

Papers for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Monday 12th May 2025

8.00pm, St Mary's Kidlington



Sharing the Love of God Joyfully

LOVING – WELCOMING – EXPLORING – GROWING

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AGENDA

Annual Report and Accounts for 2024 available separately

Minutes of the 2024 Annual Parochial Church Meeting

**Held on Wednesday 8th May 2024 at 8.00pm
in St Mary's Kidlington**

1. The meeting opened with **Prayer**

2. **Those attending:**

Revd Felicity Scroggie (Chair), Revd Susy Brouard, Andy Pedley, Anne Handsley, John Morris, Joyce Morris, Nick Kubat, Marion Kubat, Steph Hobson, Tilly Evershed, Bill Evershed, Robert Buckeldee, Jill Buckeldee, Janet Warren, Joanna Tucker, John Tucker, Nicky Smith, Liz Bruce, Rob Bruce, Katy Smith, Scott Cheeseman, Sue O'Hare, Cherona Chapman, Trevor Langrish, Alison Johnson, Colin Johnson, Margaret Day, Roger Smith, Lesley Smith, Gary Gibbs, Bruce Forman, Cherrill Seward, Malcolm Seward, Margaret Dee, Liz Bendor Samuel, Mark Christodoulou, Sarah Sewell, Liz Brandom, Karen Mason (39 present)

Apologies for Absence:

Philippa Burrell, Ann Croft, Pam Cooper, Diana Davies, Yo Davies, Mairi Gibbs, Peggy Harwood, Jan Jeffreys, Peter Jeffreys, Margaret Lang, Clare Morgan, Marian Needham, Penny Pedley, Kate Seward, Emma Tims

3. **Election of Churchwardens to serve for the year 2024**

Sincere thanks were extended to all wardens for their hard work, including Mark Christodoulou who has served for 6 years.

The following were proposed:

St John's

Irene (Tilly) Evershed (proposed by Margaret Day, seconded by Janet Warren) (5th year in Parish, 1st year at St John's)

St Mary's Hampton Poyle

Susan O'Hare (proposed by Katy Smith, seconded by Anne Handsley) (3rd year)

St Mary's Kidlington

Robert Buckeldee (proposed by Jill Buckeldee, seconded by Sue O'Hare) (1st year)

Andy Pedley (proposed by Nick Kubat, seconded by Steph Hobson (4th year)

There being no other nominations, these were elected unopposed to serve as churchwardens for 2024/2025.

4. **Confirmation of the minutes of the Annual Parochial Meeting held on 9th May 2023 at St John's.**

It was proposed (Tilly Evershed, seconded by Andy Pedley) that the minutes were a true record of the meeting, and unanimously agreed.

5. **Election of members to serve on the Parochial Church Council**

Thanks were extended to Clare Morgan and Chris Tupling, who have reached the end of their 3 year term in office.

Members still in Office:

Margaret Day (elected APCM 2022, 3rd year)

Bill Evershed (elected APCM 2022, 3rd year)

Kathryn Smith (elected APCM 2022, 3rd year)

Margaret Dee (elected APCM 2022, 3rd year)

Bruce Forman (elected APCM 2023, 2nd year)

Marian Knight (elected APCM 2023, 2nd year)

Laura Morgan (elected APCM 2023, 2nd year)

Roger Smith (elected APCM 2023, 2nd year)

The following were nominated to serve as new members:

Cherona Chapman (proposed Anne Handsley, seconded Jill Buckeldee)

Yo Davies (proposed Joyce Morris, seconded Veronica Smith)

Anne Handsley (proposed Robert Buckeldee, seconded Tilly Evershed)

Nick Kubat (proposed Paul-Bendor Samuel, seconded Anne Handsley)

There were no further nominations, so these four were duly elected to the PCC.

6. **Appointment of an Independent Examiner for the year 2024**

On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, Nicola Cadwallader was proposed, and unanimously accepted.

7. **Approval of the membership of the Committee for St John's Kidlington**

Mark Christodoulou, Margaret Day, Margaret Dee, Tilly Evershed, Chris Graham, Cherill Seward, Malcolm Seward and Emma Timms were unanimously approved to serve on this committee. Felicity thanked them for their work.

8a **Approval of the membership of the Committee for St Mary's Hampton Poyle**

Jean Bagnall, Judith Baker, Marie Bickley, Carolyn Castle, Monica Green, Patricia O'Gorman, Sue O'Hare and Katy Smith were unanimously approved to serve on this committee. Felicity thanked them for their work.

8b Approval of the membership of the Fabric Committee for St Mary's Kidlington

Robert Buckeldee, Andy Pedley, Beth Evershed, John Morris and Roger Smith were unanimously approved to serve on this committee and thanked for their work.

9. Approval of members to serve on the Council of Churches Together in Kidlington

Felicity thanked Pam Cooper who is retiring as a longstanding member of CTK. It was unanimously agreed that Scott Cheeseman, previously ex-officio, should become a full member, and that Margaret Day should rejoin the Council, with Penny Pedley continuing in office. Felicity emphasised the valuable work of CTK, and encouraged anyone interested to consider joining.

10. Consideration of a Report on changes in the Electoral Roll since the last Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The Electoral Roll Officer, Joyce Morris, reported that there were 249 names on the Electoral Roll; since last year 4 people have died and 7 names have been added. It was noted that this figure did not include a number of retired clergy who are very active in the Parish.

It was also noted that a fully revised Roll is required in 2025, so extra help will be needed. Joyce was thanked for all her work in preparing the Electoral Roll.

11. Consideration of the Annual Report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the activities of the Parish generally

The Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 2023 had been circulated electronically and in hard copy in advance of the meeting. The Secretary was thanked for writing the general report, which reflected the very active life of the Parish, and the Treasurer, Bill Evershed, together with Margaret Day from the Finance Committee, were warmly thanked for their hard work in compiling the Accounts.

