



Annual Report

For the year ended
31st December 2024

Team Rector

Revd Marc Terry

Team Vicar (SSM)

Vacant

Associate Minister (SSM)

Revd Gillian Parkin

Licensed Lay Ministers

Alison Flint, Mike King,
Diane Ross-Smith

Benefice Worship Leaders

Marje Caie, Patrick Shervington

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Composition of the Team Council 2024

Revd Marc Terry (Team Rector, Chairman)
Claire Campbell (Team Council Secretary)
Pam Rawlins (Lay Vice Chair – until 06/2024)
Merope Sylvester (Lay Vice Chair)
Paul Woodcock (Team Treasurer)

Other Clergy representative:

Revd Gillian Parkin

Licensed Lay Ministers:

Vacant

Benefice Worship Leader

Patrick Shervington

Churchwardens/representatives:

Rosemary Warchus (St Nicholas, Biddestone)
Karen Mullins (St Andrew, Castle Combe)
Doug King or Rindi Runacres (St Mary, Grittleton)
Alison Greenhalgh or Christine Laskey (St Michael and All Angels, Kington St Michael)
Caroline Cook (All Saints, Littleton Drew)
Marje Caie (St Mary, Nettleton and Burton)
Anne Godwin (St James, North Wraxall)
Merope Sylvester (St Nicholas, Slaughterford)
Daphne Smith or David Akerman (St Mary, West Kington)
Graham Gee (St Margaret, Yatton Keynell)

Patrons:

Bishop (Chairman - 3 votes), Archdeacon, any Vicar; Deacon; person with special responsibility for pastoral care under section 34(8) of the 2011 Mission and Pastoral Measure (1 vote jointly), Rector, St Mary's College Winchester, Oriel College Oxford, Michael Neeld Esq, each PCC.

Together, sharing in Christ - Together, growing our communities.

Our life as a collection of ten rural Church of England parishes (communities and churches) is defined by this shared vision. Discerned through prayer we are confident this is how God is calling us to live in an area known locally as 'By Brook'

We are committed disciples eager to learn from Jesus and share his love with others.

Our way of life calls us to love our neighbour – both at home and abroad. Locally, we serve in many ways to help grow and build community.

Because we know that we are loved by God.

First and foremost Christ's church is one of disciples: followers and worshippers. In our role as His disciples we are part of God's tapestry and of God's plan for our communities.

Woven to His tapestry the golden thread that binds us is His vision for Bybrook:

Together sharing in Christ, together growing our communities.

It is key therefore that our own discipleship and that of the communities of which are a part continues to grow and to deepen.

Isaiah 52:7 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring *good news*, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation.' The gospel is good news and here that good news is brought back His people by messengers, long awaited and watched for.

When Paul writes to the early church in Ephesus (Ephesians 6:10-18) he uses the imagery of a Roman soldier, clothed and replaces the uniform with an armour of God, and 'with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace' (Eph 6: 15 NIV).

Whether we are watching for God's good news being delivered and shared amongst us or whether we are readying ourselves to share the gospel with others the heart and strength of that core is our own place with Christ and our life as disciples.

As part of [Bristol Diocese](#), it forms part of their larger [vision and priorities](#)

The Anglican Communion (worldwide church), to which the Church of England belongs holds to the five marks of mission:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

TEAM RECTOR'S REPORT

The start to January 2024 came with Storm Henk and damage to the pinnacle and roof of St. Margaret's in Yatton Keynell.

A meeting of PCC Treasurers was convened to work together on solutions to funding the office that became an ongoing conversation for 2024 with another meeting planned for early 2025. It's hoped it will be as well attended as the last.

As always, January saw a well-received Marriage Preparation Day attended by our own couples and others from other benefices within our own and neighbouring deaneries.

Care for church buildings and their use for mission took up some time in 2024! A car accident led to well documented damage to the churchyard and railings in Castle Combe, with much now repaired. St. Nicholas Biddestone replaced their inspecting architect, re-igniting a church re-ordering project and many, many churches have walked that delicate line with reaching out to the community in hospitality coupled with fund-raising. It is so very difficult to reach out in love and with cap-in-hand at the same time. What is clear is that the level of hospitality and welcome shown through Lambing, Rogation, Summer fairs, Harvest, Christmas Fayres are all very well received (and a huge effort of annual planning).

