



st Andrew
STAPLEFORD

Annual Meetings 2025

St Andrew's annual meetings this year will follow on from the 10.30 am morning services on 11 May 2025. 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 11 May 2025 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 11 May 2025 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.

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AGENDAS

The meetings will be opened with prayer.

A. MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Minutes of 2024 meeting
2. Consideration of resolution under section 3 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 designed to disapply the normal limitation of six successive terms of office
2. Election of two churchwardens

B. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. Minutes of 2024 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 Kirsty Campbell, Martin Ginger, Sarah Hackett and Romie Ridley. There are four vacancies, each for three years. There is also an outstanding vacancy following the resignation of Rachel Bousfield last year, leaving a one year vacancy.

3. Election of two assistant churchwardens
4. Financial statements & reports
5. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2025
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. Vicar's Report
12. Any other business

C. PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

1. Note: the minutes of the meeting in 2024 after the APCM have already been approved at a subsequent PCC meeting, but are included for convenience.
2. Appointment of Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Electoral Roll Officer and any consequential co-options
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 3 MARCH 2024 AT 12.13 PM

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), Rachel Bousfield, Sue & Stephen Brown, Ollie Challis, Kay Coe, Mary Cooper, Chris Everitt, Rob & Glenda Ferneyhough, Vahe & Yasmin Grigorian, Sarah Hackett, Gillian Halliwell, Margaret Hebden, Alan & Fiona Holliday, Judith Lee, Alastair & Lisa MacGregor, Trish Maude, Rob & Sarah Needle, Jackie Nettleton, Bill & Valerie Powell, Frances Richardson, Romie Ridley, Anne Roberts, Lizzie Taylor, Jill Ward, Peter & Christine Wenham, Derrick Wren

APOLOGIES: Piers Brereton, John & Joan King, John Sherwell and Judith Whale

Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes were approved and signed.

Election of Churchwardens

Alastair MacGregor was nominated by Gwilym Luff 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 2024-25.

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

The meeting closed at 12.16 pm.

Item 2: DISAPPLICATION OF TIME LIMITS FOR SERVICE AS A CHURCHWARDEN

Alastair MacGregor has served as a church warden for 6 successive annual terms. Paragraph 3 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 disqualifies someone from standing for a seventh successive term unless the meeting of parishioners votes to disapply that rule. The rule says that any such disapplication continues to apply until revoked by a further vote of the Annual Parochial Meeting.

Alastair is willing to continue to serve as a warden if elected. The meeting is asked to consider the following resolution:

This annual meeting of parishioners held on 11 May 2025 considers it expedient to disapply the six year disqualification for service as a churchwarden in the Parish of St Andrew, Stapleford, and the disqualification shall therefore be disapplied.

Item 3: ELECTION OF TWO CHURCHWARDENS

There are no documents to consider for this item.

B. DOCUMENTS FOR ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Item 1: MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 3 MARCH 2024 AT 12.17 AM

PRESENT: as at the annual meeting of the parishioners

APOLOGIES: as at the annual meeting of the parishioners

1. Minutes of the 2023 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 Members of the Laity to serve on the PCC

Simon Taylor thanked retiring members Sarah Kastner and Valerie Powell for their service.

Rob Ferneyhough (nominated by Romie Ridley, seconded by Alan Holliday) and Sue Brown (nominated by Romie Ridley, seconded by Trish Maude) were elected to serve as lay members of the PCC for a period of three years. There are two casual vacancies for one year.

Our Deanery Synod Representatives, Felicity Cooke and Lizzie Taylor, are in post until 2026.

3. Election of two Assistant Churchwardens

Margaret Hebden (nominated by Judith Lee, seconded by Alastair MacGregor) and Romie Ridley (nominated by Sue Brown, seconded by Trish Maude) were elected to serve as Assistant Churchwardens for 2024-25. Simon Taylor thanked Margaret and Romie for their hard work in 2023-2324.

4. Financial Statements and Reports

These were presented by Chris Bow.

4.1 & 4.2 Treasurer's Report & Financial Statements for 2023

The extract from the Treasurer's report explains key figures in the accounts. The overall financial position of the PCC remains satisfactory. Activities are split into restricted funds and unrestricted funds. Unrestricted funds show an amount of £11,446. i.e. the church had income in excess of expenditure of that amount. This is an improvement on previous years due to various reasons; regular giving increased by 12% year on year; we continued to enjoy the benefit of fixed energy contracts; salaries were not paid out during part of the year because of youth worker and organist vacancies.

With regard to gains and losses on investments, market value which generates cash income to the funds increased over the year. The financial position of the church funds is

satisfactory, with over £200,000 of funds that the church can call upon relatively quickly. These are mostly unrestricted funds (ie: the church has control over how funds are utilised.)

4.3 Budget for 2024

The notes show the key assumptions made. Inflation for some costs is assumed to be 4% but for others, such as utilities, inflation will be much higher, possibly a doubling, which is reflected in the budget going forward. Inflation at 4% has been assumed for salaries, and provision has also been made for youth worker costs for 6 months. A small increase in giving of about 3.5% has also been assumed. To avoid distorting figures, no provision has been made for substantial expenditure the church might make in the short to medium term such as ceiling and boiler repairs, modifications to the church etc. Trish Maude thanked Chris Bow for presenting the accounts in such a clear way and told the meeting that the Nachingwea fund had overspent by about £4,000 on an important project which has transformed the life of women in Tanzania.

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

4.4 Gift Aid

The report from Lisa MacGregor was noted. Simon Taylor thanked Lisa for her hard work during the year.

Thanks were expressed to Chris Bow, Sue Brown, Clare Kerr and Lisa MacGregor for their team effort managing our finances. Simon Taylor also expressed his gratitude for parish giving and reminded people to give via the Parish Giving Scheme because it has inflation built in.

5. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2024

Simon Taylor expressed his thanks to Jayne Merrick, the independent examiner, for her work in 2023.

Chris Bow proposed the appointment of Jayne Merrick for 2024, Simon Taylor seconded, agreed unanimously.

6. Parochial Church Council Reports

6.1 & 6.2 Annual Report of the PCC & Proceedings of the PCC

The Annual Report was taken as read. In connection with the Proceedings, Jackie Nettleton and Mary Cooper reported that the Parish Council had not contributed to the Warden Scheme for some years.

6.3. Safeguarding

St Andrew's is piloting a trial on reporting via the Diocesan Safeguarding Hub and Dashboard. The system is settling down and has been scaled down slightly. Thanks were expressed to Rob Needle, Parish Safeguarding Officer, and to Gillian Sanders for her assistance with administration.

7. Electoral Roll

The membership of the Electoral Roll is now 127. Felicity Cooke told the meeting that the Roll will be completely revised next year. It is important to keep the roll above 100 so that we can send two representatives to the Deanery Synod and maintain our representation. Thanks were expressed to Felicity Cooke for her work as Electoral Roll Officer and to Gillian Sanders for her assistance with administration.

8. Reports on the activities of the parish

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

8.1 Churchwarden's Report

Alastair MacGregor was thanked for his report.

8.2 Curate's Report

Lucinda Howard was thanked for her report and hard work. Lucinda's curacy will end in 2025 and Simon Taylor has already applied for a new curate from 2025. It is by no means a given that we will be asked to receive another curate.

8.3 to 8.15 Reports of Committees and Organisations

Thanks were expressed to all who had contributed. 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 and Lucinda Howard.
- JOY
Thanks were extended to Romie Ridley and Lucinda Howard.
- Community Warden Scheme
Romie Ridley asked how much money would be needed to extend the Community Warden Scheme. Service users pay a minimum amount each month which does not cover the cost of the warden, so fundraising is always needed. Grants have been received from South Cambridgeshire District Council, the Stapleford Estate Fund, the Stapleford Weekend, and the Shelford Feast. Age UK Cambridge and Peterborough are keen to keep the scheme going. Jill Ward expressed her appreciation of the Warden Scheme. Mary Cooper and Jackie Nettleton, our representatives on the steering group with the Age UK team, were thanked.

- **Ministry beyond Stapleford**

- St Andrew's Stapleford-Nachingwea Link
Thanks were expressed to Trish Maude for her leadership of the Link and to the team. Trish thanked the PCC, clergy and congregation for their support and said

that the Link is confident to proceed with its plans for Nachingwea. Trish would welcome new members to the committee.

- St Andrew's/Children's Society Partnership
Thanks were expressed to Rob Needle and the team.

- **Children and Young People**

- Children and Families
Thanks were expressed to the team led by Sue Brown with support from Fiona Holliday and Lucinda Howard.
- Youth Groups
- Little Fishes Toddler Group
- Shelford & Stapleford Youth Initiative
Zac Brittan is coming to give us an update on the initiative at a future service. There should be a trustee from the church on their board and a volunteer was encouraged to come forward.
- YouthInc

- **Music**

- Choir
Mary Cooper expressed her thanks to Sarah Needle for leading the choir through a challenging time. Simon Taylor welcomed our new Director of Music, Timothy Kwan, and looks forward to working with him.
- Treble Time
The new children's choir starts on 7 March.
- Tower Bells
Thanks were extended to Tony Smith for his continuing leadership of the team. Simon Taylor said that the bells were much appreciated, and it would be good to hear them more often in 2024.

- **House Groups, Study Groups and Prayer Groups**

Thanks were expressed to all the leaders of our groups.

- Wednesday Evening Home Group
- Exploring Faith, Life and Prayer (Women's Group)
- Tuesday Evening Bible Group
- Friday Prayer Group
- One-off courses

- **Eco Church Project**
Simon Taylor thanked Sophi Berridge for her past work and reaffirmed the church's continued commitment in the project.
- **Church Flowers**
Jackie Nettleton and the team were thanked for their lovely floral work. Additional volunteers are always welcome to join the team.
- **St Andrew's Men's Group**
The group was quiet in late 2023 but resumed in 2024 with a Curry Night. Thanks were expressed to Alan Holliday for his leadership. Simon Taylor raised the idea of a corresponding Women's Group.
- **Lunch Group**
Chris Everitt was thanked for organising the group which meets for lunch once a month at the Arthur Rank Hospice.
- **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 with support from Mary Cooper. Mary Cooper told the meeting that the MU contributes £120 per year to the Johnson Hall where they hold their meetings.
- **Friends of St Andrew's**
The Friends is a vehicle for people to contribute to the church building. Fundraising has started in a gentle way and thanks were expressed to Tony Hore for his continuing leadership.
- **Stapleford Messenger**
Thanks were expressed to Helen Hale who leads the well organised and efficient Messenger production team. The team is engaged in forward planning, including the need for an advertising manager and co-ordinator during 2024.

