

Annual Parochial Church Meeting of the Polden Wheel Benefice

Date: 29th April 2024

**7.30pm; Chilton Polden Church
(Refreshments from 7.00pm)**



AGENDA

1. Opening Prayer
2. Appointment of Secretary
3. Apologies for Absence

VESTRY MEETING

4. Election of Church Wardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

5. Minutes of previous APCM 3rd May 2023
6. Matters Arising
7. Election of Local PCC Representatives. (to be voted en bloc).
8. Election of Cashiers (to be voted en bloc)
9. Election of Electoral Roll Officer.
10. Election of Deanery Synod Reps (appointed in 2023 for 3 years)
11. Appointment of Independent Examiner.
12. Reports
 - a) PCC Annual Report, b) Church Warden's Fabric Reports, c) Treasurer's A/cs & Report, d) Electoral Roll Report, e) Deanery Synod Report. f) Other Reports.
13. Chair's Reflection/Votes of thanks
14. Open Discussion
15. Dates: Archdeacon's Visitation, Next PCC Meeting (13/5/24), Commissioning of Wardens and PCC Members.



Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM): Polden Wheel: Tuesday May 30th 2023 Burtle Church



1. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting for the Polden Wheel benefice took place at Burtle church. Representatives from each of the six churches were present with 22 parishioners attending. All reports had been previously circulated and had been placed on the parish website with the exception of the accounts which had yet to be Independently Examined. Notices had been displayed on church noticeboards. The accounts for the six churches had been circulated individually but the overall accounts for the Polden Wheel benefice were delayed and therefore could not be circulated prior to the meeting. They had been agreed, provisionally by the PCC on 22nd May via Zoom but the Independent Examination had not taken place. Following advice sought from the Archdeacon of Wells, it was agreed that the APCM should not be postponed and that the accounts should be presented and agreed subject to independent examination.

Nominations for Churchwardens, Cashiers and PCC representatives had been carried out in the respective parishes and completed forms were to hand. The Deanery Synod elections were due this year for the next three years.

2. Alison Everett, deputy chair presided over the meeting and good wishes were extended to Revd. Rich Tweedy who was convalescing after his stay in hospital. Alison opened the meeting with prayers which included prayers for our administrator, Sue Ball who had suffered a fall during the morning and was currently in hospital.
3. **Appointment of Secretary:**
Mrs Freda Prime was appointed to act as Secretary for the meeting. Proposed by: John Harvey and seconded by Martin Melia...

4. **Apologies for Absence:**
Apologies were received from; Rich Tweedy, Jackie & Dave Parkes & Sue Ball.

VESTRY MEETING:

5. **Election of Churchwardens for 2023/24:** The following nominations had been received:

Parish	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Ashcott	John Harvey	Margaret Trimm	Lyn Harvey
Ashcott	Vacant	N/A	N/A
Burtle	Rosemary Tucker	Margaret Bell	Sue Ball
Burtle	Alison Everett	Margaret Bell	Rosemary Tucker
Catcott	Martin Melia	David Parkes	Sandra Pearson
Catcott	Corinne Reynolds	Sandra Pearson	Trevor Jones
Chilton Polden	Anne Lush	J Simmonds	Margaret Bell
Chilton Polden	Vacant	N/A	N/A
Edington	Rosie Tilbury	Andrew Stevens	Iona Stevens
Edington	Vacant	N/A	N/A

Shapwick	Rosemary Hargreaves	Jonathan Johnson	Linda Johnson
Shapwick	Vacant	N/A	N/A

All nominations unanimously agreed by the meeting: Proposed by Anita Hayne, seconded by Margaret Bell.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING.

6. Minutes of APCM (3rd May 2022 @ Ashcott

Minutes of the previous APCM were to hand and agreed. These were signed as a true record.

Matters Arising:

None

8. Election of Representatives on PCC from Local Committees:

Parish	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Ashcott	Freda Prime	Keith Prime	Margaret Trimm
	Margaret Trimm	John Harvey	Linda Harvey
Burtle	Margaret Bell	Jane Ponsillo	Barbara Vowles
Catcott	Jackie Parkes	Corinne Reynolds	Bridget Frier
Chilton Polden	Chris Lush	Lorraine Simmonds	Margaret Bell
Chilton Polden	Vacancy	N/A	N/A
Edington	Alison Sparkes	Rosie Tilbury	Brian Tilbury
Edington	Brian Tilbury	Iona Stevens	Andrew Stevens
Shapwick	Jonathan Johnson	Rosemary Hargreaves	Chris Hargreaves
	Linda Johnson	Rosemary Hargreaves	Chris Hargreaves

All nominations were unanimously accepted by the meeting. Proposed by Linda Harvey seconded by John Harvey.

9. Election of Local Cashiers: The following nominations had been received:

Ashcott	Margaret Trimm	John Harvey	Linda Harvey
Burtle	Sue Ball	Alison Everett	Dawn Carter
Catcott	Stuart Frier	Martin Melia	David Parkes
Chilton Polden	Anita Hayne	Sheila Chambers	Christine Knight
Edington	Brian Tilbury	Iona Stevens	Andrew Stevens
Shapwick	Carolyn Fitzpatrick	Rosemary Hargreaves	Chris Hargreaves

All nominations were unanimously accepted by the meeting. Proposed by; John Harvey, seconded by Rosemary Tucker.

10. Appointment of Sides Persons: In line with the revised Church Representation Rules 2020, the sides persons for each church will be appointed at the first PCC meeting.

11. **Appointment of Independent Examiner:** Mr Stephen Fry was appointed as Independent Examiner for the coming year. Proposed by Brian Tilbury and seconded by Rosemary Hargreaves.

12. **Appointment of Deanery Synod Representatives: To serve for three years.** The three year tenure of 2023 elections stands until 2026. Only three of the possible six places on the Deanery Synod were filled and therefore the PW has three vacancies. The following representatives were elected to serve for the next three years; Proposed by Martin Melia and seconded by Margaret Bell.