12. Consideration of the Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2023, independently examined

The Treasurer drew the attention of the meeting to the Statement of Financial Activities in the Accounts, which showed that we had income from all sources of £295,000, together with about £1,400 gained from investments, while our outgoings were £242,000, thus showing an addition of £54,000 to our funds in 2023.

However, about £21,000 of our donated income is restricted to projects such as Martin's Garden and Kidlinks, so we have rather less in the General Fund to cover day to day running costs such as utilities, repairs and insurance.

We also spent less in 2023 than the Budget allowed for, spending £11,500 rather than the estimated £50,000 on maintenance, as the cost of replacing the heaters and servicing the organ at St Mary's Kidlington has been deferred to 2024. Our expenditure was lower generally, however, even allowing for this deferral.

Looking to 2024, and working on a theoretical model of 150 donors giving over a 52 week year, the Treasurer estimated that our costs equate to £31 per donor per week, and a deficit equivalent to £8.15 per person.

There being no questions from the meeting, Bill thanked the Finance Committee, and in particular Margaret Day, for their hard work in getting the accounts prepared and audited. Felicity echoed warm thanks to Bill and the Finance Committee, agreed by all those present.

13. Consideration of a Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of the Parish

Thanks were extended to everyone on the Fabric Committee for all their hard work in maintaining and improving the Fabric of our buildings, including the house in Anderson's Close.

14. Consideration of a Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

Thanks were extended to the members of the Deanery Synod for representing the Parish at Synod.

15. Consideration of any other matters of parochial or general church interest

As recorded in the Annual Report, it was noted that the whole Parish mourned the loss in 2023 of our Team Vicar, Revd Martin Davis, and we continue to pray for his wife Diana and family.

16. Any Other Business None

17. The date set for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting for 2025 is **Tuesday 13th May**

18. The meeting ending with Prayer.

Rector's Report

Kidlington with Hampton Poyle is a complex parish full of diversity and activity; a true parish church which engages with the local community and shares God's love in many different ways. This year I have heard our parish described variously as 'grown up', 'honest', 'valuing variety', 'fun', and 'accepting'. From *Kidlinks* to *Lincroft Meadow*, from Choral Evensong to '*All Together*', from the *Making Group* to the monthly parish lunch and *The Big Sing*, from baptisms and funerals to *Joseph Day*... people encounter us as a living church and value the different parts of ministry they experience, whilst usually not being aware of the many other aspects of ministry that go on, or of the vital supporting infrastructure of governance, finance, administration, maintenance, cleaning, and general help that goes on every day and is mostly provided by volunteers. Thank you to everyone who plays your part, whatever that is, in keeping us as a well-run, safe, welcoming and faithful community.

The annual report and meeting is our chance to draw together the diverse parts and to value each and every one. I thank Anne Handsley who, as PCC secretary, has summarised the events of the year in the formal report. I will not seek to duplicate what is in her comprehensive statement but will seek to draw your attention to new things this year, whilst appreciating all the wonderful things that we do each and every year.

2024 was a year of increasing confidence and energy with significant outreach both through the community projects and through our continual presence and interaction in the village. We deepened our relationships in small ways with all the with Kidlington schools, with the Kidlington Business Community (*Kidlington Connections*), and through the *Friends of St Mary's* with many local people who do not look for faith connections with the church.

Music in various forms has been especially strong this year. The adult choir has continued to grow and the standard of music has been amazing. Thanks are due to David Hewett and all who take their part in this. We have welcomed a new intake of Junior choristers alongside our experienced choristers which takes the young people to nearly 20 in number and means that two groups rehearse at once in separate spaces every Friday. Thanks to all adults and parents who support these children. We were also able to offer three organ scholarships to Joshua Hewett, Shreya Krishnan, and William Goodfellow. We are blessed to have such talented young people. In the summer an informal group of female singers met to sing for fun and we have sought to encourage various instrumentalists (who could forget the valiant trumpeters who graced nearly every Christmas service indoors and outdoors in all churches?). All of this feels like music is developing in an inclusive and varied way.

Joseph Day was a new venture designed to be an event just for the church community; a time for us simply to have fun together, get to know one another better, and build up our confidence in different ways. Clare and Huw Morgan conceived the idea of staging the Joseph story with costumes, music, and props all within one day. With no audience to perform to, this was a brilliant success and a highlight of our life together. Teams of people sorted out food, costumes, props, health and safety and music. Participants' ages ranged from 5-95 and everyone took part. We are so used to running events in order to reach out, raise money, teach, etc that doing an event just for the sake of being together was truly refreshing.

We always celebrate the major festivals in style and 2024 was no exception. Through Lent the *Making Group* produced startling hangings and a vivid installation on the theme of 'Crown of Thorns' around which we built Good Friday worship. Our second Christmas Tree Festival, masterminded by Malc, our Parish Administrator, saw a huge increase in the number of trees decorated by local organisations and brought in a large number of local people who also enjoyed the supporting music offered by a range of contributors, and the culminating Community Carol Service which went with a swing. This event and the three evenings of Carol Singing around the streets raised significant funds for our two charities for the year, *SANDS* and *Edukid*.

At Hampton Poyle we again enjoyed the variety of services with the Rogation Day walk of blessing around the village (with a rather fractious horse this year!), the Pet Service, and a new special Christmas Craft Service on Advent Sunday led by Paul which was very popular and looks like becoming a fixture.

Malc has faithfully sent out the weekly email which is now established as our main communication and Margaret Day has kept the website beautifully up to date. A small team keeps the livestream and bespoke online services going which, alongside '*Pause for Prayer*' three times a week, offers a significant online support for faith and growth – please don't forget that this exists even if you are now physically back in church buildings for worship. Thank you to all who valiantly make these happen especially to Joyce Morris who organises the *Pause for Prayer* rota and keeps the prayer list updated each week. We continue to prepare bespoke service sheets for most of our services and to publish them online. We began to encourage people to download the service sheets onto tablets or phones and bring these to church so that we can save printing and paper costs and help the environment. This will take some time to establish but in time we might create a new culture and save a lot of trees.