9. Buildings, Churchyard, Goods and Ornaments

- **Church Building**
Stephen Brown, Chair of the Fabric Committee, reported that the boiler is likely to need further attention, and future replacement. A replacement heating system is also under consideration, which will be expensive. Stephen Brown and Chris Cooper were thanked for everything they do to maintain the building.
- **Inventory of Goods and Ornaments**
The inventory is available for inspection.
Thanks were expressed to Romie Ridley and Margaret Hebden for keeping the inventory.

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

Gillian Sanders was thanked for managing bookings.

- **Churchyard**

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

10. Granta Deanery Synod

Lizzie Taylor and Felicity Cooke were thanked for representing us on the Deanery Synod; they are in post until 2026. Felicity Cooke headed up the group producing the Deanery Development Plan.

11. Vicar's Report

*Simon Taylor had circulated in advance his report in written and video form. The full text of this report given in **2024** relating to the previous year was as follows. There were no questions or comments. This is included here as part of the minutes of the APCM held in 2024.*

This is my ninth annual report. That feels like a lot, but Lizzie and I feel very at home here, and don't have itchy feet.

In these reports my habit has been to review the good things that happened in the previous year, to look honestly at some of the difficulties we have – I think that is important – and to look a little to the future. I am going to do the same again this year.

So, 2023. It is worth looking back, because, as usual, we did some great stuff. Starting outside the church and services, two of the continuing successes are JOY and Little Fishes, for the old and the young in our community respectively. Fiona and Lucinda lead Little Fishes and Romie and Lucinda lead JOY. The teams that lead and help out at these have done a fantastic job in showing Christ's love to our community, and if you have been to one you will know that Christ is also spoken of, directly and plainly. That is one change we have gently made over the last several years: now, if there is an event that the church runs, Christ is spoken about. To my mind that must always be the case. The church is not here as a social service, but to spread the good news of Christ in word and action together.

JOY and Little Fishes were going on throughout the year. So too was our pastoral care. This too has developed. The wonderful team, led by Romie, has gradually been renewed – faithful long-standing members still contribute significantly but there are a number of new faces, as there needed to be. I am grateful to them all. And prayer and anointing are becoming part of their repertoire, which is as it should be.

Those are all background things going on. Turning to events during 2023, early on I was instituted and inducted as vicar. That was at Candlemas. The Church of England's machinations that seem to be designed to avoid giving each parish a vicar of its own have to be seen to be believed, but we got there in the end. If you think that it is a good thing for St Andrew's to have its own vicar – I do – then you owe thanks to those who dug their

heels in 25 or 30 years ago to stop the complete absorption of the parish into a bigger entity, so we at least had a good starting point as we made the arguments for separating Stapleford off again. It would be a very bad thing for the church in Stapleford to lose its own identity and to be absorbed into Great Shelford. That plan will rear its head again in the future, I am sure, but we have pushed it away for the present.

During the year we had lots of different sermon series. I enjoyed taking us through the second half of Paul's letter to the Philippians. That was before Lent. Then after Easter we had a series looking at art and the resurrection. That was fun to do and well-received. We then preached through the Sermon on the Mount – really good to go back to some bible basics in that way – spent the summer with Joseph, dipped into the book of Job, and celebrated the coronation with a series looking at kingship in the bible. I hope that you enjoyed it, and, more importantly, that your faith was stimulated, increased or enlivened.

And we had all the usual things that go to make up the life of St Andrew's: lovely celebrations of our two mission links, parties, baptisms, weddings and funerals, some wonderful music – I will say more about that in a minute – involvement in the Village Weekend and more. A good year in lots of ways.

The Lord was worshipped, the Word was preached, the sacraments were celebrated and we had enormous fun for all ages all the while.

None of this could have taken place without huge contributions from lots of people. I have already mentioned Fiona, Lucinda and Romie. What great people they are, and how much we owe them.

Romie, of course, is also an assistant churchwarden. In that role she is joined by Margaret Hebden, who does an immense amount particularly in keeping our weekly services going. I am grateful to them both for their work in that role. And I am massively grateful to Alastair MacGregor, who once again has been our sole churchwarden. Alastair's kindness to me and work for the whole church is outstanding. I am so very thankful for him.

Two other mentions. The problem with mentioning individuals is that you then start missing people out, but I am going to mention Stephen and Sue Brown. Stephen has been chair of our Fabric Committee for some years and keeps us in order in more ways than you can imagine. The fact, for example, that our electrical appliances are checked and are safe, that our lightening rod is checked, that our fire extinguishers would work should we ever need them to do so – all of these sorts of things as well as organising more obvious maintenance and repairs – all that takes place under his leadership, assisted by the Fabric Committee. Grateful thanks to him and them.

And Sue has organised our children's ministry for some years. It is a large and important task, and Sue has done it brilliantly. At the moment Sue is taking a break from the role and we are having a little re-think, but none of that takes away from the fact that she has been an inspirational and hugely hard-working leader of that team and done great things for us.

And I know, of course, that there are many of you, unsung heroes beaver away behind the scenes, without whom we could not function. Thank you, one and all!

So, lots of good things this year.

But difficulties too, of course. It is a rare year in which there are not difficulties, and it is right to acknowledge them.

One difficulty was with our music. For reasons that many of you know, it became impossible for John Bryden to continue as Director of Music, notwithstanding his huge contribution to the church over the last several years, for which I am genuinely grateful. Few churches are lucky enough to have someone as gifted and enthusiastic as John in post and none of us wanted his tenure to end. But the position of Director of Music is at its heart a spiritual post with a significant role to play, through music, in the spiritual life of a church, and there are some things incompatible with that spiritual leadership. Despite our good will and best efforts it was not possible to change the situation once it developed. But John has gone with our very good wishes, and it is a pleasure still to see him at services occasionally.

Of course, out of adversity, good things can come. That is God's way of working. One good thing that came out of this was the opportunity for Sarah Needle to step up as Acting Director of Music. She did so utterly fantastically. She inherited a situation in which the choir – all of us really – were a bit shell-shocked, and by loving care and diligence she was able to get our music back on track. She gave us a great 6 months, including the mammoth effort of terrific Christmas celebrations, and I thank God for her.

The other good thing that came out of John's departure was Tim Kwan's arrival. To state the obvious, Tim is not John and will be different, but he brings his own particular unique set of gifts, and I am very much looking forward to working with him and seeing how he develops the role of Director of Music as time goes by.

The music, then, was one difficulty. The other major difficulty has been the impossibility of replacing Zoe as youthworker. We have tried and tried, but in common with youthwork organisations and other churches we have found there is a dearth of youthworkers. Or maybe none of us are paying enough. Zoe was great, but as time goes by it gets more and more likely that the foundational work she did is going to need to be re-done. We went through the same re-building process when Zac left – then it was the pandemic that caused the hiatus – so I know we can do it if we have to, though it would have been lovely just to be in a position to build on what Zoe had already done. In any event, Zoe's departure and Sue Brown stepping back from our children's ministry is giving us a chance to re-evaluate what we do, and that is a good opportunity which we will not waste.

Other difficulties are on the horizon, or perhaps rather closer. One is that we are suffering from a real lack of volunteers. I mention this not to guilt trip anyone – a wise older vicar told me years ago that guilt was a very bad foundation for any aspect of

ministry – so not to guilt anyone, but to be realistic. I am concerned that lots of little jobs, which I keep mentioning, are just not being done unless I pick them up myself. But that is not the main concern. There are two bigger jobs in the offing which simply have to be done. As matters stand we have only one warden, Alastair, and he can only serve one more year. And we have had no volunteers willing to join the Fabric Committee and consider the role of chair of the Fabric Committee when Stephen steps down at the end of this year after a substantial stint. I cannot do those jobs, and actually hand on heart I do not think that I can do the job of being your vicar properly if those jobs are not done.

This lack of volunteers is no doubt for many reasons. Changes in the way society functions, in the world of work and the expectations laid upon those of working age, and more. And it is also the case that, as in the rest of the church our congregational numbers are gently dropping, and that too, to state the obvious, affects the number of volunteers available. We have plenty of good weeks, when the church is full of bounce and life, but I see the numbers from week to week and the trends are pretty clear and are not encouraging. If this continues we will see a number of effects, not just a lack of volunteers. Money will get tighter, against still rising bills, for example, but more jobs will need to be paid for because we have fewer volunteers. Our electoral roll will shrink – next year is a complete revision, and the results of that complete revision may be a bit of a shock. When that happens we may find that our right to be represented in the wider church will contract, because those rights depend on numbers on our roll. And smaller churches are less able to put on a wide and vibrant programme and so remain attractive to a wide spread of people. And so on. I can't predict all the ripples in the pond, but there will be many.

All this is rather gloomy, I know, but there is no point in an annual report if it is not realistic. What then does the future hold for us?

Essentially I think the best course is to trust in God and hang in there. We will keep on trying to grow, of course. But even if we can't, we will trust. We may not know what the future will be, but it will be the future God has for us. We will keep doing what we are doing. Keep reaching out to our community. Keep preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments. Keep offering a loving welcome in the name of Christ to all whom we encounter.

When Daniel and his friends were about to be thrown into the fiery furnace for refusing to bow down to a golden idol, Daniel had something to say to the King. He said 'The God whom we serve can deliver us.' Daniel was certain of that. And Daniel went on. 'But even if he does not, we want you to know, your Majesty, that we will not worship your gods, nor serve the image of gold that you have set up.'