Ashcott	Vacant
Burtle	Sue Ball
Catcott	Corinne Reynolds
Chilton Polden	Vacant
Edington	Rosie Tilbury
Shapwick	Vacant

12. Reports (all reports had been previously circulated)

- a) **PCC Annual Report:** The Annual Report for the Parochial Church Council was produced as an overall report for the six churches. The information had been gained from contributions from every church and represented the activities from the parishes... Proposed by Brian Tilbury and seconded by Jennifer Tweedy and carried.
- b) **Churchwarden’s Fabric Reports:** The inventories of all moveable items had been updated. **Ashcott;** The repairs that were highlighted in 2019 have yet to be addressed although some repairs to the damp on the south wall had been carried out .The schedule of work is ongoing. **Burtle:** No building work has been undertaken over 2022. The Quinquennial Inspection is due in February 2023.and it is noted that the internal paintwork is in a poor state due to condensation and wet weather which has caused some mould patches .**Catcott;** generally the fabric of St. Peter’s is good and a new Smart meter has been installed. The problem with the conifers is ongoing but may be resolved with a new development project adjacent in 2023 The next Quinquennial Inspection will be due in 2023 and some repairs to the south wall have been partially completed. It is hoped to fit a handrail down the steps from the south door... **Chilton Polden:** The Quinquennial Inspection took place in 2022 and was generally good but resulted in a list of work that will be done as funds become available. As previously mentioned, the amazing effort in gaining the Eco Bronze award is inspirational and it is hoped that this can be replicated across the benefice. **Edington;** No building work was carried out this year but it is intended to address the plastering on the west side of the church which is allowing damp to occur on the plaster on the inside.it is also intended to fit two cowls to be fitted on the bell ropes to prevent rain coming through. **Shawick;** No major work had been carried out over the past year. However a fallen branch from one of the cedar trees had been dealt with as well as a jackdaw’s nest in the tower. The nest was extremely large and the windows have now been meshed. All six churches carried out formal inspections of

fire extinguishers, lightening conductors and PAT of electrical appliances. All reports were agreed and accepted. Proposed by Anita Hayne and seconded by Margaret Bell.

- c) **Electoral Roll Report:** The revised Electoral Roll report had been prepared by Freda Prime with information from the six parishes. It had been previously agreed that contact details should not be displayed but names can be published but is purely at the discretion of the churchwardens. A certificate had been prepared for each parish to display and these were distributed... There are 131 members on the revised rolls across the benefice. It was clarified that each parish should amend their electoral roll each year according to additions and deletions as appropriate locally.

Proposed by Freda Prime and seconded by Anita Hayne.

- d) **Deanery Synod Report:** The Synod report had been prepared by Sue Ball. In Sue's absence and given that the APCM packs had not reached all members, the report was read to the meeting by Alison. There had been three meetings held over the year and at the first meeting it was agreed that the Deanery Mission Plan, now six years old, needed to be revised. Views were sought and Revd. Jane Durham will report back. It was reported at the summer meeting that the proposed amalgamation plan for the Shepton and Glastonbury Deaneries was postponed for two years given that the Glastonbury Deanery needs to lose 1.5 clergy posts. Revd. Preb. David McGeoch announced his retirement as Area Dean at this meeting. A new DMP would be ready by September for consideration. At the November meeting it was announced that Revd. Ana Lawrence had been appointed as the new Area Dean, assisted by Revd. Jane Durham. The updated DMP was presented, focusing on the five marks of Mission; tend, teach, tell, transform & treasure. PCCs are expected to engage with the plan and discuss, focusing on 'tend' for the coming year and a Deanery Champion will be appointed to lead on the five marks of mission. The need to lose 1.5 stipendiary posts across the deanery has been an ongoing discussion and is the start of a conversation about our shared ministry.

Proposed by Margaret Bell and seconded by Martin Melia

13. **Finances:** Brian Tilbury had done sterling work once again in producing a very readable set of accounts for the six churches. Brian thanked the local Cashiers for their work in providing him with the information that was needed to prepare the end of year accounts and for keeping their respective records in good order. The accounts for the Benefice are prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 on a 'Receipts' and 'Payments' basis. The Parish Share continues to be a heavy burden on all six churches with one church declaring its inability to meet its obligations in this regard and have paid a reduced Parish Share rate for several months

Unfortunately it had not been possible to produce consolidated accounts for the benefice in time for the APCM this year. In consultation with the Archdeacon of Wells, it was decided to continue with the APCM but to approve the accounts subject to Independent Examination. The PCC had approved the accounts on the same basis on 24th May. Brian will ensure that the accounts are duly examined by Stephen Fry and posted in the churches. Due to a reported deficit over 2022, the finances of the benefice have decreased to £74,907.87 compared to £96,927.42 at the close of December 2021.

After 11 years of faithful and competent service, Brian has now retired as Benefice Treasurer. He was warmly and wholeheartedly thanked for the dedication and expertise that he has

consistently brought to this role over that time. Mrs Caroline Snell has agreed to take on the role and will be officially proposed at the next PCC meeting

- 14. Chair's Reflections:** Alison began her reflections by proposing a warm vote of thanks to the churchwardens for the amazing and dedicated work that they do. She went on to thank the PCC Members, together with the local Friends groups for their unstinting commitment. Special thanks were expressed to Secretary Freda Prime and Treasurer Brian Tilbury, both of whom devote a significant amount of time to the benefice. In her reflection Alison felt that it was heartening to see that the benefice works collaboratively together.

Open Discussion.

A vote of thanks was given to Rich for all that he does across the six churches.

The question of discussions at PCC level with regard to Deanery Synod issues was raised and it was agreed that the issue of the DMP and the five marks of mission needed to be on the agenda for future meetings.

It was felt that the commitment to attend worship at other churches was not as evident as it once was and, as a result, the links between the six churches are less strong.

The issue of communication regarding the information for the APCM was felt to have been lacking in terms of the general availability of the packs containing the relevant reports and information. Only the PCC members had seen the accounts and there had been no packs for members in the churches. This will need to be addressed ahead of the next APCM to ensure that this meeting open to all members, has all the information available to everyone.

Concerns continued to be felt for Sue Ball, our administrator and messages of love and good wishes were signed up to be included in a card and a basket of fruit which Rosemary Tucker would arrange for her.

There being no other business, Burtle were thanked for their hospitality the meeting closed with prayer at 8.30pm

Dates: Archdeacon's Visitation: 15th June at St. Cuthbert's, Wells
Next PCC tba in consultation with Rich
Commissioning of PCC and Churchwardens TBA

Signed.....Date.....

