

Shottery St. Andrew



Annual Report for 2023

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Front photograph taken on Easter Sunday 2024

Back page photograph

THE ANNUAL MEETINGS 2024

The meetings will be held in church, after the 10 am service
on Sunday 19th May 2024

We will endeavour to zoom the meeting to those at home

AGENDAS

ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

1. **Opening Prayer**
2. **Election of Churchwardens** – *all present entitled to vote*
3. **Prayer of blessing** for Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Minutes of the Annual Meeting** held on 21st May 2023
3. **Matters arising** from these minutes
4. **The Reports** – *to be given verbally*
 - (i) Electoral Roll – *current number on the roll and changes*
 - (ii) Annual Report – *what the church has done in the last 12 months*
 - (iii) Financial Report – *presented by PCC treasurer*
 - (iv) Annual Report on Fabric & Inventory – *by churchwardens*
 - (v) Deanery Synod Report – *presented by member of Deanery Synod*
 - (vi) Safeguarding Report – *presented by Parish Safeguarding Officer*
5. **Elections and Appointments** – *only those on ER eligible to vote*
 - (i) Election of PCC Members
 - (ii) Appointment of Independent Examiner of the accounts
6. **Vicar's Charge**
7. **Any Other Business**- *only items submitted prior to the meeting can be addressed*
8. **Closing Prayers**

ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

Sunday 21st May 2023 at 11:30 am

The meeting opened with a warm welcome from the vicar and a prayer from our churchwarden Bob Macvie.

1. Minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 15th May 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record.
2. There were no matters arising.
3. Election of Churchwardens. Bob Macvie and Orion Johnson were nominated and were both elected to serve as Churchwardens for the next year.

Revd Craig thanked David Whyman for his long service as outgoing Churchwarden and a small gift was presented as a token of our thanks and esteem.

Revd Craig reminded David that he still had to serve until the formulization of the changeover at the Archdeacon's Visitation which takes place later in the year.

Both Bob Macvie and Orion Johnson thanked everyone for the confidence to elect them and the members responded with a round of applause for their new Churchwardens.

The Annual Vestry Meeting duly closed.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

1. **Those present:** There were 38 people at the meeting in church and a further 2 who attended by zoom. Apologies were received from 18 people.
2. **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting for 2022** were agreed as being a true record and were duly signed.
3. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

4. Reports

- i. **Electoral Roll:** Anne Challis reported that there were 149 on the Electoral Roll, which is a net decrease of 2 from last year, being 6 new members offset by a loss of 8 existing members. Anne was thanked for her help in keeping the Roll up to date. Any members who are not on the Church Electoral Roll, should contact Anne.
- ii. **Annual Report:** Revd Craig thanked David Millington who compiled the report, all those who provided input, and Sally for printing copies off. He commented on the excellent nature of the report and recommended it for adoption by the meeting. The meeting formally received the report.
- iii. **Financial Reports:** Revd Craig was pleased to see Carole Taylor in church to present the accounts for 2022. Copies of those accounts were with the Annual Report.

Revd Craig was sorry to hear that Richard Prior could not be in church due to illness but said that we would answer any questions as best as we could in his absence.

There were however no questions, and Revd Craig asked that these accounts be formally accepted by this meeting and this was agreed. Proposed by Clodagh and seconded by Tom and approved by the meeting.

Revd Craig thanked Richard and Carole for their hard work not only in producing these accounts but also for their stewardship of our finances over the year.

- iv. **Annual Report on Fabric & Inventory:** Revd Craig reminded the meeting that the care of the fabric of the church was one of the legal responsibilities of the churchwardens and was pleased to hand over to David Whyman to cover this point.

David thanked all those people who work in the background keeping our church and grounds in such excellent condition. He reported that he had duly fulfilled one of his churchwarden's tasks in completing the Inventories of furniture, equipment and silverware, duly checking each item off and accounting for them.

David stated that the condition of the church buildings was generally very good – there were always small items which need to be done such as minor decorations but in the case of the church itself it was felt better to wait until other outstanding work, such as the Audio Visual project, had been completed.

The lighting had been installed now and was working well. It was a large project which was installed with minimum disruption to the church life and gives us more control over lighting for our worship in church.

One outstanding issue facing us is the condition of the carpark. It does need resurfacing and relining but the cost at the last checking was over £45,000. Undoubtedly without it we wouldn't have as many activities in the church hall as we do, so it is a great asset to us and we need to maintain it.

David made special comment on how clean and tidy our church looks – especially in comparison to others we see on our evening pilgrimages – and that is down to the hard work and dedication of David Challis and his team. How fortunate we are to have them.

David also paid thanks to the Fabric team who keep on top of all fabric issues and especially to David Millington who keeps us straight with authorisations, faculties etc.

Revd Craig commented on how lucky we were to have two wonderful churchwardens who obviously care so much for the church we all love.

Bob Macvie took the opportunity at this time, not to talk about Fabric, but to express our thanks to our incumbent, Revd Craig, and his team. We are so fortunate to have a vicar like Craig and in that we are truly blessed.

- v. **Deanery Synod:** - Orion Johnson reported that the Fosse Deanery Synod, of which Shotton is part, met three times last year and in addition to the allotted topic for each meeting was a useful forum for parishes across the deanery to share experiences and help.

The Deanery Synod is led by the Area Dean, Revd Patrick Taylor (Stratford upon Avon) with Area Chair being Margaret Howard

(Wellesbourne) and Deanery Strategy being led by Revd. Barry Jackson (Edgehill Benefice).

There being no questions, Revd Craig thanked Orion, Jackie Daniels, Hilary Mattocks and Pat Morris – our Deanery Synod Reps for all the work they do on our behalf.

- vi. **Safeguarding:** - Revd Craig affirmed that Safeguarding is absolutely paramount. The safety of our children and vulnerable adults in church is of great importance to us all. Revd Craig introduced David Millington, who with Liz Talbot are the Safeguarding Officers for St Andrew's, to report on the situation.

David confirmed that there had been no safeguarding issues brought to his attention in the past year. The PCC had reviewed and readopted its safeguarding policy during the year and actively follow that policy. Although there were no issues that doesn't mean that we are not vigilant.

Revd Craig commented that Safeguarding was a crucial issue for the church across the country, particularly since churches have been targets for those who would seek to harm those vulnerable within our midst. We should never assume that an instance could not happen and should plan accordingly.

There being no questions, Revd Craig thanked David and Liz for their work on our behalf.

5. Elections and Appointments

- i. **PCC Members:** In line with the Church Representation Rules, elected PCC members serve a term of 3 years. At the end of their 1st term, they can stand to serve for a second 3-year term – but after two consecutive terms they are required to stand down for at least one year.

At this time Sylvaine Gravestock, Jane Ireland and Chris Susnik come to the end of their 6 year terms and must stand down. David Whyman, Richard Walker and Isaac Alun-Jones have been nominated and have agreed to stand together with Jackie Daniels who has decided to stand down from Deanery Synod but would like to stand for PCC. All were voted in en-bloc.

Pat Morris has also decided to step down from Deanery Synod, and hence PCC, after many years of valuable service. Julie Milne and Bob Macvie have volunteered to stand to fill those gaps, which brings our Deanery Synod representation to Orion Johnson, Hilary Mattocks, Julie Milne and Bob Macvie. All were voted in en-bloc.

Revd Craig commented that, at Shottery, we have a PCC which works together and with the vicar for the collective good of the parish. Many thanks to all that team.

- ii. **Independent Examiner to the Accounts:** The meeting voted to reappoint Chris Wiltshire and Company as our Independent Examiner to our Financial Accounts.

6. **Vicar's Charge:**

There are a number of thank you's that I must give for all the work that goes into making this church what it is today – this is a dangerous task as most clergy know, as it is all too easy to miss people off the list. Forgive me if I do.