I am likewise certain that our God can fill our church. It may or may not be in his good plan to do so. That is up to him. As time goes on I am learning not to worry about numbers, and to trust in God. St Andrew's is his. We are his. We have our bibles. We

have prayer. We have faith in Jesus Christ who loves us and died for us. We have the Holy Spirit. In the end those things are all that we need. All that is required of us is to be faithful, and that we shall do.

Every blessing to you all, Simon

12. Any Other Business

Alastair MacGregor thanked Simon Taylor on behalf of the congregation for his vision and leadership, and expressed our good fortune to have Simon and Lizzie at St Andrew's

The meeting closed at 1.22 pm.

Item 2: ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE LAITY TO SERVE ON THE PCC

There are no documents to consider for this item.

Item 3: ELECTION OF TWO ASSISTANT CHURCHWARDENS

Assistant wardens are a non-statutory post which St Andrew's have found convenient to have for many years. Assistant wardens are not automatically members of the PCC, a body whose composition is defined in the Church Representation Rules.

Item 4: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS & REPORTS

4.1: TREASURER'S REPORT

Extracted from the Report & Accounts 2024 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. This income category, at £80,297, was 10% higher than the previous year (2023: £73,116).

Other ordinary income rose to £32,014 (2023: £30,168); lower magazine advertising revenue was more than offset by higher rental income from the Verger's Cottage and Johnson Hall.

Before investment gains, the net surplus for the year was £18,398 (2023: £8,627). The restricted funds were in surplus for the year by £6,378 (2023: £2,819 deficit). The church's unrestricted funds (which reflect the normal operations of the PCC) were in surplus by £12,020 (2023: £11,446).

The PCC transferred £3,000 to The Messenger designated fund (2023: £3,000). £6,000 was paid out to village and other church related activities (2023: Nil).

Gains on investments amounted £2,452 (2023: £7,879).

Net assets were £225,401 (2023: £204,551).

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 eg: our links with St Andrew's Church, Nachingwea, Tanzania and The Children's Society 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 2024

The tables under this heading are extracted from the Report & Accounts 2024 for submission to the Charity Commission by the PCC.

4.2.1: Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 total	2023 total
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources				
Donations and legacies	69,239	11,058	80,297	73,116
Charitable activities	1,312	0	1,312	1,160
Other ordinary incoming resources	27,970	4,044	32,014	30,168
Investments	5,614	0	5,614	4,802
Total incoming resources	104,135	15,102	119,237	109,246
Resources expended				
Raising funds	(15,563)	0	(15,563)	(14,377)
Charitable activities	(76,552)	(8,724)	(85,276)	(86,242)
Total resources expended	(92,115)	(8,724)	(100,839)	(100,619)
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before other gains and losses	12,020	6,378	18,398	8,627
Gains/(Losses) on investments	2,452	0	2,452	7,879

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 total	2023 total
	£	£	£	£
Net movement in funds	12,472	8,378	20,850	16,506
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	172,128	32,423	204,551	188,045
Total funds carried forward	184,600	40,801	225,401	204,551

4.2.2: Balance Sheet

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 total	2023 total
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Investments	124,873	0	124,873	122,421
Current assets				
Debtors	1,887	558	2,445	2,059
Cash at bank and in hand	72,566	40,243	112,809	97,037
Sub-total	74,453	40,801	115,254	99,096
Current liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(14,726)	0	(14,726)	(16,966)
Net current assets	59,727	40,801	100,528	82,130

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 total	2023 total
	£	£	£	£
Total assets less current liabilities	184,600	40,801	225,401	204,551
Total net assets	184,600	40,801	225,401	204,551
The funds of the charity				
Restricted funds	0	40,801	40,801	32,423
Unrestricted funds	184,600	0	184,600	172,128
Total funds	184,600	40,801	225,401	204,551

4.2.3: Incoming Resources

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 total	2023 total
	£	£	£	£
Donations and legacies				
Donations & gifts	57,109	9,210	66,319	61,621
Gift aid	12,130	1,848	13,978	11,495
Sub-total	69,239	11,058	80,297	73,116
Charitable activities				
Fee income	1,312	0	1,312	1,160
Other ordinary incoming resources				
Hall hire	6,138	0	6,138	4,388
Fundraising	0	4,044	4,044	3,060
Magazine sales & advertising	17,008		17,008	18,275
Other income	4,824	0	4,824	4,445
Sub-total	27,970	4,044	32,014	30,168
Income from investments				
Interest income	5,614	0	5,614	4,802
Total incoming resources	104,135	15,102	119,237	109,246

4.2.4: Resources Expended

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 total	2023 total
	£	£	£	£
Expenditure on raising funds				
Magazine printing costs	9,568	0	9,568	10,145
Other trading activities - hall upkeep	5,995	0	5,995	3,872
Other	0	0	0	360
Sub-total	15,563	0	15,563	14,377
Expenditure on charitable activities				
Ministry share	26,486	0	26,486	27,094
Administrative costs	13,777	177	13,954	12,831
Utilities	7,076	0	7,076	4,062
Insurance	2,809	0	2,809	2,700
Repairs & maintenance	7,484	2,830	10,314	11,734
Events & entertaining	220	0	220	608
Missions & charities	5,500	5,717	11,217	12,362
Upkeep of services	1,897	0	1,897	1,442
Choir, robes & music	11,552	0	11,552	5,214
Youth work & education	(249)	0	(249)	8,195
Sub-total	76,552	8,724	85,276	86,242
Total resources expended	92,115	8,724	100,839	100,619

4.2.5: Funds

	1 Jan 2023	Movement during 2023	31 Dec 2023	Movement during 2024	31 Dec 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds					
Estate fund	25,598	(1,053)	24,545	2,081	26,626
Nachingwea fund	9,644	(2,067)	7,577	4,790	12,367
Children's Society & Warden Scheme	0	301	301	1,507	1,808
Total Restricted funds	35,242	(2,819)	32,423	8,378	40,801
Unrestricted funds					
Johnson Hall fund	27,710	515	28,225	143	28,368
General fund	42,183	15,034	57,217	15,329	72,546
Legacy fund	77,527	0	77,527	0	77,527
Designated funds					
Messenger Fund	5,383	3,000	8,383	(3,000)	5,383
Youth Fund	0	776	776	0	776
Total Unrestricted funds	152,803	19,325	172,128	12,472	184,600
Total funds	188,045	16,506	204,551	20,850	225,401

4.3: BUDGET FOR 2024

4.3.1: Notes

General inflation assumptions

Energy & water	10.0%
Contracted gas & electricity supplies	3.0%
General	2.6%

Johnson Hall

Income

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

Maintenance

- Routine work, no decorating

Estate Fund

Income

- Feoffees as last year

Repairs

- £1,000 for sundry repairs
- No quinquennial repairs
- Excludes major heating & ceiling repairs as not yet agreed

General Fund

Income

- No repeat of large donation in 2024
- Modest increase in regular giving
- Reduction in investment income – rate reduction(s) expected
- No other changes

Costs

- Normal running costs assumed except as stated below

Staff

- 3.5% increase on current rates
- No provision for youth worker

Maintenance etc

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

Insurance

- Adjustment to value insured results in no annual increase

Quota to diocese

- Per formal notification
- 9.3% increase and no synod rebate in 2025

Missions & Charities

- Age UK & SSYI (no Deanery youth initiative)

Magazine profit

- Sale revenue – receipts down on same time last year
- Advertising revenue – based on confirmed payments received and an allowance of £1,000 for sundry/late applications

4.3.2: Summary

Net Surplus/(Deficit)	2025 Budget	2024 Actual
Johnson Hall Fund	1,947	144
Estate Fund	4,000	2,081
General Fund	8,078	8,437
Messenger surplus retained	4,023	4,440
Total	£18,049	£15,102

4.3.3: Johnson Hall Fund

	2025 Budget	2024 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Income			
Hall Hire	6,250	6,138	1.82
Expenditure			
Electricity	620	597	3.78
Gas	510	491	3.87
Cleaning & Administration	670	648	3.33
Water	309	281	10.00
Repairs & Maintenance	800	2,387	(66.49)
Insurance	869	869	(0.02)
Other	525	721	(27.16)
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	£1,947	£144	1,256.33

4.3.4: Estate Fund

	2025 Budget	2024 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Income			
Feoffees	5,000	4,861	2.86
Friends of St Andrew's	0	0	-
Donations	50	50	0.00
Expenditure			
Architect's fees	0	480	(100.00)
Repairs	1,000	2,350	(57.45)
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	£4,000	£2,081	92.20

4.3.5: General Fund

	2025 Budget	2024 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Income			
Collections & Donations	5,500	6,549	(16.02)
Regular Giving	52,000	50,560	2.85
Gift Aid	12,500	12,131	3.05
Fees	1,325	1,312	1.03
Investment income	5,300	5,614	(5.59)
Verger's Cottage rent	4,900	4,824	1.58
Total Income	£81,525	£80,989	0.66
Expenditure			
Administration expenses	2,297	3,055	(24.81)
Postage & Stationery	387	377	2.60
Photocopier Hire	1,140	1,251	(8.90)
Other	417	406	2.60
Clergy Expenses	150	0	-
Cottage Maintenance & Repairs	200	863	(76.83)
Cottage Gas	206	200	3.00
Cottage Electric	2,028	1,969	3.00
Cottage Water	89	81	10.00
Cottage Insurance	296	296	(0.00)
Cottage Cleaning	308	301	2.60
Gas	2,375	3,230	(26.46)
Electricity	1,219	1,183	3.00
Insurance	2,513	2,513	(0.01)
Water	455	414	10.00
Organ Repairs	215	210	2.60

	2025 Budget	2024 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Maintenance, Upkeep & Repairs	3,500	4,795	(27.01)
Church cleaning	544	530	2.60
Upkeep of Services	1,250	1,897	(34.12)
Education/Children's Work	0	(249)	(100.00)
Churchyard	500	785	(36.27)
Organist	11,395	11,010	3.50
Choir, Robes & Music	557	542	2.60
Events/Entertaining	225	220	2.60
Quota to Diocese	30,442	26,486	14.93
Missions & Charities	1,500	1,500	0.00
Bank Charges	297	290	2.60
Gifts	250	0	-
Youth Worker	0	0	-
Parish Administrator	8,692	8,398	3.50
Total Expenditure	£73,447	£72,552	1.23
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	£8,078	£8,437	(4.25)

4.3.6: Magazine Profit & Loss Account

	2025 Budget	2024 Actual	% increase / (decrease)
Income			
Sales	4,200	4,438	(5.36)
Advertising Revenue	12,640	12,570	0.56
Total income	£16,840	£17,008	(0.99)
Expenditure			
Printing Costs	9,637	9,393	2.60
Administration	180	175	2.60
Total expenditure	£9,817	£9,568	2.60
Net Surplus	£7,023	£7,440	(5.60)
Distributed	3,000	3,000	0.00
Retained by PCC	£4,023	£4,440	(9.39)

4.4: GIFT AID

Thanks very much to everyone who gift aids their donations. For 2024, total gift aid received by St Andrew's was £13,482.

