



ANNUAL REPORT

For year ending 31st December 2022

(As required by Church Accounting Regulations 2006)

Registered Charity Number 1129833

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
ANNUAL REPORT
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames is a registered charity, Charity Registration Number 1129833.

The Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames is situated in the town of Abingdon, Oxfordshire. It is part of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is:

The Hon Secretary, Abingdon-on-Thames PCC
c/o The Parish Centre, St Helen's Court, Abingdon OX14 5BS

The Parish comprises the churches and congregations of St Helen, St Michael & All Angels and St Nicolas.

PCC members

PCC members are the Trustees of the Charity. PCC members who have served from 1st January 2022 until the date that this report and the financial statements were approved are:

Stipendiary Team clergy:

The Revd Dr E C Miller
The Revd P A Smith

Non-stipendiary clergy:

The Revd J Brown
The Revd P T C Masheder

Licensed Lay Minister

Mrs G Bevington

Churchwardens:

Mrs E Hallas
Mrs L Heffernan
Mrs L Hobbs
Miss J Kelly
Dr G Meen

Officers (from April 2022):

Chairman	The Revd Dr E C Miller
Vice Chairman	Mrs S Scott
Secretary	Mrs E Hallas
Treasurer	Mrs S E M Read

Ex-Officio

– **representatives on Diocesan Synod:**

Miss A Scott

– **representatives on Deanery Synod:**

The Revd R Rutherford (from July 2022)

Elected representatives - Deanery Synod:

Miss A E Green
Mrs E Hallas
Miss A Scott
Mrs S Scott
Dr H Glennie (from July 2022)

Elected PCC members:

Dr A Birks (to December 2022)
Mr J Clare
Mrs H Clare (to April 2022)
Dr H Glennie (from April 2022)
Mrs J Fishpool (from April 2022)
Dr G Lewis
Mrs S E M Read

Auditors

Mercer Lewin Chartered Accountants
41 Cornmarket Street,
Oxford,
OX1 3HA

Weblinks:

<http://www.abingdonparish.org.uk/>

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AIMS AND PURPOSES

Under the PCC (Powers) Measure 1956, the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Dr Charles Miller, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. Each DCC is similarly required to co-operate with the minister in charge of the district church. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Parish Centre (in St Helen's Court) and Enock House (2 Musson Close).

1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

1a Team Rector's Report [Charles Miller]

Introduction

2022 has been a year of slow but steady recovery in the life of the parish. By 'recovery' I mean the return of patterns of worship, volunteer teams and programmes that characterized our congregations before the pandemic. Whereas I thought that more and quicker progress would be made in 2021 that did not materialize; instead there were starts and stops, something that made 2021 a frustrating year for me and for many. In relation to St Helen's at least, beginning in August 2022 an unanticipated surge of energy and newcomers happened which took us pleasantly by surprise. Still, the volunteer corps was (and at time of writing still is) diminished so the 'recovery' is hindered by the challenges of recruitment – a slow process. Of course that issue varies from congregation to congregation, so reports will vary. Overall, though, there is the problem: more is done by fewer.

Staffing

It has been a challenging year for the Team and associates. As the round of pastoral ministrations has grown, and as we have sought to meet them with customary care and quality, there has been an unfortunate debilitation owing to sickness, medical procedures and convalescences. The 14 week sabbatical period of Fr Paul Smith (delayed for several years, alas, by Covid) followed a stretch of clergy absence and illness so that when extending our coverage was required there was less energy and more uncertainty about the ability to do that. In that challenge our honorary clergy stepped-up. In addition we were ably supported by the acquisition of a Licence to minister by LLM Sue Holligan (based at St Nicolas) and by already standing LLM Gwen Bevington and Beryl Clements who is licensed to preach.

Fortunately, our parish-wide corps of organists and musicians stood firm so that worship was able to continue and, on the musical side, see welcome enhancements.

The Parish Office continued to work through 2022 in customary ways though the year. There was something of a 'learning curve' for Administrator Jackie Cunningham. Beginning her role during the pandemic meant that she had something like a 'false start' since many aspects of parish life were in abeyance. As recovery has occurred the multi-tasking magnitude of the part-time post has become apparent and at points has proved challenging. More direction and oversight from me has been necessary and (I hope) helpful. For Christmas 2022 office operations were in good order since that was 'the second time around' for our Administrator and she knew what was coming.

Leadership

Our team of five parish wardens – alas, St Nicolas only elected one at the ADCM-APCM in 2022, – has shown resilience and solidarity through the year. The positive esprit in the PCC Standing Committee and at PCC meetings is one signal result of that, and something I appreciate. In addition,

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St Michael's DCC member Sue Scott is also the Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod and Alex Scott (her daughter) is a member of the Diocesan Synod, so we have the benefit of their "finger on the pulse" perspectives about policies and planning as they relate to parochial life.

This year the PCC returned to its recent pattern of an annual 'away day'. This year we enjoyed the excellent facility of the River Room at All Saints, Sutton Courtenay. The theme of 'WELCOME' was a major discussion point with much to follow-on from that at the DCC level in the immediate and mid-term. The concerning deficit in parish finances was also discussed.

I end the year with sincere thanks to our PCC officers: vice-chair Sue Scott, Treasurer Susan Read and Secretary Eluned Hallas all of whom in their appropriate ways keep 'the ship of state' afloat and moving forward!

The 'Team Review'

In this exercise by which the Diocese is picking-up its oversight of and care for team ministries throughout the whole Episcopal area we were first in the queue (for the simple reason that the Associate Archdeacon who conducted it lives in the parish!).

The review made two recommendations especially relevant to me as Team Rector: 1. To visit each congregation on a Sunday at least once a quarter; and 2. To re-start TEAMword on a quarterly basis as a vehicle to speak to the parish. On point 1 the rota for the late spring and summer period included such visits, but the collapse of clergy support in the late summer meant that I had to re-deploy clergy to fill sudden gaps; that resulted in cancelling a quarterly visit to St Nicolas; the period of the Team Vicar's sabbatical made folding such visits into a 'normal' quarterly routine difficult. On point 2 an issue of TEAMword appeared at Trinity and then at the end of the year. (By then there were enough matters to note about clergy, the Team and our parish ministry to justify an issue.) Another issue will need to wait until return from sabbatical in the spring of 2023.

The Ministry

A positive development in 2022 was the return of Prof John Barton to our Sunday rota in a preaching role. This was a very satisfying turn both for the congregants and for John. I hope that in 2023 John can return to his preaching links with the other congregations, and as I work on the Sunday rota for January – April 2023 that is one of my aims.