Firstly, I thank this meeting for giving up the time to be here with us today.

I have already given my thanks to the Churchwardens and the PCC but would like to extend that to David Millington, as PCC Secretary and for all the other things he does around church, for his help and for his wisdom, which I value.

Thanks also to our Ministry team here and thanks must go to Revd Mary, Revd Paul, Revd David and Revd Joan – and also Revd Joy and Revd Nikki. Also, thanks, of course, to Jan Walker, our lay Reader. And I haven't forgotten the wonderful Revd Mike. What a blessing it has been to have Mike here over the past 3 years and how he has grown over that time. We wish him well as he moves off to Bedford with Helen. Also, thanks to Rev Sarah who is at Emscote this morning but who we welcome back into our ministry here at Shottery.

Thanks to Jane, Jenny and Hilary our bereavement team – we had some 60 funerals in the last year, and they follow up on these. It would be nice if we had as many weddings, but with Holy Trinity sucking all of them in we don't have much of a chance of that.

Thanks also to Jackie, Kay and David Challis for helping me as vergers for our funerals – so lovely to know that whilst I or my team focus on the

family and liturgy, all the background tasks are competently and professionally undertaken by them.

Thanks to Jenny and her team for putting on our monthly lunches and fortnightly coffee mornings – these really do reach out into the community and provide a much needed facility (and source of funds).

Thanks to Caroline Penn and her team and for bringing to reality our visions of having a Children's Worker in St Andrew's. Chocolate Church had over a 100 people milling around in the hall and church last week. We could never expect to get this church full of young people overnight, but this is the practical way forward towards this ultimate goal. Also good to see the Stamp choir in church every Tuesday evening – so much achieved with this group of 35 primary school children over such a short time. Well done.

Thanks to Clodagh for the excellent job she does with the parish magazine. What an absolutely marvellous and quality job she does – even the bishop comments on how good it is. Also, for Clodagh's work as our contact with the Cathedral and our recent pilgrimage there.

I repeat my thanks to Richard and to Carole for their stewardship of our Finances, and also to Tim Hewson-Stoate, who oversees our insurance cover and any issues arising. Something we had to call on this year, as someone decided to drive their car into our church gateway.

Thanks to all our musicians, – to Rosemary and Larry and to our organist Matt Penn, and also to Jackie Wightman – and to the choir. I would like to commend the choir to you and to any in the congregation who might consider joining the choir. It's great what you all bring to our church life.

Massive thank you to the wonderful David Challis, for all the work he does around the church – his Ministry as he calls it – it is truly appreciated. His work is evident in this beautiful building but also in the churchyard as well. Thanks to Dot as well who helps David with cleaning of the church and hall.

I need to thank David Gravestock for his skill and that of his techie team, not only here in church but also in the office. We are fortunate to have his expertise heading up our AV project. To all the techie team on your rota, I can say it is far easier standing up here than on that desk – I know, I've tried it.

Thanks also to the Listening and Prayer team, here each week to pray for and to pray with those who need it. To Hilary Mattocks for all her hard work on coordinating our Outside Giving projects. To Andrew Mills and

Orion for their work as Sacristans and to all the servers who help the clergy during Eucharists. You can't run these services without them – so if there are any budding servers out there, Bob Robbins, we could do with more in the team. And our former Sacristan, Alan Minchin and his lovely wife Jenny, always reliable and just get on with it – silver doesn't shine by itself, you know.

A special thank you to the Flower Team and to Nick Carree and Bev and the Blooming Lovely team who make our church such a feast for the eyes. It makes such a difference, and we are truly thankful for all you do – what a talented group you are.

To Trevor Cox whose stamp is on so many things around this church – some quite literally – what a craftsman he is – and yet again someone who just gets on with a job that needs doing, no fuss, no bother, just love for his skill and his church.

I'm sure I've missed someone off this list – so much goes on in this church and so many do so much to make it happen. Without you it just wouldn't happen. Well done to you all.

Last year I spoke about my four aims for the church which I held dear to my heart.:

- Children
- Bishopton
- Lighting
- Audio Visual

On children, I said that I wanted to find the money to employ a part-time Children's Worker, to build activities in the church which would attract children and young families through our doors. Well, we were lucky to receive funding of £5,000 from the Town Trust which allowed us to sign on the fabulous Caroline Penn and she has worked wonders with her Stamp singing group and her Chocolate Church, which have been successful.

We have still to make a mark on Bishopton, but we will get there.

On lighting, we completed that project successfully, and I think you have all seen what a difference that has made to our worship here in St Andrew's. The ability to light parts of the church does create some dramatic moods and focus.

Audio Visual is still a work in progress, as we work with the contractor, Novam, to convert our temporary hook up of wires and software into a long term solution, which will also offer increased resources to enhance our worship – at a price that we can afford – technology is not cheap. This time, next year, I hope I can say that we have converted this desire into reality and that we can move forward in our ministry.

I have said for a while that I would like us to look at our First Sunday service of the month, what we called our family service, and I would like that thought process to fit in with what Caroline Penn is currently doing in her children's work. What we need is a service style that would attract new families and children. We are starting to get young families and children into our church building for these children's events and they are starting to trust us and their presence in a building, a church, that they might never have entered or thought of entering before. We can build on this.

As Janet Insoll has just said, we used to have the brownies and rainbows in church a couple of times a year and they have actually come to me recently and said they would like to do that. Similarly with the church school who you probably know has a new head teacher. She has indicated to me that they would like to be more involved in our services throughout the year, and I know that is something which the Diocesan Board of Education encourages, so it would be lovely to get dates in the diary for these young people to be part of our worship.

I think the Family Service is a big opportunity for us to do something. I'm sure you know that the difficulty in attracting young families into churches is a typical problem across the country. I know that when I ask Su, my wife, who preaches in churches in other parts of the country about the size and make-up of the congregations there, her answers reflect what we see here. At the last census, more than 50% of people said that they were non-believers, and it seems to be the same across Europe especially in the young. So, we have some great challenges ahead but also great opportunities. It's almost like virgin territory, so many people sat through the coronation recently and wondered "what on earth is going on here", looking at the religious elements of the ceremony.

It is a major question of where do we go with churches in the next 10-15 years. We can't realistically expect the church to be full of young families within the next 3 years – it just isn't going to happen – but

nothing will happen unless we try to make it happen and I think we have possibilities here, especially with the Family Service.

I want to thank you all for being the people who you are, and to continue to thank you for the love that you bring to this place and to me. A big thank you to my wife, who puts up with me when I'm not quite so happy – she's a great support to me. And also to Sally in the office who makes the admin side of this job somewhat more manageable.

So, again, a Big Thank You for Everything you do. **Revd Craig**

7. **Any Other Business:** There were two items of AOB which had been notified.

- Angela Jacquiss – wanted to highlight that individual church events should be covered by a Risk Assessment especially to comply with our Insurance requirements. She's very willing to do these but does need information from the relevant groups ahead of the events. Just a reminder to us all. We all forget and we shouldn't.
- Nick Cutler – Nick asked for a vote of thanks for Revd. Craig for all that he does for us at St. Andrew's – and the meeting responded accordingly!

Dear God, we want to thank You for our time together here this morning. We thank You for all those we have mentioned, who do so much in this, Your church. We also thank You for all those unsung heroes who work in the background, just getting on with things, without wanting thanks or praise. We pray, Lord, that You would bless us and all that we would do in Your name.

Go in Peace, to Love and Serve the Lord.

God Bless you all.

David Millington -PCC Secretary

REPORTS

Vicar's Report

Welcome to St. Andrew's annual report once again.