Looking for an opportunity to continue Alpha or the Bible Course, this time during the day, Knit and Natter (born from a previous Alpha group and intergenerational friendships cemented at AT@4) took up studying books of the bible and the Bible Course whilst meeting for fellowship. I give thanks for the way this group has grown naturally and brings together people of all ages (currently from aged 9 to 'I'm not allowed to guess').

By September 2024 all ten churches in Bybrook Benefice, following the Living in Love and Faith discussions and offer of a potential stand-alone service for the blessing of a same-sex marriage agreed in the affirmative to support them if/when they are made available through General Synod. Some PCCs are now considering registration as an Inclusive Church (IC). The wider statement of inclusivity by IC has caused some to reflect on the accessibility of their churches (some issued beyond their control).

In November we offered 'Grave Talk' – a facilitated conversation for those facing bereavement or their own end of life, planned by the Church of England. Take up was minimal though there was an expression of interest to meet again, and we hope to see if there is a core group that would be willing to give this another try.

Throughout 2024, Claire Campbell, our office manager, has been looking at ways to improve processes and make the office increasingly efficient in an effort to drive down costs. This resulted in a revised Operations Manual, shared to the Team Council in 2024, and lots of investigative work on software applications and shared drives behind the scenes. Few church packages it seems work with a benefice our size. Claire has also begun receiving bookings from Bristol Diocese for events in 2025 in our own effort to seek donations for church-related activities to support the cost of the office.

Thank you to Claire, who manages not only her regular workload (and an admin pile that is considerable, just for baptisms, weddings and funerals, let alone service sheets, expenses and parish queries) but has found time to look at ways to continually improve.

December saw the announcement that Revd Marc Terry would become the next Area Dean for Chippenham Deanery, from 1st February 2025 when Revd Canon Sally Wheeler steps down at the end of January. His commissioning service will be on 29th January 2025, 10am at St. Peter's, Lords Mead, Chippenham. Other notable dates shared in 2024 was that Marc has a sabbatical approved by the Diocese in June, July and August 2025 and will be attending the Enabling Leaders Course in 2025, which involve a few conferences.

The Team Council meetings completed a full year in their new pattern, hearing from a 'cluster' and the ministry team throughout the course of a year. Being able to spend more time hearing issues and offering support has led to a greater depth of support among the parishes, with PSOs helping vacant parishes, treasurers sharing expertise, wardens offering cover and advice. I have felt that 2024 was a year in which the deliberately repeated 'Together' of 'Together sharing in Christ, together growing our communities' has borne fruit.

Thank you to the Team Council, who not only represent PCCs at a benefice level but are often the conduit for vast amounts of information, and especially for those who, like Merope and auditing policies, take on a wider role that benefits the whole of the benefice.

It is certainly appropriate here to thank the PCCs who often unseen care for the churches, both the people and the buildings as places of sanctuary and welcome.

To the treasurers, the same. For being faithful stewards of resources gifted to the church and for committing to work together throughout 2024 and 2025 to facilitate a benefice of ten parishes.

SCHOOLS

School visits continued through early 2024 with classroom visits and collective worship being held in both By Brook Valley School and Kington St. Michael Primary School. AT@4 once again moved to Kington St Michael for the Good Friday service. In March interviews for a replacement Head Teacher at By Brook confirmed the appointment of the acting-head (and then Deputy Head) Deb Henshall to Head Teacher. In June By Brook Valley attended St. Margaret's for another Experience Day, for a whom a big thank you goes to Cilla Palfreyman for pulling this year's effort together and organising. The school year ended with Kate Cavey retiring as Head at KSM with Victoria O'Brien being appointed as her replacement.

The work of the school governors continues, with Merope Sylvester joining the team at By Brook Valley School and with Jaclyn Cross stepping in to head the safeguarding aspect as governor. I am very grateful to those who continue to strengthen the relationship with our schools, including Alison Greenhalgh in Kington St. Michael, when our team is quite small.