The Polden Wheel Benefice: Annual Report: January – December 2023

INTRODUCTION

As I begin this annual report for our six churches for 2023 I am mindful that, last year, the focus for our prayers and support was towards Ukraine. Russian troops had invaded their homeland and, not only does this remain the case, but we have seen the horrors of the attack by Hamas on an unsuspecting Israel and the horrendous consequences of those actions, on October 7th 2023. We continually pray for all those who suffer as a result of war and persecution. Throughout 2023 much has happened to disturb us. The February earthquakes in southeast Turkey, on the border of Syria, and again, in September further earthquakes in Morocco and the bursting of the Derma dams in Libya have all served to focus our minds on the need for prayer and faithfulness in God's love for His people in these dark times at home and abroad.

In April our vicar, Rich was taken suddenly ill and admitted to hospital where he underwent surgery to fit a stent. Rich clearly needed to convalesce and we are grateful for his full recovery and also for the help and support of Sue Ball who stepped up to ensure that the business of the benefice continued appropriately and that services were covered. Understandably Rich's recovery period impacted on the provision of some things but the willingness of others to fill in ensured that the benefice continued on an even keel.

The Coronation of King Charles 111 was marked in May in our churches and communities.

The pattern of worship across the six churches remains unchanged with services on alternate weeks being the general rule. The decision not to share the communal cup at Holy Communion continues with the dipping of the sacrament at the altar rail.

Sadly we are not able to say that we see much increase in numbers across the benefice but there continues to be a small but strong core of members in each church. All six churches have a local committee of 'Friends/Supporters who oversee and administer the business at a local level. These groups are the mainstay and link between the church and the wider community and efforts are made to ensure that the many and varied fundraising events reflect the work of the church and its identity

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Polden Wheel continues to operate as one Benefice with a single Parochial Church Council representing six churches. Our vicar, Rich, works collaboratively with his churchwardens and Lay Worship Assistants. Currently there are no Lay Readers in post in our benefice. It was with great sadness that we saw the passing of our Benefice Treasurer, Brian Tilbury. Brian brought an expertise that is much missed as well as his genial presence among us, always generous with his time and service.

At the end of 2023, our long-standing organist, Andrew Gordon Clarke, retired and a special tea was arranged for him in Catcott. We very much hope that Andrew will continue to enjoy Christian fellowship with us.

Engaging with our respective communities forms a key part of our church lives and a range of activities ensure that the church family plays a central part in community life beyond the church walls.

LEGAL/ADMINISTRATION

Administrator: We are pleased to have the services of our administrator, Sue Ball, who is based, part time at the Vicarage office and is a valuable asset both to Rich and to others of us who often request her expertise and assistance. Unfortunately Sue suffered a very serious fall earlier in the year which has impacted greatly on her ability to do certain tasks. At the time of writing Sue is much improved but is still unable to drive. She has continued to work at home and has demonstrated great commitment in the face of such serious injuries.

Finances:

We are delighted to have been able to appoint Caroline Snell as Benefice Treasurer. Caroline had been assisting Brian and is currently finding her way through the complexities of six churches. Cashiers continue to support the Benefice Treasurer at a local level with three new appointments over the year for Ashcott, Catcott and Edington. The Safer Recruitment process is followed for new volunteers. Caroline will inevitably put her own stamp of expertise to the role of benefice Treasurer.

2023 has been a difficult and challenging year with regard to the financial position of our rural churches. Dwindling numbers and rising costs have contributed to a situation where, in some churches, outgoings have exceeded income and the burden of the Parish Share has been heavy. It is of note that Ashcott has been unable to meet the full amount of the Parish Share and took the decision to offer what could be realistically afforded. Following advice and meetings with a Diocesan Advisor, the views of the local community by means of a questionnaire were sought, followed by a public meeting. The attendance was encouraging and it is hoped that more people will be able to financially support the efforts to maintain All Saints and its role in the community. With anticipated increases in the expectations on parishes to support the Diocese, concerns are high at the present time. A good deal of concern has been raised in relation to escalating heating costs for our churches as 2023 drew to a close. The issue of fees will be addressed early in 2024. A new development saw the introduction of two digital giving devices that are now installed in Chilton Polden and Ashcott churches. There are some technical 'blips' to be ironed out but the devices are clearly being used and it is hoped that they will prove a valuable source of additional income. The Treasurer's report forms part of the overall reporting for the APCM. Some of our churches continue to hold a Gift Day each year and others are considering the possibility of doing so going forward.

Parochial Church Council:

The PCC meets on a regular basis and all six parishes are represented. Only two of our churches now have two churchwardens in post making a total of eight across the Benefice. They, together with one other representative from each church make up the body of the PCC. Where there is only one churchwarden a second representative may be appointed. The secretary is a PCC member but the Treasurer and Administrator are ex officio

Electoral Roll:

Each church maintains its own Electoral Roll and posts names only two weeks prior to the APCM. A report is prepared for the whole benefice by our Electoral Roll Officer. For the period 2023/24 there are 127 members on roll.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM):

The APCM for 2023 was held at Burtle on 30th May but the numbers attending were disappointing. The meetings are compliant with current legal regulations and procedures followed in terms of advertising and reporting. A comprehensive Annual Report is produced each year. Due to unavoidable circumstances there was a delay in concluding the Annual Accounts but with Diocesan advice these were completed appropriately.

Deanery Synod:

The appointment of Deanery Synod representatives took place during May and three members were appointed to serve at the APCM. This sees a reduction of one member and only 50% of the benefice is represented. During the latter part of the year, given the vital discussions around restructuring our Deanery, two further members were appointed and we are grateful to all five members for their service in ensuring that we are fully conversant with discussions and decisions taking place. In essence the Deanery is required to lose 1.5 priests and this will require considerable, prayerful thought and consultation, particularly as workloads are already heavy for incumbents and MOMSS (Moorlinch, Middlezoy, Othery, Stawell and Sutton Mallet) will lose their priest who is retiring. The idea of a 'House for Duty' was introduced and, at the time of writing consultations and negotiations are ongoing and will be finalised in 2024- maybe! It is anticipated, given that MOMSS will go into vacancy, that the process will be lengthy.

Safeguarding:

The PCC is mindful of its responsibilities in this regard, both for safer recruitment and those working directly with children and vulnerable adults. Freda Prime continues as Safeguarding Officer for the six churches and is responsible for the wellbeing and protection of vulnerable adults and children and attends regular training events as arranged by the Diocese. 2023 saw the appointment of a 'trainee' SGO, Niki Hill, who has now completed her statutory training and safer recruitment procedures and her assistance is much valued and appreciated. This is particularly helpful given that the Diocese has changed to a new provider – ThirtyOne Eight, which has necessitated familiarisation with a whole new process and system for DBS applications and checking.