St Andrew's continues to be a church that is not only warm and friendly but welcoming and inclusive. This year the PCC agreed this statement:



*"We are a church which **celebrates and affirms every person** and does not discriminate on **disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality**. We believe in a Church which **welcomes and serves all people** in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long, and high and deep, is the love of Jesus Christ."*

I am so proud to be the leader of a church with such openness and grace that this statement illustrates.

Rev'd Sarah has entered her third year of curacy and continues to be an asset to us. It is a real joy to witness her growth and growing confidence this year. Because she isn't full time with us, Sarah's curacy has been extended until the end of 2024. Sarah has a huge pastoral heart for people. She is currently exploring the establishment of a new bereavement support group and this year set up a Scottish Dancing group that meet in the hall each week, both examples of her gifts in reaching out and being amongst people in the community - we are blessed to have her.

Caroline, our children & family worker, has continued to develop our work with children this year. With thanks and appreciation, once again, to the Town Trust we have been able secure £10,000 this year to develop her work further. The annual report gives details on Caroline's work, but I wanted to thank Caroline for her energy, enthusiasm and vision. The STAMP choir has gone from strength to strength, with 'Mini Stamp' for younger children now meeting. The monthly Chocolate Church (our version of Messy Church!) is packed with children and families each month - sometimes with as many as 60 children - providing a

variety of activities, games, food with simple teaching on the Christian faith. It is wonderful to see children from STAMP also attending Chocolate Church. Caroline, Sarah and I are working on a new format for our monthly family service. I believe we really can do something fresh and new with this that will see growth in terms of our families.

Worship this year has seen us move steadily through the church's year. I continue to be thankful to Matt, Rosemary and Larry and our choir for their commitment and ministry to the life of our worship on Sundays and during special times and occasions during the year.

We've introduced new Sunday booklets for Easter and the new third Sunday Celtic Communion service. Christmas was packed with great joy and celebration with St Andrew's seeing the largest numbers joining us for worship since the Covid pandemic. The crib service, led by Caroline & Matt, was incredible (and riotous!). The STAMP choir came and sang, and my grandson (Eddie) was the baby Jesus (there are some perks in being the vicar surely?).



Sarah led us in a beautiful service for Candlemas in February, the Rainbows and Brownies joined us for Mothering Sunday and helped me bake a cake (we'll say no more!).

Holy week was a very special time. Palm Sunday saw us returning to the Bell, to begin our procession with palm branches and great joy. The various services during the evenings of the week saw encouraging numbers attending and 'walking with Jesus'. Good Friday's children's service was led by Caroline, Revd Sarah and their brilliant team as children were led through the events of Good Friday and Easter. Holy Saturday evening saw us lighting the New Fire of Easter and welcoming the risen Christ, as the Easter candle came into a dark church – all so beautiful. St Andrew's rang with praise on Easter morning with a packed church – what a wonderful end to an amazing Holy Week.

Atrium café church has been steadily growing this year in numbers. Sadly, Ruth Yeates left us this year to begin work in London, but we are so grateful that she returns each month to lead the service so inspirationally, alongside Julie Milne and others.

Growing in faith: I am grateful to our groups that meet during the week. My thanks go to our Cell group, The Contemplative prayer group, the Saturday morning Bible breakfasts, and the Pilgrim course group. This year has seen the start of another group exploring the Bible, led by Nick and Alex Cutler.

We try to be a church that gets involved in our **local community**. I am grateful for those at church involved in the Food Bank and Street Pastors. We continue to develop links with both our schools (St Andrew's and Bishopton). I take regular assemblies in both schools and our Open the Book team also visit regularly. It has been a privilege this year to begin a new communion service at Ambleside Care Home and continue to lead a similar service each month at Lower Meadow. I have taken on the role of Chaplain to the Shakespeare Hospice this year offering spiritual and pastoral support to users and staff as well as supporting the parish of Wilmcote, as they look to appointing a priest.



We do a lot as a church as this report illustrates. But we must never become so busy that we lose what we are here primarily for. **Worshipping, Growing, Transforming** - says our new notice board at the front of church and this is what we must try to do and be as a church. A church that puts the worship of God first, one that desires to grow spiritually and numerically and one which works with the Holy Spirit to transform our community.

Being drenched by our Mayor at Shottery village fayre.

May God bless each one of us as we continue to follow Jesus and may God bless this coming year and all that we do in His name.

With every blessing in Christ,

Reverend Craig, Vicar

Churchwarden's Report

As I look back and reflect on the past year at St. Andrew's, it seems to me to have been one of consolidation and steady growth. The numbers attending our regular 10am Sunday service and the Atrium café-style service have shown an upward

trend, which has been really pleasing to see. Especially welcome have been the 'new' people who have joined us this year and who have now become familiar faces. I am sure one of the reasons why this has happened is because St. Andrew's is renowned for being a 'friendly', inclusive church, a generous, caring community where every individual is valued and appreciated. So, thank you to all of you for your efforts to make new people feel at home – something we must continue and strive to do even better!

One aspect of our church life which has really shown improvement is the number of House groups/Cell groups which have emerged and enriched all those who attend. Although they wouldn't want it, I must especially applaud Nick Cutler, and his wife Alex, for the Bible Group courses they have instigated; Becks Bartlett for leading her online Cell group and Rev. Joy Hance for running the Pilgrim Course and the occasional Quiet Day. How valued too is Rev. Joan Whyman for diligently writing her Advent and Lent booklets which so many of us enjoy and find enlightening.

From personal experience, I have witnessed the incredible growth in Chocolate Church numbers, thanks to the imaginative and brilliant work of Caroline and Matt Penn, catering for the younger children in our parish. The STAMP choir goes from strength to strength and now we have the Mini STAMP choir, such is the demand! It is so lovely to see all these children enjoying being at St. Andrew's, becoming familiar with it and learning more about the love of Jesus in such varied ways – far different from my Sunday School days!

This year I think we have all witnessed with joy the increasing maturity and blooming of Rev. Sarah Cushing as our assistant curate. She has grown more and more into the role, assuming more responsibility and I know how much Craig appreciates her help.

Naturally during any year, it is sad to say 'goodbye' to church people we have known and loved for so long. For me and for many others of you, the passing of Rev. Canon David Capron was particularly poignant, as he had been such a legendary figure at St. Andrew's for many years, and responsible for starting so many groups. How delighted he would be to know that the mini-pilgrimages to local churches and pubs continues – a lasting legacy to an incredible man!

You will have noticed this year that on Sundays the churchwarden's duties have been shared with Orion and me being assisted by our deputy wardens, Liz Talbot and Richard Walker. It has been really helpful having them 'share the burden' and so many thanks to them.

Finally, it struck me during Holy Week how truly blessed we are at St. Andrew's to have the rich variety of services, music, speakers, courses and events that are regularly on offer - from Book of Common Prayer services to Celtic style worship; from Bible based sessions to Open the Book presentations. So, many thanks to

Revs. Craig and Sarah, to our retired clergy Mary Crameri and Joy Hance, and to Jan Walker our Lay Reader for providing us with such quality, week after week, month after month.

Bob Macvie *Churchwarden*

Fabric Report

At first when I sat down to write this report, I thought it had been quite a quiet year regarding Fabric. However, when I recall the things which have happened, maybe it hasn't been quite so quiet!

As I go round a variety of other churches, I feel we are so well blessed with not just the team who care for our buildings, but for the way everyone does their part in making our buildings "cared for" and "loved" just as much as we do our own homes, and to each one of you, on behalf of the PCC, I say "Thank you so much for achieving a loved church in which we can worship."

As we know from our own homes, all buildings need a lot of maintenance, or they soon become a major problem. There are so many people who share this responsibility in various ways, I might as well write out the membership list, but special thanks go to Dot and David who so faithfully clean our church premises from end to end every week and keep it spotless. Dusting and cleaning are such thankless tasks, because it all returns next week! In keeping everywhere so beautiful, says so much more than just "Welcome" to everyone who comes through our doors whether visitor or regular worshipper. Thank you, Dot and David!