Our worship pattern through 2022 was planned by me in advance, taking cues from the Team Vicar, and then shared with the PCC – another recommendation of the 'Review'. That pattern was followed closely though a few changes were made and negotiated with individual congregations. The plan is to provide a similar document, key for planning, for 2023.

In the last quarter of 2023 two clergy obtained PTO to join our honorary clergy in the parish and to serve in the Deanery as needed. Ruth and Richard Pyke are retired clergy from the St Alban's diocese now resident in Abingdon. I was delighted to support their interest in joining us, and conversations occurred that helped me understand when and how they can happily offer their priestly minister and pastoral expertise and gifts starting at a point that seems right to me in 2023.

Also in the final quarter the PCC approved a few changes to Canon Charles Masheder's 'Working Agreement' for 2023 which was extended for another twelve-month period starting November '22 by Bp Gavin Collins. I was pleased also to ask the PCC to re-affirmed its support for Beryl Clements' Preaching License and Sue Holligan's PTO as LLM (as previously noted).

Christmas 2022 signalled a return to more-or-less normal services and attendance patterns after the challenges of the pandemic and its immediate aftermath. St Michael's and St Nicolas did not have a 'midnight mass' (as had been the case also in 2021) so a more St Michael's style Sung Eucharist was provided at St Helen's on Christmas Eve. A respectable core of St Michael's worshippers

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attended and actively served appreciatively and the congregation included some who would usually (they said) attended at St Nicolas on Christmas Eve. Live and learn.

The St Nicolas School & Education Trust, Abingdon

The year began with good momentum on this score. By the autumn of 2021 the new trust had been approved by the Charity Commission and I expected that 2022 would see major steps forward in the provision of the non ex officio trustees, robust continuation of discussion with our solicitors to complete the process, and key decisions about asset investment. None of this has happened. A main part of the hold-up was non-responsiveness from the solicitors' firm, where legal staff changed. Our portfolio seemed to have got lost in the process. Finally in mid-November, after numerous approaches, our designated solicitor responded and some momentum began to be built up. However, as the lead trustee, and with only two other trustees to date, and with my sabbatical absence planned for the first quarter of 2023, it is hard to see that 2022 and the first half of 2023 will see much advance.

Christ's Hospital, Abingdon

As an ex officio governor of the charity I join in monthly meetings so far as my schedule allows. After 16 years I am now among the longest-standing governors! The charity has seen robust and creative changes in the way it appoints new governors, and the current Master, parishioner Laurence King (St Michael's) has steadily, sure-footedly and effectively opened up new horizons for the charity to benefit the people of Abingdon. It has been and will continue to be a gratifying 'journey' to be on! Obviously, looking ahead, I will offer standing apologies for the first quarter of 2023.

Sabbatical

I finally decided to take a sabbatical (tenth year since 2013) in the first quarter of 2023. That meant gaining approvals and applying for grants to make the period possible, especially for the proposed 'study' aspect of the sabbatical leave (Henri Matisse's part in the creation of the Dominican chapel in Vence, France). Permissions, support and funding came through as hoped (thanks chiefly to St Helen's, the Diocese, Ecclesiastical Insurance and the Clergy Support Trust). But all that took time, as did the organizing of liturgical, administrative and pastoral work during my absence from ministry in the parish.

General

The amount of flux and change in the conduct of the ministry and in responding to clergy absences has meant that I have spent more time managing rotas than I ever have in the course of my ministry here. It's not something I do well. In addition there is an ever-growing influx of e-mail business which demands. Lack of volunteers has put numerous tasks in my hands so that multi-tasking has increased. The result has been a blurring of focus and in a number of spheres a loss of 'grip' on aspects of my ministry. I have become especially conscious of this in 2022. It pains me that my ministry is not of the quality that I would like and that the parish deserves. Whether 2023 will see a rectification of this remains to be seen. A sabbatical can engender surprising results!

Respectfully,

The Revd Dr Charles Miller, Team Rector

1b Church Electoral Roll [Richard Kirby]

There is a Parish Electoral Roll Officer for Abingdon-on-Thames, but each of the three churches in the parish maintains a section of the Roll.

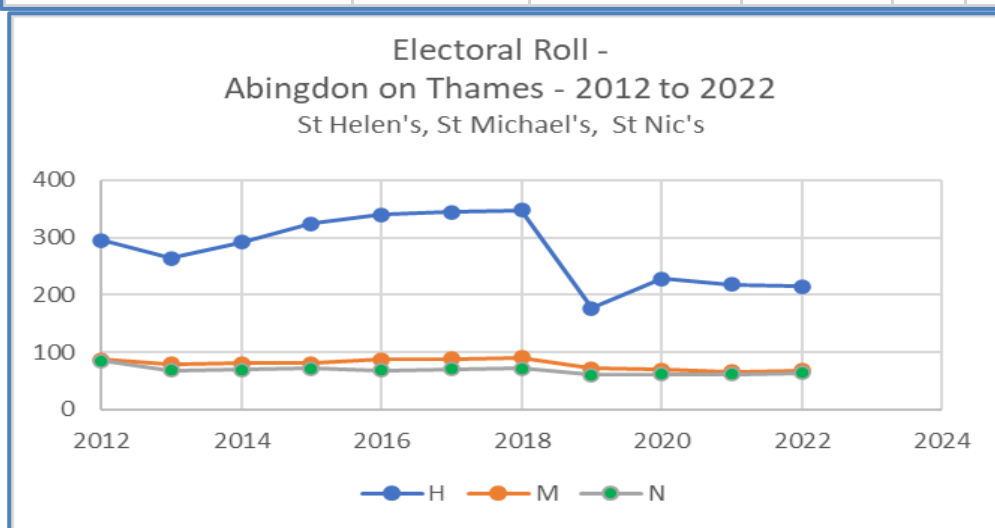
Electoral Roll Numbers 2021 to 2022

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	2021	2022				
	roll	deletions	additions	change	roll	% change
St Helen	218	9	5	-4	214	-2%
St Michael	66	1	3	2	68	3%
St Nicolas	62	0	2	2	64	3%
Abingdon on Thames	346	10	10	0	346	0%

History

	St Helen's	St Michael's	St Nic's	Total	% change
2012	295	87	85	467	
2013 new roll	264	79	68	411	-12%
2014	292	81	69	442	8%
2015	324	81	71	476	8%
2016	340	87	68	495	4%
2017	344	88	70	502	1%
2018	348	91	71	510	2%
2019 new roll	177	71	60	308	-40%
2020 (Oct)	228	69	62	359	17%
2021	218	66	62	346	-4%
2022	214	68	64	346	0%



I could not make this report without mentioning our dear friend and CERO, Gill Titcombe, who did such a great job in bringing together the St Helen's roll in recent years; it hurt to remove her name from the roll, and we shall miss her always. We welcome Kate Burland to the team.