The monthly *Sunday Prayer Breakfasts* at St John's, which started in May 2023, have continued as a time to enjoy friendship and prayer with coffee, croissants, pastries, and fruit. We have found that starting like this at 9.30 has enhanced the quality of worship at 10am, and at the end of the year we agreed that the time was right to open this to all members of the parish, not just St John's. If you haven't been before, why not come along? You will be very welcome.

The Eco Team has grown in confidence this year, running several events and leading worship for us all, but they have written their own report.

Despite not having a Team Vicar to hold the oversight of all Children and Youth work, the Children's and Young People's Committee ran our first young people's overnight trip away in October. With a variety of sports, fun, and faith activities this was a great success and the young people instantly asked for a repeat and longer trip in 2025. This is very heartening and, along with the ongoing work in choristers, TIG, and All Together, will give the incoming Team Vicar a strong base of energised young people with which to start to build an integrated vision for this work across the parish. Our thanks to all the leaders.

Jo Tucker was the inspiration behind the installation of defibrillators at St Mary's and St John's, which led to several other churches in the village following suit. It was also in conversation with John and Jo Tucker that St Mary's wardens organised a couple of cleaning mornings which were very much appreciated.

Yo Davies, our safeguarding officer, has worked extremely hard and with great resilience to keep us all up to date with the highest standards of safeguarding training and practices. National events have brought home to us, if we didn't know before, just how vital it is that we should do everything we possibly can to ensure that our churches are safe spaces and that we can be trusted by all who come. It takes a little while to change a culture but I think that people now understand there is no leeway here at all. Our thanks are due to Yo and also to Paula Clifford who has deputised for Yo while she has been away.

Each week so many people keep our services going as duty wardens, welcomers, lay ministers, servers, interceders, communion distributors, pray-ers, musicians, bellringers, readers, coffee makers, cleaners, flower arrangers and those who contribute to All Together and Open Space.

In Hampton Poyle the team work is wonderfully organised and it is always a pleasure to arrive and see the church beautifully clean, decorated with care, refreshments ready and smiles from all. This may be our smaller church (despite packing in 105 people on Christmas Eve for the carol service!) but the distinctive personal sense of worship here – and the fact that the heating and microphones are the most reliable of all our churches – makes it a very special part of our parish. Kidlington residents are always welcome in Hampton Poyle – why not come along and experience worship here? Thank you to everyone in HP who pulls together to keep everything running so well.

Many other people work behind the scenes doing things that keep everything going: working as PCC and committee members, ironing altar linen, baking, leading small groups and youth groups, ordering candles, mending lots of things, keeping the database and Facebook up to date, making phone calls, organising the parish lunch, visiting, praying, doing their safeguarding training, baking, offering transport, applying for faculties, opening and closing our churches, and did I say baking?

Challenges this year have been mainly around the area of finding enough volunteers for all the things that we have running and for the provision of children's work on Sundays at St Mary's (aside from choristers). In many ways this is not surprising: most parishes do not do nearly as much as we do, and in 2024 we still lacked a Team Vicar. We hope and believe that people make friends and have fun while carrying out many of the roles within the parish and we are very grateful for everyone who plays their part. It really is true that no matter how many clergy we have none of this would happen without all the volunteers. Thank you.

We advertised twice for a Team Vicar but did not initially receive any interest in the post. It is a tribute to all the teams (especially the clergy and children and young people's teams) that we did not lose heart and managed to continue to offer the variety of worship, events, and community service that people are now used to. One cannot deny, however, that there have been times when the load has felt heavy.

Special thanks are due to our wardens who shoulder many tasks unseen and often 'keep the show on the road': Andy Pedley and Robert Buckeldee for St Mary's, Tilly Evershed, who this year made the move to St John's, and Sue O'Hare at Hampton Poyle. Everyone in the regular congregation at Hampton Poyle plays their part and we recognise the huge value of team approach to church our small village. We also thank Margaret Day who has worked tirelessly to support the running of the parish office and finances, Malc running the office, Bill Evershed as treasurer and Anne as PCC secretary. You all bear with my foibles (and typing) with great good humour!

Monday mornings have two regular meetings: a clergy one followed by wardens and admin. I am very appreciative of the fact that, aside from Paul, Malc, and me, everyone else can choose not to come, but in fact our lovely clergy, wardens, and administrative leaders do choose to come and this allows for good and regular communication.

In the clergy team we said farewell to Susy after her four years of curacy in July and celebrated her new role as school chaplain in September. Her legacy lives on in *The Big Sing* which has become embedded in village life and goes from strength to strength with dedicated lay leaders. We miss her ministry but are glad to keep contact with her as a congregation member when her time allows. We also bade farewell to Jane Hemmings who has moved away. Thanks to Jane for her assistance with leading services and preaching in the last few years.

It has been a joy to welcome Paul, Ashley, and PJ who have all become valued members of the church communities. Paul's curacy feels so entirely natural, and Ashley's significant contribution at *Kidlinks* along with PJ's immense knowledge of all things dinosaur enriches us. Sarah Sewell was able to offer more time in our clergy team from April onwards as she retired from NHS chaplaincy. Sarah has taken on some pastoral ministry and mentoring of individuals and some 8am services, for which we are very grateful.

Paula has continued to offer her time generously for many occasional offices (baptisms / weddings / funerals) as well as Sunday services. She has also played a regular part in supporting worship at St John's, especially with me on 2nd Sundays of the month. David Meara has also continued to offer significant support in worship as well as leading the Making Group with Rosemary. We value their quiet strength and are so pleased that David was returned to health by the end of the year having had a time in hospital during the autumn. Marian Needham's ministry at *Lincroft Meadow* continues to grow as she has led services of communion and Songs of Praise every fortnight, caring for congregations of between 25-30 residents. Marian is supported by a lay team and this chaplaincy ministry is so much appreciated by staff, residents, and relatives.