Many people who visit us comment on our beautiful gardens and grounds. Again, many thanks to David for the many plants you provide and care for and the excellent mowing of the lawns – thank you David.

Another thing we have achieved this year is the replacement of the wooden notice board on the road side of church. The new aluminium board says we are alive and welcome all who pass that way! Thanks for those several chaps who gave their muscle!

An ongoing aim for the Fabric group is the Audio Visual system. I have lost count of the many meetings held, either on our own, or with professional help, to sort out our needs and how best to meet these. As a group we have been through a huge learning process and thanks to David Gravestock, even I have learned some electronic and technical terms! I think we are beginning to see the light at the end of a very long process, assessing our real needs at a cost we can afford.

One place that has considerable usage is the kitchen, not only by ourselves, but by others who hire our accommodation. Our oven is functional, but very tired. If I just say that in order to light the oven, one has to get on hands and knees to reach the back of the oven at ground level – not at all easy for some who use it for our benefit – this must be high on our priority list!

I know I mentioned our car park last year and the state it is in. We have set up a separate fund to try to meet this considerable cost so that those who wish, at any time, may contribute.

So, overall, we are “sound in wind and limb”, our property is well maintained, and all bills and insurances paid.

David Whyman

Fabric Committee

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

A reminder of the function of the PCC:

‘It shall be the duty of the Minister and the PCC to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish. The PCC works in co-operation with the Minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical.’

A PCC is required to meet at least 4 times each year. During 2023, St Andrew’s PCC actually met 10 times during the year including the APCM. We try to alternate meetings, one month being a full formal PCC meeting and the next month being a Subgroups meeting – that way we get to cover more ground in more detail. The PCC feels better informed and gets to have more efficient meetings.

At the APCM in May 2023, four members stood down after completing their terms of office. We give thanks to Sylvaine Gravestock, Jane Ireland, Pat Morris and Chris Susnik for their service. Three new members promptly stepped forward to offer their talents and Isaac Alun-Jones, Julie Milne and Richard Walker were duly elected and welcomed to the team. In addition, David Whyman stood down as churchwarden but stood as an elected member and was duly voted in – Orion Johnson was voted in as churchwarden.

Thus, after the APCM, the members of the PCC were:

Chairman: Revd Craig (8/10)

Mesdames: Hilary Capron (7/10), Sarah Cushing **Curate** (4/10)*, Jackie Daniels **Deanery Synod** (9/10), Jenny Gregg (8/10), Orion Johnson **Churchwarden and Deanery Synod** (9/10), Clodagh Mallison **Parish Information Officer** (7/10), Hilary Mattocks **Deanery Synod** (9/10), Julie Milne (4/6), Liz Talbot (7/10), Carole Taylor **PCC Treasurer** (10/10), Jan Walker **Reader** (9/10)

Messrs: Isaac Alun-Jones (4/6), Bob Macvie **Churchwarden and Deanery Synod** (9/10), David Millington **PCC Secretary** (10/10), Bob Robbins (9/10), Richard Walker (5/6), David Whyman (9/10).

The numbers in brackets show the number of meetings attended during the year out of a possible ten. *Sarah Cushing was undergoing curate training

During the year, the PCC discussed the Parish Share, Outside Giving, Safeguarding, Fabric, Worship, Outreach and Finance.

We also spent time discussing the audio-visual project which is still ongoing. This was our second full year with work in our subgroups and are starting to see lots of progress there – with more detailed discussions happening within the subgroups and a distillation of that work presented to the next full PCC for approval.

David Millington *PCC Secretary*

Deanery Synod

Coventry diocese is divided into deaneries, each made up of parishes in that area, and Shottery is in Fosse Deanery. It is informally known as Faith in Fosse. Deanery synod is made up of lay representatives and clergy from each of the parishes in the area.

At the beginning of 2023, Shottery's deanery lay reps were: Orion Johnson, Jackie Daniels, Pat Morris and Hilary Mattocks. At the 2023 APCM, Jackie and Pat stood down and were replaced by Julie Milne and Bob Macvie. Orion Johnson and Hilary Mattocks were reappointed. Shottery PCC is very grateful to both Jackie and Pat for representing us at deanery level. Jackie was already experienced on deanery synod when I joined it in 2015, and I would like to make special mention of her long service to the deanery that included support throughout my years as Lay Chair.

Deanery synod is held three times a year; we meet with other PCC representatives from town and rural parishes in our section of the diocese and it is a useful chance to share and exchange ideas and experiences. Meetings

usually consist of a talk or discussion, with the aim of supporting the spiritual or church life of those attending.

The February meeting was held at Holy Trinity in Stratford. Rev Craig presented on the subject of 'Spiritual disciplines' and led the group in a session on Lectio Divina and some different styles of channelling our thoughts on God.

June's synod was held in All Saints Church at Burton Dassett: an ideal venue for a midsummer evening, on the opposite edge of Fosse deanery. Gareth Fitzpatrick, Mission & Evangelism Enabler at the diocese, shared a recent initiative called The Collective: an evangelistic resource providing people who wouldn't normally visit a church with the chance to find out what Christianity has to say about issues we all experience (see www.equiphub.org.uk/courses-events-and-resources/the-collective/).

In October, synod met at St James in Alveston, when the central talk from Rob Harrison (Director of Ministry and Leadership) was about lay ministry and how the congregation's experience in church might be 'training' for our witness to others in daily life.

After a themed talk or activity, the agenda turns to deanery 'business', which is largely focused on:

1. Deanery share: how the deanery will contribute financially to the diocese to meet the cost of our stipendiary clergy. A total cost is then split down into shares from each benefice and parish.
2. Deanery plan: the future organisation of the deanery in coming months and years. This can include allocation of clergy and in 2023 a decision was agreed with the diocese to appoint a part-time vicar to the Dassett Magna group (Shottery parishioners might remember Rev Nicki Chatterton completing her interim role there in Spring 2023).

Rev Patrick Taylor (Stratford-on-Avon) is the Area Dean, Margaret Howard (Wellesbourne) is Lay Chair and Pauline McIntosh (Stratford-on-Avon) is Secretary. Rev Barry Jackson (Edgehill Benefice) leads on the Deanery Plan. Katie Hartkess Rose was appointed the new Deanery Environmental Representative as of June 2023.

Orion Johnson

Parish Safeguarding

The Disclosure and Barring Service checks all members of organisations within St. Andrew's if they have any connections with children or vulnerable adults.

The children's activities of the Stamp Choir and Chocolate Church have involved several new helpers who have all been DBS checked.

Safeguarding is taken very seriously at St. Andrew's and is an agenda item on all PCC meetings and at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). Members of the PCC have also undertaken a basic safeguarding training update which was provided online by the Church of England.

Our Safeguarding policy is based on the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and is regularly reviewed and readopted by the PCC. It is clearly posted in our Welcome area and on the home page of our website. The parish has copies of all the resource documents listed in the policy.

David Millington *Parish Safeguarding Officer*

Music Report 2023

This year began with an unusually busy January, with a Confirmation Service conducted by Bishop John, an evening Candlemas Service and the celebration for Jan Walker's 30th anniversary as a Reader. The choir provided special anthems for all these. A new appeal was made for singers as Choir numbers, particularly of men were and still are very low.

In February some of our choir members attended a most enjoyable RSCM event at St Mary's Church Tysoe. This was led by Julian Harris and took the form of a Eucharist for Candlemas with a music rehearsal beforehand. We have since made use of some of the music at St Andrew's.