The unstable nature of this data means we should not use it to try and make predictions; the influences on the numbers are complex and many.

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1c LLM Report [Gwen Bevington]

It is a cause for rejoicing for the whole parish, especially for St Nicolas' Church, that Sue Holligan came on board as LLM (like me, with PtO) from August 2022. Sue comes to us with long experience as a Reader in Winchester diocese. During Fr Paul's sabbatical she led several services. Nearer the end of the year, application was made to renew Beryl Clements' licence as an authorised preacher. Thus, three lay members of the parish are authorised to preach.

In March the annual diocesan LLM Forum (in abeyance during times of Covid) resumed, with an excellent day led by Dr Andrea Russell on addressing doubt, with help from Richard Hooker. Old Testament scholar and translator John Goldingay was the speaker at the LLM residential weekend in June but, alas, this clashed with a weekend dominated by clergy illness in Abingdon, so that I was unable to go. Those who did attend bade farewell to Dr Phillip Tovey, who retired in July after several years as Warden of Readers (and previously Deputy Warden) for the diocese. Bishop Gavin is now undertaking this role on an interim basis.

1d PCC [Eluned Hallas]

The business of the PCC concerns those issues best approached on a Parish, rather than Church, basis. It is also a useful forum for communications throughout the Parish, including details of Parish and Church sponsored events, staff updates and feedback on Deanery and Diocesan issues.

The PCC of the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames met in person or on zoom seven times during 2022, with the Standing Committee / Clergy & Wardens Group meeting regularly during the year. A successful Away Day – looking at Challenges and Opportunities post-Covid – was held in June.

Discussions during the year focussed on

- Governance – including the preparation and issue of a Trustees Pack, and discussions on the role and responsibilities of Church Wardens as seen in the Parish and individual churches;
- Outreach, Welcome & Retention – in the Parish and individual churches, and including Warm Spaces.
- Communication and Education, including Services
- Finance – including regular monitoring, budget setting and a review of fees
- Staffing

The PCC continues to review and approve faculty applications and other fabric matters across the Parish, and GDPR, Safeguarding, Health & Safety and Parish Policies remain regular items on the PCC agendas. Individual DCC minutes are circulated to PCC members to improve communication within the parish.

1e Safeguarding [Maria Gibson]

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

The annual review of the Parish Safeguarding Policy was completed in July 2022.

In 2022 there have not been any new incidents at St. Helen's that required Safeguarding assistance or intervention from the Diocese. During the year, the Team Vicar and Church Safeguarding Officer for St Michael's made two requests to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, for advice on safeguarding issues relating to vulnerable adults.

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Progress has been made on producing role descriptions for church officers, in line with the models published by the diocese.

DBS Status:

In 2022 the Diocese confirmed that DBS renewals need to be done every 3 years, there have been a number of DBS renewals in the Parish.

Training

Safeguarding training, appropriate to the level required for individual posts, is up to date for all but a very few people within the parish

Safeguarding Officers within the Parish:

Maria Gibson – St. Helen's
Carol Bowman – St. Michael's
Jenny Fishpool – St. Nicolas'

Maria Gibson (Parish Safeguarding Officer & Parish verifier), March 2023

1f Abingdon Deanery Synod [Sue Scott]

Abingdon Deanery Synod is part of the Diocese of Oxford and is one of 11 deaneries within the Archdeaconry of Dorchester whose membership represents 25 churches in 9 benefices. The Synod is a vehicle to discuss key issues and to look at the church's ministry and mission in a geographical area. The Deanery Synod sits between the Parishes with their PCCs and the Diocese with the Diocesan Synod. It is a key channel of communication.

The Synod is a place to support each other in difficult times and a place to celebrate the good things happening in our churches. It is also a place where the views of the Parishes can be brought together. Proposals can be made to Diocesan Synod for discussion if the Deanery feels this is necessary/appropriate. Clergy and Laity have equal status in the Synod.

The Parish currently has 5 elected members from the House of Laity:-

Alexandra Green (St Helen's)

Hazel Glennie (St Helen's)

Alexandra Scott (St Michael and All Angels) ex officio Diocesan Synod

Sue Scott (St Michael and All Angels) Lay Chair and ex officio Diocesan Synod

Eluned Hallas (St Nicolas)

This has been a challenging year for many of our churches and things continue to be difficult for many. The aim has been to create a balance between providing information, giving time for discussion and also responding to common concerns. The Synod met 4 times in 2022 (January, May, September and November) and once so far in 2023 (February). In response to feedback some of the meetings now take place on zoom and some in person. Some of the business covered has included: -

- Finance issues including the Budget, Parish Share, the Deanery Parish Support Fund and Mission Grants
- Opportunities to share good practice and expertise to develop Parish Mission Action Plans
- Address followed by Q and A session with Andrew Anderson Gear Diocesan Head of Mission and Ministry
- Raising awareness of Diocese resources and how to access services eg Churchwarden Training, use of Safeguarding Dashboards and Church Energy Audits
- New Congregations/New initiatives

In addition to the usual business meeting format of Synod we are planning other opportunities for

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representatives to meet to share - an example of this is the Prayer and Party meeting scheduled for May in Milton.

A key role of the Deanery Synod is to represent the views of the Parishes and to seek ways to support the work of the Church in this place. Please speak to your Parish representatives so that they can raise issues questions or concerns on your behalf. Churchwardens are also very welcome to attend.

Minutes of all Synod meetings and Standing Committee meetings can be found on the website at abingdondeanery.org.uk together with other news and information about the work of the Deanery Synod.

Please could you pray for the work of the Deanery Synod as it strives to seek God's guidance to support the work of the Church in this place.

Sue Scott

St Michael and All Angels representative and Lay Chair Abingdon Deanery Synod

1g Abingdon Diocesan Synod [Sue Scott]

We currently have full representation for the House of Laity and we have one casual vacancy in the House of Clergy.

The Synod meets 3 times a year to consider issues facing the church and also to share experience from right across the diocese.

Synod met in March, June and November 2022. There are meetings planned for March, June and November 2023.

The Church is facing a time of great challenge. Some of the issues which have been discussed are : -

- Living in Love and Faith
- Common Vision
- Environmental issues and steps needed to achieve net zero by 2035
- Finance, Parish Share, SSM/LLM fees
- Ukrainian Crisis
- How parishes can more easily access diocesan resources – what is out there?

Further information about the work of the Synod can be found at oxford.anglican.org.

The pathway to follow is – homepage>who we are>How we are governed>Diocesan Synod> documents

The Synod does not always speak as one voice. But the aim is that together we can work towards being a more Compassionate, Courageous and Contemplative Church.

