



The Parish Church of
St Peter Great Berkhamsted

Annual Report 2022

**Agenda, Reports and Financial
Statement for the
Meeting of Parishioners
and the
Annual Parochial
Church Meeting
Sunday 30 April 2023 at 11.00am**

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 30 April 2023 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Stuart Owen', written in a cursive style.

Fr Stuart Owen



Photo: Rob Halls

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The Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens 11.00am Sunday 3rd April 2022 in the Lady Chapel, St Peters Berkhamsted

MINUTES

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for Absence Kathy and Stephen Lally; Peter Matthews.
3. To Receive the Minutes of the previous Meeting of Parishioners
4. (16th May 2021) The minutes were accepted as a true record.
5. Election of Churchwardens for 2022-2023 Mark Grego and Tim Hennessey were elected unopposed. Gratitude for their service was expressed with acclamation.
6. Closure of Meeting



Annual Parochial Church Meeting

11.05am Sunday 4th April 2022

in the Lady Chapel, St Peters Berkhamsted

MINUTES

1. To receive the Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting (16th May 2021) Minutes were accepted as a true record.
2. To receive a Report on the Electoral Roll. Richard Hackworth reported that 194 people are now on the electoral roll.

Elections

3. Affirmation of ONE All Saints representative to the Parochial Church Council for 2022-23 Richard Hackworth was affirmed.
4. Election of new members of PCC Chris Chatterton and Sarah Elder were elected unopposed. One remaining vacancy will be filled by co-option.

Other Business

5. To receive the Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council for 2021. The report was proposed by Miles Nicholas and seconded by Sarah Dawson.
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. Miles Nicholas proposed and Sarah Dawson seconded that Hillier Hopkins continue as auditor and independent examiner.
7. To receive a report from the Churchwardens on the Fabric, Goods & Ornaments of the Churches. Particular thanks was expressed for the work of the Buildings Committee, and for Michael Anderson's work with All Saints House; Peter McMunn's work with the Court House; and Christine Cowie's work on the Inventory.
8. To receive the other written reports of Parish Activities as circulated herewith.
9. Rector's report. Fr Stuart presented his report, and invited us to go forward gently.
10. Questions and discussions on any matters of Parochial or general Church interest – including Safeguarding. Pru Murray gave an outline of the 800th Anniversary events.
11. To note the following date:
PCC Meeting: Wednesday 11th May 2022



Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the election of Churchwardens

AGENDA

1. Prayers
2. Apologies for Absence
3. To Receive the Minutes of the previous Meeting of Parishioners (4th April 2022)
4. Election of Churchwardens for 2023-2024
5. Closure of Meeting



Annual Parochial Church Meeting

11.05am Sunday 30th April 2023

in the Lady Chapel, St Peters, Berkhamsted

AGENDA

1. To receive the Minutes of the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting (4th April 2022)
2. To receive a Report on the Electoral Roll.

Elections

3. Affirmation of ONE All Saints representative to the Parochial Church Council for 2023-24
4. Election of new members of PCC
5. Elections - Election of Deanery Synod members

Other Business

6. To receive the Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Parochial Church Council for 2022.
7. 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.
8. To receive a report from the Churchwardens on the Fabric, Goods & Ornaments of the Churches.
9. To receive the other written reports of Parish Activities as circulated herewith.
10. Rector's report.
11. Questions and discussions on any matters of Parochial or general Church interest – including Safeguarding.
 - a. To note the following date:
12. PCC Meeting Tuesday 9th May 2023



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.

Buildings Committee

Castle Federation:

Thomas Coram Church of England School
& Victoria Church of England Infant School
& Nursery

Mothers' Union

Music department

Pastoral Care Group

Rector's Report

Sundays Together Lunches

Mark Grego

Rob Halls, Executive Head Teacher

Margaret Burbidge

Adrian Davis

Philippa Seldon

Fr Stuart Owen

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).

Church Wardens' Report 2022

MARK GREGO & TIM HENNESSEY

After nearly two years dominated by COVID, it was wonderful to focus this year on our 800th Anniversary. Our celebrations covered a wide range of events including a summer fête, concerts, talks, hikes, ceilidhs, choral services, art workshops and photography exhibitions. These activities drew a large number of townsfolk into the church who do not normally attend our services.



The year was also notable for its contrasts.

In June we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, but sadly in September we were mourning her death. To mark the occasion our bells were rung fully muffled for the first time since 1952.