The Polden Wheel is compliant with current guidance and uses the Safeguarding Dashboard which is a tool that enables SGOs to keep track of actions that need to be taken in order to remain compliant. In the Polden Wheel we were 93% complete most of the time but there can be delays between PCC meetings where reviews take place. The next stage will be for SGOs to engage with the Diocesan Hub which provides a data base for all volunteers and the requirements for their respective posts

The DBS checks for our staff and volunteers are all up to date, having been renewed during 2023 to bring them in line with the three year duration.

Regular briefings are given to the PCC and all decisions and reviews are ratified by them. Sensitive documentation is securely held at the vicarage office.

General Data Protection Regulations:

The PCC gives due regard to the requirements of GDPR. The safe storage, sharing and retention of sensitive information is an ongoing responsibility with our administrator taking the lead role on behalf of Rich and the PCC. The PCC secretary has the use of a designated laptop for church business.

Disability Audit:

Not all churches have an Accessibility Plan in place but this is work in progress. All churches are wheelchair friendly; some have ramps on a permanent basis and some on request. It is acknowledged that more could and should be done but there are some constraints in the nature of our ancient buildings. It had been the intention, during 2023, to carry out a Disability Audit across all six churches but this has yet to take place.

Health & Safety:

There is no specific Health & Safety Officer in post either for the benefice or individual churches. Whilst this remains officially pending for the time being, there is a good deal of informal expertise in this area and all churches seek to ensure that they fulfil their obligations to the public and to members. During external activities such as tower opening days, Risk Assessments are in place. Running Man exit signs are in place in all churches together with other safety precautions such as torches and first aid kits and painted step edges. Some members have undertaken the Food and Safety Hygiene Certificate online and it is hoped that more will do so. In addition, the requirements of the Safeguarding Dashboard are fulfilled, to a large extent, with Risk Assessments and Role descriptions being set up for all church led activities.

DISCIPLESHIP

Invitation to Explore: following the success of the first course in 2022, Rich decided that it would be appropriate to run the course again and this took place in January 2023. The course is aimed at those people who are not church members but who are on the fringe or seeking answers to questions. The course ran for three weeks and then led on to an Alpha course for those who wished to continue their journey of exploration into the Christian faith.

Advent Course: a course entitled 'Searching for Home' was held on the four weeks of Advent. The discussions were prompted by video interviews with three people, looking at what it really means to be a refugee. The course was thought provoking and worthwhile.

Cornerstones: Rich has been keen to explore what it really requires to build our churches and to that end he devised a four week course which ran through October. The tenets of a strong church were explored by four essential aspects. Bible, Prayer, Giving and Witness. The course was well supported and much gained from it. Rich has spent a good deal of time over 2023 promoting the need for individuals to read their bibles on a daily basis.

Music Group/Support for Services: our Music Group, Polden Praise, brings much valued enhancement to our services across the six churches. This is often a challenging juggling act for them but communication via WhatsApp is very effective. We are also grateful to those who play the organ or piano at other times. As a backstop a digital media system of pre-recorded hymns and songs has been purchased and is being successfully used where necessary. We are mindful of the need to have the appropriate licences in place for using music that is not in our books. 2021 saw a change in CCLI rules whereby individual churches must have tailored licences rather than a 'cover all' licence which was previously in place. A guidance document was issued in 2022 for clarity.

A musician's combo, led by Jennifer Tweedy, provides music for the monthly Café Church.

The use of the projector and laptop in church appears to have lapsed and it is hoped that this will be used again as new personnel replace those who have moved on. It was good to have been able to use this at both Christingle services.

MINISTRY:

Lay Worship Assistants:

There are six Lay Worship Assistants across the Polden Wheel. LWAs have led Informal Worship in church throughout 2023, particularly in Rich's absence. Role Description and Risk Assessments are in place.

Regular Services:

Services follow a pattern of 9.30am, 11.00am and 6.30pm (4.30pm for some during the winter months). The main festivals and celebrations in our churches are much enjoyed and represent a rich pattern of worship and fellowship across the six churches.

We have always been pleased to be able to keep all of our churches open during the day and very much appreciate the faithful members who open and close them each day. Comments in visitor's books indicate that this is welcomed on many occasions when people are visiting the area and it is not unusual to find someone sitting quietly in the church. Service of Quiet and meetings for private prayer in groups take place in some of our churches.

Café Church:

This continues to be a popular format each month. Bacon (and vegetarian) rolls and percolated coffee make for an informal atmosphere where discussion, videos and worship songs are enjoyed. The numbers have remained fairly static over the year but some new faces have been welcomed, some of whom attended the Invitation to Explore and Alpha courses.

Messy Church:

It was with deep regret that the very important growth area that was Messy Church could not be sustained when the key leader left the area. It has not been possible; thus far, to reinstate this but some Muddy Church sessions have taken place over 2023, in conjunction with Edington Chapel staff. We continue to pray that it will be possible to start Messy Church at some point in the future.

Open the Book: this has proved to have been a casualty of the pandemic when it was not possible to go into schools. It would be wonderful to see this group re-establish and begin to enact their stories for the children once more.

Easter: 2023 saw all of our churches being able to hold Easter celebrations. During Holy Week a 'Stations of the Cross' was held and also a Maundy Meal at a local pub. An hour at the cross on Good Friday was somewhat disappointing and will need to be revisited for 2024. The Easter Saturday Vigil held at Catcott was well attended and very moving and will be repeated next year.

Rogation Sunday: this was not celebrated as a benefice this year but some churches arranged a 'lay led' service of Rogation with appropriate activities.

Harvest Thanksgiving: in 2023 our focus for Harvest offerings was dedicated to the Trussell Trust Food Bank once again. This is regularly supported by our churches with collecting boxes in all six churches. This was a Harvest initiative across all six churches and the generosity of all the villages has been so much appreciated. The dedication to this cause by Anita is much appreciated and she has established a good connection with the depot in Bridgwater.

Remembrance Sunday: once again an act of Remembrance was held outside at the Catcott War Memorial. The benediction Remembrance service was held at Ashcott this year when the names of the fallen in conflicts were read out.

All Souls Service: this took place at Ashcott on 27th October when those who had suffered a bereavement during the year were personally invited to attend to feel supported and to light a candle if they wished to do so.