Sue Scott, Diocesan Synod Representative

2 STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames is served by a Team Rector, based at St Helen's, and a Team Vicar shared between St Nicolas' and St Michael's.

Abingdon has a Local Ecumenical Project – the Church in Abingdon (CiA) – to which all the Anglican churches belong.

The Parochial Church Council of Abingdon-on-Thames is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure, and was formally registered with the Charity Commission on 27 May 2009.

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Lay members of the PCC are appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Church Representation Rules, as originally authorized as Schedule 3 to the Synodical Government Measure 1969 and subsequently amended by the General Synod. All eligible church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

In addition to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames, there are three District Church Councils (DCCs). The PCC has delegated to the DCCs responsibility for detailed implementation of most of its functions, in a continuation of a Scheme approved by the Bishop. The PCC is therefore able to concentrate on those matters which cannot be delegated, or are of common concern. It has two committees:

The *Standing Committee* (comprising the team clergy, church wardens, the secretary, the treasurer, and the vice-chairman) has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC.

The *Finance Working Group* (comprising the Parish Treasurer, the Treasurers of the DCCs and a limited number of co-opted members) oversees the financial activities of the parish, including the annual budget and financial statements. It meets as required. The budget and financial statements are approved by the PCC after individual church finances have been considered by individual DCCs.

In addition to meeting the statutory requirements of the Charities Commission, the immediate aims of the Group are, firstly, to provide a forum at which the Treasurers can discuss common problems and learn from each other, for example, attempting to move towards a standardisation of accounts across the three churches. Secondly, the Group is attempting to develop key performance indicators that provide early warnings of potential difficulties. Third, the Group expects to undertake risk analysis which will include longer term projections of our financial status.

PCC members (and DCC members) are encouraged to attend training sessions as appropriate. Most often these are courses organised by the Diocese of Oxford.

The PCC is exposed to risks associated with buildings, finances and availability of volunteer effort. Dealing with the secular aspects first: buildings are insured and regularly inspected, finances are managed by the parish treasurer, and DCC treasurers and volunteers are constantly sought to carry the administrative burden of the PCC and DCCs. The maintenance of ancient buildings is a heavy responsibility for the PCC, but this is not unusual in the Church of England. Health and Safety, Child Protection and other pertinent legislation is adhered to, and there are policies in place to this effect. DCCs operate within a budget and financial envelope determined by their annual income and reserves and approved by the PCC. Each church has an annual stewardship programme to invite donors to respond to the income targets. Special appeals are launched for special projects (typically capital projects) as appropriate. To say ‘The Lord will provide’ may not be an acceptable approach to financial risk management in the secular world; but seeking the Will of God through constant prayer and responding to His Will moment by moment are key instruments by which the PCC manages risk in labour and financial matters.

3 **PROPERTY**

3a Musson Close [Linda Hobbs]

The Parish “House for Duty” was purchased in 2015. The current occupiers are the Rev. Canon Charles Mashedor, Associate Priest and his wife Felicity. We are aware that sometime this year the house will be vacated by Charles and Felicity following retirement.

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The property has been extremely well cared for whilst Charles and Felicity have been in post, with many improvements carried out at their personal expense, for which we are very grateful.

When the property was purchased, it had been “privately let” for many years, we were able to purchase the house doing as little remedial work as possible.

Until this year repairs have been minimal; regrettably, following inspection of the roof, the decision had to be made to re-roof, holes were found in the felt and boarding beneath the roof tiles.

Following a recent requirement to clear the drains, there is now a possibility that remedial work may be required to one of the drains, we await a report from the drainage company. Additionally, it has now been found that the water tanks in the roof space need replacing.

Whilst these expenses are obviously regrettable at this time of financial restraint, we must be aware that all property requires regular maintenance, and until this year, the property had cost relatively little in maintenance.

We anticipate that once the repairs we have become aware of, are completed, the property will once again be ready to pass onto the next House for Duty Priest.

The property continues to be managed by Linda Hobbs

Linda Hobbs, Church Warden

3b Fairacres Road [Rob Bough]

Pursuant to a bequest from Mr Derek Enock in 2009, each church in the parish has an interest in a residential property in Fairacres Road, Oxford, which is held on a trust. The current occupant of the property has the right to reside there for as long as she wishes. If the property is sold, she will be entitled to the income from the invested sale proceeds. Upon her death the property or proceeds from the sale will pass to the following beneficiaries of Mr Enock’s estate:-

1. St Michael and All Angels Church;
2. St Helen’s Church;
3. St Nicolas Church;
4. Trinity Church; and
5. The Churchill Hospital.

The trust is administered for the beneficiaries by Freeths Solicitors, who have confirmed that the life tenant continues to live in the property, and the insurance is in place for the coming year."

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The following Vision Statement was agreed by the PCC on 22nd November 2000 and continues to apply to the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames:

“A single unified parish with a Team Ministry in which clergy and laity work together to serve interdependent congregations, within an active ecumenical organisation where:

- The Gospel of Christ is celebrated through worship and fellowship, with individual congregations providing a spectrum of traditions
- The life of the Church is built up through teaching, preaching, evangelism, pastoral care and ecumenical co-operation
- God's love is made known in mission and service to the community and society as a whole.”

The following objectives for the Team Rector appeared in the Parish Profile agreed by the PCC in November 2005.

- In liaison and collaboration with the Church in Abingdon, to refresh and progress the strategy for the development of a Christian presence in south Abingdon.

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- To encourage, enable and release lay leadership and ministry to enable the Parish to be better equipped to respond to the changing patterns of stipendiary ministry.
- To continue to develop joint working within the churches and across the team, to ensure we use our resources effectively in the propagation of the gospel.

The activities undertaken to enable the PCC to achieve these objectives are described in the Achievements & Performance section, and in the reports from the constituent churches.

The PCC is heavily dependent upon the contribution of volunteers to drive forward the mission of the church and the Kingdom of God.

The PCC delegates to DCCs the matter of policy for making grants and donations from their income. The financial statements record donations made during the reporting year.

Public Benefit

The PCC is aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in "The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit" and have regard to it in their administration of the Parish. The PCC believes that, by fulfilling its responsibility to work together with the incumbent in the Parish and co-operate in all matters of concern and importance for the promotion of the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, it provides a benefit to the public by:

- providing resources and facilities for public worship, pastoral care and spiritual, moral and intellectual development, both for its members and for anyone who wishes to benefit from what the Church offers;
- promoting Christian values, and service by members of the churches in the Parish to their communities, to the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.

Reports from individual churches, St Nicolas CofE School and the Church in Abingdon are attached as Appendices to this report.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

TREASURER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DEC 2021

The Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames consists of three churches (St Helen's, St Michael's and St Nicolas') which have separate treasurers and accounts. The Parish accounts are produced by consolidating the accounts of the three churches.