Music and Anthems were provided through Lent for Ash Wednesday, Mothering Sunday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday, with our main musical focus being the special Good Friday service Before the Cross...The things He Carried. The choir sang Anthems for each of the three sections of the service including, notably this year the Libera Me Domino from Faure's Requiem with soloist Andrew Parkes, and Elgar's Ave Verum Corpus.

Post Easter we sang Acclamations and Anthems for Ascension Day, and Pentecost and Trinity Sundays. In May we put on a service to celebrate the Coronation, and the choir sang an Anthem specially commissioned by the RSCM, The Mountains shall bring Peace by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange. This was a great piece for us to learn and very well received.

It proved to be quite an exciting summer musically in a variety of ways. On June 24th the Stamp Choir lead by Matt and Caroline Penn gave their first, and very lively concert to a packed audience. The following day we had a visit from Coventry Cathedral Choir, along with their Acting Director of Music and Organist for Choral Evensong. They sang the anthem Many Waters cannot quench Love by John Ireland, as well as enjoyable settings of all the rest of the Evensong Liturgy. On Sunday 2nd July our own choir celebrated RSCM Music Sunday with a special Evening Service. We learnt seven great anthems for this occasion, including a musical setting of the Choristers' Prayer and the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in D by Herbert Brewer. These, along with hymns and descants celebrating music in worship made for an excellent occasion at which £275 in was raised for the RSCM.

There were more concerts to come over this Summer from two of our ex-choristers. In July Lily Robson, currently a Choral Scholar at York Minster performed a solo song recital Seasons of Song, with well-known local pianist Charles Matthews. This was followed on in September by Vanessa Gravestock's Night at the Musicals. Larry and Rosemary were delighted to be asked to play in both concerts, and Matt Penn also featured in the latter. Both of these evenings were really well supported, much enjoyed, and raised significant funds for church. St Andrew's choir are very proud of the ongoing achievements of Lily and Vanessa, who sang with us throughout their school years.

It was a great shock to us all when our dear friend and choir member Rev Canon David Capron passed away in September. David could not have been a greater supporter of St Andrew's music over the years. The choir were honoured to sing at the special Eucharist the day before his funeral. There is not a choir rehearsal or service when he is not in our minds. He is, and will continue to be, sorely missed. David was very keen for the choir to learn and sing a hymn Tree of Glory, written by his son Rev Mark. We did so in early October.

Autumn kept us busy with Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Time to Remember, and St Andrew's Day. Music was prepared for all of these. Our Advent Carol Service was a high spot, with such lovely repertoire of Advent music available,

both old and new. We enjoyed the challenge of singing in German for one of our carols, Au du Freuliche in the Nine Lessons and Carols Service. We were pleased to note that one of our other choir carols, a beautiful modern piece, In the Stillness by Sally Beamish, also featured this year in York Minster's main carol service, and also in Carols from Kings on Christmas Eve! We were there first...!

Out in the community in December, carol singing was arranged for the Squirrel in Bishopton and also at the Bell in Shotton. We are always mindful that choir performances would not be of the standard that they are without the hard work and commitment of all our regular choir members through the year, and for the major festivals we are so grateful to Helen Hall who joins us in the Altos, along with Ruth Yeates, and our two extra basses, Anthony McIsaac and Andrew Parkes. The presence of these extra singers means that Larry is able to conduct the choir rather than being needed for singing. This improves our performance. We still hope and pray for extra singers to join us on a regular basis. Thanks, too, to Jackie Wightman for playing one Evensong each month. Organ music is provided through the year for Weddings and Funerals by Matt and Rosemary.

Finally, we are reminded every service of the talents of Matthew Penn, our organist. His extemporisation skills are much enjoyed, as are his Voluntaries and imaginative hymn accompaniments. We are fortunate indeed to have him at St Andrew's as such a crucial part of the music team.

Larry and Rosemary Robson Directors of Music



The Parish Office

The Parish Office is often the first point of contact that many people have with St. Andrew's. Our Parish Administrator, Sally, has now been in the office about two years and has found her feet nicely and a place in our hearts.

Sally keeps everything running smoothly and always has a smile a cheerful word for visitors.

We have continued our attempt to make both the office but also the Welcome Area and Hall bright and welcoming and to keep all the noticeboards refreshed and free of old material.

Outside of the physical office, Clodagh continues to produce our monthly church magazine, Searchlight and makes an amazing job of it – we all look forward to each new edition. Where does she find all the input, articles and photos (and jokes)? She is a human tornado and we are truly grateful for all her hard work.

Clodagh also looks after our church Facebook page. It's difficult to comprehend how so much of our lives have been turned towards the internet and social media in the past few years. But if that is where people look for their information and news, that's where we must be also. The immediacy and visual impact of these platforms are undeniable. The snag is that they need to be bang up to date and that's a hard task.

DM

Shottery St Andrew's CE Primary School Report

I've been a school governor for nearly 2 years now and it's been a time of great learning for me and fabulous to monitor lessons with the staff and see the children learn and listening to their voices on their lessons and school life. For my first Foundation Governor report I've focused on the Christian Distinctiveness of our school.

The church has an important part to play in the life of the school. The staff and the governors work with the church, through leadership of collective worship and school services, seeking to ensure that each child grows spiritually. The school's hope is that every child should know that they are unique, special and

that in their daily lives, they should exhibit the school's distinctive Christian values.

In our school, Collective Worship underpins all that we do, prepares us for the day ahead and allows for a time of community, quiet, reflection and prayer. Our children lead the prayer and reflection element of worship.

Collective Worship provides a basis for discussing key values and themes, including gender equality, consent and rights of the child and Collective Worship Journals of Reflection have been introduced for pupils to reflect these. As a result, pupils are confident talking to adults about managing different situations where these values are in question. The theme they started the year with was Thankfulness. The children gave thanks for all the wonderful things in the world and considered how each and every one of us are unique and have the ability to shine a light on even the darkest of places; the children heard the bible story The Thankful Leper, *Luke 17:11-19* to further explore the theme and were then asked to reflect about what others have done in their life that they are thankful for; what relationships they are thankful for; what abilities they have that they are grateful for and what thankfulness looks like. Finally, they were asked to think about how a thankful attitude makes life much fulfilling. Collective Worship also provides an opportunity to introduce a safeguarding question of the week, devised by the school council/safeguarding committee ensuring safeguarding is a priority for staff and pupils, e.g. Do you know how to stay safe online? Do you have a network of 5?

Each week, we also have a Global Collective Worship where the children explore questions such as, *What can we learn from new adventures?*

Acts of worship are carefully planned around Christian Festivals and are an opportunity to help children learn about and acquire our Christian values in a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment. All children in the school visit St Andrew's Church on a regular basis for Harvest, Christmas and Easter Services, with parents in attendance – pupils are actively involved in preparing and leading on readings, hymns, poems and prayers. Behaviour in church is excellent and observed by the Behaviour Governor, Safeguarding Governor and Reverend Craig.

The pupil-led Worship Committee are continuing to play an active role in school life and were excited to learn that the headteacher has signed them up to a training course, to develop them further as collective worship leaders. For a few weeks, the Worship Committee lead on class worship, from the Worship Committee after their first week:

“It was a very busy week for the Worship Committee,- we started the week helping out with the whole school collective worship and we ended the

week doing collective worship all by ourselves! We spoke to the school about Lent and Easter and we shared a story with everyone called *That's Not Fair, That's Not Justice!* written by a storyteller called Bob Hartman. We talked about how on Good Friday, Christians remember that what happened to Jesus was not fair or just. Jesus was not a criminal; he was God's precious son. But out of what appeared to be the darkest day, God brought hope for the world. Three days after Good Friday, on Easter Day, Christians celebrate the greatest miracle that ever happened. Jesus rose from the dead and he appeared again to his friends to show them that all he had taught them was true! We are looking forward to retelling the Easter story in church next week at our Easter Service."