Advent Christingle: Two Christingle services were held again this year and, although numbers have reduced over time, these services continue to be well attended. The numbers attending at Chilton Polden were significantly more this year. This service provides a link with our two schools.

Christmas: Carol Services were held in most churches during December and a planned outdoor Carol Service was moved inside at the Shapwick Cricket Pavilion due to the weather. The latter was well attended and mulled wine and mince pies enjoyed. The annual Nativity held at Edington is always a well-attended event with a good number of children and families attending and participating. The increase in numbers attending at Ashcott was encouraging. Ashcott church was delighted to welcome children from the local primary schools once again but, sadly, the school did not hold their usual Carol Service in St. Peter's this year.

BUILDINGS

The maintaining and running of the six lovely buildings across the Polden Wheel is often a challenge and we are mindful of the balance between our responsibilities in this regard whilst ensuring that the true mission of Christ cannot be found in bricks and mortar alone. All churches had at least one churchwarden in post and all are dedicated to maintaining and overseeing their respective parish church buildings and fabric. We have been pleased to have been able to continue regular fundraising through 2023 which is a vital part of being able to maintain our buildings and churchyards. However this continues to require a good deal of effort from a few but is done with support from communities and fellowship enjoyed. There are many events that are planned and organised across the six parishes, some of which are 'one off' initiatives and others held on a regular basis. At these times the church promotes a community presence as well as raising much needed funds. All events are recorded at PCC meetings in order to ensure that we adhere to insurance guidance and regulations.

Discussions have taken place regarding Eco church initiatives, and we hope that we will see more of our churches following the example of Chilton Polden who are already at Bronze status and aiming for Silver. Burtle also achieved their Bronze award in March 2023. Caring for God's world is a responsibility that lies with everyone and it is hoped that steps will be taken wherever possible to bring all of our churches into new ways of becoming greener.

The reporting on finances and the fabric of buildings can be seen in individual reports from the treasurer and churchwardens who have prepared them for the 2023 reporting year.

ACROSS THE BENEFICE

Communication: it is essential in a large Benefice to ensure that good communication exists in order to maintain connections between the six churches and the wider community. Our website is not as effective or attractive as it could be and a request for more 'action' photographs of events, showing people, has been made. Discussion and work on improving our communication is an ongoing priority. It is clear that we need to be better at promoting ourselves and our wonderful story whilst ensuring that six churches remain as connected and informed as possible. At the time of writing Rich has been in negotiations with 'Church Edit' to try to improve the website at an acceptable cost.

Fairtrade: the review of our use of Fairtrade goods that was planned for 2022 has yet to happen. It is clear that not all churches can honestly say that they are a Fairtrade church.

Food Bank Donations: we have been pleased, once again, to support the Trussell Trust Foodbank in Bridgwater with collecting boxes in the churches. Over 2023 the amount donated amounted to 725kg, £445 was raised over the six Harvest Festival services. Special thanks to Anita Hayne for her commitment to this cause.

Samaritan's Purse Shoe Box Appeal: is organised by Burtle church and is well supported with boxes being filled and collected across the benefice and also by non-church members. It was heartening to see this continue in 2023. 90 boxes were filled and sent, some of which were donated by Compton Dundon.

History Booklet: Most churches have a history booklet that is available to visitors. Our churches are opened every day in normal times and the visitor's book provides an indication of the number of visitors that enjoy our lovely churches. During October it was necessary to keep Ashcott church closed during the day following a break-in which damaged the metal gates and masonry.

The Men's Breakfast: This very popular event has resumed again at a local pub and is much enjoyed. Rich has been able to engage the services of some very interesting and stimulating speakers.

Maundy Meal: A good number of people attended this event which was a moving and thought provoking time together, remembering the last time that Jesus met with his disciples to eat together. It also provided an outreach opportunity as it was held in a local pub.

Service of Quiet: For some time now, Catcott has held a 'Service of Quiet' each month and this draws a number of people who do not attend normal Sunday services. It is growing and clearly meets a need for quiet reflection in these challenging times.

IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Whilst we celebrate our benefice identity as the Polden Wheel group, we are mindful that each parish has its own individual identity in terms of the way it interacts with the community that it serves. Last year we hoped that, in 2023, we would be able to 'catch up' post pandemic. We have surely done that with the ongoing support of our

communities but there continues to be a degree of nervousness about a return to group gatherings over the year and, in the main, numbers attending services have not returned to pre-pandemic numbers.

The Big Breakfast that is run as a regular event in Ashcott draws significant support across the benefice and other events have a good community following. Cream Teas in Burtle, together with a Classic Car Run to the Quantocks and back proved very popular once again. Catcott participated in the village 'Open Gardens' event, hosting a cream tea which raised valuable funds for St. Peter's. An Open Day and Gift Day included the display of historical artefacts which told the history of St. Peter's. Also Catcott has also been proactive in organising the 'Spirit of Catcott' Christmas Appeal which collects food and gifts for distribution by the Salvation Army. This has become a real community event. Chilton Polden has successfully run various events during the year and the 100 Club continues to raise much needed funds for them. This year the Christmas Tree Festival was hugely successful and reflected the spirit of 'community' that prevails. A very successful cream tea event was held at Edington again this year and the regular coffee mornings have provided a much valued meeting place and fund raising opportunity within the community. The annual charity event for Macmillan Cancer Research was again very worthwhile. Regular Coffee Mornings are held in some villages, hosted by church and non-church members.

Mission: Deanery Mission & Pastoral Group (DMPG) continues to work at Deanery level and the new Deanery Mission Plan was published in 2022. The introduction of a Deanery Facebook page is helpful. Our part time Mission Enabler works with parishes but the Polden Wheel have not, as yet, used her services. All six churches continue to look for ways in which our churches can be used more widely for community and outreach

PASTORAL CARE

We mindful of those in the parish who need our care and our prayers. Pastoral Concern is a standing item on the local agendas.

Lay Pastoral Assistants:

It is with regret that this group was disbanded during 2023 but it is our hoped to re-launch it again in 2024.