Alongside the clergy team there is the monthly meeting of '*Big Team*' which is the place for all who exercise a licensed lay ministry and our valued clergy who give of their time whilst being retired or having other jobs: Philippa Burrell – pastoral group and home communions, Meghann Hewett – preaching and leading worship, Colin Johnson – Iona service and support for *Open Space*, Joyce Morris – funeral ministry, John Morris – home communions, Penny Pedley – small groups and worship leading, Katie Tupling – *All Together* leader. As colleagues and friends you offer your different skills and wisdom in so many ways. Thankyou.

Alongside the general work and ministry of the parish we run three community projects: *Kidlinks*, *The Community Garden at St John's* (Martin's Garden), and the *Parent Support Group*. *Kidlinks* has its own report.

The Community Garden planning group of Paula Clifford, Margaret Day, Diana Davis, Bruce Forman and me has been very much unseen this year but we have been plugging away at finding a replacement for the parish portakabin, applying for planning permission and a church faculty to install a garden room as our new parish office, dealing with legalities and practicalities. All of this has been very slow but we look forward to 2025 when, as a result of sorting these things out, the landscaping and more pleasant aspects of community gardening can begin. Thank you to the planning team and to Paula especially for Saturday morning pastries!

The Parent Support Group project has run two regular groups on Monday and Tuesday nights through the year for parents whose children struggle with neurodiversity or mental health issues. The management group consists of Jill Buckeldey, Ursie Phayre, Yo Davies and me. Trained facilitators are paid for by a grant from Oxford diocese and at the end of the year we obtained a small grant from the *Joey Beauchamp Foundation* to pay for 10 hours a month publicity and networking which will start in the New Year. These confidential groups are massively appreciated by those who attend, but we also realised that it is such a big step for a parent to make contact with us and so this extra funding to build trust and contacts was very necessary. One facilitator will be resigning soon and we will be recruiting for her replacement in the New Year. We see this project expanding slowly over the coming years and are glad to be able to offer something of value at a time when there is so little help available for families with these challenges.

Personally 2024 was a challenging time for me, as I lost two close family members who lived in north of Scotland. 5 times I was called away and the wonderful lay and clergy teams kept everything going. Thank you again from the bottom of my heart.

I look forward to 2025 with great hope because of the strength and love of this community which it is my absolute privilege to be part of. Thank you for having me as your rector. May God bless us all and lead us in His ways for the years to come.

Revd Felicity Scroggie, Rector

St Mary's Kidlington Report

It was with sadness that we saw Tilly change roles from St Marys to St Johns, but a delight that Robert was elected to the role at the APCM.

The year has seen some notable achievements - the biggest being the replacement of the heaters in St Marys. The new heaters are "smart" and controlled by an App, so the temperature is more closely controlled, and they can be programmed to accommodate occasional offices and other uses of the Church. This has necessitated a permanent internet connection, and there is WiFi in both the Refectory and the Church itself. Another notable update is that the organ has been serviced, cleaned and tuned.

It is great to see so many uses of the Building - many bookings of the Refectory, and the Sacred Space used for concerts, our "Joseph Day", making group, as well as many services, of great diversity - the 8am Communion, Eucharists and "Open Space"; Evensong, Compline and many services during the Easter and Christmas season.

The Church remains open during the daytime, with huge thanks to the Openers and Locker Uppers. Generally the Locking up team is working well, however additional volunteers will be appreciated.

The Church, of course, includes the Belfry and the ringing team continue to rehearse on Tuesdays, and ring on Sundays to welcome the congregation to worship.

There was a brilliant Summer Fete, complete with a "Human Fruit Machine". We had a wonderful Christmas Tree Festival. Art Weeks took over the Church in May and it became a gallery space with wonderful work undertaken mainly by local artists. The Fire Service have used the building several times for training - honing their rope skills. The Ecoteam have commenced an "EcoCafe" on the 4th Saturday of each month and there was a Bioblitz in the Churchyard (the wildlife survey continues on a monthly basis).

The Friends of St Mary's Kidlington group has re-emerged, holding a number of fund-raising events that will in time support the financial challenges of maintaining the building.

And there are challenges! The roofs have leaks and accessing them to effect repairs is difficult and therefore expensive; finding contractors with the necessary skills is also difficult. We continue to fund repairs from our reserves to keep the building in good repair. The Refectory and Church are in need of redecoration; and the Refectory windows are in poor condition and will probably need replacement in the next few years. The Church lighting has deteriorated and will need upgrading, and a plan to improve access by ramping the main and west doors is in place but moving very slowly.

Many people are involved in the maintenance of our amazing building, and we thank them all.

Andy Pedley and Robert Buckeldee, Churchwardens

St John's Kidlington Report

The wonderful variety of services has allowed St John's to continue to grow and prosper consolidating the feeling of belonging within the congregation and the parish as a whole. The All Together service on the first Sunday of the month with its family focused nature is enjoyed by families from across the Parish. The second Sunday of the month holds the popular pre service Prayer Breakfast where we look at a variety of topics flowing into prayer and then reforming into a eucharistic service. Third (and fifth) Sundays are a simple eucharistic service, while fourth Sundays are blessed with a Joint Service where the whole Parish is invited to come together in one service. These services generally alternate between St John's and St Mary's Kidlington. Add to these the regular Tuesday evening Iona services and you have the varied patchwork of services that form the core of St John's

Junior Church continued to be a regular feature in all our Sunday morning services with the active participation of the children in our All Together services, Mothering Sunday, and of course our Nativity play. Numbers have remained steady throughout the year, thanks to all the leaders and helpers.

As the year progressed, the familiar round of special services took place, from Epiphany to Candlemas, Holy Week to Easter Sunday, Harvest, All Souls and Remembrance up to Advent and Christmas. We are grateful to all the clergy team for making these services special, and were delighted to welcome many visitors to these events.

