even so it has seemed to come round more and more quickly. That, I think, is partly because I am getting old, and partly because it has been a packed year.

We really came out of Covid restrictions properly last Easter, but we had not recovered from the effects of the pandemic on church life at that point, and I don't think we quite have even now. There are still things coming up where we scratch our heads and try to remember how we used to do it, whilst at the same time wondering if we should do it differently.

We had lots of good things happening in 2022. Let me just rattle a few of them off to remind you.

During the year we had services in every conceivable place. In the chancel – if you haven't been to our 9 am BCP Communion services in the chancel you should give them a try, for they are an absolute delight - and in the nave, of course, in the churchyard and in the Johnson Hall. And we have had a wide variety of services. Three particular standouts for me. Early in the year we had a healing holy communion. It was good, and we really should repeat it and get it into our schedule. In the middle of the year we celebrated Her Majesty's 70 years on the throne with a wonderful service in the Marquee during the village weekend. Then in the Autumn we gave thanks for her life of service as it came to an end. We can really rise to these sorts of events, and we do our regular stuff well too, I think.

Towards the end of the year we really began to get grips with our All Age services, something we have not done well for years, but which we are getting better at. With prayer and work they will become an important, unifying part of our ministry. And we

celebrated all the festivals with great gusto, indoors or out as seemed fitting and possible. Easter and Harvest were wonderful outdoor occasions. Christmas was huge fun with something for everyone. Who will forget our walking, talking Christingle this year, or the John Taverner anthem *A Christmas Proclamation* which closed both our carol services and more than made up for England not being in the World Cup Final that day?

In our various sermon series we took on two more chunks of John's gospel. It has been a real joy working through that bit by bit, and we will return to it. We enjoyed a really good series by Clare Coates looking at the passion icons of Julian of Norwich – and that included both Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and all the Complines in between, so it was a really good way to travel through Lent. After Easter we tackled the opening chapters of Genesis, and later on we had a series of Summer Psalms. We began a series of sermons on Philippians which we have just ended, the first time since I have been here that we have tackled the whole of one of Paul's letters.

And we did all the other things that we are expected to do, but really love doing. So we baptised the young – including, rather wonderfully, in Forest Church. During the Reformation, as churches broke with Rome, one of the questions was whether these new breakaways were real churches. One of the answers was any group that preached the Word and celebrated the sacraments, baptism and the eucharist, was a properly understood, a church. So there we are, Forest Church celebrates both sacraments and preaches the Word. It is not play time, it is church.

And of course we conducted weddings and we buried the dead. We held prayer meetings. We enjoyed parties. We had wonderful music throughout the year from our choir – huge thanks to them and to John, and to Sarah and James who help out a great deal. We had visiting choirs from Homerton and Clare College, and hosted lots of other concerts. Our youth groups have gathered week on week, marvellously led by Zoe Clayton. In December they gave us a wonderful nativity as part of a fund raising evening, then with your generous help six of them and two leaders when off to Fort Rocky, a Christian weekend run by Youth for Christ.

In short, at St Andrew's the Lord was worshipped, the Word was preached, the sacraments were celebrated and we had enormous fun for all ages all the while.

During the year we said goodbye to Clare Coates, as we always knew we would have to, but sent her on elsewhere in the knowledge that by the grace of God and by our contribution to her training she will do a great job there. In her place we welcomed a wonderful new curate in Lucinda Howard, who is already very much making her own distinctive mark on the place. We are very fortunate to have her. We welcomed Ben Barton as an ordinand in addition to David Tisdall and they too have both made excellent contributions to our church life.

So in a huge variety of ways it has been a good year. There are lots of people who deserve our thanks for that, and I mean lots. There are many tasks, small and large, that

people do week in week out without which the church would not function. And they are often very unsung. I try to say thank you when I see stuff happening, not as a matter of form, but because I am so very grateful to all who do so many tasks. I won't, and probably couldn't, name all those who do different things.

But one person I do want to name is Alastair MacGregor. He is a super-efficient warden, and super-kind and encouraging with it. I think he has done a long four-year stint now, for which he has all our grateful thanks. It has not exactly been an easy four years either. Alastair is now embarking on his fifth year, again with our excellent assistant wardens Margaret Hebden and Romie Ridley. Alastair can only do six years as warden, so at some point very soon one or two people need to step into that role.

That is where we are, my very broad brush take on the last year.

Standing back a little, this is the first year for a while when I don't feel the need to report on any negatives, as I have in previous years. There is a certain joyful bounce about the church for which we should thank God. Long may it last. Those who stuck with it through the changes of the last few years have realised, I think, that there is room within our little village church for the sort of variety of worship that we now have. Indeed there is a need for it if we are to be a church for the whole community. That is not to say that every service is successful, or that every experiment works, or that any pattern is set in stone, of course, but we have moved in the right direction.

It is true that fewer attend our services than before the pandemic. This doesn't affect all our services. The early service is more or less the same size as it was in 2019, though the attendees have changed in part. That is partly because of deaths or increasing debility amongst those who used to come, but also the change in time has made it an easier service to come to for some. I was always hopeful that it would. Evensong attendance is about one-third up on 2019, though the numbers are still disappointingly small, particularly so as these are services that John and the choir work really hard at and do really well. If you haven't come along to an Evensong, you should.

The issue, as regards attendance, is with our mid-morning services. We are about 20 to 25% down on pre-pandemic levels. That is a continuation of decline over many years, but with some accentuation. Clearly some of that additional loss is due to people moving to other churches because the new pattern of services was not for them. And there are a significant number who are much frailer than before the pandemic and have stopped coming for that reason. Any of us who have been here a few years would be able to name a good number who have stopped coming in the last three years or so just for that reason. But, those two categories aside, a good deal of the pandemic reduction is due to a decrease in casual attendance, the falloff in those who used to come once or twice a month. We also see that phenomenon on high days and holidays such as Easter Day, Christmas Day and Remembrance Sunday. Lots still come to those services, but churchgoing, even on these special days, is no longer an ingrained habit in the local

population and our numbers are still high, but are reduced. We have also seen it, I think, in the reduction in the numbers of requests for church weddings and church funerals. As a church we have been slow to wake up to this change in habit and what it means for the viability of small parish churches like ours. It is a really serious issue.

So if I ever feel gloomy about church it is because of the numbers – but a slightly unhealthy interest in numbers is a perennial problem for church leaders. That said, one of the things I have to report to the central church each year is the number of new members of the congregation, or strictly new members of a defined entity called, in the statistics, the worshipping community. Over the last few years we have been able to welcome 20 or more new regular adult attendees. There have been slightly more leavers, hence the net decrease in numbers, but nonetheless the number of new people, across a very wide age range, who have looked around and then chosen to make St Andrew's their home church is very encouraging.

So overall, some parts of the numbers notwithstanding, my sense is that we have come out of the other side of the pandemic in pretty good shape. Our numbers are actually reasonable, our worshipping life is vibrant, we reach out into the community effectively in lots of way, we continue to be a training church, the powers that be finally got round to giving Stapleford a vicar back just recently, and our finances are ok. I will have more to say about finances in the next few weeks, but the overall picture of our church life is good.

What then does the future hold for us?

One thing that has just re-emerged onto the PCC agenda is the question of our vision for our buildings. You might remember that in 2019 we began to look at how we use this building, how we could make it more accessible, more flexible for worship and community purposes and so on. We consulted the congregation and then the wider community, and by early 2020 there was a fair degree of consensus about a set of broad aims. The work on that project then halted during the pandemic, but it is now time to think about next steps. I don't know what will emerge as priorities but I hope it will include access to the building. Those who use walkers, or wheelchairs or pushchairs struggle to get into this building – that is physically through our two sets of narrow double doors, and then into seating once inside. That is not ok. It should be a matter of concern to us, shame even, that more than 25 years after the Disability Discrimination Act we are still not providing easy access to even the main part of our building. And it is not the antiquity of the building that is stopping us. It is because we have not made that a priority. It is going to cost us to put this right, but we should do it.

Whatever that project turns out to include, it is really going to be for the medium term, measured in years, but not, I hope, in decades.

In the meantime our church life is set to go on broadly as it is. Last year I spoke of the need to consolidate after a turbulent couple of years. To my mind, leaving aside initial

thinking about our buildings, that is still what we need to do. As I set out last year, this must involve concentrating our efforts on the twin pillars of bible study and prayer, with one addition that I will come to in a minute.

In terms of bible study we held the Bible Course last year, which was well received, and started up Bible Book Club, or BBC. We had hoped that would become an occasional hub meeting for homegroups and that it would attract others who don't have time for a homegroup but fancy an occasional session looking more closely at the bible. It hasn't yet quite caught on, but we will keep on with that. I don't think that we as a church read our bibles as much as we should, and frankly we are not going to see much in the way of revival unless we get back to that habit. Everything we do turns on the Word of God and our individual grappling with it.

On the prayer front over the last few years we have made some progress. So the expectation now is that at all our services, not just at the mid-morning service, intercessory prayer comes from members of the congregation. That does not always work out, and Lucinda and I play our part in filling the rota, but the de-clericalisation is a positive change of emphasis. We have started a monthly prayer meeting – small but valuable. We are doing the prayer course. We have started providing opportunities for individual prayer after services, which is a major change from the habits of the past in St Andrew's. And, as time permits, we are going to provide some training in prayer, probably on two fronts, firstly in leading intercessions in our services, not just to improve what we do but maybe to give new volunteers confidence to give it a go, and secondly in praying for others in more pastoral settings, something that we could all benefit from. If you care for someone, why would you not want to be equipped to pray for them?