In July temperatures reached a record high of 40°C. However, in response to the unprecedented fuel prices, it was decided that we could not afford to heat the church through the winter. This led to the unusual spectacle of the congregation, choir and clergy worshipping in coats, hats and scarves. Fr Anthony cut a particularly fine dash in his Tudor scholars' cap.



In last year's report we recorded our disappointment at failing to house a refugee family in the newly refurbished Court House Cottage. In a surprise turn around by the Council, due largely to the efforts of Herts Welcomes Refugees, we were delighted to welcome Asad & Frozan Mutaheri with their 4 children. Various members of the congregation have been doing a fantastic job of supporting the family and assisting Asad in his efforts to convert his medical qualification to NHS standards.

Interfaith engagement has been important for St. Peter's. The Muslim community hold their Friday Prayers in the Court House, which has proved very convenient for Asad.

We also had a very enjoyable celebration of Simchat Torah with the local Jewish community. We joined in the re-rolling of the Torah scrolls, shared a meal and there was even dancing.

In what is now a regular feature in our calendar, we participated in the town's Festival of Light. The church was illuminated with thousands of candles, while volunteers in the fun-hut did roaring trade in mulled wine and St. Peter's mugs. Over 3,000 people passed through the church admiring its beauty.

At the end of the year we bade a sad farewell to Jon Lee and Alison & Peter McMunn. Jon has been our organist for 21 years, and he moves on to an exciting role at Christ's Hospital School in Horsham. Peter & Alison were extremely active in support of music, lighting, choir, sacristy duties and building projects. They will be missed. Chris Beauchamp has taken over as our new organist, and Susan Holmes is

the new Sacristan. There are also new faces in the congregation and we must endeavour to find their hidden talents.

These days our virtual presence is as important as our physical presence. To this end we continue to live-stream our Sunday Mass, and Robin McMorran who has taken over as our new Parish Administrator keeps the website and social media accounts fresh. While we have a faithful live following of about 10 on our Sunday Mass, we have had about 3,500 non-live views of our various videos. Twitter seems to be reaching about 6,000 a month and Facebook 5,000 a month.

The comments in the more traditional Visitors Book at the West End, although less numerous, all say what a wonderful church St Peters is. This is due entirely to the efforts of those who maintain, clean and decorate the Church and we give thanks for the generous gift of their time.

Finally, we offer our thanks to Fr Stuart for leading us in our spiritual development. In supporting him we also thank Frs Anthony, Chris and David, Richard Hackworth as Reader and Chloe Hopkins.

Rector's Report

FR STUART OWEN

One of the many wonderful things about 2022 was how much of our 800th anniversary year was about our future and looking forwards. This momentum was there from the very start of our celebrations, with a series of three packed out lectures, the first two of which offered wonderful insights into the history of Berkhamsted and the history of St Peter's church, and the third of which looked to what the future might hold. That sense of future opportunity also found expression in the fact that whilst many of the events last year saw us building on existing relationships with other individuals and organisations in the town, a great many of the events saw us making new connections with local groups which I hope we can continue to nurture and build on. I'm so grateful to all those who took the lead in planning and organising our 800th celebrations.

For me, this sense of moving forwards was most wonderfully visible in two (very different!) acts of worship: our Easter Day Masses and the Christmas Crib services. On Easter Day, those who wished to were able to receive the consecrated wine for the first time since March 2020, and for me there was a palpable sense of the new life and new hope of Easter in St Peter's that morning. In a revelation that will surprise few, I've always rather enjoyed the holy chaos of Crib services. The children who filled St Peter's for those services again last year, filled our eight centuries old building with more fizz than a well shaken bottle of champagne.

I'd like to thank all those whose dedication to our parish church serves to keep the show on the road week after week. We are fortunate to have so many people who give so generously of their time, gifts and good humour. The building which it is our privilege to be stewards of for a time, tells a story and breathes a peace which so many people value. All those who care for the fabric of St Peter's and are

involved in keeping our church looking beautiful aren't just looking after 'bricks and mortar', they're also serving the countless people who visit the church year by year seeking whatever it is they might be seeking here. Our musicians too, both those out of sight up in the tower and those who populate the choir stalls, offer a service to so many people and the music they offer really touches people's lives. The ringing team and the choir are also key parts of our service to children and young people, along with our Sunday School volunteers and our team of Servers. There's such a variety of ways in which pastoral care is offered at St Peter's, including lunch groups, home groups, those who make home and hospital visits and more, and I'm grateful to them all.

