



**AGENDA, REPORTS and
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
for the
MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
and the
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

**Sunday 3rd April 2022
11.00am**

The front cover shows a photograph of the Festival of Light November 2021.

From the Rector, Fr Stuart Owen

Dear Members of the Electoral Roll,

I have pleasure in introducing these Agendas, Reports and Financial Report in readiness for our Annual Meetings which take place this year at **11:00 am** on Sunday 3rd April 2022 at St Peter's Church.

Do please make every effort to be present at these Meetings when they happen. They are a significant occasion in our communal parish life.

Yours sincerely,

Fr Stuart Owen

**Annual Meeting of Parishioners
for the election of Churchwardens**

MINUTES

11.00AM Sunday 16th May 2021, St Peter's Berkhamsted

1. Prayers: Father Stuart
2. Apologies for Absence: Hilary Armstrong, Barbara Conway
3. To receive the Minutes of the previous Meeting of Parishioners (25th October 2020) – received
4. Election of Churchwardens for 2021-2022: Tim Hennessey and Mark Grego
5. Closure of Meeting

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

11.05am Sunday 16th May, St Peters, Berkhamsted **2021**

Minutes

- 1. To receive the Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting (25th October 2020)** - Received
- 2. To receive a Report on the Electoral Roll** - Provided in writing by Richard, current electoral total: 194 (18/03/2022)

Elections

- 1. Affirmation of ONE All Saints representative to the Parochial Church Council for 2021-23** - Richard Hackworth

Other Business

- 1. To receive the Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council for 2020, including the General Fund Summary Budget for 2021.** No questions. Proposing: Michael Anderson; seconding: Nicky Evans.
- 2. To re-appoint Hillier Hopkins LLP, Chartered Accountants, or another qualified firm if advantageous to the PCC, as the auditor or independent examiner, dependent on the requirements of charity law.** Proposing: Sarah Dawson; seconding Caroline Charman.
- 3. To receive a report from the Churchwardens on the Fabric, Goods & Ornaments of the Churches. No motion required.**

Quinquennial Inspection Report summary – Priority B repairs must commence within 18 months (St John's chantry, South Aisle, St Katherine Chapel) – est. cost: £120,000

Priority C – replace lead roof of North transept

Court House: total cost £350,000

Total: £650,000 over the next 6 years

Beneficial that we have a firm plan laid out and know exactly what we need to do, repairing the roof is the priority. PCC agreed Standing Committee will meet next week to discuss the next steps and begin organising a general fundraising appeal.

Appeal for fundraising ideas, please let Churchwardens/Treasure/Fr Stuart know.

4. **To receive the other written reports of Parish Activities as circulated herewith.** Received, no questions. Fr Stuart thanked all those who contribute to the work and life of this Parish.

5. **Rector's report:**

In summary, three actions for the upcoming year: caring for our Church building, building on what we have learnt over the past year and building relationships with our local community.

6. Questions and discussions on any matters of Parochial or general Church interest – including Safeguarding.

- 800-year celebration: what outreach are we doing? Core group have begun reaching out to local organisations, Fr Stuart has written to clubs and societies in and around Berkhamsted (Raiders FC, Cricket Club, Strathspey Society (Ceilidh) have expressed interest in being involved.) Planned event in September (reception in the Lady Chapel) to invite local groups and let them know what is already happening. Next step, Fr Stuart will contact the schools, possible photography competition.
- Eco Church (La Rocha): at present, submitting our Bronze award. We will now begin working towards Silver, and St Peter's will be doing more to promote this and what is involved. Fr Stuart expressed gratitude to Susan Holmes for her organisation of this.

7. To note the following date:

PCC Meeting Tuesday 22nd June 2021 (In person)

**THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
FOR THE ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS**

11:00 am Sunday 3rd April 2022, St Peters, Berkhamsted

AGENDA

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for Absence
3. To Receive the Minutes of the previous Meeting of Parishioners
(16th May 2021)
4. Election of Churchwardens for 2022-2023
5. Closure of Meeting

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

11:00 am Sunday 3rd April 2022 in St Peter's, Berkhamsted

AGENDA

1. To receive the Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting (16th May 2021)
2. To receive a Report on the Electoral Roll

Elections

3. Affirmation of ONE All Saints representative to the Parochial Church Council for 2022-23
4. Election of new members of PCC

Other Business

5. To receive the Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council for 2020, including the General Fund Summary Budget for 2019
6. To re-appoint Hillier Hopkins LLP, Chartered Accountants, or another qualified firm if advantageous to the PCC, as the auditor or independent examiner, dependent on the requirements of charity law
7. To receive a report from the Churchwardens on the Fabric, Goods & Ornaments of the Churches
8. To receive the other written reports of Parish Activities as circulated herewith
9. Rector's report
10. Questions and discussions on any matters of Parochial or general Church interest – including Safeguarding
11. To note the following date: **PCC Meeting** Wednesday 11th May 2022

REPORTS FROM THE PARISH

The following groups (here in alphabetical order) have met, worked and contributed regularly or in part throughout the year within the parish community, and the reports of those who particularly wished to write them will be found in the body of this Annual Report.