Gift aid of £5,439 on donations to St Andrew's outside the Parish Giving Scheme was claimed (about £900 more than for 2023). Of this, £4,099 was for the church's general fund, £1,201 was for the Nachingwea Link and £48.50 was for the Stapleford Community Warden Scheme.

A further £8,043 of gift aid was received during 2024 from donations made via the Parish Giving Scheme. This is about £1,300 more than received for 2023. The number of regular donors using the Parish Giving Scheme remained stable at 38 over the year.

Anyone interested in giving to St Andrew's is encouraged to do so through the Parish Giving Scheme. Monthly, quarterly, annual or one-off donations can be made on the Parish Giving Scheme website at: www.parishgiving.org.uk by click on the 'Donors' tab at the top of the page and searching for 'Stapleford St Andrew'. Thank you.

Lisa MacGregor

Item 5: INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The Independent Examiner for 2024 was Jayne Merrick. She has signed the Report & Accounts 2024 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 2025 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 2024 for submission to the Charity Commission by the PCC

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document

Stapleford Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of working with the Parish Priest, the Revd Dr Simon Taylor, to promote in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC has maintenance responsibilities for the Church of St Andrew, the Verger's Cottage and the Johnson Hall.

Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts

The provision of religious services on a regular basis. St Andrew's is a church for the whole community, including Stapleford and the surrounding areas, and aims to provide a safe and inclusive welcome to everyone, whatever their situation in life. 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 and various groups and activities are 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 AND 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 2024 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. Series of services during the year followed a number of different themes: in addition to significant use of the lectionary, there were series based on the poems of George Herbert, the book *Being Christian* by Rowan Williams, the first half of the book of Ephesians, the life of Jacob, and Heresies.

Every Sunday morning begins with a communion service at 9 am. The various services at 10.30 am are of different styles. In 2024 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 summer services were successfully held in the churchyard.

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

In March 2024 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	2024
Average week in October	100	83	79	104
Usual Sunday	85	76	80	83
Easter Eve/Day	240	196	185	193
Christmas Eve/Day	430	368	368	386

The October 2024 figures were increased by unusual special events. Overall, therefore, attendance is at present generally lower than before the pandemic, but at or marginally above the attendance in 2022. There is, however, a sense that in attendance as well as in the range of activities the church offers 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 2024, as in most years except during the pandemic, 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.

The Johnson Hall is used by church groups, community groups and local service businesses. A weekly toddler group, Little Fishes, run by the church, takes place there. This re-started at the end of 2021. A popular monthly group for seniors, called JOY (Just Older Youth), is also run by the church in the Hall. The reduction in use of the Hall after the pandemic continues to be rectified. Whether the revenue will cover the cost of maintenance remains to be seen.

The Verger's Cottage provides office space for the parish, including the administrator and curate. 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). The sitting room or other rooms in the cottage are used as counselling rooms occasionally.

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

An attempt was made in 2024 to re-start a church youth group. The group was small but valuable. It ceased to function part of the way through the year.

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 43 years of operation in 2024 with a service in October. 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 2024 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. There is significant demand for the services of the warden, more than the scheme can currently meet.

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 and thinking about how the culture of St Andrew's impacts safeguarding. 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 up-dates 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.
- As part of our vision for buildings, continued to make plans for major upcoming work: installing a new heating system, replastering on the nave ceiling, replacing pews with chairs, enhancing lighting and improving accessibility. We thank Stephen Brown for chairing the Fabric Committee up to the end of 2024 and Kirsty Campbell for taking over as chair.
- Supported Simon Taylor's extended ministerial leave.
- Prepared a Trustees' Annual Report to file with the accounts filed with the Charity Commission.
- Participated in Feoffees, Friends of St Andrews and the Messenger Fund.
- Voted to use outstanding Deanery funds for outreach work in the Deanery, including YouthInc and chaplaincy in the Science Park.
- Supported St Andrew's partnership with The Children's Society and also with the Link Committee furthering the relationship with St Andrew's, Nachingwea.

- Received regular reports from committees and organisations. We thank everyone who contributes to the work of these groups.
- Backed the Stapleford Warden Scheme. The PCC thanks Age UK, and our liaison members of the steering group, Mary Cooper and Jackie Nettleton.

We thank Gillian Sanders whose administrative support to the PCC has been invaluable. She stepped down from her role as Parish Administrator at the end of March, after excellent service, and we are grateful for all she has brought to St Andrew's, Stapleford. We thank Nicky West for her diligent work 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, sidespeople, 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, Kirsty Campbell, Martin Ginger, Sarah Hackett and Romie Ridley .

Alastair MacGregor

6.3: SAFEGUARDING

We are an active church with a congregation covering a wide age range. That brings with it certain obligations with regard to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

St Andrew's runs five 'Church Activities' and oversees one 'Non-Church Activity' that are subject to Safeguarding requirements. Leaders and helpers for those activities have to complete safeguarding training and are subject to checks with the Disclosure & Barring Service. Both the training and the checks must be renewed every three years.

The requirements set by the Church of England are updated regularly. We monitor our compliance with those requirements and keep up with changes through the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and Safeguarding Hub. These are managed by the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and reviewed with Revd Simon Taylor regularly throughout the year. The PCC oversees the Safeguarding provisions of the church and receives reports from the PSO at every meeting.

Rob Needle

Item 7: ELECTORAL ROLL

Every sixth year there is a complete revision of the Electoral Roll. This complete revision has taken place in 2025. There were 110 members of the new Electoral Roll on 25 April 2025. When the roll was last fully revised in 2019 the number on it as at the APCM was 109, virtually the same figure.

This current figure does represent, however, a decrease from 127 since the APCM in March 2024. The net decrease over the last year is a result of deaths, people moving away, and the removal (as a result of the complete revision) of those whose names had been on the roll previously, in some instances for many years, but who in reality had ceased to be part of the church in the intervening years. This year's figure is likely to increase gradually over time as was previously the case.

Amongst those who are no longer on the Roll are those who have died in the last year: including Diane Barlow, Denise Craney, Frank Jacot and Stephen Lee, long-time members of the congregation who died during the last year. We miss them. We are also delighted to welcome new worshippers to the church family.

Of those now on the roll:

- 65 live in the parish of Stapleford
- 35 live in Great or Little Shelford
- 2 live in Hauxton
- 2 live slightly further afield in Caldecote
- 6 reside in Cambridge, including Trumpington

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 question 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, the finance team, the now-retired Chair of the Fabric Committee Stephen Brown and his successor Kirsty Campbell, and the whole fabric committee. Special thanks to Alan Holliday and Chris Cooper for tireless work with the church boiler. Thanks too to everyone who keeps the building and churchyard clean, tidy, operational and looking beautiful.

Working with a Vision for Buildings group (Simon Taylor, Kirsty Campbell, Rome Ridley and Alan Holliday) I am making a plan to improve heating, seating, lighting and accessibility of our main church building. These plans will go to the PCC and the Diocese in due course. They will require us to raise funds and I am hopeful that the Friends of St Andrew's will be able to help cover some of the costs.

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.

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

Writing this report in the third and final year of my curacy at St Andrew's is a bit bittersweet!

To begin with, I am very happy to have been successfully signed off this March after a meeting with Bishop Dagmar, IME2 Officer Steve Rothwell and Simon Taylor. It means that I have officially passed my curacy training, although of course I continue to learn and grow in my vocation and broaden my experiences as a priest.

One of the bits of paperwork we had to submit beforehand was an end of curacy assessment, and I found that a really useful experience. Using the seven formation criteria for Church of England priests, I was able to reflect on how far I've come in my vocation, but also on those parts that still need work! A successful curacy can be defined in many ways, but for me being in the right church must be fundamental. I remain extremely grateful for the varied opportunities I've had at St Andrew's and the wider parish, to serve and develop my ministry, as well as the support and grace shown to me by the congregation, Simon and all I've worked alongside.

I feel my confidence in my role, especially in more outward and public facing services and events, has really increased. I see this in my presiding at funeral, baptisms and weddings as well as writing for the Stapleford Messenger and one-offs such as the village weekend service.

I continue to enjoy the deepening relationships I've made in our groups, Little Fishes and JOY, both places where we are seeing increasing crossover with church attendance and openness to the Christian faith.

Lastly, Simon's sabbatical leave was a great opportunity to step up and experience the role of vicar, albeit with a lot of help and encouragement from others in our team. Christmas was exhilarating, if tiring, and I learnt a lot about managing a church through a busy period, I'm only sorry that my appendix had other plans meaning I couldn't finish the full three months. Nevertheless, it showed me that I might be up for this vicar-role in the future, which is a good thing really as I look to what life beyond St Andrew's might look like!