Our Christian values, and carefully planned opportunities in our curriculum, ensure that the children regularly discuss and debate the big issues, to challenge injustice and to engage in activities that can bring about change are always present, e.g. Sponsored Santa Run for Shakespeare Hospice; Stratford upon Avon Foodbank Reverse Advent Calendar; Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. Further work is being completed to broaden pupil understanding of being a courageous advocate, through curriculum topics, questions and debates. The school provides opportunities for children to be responsible, respectful, active citizens – prioritising strengthening community links and using these opportunities to develop the children as change agents. A whole school Christmas Lunch was organised at the neighbouring pub, The Bell, all children attended and enjoyed Christmas celebrations with their friends and teachers; the local plant nursery has worked with different classes to support with science and geography lessons; KS2 attended the RSC production, *The Box of Delights*, with a follow up email received from the theatre regarding excellent pupil behaviour throughout the performance; the Mayor of Stratford upon Avon is a regular visitor to the school, supporting with themed days and fetes; and links with local nursing homes, where pupils sing for residents; the school entered a Peace Pole competition, designing gardens of reflection – Shottery St Andrew's came in second place and are awaiting the installation of a Peace Pole, which will become the focal point of our orchard area, which will be developed into a garden of reflection, with the support of FSSA and Co-op volunteers in Summer term 2024.

From our Headteacher:

"I am really proud of the journey that we have been on since I joined in April 2023 and I hope that our wider school community gets a real sense of how settled the children are, how wonderful the school and classrooms

are looking, how expectations have been raised and how the school feels a happy place to be. I always say- if we have happy children and happy staff, we will have a happy school! We have a new school vision and values - children, staff, Governors and parents have contributed to redesigning our Vision and Values, based on the Bible verse,
'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'
Matthew 5:16.

At Shottery St Andrew's, we aim to shine brightly as a church school. Our vision is to 'be lights to the world,' radiating through every aspect of our ethos and provision. As a result, we are a community where 'fullness of life' for everyone has the highest priority and where everyone, on a daily basis, is embraced as part of our Christian school family. We are passionate about our vision and our strapline, '**Anchored in faith, we shine!**' encapsulates our school philosophy."

Becks Bartlett, Foundation Governor.

STAMP, Chocolate Church and Sunshine Village

We have spoken a lot about our children's activities in Searchlight during the year, but the progress here has been so massive, I will recap on what has been achieved.

We were fortunate in recruiting the whirlwind that is Caroline Penn and in obtaining funding from the Town Trust of £5,000 to help us finance this initiative.

We started with three main thrusts, trusting in God to see how each would develop and knowing that this would show us how to develop our children's work.

The first was a singing group, a St. Andrew's Music Project so let's call it **Stamp**. Aimed at Primary school children we soon got 35 keen talented youngsters singing their hearts out in church and having a great time doing it. The success of this has given us two additional problems. What to do with the older ones as they move up to secondary school age and what about the little ones who want to join but aren't quite old enough. Easy. The older ones can become Young Leaders helping with the singing, the admin and the social media side – the younger ones can form a Mini Stamp run slightly earlier than Stamp.

The second thrust was a Sunday afternoon event, run once a month, to get young children into church, which from the start seemed to involve food elements so was called **Chocolate Church**. This was a runaway success from the start and testimony to the amount of preparation work which Caroline puts into it. There are so many activities for the children to get involved in we regularly have 60 children plus their responsible adult in the church buildings. Some weeks there is a simple meal to follow – all free for child and adult – where children and adults can sit down and eat together which is a good thing to do in this day and age. We have even an arrangement with another local charity, Stepping Stones, who help with our cooking and we give them a kitchen to do theirs.

The third thrust was a nursery event once a week. The church hall was split into several areas to allow role playing at the library, the doctors, the garage, the school, the kitchen, the shop ...- our **Sunshine Village** - whilst the carers/parents chatted over a coffee and cake. This was an enormous amount of effort each week but was poorly attended, so we have shelved that idea for the time being to allow focus on what has worked well.

We showed the Town Trust how we had spent their monies and they were so enthusiastic they doubled the grant for this year to £10,000. The Diocese also chipped in a further £2,500 to aid us develop these mission activities further.

As a result of these initiatives, we have a lot of children and their families who come into our church building for these events, some perhaps for the first time. The activities have some religious message and use both the church hall and the church itself.

DM

The Listening and Prayer Team

Two members of the team are available after the 10 am service each Sunday. We have moved to our original position under the St Andrew's window at the back of the church and will be there to offer listening and prayer to anyone who wants it.

We did this because we found the Sanctuary didn't quite work and did not attract many people. Since moving there, the team have been quite busy. Becks redesigned our posters, and they are in the welcome area, the hall, the west door porch, and by the prayer tree in church. Each explain what is offered

by the Listening and Prayer group. Clodagh will feature the posters in the Searchlight to show what we do.

The prayer tree inside the church has been attracting visitors from outside the church, some from distant countries, and some new settlers.

We continue with the weekly prayer list, which is kept confidential within the team. Anyone wanting prayer for themselves, family or friend can contact one of the team and ask to be put on it. We ask for specific details that prayer is required and for weekly updates. It will remain on the list for 4 weeks.

The team are Becks Bartlett, Bob MacVie, Brenda Whitbread, Jackie Daniels, Jane Ireland, Revd Joy Hance, Kay Sillitoe, Liz Talbot, Revd Nikki Moon, Revd Sarah Cushing and Susie Fletcher.

Susie Fletcher



Bereavement Visitors

Our group of visitors comprising of Jane Ireland, Hilary Mattocks, and Jenny Greg welcomed Robin Essex at a meeting in March this year, 2024. He has offered to join us, phoning and visiting bereaved gentlemen, a welcome addition to our team.

In November 2023 we had our usual Time to Remember service in Church, for friends and families who have been bereaved over the past 2 years, where they can light a candle in their memory to place on the altar. This service was very well attended with nearly fifty invitations being posted out and many bringing friends and other family members. After the service tea and cake was served in the hall by Mothers Union, allowing us the opportunity to socialize.

We feel welcomed when contacting the bereaved, many thanking us and showing appreciation. We offer to follow up contact where we feel this is needed and have lists of professional organizations that offer bereavement counselling if we feel this is needed on a longer basis.

We meet at my house bi-annually, or as needed, to catch up with each other in the team.

Jane Ireland Bereavement Team Leader

Mothers Union

St. Andrew's Mothers' Union branch members enjoyed a full and varied programme of activities throughout 2023. The monthly meetings included thought-provoking talks.

- Our member, Jane, explained how she experienced the lasting impact that the Holocaust had on life in Poland, during the time she lived there.
- Rev Su McClellan updated us on the situation in Gaza, relating it to how the geographical zones had been developed and how Embrace the Middle East is involved in supporting people in the region.
- Northumbrian saints were the topic of Rev Joy Hance's 'pilgrimage' around the north-east of England.
- We welcomed members of Wellesbourne Mothers' Union to our meeting, when past Diocesan President, Jane Hill, gave an illustrated talk about her visit to Kapsabet and her involvement in Mothers' Union there, as part of the group led by Bishop Christopher to the diocese in Kenya.
- Graham Poole shared his passion for sci-fi themed painting, whilst explaining how his love of art had developed over many years, becoming a relaxing diversion to the rigours of his profession. We then all created our own artwork using a variety of medium and appreciated the calming effect of this craft.

To mark the King's Coronation, our time of Reflection at that meeting, included elements from the service and prayers produced by Mothers' Union for the occasion. We then aired and shared personal highlights of the event from the pageantry to the sacrament of anointing, choosing some to write onto 'jewels' which were stuck onto a 'crown', thus preserving a record of this unique occasion.