Over the next few months, and indeed years, we're going to be putting a lot of energy into repairing the roof. Big building projects cost a lot of money, and they cost a lot of energy and focus too. However, projects like the one before us can also offer opportunities to continue the good work of 2022, and look to go wider and deeper in our relationships with the wider community. I was involved in a project to restore the tower of the church at my previous parish in Edmonton. I recall that when that project started, a lot of the community engagement work which many funders expect to see, felt like just another hoop to jump through. However, by the end of the project it wasn't just the tower's Kentish ragstone which had been renewed, but also our relationships with and impact on our neighbourhood. Last year, as the last of the Covid restrictions were lifted, and as we celebrated our eight hundred years in so many wonderful ways, there was just such a sense of renewal. Whilst we have a lot of work ahead of us, what potential will we find in that work if we think of it not in terms of building repair, but of church renewal?

The Deanery Synod

ALAN CONWAY

The Deanery Synod met on a number occasions during the year, two items of note were, first, a meeting with Rachel Johnson, Diocesan Environmental Officer, at which Synod discussed the Diocesan's plans to achieve net zero carbon. The second was a group discussion on racial justice led by Fr. Jonathon, Rural Dean.

At the time of writing the next meeting of the Synod will be at Little Gaddesden on Thursday, 20 April, when the speaker will be the Rev. Cannon Tim Bull. Fr. Tim is a member of the General Synod.

Buildings Committee Annual Fabric Report

MARK GREGO

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)

Area of responsibility	Responsible person
Court House maintenance lead	Carolynne Charman
Church maintenance leads	Mark Grego and another.
Working group	Stephen Lally
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, Alan Conway, and Mark Grego. Astrid Biddle and Peter McMunn stepped down from the committee – at least two new members are needed.

The Court House Cottage

The improvements recommended last year by our letting agent, were completed thanks to our treasurer, Richard Hackworth and Peter McMunn. The cottage is let to Dacorum Brough Council to house a family of refugees and, therefore, maintenance is carried out by the Parish rather than our letting agent.

Maintenance checks and repairs:

- The gas boiler serviced annually by a qualified Gas Safe Register engineer. The heat exchanger failed and had to be replaced 6 March 2023. This negates the need for an annual service this year. A full flushing of the system will be carried out in April 2023.
- A landlord's gas safety certificate was issued on 6 March with the next test is due by 5th March 2024.
- The electrical installation inspection report was carried out on 11 June 2022 and is valid for five years.
- The existing electric hob and electric oven was replaced and installed on 23 March 2023, along with a new kitchen worktop, to replace the existing one which was leaking water. An electrical safety test was also carried out by our electrical contractor.

The Court House

Improvement project: Snagging was managed by Peter McMunn and a certificate of completion released by our architect. However, in January 2023, water started leaking from the ceiling above one toilet cubicle. Landgreen attended site but were not able to identify where there could be an ingress of water from the flat roof. It is possible that there the leak maybe from the Court House Cottage bathroom: the least damaging investigation is to remove the ceiling above the toilet and work upwards and Landgreen will arrange to do this as soon as possible.

Peter McMunn and Carolynne Charman arranged for the installation of a shelving solution for the alcove at the end of the new corridor.

Phases 2 and 3 of Peter McMunn's project brief, are dependent on future fundraising and prioritisation. These improvements are desirable but are unlikely to be initiated due to the need to prioritise repairs to the church.

Maintenance checks and repairs:

- Fire extinguishers were inspected in April 2022. PAT testing was also carried out and is now due for this year.
- Failed floodlights by the office and stairs were replaced and fluorescent up lights in the long and square rooms were replaced by LED battens.
- Remedial work from the June 2018 electrical installation inspection report was carried out by BEES Electrical in summer 2020. A new inspection should be carried out in 2025 or earlier if recommended by BEES.
- It would be sensible to schedule an annual service of the boiler in the near future.

I recommend that the Court House is eventually subject to a quinquennial inspection report by our surveyor.

The Church

As stated in last year's report, 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.

The quinquennial inspection (QI) report delivered in February 2021, identified work required over the five-year term which will require some 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 is working on converting an architects' plan of the church into a software model which will enable accurate estimates of the cost of replacing the roof in different areas of the building. This necessary for budgeting purposes but should not delay fundraising.

The report recommendations have been added to the list of priorities spreadsheet (by risk and cost). To reduce the need for scaffolding, all repairs in an area where the roof needs renewing. The PCC has accepted the priorities and we are awaiting sufficient funding to proceed with the first phase of the work. The QQI report was written in October 2020 and delivered in February 2021. There is risk that little or no work will have been carried out by the time that the next QQI report is due, without serious fundraising.