Lucinda Howard

8.3: MINISTRY IN & AROUND STAPLEFORD

8.3.1: Pastoral Care & JOY

The Pastoral Care team consists of Lucinda Howard, Rob Ferneyhough, Sarah Hackett Jackie Nettleton and Romie Ridley. The 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. Romie takes Communion to 5 people/couples at home each month, and any others who wish for it while unwell. The clergy and Fiona Holliday as LLM also help in this role. John King continues to visit Stapleford people in Addenbrookes after his volunteering at The Royal Papworth on Mondays. The team meets about every 2 months to share news and concerns and discuss ways forward.

The JOY group continues to flourish and grow (without much advertising) 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!) chat and friendship are key.

Speakers have included an inspiring account of the working life and charitable work of Arthur Rank by Rob Ferneyhough, who worked for Rank Xerox; a very helpful talk on avoiding scams by a Community Police officer; a JOY 'Songs of Praise', then Christmas carols led by Sarah Needle; Mary and Chris Cooper on their fascinating visit to Kazakhstan; excellent talks by various members of the group about important parts of their lives eg Chris Everitt, Brian Ellis, Janet Johnson and Kay Coe (with others to come). Sharing of a wealth of memories eg of Mothering Sundays, table top games, quizzes, sharing favourite poems, quotations and resolutions for the New year by Chris Everitt and a pub signs quiz by David Barnes. Many thanks to them all.

In addition, thanks to Rob Ferneyhough for organising them, and to Glenda Ferneyhough for helping with lifts, lunches are arranged at Arthur Rank, usually on a Monday every couple of months. About 20 usually attend with lifts for those who cannot drive – any offers to give lifts would be very helpful.

More helpers for the Pastoral team and JOY would be most welcome, please talk to any of the team. Also, offers to ring someone up once a week, invite them in or take them out for a cuppa would be much appreciated.

Romie Ridley & Lucinda Howard

8.3.2: St Andrew's/Age UK Community Warden Scheme

At present our Community Warden (Juliet) has 11 people on her books and there is a waiting list of 5 people for which the services of volunteers may be called upon until Juliet can incorporate them into her list.

How is the service paid for?

The service users contribute a weekly amount (£15 a single person, £18 per couple - some help with the cost may be available). St Andrew's Church, the Parish Council, the Messenger Fund, Shelford Feast and the Village Estate Fund kindly give grants, and South Cambs District Council has given significant financial support.

In 2024 Fundraising events included selling second hand books at the Shelford Feast, a bric-a-brac stall at the Stapleford Village Weekend, and a soup lunch and a coffee morning which were very well attended

Recent research has identified that investing in a warden scheme delivers a return on investment of £4.92 for every £1.00 spent so saving the NHS significant amounts by keeping people out of hospital. All Cambridgeshire wardens were part of this research run by Cambs District Council. It was quite intensive taking months to come to a conclusion.

Jackie Nettleton & Mary Cooper

8.4: MINISTRY BEYOND STAPLEFORD

8.4.1: St Andrew's Stapleford Nachingwea Link

The Link Committee met every two months throughout the year, mostly in person and occasionally over Zoom.

In addition the Sub-Committees met as and when needed to discuss and take action on their respective projects.

Projects supported in 2024 included:

- The three-month English Course run by Nachingwea Link chair, Kevin Bushiri. This prepares children leaving primary school (where the teaching is in Swahili) to continue to secondary school (where the teaching is in English). 45 children (35 girls and 10 boys) from primary schools across Nachingwea completed the course, with the Link providing financial assistance to those families struggling to pay the course fees.
- Provision of uniforms for special-needs pupils and secondary girls from needy families, who are otherwise reluctant to attend school if they don't have the correct uniform.
- Financial support for two girls studying science A-levels.
- Financial support to enable a youth group delegation to go to Newala for a Diocesan youth event.
- Ongoing support for women's health in conjunction with Tanzanian charity Dare Foundation. This has led to the Nachingwea Women's Group setting up a committee and a bank account, and they now meet monthly to discuss women's health issues.
- A pension for a retired blind priest.

We were pleased to hear that St Andrew's Nachingwea has a new priest, Rev Phares Lihewe, and we look forward to working with him on Link projects.

Fundraising activities included a pub quiz at the Three Horseshoes, the May lunch with stalls, a celebratory weekend with music concert and family service at St Andrew's, and a Christmas Tea. These raised respectively around £750, £1,300, £600 and £1,400 excluding gift aid.

Looking ahead to 2025/26

With two new members Rob Ferneyhough and Tom Robinson joining our Ag & Tech Committee, we are looking to further food security projects including restoration of the local disused dam in Nachingwea.

In the autumn, Liz Claiborne-Dixon (whose parents were married by the Rev Cox in 1952 in St Andrew's Nachingwea) and her husband Robert are visiting Nachingwea, following in her father's footsteps when he was a civil servant for the UK government based in

several locations in Tanzania. We put them in touch with Kevin, who will show them around the church, school and health facilities that the Link has funded.

The Link Committee gratefully acknowledges:

- All our supporters, Friends of the Link and funders for their generous financial aid and other support that made these projects and fundraising events possible.
- The ongoing 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 generous £1000 grant from the Messenger Fund.

We were saddened to hear of the recent deaths of two valued and long-standing supporters of the Link, Philippa Jones formerly of Stapleford, and Dr Lawi Issa, former District Medical Officer for Nachingwea.

Trish Maude

8.4.2: St Andrew's Children's Society Partnership

During 2024, the St Andrew's/The Children's Society Partnership team ran several events.

The Lent fundraiser promoted the *Children At The Table* campaign, encouraging political parties in the forthcoming general election to include the needs of children in their policies and plans for government. Supporters were encouraged to make donations and to add their name to the petition in support of that campaign.

Glenda Ferneyhough ran a plant sale at the Harvest Festival and the autumn also saw us collate the money from the collection box scheme. The preacher for the annual Children's Society service was Rob Needle. The year ended with the Children's Society Advent Challenge and a very well attended Christingle service on Christmas Eve.

The above events between them raised a fantastic £2053.21 to support the vital work of The Children's Society. A big thank you to the St Andrew's family for their generous support throughout the year.

We are always looking for new ideas to promote the work of The Children's Society. If you would be willing to get involved in planning or supporting any of our initiatives, please speak to me.

Rob Needle

8.5: CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

8.5.1: Children & Families

2024 began with a shift in delivery of children and families' services by reducing the number of Messy Church services from twice each month to once a month. The workload of preparing a service each fortnight had become onerous and once a month has proved to be far more productive. Alongside that provision it was agreed to provide supervised craft in the Lady Chapel during the 10.30am services in church, except on the All Age service Sunday each month. This has proved popular and with an increasing number of very young members, a baby corner is very much welcomed by parents. Older children too have enjoyed the crafts on offer, sometimes making it difficult to persuade them out of the corner for all age activities going on in the services!

In Messy Church during the colder months and Forest Messy Church outside during the warmer months we have considered themes including 'Peter's discipleship'; 'Who is Jesus?'; 'What did Jesus say?'; 'All can be saved' as well as the perennial celebrations of Easter, Harvest and Christmas. We rely heavily, but not exclusively, on the Messy Church Magazine, which outlines themes and suggests craft activities and resources, adapting them to our setup and expertise into a stand-alone service that includes bible reading, a short talk or reflection on the theme, a time of prayer and worship, as well as crafts on the theme and refreshments. The number of attendees has increased during the year, with an average of 35, split 50/50 between adults and children.

Grateful thanks to the team of helpers – Alastair, Lisa, Lucinda, Fiona, Alan, Lizzie and welcome to Sarah Needle, who is providing an added dimension to our worship with live music and Sarah Hackett whose biscuit-making skills are much appreciated. More help is always welcome so please contact me if you can come along and help occasionally – DBS check and a little light training required.

Sue Brown

8.5.2: Youth Groups

We hit a total wall with attempts to replace Zoe as youthworker, so have been somewhat in limbo since September 2023. A small but terrific little group was re-formed in the course of 2024, meeting in the vicarage, but had to end partly because of a lack of helpers.

We will try again!

Simon Taylor

8.5.3: Little Fishes

The Little Fishes group has had a good year. Our aim is to provide a safe space for parents or carers to bring their preschool babies or children where they can meet others in the same situation, share their joys and struggles and where the children can learn to interact and play together. Being a primary caregiver for small children can be a lonely

and stressful time. Since this 'Toddler' group reopened after the Covid lockdown we have seen a number of families move through the group, several now bringing the third child so we must be doing something right! Some of our families now join us for Messy or Forest Church and some of the All Age services.

We meet in the Johnson Hall every Monday morning during the school term, we have free play time, playdough and a simple craft and a welcome tea or coffee for the adults. We finish with the session with a couple of stories, one usually from the bible and then some interactive songs, our favourites include the tractor song, the animal fair and we always end with sleeping bunnies.

We average around 8-9 children and 8-9 adults at each session but it is very variable on one occasion we had only 3 children and on another 20 when we had to turn late arrivals away. The Johnson Hall is quite small and we look forward to the summer when we can spill out into the garden.

We couldn't do this without our wonderful helpers and a huge thank you to Alan, Anne, Kirsty, Lizzie, Rose, Sarah and Valerie.

Lucinda Howard & 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. SSYI, 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, under reached, and most in need.

As we reflect on 2024-2025, SSYI has experienced another year of meaningful progress and positive impact. Our commitment to serving the young people in our community has led to the continued expansion of our work, with 11 youth groups running each week across Shelford, Stapleford, Sawston, and Duxford. Through our open access sessions, targeted groups, one to one sessions and community activities, we've been able to support over 300 young people, providing opportunities for growth, connection, and development. This work has been powered by our dedicated youth workers - Tilly Akoto, Tina Woodstock, Kay Salter, and lead youth worker Zac Britton - under the oversight of Jon Sanders, head of the Romsey Mill Youth Development Team.

Our weekly Deeper session has continued to run, giving our young people the opportunity to explore Christianity. Alongside this we took several young people away with Romsey Mill in the summer for 2 days to explore faith and have been attending their Deeper events across the year.



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. We would love to have a representative from St Andrew's join us as a trustee, so if this is something you might be interested in do get in touch.

To find out more information, to read our full report or to get in contact head to www.ssyi.club or can the QR code.

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 run 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 Sawston, and others are in development.