A summer outing to Hillers Garden Centre was much enjoyed, as was a visit to Wellesbourne to join in a lunch with Mothers' Union members from around the Deanery. Donations at an Afternoon Tea at Hilary's contributed to the year's charity support with monies being sent to 'Coffee Tots' in Coventry. The branch participated in a national Mothers' Union campaign by upholding the '16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, through the mounting of a small display and including the issue in Intercessions.

Serving refreshments following the 'Time to Remember' service and facilitating the making of daffodil posies for distribution on Mothering Sunday gave practical support to church activities. Distribution of mini Christmas stockings and Easter bags filled with goodies to housebound parishioners was a gesture that was warmly appreciated.

The highlight of the year was the celebration of St. Andrew's Mothers' Union branch's 40th anniversary. This took place in March with a very special service of Holy Communion at which Rev Craig was the Celebrant. It was attended by our Diocesan President, Karen, together with several Diocesan trustees. It was wonderful to formally welcome 5 new members during the service. Afterwards, our longest serving current member, Audrey, cut the special anniversary cake and celebrations continued.

As a permanent reminder of this special milestone in the life of St. Andrew's Mothers' Union, a terracotta planter was purchased with funding from the Diocese as our project for 'Transformation' – a scheme whereby branches apply for funding to create something that will improve the lives of others or will enhance the appearance of a venue/place. Bulbs planted in this trough in the Autumn have indeed transformed the entrance to the church's 'Welcome Area' this spring.

It was a joy that David Capron was able to take part in the 40th anniversary celebrations as it was whilst he was vicar here that he initiated the forming of the Mother's Union branch in 1983. He was immensely pleased that it continued to flourish throughout the years and have a valued role in the life of St. Andrew's. David was a Mothers' Union member, continuing to uphold the ethos and values of the organisation until his death in September.

Hilary Capron

Cell Group

Cell group remains a bi-weekly bible study group who meet on Wednesday evenings via the joy of Zoom. Zoom was originally introduced to get us through COVID restrictions as they wore on and has stayed with us as it allows those who are now living further afield, those who don't like driving in the dark, those who don't always have the ability to get out and those who are away to still meet and grow in Christ together.



Over the last 12 months we have studied The Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop of York's Lent book: Failure, the book of Philippians and most recently The Bible Course which Alex & Nick very kindly expanded to our whole church congregation.

Becks Bartlett

Open the Book

Open the Book (OtB) offers primary school children an opportunity to hear key Bible stories told by a team of Christians from local churches, who present the stories during assemblies or acts of collective worship. Each presentation takes around 10–15 minutes.



The Open the Book team continues to go into our local primary schools of Shottery St Andrew's, Bishopton and Holy Trinity bringing to life God's great big story, The Bible. Once again, the children have been the real stars of the show. They have such a short amount of time to find out what story they are dramatising, get into costume, practice their words, and find out where and

when to move and speak. Each time they are enthusiastic, really get into their parts and do a great job of bringing the story to life.

We are a small team (Becks Bartlett, Bob MacVie, Bob Robbins, Hilary Capron, Nick Cutler, and Susie Fletcher) as we simply introduce, narrate and reflect on the story; it is the children who bring the dramatisation! Going forward, we are looking to expand the team to include prayer supporters and once we have got to grips with all the resources gathered over the years, costume makers and set dressers (to create *very easy* to put on costumes and *very easy* to transport and *very quickly* to put up props and set dressings).

2023-24 will be the last academic year we use The Lion Storytelling Bible as Bob Hartman has worked with the Bible Society to produce a Bible full of stories ready for Open the Book to dramatise and take into schools. Part of this change also means changing to a membership scheme which does cost but also gives us access to more resources to use in bringing the stories to life. Please keep an eye on the noticeboard in the Parish Centre for more information as it happens!

Becks Bartlett,
Open the Book Team Leader.

Bible Study Group



During the last year we have run ***The Bible Course*** twice, with a total of about 40 people from our church either joining us on Zoom or watching the videos in their own time.

The Bible Course is produced by The Bible Society and gives a superb overview of the world's best-selling book, combining clear video teaching (from Dr. Andrew Ollerton), group discussion, personal reflection and suggested daily readings. We are very grateful to Becks and the Cell Group who helped to run the first course. It's been exciting to hear comments such as:

- *The video presenters have a real gift in their presentation skills which makes you feel comfortable and not threatened. This makes it very accessible to all.*
- *We got a lot from it and feel inspired!*
- *The course has been really good at linking the different books together and pointing out how the Old Testament points to Jesus.*
- *The course was superb in navigating us relatively swiftly through the whole of the Bible and making sense of it in its historical context. We learned a lot and the ability to listen if we didn't feel we could contribute was important.*
- *Really enjoyed the course and found it very enlightening - how it fits together and relates to today*

As Jesus said: "Whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life." [John 5:24]

We now have a weekly (in-person) follow-on Bible Group as we continue learning to know, love and serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nick & Alex Cutler

Pilgrim Course and Other Actions

We ran a Pilgrim Course last summer on the Beatitudes

A group of 12 met for 6 weeks last Autumn (2023) to follow the Church of England 'Pilgrim' course on the Creeds.

There was a Quiet Day at the church in November 2023 with the theme *Abundant Life*.

Joan Whyman and Joy Hance led a Lent Course on the theme of the *Landscape of Faith* looking at the wilderness, the sea, the sky, mountains and trees, culminating with a Quiet Morning at church on the Garden.

A small group knit *Prayer Shawls*. They meet together once a month to pray and knit, and completed shawls are blessed in the group. The shawls are then wrapped as a gift and given, with a prayer card, to anyone who isn't well, bereaved, or just in need of comfort.

Joy Hance

Flower Arrangers

The past year has been a blooming good one for our enthusiastic Flower arranging group.



They have had the opportunity to demonstrate their artistry, their skills and presentation at several events, including weddings, funerals, weekly Altar floral arrangements and seasonal church celebrations as required.

We are blessed at St Andrews in having a large number of skilled arrangers from the “Blooming Lovely” flower arranging classes (many are non-congregation) and congregation members who truly can't wait to help in every requirement that occurs.

The floral demonstrations have been totally funded by financial contributions from congregation members and floral donations by the arrangers themselves, who, in the whole, are non-members of our congregation.



A huge thank you to one and all who have contributed to the past year's floral activities.

DM



Events

The finance working group of the PCC are the people who have tried very hard to raise money for ST ANDREWS through events through the year.

Our little coffee mornings are held in the Parish Centre every other Saturday morning whenever possible. The idea of them came after covid just to get people together, but they have proved very popular and have raised a fair amount of money - £2,689 in the year of 2023. (that is just rough as I have not had the papers back yet) but we are very pleased with the result.

We had a book sale which is always popular, when we have coffee and tea cake and some readings from several books; we had a plant sale again people love it (Thanks to David and Anne Challis for lending us their house and garden); we had a couple of concerts one by Lily Robson and another with Vanessa Gravestock, enjoyed by everyone and also raised a lot of money for church; a concert was organised by John Fletcher with the Guitar group where again St Andrews's benefitted and we were all entertained.

Lunch Club is another way of raising money for St Andrew's, again giving pleasure to so many.

We have had a Beatle drive, which many people enjoyed.

We have a few things planned and appreciate any ideas for fundraising, so please let us know. We can only guess what will be popular.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to St Andrew's, and we hope that it is now made easier for you with the card machine that is in Church. (and the office)

Carole Taylor (Chairman) Jenny Gregg (scribe), Jackie Daniels, Hilary Mattocks and Richard Walker

Carole Taylor

Audio Visual Team

When we think back to how we started, during lockdown, to keep our church community connected during those tough times, our little team has in many ways gone from strength to strength! We are still a small team, as we grow, we also lose people - Vanessa and Lyndsay are now busy shaping up their futures and Liz finds herself busy with other church roles.