SERVICES

February saw the bedding in of a new pattern of services for the clergy team with Marc and Gillian swapping some parishes (and PCC churning) and with the Mike and Alison moving into other services too. It has been refreshing working with different PCCs again and always helpful to be able to share ideas and information across PCCs. We continued as a benefice to advertise to fill our Team Vicar (SSM) vacancy. We would get some good news later in the year with an application, to lose out a short while later the applicant withdrawing to take up a half-time stipendiary position. We remain positive that someone will be found!

In July, Claire finished her placement as ordinand (and her place on our Ministry Team) with Bybrook and from September moved to St. Peter's Chippenham to broaden her context training.

In September, Revd Gillian Parkin made the sensible decision to withdraw from leading services and attending PCCs given her worsening hip and need of a hip replacement. She continues to join events where mobility and the condition allows. We are hopeful of surgery soon for Gillian (it was anticipated for November 2024).

Fr. Benji Tyler (who joined the deanery at St. Andrew's, Chippenham in April) and Revd Si Dunn helped cover some midweek services at short notice and thanks go too to Revd Canon Sally Wheeler, Vens Christopher Bryan and Adam Beaumont for covering some Christmas services for us. A big thank you is owed to Revds Francis Miles and Pat Freeth, both of whom travelled from Malmesbury regularly to cover multiple services each week for us. Their ministry has been very much enjoyed.

Thank you to our 'own' committed ministry team – for Gillian, who despite stepping back returns occasionally for special events, may your operation and recovery come swiftly. To Alison, Mike and Diane, our LLMs who month-in, month-out take services around the benefice and on occasion deal with lots of funerals which always arrive in bunches, thanks again.

SAFEGUARDING

A year of upheaval and a difficult one for survivors of abuse who once again had to relive experiences or hear of events shared in the news.

The release of the Makin Report saw the resignation of Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and (at the time of writing, 16th December 2024) calls for the resignation of the Archbishop of York Stephen Cotterall. Whilst this has led to a difficult time for our Parish Safeguarding Officers, I do firmly believe that the changing culture of safeguarding in the Church of England, largely won by the hard of PSOs at the coal face, is driving change like this and bringing issues to light that need to be resolved.

Bristol Diocese submitted its safeguarding teams and processes to a fully independent review, outside of the Church of England and it was commended on its level of care and operation.

My thanks to our dedicated team of PSOs (who increased this year with the addition of Jaclyn Cross for All Saints, Littleton Drew), who being passionate about safeguarding have had to deal with 2024!

CHIPPENHAM DEANERY

In November it was announced that Revd Canon Sally Wheeler would be standing down as Area Dean of Chippenham Deanery from 31st January 2025. Revd Marc Terry will be licensed as the Area Dean of Chippenham deanery (from 1st February 2025) at a service on 29th January 2025, 10am, at St. Peter's, Lords Mead, Chippenham.

Reverend Marc Terry

ASSOCIATE MINISTER'S REPORT

My reflection of the last year is unfortunately limited to the first nine months as at the end of September my declining mobility forced me to step back from services while I awaited a replacement hip operation which eventually took place in January 2025. Attendance across the churches I serve is variable although it is encouraging to have a few new regular members of congregations and visits from wedding couples completing their required attendance. Having said that Christmas, and Easter, have been well attended. The monthly mid-week services which I lead have small but dedicated support and seem to be much appreciated by the older members of their congregation and all three congregations enjoy some social time afterwards either in church, cafe, or pub!

Aside from regular services I have enjoyed conducting weddings and baptisms and of course supporting families at funerals.

In the light of my increasing mobility issues, I have been very fortunate to receive help and support from across the Benefice and for this I am most grateful. I am gradually returning to leading services and hope that by the time I come to complete next year's report things will be back to normal!

Finally, a big thank you to all the church wardens and congregations I serve for your help and support throughout the year. I often feel quite humble when I see how hard members of the congregation work to keep our little churches open and welcoming to those who pass by.

Gillian Parkin

OFFICE MANAGER'S REPORT

2024 has once again been a much quieter year for weddings with only 17 weddings taking place across the benefice. Baptisms, also reduced to 11 however there was a noticeable increase in funeral/burials up to 34, which is more in line with previous years.

A scaled down version of the Bybrook News continued to be sent out electronically as and when we were able to. We were still unable to prioritise this or other methods of communication but are keen to improve on this, so if you are a budding journalist, love social media, or just have an interest in helping with any of our communications, we would love to hear from you.