Those are the two strands, bible and prayer, that we have been working on over the last year, and that we will continue to work on this year. And I want us to add more thinking about discipleship. Discipleship is the name given to how we live our lives as Christians in response to what Jesus has done for us. I am not quite sure yet what shape an emphasis on discipleship should take, but that question 'how is my faith apparent in my life?' should be one we all ask from time to time. It should be obvious to ourselves and to others that we are Christian, and that being Christian is our motivation in all areas of our life. In addition to that generalised thinking, and finding ways of helping us to make that thinking a reality, part of a discipleship programme may be, for some of us, those formal markers of taking public steps in the Christian life – baptism (and I am not just talking about babies), first communions, and confirmations (and again, I am not just talking about teenagers).

In any event, that is where we are as a church, what the immediate future holds and some taste of what might be coming further down the track. I feel buoyant about the church and I hope you do too. We are now, genuinely, a church for the whole community. There is always more to do, more people who need to hear about and experience the love of Christ, but we do touch a lot of lives in many different ways. I

thank each of you for the part you play. Our gathered church community is the lighthouse and powerhouse of our mission to our village community and beyond. That mission is to tell of and show the love of Jesus Christ. As we have learnt from Paul's letter to the Philippians, rejoice in the Lord!

Every blessing to you all, Simon

13. Any Other Business

Romie Ridley thanked Simon Taylor for his vision and leadership, and everyone who helps the church run so well, especially John Bryden with his wonderful music.

The meeting closed at 12.42 pm.

Item 4: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & REPORTS

4.1: TREASURER'S REPORT

Extracted from the Report & Accounts 2023 for submission to the Charity Commission by the PCC. A full copy of this document will be available for inspection at the APCM, and can be provided in advance or subsequently on request.

Financial review

As illustrated in the financial statements, the church's financial position continues to be maintained predominantly by regular giving and donations. Overall, at £73,116, this has remained static year on year (2022: £73,739).

Other ordinary income rose to £30,168 (2022: £27,020), largely due to increased magazine sales revenue, following a subscription increase, and a full year's rental of the Magog Trust office in the Verger's Cottage. Hall rental income remained broadly constant.

Before investment gains, the net surplus for the year was £8,627 (2022: £17,597). The restricted funds were in deficit in the year by £2,819 (2022: £18,338 surplus). This was largely due to architect's fees and land survey costs (totalling £6,174) and grants paid from the Nachingwea Fund in excess of incoming resources. The church's unrestricted funds (which reflect the normal operations of the PCC) were in surplus by £11,446 (2022: £741 deficit).

The PCC transferred £3,000 to The Messenger designated fund (2022: £3,000). The sum of £776, which the PCC had received from its youth work, was added to a newly established Youth Fund.

Gains on investments amounted £7,879 (2022: £15,209 loss).

Net assets were £204,551 (2022: £188,045).

The overall financial position of the PCC remains satisfactory.

Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held

It is the policy of St Andrew's Church, Stapleford to hold in reserves the equivalent of three months' general running costs and three years' annual deficit of income versus expenditure (based on recent years' experience). It is also our policy to hold an amount for likely building works arising from the church's next quinquennial inspection and other major issues, currently ceiling and heating repairs. The appropriate sum to hold in reserve for these purposes at the present time is £200,000.

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)

The charity's principal sources of funds are personal giving and fees gained for wedding and funeral services (charged in accordance with Ely Diocese procedures), with additional funding provided by rental income, income from the village magazine and interest on investments. A programme of fundraising events augments the church's funds but are

primarily to aid other charities e.g.: our link with St Andrew's Church, Nachingwea, Tanzania as well as a range of local, national and international aid charities.

Two Stapleford charities provide funds for the long-term maintenance of the church fabric.

4.2: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2022

The tables under this heading are extracted from the Report & Accounts 2023 for submission to the Charity Commission by the PCC.

4.2.1: Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023 total	2022 total
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources				
Donations and legacies	60,222	12,894	73,116	73,739
Charitable activities	1,160	0	1,160	1,948
Other ordinary incoming resources	27,108	3,060	30,168	27,020
Investments	4,802	0	4,802	4,037
Total incoming resources	93,292	15,954	109,246	106,744
Resources expended				
Raising funds	(14,017)	(360)	(14,377)	(12,413)
Charitable activities	(67,829)	(18,413)	(86,242)	(76,734)
Total resources expended	(81,846)	(18,773)	(100,619)	(89,147)
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other gains and losses	11,446	(2,819)	8,627	17,597

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023 total	2022 total
	£	£	£	£
Gains/(Losses) on investments	7,879	0	7,879	(15,209)
Net movement in funds	19,325	(2,819)	16,506	2,388
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	152,803	35,242	188,045	185,657
Total funds carried forward	172,128	32,423	204,551	188,045

4.2.2: Balance Sheet

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023 total	2022 total
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Investments	122,421	0	122,421	114,542
Current assets				
Debtors	1,495	564	2,059	1,700
Cash at bank and in hand	65,178	31,859	97,037	87,629
Sub-total	66,673	32,423	99,096	89,329
Current liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(16,966)	0	(16,966)	(15,826)

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023 total	2022 total
	£	£	£	£
Net current assets	49,707	32,423	82,130	73,503
Total assets less current liabilities	172,128	32,423	204,551	188,045
Total net assets	172,128	32,423	204,551	188,045
The funds of the charity				
Restricted funds	0	32,423	32,423	35,242
Unrestricted funds	172,128	0	172,128	152,803
Total funds	172,128	32,423	204,551	188,045

4.2.3: Incoming Resources

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023 total	2022 total
	£	£	£	£
Donations and legacies				
Donations & gifts	49,817	11,804	61,621	63,145
Gift aid	10,405	1,090	11,495	10,594
Sub-total	60,222	12,894	73,116	73,739
Charitable activities				
Fee income	1,160	0	1,160	1,948
Other ordinary incoming resources				
Hall hire	4,388	0	4,388	4,209
Fundraising	0	3,060	3,060	1,873
Magazine sales & advertising	18,275	0	18,275	17,057
Other income	4,445	0	4,445	3,881
Sub-total	27,108	3,060	30,168	27,020
Income from investments				
Interest income	4,802	0	4,802	4,037
Total incoming resources	93,292	15,954	109,246	106,744

4.2.4: Resources Expended

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023 total	2022 total
	£	£	£	£
Expenditure on raising funds				
Magazine printing costs	10,145	0	10,145	10,113
Other trading activities - hall upkeep	3,872	0	3,872	2,300
Other	0	360	360	0
Sub-total	14,017	360	14,377	12,413
Expenditure on charitable activities				
Ministry share	27,094	0	27,094	25,801
Administrative costs	12,538	293	12,831	12,740
Utilities	4,062	0	4,062	2,364
Insurance	2,700	0	2,700	2,551
Repairs & maintenance	4,476	7,258	11,734	5,970
Events & entertaining	608	0	608	434
Missions & charities	1,500	10,862	12,362	5,299
Upkeep of services	1,442	0	1,442	2,355
Choir, robes & music	5,214	0	5,214	9,189
Youth work & education	8,195	0	8,195	10,031
Depreciation	0	0	0	0
Sub-total	67,829	18,413	86,242	76,734
Total resources expended	81,846	18,773	100,619	89,147

4.2.5: Funds

	1 Jan 2022	Movement during 2022	31 Dec 2022	Movement during 2023	31 Dec 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds					
Estate fund	12,056	13,542	25,598	(1,053)	24,545
Nachingwea fund	4,848	4,796	9,644	(2,067)	7,577
Children's Society & Warden Scheme	0	0	0	301	301
Total Restricted funds	16,904	18,338	35,242	(2,819)	32,423
Unrestricted funds					
Johnson Hall fund	25,801	1,909	27,710	515	28,225
General fund	63,042	(20,859)	42,183	15,034	57,217
Legacy fund	77,527	0	77,527	0	77,527
Designated funds:					
Messenger Fund	2,383	3,000	5,383	3,000	8,383
Youth Fund	0	0	0	776	776
Total Unrestricted funds	168,753	(15,950)	152,803	19,325	172,128
Total funds	185,657	2,388	188,045	16,506	204,551

4.3: BUDGET FOR 2024

4.3.1: Notes

General inflation assumptions

Energy & water	10.0%
Contracted gas & electricity supplies	per new contract: annual estimate 88% increase in rates for 2/3 of the year
General	4.0%

Johnson Hall

Income

- Expectation of modest increase in letting activity
- No increase in rates

Estate Fund

Income

- Feoffees as last year

Repairs

- £1,600 for repairs to the 10 Commandments boards & £1,000 for sundry repairs
- No quinquennial repairs
- Excludes major heating & ceiling repairs as not yet agreed

General Fund

Income

- Modests increase in giving
- Modest increase in investment income
- No other changes

Costs

- Normal running costs assumed except as stated below

Staff

- 4% increase on current rates
- Provision for youth worker - £5,000 say
- New organist – previous rate plus 5%