An inspection by our surveyor is planned for this summer of the areas which were not accessible by ladder such as the nave roof and this will require the hire of a cherry picker.

We had intended to update the wooden notice board with the Rector's details but unfortunately the board was rotten. In order to extend the lifespan, we have ordered a powder-coated, aluminium sign, designed by Robin McMorran using the St Peter's Style Guide. We have obtained permission in the form of an Archdeacon's Letter of Authority and planning permission from Dacorum Borough Council.

Maintenance checks and repairs:

- Fire extinguishers were inspected in April 2022. PAT testing is due.
- A fire safety assessment was undertaken in November 2020 and the recommendations implemented and a fire safety procedure approved by the PCC.
- A manual fire alarm was installed for the tower and additional electrical sockets were installed in the porch, under rear bench and in the gallery and a power supply to the tower roof for the relocated CCTV alarm panel.
- The faulty security light on the north side of the church building was replaced.
- Remedial work from the June 2018 electrical installation inspection report was carried out by BEES Electrical in summer 2020. A new inspection should be carried out in 2025 or earlier if recommended by BEES.

Inventory – Christine Cowie spent many hours compiling a new inventory of the contents of the church. I intend to put this into electronic format and store it online in the churchwarden's OneDrive folder. A printed hard copy will be kept in the

vestry safe along a memory stick containing photographs and original hard copy pictures of the church plate.

History: Christopher Green has committed his extensive knowledge of the history of the church building to paper and this valuable book has been published.

Records: we have started the process of archiving building records. All records are now electronic and are held on a OneDrive folder using the churchwarden's account. Read-only access can be provided to those who need access. It is very important that these are maintained for future use. Hard copies of the electronic logbook are held in the vestry safe along with the original book.

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 is currently let and managed on our behalf by Ashtons, our letting agent, who arrange for any maintenance required.

The detached churchyard (Rectory Lane Cemetery)

Management of this area is the delegated responsibility of the Friends of St Peter's. The PCC contributes £5,000 per annum towards the maintenance costs.

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.

Parish of Great Berkhamsted - Building Maintenance Schedule of Priorities Nov 2022

Location	Description of works	Estimated cost	Priority	Risk	Status	Due/ compl.	Comments
Church - South Aisle and St John's Chantry Roofs	Replace copper roofing sheets	£120,000	1	4	Proposal	Nov-22	QQI priority B. Include all stonework and flashing repairs (priority C) as scaffolding available.
Church - South Aisle and St John's Chantry Roofs	Install solar panels on roof.	TBC	1	4	Proposal		Install at same time as roof repaired. Need to apply for planning permission in advance of full funding.
Church -Tower	Maintenance work to bells and bellframe	£22,000	1	3	In progress		Quotation from Whites of Appleton Ltd presented to PCC . Funding secured. Risk increases to 5 if left for 10 years.
Church - all roofs	Install insulation when re-roofing.	TBC	1	3	Proposal		Needs to be investigated and added to statement of works.
Church - St Catherine Chapel	Replace lead roofing	TBC	2	4	Proposal	Nov-22	QQI priority B. Include all stonework and flashing repairs (priority C) as scaffolding available.
All properties	Routine maintenance/repairs	£18,000	2	3	In progress		Mean of annual sum 2013-2017
Church - Lady Chapel	Removal of rubble	TBC	2	3	Proposal		MB to run one day exercise to determine whether three volunteers can realistically remove the rubble.
Church - roof	Smartwater markings to obtain insurance cover	TBC	2	3	Proposal		Estimate required
Church - various	Stonework repairs	TBC	2	3	Proposal	Nov-22	Where not included in above. Includes chimney. Priority B.
Church - nave	Rainwater Goods - Repairs	TBC	2	3	Proposal	Nov-22	Priority B
Church - tower	Installation of lightning conductor	TBC	2	3	Proposal	2023	Recommendation from EIG report.
Church - Lady Chapel	Investigate cracks between window arches and vaulting. Check roof timbers.	TBC	2	3	In progress	Nov-22	Priority B - arrange for structural engineer to visit.
Court House	Pitched roof	£58,000	3	3	Proposal		Mean of two quotes from three years ago. Snow guards previously installed to catch falling tiles.
Church -various	Rainwater Goods - Repairs		3	2	Proposal	2025	Priority C