The Read Room has continued to be a multiuse space, with the office operating 3 days a week and a place for clergy to work in alongside this. As well as being used for Ministry Team, Treasurer, Wedding, Worship Planning and various other meetings, it also continued to be used for weekly prayer for the benefice and the Knit and Natter group. The space has also continued to be offered for use by the pre-school staff, school governors and doctors surgery, for their meetings where necessary.

A huge thank you as always to Marc, Gillian, the wider ministry team, churchwardens and PCC members who all work tirelessly to make sure that the benefice runs smoothly. A massive thank-you also to Paul, who continues to do a sterling job at overseeing our finances and to Sara who does a beautiful job of writing our wedding registers.

We have continued with our plans to reduce our paper use throughout 2024 and have also begun to encourage this with other organisations who we work closely with too. Not only does this benefit the environment, it also makes things smoother and swifter. We also continued to work hard behind the scenes to improve our processes and increase our efficiency and have been exploring various tools available to assist us with this, something that will continue into 2025.

The admin manual has been thoroughly refreshed and distributed this year. If your church does not have one of the new manuals available, do pick one up from the office as this has all the information needed to ensure the smooth running of the occasional offices as well as the team policies.

Claire Campbell

ALL TOGETHER @ 4 REPORT *No report available*

JAM CLUB (JESUS AND ME) REPORT

JAM has been hugely encouraging this year. Although the numbers have stayed relatively low the families who do support have been very faithful and regular and it is wonderful to see the children remember the stories and the memory verses. They all engage beautifully and it is lovely to see them coming into church so happily and full of their important news of the week. They are never in any hurry to leave so in some sessions we can finish around five different crafts related to the story.

We have covered several different bible stories this year, including Easter and Christmas, so it is wonderful to know they are having a good grounding in the Word of God while they are still young. We always close with a short time of prayer and the children are encouraged to suggest what and who we should be praying for, and sometimes they too like to pray in the group.

The parents are always very appreciative and it is great that we are reaching families with the message of Jesus.

Grateful thanks to Wanda for all her support and her champion work in the kitchen, providing us with refreshments and cleaning paint brushes!

Cilla Palfreyman

OPEN THE BOOK REPORT

It is always so uplifting when unexpected encouragements burst like rays of sunshine into seemingly empty times. Because of all the restrictions surrounding covid not only had we stopped going in to By Brook Valley School but several members of our team had stepped away due to varying reasons. Then all of a sudden there was more enthusiasm from the team, and more importantly we had contact with the children during an Experience Day at church and were told by so many groups of children that they had missed Open the Book and were longing for us to return! One boy about to move on into Secondary education said how Open the Book had been a huge part of his childhood.

And so we recommenced our monthly Assemblies in September with a small team plus one much appreciated recruitment. We were off to a shaky start but the enthusiastic welcome from the children made up for our shortcomings and we ended the year much more confidently! We began right at the beginning of the Storyteller Bible again so this will be our second time of presenting the whole bible to the children. Because our team is small we need plenty of children to help us, and many of them have pulled off their speaking and acting parts superbly.

They love to dress up and help us reenact the story. They always give very good responses to our questions and join in with a closing song. It has also been encouraging to note how the older ones still remember the songs we taught them a few years back and it is lovely to see them all joining in with the actions, often still singing the song as they file out and back into their classrooms.

We feel warmly welcomed by the Head, the teachers, the office staff, the kitchen staff and most of all the children, and we are grateful for this wonderful opportunity to go into the School with the timeless message from God's Word.

Cilla Palfreyman

BYBROOK TODDLER GROUP AND EDWARD BEAR REPORT

Bybrook Toddler Group and Edward Bear sessions ran weekly throughout the year during School term times.

We have a core group of families including people from Yatton Keynell, Kington St Michael, Biddestone, Castle Combe, Grittleton, Marshfield and Chippenham. The numbers attending have been encouraging and on several occasions we have reached around 23 attendees - children with their carers.