St John's continues to host a wide variety of events and activities with regular bookings from various groups such as Zumba, Pilates, Yoga and of course by KidLinks. It also remains a popular venue for one off activities such as birthday parties and training events.

We give grateful thanks to all members of the Parish Clergy team, the All Together planning group, Servers, Junior Church team and Bruce our Musical Director for their valued ministry to us all during the year.

We would also like to express our thanks to everyone for their valued support and contribution to life of St John's. We remain extremely grateful for all that you are and all that you do, as members of St John's Hall Church in Kidlington.

Tilly Evershed, Churchwarden

St Mary's Hampton Poyle Report



Our small but active congregation ensures that St Mary's Hampton Poyle is open every day to offer a quiet and peaceful welcome to parishioners and visitors alike. Services are held regularly throughout the year, and all are most welcome to attend.

After the celebration of Easter accompanied by wonderful flower arrangements, a fine day in May 2024 saw the annual Rogation perambulation through the village led by Reverend Felicity on horseback accompanied by musicians, parishioners and the occasional dog. At each stopping place a hymn was sung, or a poem or reading said and a small floral cross was laid. Tea and cake were served at the final stopping place. In late August the annual Pet Blessing service was held outside in the churchyard with teas provided afterwards. Harvest Festival was in early October followed by drinks and nibbles. In November the Remembrance and All Souls service was a solemn and thoughtful evening service, with the lighting of candles. This service was made especially poignant by the addition of a trumpeter playing the last post. A special and very enjoyable Advent Crafting Service on the first Sunday in Advent included making Christmas tree decorations for Hampton Poyle's entry to the Christmas Tree Festival at 'big' St Mary's. A slightly damp evening of carol singing through the village raised money to contribute to the parish nominated charities for 2024. Hardy singers and players were grateful for the generous supply of mulled wine and mince pies at the end house. Carols by Candlelight on Christmas Eve proved very popular with lusty singing and contributions from musicians and local children and adults. Holy Communion on Christmas morning was a beautiful reflective service.



Here at St Mary's Hampton Poyle, we are grateful to the clergy who take the services and the volunteers who help clean and tidy the church, make the teas, arrange the flowers, mow the grass and of course, play the organ. We continue with the long application process to gain a faculty to install a servery and toilet in the church and welcome any donations towards the project.

Sue O'Hare, Churchwarden

Fabric Committee Report

The Fabric Committee is responsible for all restoration, renovation, upkeep and maintenance on the buildings under the stewardship of the PCC.

These buildings - St Mary's Kidlington, St Mary's Hampton Poyle and St John's Kidlington - each present their own challenges and the committee manages an on-going list of "jobs" that need to be managed and completed over time.

The committee met six times in 2024, and a significant volume of activity was recorded in the minutes from each meeting. I am very grateful to the other members of the committee for their dedication, their expertise and their willingness to invest time and energy into keeping our buildings safe, warm and fit for purpose.

During 2024, the following activities were logged across the three churches:

St Mary's Kidlington – gutters cleaned; gas service and safety check completed; exterior floodlights mended; pathways re-gravelled; heating system replaced; handrail and ladders fitted in belltower; lighting in belltower fixed; new bike rack installed; new carpet fitted to dais; PAT testing completed; defibrillator installed; organ cleaning completed.

St John's Kidlington – gutters cleaned; concrete base plus shed installed in the grounds; outside lights installed and fire escape route illuminated; utility works undertaken for new office; new bike rack installed; PAT testing completed; defibrillator installed; repairs/redecoration of windowsill, kitchen roof and meeting room; gas service and safety check completed.

St Mary's Hampton Poyle – gutters cleaned; fire extinguishers services and replaced; gas service and safety check completed; bell ropes replaced; percolation holes filled in; PAT testing completed; notice board repaired; windowsill in North Ailse repaired and repainted.

Robert Buckeldee, Chair of Fabric Committee

Oxford Deanery Synod Report

4 Synod meetings took place during the year.

Tuesday 6th February 2024 7.30 at St Matthews Church, Marlborough Road : the main focus of the meeting was continuing discussion of the allocation of Parish Share. A proposal from St Aldates to use the same model as the diocese was withdrawn and the Area Dean put forward the Offer System of collecting Parish Share. A paper, 'Parish Share and the Common Vision Fund', was presented by the Lay Chair. The next step to be the formation of a working party to take the matter further.

Monday 13th May 2024 7.30 at St Michael in the Northgate: Anthony Buckley, Area Dean, announced his term of Office was to end in May and that a new Area Dean, Rev Gavin Knight, had been appointed.

The following proposal was made, fully discussed and accepted:-

'For all finance related proposals including proposals for parish share allocations as well as changes to the system for allocating it between parishes, the Deanery will follow this procedure:

- 1] The Deanery Treasurer will convene a meeting of all PCC treasurers to fully discuss proposals
- 2] After the treasurers have reached a collective view, this will be taken back to all PCCs in time for formal discussion and a vote
- 3] The Deanery Treasurer will be informed of their decisions and will put the proposal to Deanery Synod in legal time for formal discussion and voting
- 4] Following this vote, the Deanery Treasurer will report the decision to PCC treasurers who will inform their PCCs

A presentation by the Oxford Street Pastors followed.

Wednesday 2nd October 2024 7.0 at St Michael and All Angels Summertown: Prudence Dailey, Lay Chair, is standing down

The theme of the meeting was work with children and young people, and Synod welcomed children's and young people's workers from across the Deanery. There was a CYP presentation including mapping process, by Yvonne Morris and Rhodri Bowen. This year Diocesan Synod has committed to work with CYP and families and has asking each deanery to come up with a plan for growth. Results of the subsequent mapping exercise to be circulated. Small group discussions led to the following suggestions following the presentation:

- each PCC to have CYP as a standing item
- each Deanery Synod host to talk about their work with CYP
- Deanery training days led by churches with expertise
- a cluster of churches who don't currently have a youth worker to club together and apply for funding money is available

Wednesday 4th December 7.30 at St Andrews Church Oxford: Some positive developments were reported following the last Deanery meeting on working with young people and families. There continued to be a need for a new Lay Chair. A meeting about the Parish Share was held and the target had not quite been reached .