Income and Expenditure

In 2022, our churches were open for the whole year, unlike 2021. The net movement in funds looked much worse (2022: deficit £74k; 2021: surplus £47k), but these figures were largely caused by the movements in the global investment markets before and after the start of the war in Ukraine. The more important figures were those before the investment gains and losses, which showed a mildly improving trend (2022: deficit £1k; 2021: deficit £7k)

Giving and collections provided over 85% of our churches' income in the Unrestricted Funds and it was reassuring to see that regular giving by standing order and envelope increased slightly (2022: £225k, 2021: £216k).

Sundry donations included a £10k donation in 2021, so we expected a lower figure in 2022 but were pleased to find that the donations received in total were not as different as might have been expected (2022: £14k; 2021: £18k). This was partly because in 2022 St Nicolas church planned and sought donations toward the renovation of their toilet block, which is to be completed in 2023.

Where expenditure is concerned, around 60% of the costs on the General Fund are in the Parish Share, and that rose by 4% (2022: £168k, 2021: £162k).

Balance Sheet

The Parish owns two freehold properties, the Parish Centre and the House for Duty property purchased in 2015. Legal title of both is held by the Diocesan Trustees (Oxford) Ltd as custodian trustees on behalf of the Parish. Both are held for the mission of the church. The two properties appear in the balance sheet as Tangible Fixed Assets.

PCC policy is that unused fund balances should be invested with CBF Church of England funds. At the end of 2022 92% of Parish investments were with CBF Church of England funds. The value of the Parish investments dropped by 14% in the year but still exceeded their value in 2020 (2022: £507k 2021: £587k, 2020: £472k).

Going Concern

The PCC is required to operate on a going concern basis, and considers that each church should aim to maintain a minimum reserve of two months expenditure in hand in Unrestricted Funds (months of average expenditure: 2022: 5.8, 2021: 5.4). Also that there should be reserves, appropriate to each church, to cover the future demands of building maintenance. This is less easy to evaluate and needs further consideration. I do not consider there to be risk of any of the churches being unable to pay for their building maintenance in the next few years, but we need to keep this under review.

Susan Read, PCC Treasurer, 17 March 2023

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Appendix 1
St Helen's Church
Church Wardens' & Fabric Reports

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

We are pleased to report that 2022 has been a year of growth and recovery following previous periods of lockdown. The congregation, for the most part, has returned to regular worship with several new families and individuals joining. Major services took place during the course the year, notably the commemoration for the life of the Queen, the Remembrance Sunday service and, we are pleased to report, a return to more traditional numbers – around 500 - for Christingle.

DCC meets at approximately two-month intervals and an Away Day in June gave time to look at ideas for increasing both church revenue and congregation numbers. DCC meetings provide an important way for the congregation to support the church and its challenges in this time of financial restraints.

Finance

However, finance continues to be an area of concern and led to renewed efforts in the autumn stewardship campaign. The campaign stressed not only the need for an increase in planned giving but also the need to increase the giving of time to support Church activities. 2022 again registered a modest deficit on General Funds (which was an improvement on expectations at the start of the year) but, on current trends, 2023 is likely to show yet another deficit. Reliance on church reserves cannot continue and DCC and the finance team are actively exploring ways in which this can be turned round. The improved Contactless machine, which can be used both for donations and for purchases from the shop, is beginning to make a useful contribution. In November, the annual Christmas Market, efficiently organised again by Margaret Horton, raised approximately £2,500. In September a Macmillan coffee morning, held in the Parish Centre, raised in excess of £560. The occasion was well supported by both congregation members and town folks.

Quinquennial Inspection and Repairs

The Church and Parish Centre underwent their five-yearly architect's inspections in 2022. Although a significant programme of regular maintenance will be required (as in all medieval churches), the inspection did not reveal the need for major repairs. These can be largely financed from the annual donation from the Friends of St Helen. Repairs have already been carried out to the Parish Centre fire escape, which was causing cracks to the pointing in one of the walls. In addition, the metal gates to the parish centre are now fully operational for the first time in many years. Repairs were also needed to the organ and have now been carried out. A major issue arose from the presence of rats in the grounds of the Parish Centre. Contractors have been appointed to keep the problem under control.

Welcoming

'Welcoming' has been one of the main discussion issues at DCC, its Away Day and other forums in 2022 and is one of our priority areas. Whilst we believe that St Helen's is welcoming to the established congregation, visitors and new worshipers we must not be complacent. A document has been drawn up by a small team highlighting ways in which improvements can be implemented to ensure a consistent welcome to all who come. There is now a new Welcome leaflet available for visitors to our church and discussions are on-going about the establishment of a welcoming team.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Church Opening and Stewarding

An important part of welcoming is the daily opening of the church which continues to prove a success with the building being treated with love and respect. The continued opening of the church is an important outreach to the town; many people visit the church regularly, some just for a few minutes, others to sit and enjoy the tranquillity of the building. The church is appreciated by many as a place of peace as well as a beautiful historic building. In times of financial hardship, the building being available for prayer is important, offering comfort and hope. Volunteers continue to steward the church between Easter and September; their role is to meet and greet visitors enabling them to enjoy the building and its history.

Hospitality

The hospitality team continues to provide refreshments, providing an opportunity for fellowship and enhancing our welcome. Newcomers' lunches have been reinstated following the lockdown. These are held to welcome those new to the congregation, giving an opportunity for fellowship and familiarisation. A Christmas lunch served to the Wednesday Communion group was again an occasion of fellowship. The Winter Warmer event raised money for Abingdon Food bank and for the hospitality fund. The event was well supported by the congregation, friends and family. Coffee following the Sunday Eucharist continues to be a time of 'catching up' and an exchange of information and ideas.

Outreach

The West Porch displays again opened prior to Christmas, Easter and Harvest, organised by the Rev. Canon Charles Masheder. The initiative sees the church open and welcoming and invites the town to join in our celebrations. In addition, each Monday Mothers and Toddlers continue to meet, although numbers, following Covid, are still reduced.

Pastoral team

The Pastoral team continues to meet regularly, aiming to support those members of the congregation who are unwell or unable to attend church in person. Regular services are held in residential homes with visits also made to individual homes. It has been rewarding, post-Covid, to recommence these visits.

Communication

The new parish website is working well and has enabled users to view upcoming events and services over the three churches. Services continue to be both streamed and recorded, being available on the website. The Candle in the Window continues to be published and is available on the website. Contributions are many and cover a wide variety of subjects. Paper copies are also available for those without electronic access.

FoSH and the Shop

FoSH events continued throughout the year, frequently consisting of a talk followed by hospitality. These events have proven to be popular, the talks being both inspiring and thought provoking. A summer tea held in June followed the AGM and was enjoyed by all.