Edward Bear takes place once a month usually on the 3rd Friday of the month and is led by Cilla Palfreyman, with George Dale leading Toddlers on the other Fridays. Edward Bear has a familiar format with a welcome song, a story from the bible, songs related to the story and those requested by the children, a craft activity such as biscuit decorating, or cutting and sticking and other art activities linked to the bible story, and the session is closed with a few more songs including a goodbye song and a prayer. Toddlers runs along similar lines only without the bible story and it is just an hour or so in length. Artwork from the activities is being displayed in the church and shared (without pictures of the children) on Facebook.

We were happy this year to present a bible to a child who had been coming regularly to Edward Bear since he was a tiny baby and to send him off on his next big adventure to Bybrook School!

It is wonderful to meet and form friendships with so many families. It is also lovely to see parents being able to share their problems with people to whom they can relate, while their children get to know each other better. It is a valuable and rewarding work.

Cilla Palfreyman

SCHOOL GOVERNOR REPORTS

By Brook valley CofE school

ROOTS TO GROW, WINGS TO FLY "They will soar on wings like eagles." Isaiah 40:31

The roots of our school community, based on our Christian values, nurture, help and support us to grow to be the best versions of ourselves. The wings of faith allow us to soar freely and flourish now and in the future

At By Brook Valley CofE School, Foundation Governors are approved by the PCC of St Margaret's Yatton Keynell and appointed by the Bristol Diocese. Foundation Governors have a particular responsibility within Church Schools to preserve and develop the Christian character and ethos of the school. During 2024, Merope Sylvester and Jaclyn Cross served as Foundation Governors at By Brook Valley. We sit on the Foundation and Ethos Sub-committee which reports to the Full Governing Body and also oversees and monitors safeguarding. As full school governors we also share responsibility with the rest of the governing board for supporting the school, approving and developing the school improvement plan, making budgetary decisions, holding the head teacher to account, and approving and monitoring the implementation of school policies.

During 2024 we joined with other governors to recruit a permanent head teacher and also joined the Head teacher and others to appoint teachers. We have continued to get to know the children, staff and parents at the school, visiting lessons and collective worship, participating in special events such as the Modern Languages day, Art day, Science Fair and chatting to parents at Parents' Evenings.

We currently have a vacancy for a Foundation Governor at the school, so please speak to a member of the Benefice team if you would like to find out more about the role.

Jaclyn Cross, Foundation Governor

Kington St Michael CofE School

The start of 2024 saw an extremely successful SIAMS inspection, highlighting our wonderful school spirit, our Christian ethos and warm and welcoming environment, children and staff. It confirmed our vision and values to Nurture, Grow, Flourish underpinned by our Christian Vision from Colossians 2.7 (Good News Bible).

Keep your roots deep in him, Build your lives on him, And become stronger in your faith.

We saw changes in our leadership team with our Headteacher Kate Cavey, and Senior Leaders Lisa Wells and Cathy Clancy all retiring in the last two terms of the '23-'24 school year. Their hard work, passion and dedication over the preceding 20+ years each were a huge part in making our school what it is and they left a fantastic legacy.

We were delighted to welcome our fabulous new Head Victoria O'Brien and wonderful new teachers who joined our exceptional staff in September. This was shortly followed by a full Ofsted inspection, with the inspectors reporting that "This is a nurturing and happy school, where pupils enjoy learning. Pupils describe it as a welcoming place where everyone is nice to one another. They understand how the school's values help them to have the courage to try new things. The school has high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils meet these expectations. They work hard and achieve well across the curriculum."

Since the school's previous inspection in 2014, the Ofsted framework has changed four times, raising expectations significantly. Despite this, our school not only met but exceeded these standards in key areas, and we are thrilled to have achieved an Outstanding grade for personal development, a remarkable achievement that reflects our commitment to nurturing confident, well-rounded pupils who are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond school.

Our Board of governors is small but we have built a strong team together with the school staff leadership, and we take pride in serving as Governors of the primary school. We are dedicated to supporting the school in achieving its vision of providing a safe, inclusive, and inspiring learning environment for all students. The Ofsted inspectors were impressed with our new leadership team, our dedicated staff, and our recently developed curriculum, noting that while much is new, it feels well-established and cohesive. This, alongside our SIAMS inspection outcome confirms that we have a thriving school with much to celebrate. We contribute to the development and implementation of policies that support the school's ethos of inclusivity, diversity, and excellence in education. As a school body with very limited funds we are extremely grateful to our Parents and Friends Association for their help with new equipment and funds to support whole-school experiences; and of course we thank them for the time and effort they expend on events that enable them to raise those funds. Thanks too to our school and local community that take part in those.