The Bellringers

Mike Below

The Buildings Committee

Mark Grego

Castle Church of England Federation:

The Thomas Coram Church of England School and

Victoria Church of England Infant School and Nursery

Rob Halls, Executive Head Teacher

The Mothers' Union

Margaret Burbidge

The Music Department

Adrian Davis, Jean Wild, Jon Lee

Pastoral Care Group

Philippa Seldon

St Peter's Ladies' Club

Barbara McKenna

Sundays Together Lunches

Carolynne Charman

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

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- 1) **Treasurer's Report for the Parish** *Richard Hackworth*
- 2) **St Peter's Churchwardens' Report:** *Mark Grego / Tim Hennessey*
- 3) **The Rector's Report** *Fr Stuart Owen*
- 4) **The Buildings Committee** *Mark Grego*
- 5) **Online Technology** *Robin McMorran*
- 6) **Pastoral Care** *Philippa Seldon*
- 7) **St Peter's Church Choir** *Jean Wild*
- 8) **St Peter's Ladies' Club** *Barbara McKenna*
- 9) **Sundays Together Lunches** *Carolynne Charman*
- 10) **The Bellringers** *Mike Below*
- 11) **The Mothers' Union** *Margaret Burbidge*
- 12) **Castle Church of England Federation: Victoria and Thomas Coram**
Schools: *Rob Halls, Executive Headteacher*

1. THE TREASURER'S REPORT

The full 2021 Trustee Report and Accounts for the Parish of Great Berkhamsted is now available on the St Peter's website, and copies have been displayed in St Peter's. The report sets out details of the Parish finances for 2021 with the usual supporting commentary. If anyone has any questions, please contact me.

General fund

Our core fund, as always, is the General fund that we use for all day-to-day business. I prepared two projections for how the General fund might fare over the year – a pessimistic projection and an optimistic projection. Here is how we came in.

Pessimistic projection	Where we actually landed 31 st December 2021	Optimistic projection
-£7,200 (projected deficit)	-£4,700	£8,600 (projected surplus)

It is disappointing to close the year with a deficit, but this is almost entirely due to hard luck. In September 2021, ARPM Ltd, who was managing the tenancy of All Saints House, failed, costing us -£4,000. We are unlikely to recover these costs. Without this misfortune the end of year deficit would be less than -£1,000, that would have been quite satisfactory.

The 2021 deficit is on top of the deficit accumulated during of 2020. Consequently, it was necessary to use reserves of -£18,000 to support the General fund last year. Apart from the above exceptional costs, almost all of the deficit over the past 2 years can be attributed one way or another to Covid restrictions (St Peters has suffered much less financial damage than some other parishes). Despite Covid, regular donated income has slightly increased – thank you all.

Other key funds

Our other key funds are the Legacy and Building funds (including funds held specifically for Court House building work).

Funds	1 st January	31 st December	Comment
Legacy	£93,200	£71,900	Used to pay balance of Court House work
Building and Court House	£58,860	£35,400	This expenditure is in addition to £43,500 raised through the Court House renovations appeal

The total cost of Court House and Court House Cottage building work, including professional fees, is £98,000. On behalf of all members of St Peter's, I want to thank all those who contributed so generously to the special Court House appeal. The total raised, including Gift Aid, is over £43,000 – a terrific effort – thank you.

What is the outlook?

A priority is to relet the Court House Cottage. The Cottage has been unoccupied for a large part of 2021 because of building work, and it costs over £440 per month while it is empty. The Cottage is now being prepared for letting in April, and I would expect potential rental income to be no less than £1,500 / month after management fees, providing much needed income.

You will all be aware that energy prices are expected to increase substantially in the near future. Across the year we spend an average of £650 to £750 / month on gas and electricity combined. In principle, our prices are contractually fixed until September, but they are then almost certain to increase. It is therefore particularly hazardous to project our financial position at end 2022, and I will continue to provide the PCC with regular financial reports throughout the year.