Maintenance etc

- WiFi/boiler/extinguisher service/safety equipment £2,000 plus, say, £500

Quota to diocese

- Per formal notification

Missions & Charities

- Age UK & SSYI (no Deanery youth initiative)

Magazine profit

- Sale revenue – no change
- Advertising revenue based on confirmed payments received and an allowance of £1,000 for sundry/late applications

4.3.2: Summary

Net Surplus/(Deficit)	2024 Budget	2023 Actual
Johnson Hall Fund	305	515
Estate Fund	2,400	(1,052)
General Fund	(1,778)	2,024
Messenger surplus retained	3,736	5,131
Total	£4,663	£6,618

4.3.3: Johnson Hall Fund

	2024 Budget	2023 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Income			
Hall Hire	4,500	4,388	2.56
Expenditure			
Electricity	949	623	52.43
Gas	657	453	45.21
Cleaning & Administration	420	403	4.00
Water	200	128	56.74
Repairs & Maintenance	600	578	3.8
Insurance	869	835	4.00
Other	500	853	(41.35)
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	£305	£515	(40.79)

4.3.4: Estate Fund

	2024 Budget	2023 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Income			
Feoffees	5,000	4,941	1.20
Friends of St Andrew's	0	1,000	(100.00)
Donations	0	265	(100.00)
Expenditure			
Architect's fees	0	4,320	(100.00)
Land survey	0	1,854	(100.00)
Repairs	2,600	1,084	139.90
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	£2,400	(£1,052)	(328.08)

4.3.5: General Fund

	2024 Budget	2023 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Income			
Collections & Donations	5,500	5,383	2.18
Regular Giving	46,000	44,435	3.52
Gift Aid	10,700	10,405	2.83
Fees	1,200	1,160	3.49
Investment income	5,000	4,802	4.13
Verger's Cottage rent	3,600	3,670	(1.91)
Total Income	£72,000	£69,853	3.07
Expenditure			
Administration expenses	1,993	1,984	0.46
Postage & Stationery	372	357	4.00
Photocopier Hire	1,460	1,459	0.10
Other	199	191	4.00
Clergy Expenses	134	128	4.00
Cottage Maintenance & Repairs	200	65	207.41
Cottage Gas	209	97	114.62
Cottage Electric	1,647	1,319	24.94
Cottage Water	59	54	10.00
Cottage Insurance	295	284	4.00
Cottage Cleaning	153	147	4.00
Gas	1,806	1,444	25.09
Electricity	1,262	766	64.72
Insurance	2,513	2,416	4.00
Water	421	382	10.00
Organ Repairs	938	902	4.00

	2024 Budget	2023 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Maintenance, Upkeep & Repairs	2,500	2,713	(7.82)
Church cleaning	675	649	4.00
Upkeep of Services	1,250	1,442	(13.30)
Education/Children's Work	100	(62)	(262.36)
Churchyard	448	0	-
Organist	11,200	4,341	158.01
Choir, Robes & Music	908	873	4.00
Events/Entertaining	632	608	4.00
Quota to Diocese	27,164	27,094	0.26
Missions & Charities	1,500	1,500	0.00
Bank Charges	277	266	4.00
Gifts	400	400	(0.00)
Youth Worker	5,000	8,256	(39.44)
Parish Administrator	8,063	7,753	4.00
Total Expenditure	£73,778	£67,829	8.77
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(£1,788)	£2,024	(187.84)

4.3.6: Magazine Profit & Loss Account

	2024 Budget	2023 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Income			
Sales	4,500	4,489	0.25
Advertising Revenue	12,786	13,786	(7.26)
Total income	£17,286	£18,275	(5.41)
Expenditure			
Printing Costs	10,136	9,746	4.00
Administration	414	398	4.00
Total expenditure	£10,550	£10,144	4.00
Net Surplus	£6,736	£8,131	(17.15)
Distributed	3,000	3,000	0.00
Retained by PCC	£3,736	£5,131	(27.19)

4.3.7: Verger's Cottage Profit & Loss Account

Included in General Fund

	2024 Budget	2023 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Income	3,600	3,670	(1.91)
Expenditure			
Maintenance & Repairs	200	65	207.41
Gas	209	97	114.62
Electric	1,647	1,319	24.94
Water	59	54	10.00
Insurance	295	284	4.00
Cleaning	153	147	4.00
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	£1,036	£1,704	(39.20)

4.4: GIFT AID

Thanks very much to everyone who gift aids their donations. For 2023, £4,592.09 of gift aid on donations outside the Parish Giving Scheme was claimed (about £200 less than for 2022). Of this, £3,522.87 was for the church's general fund, £823.51 was for the Nachingwea Link and £245.71 was for the Stapleford Community Warden Scheme.

A further £6,622.02 of gift aid was received during 2023 from donations made via the Parish Giving Scheme. This is about £800 more than received for 2023. The number of donors using the Parish Giving Scheme increased from 24 to 38 in the course of 2023.

Anyone interested in giving to St Andrew's regularly is encouraged to do so through the Parish Giving Scheme. Monthly, quarterly or annual donations can now be set up on the Parish Giving Scheme website www.paritygiving.org.uk, clicking on the 'Donors' tab at the top of the page and searching for "Stapleford St Andrew".

Lisa MacGregor

Item 5: INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The Independent Examiner for 2023 was Jayne Merrick. She has signed the Report & Accounts 2023 for submission to the Charity Commission. She was extremely thorough in her work. Our grateful thanks go to her.

Jayne has indicated her willingness to act again in 2024 and the APCM is invited to make the appointment.

Chris Bow

Item 6: PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL REPORTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

6.1: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PCC

Extracted from the Report & Accounts 2023 for submission to the Charity Commission by the PCC.

Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference which the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole

The provision of religious services on a regular basis. St Andrew's is a church for the whole community. The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at St Andrew's church and to become part of the church community, including offering special services at Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas. We offer baptism, marriage and funeral services as requested and in accordance with Ely Diocese instructions. Pastoral and spiritual support is offered to the whole community.

Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

In provision of these activities we are mindful of Christian teaching as well as the guidance issued by the Commission on public benefit. Thus whilst our worship, ethos and practices are Christian and accord with the doctrine of the Church of England, activities organized or led by the church for individuals or groups are open to all and are carried out without discriminating in relation to any protected characteristic. We also work in partnership with the community to maintain the fabric of St Andrew's church and the churchyard and both are used by the wider community.

Contribution made by volunteers

The Parish Priest of St Andrew's serves as 'House for Duty', receiving housing but no stipend from the Diocese. The parish contributes the full ministry share requested from it. Members of the PCC and the congregation lead and support all activities on a voluntary basis, through a system of sub-committees of the PCC. Maintenance of the buildings and churchyard, worship and social events, pastoral work in the parish, and children's and youth work in the parish are all contributed to by volunteer members of the PCC and the church.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference which the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole

During 2023 the church's activities continued to recover from the effects of the Covid pandemic.

Worship and Prayer

The PCC offers a range of services and other worship opportunities each week and in the course of the year. During the course of the year St Andrew's has generally offered up to three services on Sunday mornings, in addition to evening services once a month. Every Sunday morning begins with a communion service at 9 am. The various services at 10.30 are of different styles. In 2023 they included regular Forest Church services in the churchyard or Messy Church services in the Johnson Hall depending on the weather. These services have proved popular with families with young children, but also with some older members of the church. The popularity of Forest Church has continued to prompt greater use of the churchyard for other services too, so that a number of services, both on special festivals and other occasions, were successfully held in the churchyard.

Special services have taken place according to the church calendar (e.g. Easter Sunday, Harvest Festival).

In March 2023 at the date of the annual church meetings there were 127 persons on the Electoral Roll.

Attendance compared with the previous year, and with the pre-pandemic figures in 2019 were as follows:

	2019	2022	2023
Average week in October	100	83	79
Usual Sunday	85	76	80
Easter Eve/Day	240	196	185
Christmas Eve/Day	430	368	384

Overall, therefore, attendance is at present generally lower than before the pandemic and on some measures lower than in 2022. There is, however, a sense that in attendance as well as in the range of activities the church offers there is a continuing recovery from the pandemic.

The church meets monthly outside of Sunday services for a prayer meeting. It is open to all, though attendance is limited.

Deanery Synod

Four members of the PCC, including the parish priest and curate and two elected representatives, sit on the Deanery Synod, which provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and wider structures of the church.

The church building, Johnson Hall and Verger's Cottage

During 2023 the church remained open 24 hours a day. The PCC's Fabric Committee has continued to undertake and commission regular maintenance and upkeep, and volunteers do the bulk of the work necessary to maintain the churchyard. Both church groups and community groups and local service businesses use the Johnson Hall. A weekly toddler group, Little Fishes, run by the church, takes place in the Johnson Hall. This re-started at the end of 2021. The reduction in use of the Hall has only been partially reversed, and it is possible that the revenue generated will not cover the cost of maintenance.

The Verger's Cottage provides office space for the parish, including the administrator, curate and youth worker. A local charity, the Magog Trust rent office space and use it as their postal address, and it is also used as a postal address for another local charity (the Stapleford Feoffees) and a national charity (Women and the Church). The upstairs room in the cottage is used by a family counsellor.