The wonderful David Gravestock steadfastly works to improve our system, tidying up the cables, acquiring and replacing equipment and, with Becks, sends out new instruction manuals and trains new recruits. Joshan is amazing with his youthful confidence and skill and is now training up Hadriel, his little brother - as he peeps over the top of the screens. Susie is a stalwart of our group - always prepared to give it her best and with good humour. Chris struggles to see the buttons and keys at times but keeps us organised with a monthly rota. We welcome Jason and Andy who have recently brought their experience and skills to the team.

We also need to thank David Challis who often steps up to help with the Audio when one of the team can't make it.

We continue to have our struggles as the joys of the internet, app quirks and PC virus scans and updates think a Sunday morning is a good time to do their worst! But the Holy Spirit is around for us.

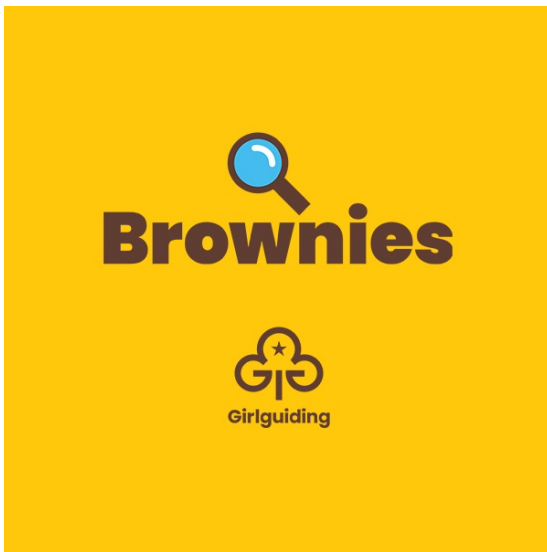
We are looking forward to the new set-up, which will give us better stability and camera angles, so enjoy those backs of heads while you can! We understand that this will still take some time, due to sourcing the right equipment with the right support to take us forward and the recent world events, which alter quotes and delivery windows.

Becks Bartlett

Brownies and Rainbows

This year has marked the first full year of us being a joint Rainbow and Brownie unit. Becoming a joint unit has not only saved a local Rainbows group from disappearing completely from Stratford but has also majorly helped our existing

group grow from strength to strength, attracting and retaining more members than we have seen in several years.



We have enjoyed working on various badges and projects, with many girls achieving various Interest Badges, including Rainbows receiving their 'Helper' badge and the Brownies, their 'Charities' badge after we had a visit from Janet from Net Zero Stratford who talked to us about the 'Big Green Week' initiative. Many girls also enjoyed their first experience of a night away from home when we took part in a district wide sleepover at Imagination Street - although how much sleep was actually had was questionable!

We have also enjoyed an evening 'mini orienteering' around Shottery and a very popular disco night at Christmas time.

Most recently, we really enjoyed taking part in the Mothering Sunday service at Church with Reverend Craig and Reverend Sarah. The Rainbows and Brownies took part in many different elements of the service, helping Reverend Craig to make a cake, handing out posies to all the female congregants and reading specially written prayers. The girls had a wonderful time, and we hope to return to another service in the coming year.



Finally, we are delighted to welcome two new leaders. The first, Jen, is a leader with Girl Guides in her native Canada but we are delighted to welcome her and her experience as she is now studying at the Shakespeare Institute. We are also thrilled to have one of our ex-Brownies (one of our first to achieve the Brownie Gold Award - the highest award a Brownie can achieve) return to us as a volunteer for her Duke of Edinburgh 'Service' and hope that she will continue with us as a Young Leader.

Rhiannon

Outside Giving

During the year 2023, a grand total of £4,345 was given by St. Andrew's Church to the twelve nominated monthly charities. This compares with a figure of £3,905. However, with other monies given to The Appeals for Pakistan Flood and Turkey Earthquake, St Andrew's School, British Legion and Stratford Christmas Lights, the total figure given amounts to £5,733.

A variety of charities are chosen by the Outside Giving Committee to support a mix of international mission and local mission. Some charities we support yearly such as **World Vision**, through which we sponsor Gimo Sergio in Mozambique.

Our giving to the **Church Mission Society** helps support church missionaries – Andrea and Andrew Young in Nepal have now retired. We also donate annually to **Christian Aid** and the **Shakespeare Hospice**.

This year we have introduced:

- Parkinson's Society,
- Ripple Effect (where aid goes to families in Africa and Asia to help them become more self-sufficient),
- Prostate Cancer,
- Sightsavers (which works in more than 30 countries around the world trying to help the root causes of avoidable blindness),
- The Farming Community Network (a UK charity giving practical and pastoral help to the farming community) and
- Embrace the Middle East (a Christian development charity, who partner with Christians in the Middle East as they work to transform lives and restore the dignity of the most excluded and marginalised communities).

If there is a particular charity you feel strongly that we should support occasionally, the Outside Giving committee would be pleased to hear from you. Either speak to Bob Macvie or to Hilary Mattocks, Sylvaine Gravestock, or Liz Talbot. Extra special thanks should go to Hilary Mattocks for keeping account of all the money collected and for sending it on to the various charities throughout the year.

ST ANDREW'S CHARITY GIVING 2023

MONTH	CHARITY	Amount Collected £
January	Samaritans	419
February	Parkinson's Society	426
March	Church Missionary Society (CMS)	281
April	Ripple Effect	409
May	Christian Aid	310
June	Prostate Cancer	160
July	Children's Society	296
August	Sightsavers	391
September	Farming Community Network	453
October	World Vision	300
November	Shakespeare Hospice	448
December	Embrace	452
Additions		
	St Andrew's School	380
	Pakistan Flood Appeal	256
	Turkey Earthquake Appeal	677
	British Legion	50
	Stratford Christmas Lights	25
	Total Collected – Including Gift Aid	£ 5,733

Finance Report 2023

Summary

During 2023, we had our first full year as a normal church after the Covid years.

Last year 2022 we showed a net deficit in our Income over Expenditure entirely due to a reduction in the value of our investments - what we can call our Church of England savings account. This year 2023 the investments went back up by some £20,000 leading to a surplus, as our income was also a fair bit better than our expenditure.

Income

Normal Income – that is ignoring the increase in investment value - was some £10,000 better than 2022, due to increases in donations (£6,000), to more in the open plate (£2,000) and also from better utilisation of the hall (£2,000).

Costs

Our costs were slightly higher than 2022 by some 2%, but this was expected as we get back into normal operation and with inflation.

Other

As we noted last year, we have been fortunate that our bottom line has been aided over several years by the increase in value of our investments, in the Church of England Deposit Account, and this year was no exception – but we know from our experience in 2022 that shares can go down just as easily, especially in globally troubled times.

What is pleasing to see, therefore, is that our normal day to day operation is showing a positive return – our income is more than covering our costs, not by a lot but still positive.

Note: during 2023, our Accountants, Wiltshires, became part of Pointon Young.

Shottery St. Andrews Church

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2023

	2023	2022
	Total	Total
	funds	funds
	£	£
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM		
Planned giving and donations	88,510	81,478
Other trading activities	32,231	29,665
Investment Income	16	7
Other Income (<i>revaluation</i>)*	22,519	(16,479)
Total	143,276	94,671
EXPENDITURE ON		
Diocesan Share	66,178	67,591
Church Management & Admin	12,210	12,208
Other Costs	24,086	20,308
Other (Accountancy)	1,308	1,741
Total	103,782	101,848
NET INCOME	39,494	(7,177)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS		
Total funds brought forward	160,624	167,801
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>200,118</u>	<u>160,624</u>



ST ANDREW'S SHOTTERY