*Richard Hackworth
Hon Treasurer*

2. CHURCHWARDENS REPORT

Our hopes report for a swift return to normality at the end of last year's report were obviously not realized. Christmas was certainly different with a ticketing system for the major services. The idea that we would have to turn people away was unsettling to say the least. As we write, cases of COVID are yet again rising. But we are back and cautiously moving forward to a more normal form of worship.

Some of the good news this year is that we welcomed two new people to the team. Elizabeth Morris took on the role of Parish Administrator, and Chloe Hopkins who has replaced Olivia as Parish Intern. Both have settled in quickly and are making a real contribution to the work of St. Peter's.

Plans for a much-needed refurbishment of the Court House lavatories had been drawn up, but sadly the cost was more than the parish funds could afford. Desperate not to lose momentum, a direct appeal was made to the congregation and amazingly £40,000 was raised enabling the project to go ahead.

Due to the interlocking nature of the architecture, the Court House project involved putting a new bathroom into the Court House Cottage. This was completed just as the Afghan Refugee crisis occurred. We decided to offer the cottage to the Council to house an Afghan family. This report is too short to detail the ensuing Kafkaesque experience, but sadly our efforts to help proved fruitless.

There was much debate about the ability to have our now regular Festival of Light, in the end we went ahead. The Church looked fabulous and obviously touched the very large number of people who came through our doors.

On a more sobering note, we had the Quinquennial Report on the condition of the Church. While there are no items of *Utmost Urgency*, there is a significant list of *Serious items requiring attention within 18 months*, prominent is the roof which will need considerable expenditure. This will be a challenge!

As ever, we are hugely indebted to the considerable cast of people who contribute to our life at St. Peter's. Fr. Stuart has done a fantastic job leading us safely through the pandemic. It is not an easy task trying to balance those pushing for an early return to normal (guilty), with concern for those who are more vulnerable and fearful. We are also truly blessed to have three wonderful 'retired' priests who play a considerable role in the life of our Parish.

Another stand out individual worthy of thanks is Richard Hackworth our dedicated and tireless Honorary Treasurer. It is safe to say that without him we would be in a far worse position than that detailed in the Trustees Report.

We said it last year, but it remains the case, that Churchwardens cannot undertake their responsibilities without support. We remain indebted to the members of the PCC, and all the volunteers who give their time to ensure that everything runs smoothly, looks and sounds wonderful, and plans are made and actioned. However, it is noticeable that the same names cover a multitude of tasks, and one our tasks for the future must be to encourage and support more and, dare I say, younger folk to take on some of these vital tasks.

Mark Grego & Tim Hennessey

3. RECTOR'S REPORT

Towards the end of last year's Rector's report, I noted that, *'The signs seem largely positive, that the second half of 2021 will see a sustained return to normality... I'm looking forward to seeing what 'normal' Sunday worship is like at St Peter's.'* Clearly, if I ever decide to change career, clairvoyance is not an avenue I should pursue. From beginning to end, life continued to be shaped by the coronavirus pandemic in 2021. However, as significant as the pandemic remained, there were also plenty of signs of life returning to some kind of normality.

Although we were still living with some safety measures in place by the end of 2021, things were very different from the start of the year. The numbers permitted in the choir gradually crept upwards, and by year-end our choral ranks had returned more or less to full voice. Sunday School, which had been entirely online at the start of the year, was back to meeting regularly in the Lady Chapel when the new school year began, and the Little Fishes pre-school group resumed its valuable work around the same time. Our Lent Group met online and gave us an opportunity to reflect on our experiences of the pandemic from the perspective of faith. The regular Saturday morning Walsingham Masses resumed early in the year, and the 8am Sunday Mass was restored in September. Choral Evensong, usually with Solemn Benediction, also made a welcome return. Holy Week and Easter were kept as fully as possible, and with indoor congregational singing still forbidden at that point, it was very special to see everyone in the churchyard at the end of the Easter Mass, raising their voices to sing 'Thine be the glory'. The choir offered another bit of *al fresco* singing, at the dedication of the new war memorial at the Rectory Lane Cemetery, attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire. The journey of the cemetery from 'dead place to living space' continues to inspire. Having heard so much about the Festival of Light, it was wonderful to see it in all its candlelit glory at last; another great example of St Peter's teamwork. That same teamwork was evident in the raising of significant funds in a short space of time, to enable the installation of new loos in the Court House.