The main theme was Ministry to Older People. Debbie Ducille, Ministry Lead for Anna Chaplains, outlined the need for ministry to the increasing numbers of older people in this country. There are more over 60s than under 18s currently. There are now 410 chaplains and 2,000 Anna Friends across the country. A robust training is given for both roles and a certificate awarded at the end. Charlotte Maughan, Anna Chaplain for St Andrews, spoke about her role.

There were some interesting speakers and discussions during the year plus good work on putting together a system for Parish Share allocation however numbers of folk attending the meetings is diminishing which is disappointing.

Steph Hobson, on behalf of Deanery Synod members

Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding continues to play a vital part in our parish. This past year has seen major concerns raised within the Church of England and we try to ensure that at a local level we do all we can to keep people safe and to respond to the needs of any victims of any kind of abuse.

Everyone who volunteers to work with vulnerable adults and/or children and young people is safely recruited and undertakes an appropriate level of safeguarding training and a Disclosure and Barring check if necessary. This information is then logged on our Parish dashboard enabling reminders to be sent when any training or other information needs updating.

Risk assessments are completed for church based and external activities and are reviewed annually.

Safeguarding issues that have been raised this past year have been worked through with the help of clergy and our diocesan safeguarding advisor.

The PCC participated in a safeguarding exercise at our annual Awayday. We held a special service to highlight safeguarding in October in order to enable the congregation to understand what was in place at a local level and in order to be able to reflect on the national church safeguarding situation.

Yo Davies, Safeguarding Officer

Health & Safety Report

I am very pleased to report an incident free year – there were some very minor incidents involving children at the various activities but none needed more than a plaster by way of treatment.

A couple of preventative actions have been taken – in the Kidlington Graveyard, a box tomb has been surrounded by plastic mesh as a precaution and a Faculty obtained for it to be taken down; the work will be undertaken by Kidlington Parish Council, and is pending.

Kidlington Parish Council did undertake a survey of the memorials in the Churchyard, to ensure that they are all stable and safe, and a few were laid flat as they were hazardous.

The Fire Service attended to help us put a rope to the Chandelier in the Crossing back on its pulley. Sadly it came off again more or less immediately so for the moment it is labelled as not to be used. The proposal is to replace the blue plastic rope with a wire rope (steel) which will be much more secure and wear resistant.

A bench in the Churchyard decayed to the point where it was in danger of collapse; this was reported to Kidlington Parish Council who arranged immediate removal, and then replacement with a new one.

There is work to be done – in St Marys there are “Hatchments” which are high and inadequately fixed; the Fabric Committee is working on improving the fixing to make them completely safe; there is also some blown plaster high in the Nave; this needs to be taken off and replaced, and again is a work in progress.

H&S has always to be borne in mind - any activity should have a risk assessment undertaken, with appropriate controls in place.

The 3 church sites are quite complex, so we all need to be aware continuously of the hazards that do exist, or could arise, and ensure they are recognised and either eliminated or managed effectively; this is a job for everyone – if you spot something that is dangerous or potentially dangerous, then please let me know as soon as possible for it to be checked and actioned (07832 903531)

Andy Pedley, Health and Safety Officer

Finance Committee Report

The Committee met either in person or by circulation of emails to consider financial issues. As previously, the main work of the Committee was to produce a 2025 budget for PCC approval in November 2024. We also met to agree changes to the presentation of the 2024 accounts, and closure of certain bank accounts that held designated funds (The balances on these accounts were transferred to our main accounts, and the funds themselves are unaffected by this treatment.)

For several years we have shown a negative balance on the St Mary's Kidlington part of the 2020 fund. This implied that the fund was reasonably certain of recovering these costs through further fundraising. However, as Covid impacted on the fund, this became an increasingly unrealistic presentation of the financial facts. Therefore the Committee, with the agreement of the PCC, wrote off this negative balance against general reserves as part of the 2024 Accounts.

The Financial Review is included in the formal Annual Report for 2024 and the Annual Accounts are shown separately.

This year's committee were Robert Buckeldee, Katy Smith, and Margaret Day, and I am very grateful to all of them for their support and commitment during the year.

Bill Evershed, Treasurer

Children & Young People Committee Report

The Children and Young People's Committee has worked over the last year in supporting the various connections with young people both at St. Johns and St. Marys. The Youth Weekend Away in September was one of the highlights of the year, with participants from both Choristers and TiG (Together in God). Young people are excited for the prospect of another weekend in October 2025. The choristers have now added a junior section, who sung together at one of the Advent services, and the group has benefited from both the teaching they receive as well as the Choristers' Party.

Junior Church at St John's continues to be well received, following material from 'Roots,' and many children and young people were involved in the nativity service. TiG continues to meet monthly and have benefited from committed leaders and periodical social events, including punting.

Revd Paul Charles, chair of CTP

Kidlinks

Kidlinks was set up in response to the closure of Kidlington's Children's Centre. It was initially called 'The Hub' and we relaunched it under its new name in summer 2023. It is not an independent charity but is run through the PCC and employees are employed by the PCC. It has a management committee made up of PCC reps, a parent rep, community reps and in the absence of a Team Vicar Felicity has taken the chair for the last few years.

Management Committee members were:

Felicity (temporary chair)

Clare Morgan (PCC rep)

Nigel Simpson (Community rep)

Jo Simpson (Community rep)

Eleanor Temple (Parent rep)

Alison Wharmby (PCC rep)

Rachel - Children and Families Worker is in attendance at meetings.

Our main aim as a project is to work with and support as many families as we can through the early years of their child's life. We do this by providing drop-ins and support groups where parents and carers can come for peer support and friendship, the friendly listening ear of a volunteer, professional guidance, or sometimes just a hot cup of tea and a biscuit. And of course, there is the all-important play time and learning opportunities for their little ones! *Kidlinks* is a fantastic resource for families, and many have told us that our sessions have been a lifeline to them during some of the most challenging moments of parenthood.