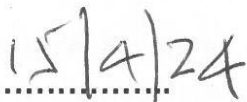
BUILDING WORKS

The churchwardens maintain oversight of their respective church buildings as far as they are able. It is fair to say that 2023 has proved to have been a challenging year with the COL crisis affecting pretty much everything. All of our buildings are high maintenance due to their age and this is an ongoing pressure for those in office. (See individual reports). We were sorry to have had to deal with a break-in at Ashcott when the wrought iron south porch gates and masonry were damaged and also an attempted break-in at Shapwick and a memorial bench vandalised.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In conclusion the PCC would like to thank everyone for their generous support, creativity and faithfulness in what has been another very challenging year for everyone. The need for growth across our benefice is clear and, having discussed at the early part of 2022 that things could not remain the same, we need to focus on new and different ways of growing our Christian communities. The pioneering initiatives produced by Rich provide opportunities for those with questions to find

answers and we very much hope that the uptake for 'Invitation to Explore' will continue to be blessed and successful and that members will be bold in making those invitations to friends and neighbours. However, the discussions around the Diocesan Snapshot have stalled through 2023 for various reasons, not least Rich's illness over the summer period. Much prayer is needed to support the ongoing deliberations which will see significant changes in the restructuring of our Glastonbury Deanery over the coming months.

Signed:.....Date..........
Freda Prime: Secretary to The Polden Wheel parochial Church Council

All Saints' Church, Ashcott

Churchwarden's/Fabric Report for 2023

The inventory of books and other moveable items has been checked and brought up to date.

The repairs and renovations as detailed in the quinquennial inspection report have not been completed. Delayed due to the various uncertainties regarding Covid we have found that funding has been problematical and are considering various options. One of these looked at the possibility of offering the Church building for use by other organisations and a questionnaire was circulated around the village to get views from parishioners. This was followed by a public meeting to display the results of the questionnaire and to elicit verbal views from those present. There was some support for the concept of the wider use but to achieve this would require the removal of the majority of the pews which was not acceptable to the vast majority of those returning their questionnaires. As a result, we are now planning for the work required in the quinquennial report to be undertaken.

Through the year we have undertaken a number of tasks relating to the fabric of the Church. We have arranged for grave spoil to be cleared away from graves that it had encroached upon, We have PAT tested our electrical appliances, We have decorated the south wall which was affected by blocked gutters. We have repaired a leak in the lead roofing with a new patch being burned in to seal the leaking area and the water dripping into the pulpit area has now stopped. We have replaced bulbs in the chancel as a number had failed. A break-in to the Church was effected by damaging the gates to the porch and these have now been repaired. Doors into the vestry and the Church were adjusted to avoid scraping on the floor.

Fire extinguishers have been inspected and are in a satisfactory condition.

Gary Townsend has continued to maintain the churchyard to a high standard throughout the year.

I am pleased to report that All Saints' Church is open every day, normally from 10.00 until 4.00pm but sometimes longer.

Services have broadly continued with normally just two per month. The benefice has been wary of returning to drinking from the cup at communion services and intinction is carried out by the vicar.

The worshipping community is grateful to those who have provided music to accompany our services, particularly Polden Praise, Jenny Cole, Margaret Dobbs and Adam Mellor.

We reported last year that we needed to contribute less to the Parish Share than was requested and we took the decision to reduce our Parish Share to Bath and Wells Diocese from the requested level to one that matches our regular income. This has continued through 2023 and into 2024. Benefice and domestic expenses still need to be found on top of this so fund raising is still vital.

Along with Chilton Polden we took up the offer from the Diocese of a digital payment device which is a card reader for donors to use instead of cash. The effect of the device has yet to be analysed although it is being used to some extent.

There are many persons involved behind the scenes in the day to day running of our Church and grateful thanks must be afforded to all of them who are too many to name, but they include the cleaners, the flower arrangers, those providing refreshments on social occasions and after services, the bell ringers under the leadership of Henry Routley and those overseeing supplies of fresh linen and consumables. The contribution from those who open their homes for meetings is acknowledged as it does contribute indirectly to cost savings. I must also thank those members of SAS who are very supportive and prepared to undertake tasks on behalf of the Church.

Finally, we thank our Vicar, Rich Tweedy, for his contribution to the ministry in the Polden Wheel and of course in Ashcott. Despite a health issue during the year, he has continued to provide spiritual leadership and guidance.

John Harvey
Churchwarden

St Philip and St James, Burtle Fabric Report 2023

No building works have been undertaken during 2023

The Quinquennial Inspection was held in February 2023

Two slats on the louvres on the bell turret have fallen out: we await a second quote to replace all the louvres.

The condition of the internal paintwork is poor due to condensation and wet weather causing some mold patches and areas of flaking paint. The architect advised that some of the problem is the underlying plaster work rather than an issue with the paint.

The lightning conductor and fire extinguishers had their annual check.

Report to the APCM on St Peter's Church, Catcott for 2023

Fabric

According to our Quinquennial Inspection Report of October 2023 the fabric of the building is generally in good repair. There are, of course, a number of recommendations for maintenance and repair, the most urgent of which have largely been completed. There are a number of works which are meant to be completed by October 2024, but we are hesitant to spend money on these at present due to uncertainty about our finances. One priority needs to be the repointing of a buttress @ SE corner of the tower, as this is allowing ingress of water into the plasterwork on our gallery.

In 2023 we completed our annual checks to the lightning conductor and fire extinguishers. Maintenance was done to check and clear gutters and downpipes and an unsteady gravestone was lowered. Some work was done to cut out dead branches of cherry trees in the church yard, though more work is needed on this. Overhanging branches from the conifers on the North side were cut and we hope that the remainder of these recently topped trees will be felled later this year, reducing damage to our North wall.

Further repairs were completed to rendering on the South boundary wall of the church yard.

Work was completed on the installation of a handrail leading into the church from the South porch. We are now exploring how to make access to the church easier for the less mobile members of our congregation.

Activities

During 2023 we were delighted to celebrate a large family wedding and a christening, as well as bidding farewell/laying to rest five members of our community.

Easter was a busy time, with an Easter Vigil as well as the creation of an Easter Garden and the raising of three large wooden crosses in the church yard, to remind the community of the story of Easter.

In July St Peter's participated in the village Open Gardens event, hosting a cream tea, which raised much needed funds for the church, and opening the church tower to raise funds for the Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance..

We also held a very successful Gift Day and Open Day, where we displayed the historical artifacts and told the history of St Peter's.

Our Harvest Festival was most inspiring, with some beautiful displays and numerous contributions to the Food Bank.

Our Remembrance Day service at the village war memorial was very well attended (80+) and very moving. Our thanks go to Andrew Stevens for leading the service and to Henry Routley for playing the Last Post.