In addition to making our tentative way back to pre-pandemic life, there were some new events in the life of St Peter's too. Early last year the Rosary was introduced to the weekly pattern of prayer, with half-a-dozen or so people meeting each Friday to share in that devotion. St Peter's began the process of seeking 'Eco-church' accreditation, and we received our bronze award; the work of attaining our silver and then gold awards continues (<https://ecochurch.arochoa.org/>).

We held our first twenty-four prayer vigil, as the doors of St Peter's were open from the day before Pentecost and through the night. The Executive Headteacher and Chair of Governors of our two church schools came to give a presentation on the role of governors, and I am delighted we were able to appoint two excellent candidates from the congregation to serve on the Governing Body of The Castle Federation; the links with our church schools need to continue to be celebrated. We certainly celebrated our link with Victoria Infant School, as we hosted part of their summer fair in the church and churchyard, including my first experience of the marvel that is the 'teddy-bear zip-wire'. At the other end of the generational spectrum, we hosted Age UK Dacorum's Carol Service for the first time this year, which was a great success, and likely to become a regular 'fixture'.

Across the year, plans for our 800th celebrations took shape, and provided an excellent opportunity for making and renewing connections with all sorts of local groups and organisations. Around thirty diverse groups attended a promotional event for the 800th which was held in the Lady Chapel at the end of September, and we welcomed around forty representatives of local businesses to a champagne breakfast in church, hosted by Berkhamsted and District Chamber of Commerce. In November, St Peter's was the venue for the children's part of the excellent BerkoFest Book Festival; audience and authors alike seemed to really enjoy flexing their creative muscles in the Lady Chapel.

To look back over 2021, and mindful of the various restrictions that were in place throughout most of the year, there is an awful lot to be thankful for. Every single one of the events I have mentioned, happened because of the imagination and dedication of so many wonderful volunteers, and I am grateful to each and every one of them. My family and I are grateful too, for the kindness we have been shown at a very sad and painful time in our lives.

In 2022 we celebrate our 800th anniversary. This is an opportunity to give thanks not just for a special year in the calendar, but for all those who have gone before us, who through their prayers, through their compassion, through their faithfulness and generosity, have made the Gospel of Jesus Christ live and breathe year after year, century after century, in this town. That same story is ours to tell now and may the generosity of the welcome we extend during our celebrations, speak to our friends and neighbours of the welcome God extends to us all through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Fr Stuart

4. ANNUAL FABRIC REPORT – THE BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Arrangements and responsibilities

The Buildings Committee has delegated responsibility for the care and maintenance of the PCC's properties which are:

- St Peter's Church
- St Peter's Churchyard
- The Court House
- The Court House Cottage
- All Saints House
- The detached churchyard (Rectory Lane Cemetery)

We have been meeting online since 2020 which has several benefits such as more frequent but shorter meetings and easier access to information.

Area of responsibility	Responsible person
Court House maintenance lead	Carolynne Charman
Working group	Stephen Lally
Court House and Court House Cottage project	Peter McMunn
Repair person/handyman (and heating plant operator)	Ian Imber
Insurance	Michael Anderson
Heating settings	Michael Anderson and Ian Imber
Sustainable energy projects	Alan Conway and David Cooke
Tower	Mike Below
Meeting minutes	Chris Clegg
All Saints House and Court House Cottage	Churchwardens/treasurer: maintenance is arranged by our letting agent Ashtons during a tenancy

Committee members: Christopher Green, David Cooke, Ian Imber, Clive Freestone, Stephen Lally, Mike Below, Carolynne Charman, Astrid Biddle, Peter McMunn, Alan Conway, and Mark Grego. Additional help is always welcome.

The Court House Cottage

Improvement project: The work was conducted by our contractor, Landgreen Ltd, focusing on first-floor rear extension to the existing bathroom, partial re-cladding to existing extension and the complete refurbishment of the bathroom.

This work is a necessary investment in both the maintenance of the property and ensuring its attractiveness to potential tenants.

Following consultation with our letting agent, our treasurer, Richard Hackworth, with the support of Peter McMunn, has arranged for interior redecoration and a replacement carpet and a few other improvements. This work is currently ongoing to enable us to let the cottage as soon as possible. We offered to let the cottage to Dacorum Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council for Afghan refugees, but this offer was, unfortunately, not taken up.

The Court House

Improvement project: The part of the project specifically relating to the Court House, covered the demolition and replacement of the existing flat roof which the Cottage bathroom partially rested on. The existing toilets, gas boiler and pipework, and storage space along the corridor were removed. The new unisex toilets and the disabled toilet were installed along with the new gas boiler and waste pipes.

Snagging has been managed by our project manager, Peter McMunn, and the final inspection is due shortly before the certificate of completion is released by our architect.