After a difficult period following the departure of the youth worker and a prolonged period trying to recruit a replacement, a new youthworker was recruited starting in September 2024. Hannah Elphick seems to be just right for the role, and we have high hopes for the next period.

St Andrew's contributes in two main ways. We contribute £300 pa, and Simon Taylor is chair of the trustees until May 2025.

Simon Taylor

8.6: MUSIC

8.6.1: Choir

It has now been 16 months since I began my role as Director of Music at St Andrew's, and I feel incredibly blessed to be part of such a fantastic and dedicated community. The church choir continues to be a source of joy, inspiration, and spiritual enrichment for us and our congregation. I am delighted to share with you a summary of what we have achieved together over the past year.

Musical Highlights and Worship

The choir has faithfully led music in regular Sunday services and a number of special liturgical events. We have sung a wide range of anthems - from traditional favourites to more contemporary settings, including pieces from the modern choral book generously funded by the church. Our musical offerings have included many successful Evensongs and introductions to hymns and service music that have enriched our worship. We have welcomed several new members into the choir, bringing fresh energy and enthusiasm. One of our most exciting developments has been the appointment of a new junior organ scholar, Philip, who joined us seven months ago. Under our guidance and encouragement, Philip is contributing more and more each week and quickly growing in skills and experience.

Special Services and Concert Series

Our Carol, Christmas, and Easter services were truly memorable - full of beauty, reverence, and congregational participation. These moments stood as shining examples of the choir's dedication and musicality. Additionally, we have launched a new concert series that showcases local talent and fosters deeper connections with the community. These events have not only raised funds in support of our organ scholar but also introduced new musicians to St Andrew's. With two successful concerts behind us and two more planned for later this year, the future of this initiative looks bright.

Times of Sorrow and Support

This year has not been without its losses. In Frank Jacot's death we sadly lost a deeply cherished and long-standing member of our choir. In response, we came together; with retired choristers and even previous music directors of St Andrew's joining in to fully honour his memory with a funeral that truly celebrated his love of music and community. The choir has also provided their voices for other funerals this year, providing much needed support for families and friends at these challenging times.

Looking Ahead

We are excited to be hosting our first Come and Sing Evensong soon, on 8 June, which we hope will be the beginning of a new tradition at St Andrew's. We have also established a new link with St Mary the Virgin, Linton, with some of our singers recently participating in their Come and Sing St John Passion. Plans are already forming for further collaborations,

and I'm thrilled about the musical and spiritual possibilities these connections offer. It has been an incredibly full and fruitful period for the choir. I am proud of all we have achieved and deeply grateful for the commitment, talent and spirit of this wonderful group. With continued support, I have every confidence that St Andrew's choir will flourish even more in the months and years to come.

Timothy Kwan

8.6.2: Tower Bells

2024 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. But things are now afoot, with help from friends at Great Shelford, and we hope to get the bells ringing more regularly again soon

Tony Smith

8.7: HOME GROUPS, STUDY GROUPS & PRAYER GROUPS

8.7.1: Wednesday Evening Home Group

We enjoy hospitality in each other's homes with all members taking a share. Several of us take part in guiding our time of fellowship which centres on a Bible passage or occasionally another inspirational theme. We have looked at Psalms that individuals have chosen, a hymn and its origins, with a series in the autumn looking at what Jesus and the New Testament writers taught about living in the time leading up to the Second Coming and its relevance to the 21st century. Through Lent and Easter we have enjoyed a series of videos produced by the Bible Society taking us through the great themes of Paul's letter to the Romans, that have been decisive for significant Christian leaders, St Augustine, Martin Luther, John Wesley and even Poirot. All recorded against a backdrop of the city of Rome and its relevant archaeology. We enjoy the fellowship, we learn from the study and from one another but sometimes leave too little time to pray.

Peter Wenham

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

Our ecumenical women's group has continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 7.30 to 9pm with about 6 members. Since lockdown, meetings are hybrid with those in person welcomed to Imogen's in St Andrew's Close, (roaring log fires in the winter) 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.

Between Lent and Advent 2024 we looked at the 10 Commandments, their origins and relevance today, then Jesus' related teaching in Matthew 5. Suggested by one of the group, it was relevant, thoughtful and challenging.

This Lent we were delighted to be joined by 2 others. We decided to re-use, after a gap of several years, Margaret Silf's Lent Book, 'Soul Journey', starting on 19 Feb to be ready for Ash Wednesday service and then continuing weekly, (people joining as often as they can) until Holy Week, with the last chapter after Easter. We highly recommend her book for any time of year: it is deeply spiritual, wise, practical and encouraging on our faith journeys.

Romie Ridley

8.7.3: Tuesday Evening Bible Book Group

Our group started 2024 looking at the book of Daniel and its prophecies, and trying to understand the character of Daniel and what he can teach us.

Over Lent, we followed Rowan Williams' Being Christian, which was the basis of a sermon series running at the same time in St Andrews.

We then moved onto Ephesians, where we followed the sermon series on this letter of Paul running at the same time at St Andrews.

As with the Lent series, we found linking the sermons to our discussions enormously helpful and encouraging.

Then in October we started looking at John's Gospel and at the time of writing (April 2025) we have reached the washing of the disciples' feet. (There is so much meaning in John's Gospel that we only manage to cover around half a chapter a week.)

Over the year we covered some very familiar ground (eg the fiery furnace and lions' den in Daniel, the Signs in John) but by looking carefully at these literally verse by verse and discussing them in our group, we discovered that God always has something new to teach us!

Nicky West

8.7.4: Friday Prayer Group

We consider world, country, local and church issues much like the intercessions in church. We have a relaxed, gentle way of praying gathered round candles, gradually lit for church, locality and world needs and appreciation. Ideas come from the heart or books. The Iona Community is particularly favoured as beautiful and meaningful. Music is helpful. We find no need to follow a course. Our thoughts are guided by the Spirit. We come from five different churches trusting and enjoying fellowship which has developed over many years.

Thank you to Mary Antcliff for her warm welcome and lovely calm venue.

Judith Lee

8.7.5: One-off Courses

The Lent Course for 2024 was based on Rowan Williams' book *Being Christian*. It seemed to be well-enjoyed and was followed in a sermon series as well as being taken up by our home groups and individuals. We will return to this format in the future.

Simon Taylor

8.8: ECO CHURCH PROJECT

This project is rather on hold. Sophi Berridge led it really well and as it got off the ground, and we gained our bronze award a few years ago. Among other things that has meant that we have really sensible purchasing guidance in place, which is available on our website if you need to check it out. But after that good progress it has been hard to get the impetus to step up to the silver award. That would be well worth doing in terms of improving what we do, but a volunteer is needed to take on leadership for that to happen.

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.

We have a rota system for doing the flowers which seems to work well. Arrangements are changed every 2 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. Arrangers mainly donate the flowers but have the option to claim for them if they so wish.

On Saturday 29 March we made nearly 100 small posies for Mothering Sunday which were distributed even to the men if they wanted one. Members of the congregation were invited to join us on the Saturday to make up the posies.

At Easter the flowering cross which this year stood inside the church, was prepared again by Gillian Halliwell, and covered in spring flowers by the end of Easter Day. Other areas of the church are covered with flowers, even the Crown of Thorns!

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. If they are members of the church we sometimes waive the cost of the flowers for funerals, if the families don't want anything too elaborate.

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

It has been a quiet year, with neither Alan Holliday nor I really having the bandwidth to get much organised. This is a pity, as the group is needed, and has the potential to strengthen members in their faith journeys as well as contributing significantly to church and community life. We did have one successful meeting, and the enthusiasm for the group is clearly still present. We hope to get going again soon.

Simon Taylor

8.11: LUNCH GROUP

A recent study by the University of Cambridge and others has established the reason that social isolation and loneliness are linked to poor health - an abundance of five proteins that furr up the arteries.

I am pleased to report that our group of elderly single people from St Mary's and St Andrew's who meet for a monthly lunch at the Arthur Rank Hospice continue to thrive. Indeed, many of our regular attendees are into their nineties and others are not far behind!

It is thanks to the Church that our group and the JOY gatherings help to prevent the furring of the arteries and equally importantly keeps us stimulated as we enjoy the fellowship of our regular 'get together'.

Chris Everitt

8.12: ST ANDREW'S DISPLAY BOARD

The display board has been shared. I have contributed but Forest Church and The Children's Society have found it useful to inform and promote good causes.

Judith Lee

8.13: STAPLEFORD MOTHERS' UNION

The theme for 2024 was 'Transformation – Now!'. Although we are a small group, we still value the fellowship from meeting up once a month and enjoying each other's company.

We started off the year with the World Day of Prayer slides which were put together by the women of Palestine, and later followed by the World Day of Prayer service on 1 March in Cox's Close. Some of the slides were very moving, considering the current conflict in Gaza. In February, Rosey Fuell told us about her Antarctic Adventure with slides and her reflections on visiting such a remote part of the world. In March, instead of a Lent Meditation, members gave their own reflection on the Lenten season, a very interesting meeting. Then in March Romie Ridley came to tell us about Religious Education in schools, an interesting round-up of how religion is approached and what aspects are covered in schools. We held a Deanery meeting in May, when our Diocesan President, Hazel Williams, spoke about the Clewer Initiative, a project to try to tackle modern day slavery – members from other Branches attended as well.

After our mid-summer social in June, we again supported the Village Fair with a stall selling raffle tickets for two hampers (groceries and toiletries), followed by another social event in July, hosting members of Milton MU (which has now sadly closed). Our association with Milton goes back for about 20 years, I believe, and we shall miss our visits to them – especially the Sausage Suppers!

On Mary Sumner Day (9 August) several members attended the MS Day service in the cathedral, which attracted over 100 MU members from around the Diocese. We then had tea in the Powcher Hall in the cathedral grounds.