Our drop-in play sessions *Little Acorns*, *Bouncing Babies*, and *St Mary's Toddler Group* remain as busy and popular as ever. St John's buzzes to the sound of up to 50 happy toddlers at a time with their carers for *Little Acorns*, while SEN Squirrels is a quieter group on Fridays for SEND children that families tell us is very much needed and appreciated.

What makes *Kidlinks* different from other drop in community playgroups? We add a lot of extra value through the expertise of Rachel our wonderful Children and Families Worker, and through our partnership with other sources of support and knowledge. We are working in partnership with local schools, breastfeeding counsellors, SEND settings, midwives and mental health services, to deliver significant and integrated support for local families. Families are drawn from Kidlington and Water Eaton and up to 10 miles beyond. Our reputation is very good and we won the *Red Kite* award for Pre School playgroups in 2023.

As well as having several SEND teachers on our volunteer team, we also collaborate with outside specialists to enable us to confidently signpost our families to appropriate sources of support - Bicester Autism, Sentipede, Oxfordshire SEND Families Together, Afso, and speech & language therapists, to name but a few!

This year we have led two parenting courses at West Kidlington Primary School, and we have continued to be fully booked at our breastfeeding support group in our partnership with Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support.

In 2023 we won the Co-op Charity Partnership award, and this year they chose to renew it with us! Co-op have provided volunteers to help with events such as our

Summer parties, Christmas grotto and painting our baby room, they have raised funds via customer collection pots in their shops and cake sales in their nurseries, and have provided practical support such as sending builders to build a base for our new Kidlinks garden shed! They have also provided opportunities for free staff training, and have raised awareness of us on their social media platforms. Thank you Co-op for your continued support!

Volunteers come from within and beyond the churches. Each of our volunteers goes through a safer recruitment process, completing an interview, DBS and reference checks, and safeguarding training. Without our volunteers, Kidlinks simply could not exist! They are the backbone of our charity and we can never thank them enough for all their time and dedication to supporting families, and making Kidlinks what it is.

The Family Fun Day in the summer was a great success and introduced some new families to the project. With music, pizza, fire engine, and lots of relaxed fun it was a fun and inclusive afternoon for local families and it was good to see St John's forecourt buzzing with energy and life.

Kidlinks groups ran through the summer which was very much appreciated by families who often find the long holidays difficult to get through. Big thanks are due to Rachel and volunteers for keeping these life-lines going.

In November, we collaborated with local CIC Cherwell Collective, and Good Food Oxfordshire on a joint research project around food insecurity and the barriers families face with eating healthily and sustainably.

In December, Rachel was interviewed for the *Neurodiverse Voices Podcast*, raising our profile and showing how we are supporting more and more diverse families.

For the 3rd year running we hosted Santa's Grotto at Kidlington's Christmas Lights Switch-on, which also raised our profile in the village as well as allowing us to benefit from much needed funds.

The major challenge remains, as maybe it always will be, finances. It is much more expensive to run an integrated project with employees than to run volunteer led separate drop in play sessions because we offer much more to the families than just drop in sessions. When we took over from the Children's Centre we were given funds to last 3-4 years but after that we have to become self-funding. At this point many similar projects ceased to exist, just as many charities have folded after Covid.

We have struggled on with the support of local businesses, Kidlington Parish Councillors, Oxford City Counsellors, Co-Op sponsorship, and some small grants. We are still here – and that is an achievement – but without financial security we are not able to progress our vision for expansion, and to employ a colleague to support Rachel and free her to do more networking. At the end of the year we agreed that at this point we cannot offer further parenting courses and will pause the Toddler Lunch Club group until our funding is in a better shape. As ever we continue to welcome offers of help from people able to write fund raising bids.

We are sincerely grateful to all our sponsors, funders, and volunteers, and to Rachel for her passionate and skilful leading of this most valued project. Thank you everyone.

Felicity, Chair of Kidlinks

Small Groups Report

The Parish has a range of small groups that meet to learn, grow, study, reflect or explore together. On Monday afternoons there is a Zoom Coffee social, and in the evening The Meditation group meets in the Lady Chapel. We have 3 Home Groups that meet regularly for fellowship, Bible study, and prayer. The Making Group is active in different seasons, creating art that reflects the season and provokes deeper engagement, and ensured we had the banners and an installation based on 'the crown of thorns.' We also had seasonal groups, based on a particular theme, such as the Lent discussion groups.

Small groups offer valuable opportunities for forming and strengthening relationships, while sharing our experiences of life and faith. If you are interested in becoming part of a small group, or helping to form one, do get in touch with myself or Penny Pedley.

Revd Paul Charles, curate

Pastoral Visiting Team Report

We welcomed Revd Sarah Sewell and Revd Paul Charles to our team in 2024, and continued to visit regularly those who were unable to come to church. It is a privilege to visit people in their homes and Care Homes, and our visits were much appreciated. Philippa, Sarah and Paul are also part of the team which took Home Communion to those who requested it. We also visited others in the community who had been referred to us, and kept in contact with a number of other older members of the church, partly through the monthly Parish Lunch at the Willow Tree Cafe at Moorside. We continued to support the clergy with the

All Souls and the Presence and Absence services, which were well attended and appreciated.

Philippa Burrell, Pastoral Visiting Team Co-ordinator

Prayer Ministry Team Report

The Team has continued to offer prayer ministry after each St Mary's 10am service, thanks to the wonderful commitment of Team members (since December 2018).

Two team members (with name tags on blue lanyards) are available in the Lady Chapel after the service to listen to and pray simply with whoever comes, as well as after Joint services in St John's Lady Chapel.

People may wish to be prayed for personally or ask for prayer for loved ones. We pray before the service for the service itself, and after the service for the parish and clergy, church activities, Kidlington organisations, Council and schools, and for those who are ill or bereaved.