Peter and Carolynne Charman have investigated shelving solutions for the alcove at the end of the new corridor. The solution is straightforward with sliding doors, and shelves rather than built-in cupboards. Carolynne has obtained a reasonable price for the work to be carried out next month.

We have an ongoing problem with the main sewer becoming blocked which has caused flooding in our new toilet block. Peter has arranged for several visits by Thames Water to inspect and unblock the drain. This is the most cost-effective option for the utility rather than spending money to improve the current inadequate system. Peter has written to their customer services, but we may need to consider instructing a lawyer to remind Thames Water of its statutory obligations as the current situation is unacceptable.

Phases 2 and 3 of the projects, are dependent on future fundraising and prioritisation. These improvements are desirable but not essential at present. We are incredibly grateful to those members of the congregation who contributed to covering the gap between the available funds and the total cost of the Phase 1 refurbishment. The refurbishment has been widely welcomed as

improving both the appearance and function of the building which should make it more attractive to hirers.

Maintenance: Fire extinguishers were inspected and replaced in April 2021 along with the provision of an additional unit.

The Church

The PCC agreed in 2021 to give short-term priority to the Court House and Cottage due to the pressing need, and condition of grant money, so we agreed to postpone fund raising for the church building. Now that the work is complete, we are turning our attention to the quinquennial inspection (QI) report.

The report identified work required over the five-year term which will require significant sums of money. The priority item is replacing the copper roof over the south aisle and St John's Chantry. An initial estimate is £120,000 net of VAT. David Cooke will produce figures for all areas of the roof so that we can produce estimates to help with the necessary fund raising. We will update the list of priorities spreadsheet by risk and cost to be considered and agreed by the PCC. The QI report is comprehensive and requires serious attention this year so we can carefully plan the work over the next few years. We hope raising awareness of St Peter's Church during this 800-year anniversary will enable us to campaign for funding from various sources as soon as possible. We should be clear that this money is needed to secure the long-term future of this historic building. Projects such as the improvements to the St Catherine's Chapel will not be considered until a funded plan to fix the roof is in place.

Sustainable energy projects: Alan Conway and David Cooke are investigating the installation of solar panels on the church roof and an eventual replacement of the gas-fired heating plant. These are long-term projects which will benefit from proper evaluation and planning of solutions to support our participation in the Eco Church scheme.

Maintenance: Fire extinguishers were inspected and replaced in April 2021 along with the supply of additional units. Fr Chris and Tony Firshman have repaired several broken wooden chairs in the Lady Chapel.

Inventory: I am pleased that Christine Cowie agreed to audit and compile a new inventory of the contents of the church. Our current inventory is only in hard copy and needs updating and, in any case, we are advised to create a new one every ten years. Christine is being assisted by Fr Chris and David, particularly with the vestments.

History: Christopher Green is committing his extensive knowledge of the history of the church building to paper and we look forward to seeing the final publication. Many articles which form part of this book have already been posted on our website.

Records: We have started the process of archiving building records.

Churchyard

The flowerbeds along the south side of the church were renovated by the working group in 2021 and are now maintained by a group led by Sarah Dawson. Additional volunteers are welcome.

All Saints House

This currently let and managed on our behalf by Ashtons. We have just received a mid-term report form Ashton's with some recommended maintenance actions which we have approved.

The detached churchyard (Rectory Lane Cemetery)

Management of this area is the delegated responsibility of the Friends of St Peter's. The cemetery reopened to the public on Sunday 1 November 2020 following the completion of the three-year transformation programme, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

<https://www.rectorylanecemetery.org.uk/visit/news-events/news>

General comments

As ever, we owe a debt of gratitude to those who, behind the scenes, do so much to keep our buildings running. I am always wary of praising individuals for fear of failing to mention others, but you know who you are!

*Mark Grego
March 2022*

5. TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE: OUR DIGITAL OUTREACH

We are well into the 21st century, and technology now forms a vital part of our church ministry. We have several outlets (or “platforms” as they are called) that provide us with a sort of shop window to display our parish activities.

Last year, the technology headline was our **live video streaming** of church services. While the pandemic was a difficult time for many, we have inherited hugely positive by-product of that period: our ability to broadcast video.



Two years after the COVID-19 lockdown periods of the pandemic, it seems that worship is returning to some sort of normality, and more people are now attending in person at services. It is still important that we continue to live-stream services, as we can share our worship with people who are unable (for whatever reason) to worship in person at St Peter's, and open our worship to the wider community – our “digital outreach”. However, viewing numbers on a Sunday morning are now quite low, averaging about 8-10 people.