September began our new session, with Jackie Metcalfe (now a minister in Waterbeach) giving a very thoughtful service based on Mary Sumner. In October, Jacque Chalk hosted a coffee morning at her home, which raised money for Branch and project funds. In November I gave a talk on 'Etheldreda' and her place in the foundation of Ely as a religious centre. December saw several members attending the Deanery Advent service in Linton, together with the AGM and Social, also incorporating the Wave of Prayer for Ely Diocese.

In December we also supported the Link Committee in their new venture of a Village Tea instead of the Nachingwea Fair by selling raffle tickets for two hampers. We again set up the collection of toiletries for two weeks in November to support the MU support against gender-based violence – another splendid collection, eight bags and boxes in total, thanks to the generosity of members, the church congregation and parishioners.

On Valerie Powell's initiative, a small Craft group was set up, meeting once a month to knit garments for babies in our local hospitals; although few in number, we managed to produce quite a large amount of baby hats and cot blankets for the Diocesan Outreach Officer to distribute.

The death of Denise Craney in October saddened us all; she was a faithful and longstanding MU member and had also led the Branch as Leader in the past. We shall remember her kindness and generosity of spirit, and in particular how she used to create wonderful Christmas hampers for us to raffle for the Nachingwea Fair, as well her great ability for flower arranging.

We have a good programme drafted for 2025 so hope members will continue to support the Committee's efforts. Barbara Clegg is leaving the committee, and we thank her for her service and help. And my personal thanks to the other members of the Committee for their support and good humour – especially Mary Cooper, as Treasurer.

In conclusion, thank you to all members who attend the meetings for continuing to support Mothers' Union, one of the greatest religious institutions in the world!

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 as they develop a scheme to improve the facilities and use of the building for the whole community.

We believe that their plans are well under way and we look forward to receiving details of them so that we can see how best to support them.

Tony Hore

8.15: STAPLEFORD MESSENGER

The *Messenger* has seen another successful year with many articles of local interest and consequence eg: the busway, Local Plan, Parish Council issues as well as regular reports from local societies and groups.

Production

The latter three months of 2024 proved to be extremely challenging for Team *Messenger*. Two new people were recruited to provide email administration, initial article editing and general administration support to take over from Helen Hale who is retiring in early 2025. These new recruits had just started to learn the role when we were then faced with the sad loss of Production Editor, Frank Jacot. Thanks to a magnificent team effort the *Messenger* continued to be produced without a break. Two new Production Editors were recruited and are now producing the *Messenger* on a rotation basis

Advertising

Achieved revenue in 2024 was £12,255, down from £13,626 in 2023. We lost seven advertisers and ended the year with 61 advertisers.

There is a steady decline in the number of advertisers and advertising revenue year on year – we lost a further nine advertisers for 2025. Reasons are various, the principal ones being budget constraints, retirement and insignificant revenue from the advert.

St Andrew's Stapleford Messenger Fund

Some of the surplus from the *Messenger* is distributed to local good causes through the Fund. In 2024 grants of £1,000 each were made to six organisations: Shelford and Stapleford Strikers Football Club, the Nachingwea Link, the Community Warden Scheme, Stapleford Cricket Club, Stapleford Community Primary School and the Shelford and Stapleford Scouts.

Financials

For full financial details, please refer to the accounts.

Outlook for 2025

Despite the challenges in 2024, the outlook is bright. We have a couple of new advertisers and the new Production Editors are doing well.

We need to recruit a Distributions and Subscriptions Manager to replace Val Powell who will retire at the end of this year. This new person must be in place by October to ensure we can support the magazine in 2026. (October is when the advertising invoices are issued.)

Ed Rose

Item 9: BUILDINGS, CHURCHYARD, GOODS & ORNAMENTS

9.1: CHURCH BUILDING

The usual checks and services have been carried out.

Heating

The boiler's reliability continues to be a concern with a number of interruptions to service. However, through the good offices of Chris Cooper and Alan Holliday the system has been kept working up to its usual efficiency.

The Fabric Committee consensus is that the best replacement heating system for the Church is a radiant heating system. The favoured system would be supplied by Herschel. This would be a mixture of chandeliers (Halo system) and bar style heaters.

Over the last couple of years, we have had painting parties to limewash the interior walls of the church. There were two this year in the Chancel and Lady Chapel. This completes the interior painting at a level volunteers are allowed to access.

Quinquennial Works

There have been no further Quinquennial works necessary this year.

Ongoing Maintenance Jobs and Repairs

January	Boiler serviced and gas safe certification
March	Electrical work including: replacing strip lights in upper vestry for two LEDs Installation of linked smoke/heat detectors in boiler room and lower vestry and remote heating controller changed for HIVE system
April	Replace one halogen light in nave above the choir
May	Purchase and install three additional bicycle parking hoops
June	Lightning conductor safety checks Mains stopcock fitted on rising main in vestry
July	Tower safety systems and harness' checks with all systems passed as safe Repair, conservation and cleaning of the two commandment boards that hang in the chancel
August	Interior walls of the chancel painted with limewash Boiler serviced and certified
September	Replacement of one halogen bulb on the south side of nave above the organ console and piano
October	Purchase of a new St Andrew's flag

November Fire extinguishers safety checks; all passed and are in date
All golf ball bulbs changed in the Lady Chapel's wooden light fitting

Working Parties

There were two churchyard working parties this year in May and November. My thanks to Chris Cooper for arranging these working parties.

And my thanks to the whole 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

The Johnson Hall and Verger's Cottage were well-managed on a day to day basis by Gillian Sanders during the course of the year. Mary Cooper line-managed the cleaner Yvonne Smith, and the Johnson Hall Committee, now a part of our Fabric Committee, managed maintenance and repairs.

Bookings for the Johnson Hall held steady in 2024.

Regular users paid £28 per session in 2024. Regular users include Little Quavers baby group, the table tennis club, the Horticultural Society, Ballet East, 440 Jazz plus another band and singing lessons. Church groups, including the youth club when it is functioning, JOY seniors' group, Little Fishes toddler group and the Mothers' Union use the Hall for free.

The Hall was also used for meetings of the Pastoral Care committee, Age UK/Warden Scheme, the Nachingwea Link Committee and for occasional meetings for local charities. These are also all free of charge.

The Verger's Cottage is booked on a regular basis by a counsellor, and the upstairs office is used by the Magog Trust.

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. Basic external works were completed in the course of the year.

Simon Taylor

9.4: CHURCHYARD

The churchyard is maintained by a small band of volunteers from the village and St Andrew's. As they are getting older, there is a pressing need for new members. Work-parties last about 2 hours with a sociable coffee and chat included.

The churchyard is managed to a plan combining formal areas at the front and wild areas behind the church, maintaining its Bronze Award for Churchyards from the BCN Wildlife Trust.

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 professionally inspected bi-annually. New saplings are encouraged as appropriate to give succession as older trees pass maturity.

Grass mowing of the churchyard and Johnson Hall is carried out by Peter Dean.

Special thanks go to John O' Boyle who advises on the ecological management 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 the work-parties. If you would like to join in, please contact Chris Cooper on iis.cooper@ntlworld.com or 01223 842127.

Chris Cooper

Item 10: GRANTA DEANERY SYNOD

The Deanery Synod is a democratically representative body for our churches within our area of the diocese. Our area is called Granta Deanery. The Synod is an intermediary between the church PCCs and the Ely Diocesan Synod, and can raise matters with Diocesan Synod. Most importantly, members of Deanery Synods can vote to elect members of the Church of England's General Synod. Our parish reps are Felicity Cooke, who is on General Synod and Bishop's Council, and Lizzie Taylor, who is on Bishop's Council. Over the last year we have discussed:

- Deanery and Diocesan Finance
 - How any rebate on parish share should be distributed across parishes.
 - How the balance of Deanery Funds should be spent eg: whether on Youth Inc, a chaplaincy for the local science parks etc.
 - Whether the diocesan team has applied for the available Strategic Mission & Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) funding for children's and families work. It is an ongoing concern that a bid has not yet been made for our diocese.
 - The 'Ephesian Fund' which is a system set up by the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC) which gives a route for churches that don't support clergy being allowed to offer Prayers of Love & Faith to gay couples to withhold and redirect their parish share. We wanted to understand how that might affect our deanery, as one of the parishes anticipated to be using the Fund is in our Deanery.
- Lay Vocations

11 May has been designated as 'Vocations Sunday'.
- Clergy vacancies

A paper was presented proposing a motion to go to Diocesan Synod that clergy vacancies be filled more promptly. This was fully supported.
- Diocesan Synod and General Synod proceedings updates.
- The failure to appoint a new diocesan Bishop of Ely, and the reasons for that. We were told that the reasons for this were confidential, but they are widely viewed as relating to disagreement over positions on same sex blessings in church.
- Ascension Day service

This year it is on 29 May in Balsham.
- YouthInc

We have regular updates on this important youth work charity, and the new Youth Worker Hannah Elphick. Parishes are asked to consider whether they can financially support this work. All contributions, however small, are welcome.

Lizzie Taylor

Item 11: VICAR'S REPORT

This is my tenth annual report. It comes in a year in which I have been absent on study leave – extended ministerial leave to give it its proper name – for a quarter of the time the report covers. That was a great blessing to Lizzie and me, and we are hugely grateful to the wardens and PCC for supporting us in taking this time away, and to everyone who stepped up so well to provide services and keep the church running over Christmas and the whole period of our absence. We have real strength in depth in St Andrew's, which is great.

My leave also a chance for Lucinda Howard to take the lead in terms of our services and spiritually, and she did so brilliantly. At some point later this year Lucinda will move on as her curacy draws to a close. She has now been 'signed off' by Bishop Dagmar as having successfully completed all aspects of curacy. We expected that to take place without problems, but it is always good when it does! We will really miss Lucinda. She is a great colleague in lots of ways, with a very wide range of gifts, and I have enjoyed and continue to enjoy working with her. Matt Lewis will be our new curate, arriving in the summer. He and Lucinda will overlap for a bit.

In these reports my habit has been to review the good things that happened in the previous year, to look honestly at some of the difficulties we have – I think that is important – and to look a little to the future. I am going to do the same again this year.

So, 2024 and the start of 2025. In a nutshell, the Lord was worshipped and the good news was spread.