Parish Magazine

The church publishes a monthly news and events magazine for the village of Stapleford, The Stapleford Messenger, which is available on subscription with copies delivered in the village and in local shops. The production of the magazine has been taken over by the Messenger Production Group. The surplus from the magazine is used in part to fund local, national and international good causes.

Youth Work

A paid church youth worker, Zoe Clayton, worked 16 hours per week for the church for most of 2023. The groups are small but well-liked by those who attend. Occasional other activities and trips also took place as circumstances allowed.

The St Andrew's Stapleford-Nachingwea Link

Together with the local community the church runs a Link Committee with the church of St Andrew's in Nachingwea, Masasi Diocese in southern Tanzania. The Link celebrated its 42 years of operation in 2023 with a service in September. It is thought to be the longest running, continuously active parish to parish link in the UK.

The St Andrew's/Children's Society Partnership

In 2023 the partnership continued to support the work of The Children's Society (TCS) by praying, acting and giving. The key event of the year was a celebratory service in September. The partnership committee continue to devise novel ways in which we can support the vital work of TCS with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people in the country and St Andrew's models these initiatives so they can be adopted by other churches.

The Stapleford Community Warden Scheme

This scheme, run by Cambridge and Peterborough Age UK but sponsored by St Andrew's has continued to run during the year. A new warden has brought great enthusiasm to the post.

6.2: PROCEEDINGS OF THE PCC

The Church of England defines the responsibilities of the Church Council (PCC) as follows:

- It has the responsibility, along with the incumbent, to promote the mission of God in its parish.
- Legally, the PCC is responsible for the finances of the parish. It also has ultimate responsibility for the care and maintenance of all church buildings and their contents. Although these responsibilities are executed by the churchwardens, all PCC members must share in the oversight. The PCC has a voice in the forms of service used by the church and may make representations to the bishop on matters that affect the welfare of the parish.
- All PCCs are charities. Therefore, every member of a PCC is also a charity trustee and the PCC must comply with the Charity Commission guidance and legislation in relation to charities.

In the course of the year the PCC has, amongst other things:

- Continued to follow good safeguarding practice, including safer recruitment. We thank Rob Needle (Parish Safeguarding Officer) and Gillian Sanders for all their work on this and the congregation for supporting this important process.

- Received regular updates on church finances, maintained the budgeting process and approved investments for church funds. The PCC is grateful to Chris Bow for his work as Treasurer, to Sue Brown and Clare Kerr who look after the day-to-day running of the accounts, and to Lisa MacGregor for handling Gift Aid.
- Considered how to keep church finances on a sound footing during a time of high inflation. We are very grateful to members of the congregation for their generous response to the 2023 Giving Appeal.
- Prepared a Trustees' Annual Report to file with the accounts filed with the Charity Commission.
- Thought about how to reach out to more of our community and make them feel welcome whatever their age, outlook and situation in life.
- Confirmed that we will go ahead with Prayers of Love & Faith to help make LGBTQIA+ people feel welcome and accepted in our congregation.
- Considered a vision for buildings: how they can draw and inspire people, be accessible and serve the needs of our church today and tomorrow.
- Supported St Andrew's partnership with The Children's Society and also with the Link Committee furthering the relationship with St Andrew's in Nachingwea.
- Received regular reports from committees and organisations, which have full reports elsewhere. We thank everyone who contributes to the work of these groups.
- Backed the Stapleford Warden Scheme. The PCC thanks Age UK and Stapleford Parish Council.

We thank Gillian Sanders whose administrative support to the PCC has been invaluable. We thank Nicky West for all that she has done as PCC secretary.

St Andrew's can only run with the enthusiastic support of the whole congregation. We are very grateful to everyone who contributes to roles visible and invisible. For example choir members and musicians, cleaners, coffee team, the welcome team, servers, prayer leaders, service leaders, occasional preachers, children's and youth work leaders, Deanery Synod representatives, flower arrangers, sacristan, vergers and people responsible for sound, repairs and maintenance, churchyard, pastoral care, home groups and the Johnson Hall. A special thanks to the retiring members of the PCC Sarah Kastner and Valerie Powell.

Alastair MacGregor

6.3: SAFEGUARDING

There are four sources of activity in relation to safeguarding in parish churches:

1. Safeguarding Training
2. Safeguarding Checks
3. The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and Safeguarding Hubs, which provide prompts to ensure the PCC are maintaining an appropriate level of oversight of safeguarding in the church
4. Reports or Suspicions of Safeguarding Incidents

1. Safeguarding Training

For both Safeguarding training and DBS checks we have now caught up with the backlog created by the change for re-qualification being reduced from 5 years to 3. We are now in 'maintenance mode' i.e. dealing with those whose training has lapsed after three years and with volunteers taking on new roles.

2. Safeguarding Checks

As with safeguarding training, these are now in 'maintenance mode'.

3. Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and Hub

All our parish safeguarding activities are shown as 'green' (i.e. complete), except for two issues that are being reviewed by the PCC, as part of its role in overseeing safeguarding policies and issues in the church.

The Church of England safeguarding team commissioned the development of a Safeguarding Hub (a database) to sit alongside the Safeguarding Dashboard. The Hub records activities with a safeguarding dimension, the people involved with them and whether they have had the relevant checks and training. It will automate the process of highlighting when renewals of safeguarding training and DBS checks are due. Individuals will show as 'amber' when a renewal is due within three months and 'red' when overdue. This will be an improvement on the current practice of looking through our own spreadsheet on an ad hoc basis. In due course, it is hoped that the Hub will automatically generate emails to individuals who need to update their training or DBS check.

The Hub is still in development. Ely Diocese was selected to pilot the scheme and Stapleford was chosen to be one of the trial parishes within the diocese. We were chosen because we are using the Safeguarding Dashboard at the most advanced level.

4. Reports or Suspicions of Safeguarding Incidents

No fresh incidents were reported over the past year, although new information regarding a previous case was passed to the Diocesan Safeguarding team.

Rob Needle

Item 7: ELECTORAL ROLL

There are 127 names on the Electoral roll at 15 February 2024. The total was the same last year. Sadly we lost both Ken Dean and Olwen Seed, both long-time members of the congregation who died during the last year. We are delighted to welcome new worshippers to the church family.

Of these:

- 72 are resident in the parish of Stapleford
- 36 are resident in Great or Little Shelford
- 11 are resident in the parishes of Sawston, Duxford, Whittlesford and Newton
- 5 are resident in Cambridge, including Trumpington
- 3 live slightly further afield in Histon and Highfields Caldecote

All who live outside the parish have longstanding, close links with St Andrew's.

Felicity Cooke

Item 8: REPORTS ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PARISH

8.1: CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

The Church of England defines the role of churchwardens as:

- officers of the bishop, representing the laity and co-operating with the incumbent
- encouraging parishioners in the practice of true religion, and promoting unity and peace
- having oversight of finance, though the detail of this is handled by the treasurer
- having oversight of the care of the fabric of the parish church and reporting on its condition each year
- having legal ownership of the moveable furniture and ornaments of the parish church and keeping an up-to-date inventory of them
- maintaining an up-to-date logbook of all works done to the fabric of the parish church
- ensuring that all parish registers and records are properly kept and filed
- answering questions from the bishop or archdeacon

The assistant churchwardens, Romie Ridley and Margaret Hebden, and I have worked with the clergy and Diocese to fulfil these requirements as best we can. This would not have been possible without the support, help and goodwill of everyone in the congregation. Thank you.

Thanks to our treasurer Chris Bow, and the whole finance team, and to the Chair of the Fabric Committee Stephen Brown, and the whole fabric committee. Special thanks to Chris Cooper for his tireless work with the church boiler amongst many other things. Thanks too to everyone who keeps the building and churchyard clean, tidy, operational and looking beautiful.

We have responded to Diocesan requests about Statistics for Mission and Articles of Enquiry. We have checked the inventory. It will be available to view at the APCM.

We are liaising with the Diocese as part of Deanery Development Planning to help ensure that St Andrew's can continue to flourish in the long term.

Many thanks to our clergy Simon Taylor and Lucinda Howard for their energetic, positive and imaginative ministry.

We look forward to the future of St Andrew's as it fulfils its role as a church for the whole community.

Alastair MacGregor

8.2: CURATE'S REPORT

Another full year as curate at St Andrew's, growing in confidence in my vocation as a priest. What has been so useful and encouraging is going through my second liturgical year, feeling more confident as I serve, preach and preside, but also finding fresh insight and new challenges.

With that in mind, one of the most significant events for me was my ordination as priest last July and the opportunity to preside at communion at St Andrew's. This is a real privilege and responsibility, as well as something that can only fully be learnt through doing, so I am thankful for the church bearing with me.

In the same vein, being able to bless, sympathise and celebrate with people at baptisms, funerals and weddings, enables our church to be part of people's lives and support them through these special and significant occasions. In a smaller parish church like St Andrew's there is greater opportunity to be involved in such life events and I look forward to conducting more of these services in the future.

I do feel part of the parish here at Stapleford and being 'on the ground' so to speak, I really see how our church reaches out with the Christian message and is an active force for good. We have strong links with Stapleford Primary School, facilitate groups and events in the Johnson Hall, have a welcoming and open church building and engage with businesses such as The Granary, where I perhaps drink too many fancy coffees! Our church services over Easter and Christmas were very well attended with many bringing friends and family. This should be a great encouragement to all of us who take part and help in the church, I think we have created a hospitable and inclusive atmosphere.