Faith Forum

Faith Forum continued through 2022, led by the Rev. Jen Brown. Talks have been varied and appreciated by those who attended. Breakfast continues to be served, provided by a small team.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Church Re-ordering and Lighting

The re-ordering team, liaising with the architects, is progressing with the design of a new lighting scheme. This is a complex and technically challenging task and, once the details are available, there will be an opportunity to view and comment. To finance the scheme, we will begin to institute fund raising over the coming year.

Parish Centre

The Parish Centre office continues to be managed by Jackie Cunningham with a team of volunteer helpers. Use of the Parish Centre as a venue has not fully recovered post-Covid and, in the coming year, we aim to expand usage as far as possible.

Linda Hobbs and Geoff Meen, St Helen's Churchwardens

FABRIC REPORT

The Quinquennial Inspection of the Church and Parish Centre went ahead in June 2022. There were no major problems reported for the Church, but there was concern about movement in some of the brickwork for the Centre. There is evidence of previous vertical movement, with significant historic cracking in mortar joints and sections which have been repointed. However, the area of concern this time included bricks which had been displaced horizontally. Further investigation by a Structural Engineer identified that the displacement had been caused by rusting of the steel landing plate of the fire escape. Bricks in contact with the plate had been pushed outwards because of the increase in volume of the plate as it rusted. The plate has been replaced.

There had been a problem for some time with the iron gate for the Parish Centre. Misalignment of the two sides meant that the gate didn't close or lock correctly. The gate hinges have been cut back and rewelded to create a wider gap, so the mechanism now works perfectly.

There has been more work on the electrics for the Parish Centre. The wiring had previously passed the electrical inspections, but this had been achieved by disconnecting a section of the lighting circuit which had failed the insulation resistance test. This meant it wasn't possible to switch on the lights in three of the upstairs cupboards. The fault was found to be due to degradation of an insulating washer in the outside light by the fire escape. The washer has been replaced and the circuit retested successfully.

Two new music stands have been installed on the choir pews. There were originally six pews, each with a wooden music stand in front, stretching the full width of the pew. An increase in size of the choir had required two additional pews to be relocated to the choir area, but these pews did not have associated stands. The two new stands were constructed to match the style of the other six.

The humidifier inside the organ case had been suffering from corrosion and a build-up of limescale deposits, resulting in failure of the motor. The humidifier has been replaced by a reconditioned unit fitted with a water softener to reduce limescale in the future. There have also been repairs to the windchest for one of the organ pedal stops. The entrances to some of the pipes did not close properly, with the result that the sound did not completely stop when notes were not being played. The repairs have improved the sealing of the pipework, so the background wind noise from the organ is now much reduced.

An external light has been installed outside the South Porch of the Church, in the same style as the other porch lights. This porch door is designated as a fire exit for large events, so it is important to have external illumination, particularly as there are steps downwards just outside the door.

Stephen Thomas, Fabric Officer

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Appendix 2
St Michael and All Angels' Church
Church Wardens' & Fabric Reports

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Worship and services

Thankfully, we were able to continue our services in 2022 without any Covid restrictions. We held a Sung Mass at 09.30 on a Sunday and a Said Mass on Thursday at 12.30. In addition we held services on certain Holy Days (e.g. Epiphany, Dedication Festival, All Souls Day,)

Holy Week was celebrated with Mass on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. On Maundy Thursday we observed the Mass of the Lord's Supper and on Good Friday morning a short inter-active children's service was held, this was followed by the Liturgy of the Passion in the afternoon. The Lighting of the New Fire and Easter Vigil was celebrated on Holy Saturday, and this was followed on Easter Day by The Sung Mass of the Resurrection.

For the first time in 3 years our Christmas celebrations commenced with a Crib Service and was followed by our Carol Service. Mass was celebrated on Christmas morning.

We had 1 Baptism, 2 Weddings and 6 Funerals in 2022.

We are incredibly grateful to our honorary clergy and our clergy for enabling us to worship at St Michael's.

Outreach

Abingdon School were able to hold their Leavers' Service for the first time in 3 years, and also held their Lower School and Parents and Boarders' Carol Services. They also held Choral Evensong Service.

St Nicolas School held their Christmas Service, and it was lovely to see all the children enjoying themselves, some with Christmas hats and jumpers.

The Oxford Diocese Ride and Stride was held as usual. We opened the church to meet and greet the cyclists and offered refreshments.

The Albert Park Singers continue to use the church for their rehearsals and held 2 concerts during the year; both were enjoyable occasions.

Abingdon Passion Play held a Come and Sing of *Handel's Messiah Part 1* in aid of fundraising for the 2024 Passion Play.

During the year, concerts were given at the church by the East Oxford Community Choir, Oxford Pro Musica, Abingdon Music Festival, Harmony InSpires.

We held a very successful Autumn Fair which raised funds for both the church and the Abingdon Foodbank. Many thanks to both Louise and Nicola for organising it and to the volunteers who helped. There were also several fundraising initiatives in aid of church funds. We held a very successful Floral Extravaganza, The Dog Café after Mass on Sundays in the summer, and a Piano Recital. Thank you to Helen, Hilary, John, and Nicola for all their efforts in organising these events.

The church room is used by one group on a regular basis. It has been hired on an ad hoc basis during the year, but we have not gone back to pre-pandemic hiring of the room.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Fundraising

We continue to support:

The Abingdon Bridge (a local charity that provides support and guidance for young people) and Tariro (a youth charity in Zimbabwe),

The Porch Day Centre (supporting homeless people in Oxford) to whom we gave money this year instead of Harvest gifts,

Oxfordshire Historic Churches by sponsoring Louise Heffernan for the Oxford Ride and Stride.

Volunteers

As usual, we would like to thank all our volunteers who help keep things running smoothly. The folks that come in and do the cleaning, the flower arrangers, the safeguarding officer, those who do the odd vital jobs – fixing things or sorting out the heating or sound, those who make the coffee, the vergers at weddings and funerals, the writers or contributors of the pew leaflet and website. We thank you all.

Many thanks

To all who help in our worship – those who serve at the altar, our sacristan, our organists, readers and intercessors, our dedicated choir members, our bellringers (who now ring us in before Mass as well as during the Eucharist), to the DCC members, and all our sidepersons.

We are especially grateful to all the honorary clergy, clergy, and members of the congregation who helped during Fr Paul's sabbatical.

Finally, a big thank you to Fr Paul for his leadership, support, kindness, and love. Let us continue to pray for the Lord's blessing on him.

Joyce Kelly and Louise Heffernan February 2023

FABRIC REPORT 2022

Routine maintenance was conducted as usual during 2022. The organ was tuned, the PAT testing carried out, the fire alarms and extinguishers serviced, the heating system maintained.