Starting outside Sunday worship, JOY and Little Fishes continue to flourish. Romie Ridley and Lucinda lead JOY, and Fiona Holliday and Lucinda lead Little Fishes. As you know, both of these events have avoided falling into the trap of just being social affairs. It is important that they are that, for it is part of our remit simply to show love to our community. But in each of them, and in pretty well everything we do, the good news of Christ is explained, drop by drop, week on week. Every cup of water we provide is, as it were, done in his name, not for our own satisfaction or glory. That is our missional ethos.

And that ethos is, I think, gradually paying off. There are increasing links between Little Fishes and church attendance, and, I think, likewise with JOY.

Our pastoral care is also going well. There is now a strong team in place, very well led by Romie, which really looks out well for members of the congregation. I am grateful to them for all their efforts. There are, however, real opportunities to expand it – our follow up of funerals and baptisms is not all that full, for example, and Strawberry Fields is going to need pastoral attention soon – but we need more personnel if we are going to expand our care outwards. We should see our pastoral care efforts as directed both inwards, which we do well, and outwards. The outwards aspiration is there, and the success of JOY is its first outworking, but it is going to be difficult to expand it to cover those other things without more volunteers.

Turning to Sunday things, our year was shaped, as ever, in two ways. Firstly, we celebrate all the major festivals with appropriate services, trying to involve the whole spread of our congregation as best we can. We don't always get it right, and not everything is always to everyone's liking, but this year we seem to have managed to bounce along fruitfully.

And secondly we have, in gaps between the festivals, planned sermon series. My view, which I am sure is apparent by now, is that slavish adherence to the lectionary, and using only it as the determinant of our readings and themes, is a really bad idea. When we do have episodes of using just the lectionary – which we have had more of this year than in recent years – I am always struck by just how badly it is constructed, and how much violence it does to the biblical author's intentions. The reality is that any church that uses only the lectionary never gets a full grasp on biblical narratives or biblical lines of argument or the full impact of the author's intended teaching.

So from time to time we have other series, either direct from the bible or using something else as a way in to biblical themes. In 2024 we had a wonderful series on four of George Herbert's poems, looking at essential themes of judgment, love and redemption. Then over Lent we used Rowan Williams' book *Being Christian* to explore church teaching on baptism, the eucharist, the bible and prayer. These two series were maybe our surprise successes of the year. They felt really fruitful. I suppose they were back to biblical basics in a way, and that is something we should do from time to time, using whatever resources are suitable. We then returned to passage by passage bible teaching with a series on the first half of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and with our summer series on the life of Joseph. That was great fun, and showed how worthwhile it can be to return to those stories that we might know well from our childhoods. There is a great deal to learn from them.

And a heads up to what is coming the rest of this year: after Trinity we will return to the book of Acts for Paul's first missionary journey, the summer series will be on the life of Moses, and in the Autumn we will look at the next part of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

And we had all the usual things that go to make up the life of St Andrew's: lovely celebrations of our two mission links, parties, baptisms, weddings and funerals, some wonderful music, involvement in the Village Weekend and more. As I have been glad to say in previous years, it was again a good year in lots of ways. The Lord was worshipped, the Word was preached, the sacraments were celebrated and we had enormous fun for all ages all the while.

None of this could have taken place without a huge amount of work from lots of people. I have already mentioned Fiona, Lucinda and Romie. We owe them a lot.

Among her other hats, Romie, of course, is also an assistant churchwarden. Margaret Hebden is our other assistant warden. They both work tirelessly in helping organise services and entertainments and catering. I am grateful to them both for their work in

that role, but I think it may be time to reinvent an Events Committee to take some of the burden. It rather died a death in the pandemic.

And I continue to be very thankful for Alastair MacGregor, who once again has been our sole churchwarden. We should have had two. Alastair's kindness to me and his work for the whole church is outstanding. He is willing to serve again, which is great for us, though it masks a background problem that we do not have enough volunteers for these church leadership roles. It is not that others, for example our assistant wardens or others who get the working of the church, are not willing to step up to the warden role, it is that those who are willing are already doing other vital things. So we are a bit stuck, and this is going to come back to bite us as a church if we don't have more volunteers coming through. So, pick something small and manageable and start there! It is a great way to give something back and to get involved.

A few more mentions, albeit at the risk of missing others out who I should have thanked. Stephen Brown's tenure as chair of the Fabric Committee ended in December 2024. He did a good and very productive and orderly stint and we are better off for his care and attention. Kirsty Campbell is gradually getting her feet under that table. I am very grateful to them both.

The fabric side of things has sprouted a side-branch, our *Vision* project for the church building. This is a project that has been partly brought about by the need to replace our heating and re-plaster our ceiling. We have also been talking for years about the possibility of replacing the pews. I know full well that there are pros and cons, and that there are very strong feelings around that issue. And we have problems with storage – not enough of it – a poor kitchen and toilet, and difficult access into and around the building for those with impaired mobility. So lots of things are coming together to suggest that major works are needed. It will need a lot of planning and fundraising. Alastair is taking the lead at these planning stages. There will be lots of consultation to come. Nothing is yet certain, except perhaps for the extreme fragility of both our boiler and ceiling. My sense is that it is now time to do what the Victorians did in the 1870s, which is to do major works of such quality that they will last another 150 years before people start saying that it is time for a major refurbishment. We owe that, I think, to our forebears and to those to come. The piecemeal approach of the last few decades has attractions – it is more manageable and cheaper – but it also produces problems with the functioning of the building.

Turning to other matters, Sue Brown continues to lead our children's ministry very well indeed, and we are all grateful to her. I talked last year of our disappointment at not finding a new youthworker to replace Zoe. It may be that later this year we will be able to tap into a portion of the YouthInc South Cambs youthworker, which would address that issue. And that may give further stimulus to our ongoing discussions about a possible Children and Families' worker, as distinct from a youthworker. There are lots of things pushing us in that direction. One is that we really need to be able to return to providing

for children's ministry every week, but resources, in terms of the number of volunteers available, have prevented that for some years. We have lots of potential among children and families, as our attendance sometimes shows – though it is frustratingly variable.

Two other mentions. The first is our music. Tim Kwan has been with us over a year now and we are seeing the fruits of his tenure, with a vibrant choir – we are always open to more members, of course, but the core we have are excellent – and we enjoy Tim's terrific playing week on week. He and his wife Sarah, with Lizzie and James Buchanan-Worster have organised two wonderful *Music Moments* concerts so far, and these have raised quite a bit of money for the church's music, more than I anticipated, which, as time goes by, may allow us to be a bit more intentional about plans for developing the breadth of our music-making. We already now have a junior organ scholar, Philip Chang, whose playing is coming on in leaps and bounds, but there may be room for another, more established player as a senior scholar (which could free up Tim to conduct more), and Tim and I have been thinking about how we can have another go at establishing a junior choir, re-establishing our All Age band, and so on. There are lots of enticing possibilities, great scope here for worship in music, and we need to be imaginative, ambitious and forward-looking about it.

Last specific mention: Gillian Sanders, our administrator, retired this year. We wish her well. She did a great job over the last 6 or 7 years. New in the role is Sue Duncan who you will meet over the next few weeks and months. I am sure Sue is going to be a great asset as well.

In addition to all these individuals I know there are many of you beaver away behind the scenes, and really enhancing our communal life, and you are all wonderful: there are lots of you, and I will try to thank you all as the relevant reports come up during the course of our annual meetings rather than naming you here. But just a few who won't feature in any reports: Gillian Halliwell keeping our altar linen clean and pressed; Glenda Ferneyhough changing our liturgical colours; Piers Brereton polishing our communion silverware; Lizzie Taylor keeping the tower clock in order; Alan Holliday managing our heating; Nicky West being PCC secretary; Clare Kerr being verger for funerals and weddings. Their frequent small acts of service, and some not so small, carried on quietly and unobtrusively, really enhance what we do and I am very grateful.

And now I have probably committed two of a vicar's cardinal sins, of missing people out who I should have mentioned, and going on too long. I know, of course, that there are many of you, unsung heroes beaver away behind the scenes, without whom we could not function. Thank you, one and all!

Pulling all this together, I am optimistic. We have a compassionate, generous and ever-forgiving God and lots of great things happening. Yes we have a shortage of volunteers, but there are a great many who do step up and who are wonderful. We have sufficient funds for day to day purposes. You have given generously in response to our appeals over

the last couple of years, and righted the financial ship, for which I am very grateful. We have more or less sufficient space, good music and a mission field spread out before us. What is not to like?

In essence all we are called to do is to trust in God. As I reminded us of last year, St Andrew's is his. We are his. We have our bibles. We have prayer. We have faith in Jesus Christ who loves us and died for us. We have the Holy Spirit. In the end those things are all that we need. All that is required of us is to be faithful, and that we shall continue to do.

Every blessing to you all, Simon

Item 12: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There are no documents to consider for this item.

C. DOCUMENTS FOR PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Item 1: MINUTES OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 11 MAY 2024 AFTER THE APCM

Present: Simon Taylor (Chair), Felicity Cooke (Lay Vice-Chair), Chris Bow (Treasurer), Nicky West (Secretary), Revd Lucinda Howard (Curate), Rachel Bousfield, Sue Brown, Rob Ferneyhough, Sarah Hackett, Fiona Holliday, Alastair MacGregor, Anne Roberts, Romie Ridley, Lizzie Taylor and Gillian Sanders (Minutes)

Simon Taylor welcomed new members of the committee, Rob Ferneyhough and Sue Brown.

1. Appointment of Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer

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

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

Chris Bow was co-opted to the PCC (so that he can also be on the Standing Committee).

2, Appointment of Electoral Roll Officer

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

3. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 2 April 2024 at 7.45 pm by Zoom.

The meeting closed at 1.25 pm

Item 2: APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR, SECRETARY, TREASURER, ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER AND ANY CONSEQUENTIAL CO-OPTIONS

There are no documents to consider for this item.

Item 3: CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 2 June at 7.45 pm in the Vicarage

Monday 28 July social