Christmas saw the Friends of St Peter's hard at work, organizing what has become our annual Spirit of Catcott appeal to collect Christmas food and children's gifts for the Salvation Army to distribute.

We were delighted by the number of villagers who participated and the amount of donations received. We were supported by the Catcott Village Association in this venture.

Throughout the year we held monthly coffee mornings, run by the wonderful members of our Friends committee, raising essential funds for the maintenance of the church. Particular thanks go to Sandra Pearson, Bridget and Stuart Frier and Corinne Reynolds, as well as the kind neighbors who hosted the events.

Looking ahead, we are faced with increasing concerns about funding our contributions towards the Parish Share and Benefice contribution, as well as paying for electricity.

St Edward's Church, Chilton Polden

Annual APCM Report 2023

This year has seen a small improvement on last year; people have started to return to church but to nothing like the pre-Covid attendance.

We continued to manage to hold two services per month but we had no Easter Day or Christmas Day Service this Year. But numbers are beginning to increase with a small amount of children attending informal services,

The 100 club still continues to thrive and is a great help to support our funds. Bingo still continues but attendance could be much better.

We are a fair-trade Church and use as many fair-trade goods as possible. Coffee, tea and biscuits etc, are purchased; climate change is having a bad effect on these countries and we need to support them or we will not have their supplies in the future.

We have also achieved our Bronze Eco Church Certificate Award of which we are very proud.

We held our bi-annual Christmas Tree Festival at the beginning of December which was tremendously successful this year raising £798.46, which is a record.

We held a Christingle service on 4th December the proceeds of which went to the Childrens Society.

We operate a collection point for the local food bank and this year collected a record amount for them.

We now have an operational Card machine at the back of the church for donations.

Fabric

We are still working to attend to the points made in the Quinquennial last year but financial restrictions prevent much progress

We have replaced the plaster in the Church that was damaged by the leaking North Aisle roof and we have applied a wash coat and are investigating a supply of the right finish.

We have brought in the Architect to advise on the work needed to maintain the Sunday school. We are now obtaining quotes for the work required and investigating ways of raising money to pay for it.

The main door has been difficult to open for a long time, so we have managed to hire a special saw and cut a small amount off the bottom of the door and it now clears the floor.

We have several gravestones which are leaning badly and some were mentioned in the Quinquennial which need attention.

Due to financial pressures we have had to postpone paying our parish share but sadly we are still showing a financial loss each month.

General

Thank you to all those who continue to try to help and support our Church through these difficult times. We have tried to maintain a presence in the community, but it has been difficult. Thank you Chilton Polden Parish Council who very generously give us a grant each year towards the cost of the upkeep of our beautiful Churchyard and this year also donated a lovely Christmas tree, and thanks to those who come and help us maintain it.

I would also like to thank all those people who support St Edward's every day,

Thank You.

Anne Lush, Churchwarden.

Churchwarden's Fabric Report: St. George's Edington – 2023

Fabric

The structure of the church is satisfactory. There have been foundation movements historically, mainly at the east end. There's been some cracking noted in 2013 in the NW corner due to a dry summer. The architect suggested engaging a structural engineer to comment on crack stitching to prevent further plaster damage. The fire extinguisher and lightening conductor checks have been carried out this year and certificates filed.

The church is open between 10am and 4pm, later in the summer. There is a visitor's book and welcome leaflet about the church. There is also a booklet on the history of the church and record of graves which was updated in 2017 by the Edington and District History Group and is on sale at £4.00. There is a plan of the graves on the wall by the font. We continue to manage the churchyard as in 'Caring for God's Acre' leaving the grass uncut to attract wildlife such as wild orchids, butterflies and other insects. During the spring we are blessed with snowdrops, hundreds of daffodils and primroses.

Churchyard – we are part of 'Caring for Gods Acre' scheme. The grass is left to grow allowing wildlife to blossom. Many different insects and butterflies now visit the churchyard and wild orchids are seen in the summer. Paths are cut to enable graves to be attended.

Services in 2023:

St. Georges' has two regular services a month supported at different times by Andrew Gordon Clark on the organ, Polden Praise music group, Vicar, Revd. Rich Tweedy, Readers and visiting vicars in the absence of our own. We also host a monthly mid-week communion service led by retired Revd. Andrew Stevens.

There was also a Carol Service with a congregation of 40 and an Easter service with a congregation of 15 and a Nativity service with a congregation of about 80.

Rosemary Tilbury (churchwarden)

Church Warden's Report 2023. St. Mary's Shapwick.

We have had two services per month in St Mary's: Café Church on the third Sunday of the month and a service of Holy Communion on the fourth Sunday.

In addition to the Sunday services there is a meeting for prayer in the church every Thursday morning.

The Rev. Tweedy has created a three week course entitled 'Invitation to Explore'. This course is designed to give people the opportunity to find out more about the Christian faith. The course was run in January and twelve guests attended. Each evening started with a meal provided by Linda and Jon Johnson. This was followed by a video and then a discussion. A number of the group then went on to do the Alpha course.

In October Rev Tweedy ran a course entitled 'Corner stones' which was well attended. Lent and Advent courses have also taken place.

The church was decorated for Christmas and Mike Motum very kindly donated a beautiful Christmas tree. A service of Carols by Candlelight was well attended. The music was supplied by Polden Praise and we enjoyed beautiful solos by Gregory and Ellen Steward.

On Christmas Eve we had planned to hold an open air carol service on the cricket field but, due to inclement weather, it was held in the cricket pavilion. A service of Informal Worship took place in the church on Christmas Day.

The village Community Tea has been held in St.Mary's on several occasions this year.

We have continued to support the Bridgwater Food Bank throughout the year.

We are very grateful for another year of ministry by Rich and Jennifer in our church.

Diocese of Bath & Wells

The Electoral Roll for the Polden Wheel Benefice: Year Ending December 2023

As a Benefice of six churches with one Parochial Church Council, there is now one central Electoral Roll which is currently overseen by the Electoral Roll Officer. Each church displays its roll for 14 days prior to the APCM and, in line with new GDPR regulations and general concerns, only names will be displayed.

These figures represent the updated electoral rolls as provided by the parishes for this APCM.

The Polden Wheel Benefice listed **127** members across the six churches.