Our gas contract was up for renewal in November and after much hard work, the Fabric Committee finalised a new contract. As will have been seen in the updates in our pew leaflet, the energy bills have increased considerably due to the energy crisis. We also finalised a new contract for electricity and hope to work with the Parish Energy Basket next year, which may give us a more favourable rate

As a result of the Quinquennial Inspection 2021, the replacing of the beam filling at the end of the North Aisle was undertaken by Donkins. There is of course still further work to be carried out due to the Quinquennial Inspection.

Joyce Kelly and Louise Heffernan 2022

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Appendix 3
St Nicolas' Church
Church Wardens' & Fabric Reports

Services:

During 2022 life began to return to normal post-covid, but echoes still remain. At Communion, both bread and wine are now offered – although many congregation members still prefer to receive in one kind only. Mask wearing has declined, though some Officiants / Servers still mask for the giving of Communion involving contact with large numbers. The Peace is still more generally exchanged without contact.

One positive is the production of Orders of Service for each Service, which although this is an extra demand on resources (both time and consumables) allows service planners to take advantage of the wealth of liturgical material provided by the CofE to enhance our worship. Officiants have been happy to look at the opportunities this approach offers.

We were pleased to be able to hold our usual range of 8am and 11:15am Services, and to offer an Ascension Day evening Communion and St Nicolas Evensong to the Parish (with the support of musicians from our sister churches and wider afield). Our Carol Service and Crib Service were also well attended. In addition it was a pleasure to be able to host a Memorial Service for former councillor Jeanette Stone, and the annual Mothers' Union Service highlighting gender based violence. We continue to 'zoom' both our 11:15am and other Services, for those who are unable, for whatever reason, to join the congregation in person.

Other Sundays allowed us to receive the Church Recorders' Record of St Nicolas (compiled pre-Covid, and giving a wonderful snapshot of the church, its fixtures and fittings) and to bless the new Votive Stand and acknowledge the generous legacy which allowed its purchase.

Activities:

It was good to be able to open Church to visitors – on Monday mornings, for the OHCT Ride & Stride Day, for Heritage Open Days, and for visits from local groups. My thanks to all who have assisted in Stewarding these events.

On a sadder note we were also able to be open for private prayer following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The St Nicolas bells were rung to mark phases of the mourning, but also the celebration of the accession of King Charles III, as they had marked the Jubilee earlier in the year.

A bring and share lunch at St Ethelwolds in July was well attended, and after-service coffee on Third Sundays also offers opportunities for getting to know each other more. The St Nicolas Day Lunch at Coseners House in December was also well attended by members from all three churches in the Parish.

We were delighted when two congregation members offered to organise fundraising concerts for St Nic's – resulting in delightful afternoon concerts by Arco Strings and Claudia Martin. We thank all involved.

We also organised a book sale (August) and a booksale plus (in November – as part of the Abingdon Extravaganza), both of which offered good opportunities for socialising as well as raising funds. Thanks to all who organised and supported these events.

The use of the Church by Abbey Chamber Concerts, Mostly Books and by the Abbey Arts Group gave opportunities for the church to be open to visitors and generated income for the church.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Thanks

On behalf of the congregation I would like to thank all those (ordained and lay) who have led Services at St Nic's over the year. Also to those who have led our prayers, led our music, or provided flowers to beautify the church. My thanks also to Jenny for all her work as Treasurer, and to Paul for arranging the rotas month by month.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your support of St Nicolas throughout the year – through practical work week by week, at Services, in opening the church for visitors, by doing all those small tasks which we would only notice if they were not done, and for your continued support through donations and prayers. In particular this year, especial thanks to the small group whose work has got us so far with the Toilet Block refurbishment.

FABRIC REPORT 2022

2022 was a quiet year, we obtained permission for the various high level works identified in in our 2021 Quinquennial (five-yearly) inspection – some retiling, work to the tower roof and repairs and repainting of rain goods – but delays at our contractors, compounded by poor weather in December has delayed the work to 2023.

We were surprised, and delighted to receive a legacy from a former congregation member – Graham Gingell. The DCC agreed to use some of the funds for a votive candle stand. This was designed by a congregation member, to fit into the space available in the crossing, and made by a local craft forge. A further tranche of the legacy was spent on some 'dollies' which make moving the piano easier, and reduce damage to the tiles in the crossing.

The main work during the year was on the Kitchen / Toilet Block. A small team drew up plans to strip out the existing fittings and create one uni-sex equal access toilet cubicle, with baby change facilities, and a refitted kitchenette with cupboards, white goods and separate sinks for food and flowers. There will be hot water to all sinks, and space heaters. To allow for this the doorway will be moved to the east, and the old doorway blocked in to form a window. The building will be accessed via a freestanding ramp, bridging the existing in-situ gravemarkers. Once plans were agreed we sought approval from the Diocese, identified a contractor, obtained quotes and started fundraising. The response was so positive that the DCC felt able to include re-roofing, and replacement windows in the scheme.

With a start date in early spring, we hope the new facilities will be complete by Easter 2023.

Our old block had served us for over 60 years, but was showing its age. During the winter 2022/23 pipework froze twice – but luckily with no serious consequential damage. The lack of facilities, including no running hot water to the toilet sinks, was a serious drawback to inviting people to St Nic's. We look forward to having a fit for purpose facility which will enable us to use our church more fully. Grateful thanks to all those who have worked so hard to get us to this stage, and to all who have donated time, money or resources.

We remain in contact with the developers of 1 Stert Street, as we await works to complete their development project.

Routine tuning of piano and organ was carried out, along with essential safety checks to the boilers, fire extinguishers and lightening conductor. The fixed electrical systems and portable equipment are due to be tested in 2023.

In 2023 we hope to start work on the west wall and on the restoration of the Blacknall memorial / Blacknall Aisle.

Eluned Hallas

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Appendix 4
Abingdon Society of Bellringers

Tower Bell Ringers

The Covid restrictions of the previous years are now mostly behind us and ringing has returned to full numbers and activity. The bells are rung every Sunday morning at St Helen's and St Nicolas', while Tuesday evening practices alternate at the two towers. On Friday afternoons we welcome an increased number of boys from Abingdon School for their practice. This is followed by a session for our own youngsters, which is thriving. For adults, the Saturday morning basic teaching remains popular while providing practical mentoring of trainee teachers too.

Last year we arranged special extra ringing in the town in connection with the Queen's diamond jubilee. Later we rang marking her death and proclamation of the King. We now look forward to ringing for the coronation.

Visitors are very welcome to come up the tower to see the bells and ringing. We are happy to teach girls and boys (from age 10) who may be interested in learning to handle a bell and join in.