We also hold Summer and Winter Team Thankyou teas to connect, review and pray for each other.

It is a privilege to take part in this ministry and witness God's Spirit at work.

Liz Bendor Samuel

Eco Team Report

The Ecoteam has met regularly during the year – not as frequently as we would have liked, and we are aware that there are many activities that we would like to do but time constraints do not permit these. We have, though, undertaken the following:

Plastic Bottle Cross: This was a Lenten activity. The congregation were encouraged to bring along empty single use plastic bottles, rinsed, and these were formed into a Cross by stringing them together and suspending them from the Lamp Bracket outside the Priests' door. It elicited considerable attention, and by request remained after Lent, as there was a funeral for someone who was an environmentalist, and the family thought it appropriate.

Service :The team lead worship on the 28th July, with Paul preaching

EcoCafe: Following a suggestion made at the Eco-team service, the Eco cafe started in September 2024. It meets every 4th Saturday between 10.30 and 12.00 in St Mary's Church or the refectory, and over coffee and biscuits all types of ecological and environmental things are discussed. There is no set theme, whatever is on someone's mind, so discussions are wide ranging and very sociable.

Bioblitz and survey: The survey of species in the St Mary's Churchyard resumed in March 2024 and by the end of the year, over 100 different species of plants and animals had been identified, including such wonderfully named plants as lords-and-ladies, common mouse ear, shining crane's bill and hedge maids. Another Bio-blitz event was held when many members of the congregation also helped to identify what we have in our churchyard. All the results of the surveys have been shared with the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.

Bat Walk: We held a batwalk on the 9th June. Just 4 parishioners were there; it was a lovely evening, and bats were found!

Astronomy Evening

With Roger Davies, we had an Astronomy Evening; this was well attended and enjoyable – Roger's expertise is of course enormous!

Andy Pedley, chair of Eco Team

Music in the Parish

The choir and choristers at St Mary's continue to go from strength to strength. We currently have around 35 adult choir members and 18 choristers, including a cohort of new junior choristers recruited in September 2024. The choir and choristers have continued to lead the music at regular Sunday morning services at St Mary's (and occasionally at St John's), singing choral evensong on third Sundays in the month, and offering extensive programmes of music at special services including the Advent Carol Service, and Nine Lessons and Carols. In December 2024 we appointed 3 young organ scholars to start their duties in January 2025, who will be trained in hymn-playing, choir accompanying and conducting, and other aspects of our liturgical worship.

The music group continues to offer fresh expressions of worship as part of the monthly 'Open Space' services at St Mary's. We work with the service leaders to provide inspirational forms of music, ranging from film music, rock anthems, musical extracts, Taize chants and modern worship songs. Anyone who loves music is encouraged to offer their skills, technical, vocal and instrumental, to enhance the worship in these innovative monthly services.

At St John's we have continued our usual provision of traditional congregational hymns and occasionally dared to learn less familiar hymns and songs. At our monthly All Together services we have tried yet further possibilities, perhaps most noticeably so when TIG took over the All Together Service in May, providing the music as well as the ideas from their own resources. We also continue to be delighted with volunteers contributing additional music at All Together on a variety of instruments. Towards the end of the year it was a particular pleasure to have more of our Junior Church members contributing music to their nativity play.

Outside of services, the Big Sing held monthly at St John's continues to flourish, and we enjoyed a "Joseph Day" in the spring, when a large group of parishioners gathered to put on "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" in just one afternoon.

David Hewett, Clare Morgan and Bruce Forman, Musical Directors

Churches Together in Kidlington Report

This year has been marked by deepening unity and active collaboration across our local churches, as we continue to work together in service of our community and for the glory of God's Kingdom.

A significant achievement was the successful funding of defibrillators for the village, made possible through the generous support of Kidlington News. We also took the lead in organising the local political hustings, hosted at the Methodist Church and chaired by Bishop Stephen Croft, which gave all prospective parliamentary candidates the opportunity to share their vision with the public.

Our core annual events once again brought people from different congregations together in shared witness and worship. These included the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and shared meal, the Good Friday Walk of Witness, the ecumenical Pentecost service, and our summer Holiday Club for primary school children, supported by enthusiastic young leaders from various churches.

We were also mindful of those who are often overlooked, providing friendship and activities through our "Holiday at Home" programme for elderly residents who may have felt lonely during the summer. As the year drew to a close, we joined the community in the village Christmas light switch-on and distributed Christmas cards to share joy and hope.

Together, we embody the spirit of Romans 15:5–6: “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other... so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We thank God for what has been achieved this year and look ahead with faith and unity.

Scott Cheeseman, Chair of CTK

AGENDA for the meeting to elect churchwardens, and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

To be held on Monday 12th May 2025 at 8.00pm at St Mary’s Kidlington

1. Opening Prayer
2. Attendance and Apologies for Absence
3. Election of Churchwardens to serve for the year 2025/2026
4. To confirm the minutes of the annual parochial church meeting held on 8th May 2024 at St Mary’s Kidlington
5. To elect members to serve on the Parochial Church Council
6. To appoint an independent examiner for the year 2025
7. To approve the membership of the committee of St John’s Kidlington
8. To approve the membership of the committee of St Mary’s Hampton Poyle
9. To elect members to serve on the Council of Churches together in Kidlington
10. To consider a report on changes in the Electoral Roll since the last annual parochial church meeting
11. To consider an annual report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the activities of the Parish generally
12. To consider the Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council for the year ending 31st December 2024, independently examined.

13. To consider a report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches in the Parish
14. To consider a report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
15. To consider any other matters of parochial or general church interest
16. To deal with any other business
17. To set the date for the APCM for 2026
18. Closing Prayer

Note: in order to give satisfactory answers to questions regarding parish finances, it would be helpful to the finance committee if these could be submitted in writing or by email to the PCC secretary at least 24 hours before the meeting