This attitude of serving others alongside communicating the good news of the gospel, is clearly demonstrated in the Little Fishes toddler group and JOY, our group for seniors. Both go from strength to strength, and I am excited to see families from Fishes beginning to attend our church services. For both groups I am part of a dedicated and capable team, and I appreciate the opportunity of serving alongside Romie Ridley, Fiona Holliday and many others.

I enjoy working and training under Simon from whom I am learning a lot, as well as continuing with my IME2 curacy requirements with the diocese of Ely. I look forward in the coming months to working with our new musical director Tim, as well as our 'Being Christian' Lent course and more interesting sermon series to get my teeth into!

Lucinda Howard

8.3: MINISTRY IN & AROUND STAPLEFORD

8.3.1: Pastoral Care

The pastoral team continues to telephone, visit and support mainly older members of the church family, who often cannot easily come to church, are in hospital or at home recovering. Lucinda, Jeannie and Romie are taking Communion to five people/couples at home each month, and any others who wish for it while unwell. The team meets about every two months to share news and concerns and discuss ways forward. The pastoral team is Lucinda Howard, Rob Ferneyhough, Sarah Hackett, Jackie Nettleton, and Romie Ridley with John King, Mary Cooper and Jan Croft continuing to update us by email on the people/groups for whom they continue to care.

More helpers for the pastoral team would be most welcome. Please talk to any of the team. All sorts of help is needed e.g. offers to ring someone up once a week, invite them in or take them out for a cuppa or give lifts would be much appreciated.

Romie Ridley & Lucinda Howard

8.3.2: JOY

The JOY group continues to flourish and is a joy for its members and the team alike. We begin with a Christian reflection and prayer, including for anyone in need of our prayers. Tea or coffee, cake (Sarah Hackett's baking is superb!) and chat are key. Speakers have included the Maude sisters on their intrepid Canadian holidays, Francis Bostrom on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Naomi Tisdall on being doctor with Herts & Essex Air Ambulance, and David Barnes with a slide show of their recent cruise on the Moselle. Also, quizzes, a Coronation Tea party, very helpful discussions about the end of life using 'Grave Talk', found by Simon, sharing favourite poems and memories and making decorations for the JOY tree for the Christmas tree festival, with huge thanks to Jackie Nettleton.

In addition, thanks to Rob Ferneyhough for organising lifts and to Glenda Ferneyhough for helping with them.

Occasional lunches are arranged at the Arthur Rank Hospice, usually on a Monday every couple of months. About twenty usually attend with lifts for those who cannot drive – any offers to give lifts would be very helpful.

More helpers for JOY would be most welcome. Please talk to any of the team about what is needed, which includes offers to ring someone up once a week, invite them in or take them out for a cuppa or to give lifts. All much appreciated.

Romie Ridley & Lucinda Howard

8.3.3: Community Warden Scheme

The Stapleford Warden Scheme has continued to thrive in 2023 thanks to our warden Juliet Hawksworth and our assistant warden Yvonne Smith. Recently there has been a waiting list and if we could get more funding, the scheme could be expanded.

The Warden Scheme is run by Age UK Cambridge and Peterborough not the national Age UK. Mary Cooper and Jackie Nettleton are the PCC's nominated representatives and have regular meetings with Sarah Thomson – the service manager at Age UK. They then report to the PCC.

Juliet has continued to provide very enjoyable social events for the service users and friends of the scheme with a wonderful soup and cake lunch in October followed by a visit from the 'Variations' choir singing some old favourites which were greatly appreciated, and then a coffee and bauble making morning in December when the Warden scheme tree was decorated ready for the Christmas Tree Festival in St Andrew's, held in aid of the scheme, raising over £1,500. The Festival was great fun and our thanks go to the 28 groups from Stapleford who contributed trees and to all those who helped in so many ways.

Money was also raised at the 2023 Lent Lunch, and at the Stapleford Village Show by Juliet and Yvonne and the 'Splat the Rat' game made by Juliet. We are also extremely grateful to 'the Bunch' who donated £600 after we ran a stall at the Shelford Feast and to the Magog Singers who held a collection for the scheme at their concert of music specially chosen for the service users in March 2023. Thank you too to St Andrew's and the PCC for their donation and support of the Scheme.

However, we are mindful of the fact that fundraising needs to be ongoing, and any further donations or legacies would be gratefully received.

For more information, please contact Juliet at juliet.hawksworth@ageukcap.org.uk

Jackie Nettleton

8.4: MINISTRY BEYOND STAPLEFORD

8.4.1: St Andrew's Stapleford Nachingwea Link

The Link Committee has met on six occasions, once by Zoom and five times in person in the Johnson Hall. The Sub Committees meet/keep in touch according to need, between the main meetings and each would welcome a new member. (Agriculture & Technical; Church; Education; Health & Medical; Fund Raising)

Highlights in Nachingwea included the:

- Masasi Diocesan Youth Festival held at St Andrew's Church
- Wedding of Kevin Bushiri – Link Chair

Highlights in Stapleford included the:

- Refurbishment of the Link Display Board
- Parish Lunch
- Village Fair

- Celebration weekend: Homerton College Music Society concert on Saturday and Church Service on Sunday with Stapleford Primary School Choir
- Meeting with the Diocese of Ely Retired Clergy group, who shared our interest in Tanzania
- Christmas Tree Festival
- Christmas Fair

Projects

- English Course for 40 boys and girls who had graduated from Primary school, in preparation for the start of secondary education
- School uniforms and shoes for needy students in the special needs classes
- Women's Health Project in conjunction with DARE Women's Foundation which is based in Dar es Salaam

The Committee gratefully acknowledges:

- the support of the Clergy and PCC, and Clare Kerr, Sue Brown and Lisa McGregor for their help in the management of the Link funds
- the help of Friends of the Link who support in so many ways, including assisting in staffing events and providing expertise
- the generosity of all who have contributed via direct giving and those who gift-aided their donations, thereby adding substantially to the funds

Watch The Messenger for news of Judy the dog and St Andrew's Nachingwea in 1953 and we look forward to your participation in the Link Quiz to be held at the Three Horseshoes on 15 April.

Trish Maude

8.4.2: St Andrew's Children's Society Partnership

The St Andrew's Children's Society Partnership exists to support the crucial work of The Children's Society (TCS) through prayer, campaigning and giving.

The Guardian Angels lent appeal seemed to catch the imagination of church members and raised a fantastic £416 from the sale of angels. This was a great result and is the most raised from any of our campaigns to date. Several people also contacted their local MP and councillors in relation to the campaign. This campaign also received positive publicity within TCS nationally and was promoted as best practice of how churches can support an active TCS campaign. We spruced up the TCS pages on the church website and provided a link to that, in case other churches across the country want to look what we have done.

John Bryden organised a highly successful Come & Sing Messiah. John kindly suggested that a retiring collection should be on behalf of TCS. This raised a total of £165.

Shortly after Easter we received a generous donation of a 2 kg chocolate egg from a member of the congregation. We raffled the egg and raised £171 for the charity.

The preacher at the annual TCS service on 8 October was Andrew Read, the Director of Education, Mission and Ministry for Ely Diocese. Donations at this service totalled £112.

Members of our Box Collection scheme raised a total of £1,087.

We produced our regular Advent Challenges. These were sold in church and circulated for use by other parishes and groups. They were also circulated nationally by TCS.

The annual Christingle service took place on Christmas Eve. It was very well attended and the collection raised further funds for TCS, totalling £494.

Great thanks to the members of the TCS partnership team. Their ideas and enthusiastic support are much appreciated. We are constantly trying to come up with new ideas to engage the interest and support of church members for disadvantaged and at-risk children. If you have thoughts about this, please speak to me.

Rob Needle

8.5: CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

8.5.1: Children & Families

Through 2023 the pattern for children's and families' provision took the form of twice monthly Forest/Messy Church services on the first and third Sundays, plus the All-Age services on the fourth Sunday each month.

We have covered such themes as Joseph and his brothers, the Exodus, and Paul's letters, as well as the usual festivals including Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest, Christmas and a Nachingwea Link celebration. These were often joint services with the whole congregation, which were enjoyed by all. We have shown displays in church of some of our artwork which we trust have been appreciated by the full congregation. We also hope you enjoyed our diorama of 'A Forest Church Christmas' at the Christmas Tree Festival.

Sadly, we noticed a slow decline in numbers from summer onwards, both in families coming and in the number of helpers available to support each service. As to why, reasons include family pressures, changes in circumstance etc., although we have welcomed several new babies with their parents. We have established that those people are happy for provision in the Lady Chapel with activities for our youngest children, whilst the adults can be part of the morning service.

After much discussion it has been agreed that from January 2024, at least for a period, provision will be one Forest/Messy Church Service on the second Sunday of each month plus the All-Age service on the fourth Sunday, with a simple craft available in the Lady Chapel plus baby toys provided on all other Sundays. A rota is currently being drawn up to provide one helper, plus at least one parent with a baby, to support that provision.

Anyone willing to take a turn on that rota should contact Fiona Holliday please. Helpers are also welcomed for Forest/Messy church services going forward.