We are still looking for another Foundation Governor and Co-opted Governor to join our active Board, and we welcome applications of interest. In addition, if you would like to know more about what goes on at school, or how you could help, please visit our school website at www.ksmschool.co.uk or contact me via the school office. We welcome all opportunities to strengthen the links between the school, church, and wider village community.

Joanna Merry, Foundation Governor and Chair of Governors

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

To safeguard well, we are all responsible: 'speak up, put survivors first, conceal nothing, take responsibility, make change happen and hold each other accountable'
Safeguarding pledge with Thirtyone:eight.

Safeguarding is integral to the way we live out our Christian faith in our parish churches - it is not an external imposition or appendage. Safeguarding has continued to be carefully considered and regularly reviewed.

At each APCM it should be minuted that the PCC, as part of the Bybrook Benefice, has complied with its duty to have 'due regard' to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance.

The PCCs and the incumbent have a duty of care to ensure the protection of the vulnerable in their church community. This is achieved as follows (using the Dashboard headings):

Policies and Action Plan

- **Safeguarding Policy** - Promoting a Safer Church', the Safeguarding Policy Statement of the Church of England, and all associated practice guidance remains the basis on which we implement Safeguarding within the parish. Bybrook Benefice safeguarding policy complies with Bristol Diocese own policy. The benefice-wide policy will be reviewed and renewed in the March 2025 Team Council meeting and will be available online via our website soon after.
The 2025 APCM date will be recorded as the annual review by the PCC.
- **Safeguarding Action plan** - a copy has been sent to the PCC for approval and signing prior to this APCM. This will be reviewed annually unless there are specific concerns/actions. This can be obtained from your safeguarding dashboard by your Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) or by requesting a copy from Revd Marc Terry if your parish is currently without a PSO.
- **Policy regarding recruitment of ex-offenders** - approved by the Team Council in March 2025 and recommended for adoption by PCCs (**this should be minuted by each PCC**)

Procedures

- **Responding to concerns or allegations** - Bristol Diocese reviewed in August 2023. Bybrook policy updated and approved by the Team Council in March 2025, and thereafter adopted by PCCs. **The 2025 APCM date will be recorded as the annual review by the PCC.**
- **Use of social media** - guidelines updated & approved by the Team Council in March 2024 via the Electronic Communication policy and referenced in the Benefice Safeguarding Policy. The Benefice has signed up to the Church of England's Digital Charter.
- **Assurance to PCC** - known offenders, and others who may pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults, must be effectively managed & monitored in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. Both the Team Rector & Parish Safeguarding Officers / Safeguarding Leads (PSOs) are aware of this requirement and will comply if applicable.
- **Data protection** - To the best of my knowledge, the Bybrook Benefice complies with the data protection legislation, with information about church officers and safeguarding concerns being securely stored.
- **Secure storage of safeguarding records during a clergy vacancy** – Safeguarding Records will be sealed and securely stored in the relevant church safe or benefice office safe.

Roles

- The PSOs have been recruited under safer recruitment guidance.
- **Churchwardens** – New churchwardens should be made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities through their induction and required training. Existing or renewed wardens will follow safeguarding refresher training in the normal manner. The 2025 APCM date will be recorded as the annual review of this question.
- **Lead Recruiter** - the PSOs are currently responsible for the administration of DBS applications. The recent change to DBS checking and training every three years instead of five is still catching up with some PCCs. Thank you to our DBS checkers who are working across multiple parishes.

Our current DBS Checkers are:

Sue Plant (Grittleton with Leigh Delamere)

Marje Caie (Nettleton)

Alison Eagles (Yatton Keynell)

Nicola Wood (Castle Combe)

Daphne Smith (West Kington) – undergoing training

Training for key roles

- **PSOs** – Are keeping up to date with their training. They meet regularly with the Team Rector at a PSO meeting and were recently joined by the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (Adam Bond) and the Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (a multi agency group), in a very positive meeting in October 2024, who wanted to learn about church structures and practices.
- **Church wardens** – Refresher training has been completed or is underway.
- **Lead Recruiters** – are up to date with training.
- **PCC members** – It is a requirement that all PCC members complete Basic and Foundation training. Latest advice is moving away from Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse as being mandatory, but it is highly recommended.