The current video setup consists of an internet-enabled mobile phone on a tripod, and relies on borrowed equipment. It does require some manual adjustment before the Sunday morning Eucharist, which can be quite tricky. Ideally, we would love to upgrade the equipment with a permanent live streaming system to provide higher quality video and reduce the amount of Sunday morning fiddling, but the costs are high. Churchwarden Tim Hennessy has been investigating new systems, but the two estimates received have come in at several thousand pounds. Given the low viewing figures, it was felt that this does not represent value for our scarce financial resources, so our immediate aim is to purchase replacements for the borrowed items. Extra volunteers to operate the video camera on Sunday would also help us to run a smooth broadcast operation. Full training can be given!

The **parish website** continues to serve us well. The home page layout has recently been re-organised under a series of tabs, so users can select Worship, Events, Parish News.

Visitors to the website can be measured in some detail. Overall, we saw an increase in traffic over the pandemic lockdown period when people turned to our online services when church access was limited. By way of a snapshot, in

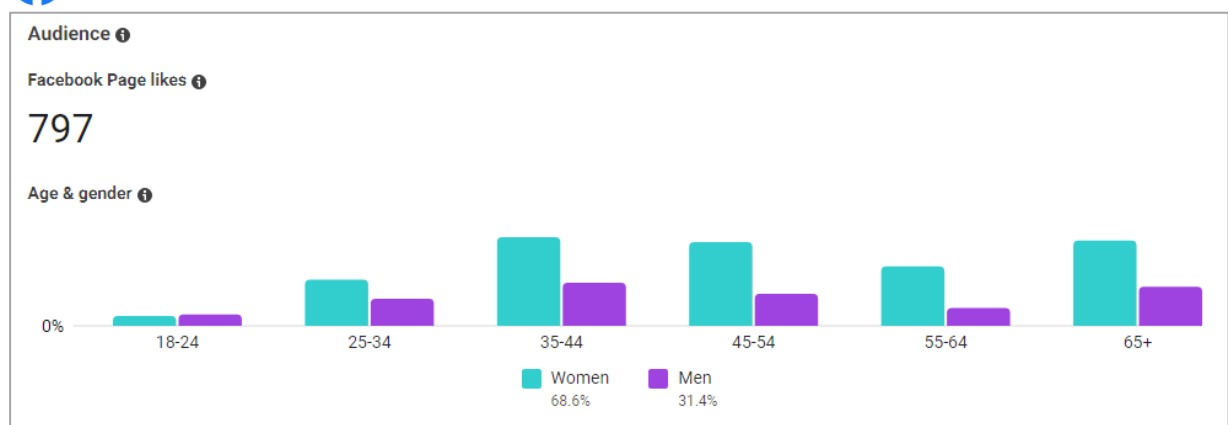


March 2021 the website had 54 unique visitors who viewed 131 pages. In March 2022, that has reduced to 16 unique visitors who viewed 56 pages. Do remember to make use of the parish website – there is a full online events calendar including a weekly summary and publicity for events like concerts, and it all works on modern smartphones too.

The website plays an important role this year in the **800th celebrations**, and the dedicated 800th Anniversary micro-site is being constantly updated to include events, interactive history features and photo galleries. We have photographs from the Victorian era, but we would love to include any old photographs of St Peter's parish life from the 1940s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s.... do please send in any old snaps!



Social media continues to thrive. On **Twitter**, Fr Stuart has proved himself a keen tweeter, and his daily tweets provide short rapid updates of church activities along with his beautiful photos of St Peter's architecture. The @stpeterberko Twitter account has 87 followers, and we get regular retweets from the Diocese of St Albans. Our **Facebook** audience is now at 797 followers, and the demographic is strongly biased towards women aged 35 and over. In the month of March 2022, St Peter's Facebook posts reached 7,533 individuals.



Additional Facebook and Twitter profiles have been set up to promote the 800th celebrations, and the main St Peter's accounts also regularly share and retweet the 800th news, so there is a lot of "cross-pollination" to help to spread the word.

Social media is a powerful resource, and it costs us nothing. As its name suggests, it is "social" – spreading information depends on individuals pressing the "like", "share" and "retweet" buttons and sharing posts with their online friends. This is

not a one-way broadcast model, but an intricate network of people sharing information. In a world where fake news, propaganda and misinformation spread like wildfire, we can all do more to fill the internet with positive messages that genuinely enrich our community. So here is our 21st-century “Great Commission”: **if you have a Facebook or Twitter account, please do not just read a post from St Peter’s and then scroll by – *share it!*** A typical post may reach around 50 people, but once shared on local Berko groups, that number leaps to 300 or more!