My grateful thanks to all who have helped during 2023 – Alastair and Lisa, Lucinda, Fiona, Lizzie, Sophie, Eleanor plus Zoe and our ordinands David and Ben before they moved on. Also to Ollie who sets up for our outdoor services behind the church and to Gillian who prepares our service sheets.

Sue Brown

8.5.2: Youth Groups

St Andrew's youth club ran marvellously until Zoe's time with us came to an end in September 2023. As well as our regular groups on a Friday afternoon, which always included Christian input, Zoe organised lots of fun outings, and – an absolute highlight – took a group of seven youngsters to a Christian housegroup weekend away organised by Youth for Christ. That represented a major breakthrough in our ministry to young people.

But then, frustratingly, we have hit a complete wall in the recruitment of a new youth worker, which is very dispiriting. We are not alone in having problems. YouthInc South Cambs has the same problem, and so do other churches, including some big ones. A small group has been set up by the PCC to consider where we go from here.

Zoe was a wonderful and committed youth worker. As well as working part time for us she was doing a law degree in London, scoring an impressive first class degree, and now has a civilian job with the police force. She will bring considerable gifts to whatever she does and we wish her well!

Simon Taylor

8.5.3: Little Fishes

Little Fishes, our weekly 'Stay & Play' group, goes from strength to strength. Although some of our regular children have now grown up and gone off to nursery or school, we have a steady inflow of new families joining the group. We have a core of lovely regular families who attend and some who dip in and out. Numbers fluctuate and the hall can sometimes feel rather small especially when the older children get a little excited and we are very glad to be able to spill over into the garden when the weather is good in the summer.

Each Monday during term time we open in the Johnson Hall for our usual mix of free play, play dough and a craft related to our bible story, and we end with stories and songs. As well as offering space for the children to develop friendships and social skills, we also provide a place for new mums to meet, for parents, carers and grandparents to come together, share and build relationships as well as have a hot drink and a chat. Bringing up a young family can be a lonely and challenging time.

During the year we were delighted to welcome a number of mums (and sometimes dads) with small babies. In view of this we were delighted, with the help of Sarah Thorne

(children & families LLM in Linton) to run a six-week *Baby Steps* course based on the Church of England *Starting Rite* course. The course is totally baby-focussed with a range of multi-sensory activities for parent and child to experience together, including baby-massage, singing, storytelling, bubbles, waterplay and a sensory tent. The aim is to give new parents lots of quality bonding time with their baby whilst also thinking about faith and values they would like to offer their child as they grow up. Six mums signed up with their babies and we were able to have some great conversations and all were very appreciative of the course and the opportunity given them. We hope to run the course again with a new cohort of babies.

We have grown very fond of our Little Fishes families and are delighted that we see some of them at church events, but our main aim is to serve them. We are very grateful to our regular volunteers, Sarah Hackett and Kirsty Campbell who have helped us through the year. We are also very grateful to Anne Roberts, Valerie Dean and Lizzie Taylor who have now joined the team as we really need to have three of us each week. We are also grateful to Alan Holliday and John Campbell for help with setting up and clearing away each week.

Fiona Holliday

8.5.4: Shelford & Stapleford Youth Initiative

We want to say a massive thank you to St Andrew's, Stapleford for all your support this past year. SSI, established in 1997, serves the villages of Great and Little Shelford, Stapleford, Sawston and (as of August 2023) Duxford, providing safe spaces, community youth activities and support for local 10–21-year-olds. With a focus on those who are vulnerable, hard-to-reach, and most in need, supporting them through open access and targeted activities, 1-1 support, schools work and community projects. Our activities provide opportunities to build relationships with young people, encouraging positive behaviour, community involvement and informal education. We work in partnership with Romsey Mill who manage the delivery of our work.

2023/24 has been another busy year for SSI. We have been regularly supporting over 220 young people through our activities. We have seen growth across the board including an increased number of sessions, staff, volunteers, and attendees. We have been supporting twelve young people through 1:1s in Sawston Village College and five young people through 1:1s in the community. In August we began running sessions in Duxford on a Monday evening, this group is now thriving and helping us to support young people in the village facing significant challenge. For most of the year, we have been running eleven youth clubs a week; six in Shelford, four in Sawston and one in Duxford, with weekly total attendance regularly over 150.

We have been continuing to run a weekly session called Deeper, giving our young people the opportunity to explore Christianity. Alongside this we took several young people

away with Romsey Mill in the summer for three days to explore faith and take part in some social action projects.

We are so grateful for all the support we receive from churches, individuals, local parish councils, and other organisations. Your ongoing prayers and support are so valued.

Zachary Britton

8.5.5: YouthInc

The aim of this charity is to ensure that all young people in South Cambridgeshire have the opportunity to hear the gospel. It does this principally by providing a professional youth worker to run youth groups and give help to those parishes that do not have their own youth worker. It also runs relevant courses for parents and in the past supported a monthly deanery Connect service at St Andrew's.

The charity is funded by parishes and the Deanery, including benefitting from the proceeds of the Deanery Fair in previous years, plus donations from individuals. The period of matched funding from the diocese has come to an end.

The project builds on existing work with children and families with under nines. Having started with the Hinkledux parishes it has extended its work to other parishes that have not had the services of a youth worker. There are now groups in Whittlesford, and Thriplow & Fowlmere, and others are in development.

St Andrew's contributes in two main ways. We contribute £300 pa, and Simon Taylor is chair of the trustees.

The difficulty the charity has faced is in recruiting and retaining a youth worker. The one appointed in late 2022 left in summer 2023 and despite extensive and repeated advertising a replacement has not been found. As a result, although the existing groups continue the expansion of the work is in limbo and there is considerable strain on volunteers.

Simon Taylor

8.6: MUSIC

8.6.1: Choir

Having handed over to our new Director of Music, Tim Kwan, I reflect back on my last six months as Acting Director of Music with great happiness: we have a wonderful, enthusiastic choir who work well together to produce the music to lead our church worship.

The church choir is in good form and is singing regularly at a variety of services with a range of music - both old and new. We have a core of very regular singers and others, who for a variety of reasons, sing more intermittently. (N.B. we are always happy to welcome new singers - there is always room on the benches!)

John Bryden was a fabulous Director of Music and a very experienced musician from whom we all learnt a great deal. We thoroughly enjoyed our practices and the challenges of learning new music fast - with his encouraging and sympathetic guidance. We were very sorry to see him go.

From June when I stepped in 'to help out', until Epiphany, the choir has sung for the full range of Sunday morning and evening services within the church including several inspiring baptisms, the marquee service (on Stapleford Rec during the village weekend) and our annual Nachingwea and Children's Society services. Some of the choir also sang in the annual Cambridge RSCM service in King's College chapel - always an exciting experience.

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany are always a busy period services wise; having worked closely with Simon in planning these, it was good to be able to offer a variety of services to suit different tastes, and at various times of day: Advent & Epiphany Evensongs; Christmas: Carols by candlelight & Christingle, Midnight at Bethlehem and Christmas Morning Communion (with the delightful 'band' of assorted instruments led by Trevor Barlow).

Our Lessons & Carols Service, with its beautiful readings and joyous singing, was a memorable event. The choir was boosted by our regular guest singers and with James Buchanan on the organ & Tim Kwan on piano, enabling me to conduct, we had the full complement of musicians. It was lovely to have a full church and the mulled wine afterwards vanished very speedily!

I am aware that a church choir is now a rarity in the Diocese. We look forward to the new chapter under Tim's leadership with enthusiasm and confidence.

Sarah Needle

8.6.2: Treble Time!

A new junior choir is starting in March 2024. Watch this space!

Tim Kwan

8.6.3: Tower Bells

2023 was not a good year for the tower bells. We hardly rang mainly due to lack of ringers and also medical problems causing difficulties with getting into the tower. Talking to the team we hope to see what we can do in the next period hopefully you will be hearing us again soon.

Tony Smith

8.7: HOME GROUPS, STUDY GROUPS & PRAYER GROUPS

8.7.1: Wednesday Evening Home Group

The group came out of a Wednesday evening prayer group run by Frances Richardson at the beginning of Lent last year when we joined others to follow a video assisted course on Prayer.

We meet for a relaxing 1½ hours together every other Wednesday evening alternating between the north and south ends of the village.

We are an informal group and enjoy each other's company, whether in sharing news and concerns of the day over a drink, or as we talk around a reading usually from the Bible and see what it might mean for us today, and finish as we think of people, events and places with needs to pray for or which give us reason to be thankful.

Over the summer, different members chose a Psalm for us to read together. In the autumn we looked at some of the great prayers of people recorded in the Bible, before returning to Psalms in the New Year.

Do come and join us.

Peter & Christine Wenham

8.7.2: Exploring Faith, Life & Prayer (Women's Group)

Our ecumenical women's group continues to meet on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 7.30 to 9 pm. Since the lockdowns our meetings are hybrid with those in person welcomed to Imogen's in St Andrew's Close, with others on Zoom using an iPad. Our usual format is news and prayer requests and prayer, input and discussion, with time to reflect on the topic in silence.

In 2023 we joined in the Lent course on prayer which was helpful and thought-provoking and led to some sessions exploring different kinds of contemplative prayer, the first two being led by our two Quaker members. From November to February we used '*Come Emmanuel: Approaching Advent, living with Christmas*' by Ann Lewin – highly recommended. We look forward to the Lent sermons and course using '*Being Christian*' by Rowan Williams, having previously used another of his helpful books '*Being Disciples*.' Winter meetings are warmed by Imogen's roaring log fire. A summer shared supper is a greatly enjoyed by all. We now have room for more members, in Lent and throughout the year, on Zoom or in person.