Brian Read

Handbell Ringers

Every autumn, the team of handbell ringers starts practising tunes for Christmas season performances. In 2022 we were able again to run a normal programme of practices and performances. We had performances at two clubs for the handicapped, two Church Christmas markets and the carol service at St Helen's.

Susan Read

www.abingdonbells.org.uk

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Appendix 5
Report on the activities of the Church in Abingdon

Member churches and staff:

Much of the life and work of the CiA, and the individual churches, has resumed slowly in 2022 following the COVID-19 pandemic dating back to March 2020, with some people still reticent to attend church and activities in person.

There have been a few changes in the clergy over the past year: Revd Rachel Hughes was appointed as the new minister of Abingdon Baptist Church in November 2022. Revd Rebecca Peters left Peachcroft Christian Centre in December 2022 - a new minister is yet to be appointed. Nessa Watts left Christ Church in June 2022 having completed her term there. Andrew Gilmour and Ros Steel started their curacies at Christ Church in July 2022.

One new church has joined the CiA: the Lighthouse Parish, part of the Redeemed Christian

Task groups and associated projects:

The CiA has continued to support a number of community projects and working groups that concentrate on specific areas of cooperation. These include:

- 35 Ock Street, a hospitality centre for the community offering a café and a listening ear, and meeting rooms for local groups and agencies.
- The Abingdon Bridge, which has continued to reach out to the youth of Abingdon, providing support, advice and guidance to an increasing number of vulnerable young people in the community.
- Abingdon Street Pastors who are out on the streets of Abingdon on Saturday nights
- The Christian Aid group in Abingdon held several fundraising activities as well as Christian Aid Week.
- The Christian Forum column continues to appear in the Abingdon Round & About monthly magazine under the direction of the CiA Administrator Debra Mcknight.
- Several exchange visits of the Church Twinning group have taken place – one to Abingdon and one to Schongau.
- The work of Desire continues in a slightly different format having been limited by a lack of youth workers.
- A ‘virtual’ Experience Easter was again organised by Trinity Learning.
- The Alpha launch-type event could not take place but various online Alpha courses took place.
- The work of Prayer Spaces in Abingdon schools is slowly starting up now the pandemic is largely over.

United activities 2022

January

Christian Aid had their annual New Year’s Day walk which was self-directed. £880 + 197.50 GiftAid was raised for the Christian Aid Christmas Appeal. Christian Aid also organised a post-Christmas online quiz, which raised £690 + 162.50 GiftAid.

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, no in-person events took place but a prayer leaflet

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

was prepared by the CiA Administrator for use during the week instead of the usual midday prayers.

February

The CiA AGM took place.

March

The CiA Lent Lectures did not take place in person due high risk aversion among congregations but the CiA Administrator prepared a list of various online courses and other resources for people to follow at home as people so wished singly or in groups.

The World Day of Prayer service took place at the Salvation Army organised by the CiA Administrator and volunteers from the previous WDP committee. The service for 2022 was prepared by the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland with the theme 'I know the plans I have for you'.

April

The procession of witness took place on Good Friday stopping in the Market Place to sing a hymn before proceeding to St Nic's for a united service led by Deacon Selina Nisbett.

Trinity Learning again ran a 'virtual' Easter Experience which allowed children to take part from their classrooms supported by resource packs and teacher packs.

May

The Christian Aid week activities took place with adaptations, raising just over £4000.

Christians across Abingdon were encouraged to join in 'prayer walking' as part of the Thy Kingdom Come initiative.

June

Abingdon's Fun in the Park event was replaced by the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in Rye Meadow in which various churches came together as normally done for Fun in the Park.

July

The South Abingdon Play & Activity Day event took place in Southern Town Park with Abingdon Vineyard and Abingdon Community churches taking part.

October

The Michaelmas fair service took place with Revd Kath Cooke leading.

Church Twinning ran their 'eco' event in Abingdon for visitors from twinned towns.

November

The Annual Bereavement Service took place at Christ Church in collaboration with the Footprints Bereavement group who usually hold an annual bereavement service for their members. Several churches started offering warm spaces as part of the Warm Welcome campaign.

December

People from all the churches gathered in the Market Square to sing carols and give out leaflets detailing all the Christmas services taking place across Abingdon.

Finance

The agreed policy on the General Fund is to limit the retained balance to a maximum of one year's expenditure, but maintain an amount that covers all agreed salaries and associated costs for the year ahead.

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Grants paid in 2022 were:

- The Abingdon Bridge £2500 for their work with disadvantaged young people
- DESIRE youth network £1000 to help run schools weeks and larger events
- DESIRE prayer spaces £150 to provide prayer spaces in schools
- Abingdon Street Pastors £1000 to fund their ongoing help for people out at night
- Experience Easter £750 to help school children and their teachers explore the Easter story
- Salvation Army
Drop-in Centre £100 to provide drop-in centre for the homeless and needy

PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES
Annual Report (continued)
FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2022

Appendix 6
Report on the Abingdon Foodbank

In the last year Abingdon Food Bank has seen a sharp increase in the number of people being referred to its service; a commitment to help support refugee families and families from the Ukraine as they wait for benefit entitlement to be received, has also increased use.

As more families and individuals face financial difficulties due to increased inflation, it is anticipated that more people will require help.

Both Abingdon Food banks have seen an increase in demand, Christ Church Food bank remains the busiest, opening two days a week on a Tuesday and Friday.

A recent initiative now requires that new clients are interviewed, we aim to ensure that clients are receiving or have applied for all benefits to which they may be entitled. Staff, (volunteers), have received additional training to advise clients, if necessary, referrals are made to the CAB for additional assistance. In the last year, several volunteers have trained for C.A.P. (Christians Against Poverty).

As always, additional donations are required, regular weekly deliveries are now received from several local supermarkets, as well as Millets Farm. All donations help alleviate food poverty for the most vulnerable in Abingdon.

Abingdon Community Fridge is another avenue to which clients are directed, they can pick up free fruit and vegetables without requiring a referral; clients can continue to utilise the Community Fridge even when they no longer require Food bank support.

Fresh food left at the end of a Food bank session is transferred to the Community Fridge, ensuring as little wastage as possible.

As in previous years, Christmas “hampers” were distributed to clients, this year again saw an increase in the number required, a worrying trend, which at this present time, looks unlikely to change.

The Parish of Abingdon has continued to support both Abingdon Food banks; whilst food continues to be donated, many people now choose to make regular monitory donations by Standing Order. These gifts allow additional supplies to be purchased, as required.

Thanks are due to all who have supported Food banks over the previous year, our Food banks ensure that many vulnerable people within our community receive the help required.

Linda Hobbs
Church Warden and Food Bank volunteer.