Learning and development

- No specific updates

Displayed information

Each church has been asked to ensure that the following are clearly displayed:

- Promoting a Safer Church: Safeguarding Policy statement (poster) signed on behalf of PCC.
- The policy statement which includes information on how to contact the PSO, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and how to get help outside the church with child and adult safeguarding issues, including domestic abuse.

The link to safeguarding arrangements is clearly visible on the front page of the Benefice website.

Reviews and reports

- **PCC agendas & Team Council agendas** - safeguarding is a standing item on these agendas.
- **Reports to PCC** - a regular report on safeguarding matters is made at the Team Council, which is reported back to PCC's both verbally by their parish reps and through the written minutes. PCCs are welcome to invite the PSOs in person if required and not already a member of the PCC.
- **Report to APCM** - an annual report is provided by the Team Rector in the absence of Benefice-Wide safeguarding officer (BSO).
- **Review list of church activities and non-church activities** - each PCC will be required to do this as part of its response to the updating and ongoing review of their safeguarding action plan (available from the Safeguarding Dashboard)
- **Safeguarding risk assessment** - PCC's are aware of their responsibility to carry out an activity risk assessment for each activity run in the name of the PCC, which is associated with children or vulnerable adults. It is also the responsibility of each PCC to have the appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of that PCC which involve children, young people and vulnerable adults. Noting an upcoming event in PCC minutes and having a risk assessment in place usually covers the event under church insurance but do check with the relevant insurer.

Church Activities

- All church activities need to be authorised (and minuted) by the PCC, with appropriate risk assessments and insurance cover. Where appropriate roles should be safer recruited with a role description, DBS check and safeguarding training and will comply with being a Safer Environment.

Non Church Activities

- Must be authorised by the PCC and with an appropriate hire agreement in place.

Safer recruitment and people management

- No specific updates.

Progress

Our roster of PSOs continues to grow and a huge thank you for a valued task goes to:

Our PSO's

Nicola Wood	St. Andrew, Castle Combe
Sue Plant	St. Mary the Virgin, Grittleton
Alison Greenhalgh	St. Michael and All Angels, Kington St. Michael
Marje Caie	St. Mary the Virgin, Nettleton & Burton
Debbie Clutterbuck	St. James the Great, North Wraxall
Alison Eagles	St. Margaret's Yatton Keynell, AT@4 and benefice-wide activities
Daphne Smith	St. Mary the Virgin, West Kington
Jaclyn Cross	All Saints, Littleton Drew

Our Lead Recruiters (DBS Checkers): Alison Eagles, Sue Plant, Nicola Wood, Daphne Smith (in Training)

Our Safer Recruiting Person: Alison Eagles

Our Safeguarding Leads:

Rosemary Warchus	St. Nicholas, Biddestone
Merope Sylvester	St. Nicholas, Slaughterford

Up to date safeguarding information can be found at the Church of England website

- <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual>
- <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-and-practice-guidance/templates-and-resources>

and on the Diocese of Bristol website

- <https://bristol.anglican.org/PSOresources/>

Any allegations or disclosures I have received during 2023 have been shared with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. It is my understand that PSOs likewise, will have done the same.

Thank you!

2024 (and the start of 2025) have been difficult for many as safeguarding rocks the national church. During 2024 Bristol Diocese offered itself for an independent review of its safeguarding practices and the results were very positive.

Whatever the culture within others of the church (for which much needs to be done), locally and in Bristol we have an active and healthy safeguarding culture, so healthily embedded that one PSO has been welcomed to improve practices in another village organisation.

Reverend Marc Terry

TREASURERS REPORT

It is pleasing to report that the outturn position, in cash accounting terms, for 2024, was a surplus of £637. However, when outstanding payments of fees to the diocese, a new computer and office electricity costs are considered a deficit of around £1.5k is probably a more appropriate indicator. The 31 December accounts (unaudited) are included in appendix 1.