Romie Ridley

8.7.3: Tuesday Evening Bible Book Group

The year has seen our group continue to grow, for which we thank God as we learn together more about His Word. From our regular group of eight (before Christmas) we now have at the time of writing two more people wanting to join!

Over Lent 2023 we followed the Prayer Course, finding it useful in the way it explored different tools to help deepen our prayer life. It also inspired us to look at the Psalms, because we realised we maybe don't use the Psalms nearly as much as we could do – they cover all situations and all moods, like prayers on tap!

In the autumn, we started exploring the Book of Daniel and for Advent we looked at "Mapping Advent" from the Diocese of Ely, which explored Advent's themes through Bible reflection, art, poetry and music.

We are now choosing our favourite passages from Mark's Gospel for group discussion, before we look at Rowan Williams' *Being Christian* for Lent in 2024.

Nicky West

8.7.4: Friday Prayer Group

We consider world, country, local and church issues much like the intercessions in church. Choices of material vary from written prayers to heart-felt personal petitions, music and nature. Candles are lit for focus of needs. Our gatherings are important to us, particularly in our troubled times. Like a special family we try to make a difference, always remembering occasions for thankfulness.

Judith Lee

8.7.5: One-off Courses

The Lent Course for 2023 was the *Prayer Course* from 24/7 Prayer. The *Prayer Course* is an eight-week journey through the Lord's Prayer giving practical tips on different ways to pray and to deepen one's prayer life. Topics included Why Pray?, Adoration, Unanswered Prayer and Spiritual Warfare. A weekday morning group and three evening groups totalling around 35 people studied using video clips, bible readings and group discussions.

Lent Study for 2024 will follow the Lent Sermon Series based on Rowan William's short book *Being Christian*.

Fiona Holliday

8.8: ECO CHURCH PROJECT

After gaining our bronze award in 2021, 2022 and 2023 have been slower years in terms of further development of our Eco Church Project, but we hope to work towards our silver award – with all that would entail in terms of improvement of our practices – in due course.

Simon Taylor

8.9: CHURCH FLOWERS

The team has continued to supply flowers for all Church services apart from in the seasons of Lent and Advent. Because the Christmas Tree Festival fell in the season of Advent and there was a funeral too, some flowers and greenery were evident in Advent at the end of the calendar year 2023.

Some arrangers like to do their arrangement at home and bring it to Church, others prefer to work in the vestry.

We have a rota system for doing the flowers which seems to work well. Arrangements are changed every two weeks and, if the flowers are still alive after that, they are placed at different places around the church. The main areas for flowers are the porch to welcome people into the building, the two hagioscopes (inlets) near the choir and the

communion table. People mainly donate the flowers but have the option to claim for them if they so wish.

On Saturday 18 March we made about 60 small posies for the ladies for Mothering Sunday. Members of the congregation were invited to join us on the Saturday to make up the posies.

At Easter the flowering cross which stood outside for all to see, was prepared again, and covered in spring flowers by the end of Easter Day. Any villager is also invited to contribute a flower/flowers from their garden.

People in the community have helped this year by providing greenery from their gardens for the main festivals in the Church calendar.

We have been asked to do some flowers for weddings and funerals this year, and I always state that whilst we are not professional florists we are happy to do some smaller arrangements for which we just charge the families for flowers, not for our time.

There is always room on the rota for more flower arrangers. Please do speak to Jackie Nettleton (07773 423388) if you're interested. Men are welcome also! Arrangements don't need to be elaborate. Indeed, a vase of flowers is all that is needed.

Jackie Nettleton

8.10: ST ANDREW'S MEN'S GROUP

After a very successful relaunch of the Men's Group in 2022, with multiple well-supported events, following our March 2023 meal event we had a quiet year partly due to losing the help of both our ordinands, David and Ben, and also other organisers becoming very busy.

There is obviously a strong demand for such a group and I received numerous enquiries from both men and women in the church asking when we were going to restart the group. Now, unashamedly bowing to the pressure, I have arranged a curry evening which Simon has kindly offered to host at the vicarage on 19 February. Initial sign-up has been excellent.

The plan is for the group to meet roughly bi-monthly and we will plan a series of different events for 2024, many of which will involve food and socialising but we also hope to use the combined skills and muscle power of the group to undertake some community projects.

Alan Holliday

8.11: LUNCH GROUP

We continue to enjoy the hospitality of the staff and volunteers at the Bistro of the Arthur Rank Hospice once a month for a Sunday lunch.

It is a great opportunity to meet with friends from other churches and their friends in pleasant surroundings with somebody else cooking the lunch (and doing the washing up!)

Our group, which is for single and elderly, has now been successfully gathering for the past six years and is an opportunity for deep friendships and fellowship.

Chris Everitt

8.12: ST ANDREW'S DISPLAY BOARD

Bold images help aid reflection throughout the church year. Contributions are made by Messy and Forest Church through creative endeavour. The Children's Society and Eco Church use it too.

Awareness of significant events are highlighted.

Judith Lee

8.13: STAPLEFORD MOTHERS' UNION

Although our Branch is getting smaller, there is still a core of faithful members who come to most meetings. Our theme this year was 'Transformation – Now!' – the same theme continues into 2024.

We started the year with memories of 'Treasured Possessions' brought by members, who explained why the possession was dear to them – a very interesting afternoon. February saw a meeting with the World Day of Prayer slides in preparation for the World Day of Prayer (prepared by the women of Taiwan), which took place in the Cox's Close Community Room on Friday 3 March. A thoughtful Lent Meditation followed in March by Rosey Fuell, and in April Mary Cooper hosted a coffee morning. In April we also had a speaker from the Mission Aviation Fellowship, which was open to the Deanery. A truly fascinating afternoon at which we learnt a great deal about the Aviation Fellowship's work overseas.

We had a lovely summer social in June, followed by a stall at the Village Weekend, with cakes and a Coronation hamper – and another social event in July when we hosted Milton MU to tea and cakes. We were all saddened to hear of the death of Liz Moule, their Branch Leader, in November. The day after the Milton visit was the Diocesan Garden Party in Ely, once again held in the Bishop's Garden, but unfortunately the weather was so appalling that none of us went (although I understand that there was quite a good gathering of sturdy members from around the Diocese who braved the weather).

On 9 August, we enjoyed tea once again in the Challis Garden at Sawston, as we did last year (although the weather was not as hot as then). Lucinda Howard led our Opening Service in September and it was good to have her with us. Valerie Powell hosted the Autumn Coffee Morning in October – we also had a good meeting in October when David Barnes took us through slides of a cruise down the Rhine. On 14 October, Kay Coe and I attended the Autumn Council meeting in Waterbeach, where, besides the usual reports from the Diocesan Officers, we listened to an interesting talk on 'Modern Slavery'. It was good to meet up with old friends from around the Diocese. Also in October, Mary Cooper

attended a Deanery meeting in Balsham, when Hazel Williams spoke about the amazing amount of work which MU does around the Deanery, especially prison visiting and supporting young mums.

Felicity Cooke explained to us the 'Work of a Lay Canon' in Ely Cathedral in November, where we all learned a great deal about the workings of both the Cathedral and the Diocese of Ely.

We had a stall at the Nachingwea Fair on 2 December where we raised nearly £200 for their funds from the sale of preserves and a Christmas Hamper raffle. Valerie Powell has kindly undertaken to decorate our entry for the Christmas Tree festival in St Andrew's from 8-10 December, for which many thanks. The Deanery Advent service was on 5 December in Sawston, but unfortunately it clashed with the funeral of our dear member, Mary Spriggs (whom we shall greatly miss). The Wave of Prayer this year is on 12 December.

The toiletries collection in November was very well supported by both the church and the parish, and the goods collected were greatly appreciated by the Cambridge Women's Aid refuge.

So, once again, despite our diminishing numbers, we have had a busy and I believe, fulfilling year. We are just a few of the four million members worldwide – we are kept in touch with events around the Diocese through the Ely monthly Newsletter which reports on other branches' activities in Ely Diocese, which stretches from St Neots to the outskirts of Peterborough.

Once again, I'd like to thank members for their support, both at meetings and donating goods when called upon. And my special thanks to the Committee for their support and help in arranging both the programme and the events we hold – and in particular, Mary Cooper, for keeping us in order financially.

Best wishes to you all for 2024!

Hilary Street

8.14: FRIENDS OF ST ANDREW'S

The Friends of St Andrew's are continuing to support the Church in maintaining its fabric.

We are currently working with them to develop a scheme to improve the facilities and make better use of the building.

We had hoped to resurrect the Village Quiz last year but a poor uptake and the large increase in the cost of hiring the Pavilion meant that it wasn't possible. We are endeavouring to find a suitable solution to the problem for this year.

Tony Hore

8.15: STAPLEFORD MESSENGER

The Messenger continues to be produced smoothly each month. The price of the magazine has not changed this year. Advertising costs have been adjusted a little to iron out some anomalies. We have noted they are somewhat higher than Great Shelford Village News, but that is largely a black and white magazine, and we don't know how it is financed.