Church - St Catherine Chapel	Lower the ground level outside wall.	TBC	3	2	Proposal	2025	Priority C
Church - various	Stonework and pointing repairs	TBC	3	2	Proposal	2025	Priority C. Where not included above.
Church - various	Carpentry Extend CCTV inside building Items to be kept under surveillance or those which will eventually require attention	TBC	3	2	Proposal	2025	Priority C
Church - CCTV			4	3	On-hold		Likely to be a costly exercise.
Church -various		TBC	4	2	In progress	2025	Priority D
Court House	Installation of RCD consumer unit for kitchen in line with up to date safety standards	£3,000	5	3	Proposal		BEES to supply quotation. BC members not convinced of need.
Church - heating plant	Replacement	TBC	5	5			Long-term view of suitable replacement.
Church - Organ	Replacement	£500,000	5	3			Eight years life left ?
Church -Tower	Maintenance of clock hammers	£4,726	5	1	On-hold		Quotation from Smiths of Derby to remove hammers (before removal of bells) and take to their workshop for restoration and reinstallation once bells reinstalled. Cost seen as high and work could possibly be carried out by St Peter's - it is not a priority in any case.
Court House	Phase 2	£126,654	5	1	On-hold		Remodelling of CH to include complete upstairs room. If we do not proceed then we need to look at rewiring as per survey
Court House	Phase 3	£35,759	5	1	On-hold		Replacement windows. Note total cost of all three phases is £249,000. With pitched roof total cost is £307,000.
Church - St Catherine Chapel	Introduction of glass screen new fan convectors new furniture re-decoration		5	1	On-hold		This work is no longer seen as a priority due to new childrens area, diversion of funds to CH and need to repair leaks. When funds allow, we should still proceed with limited form of works as listed.

Priority: Importance accorded by PCC on scale 1-5 with 1 being the highest

Risk= likelihood x severity of impact on scale 1-5 with 5 being the highest

Status: Proposal, agreed, in progress, on-hold, complete

Castle Federation

ROB HALLS, EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER



"Flourishing in learning and love, within a happy, Christian family"

Last summer results showed that the Federation's pupils continue to achieve high standards. Victoria and Thomas Coram's pupils also engaged in a variety of sporting, music and arts activities. Each school has an active Parents' Association running events and raising vital funds for our schools.

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.

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.

This will be my last contribution to the parish Annual Report as Executive Headteacher: I will be leaving at the end of this school year. A personal thank you to all those who have supported and encouraged our schools or my ministry over the last 10 years as Headteacher or during the 23 years (out of the last 25) that I have been associated with our parish's church schools.

You can read more about news from across the federation, including governance 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

Sundays Together

CAROLYNNE CHARMAN

We have between 20 and 24 people every month attending Sunday luncheon. We give a two-course meal for £5.00, plus wine or fruit juices from 12 pm until 2-30 pm on the first Sunday of every month.

It seems to be a great hit with the widows and widowers, or anyone who is on their own in the community.

Pastoral Care Team

PHILIPPA SELDON

In October of last year, 15 parishioners attended a very comprehensive Pastoral Care Course which was led by Fr David with contributions from Fr Stuart, Rev Margaret Saunders and Hilary Elliott. Topics covered included Listening (feeling and transference), Loss and Bereavement and Safeguarding. Future supervision and training was discussed and there will be safeguarding training led by Hilary, who is the St Peters safe guarding officer, in May. The pastoral team continue to meet monthly to network and support each other. These meetings are confidential.

We continue to visit house bound parishioners and to give lifts to church to those who need it. We are also able to take people for hospital appointments etc. 2 of us are licensed to take Communion to the house bound at home or in Care Homes or hospital. Fr Stuart fulfils each 3rd visit.

One of our commitments is to offer support to the bereaved. We are not counsellors, but will provide a listening ear to anyone who needs to unburden and finds it difficult with friends and relatives, who might themselves be grieving. Every year, at 6PM on the Sunday nearest to All Souls Day, there is a special Requiem Eucharist to which everyone who has been bereaved in the preceding two years receives an invitation. The names of the departed are read out as well as departed loved ones of members of the congregation who have requested it. Everyone has an opportunity to light a candle and together with the beautiful singing of Fauré's Requiem, this service brings much comfort.

Each month we host a lunch for the bereaved at the White Horse in Bourne End. Also one of our members heads up the team who provide the monthly Sundays Together lunch held in the Court House for those who would otherwise be on their own.