Our online activities are constantly evolving. **Feedback** and participation are encouraged, and if there is anything we as a parish are not doing, or could be doing differently, do please make your suggestions known.

Follow all the news about the 800th celebrations the parish website:
<https://www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk/800>

If you have missed a video Eucharist, you can catch up on the parish website:
<https://www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk/worship/video/>

Help to spread St Peter’s news and activities by sharing on social media:



facebook.com/stpetersberkhamsted

facebook.com/Berkhamsted800



twitter.com/stpeterberko

twitter.com/berkhamsted800

Robin McMorran

6. THE PASTORAL CARE TEAM

During the pandemic the Pastoral Care Team continued to meet monthly via zoom until we were able to meet in the Court House once again. These meetings are held to network, exchange ideas and talk through any worries or concerns. Like much of the work we do, the meetings are confidential.

As people have gradually come back to Church, we are again able to offer lifts to those who otherwise would find this difficult. We visit the house bound and two of us are licensed to bring Holy Communion to those who would like it. Fr Stuart fulfils every third visit. If anyone is unwell and unable to attend Church for a while, please let us know so we can visit and bring Holy Communion if you would like it.

One of our members, supported by a team of volunteers, arranges Sundays' Together - a lunch in the Court House for anyone on their own, on the first Sunday of each month.

Together with other members of the congregation, we provide sidesmen for Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals.

Some of us are trained in bereavement visiting so we can offer support to the recently bereaved. Each year on the nearest Sunday to All Souls Day, we have a special Requiem Eucharist to which we send invitations to those who have been bereaved during the preceding 2 years. During the service the names of the recently departed are read out, as well as departed loved ones of members of the congregation who have requested it, and all have an opportunity to light a candle. Together with the Choirs beautiful singing of Fauré's Requiem, this service brings much comfort.

Later this year we hope to hold a pastoral care course, which will be open to everyone. We hope many of you will decide to take part in this. Pastoral care is incumbent on all of us and it is a valuable part of ministry.

I should like to thank Fr Stuart for his continuing support and encouragement.

*Philippa Seldon
Pastoral Care Coordinator*

7. ST PETER'S CHURCH CHOIR

During the year the easing of Covid restrictions and lockdown has meant that the choir has gradually returned to a semblance of normality, with the numbers of choristers allowed to sing increasing and the removal of some glass screens from the choir stalls, though processions in and out of services were limited to the shortest and safest routes.

Using safe distancing and regular testing, choir members have been able to attend weekly practices on Tuesdays and Fridays, enabling the choir to resume the singing of the mass and anthems on Sunday mornings and occasional choral evensongs. All this has helped to bring back the confidence that had existed before the pandemic, particularly in the younger members, and we need to recognise the continuing hard work of Adrian Davis, Jean Wild and Jon Lee in maintaining a constant flow of musical inspiration for the church services.

Whilst the adult membership has increased, sadly, the number of younger choristers has declined, but it is hoped that, because of the church's 800th

Anniversary in 2022, more young people will be inspired to join our choir family. During the year, Daisy Groet continued as Head Chorister and Sophie Armstrong became her Deputy in September. Our thanks are due to them for all their support in what has been a challenging time.

Jean Wild

8. **ST. PETER'S LADIES CLUB**

On the 7th December 2021, the St Peter's Ladies Club met for the last time. It began over 40-years ago, some say 1973, as 'The Young Wives Club' and evolved into 'The Tuesday Club' and then 'St Peter's Ladies Club'. Monthly meetings brought people together, (initially those 'young wives'), to enjoy a meal, listen to interesting speakers, go on outings and activities and support St Peter's with a range of fundraising activities.

The pandemic and social changes have meant fewer people attending the meetings. I have, with other members, enjoyed and benefitted from being part of this friendly group through the years. After many years as a member of the Club, which included being Chairperson and Secretary, in consultation with the members who attended the meeting in December, it was decided the Club could not continue.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the Club for their support and friendship.

Barbara McKenna

9. **SUNDAYS TOGETHER LUNCHESES**

We meet for the luncheon once a month, the first Sunday of every month. Anyone on their own can join us for a friendly and welcoming two course meal for a small fee. We have one volunteer cook and four helpers at each luncheon and usually about 20 guests.

Due to coronavirus restrictions we started to meet again in October 2021.