The general fund balance at year end was £7,356.41. In addition, the Benefice held a reserve fund of £5,078.77, an office move fund of £334.72, a mission fund of £390.21 and an ark fund of £213.68. Total banked funds on 31 December were £13,324.39 and £49.40 was held in cash.

To further reduce the general fund balance and the impact on parishes (of Benefice contributions) a planned deficit of £2,000 was agreed by Team Council as part of the 2025 budgeting process. The Team Council 2025 budget includes allowance for pressures associated with visiting minister's fees and expenses.

Thanks are due to Anita Parsons for her independent examination of the 2024 accounts.

Paul Woodcock

BY BROOK GROUP RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

31/12/2024

	Actual 2024 £	Budget 2024 £	Actual 2023 £
GENERAL FUND			
Receipts			
Parish Contributions			
Biddestone	857.00	857	1,522.00
Castle Combe	2,954.00	2,954	2,418.00
Grittleton	1,692.00	1,692	1,424.00
Kington St Michael	1,411.00	1,411	800.00
Littleton Drew	250.00	250	233.00
Nettleton/Burton	777.00	777	777.00
North Wraxall	1,230.00	1,230	1,230.00
Slaughterford	312.00	312	529.00
West Kington	2,103.00	2,103	1,688.00
Yatton Keynell	2,485.92	2,486	2,167.02
Total Parish Contributions	14,071.92	14,072	12,788.02
Fees			
Total fee receipts	27,904.00	31,000	28,708.00
Less: paid to Diocese	(6,621.00)	(9,300)	(7,750.00)
Less: paid to PCCs (incl verger/heating fees)	(11,771.50)	(13,330)	(12,506.00)
Less: paid to organists/others	(740.00)	(500)	(1,680.00)
Net fees retained to fund Group expenses	8,771.50	7,870	6,772.00
Other Receipts			
Other - Contributions/donations	91.33	0	658.42
General Donations	13.01	0	148.62
Photocopying	0.00		0.00
Total Receipts	22,947.76	21,942	20,367.06
Payments			
Office Premises (rent/tel/electricity)	(5,429.64)	(6,460)	(5,457.64)
Salary of Manager / employment costs	(12,768.50)	(12,910)	(12,055.35)
Office supplies, furniture, banking, employers liability insurance	(1,469.11)	(2,000)	(2,081.44)
Clergy and LLM expenses	(1,608.56)	(2,500)	(2,078.79)
Worship resources	(752.51)	(700)	(582.15)
Refund of surplus to PCCs	0.00	0	0.00
Other - creating connections/licensing etc	(282.50)	(500)	(566.16)
Total Payments	(22,310.82)	(25,070)	(22,821.53)
Surplus/(Shortfall)	636.94	(3,128)	(2,454.47)
Opening balance	6,719.47	6,719	9,173.94
General Fund Balance	7,356.41	3,591	6,719.47
RESERVE FUND			
Opening balance	5,000.00	5,000	5,000.00
Transfer from General Fund Balance	0.00	0	0.00

Income	78.77	0	0.00
Expenditure	0.00	0	0.00
Reserve Fund Balance	5,078.77	5,000	5,000.00
Discretionary Funds Balance			
	12,435.18	8,591	11,719.47
OFFICE MOVE			
Opening balance	655.12	655.12	4,331.18
Match funding from General Fund			
Income	0.00		2,824.50
Expenditure	(320.40)	(500.00)	(6,500.56)
Office Move Balance	334.72	155.12	655.12
MISSION FUND / All Together at 4			
Opening balance	351.00	351.00	309.00
Income			
Transfer from General Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00
Donations - All together @4	69.21	0.00	95.92
Expenditure	(30.00)	0.00	(53.92)
Mission Fund Balance	390.21	351.00	351.00
THE ARK			
Opening balance	457.22	457.22	457.22
Income:	0.00		0.00
Transfer from General Fund			
Donations	0.00		0.00
Expenditure	(243.54)		0.00
Ark Fund Balance	213.68	457.22	457.22
TOTAL FUNDS	13,373.79	9,554.81	13,182.81

	Actual
	31/12/2024
BALANCES	£
CAF	13,324.39
Cash	49.40
TOTAL FUNDS	13,373.79

Treasurer Signature

Independent Examiner Signature

[Signature] 16/4/25
[Signature] 16/4/25
 ANITA PARSONS.