Finances

See the church's 2023 audited accounts. 2024 figures are estimates/running totals, but both advertising revenue and sales revenue will be down this year compared to 2023, thus reducing the surplus we will have available.

	2023	2024 estimate
Advertising revenue	£13,626	£11,800
Subscription/sales revenue	£4,488	£3,707
Printing costs	£9,746	£10,000
Subscriber numbers	554	538

Personnel

Looming personnel issues were raised with the PCC in November. The magazine needs an Advertising Manager first and foremost, and by the end of 2024 will need a new Co-ordinator. We should find a back-up for the Production Editor to cover holidays etc. and to ensure a smooth transition when/if the current incumbent retires. More deliverers are also needed as the current group is getting older and some are finding the task ever more onerous. As I write, Martin Ginger and Ed Rose are to meet with Simon Taylor about the support/involvement the PCC can give our team, in particular over the Advertising Manager role.

Messenger Fund

The committee under Martin's leadership is in the process of distributing a previous surplus to outstanding requests, after a delay in forming a committee. Once these requests are sorted they will offer funds to others who apply. We are mindful of keeping a reserve to cushion the fall in income, and to cover any necessary expenditure e.g. a new laptop.

Helen Hale

Item 9: BUILDINGS, CHURCHYARD, GOODS & ORNAMENTS

9.1: CHURCH BUILDING

Another busy year for fabric issues.

The usual checks and services have been carried out.

Boiler

After last year's major breakdown and repair by Chris Cooper the boiler was serviced and passed safety checks in January.

However, the boiler is old, and its reliability remains a worry going forward.

The search for a replacement heating system continues. The majority of the Fabric Committee feel that a radiant heating system is the way forward, but we need to find a system that is aesthetically acceptable.

Quinquennial Works

There have been no further Quinquennial related works this year.

On-going maintenance jobs and repairs

- Jan Asbestos survey
None detected but boiler seals could contain some asbestos
- Mar Boiler serviced and gas safe certification
- June Survey of the Church and churchyard
- June Tower safety systems and harness' checks
All systems passed as safe
- July Limewash painting working party
South wall of the church limewashed
- Aug Boiler servicing
- Aug Limewash painting working party
North and West walls of the church limewashed
- Aug Tower clock breakdown
New winding motors and thermal fuses fitted
- Nov Fire extinguishers safety checks
Three fire extinguishers had expired and were replaced
- Dec Four light bulbs above the choir replaced

Working Parties

Three Churchyard working parties took place in April, July and November.

My thanks to Chris Cooper for arranging these working parties.

My thanks to the Fabric Committee for their help and support.

Stephen Brown

9.2: INVENTORY OF GOODS & ORNAMENTS

The Churchwardens have completed a check of the Church Inventory, which is available for inspection at the APCM or on request.

Alastair MacGregor

9.3: JOHNSON HALL & VERGER'S COTTAGE

Bookings for the Johnson Hall held steady in 2023.

Regular users pay £24.50 per session (increasing to £28 from January 2024). Regular users include Little Quavers baby group, the table tennis club, Shelford Bridge Club, the Horticultural Society, Ballet East, 440 Jazz plus another band and singing lessons. Other regulars who use the Hall free of charge include St Andrew's Youth Club (not meeting since July), JOY seniors' group, Little Fishes toddler group and the Mothers' Union.

The Hall was also used for meetings of the Pastoral Care committee, Age UK/Warden Scheme, the Nachingwea Link Committee, as well Baby Steps new parents' course, the Prayer Course and Bible Book Club.

It is pleasing to report that there were eight children's parties in 2023 with three already booked in 2024. A number of other social gatherings were held in the Hall, as well as the Magog Trust AGM, the Barn Arts annual exhibition and a PR company presentation. The one-off hire charge is £22.50 for the first hour, and further hours at £11.25 per hour (increasing to £26 plus £13 from January 2024).

The Verger's Cottage is booked on a regular basis by a counsellor and also for occasional study sessions.

The Johnson Hall is available for hire for regular groups and one-offs, and is a pleasant welcoming space suitable for a wide range of events.

The inside of the hall is in reasonable condition, but will need decorating soon. The toilets are in need of updating. Externally, some quite major work is required soon.

Gillian Sanders & Simon Taylor

9.4: CHURCHYARD

The churchyard continues to be managed according to a plan drawn up 26 years ago, combining formal areas at the front and wild areas behind the church, while still leaving areas for Forest Church services under the trees.

The wild areas include dead-wood and ground cover to encourage wildlife, and seasonally managed meadow grass to encourage chalk grassland flowers. The trees are inspected bi-annually.

Grass mowing has been carried out by volunteers this year, but will be returned to a contractor for the summer season. We will still need some volunteers to stand in for high season and out-of-season cuts.

Special thanks go to John O' Boyle who advises on the mowing programme and keeps a careful eye on the wild flowers, writing about them regularly in 'Coming Up', and also to Jackie Nettleton who regularly mows the memorial plot.

The church is very grateful to all those who attend occasional work parties when the borders are tidied and the wild areas mown seasonally.

Chris Cooper

Item 10: GRANTA DEANERY SYNOD

For those unfamiliar with the democratic systems of the Church of England, the Deanery Synod comprises elected representatives from the local churches in our 'deanery', a geographical area within the larger diocese of Ely. There are regular meetings of representatives from the churches in our deanery, to which church members can be elected. Felicity Cooke and I are currently the St Andrew's representatives. Each church elects representatives at the APCM every three years.

Deanery Synod meetings are actually open to all. The synod is a vehicle for church members to bring issues up for discussion and action, to collaborate on the progress of our combined efforts in ministry, and to learn together about subjects of relevance to us all. Issues and actions can be escalated to Diocesan and then General Synod if necessary. The members of Deanery Synods form the electorate for General Synod. Details on all this can be found in the Church Representation Rules 2022.

Meetings

14 March 2023

We had an update on the drafting of the Deanery Development Plan, of which more below. We discussed diocesan and local church finances. Revd Julie Norris reported on various events helping people discern what type of ministry they might be called to, and routes for training. David Parry-Smith reported on the Mental Health First Aid training that he has been leading on. Revd Simon Scott read out a resolution from the PCC of All Saints Little Shelford, re-affirming its wish to adhere to the current Church of England teaching on marriage.

12 July 2023

We had a talk on Schools as Part of our Mission Plan, from Revd Mandy Flaherty, Ely Diocesan Development Officer for Schools Mission. She related the role the church can take in engaging with all schools. We have six Church of England schools in our deanery (Linton, Duxford, Castle Camps, Whittlesford, Balsham and Great Shelford), and 14 non-Church schools.

Felicity Cooke presented her report from General Synod. Felicity is one of the Diocese's representatives at General Synod, and the only one from our deanery. This covered the debates on Same Sex Blessings and Marriage building up to eventual votes on provision for that; Safeguarding failures at a national level, the proposal to reduce/remove marriage fees, and other topics.

30 November 2023

At this meeting we heard a talk on training available in the diocese from Revd Mark Rodel, the Ely Diocese Development Officer for Learning. Please see more on the portal at ely.learn.anglican.org, to find out about the courses and pathways available for those who want to explore them.

We had another encouraging update on the work of YouthInc, our local youth work cross-church collaboration. Jenny Duke spoke about the challenges of recruiting a new area youth worker, in collaboration with Youth For Christ. Parishes are currently running their own youth groups.

We also received a report on the finances of the churches in our deanery. Most churches are able to meet their expenses, including their parish share (the contribution to the costs of the ministry and diocese), though a few have had ongoing difficulties.

After this meeting, the Deanery Development Plan was published. The Plan contains information that was gathered on the current ministry, plans and aspirations from congregations, PCCs and clergy of the churches in our Deanery. The plan is to help the diocesan team understand how to support the development of our churches' ministries over the next few years. Felicity Cooke has chaired the group producing the plan, and put a lot of very hard work into producing this document for the whole deanery, for which our thanks should be recorded.

Lizzie Taylor

C. DOCUMENTS FOR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Item 1: MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 5 MARCH 2023 AFTER THE APCM

PRESENT: Revd Dr Simon Taylor (Chair), Felicity Cooke (Lay Vice-Chair), Chris Bow (Treasurer), Nicky West (Secretary), Revd Lucinda Howard (Curate), John Bryden, Valerie Powell, Kirsty Campbell, Sarah Hackett, Romie Ridley, Anne Roberts

APOLOGIES: Lizzie Taylor, Fiona Holliday

Simon Taylor welcomed new members of the committee; Rachel Bousfield, Fiona Holliday, Anne Roberts and, as an elected member, Nicky West

1. Appointment of Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chair and Electoral Roll Officer

The PCC made the following appointments, proposed by Simon Taylor and seconded by Valerie Powell, and agreed unanimously.

- Lay Vice-Chair - Felicity Cooke
- Secretary - Nicky West
- Treasurer - Chris Bow

Simon Taylor proposed Chris Bow be co-opted to the PCC (so that he can also be on the Standing Committee), seconded by Romie Ridley, agreed unanimously.

Simon Taylor proposed Felicity Cooke as Electoral Roll Officer, seconded by Romie Ridley, agreed unanimously.

2. Date of next meeting

Monday 27 March 2023 at 7.45 pm by Zoom.

The May meeting will be in person.

The meeting closed at 12.51 pm