Carolynne Charman

10. THE BELLRINGERS

Following a very odd year for the bellringers, we restarted normal practices and Sunday service ringing as soon as was permissible. We followed guidance from the Church and from the Central Council of Bellringers and at times this constrained the number of people that we were permitted to have in the ringing chamber. We started meeting again to practice intermittently in May, and then each week from the middle of September. We did manage to have the bells ringing on Sunday mornings every week from October as well as for multiple services at Christmas. Like a lot of churches, the impact of Covid is losing ringers for varying reasons and therefore we continue to look for more adults interested in learning to ring.

Friday afternoon bellringing for secondary school students continues with great success. As happened two years ago the students rang as a group for one of the Christmas services. The group varies in age and normally has 6 or more participants each week, all of whom are learning fast. One now joins the adult band at St Peter's regularly for practices and Sunday service ringing, whilst another three do the same at Little Gaddesden. We are optimistic of having more young ringers at St Peter's on Sunday mornings in the near future.

In February we rang a quarter peal to mark the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession and plan to ring another celebratory quarter peal in June for the Church's 800th anniversary.

Mike Below

11. MOTHERS UNION

Members met every month by Zoom or in person. The pleasure at being together for the first time was evident at a summer tea party, raising money for the MU Summer of Hope Appeal.

During the year we shared in Lent Reflections and prayers for Mothering Sunday, the Wave of Prayer service remembering members overseas, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and meditations for Advent. Prayer is at the heart of MU, and by sharing our stories, fellowship was maintained during the pandemic.

The MU Travelling Crib was taken from family to family through Advent.

We were saddened by the death of Marion Bellaby and when Anne Stead and her husband Bill moved to a Care Home in Lichfield. We continue to keep in touch with Anne.

Some members attended diocesan meetings with Zoom, and in person in November to say farewell to retiring Diocesan President Kim, and to welcome her successor Jill, to office in January.

The branch is part of the worldwide MU, living out the prayer of its founder, Mary Sumner, to care for each other and touch lives for Christ

Margaret Burbidge

12. SCHOOLS



“Flourishing in learning and love, within a happy, Christian family”

Last summer results (although the government paused national testing for the second year) showed that the Federation’s pupils continue to achieve high standards.

The second academic year running included a long period of remote learning for most pupils in the spring term. We were far more prepared than for the first lockdown and both schools provided a full, online interactive offer – with morning class registration and end of the day live online; work handed in, marked, and returned electronically; and live online sessions during the day.

The summer term saw a glad reopening to all children, although the strict system of COVID controls continued through the summer term and beyond.

Even with a second lockdown, Victoria and Thomas Coram’s pupils engaged in a variety of sporting, music and arts activities, and each school has an active Parents’ Association running events and raising vital funds for our schools.

Victoria’s SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) Inspection (which was due at the point that inspections were suspended in March

2020) eventually came in December 2021 before inspections were paused again in January 2022! The report (which you can read in full [here](#)) graded the school Good, celebrating many successes including:

- “The school’s Christian vision of doing ‘everything in love’ is well-established, promoted by leaders and embraced by all members of the community including children. It is a key driver for improvement across the school.
- All staff show love and care for children and parents ensuring that everyone sees themselves as a valued part of the school family.”

During the year, I trained as a SIAMS inspector and completed my ‘sign off inspection’ as a registered inspector for the Church of England Education Office in December 2021 – within a week of Victoria’s inspection!

The school communities would like to thank Fr Stuart, Fr Joe and Chloe for their continued time, wisdom and support to our two schools in ensuring the parish’s contribution to the education of young people in Berkhamsted.

Our governing body is now officially a national award-winning group! They were delighted to be awarded the 2021 National Governance Association award for Outstanding governance in a federation. We have, though, seen several Foundation governors change in the past year. We want to thank Jenny Jenkins (former Chair of Governors at Victoria, and the Chair of the federation governing body), Nick Heath (former Chair of Governors at Thomas Coram), Esme Dowling (former Co-chair of the federation governing body) and Jo Huddleston (who takes a maternity break). We have welcomed some super, new Foundation governors in their stead: Nick Goss, Dennis Carlton, Alex Fahey, Bev Jullien, Kate Hennessey and (transferring from a parent governor role) Nicola Few.

Thank you to those governors who have fulfilled a superb role in supporting and challenging the strategic direction of the federation; and thank you to those who have volunteered to become a governor.

You can read more about news from across the federation, including governance and our national award in our termly Castle Calling newsletter, on the [federation website](#).

Further information can be viewed on our websites:

www.castlefederation.org

www.victoria.herts.sch.uk

www.thomascoram.herts.sch.uk

Rob Halls
Executive Headteacher