Ashcott **26**, Burtle **22**, Catcott **30**, Chilton Polden **16**, Edington **17**,
Shapwick **16**

Anita Hayne

Electoral Role Officer

April 2024

SYNOD REPORT 2023

The three Synod meetings held during 2023 were on the 8th March at Street Mission church, the 28th June at Lydford Fosse and the 25th October at Butleigh. At the start of the year there were three synod representatives across the Polden Wheel benefice. Due to ill health this was reduced to two early in the year. As the proposed options for Shared Local Ministry in our deanery were going to be the main topic of discussion during 2023, it was decided that we would need greater representation. Two further representatives agreed to take this on so that there were four available for meetings.

At the meeting on the **8th March**, Reverend Kieran Rowley was appointed to the role of Secretary. There was a presentation about the Deanery Mission Plan (DMP), given by Reverend Ana Lawrence in place of Reverend Jane Durham (Deanery Mission Enabler) who was unwell. The plan was approved by Synod and a request made for it to be discussed at all PCCs. The plan is based on the five marks of mission, Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform, and Treasure. The plan is designed to last for five years, with the deanery taking one of the marks of mission as its focus on an annual basis and therefore requires 5 'Deanery Champions'; one for each of the marks of mission. 2023's chosen focus was 'Tend' and there were discussions about what this involves, such as foodbanks, community fridges and visiting the elderly, but concerns were raised by several members about the end of the 'Warm Spaces' programme and the need for better interconnected thinking across the deanery. There followed a presentation by Reverend Ana Lawrence about the Shared Local Ministry proposals. It was preceded by feedback on the map exercise from the previous Synod meeting, including a photo of the deanery map identifying all our resources. It was noted that there is much to celebrate within the deanery, but it was also noted that much of our resources, unsurprisingly, are focused on the urban centres i.e. Glastonbury and Street. Synod representatives were asked to discuss this with their PCCs and provide feedback by the June Synod meeting. This consultation came about because of the Diocese facing financially difficult times, so all deaneries are required to make cuts to stipendiary clergy numbers and are being asked to provide a proposal in the next four years as to how this can be achieved in their deanery. Mary Masters (Lay Dean) reminded all about the process of electing Synod representatives and that the new Synod term is 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2026; the first meeting to be on the 27th September in the Brue Benefice.

The meeting on the **28th June** was opened by the Area Dean who thanked all outgoing Synod representatives for their service to the deanery and welcomed those joining Synod for the coming term. There followed an update by Reverend Jane Durham about the Deanery Mission Plan (DMP) which is now in place for 5 years, reminding all that Tend was the focus for 2023. Deanery champions were in place – the Common Good Group from Baltonsborough - and all were encouraged to contact them and reminded that there is a DMP leaflet available for congregations. The meeting was advised that Treasure would be the focus for 2024 and Susan Ripley of Street would be the Deanery Champion for this. Two copies of the Deanery Prayer Diary were given to representatives to take to their parishes; a useful way for us all to pray for one another. The Synod was also advised that there will be a ZOOM/Microsoft Teams prayer meeting taking place on Tuesday Mornings at 08:30 for half an hour; a sign up link would be sent out in due course by the Deanery Secretary. The Reverend Diana Greenfield led Synod in an exercise to review all the feedback received from PCCs regarding the Shared Local Ministry Plan and discernment for deployment of clergy. Outcomes included concerns about aging congregations and the inability to fill church offices, but surprisingly finance and maintenance of buildings were not as much of a challenge as expected. There were positive outcomes about schools' work and events that

happen part in the churches. The findings were to be fed back to the Area Dean. This was the last Synod for Reverend Diana Greenfield as she was moving on and the Synod thanked her for her dedication and creativity over these many years. The Area Dean then gave Synod an updated timeline and explained the next stage of the Shared Local Ministry Plan. Challenging financial circumstances mean that every deanery is required to reevaluate how ministry is done and how clergy are deployed; this deanery will need to go from 6.5 stipendiary ministers down to 5 in the next four years. The current situation is 4 full time stipendiary priests, one 0.5 stipendiary priest, one 0.5 Deanery Mission Enabler, and one full time stipendiary Pioneer Minister (this does not include assistant curates in training). It is expected that a proposal be ready to submit to the Diocese by the end of 2024 and the Acting Archdeacon is onboard with this time frame. The next stage is consolidation and a small working group had been created to discuss in detail the findings of our listening exercise (gratitude for which was expressed to all the PCCs for enabling this to happen) and to provide Synod with the options available. This group is made up of a balance of lay and ordained persons, rural and urban, larger and smaller benefices and headed up by Mr Charles Hunt, meeting from July onwards. It was agreed that the September meeting of Synod be postponed until October to provide adequate time for the working group to meet before giving a report to Synod, with a view to being able to send outcomes to the Bishop by the end of January 2024. There then followed the Synod business, including Mr Peter Sage giving his financial report which was that the finances were in good health. Over half the levy due from parishes has been received. Peter also announced that he was standing down as Deanery Treasurer but would remain in post until a new Treasurer was appointed. The Lay Dean thanked him for his service to the Synod. The Lay Dean also announced her intention to stand down in the future and invited Synod to consider anyone that could be called to this post. A new Lay Dean would begin as Assistant Lay Dean and shadow for a year to learn the role before taking on the full responsibility.

The final meeting of the year was on the **25th October**, the first of the new Synod, so the Lay Dean introduced the officers of the Synod; also the members of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group (DMPG) and explained the DMPG's role and purpose as the standing committee of Synod. There followed a presentation by Reverend Ana Lawrence and Reverend Jane Durham about the Shared Local Ministry plan, updating all on what had happened to date and the next steps. The Synod was presented with the 'Shared Local Ministry Options' paper then there were group discussions on the options. Feedback was then given by the groups on the pros and cons of the 2 options. The options paper was to then be presented to PCCs for feedback only and then feedback provided by the representatives to the January Synod meeting. There was a reminder about the invitation to morning prayer on Zoom, Tuesdays 08:30 and the meeting was advised that an Exploring Worship course was being held on Thursday evenings starting 18 January 2024 in the Church Lane Hub and Conference Centre (formally the St Johns Centre) in Glastonbury, running for 7-8 weeks - open to the whole deanery. Synod business was then conducted and Peter Sage gave the financial report; the accounts were healthy, some parishes were still to pay their levy, consideration was being given to online banking and also to the reordering of accounts so that capital could return interest. Still seeking a new treasurer. The first meeting of 2024 was planned to be on the 24th January at Mission Church, Street.