Music & the Choir

ADRIAN DAVIS

St Peter's Church choir has been very active over the past 12 months, with its regular Sunday-by-Sunday commitments and a number of additional events – including marking the anniversary of the consecration of the church in 1222, the jubilee of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II, as well as her passing.

Highlights of the year were:

- a performance of Stainer's 'Crucifixion' by the choir, with Phillip Brown (tenor) and Christopher Foster (bass), with Jon lee at the organ (Good Friday 2022)
- Choral Evensongs each month – alas, all rather poorly attended by the congregation

- A civic thanksgiving service on 5 June for the whole community, giving thanks for the 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II
- A celebratory concert with Bridgewater Sinfonia, performing 'Blest Pair of Sirens' and 'I was Glad' by Parry, with Chiltern Chamber Choir – and 'Tu Es Petrus' by Palestrina with just the church choir (25 June)
- A Chorister Training Day (24 September), with a rather low yield of new choristers (3 boys part time)
- A joint service with the South Bucks Jewish Community (9 October)
- Remembrance Service (13 November) with the Royal British Legion
- Advent Carol Service (27 November) – popular appeal with fine performances
- A violin and 'cello recital (11 December), given by Madeleine and Beatrice Murray (chorister)

Congratulations to Charlotte and Jessica Carnegie on becoming joint Head Choristers, and to Amelia Reeves (Deputy Head Chorister) on being selected to take part in the summer choral course at Chetham's, Manchester this summer.

VALETE: sadly we said goodbye to Jean and Stuart Wild, who have departed in October to Witney, Oxfordshire, after some 40 years loyal service to St Peter's – Jean as my Assistant and organiser of RSCM singers. We wish them well in their 'translation'!

Also we are sad to say goodbye to Jon Lee, our distinguished organist since 2003, who has taken up the post of organist at Christ's Hospital, Horsham. We have been extremely fortunate to welcome Chris Beauchamp (bass in the choir) as our new organist – he slotted in to place seamlessly and is doing a wonderful job.

We said goodbye to our Head Chorister, Daisy Groet, whose vocal prowess is impressive – she is now at the University of East Anglia at Norwich and is Choral scholar in the choir of St Peter Mancroft and the Cathedral Chamber Choir.

At the same time we said goodbye to Sophie Armstrong, our Deputy Head Chorister, who is taking a gap year in Seoul, South Korea, to learn the language and to be a Leader at the World Scout Jamboree, before returning home to start as a trainee at Deloitte.

The freezing conditions in the church this winter, with restrictions on heating contributed to a drop-off in choir (and congregation) attendance – choir practices were often blighted as a result. Some members of the choir seriously considered leaving the choir because the conditions were so extreme – with choristers shaking with cold. Absences were frequent, making learning of new music especially problematic. Illness amongst the choir was higher than normal, not helped by Covid instances. I can only hope that warmer weather will restore some normality to attendance and progress.

Recruitment of choristers seems to be a problem at present, not only at St Peter's, I gather. It is very noticeable that youngsters of a suitable age are conspicuously absent at church on Sundays. One Chorister Training Day (24 September) received

scant response. Being a chorister requires a lot of parental support and encouragement, and the conflicting attraction of sport and other activities is an obvious hurdle. We have been very fortunate with parental support over the years and we could boast a chorister intake of up to 24 young singers. The training choristers receive is free of charge and leads to some very accomplished performances (and overseas tours). Many of our choristers go on to study music at university and college, singing in college and cathedral choirs. It is a training for LIFE!

Mothers' Union

MARGARET BURBIDGE

After a Zoom meeting in January members met in person enjoying the fellowship of being together.

The Christian seasons and the MU calendar provided the framework for the programme, which included Reflections for Lent and Advent. On Mary Sumner Day in August members joined the 9.30 weekly Eucharist in All Saints and held a tea party in the afternoon. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee was celebrated with a tea party and 3 months later, following her death, there was a service to give thanks for her long life.

Members joined Tring MU for a Lady Day Eucharist in March.

Make a Mother's Day, the MU project for Mothering Sunday was advertised in the St Peter's and All Saints weekly mailings.

In Advent the Travelling Crib was hosted by families, and Victoria and Thomas Coram Schools.

Members attended diocesan meetings connecting with the wider MU, and join with others worldwide through the daily Prayer Diary and Wave of Prayer. In June members across the world pray for St Albans Diocese and its MU links overseas.

Through our lives, donations and prayers members reach out as God's hands across the world to meet the stranger and those in need.





www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk