



St Dunstan's & **St Peter's**
Monks Risborough **Owlswick**

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF
ST DUNSTAN, MONKS RISBOROUGH**

Annual Report & Accounts
of the Parochial Church Council
for the year ended 31st December 2023

INCLUDING

Receipts and Payment Account
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
Notes to the Financial Statements
Independent Examiner's Report

Registered charity number: 1153849

Annual Report for the Year Ended 2023

Aim and purposes

The PCC has the responsibility to promote, both in the parish and throughout the Risborough Team, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, and to co-operate with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It has responsibility for the maintenance of St Dunstan's Church, the church hall and churchyard, and the Chapel of Ease of St Peter at Owlswick. It must also ensure that appropriate safeguarding and health and safety procedures are in place. The Team Vicar is commissioned to minister both within the parish, and throughout the Risborough Team.

Objectives and Activities

Throughout 2023, we offered worship and hosted community groups and events, which continued to rebuild and strengthen in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Eucharist is our central act of worship, with full use made of the seasonal range of liturgical material for Holy Communion from Common Worship (CW) produced by The Church of England. Services of Holy Communion and Evensong according to the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) also form a core part of the life of the worshipping community.

The pattern of services typically follows this pattern (all services are at St Dunstan's unless specified):

First Sunday of the month:	8am BCP Holy Communion 10am CW All-Age Holy Communion 3pm (Winter) / 6pm (Summer) BCP Evensong
Second Sunday of the month:	9am BCP Holy Communion (St Peter's Owlswick) 10am CW Holy Communion 3pm (Winter) / 6pm (Summer) BCP Evensong
Third & Fifth Sunday of the month:	10am CW Holy Communion 3pm (Winter) / 6pm (Summer) BCP Evensong
Fourth Sunday of the month:	10am CW Holy Communion 3pm (Winter) / 6pm (Summer) BCP Evensong (St Peter's Owlswick)

Additional services are held for the major feasts of the Church year.

Activities such as the Fellowship Group, Friendship Group, and the Lunch Club enable the church to provide a pastoral presence for the local community.

The PCC aims to donate ten percent of its income to charitable causes. The Standing Committee discusses the financial viability of this in the context of its finances towards the end of the year, and makes a recommendation to the PCC, which then votes on a proposal.

Achievements and Performance

Attendance at both Sunday and midweek services was fairly steady throughout the year. We welcomed plenty of worshippers – both regular and occasional – to services at Easter and Christmas: 127 people attended either the Easter Vigil or one of the Easter Day services across St Dunstan's and St Peter's, with 104 people receiving Holy Communion; 484 people attended worship across our five services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, with 102 people receiving Holy Communion. A further 105 people attended carol services at St Dunstan's and St Peter's on the third Sunday of Advent. During the year four children were baptized; we held three marriages; we held eight funerals in St Dunstan's Church and our ministers conducted a further four at crematoria; there were a further seven interment-only services in the churchyard, and three memorial services held in St Dunstan's (all of which followed services conducted by our ministers at a crematorium).

Groups such as the 10 O'clock Club (Sunday School) and the Lunch Club continued their activities, bringing in people of all ages. St Dunstan's church was successfully used as a venue for Bucks Art Week, as it has done for many years.

The season of Advent brought with it the Advent Craft Fair and the Chinnor Silver Band Concert, two events that bring a significant number of people into St Dunstan's who would not normally be there.

The Rev'd Sally Prendergast was formally licensed as an Assistant Curate (known as our Associate Priest) of our parish on 9th May by the Bishop of Buckingham; the parish has benefitted greatly from her ministry in innumerable ways, from the new things she has introduced such as Quiet Days, through to the continuity and stability she provided during the Vicar's period of paternity leave.

Financial Review

This year saw our income increase by over £14,000 compared to last year. Our expenditure increased by around £7,000, largely as a consequence of spending on the bell tower £5,000 of restricted money from a legacy received last year. We are therefore pleased to report a surplus for the year of nearly £5,000.

As in previous years, the largest single element of our income came from parishioner's donations, much of which was gift aided. Use of the Parish Giving Scheme for regular donations continued to grow, with 22 people using the scheme and over 40% of our gift aided donations now being made this way. We are now able to collect one off donations through the scheme, which we hope will facilitate donations from visitors as well as from more regular worshippers at St Dunstan's. Despite this increased use of the Parish Giving Scheme, our overall income from regular donations was down approximately 9%, but this decrease was balanced by an increase of £7,000 in other planned giving.

The church's fund-raising activities made a significant contribution to our income, for which thanks go to all involved whether organising or participating in these events.

Again this year we paid our full parish share contribution to the Diocese and gave in total £12,800, that is 10% of our income, to 8 mostly local charities. We replaced the bell tower sound boards at a cost of around £5,000 and undertook further maintenance on the church's heating system. Our utility costs were significantly higher than the previous year's. However, thanks to the foresight of our previous treasurer, long term fixed price contracts protected us from the worst effects of the increases in energy prices which have caused problems for so many people and organisations around the world.

For a combination of factors, in part related to recovery from the pandemic, we received gift aid tax payments in 2023 relating to two tax years. In 2024 we are likely to receive gift aid payments that will be around £15,000 less than those received in 2023. Shortly after the start of 2024 we received a legacy of £5,000. The 2023 restricted funds expenditure on the new bell tower sound boards should not recur. We do not plan any major repair and maintenance projects other than longstanding repairs to St Peter's chapel, Owlswick. Excluding that project, unforeseen costly maintenance work and any new initiatives requiring significant expenditure, we can therefore reasonably hope to be close to break-even in 2024.

In closing we would like to express our enormous gratitude to Anne White, our previous treasurer, not only for her decade of tireless service, but also for preparing the 2022 accounts for the 2023 APCM, and for the excellent training, encouragement and support she has given the new treasurer as he has taken over the role.

Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy is that the church should maintain sufficient free, that is neither restricted nor designated, funds to cover at least 3 months expenditure on normal running costs as well as any forecast expenditure on committed capital projects.

At the end of 2023, free reserves stood at £38,482. Three months normal running costs amount to around £30,000. We anticipate carrying out this year the longstanding repairs to St Peter's chapel Owlswick, which are now estimated to cost around £16,500. We have some designated and restricted funds which can be applied to this work. Other essential repair and maintenance work consists of safety related work on trees in the churchyard at a cost of around £3,000, some minor remedial work to the church's ceiling, to which designated fabric funds can be applied, and replacement of a church hall window estimated at £500. On that basis, we are pleased to report that our reserves look to be compliant with the Reserves Policy.

The organ at St Dunstan's is in need of significant repair. We are in the process of determining the best way forward, but the cost looks likely to exceed a level we could reasonably meet from reserves such that we face the prospect of a significant fund-raising campaign.

Plans for the Future

A glimpse of plans for 2024 include:

- Continuing to offer new opportunities for prayer and discipleship, such as Quiet Days.
- Considering how we can build up our ministry to families and young people.
- Undertaking building works on St Peter's Chapel Owlswick
- Establishing a serving team, to enhance worship in the sanctuary.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England and operating under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a charity registered under the full title of THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST DUNSTAN, MONKS RISBOROUGH (No 1153869). Members of the PCC are the trustees of the charity. The PCC met 5 times during the year.

The method and appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The Team Vicar, Assistant Curate and Churchwardens are ex officio members of the PCC.

Meetings are frequently preceded by a Standing Committee meeting, with the Standing Committee having the power to transact the business of the PCC between PCC meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC, and to undergo preparatory work on behalf of the PCC ahead of full Council meetings. The Standing Committee comprises the Team Vicar, Assistant Curate, Churchwardens, Treasurer, and PCC Secretary.

Composition

During 2023, the following served as members of the PCC:

Team Vicar:	Peter Godden (Chairman)
Assistant Curate:	Sally Prendergast
Churchwardens:	Sue Ingram (as Churchwarden from March APCM) (Secretary until March APCM; Vice-Chairman from March APCM) Mick White (until March APCM) Paul Woodward-Court (Vice-chairman until March APCM)
Elected Members:	David Curry (Treasurer) Jane Curry (Deanery Synod representative) Charlie Fairall Anne-Marie Longshaw Alison Maycock (from March APCM) Simon Merchant Debbie Norie Lucy Nott (Secretary from March APCM) Margaret Pitman (Deanery Synod representative until March APCM) Jane Rogers (Deanery Synod representative until March APCM; remained on PCC thereafter) Angeline Vere Anne White (until March APCM)

The number of parishioners on the church electoral roll for 2023 was 149 (compared with 138 in 2022).

The Incumbent and Churchwardens are also trustees of Hody's Charity: a small charity established by a previous incumbent of the parish, and which offers young people from the parish support with education.

Administrative Information

The parish of Monks Risborough with Owlswick centres around two places of worship: St. Dunstan's Church, in the village of Monks Risborough; and St. Peter's Chapel in the hamlet of Owlswick. The parish forms part of the Risborough Team Ministry, in the Buckingham area of the Diocese of Oxford, within the Church of England.

St. Dunstan's Church is situated on Mill Lane, Monks Risborough, HP27 9JF.

St. Peter's Chapel is situated at Owlswick, Princes Risborough, HP27 9RH.

The correspondence address for both is: The Rectory, Mill Lane, Monks Risborough, HP27 9JE.

The parish website is www.stdunstanschurch.com.

The PCC is registered charity number 1153869.

Parish Bankers

Barclays Bank, Aylesbury

Independent Examiner

Ann Tomkins

St Dunstan's Church Monks Risborough Parochial Church Council
Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023

Receipts and Payments account

2022		Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	Total £
£	RECEIPTS					
	Receipts from generated funds:					
89,687	Voluntary income	2	96,528	1,378	0	97,906
19,558	Activities for generating funds	3	23,028	2,089		25,117
336	Investment income	4	315	0	781	1,096
<u>109,581</u>			<u>119,871</u>	<u>3,467</u>	<u>781</u>	<u>124,119</u>
5,848	Other cash receipts	5	3,455	1,885	0	5,340
<u>115,429</u>	Total receipts		<u>123,326</u>	<u>5,352</u>	<u>781</u>	<u>129,459</u>
	PAYMENTS					
	Payments for generating funds:					
0	Cost of generating voluntary income	6	455	0	0	455
5,190	Fundraising costs	7	4,511	770	0	5,281
	Investment management costs	8	0	0	0	
<u>5,190</u>			<u>4,966</u>	<u>770</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5,736</u>
99,810	Church activities	9	97,419	7,135	0	104,554
11,842	Charitable donations	10	12,800	0	0	12,800
170	Church management & administrator	11	67	0	0	67
	Other cash payments	12	0	1,318	0	1,318
<u>117,012</u>	Total payments		<u>115,252</u>	<u>9,223</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>124,475</u>
(1,583)	NET RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS)		8,074	(3,871)	781	4,984
0	Transfers between funds		(1,000)	600	400	0
<u>(1,583)</u>	NET RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS) after transfers		<u>7,074</u>	<u>(3,271)</u>	<u>1,181</u>	<u>4,984</u>
61,975	Cash balances at start of year		31,408	5,000	23,984	60,392
<u>60,392</u>	Cash balances at end of year		<u>38,482</u>	<u>1,729</u>	<u>25,165</u>	<u>65,376</u>

The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

**St Dunstan's Church Monks Risborough Parochial Church Council
Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023**

Statement of Assets & Liabilities

2022		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Designated funds	Total
£		£	£	£	£
Monetary assets					
0	Cash				0
11,210	Bank current account	7,292	1,729		9,022
24,798	Bank Subscription account	31,189			31,189
3,538	CBF Deposit account			3,651	3,651
2,075	CBF Organ Fund			2,141	2,141
18,771	CBF Fabric Fund			19,373	19,373
<u>60,392</u>		<u>38,482</u>	<u>1,729</u>	<u>25,165</u>	<u>65,376</u>

Other monetary assets

Investments assets

Assets used for the charity's own use

Liabilities

There were no contingent liabilities.

The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved by the Parochial Church Council on *fifth of March, 2024*

Peter Cadden

Chairman

Woodward

Trustee

St Dunstan's Church, Monks Risborough Parochial Church Council
Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023
Notes to the financial statements

2022 1 Accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Section 42(3) of the Charities Act 1993 using the receipts and payments basis and in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 to 2001

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Designated Funds	Total
2 Voluntary Income					
Recurring income:					
54,076	Tax - efficient planned giving (excl. tax)	50,194			50,194
7,641	Collections of loose cash at services	5,724			5,724
3,322	Other planned giving (bankers order and payroll)	10,125	200		10,325
15,412	Tax recovered	30,485			30,485
80,451		96,528	200	-	96,728
Non-recurring income:					
5,000	Legacies	-	-	-	-
600	Special appeals (Owlswick Building Fund)		1,093	-	1,093
1,450	Stewardship Campaign Donations with G/A	-			-
40	Other Stewardship Campaign Donations	-			-
2,146	Other Grants Received	-	50	-	50
-	Insurance Claim	-			-
-	Donations to Fabric Fund		-		-
-	Fabric Grants		-		-
-	Donations to General & Organ Fund		35		35
89,687		96,528	1,378	-	97,906
3					
-	Summer Fete/Advent Fayre	1,151			1,151
2,204	Concerts/Film Nights	3,779			3,779
6,598	Fees - weddings, funerals etc	11,066			11,066
2,856	Church magazine/Bookstall	1,872	770		2,642
2,773	Bucks Arts Week	3,572			3,572
859	Church Coffee/Coffee Mornings/Cream Teas	462			462
-	Carol Singing	-			-
900	Parish Bar-B-Q/Harvest Lunch	927			927
447	Special Collections		1,138		1,138
185	Action Aid		181		181
269	Church Notelets/Church Booklets	199			199
2,467	Flower/Christmas Tree Festival	-			-
19,558		23,028	2,089	-	25,117

St Dunstan's Church, Monks Risborough Parochial Church Council
Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023
Notes to the financial statements

2022

4 Investment income

	CBF deposit accounts			781	781
336	Bank interest	315			315
336		315	-	781	1,096

5 Other cash receipts

1,500	Council Grants		1,500		1,500
-	Deanery Grant for Mission	-			-
1,495	Sundry Income	56			56
755	Church Hall funds received	2,155			2,155
347	Donations for Flowers	-	385		385
928	Refunded VAT	957			957
823	Fellowship Group	288			288
5,848		3,455	1,885	-	5,340

6 Cost of generating voluntary income

	Gift Aid envelopes	455			455
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7 Fundraising costs

-	Summer Fete/Advent Fayre	210			210
3,336	Church magazine	2,584	770		3,354
33	Church Coffee/Cream Teas	56			56
404	Concerts/Film Nights	941			941
659	Parish Bar-b-q/Harvest Lunch	629			629
758	Flower/Christmas Tree Festival	-			-
	Church Notelets/Church Booklets	90			90
5,190		4,511	770	-	5,281

8 Investment management costs

	Investment advice				-
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9 Church activities

63,414	Parish Share	59,931			59,931
-	Church running costs:				-
4,621	Heating/Lighting/Water/Cleaning	10,395			10,395
1,701	Church Hall expenses	2,047			2,047
9,673	Repairs	4,636	5,200		9,836
6,130	Insurance	6,707			6,707
757	Flowers	680	385		1,065
372	Organ Maintenance	504			504
3,452	Existing Churchyard & Grounds	826	1,550		2,376
63	Church Equipment	-			-
893	Clergy Expenses	1,131			1,131
3,875	Cost of Services	3,074			3,074
1,095	10 O'clock Club/Young People's Ministry	1,446			1,446
2,474	Fees paid	5,301			5,301
143	Fellowship Group	219			219
-	New Churchyard	-			-
-	Use of Deanery Grant	-			-
1,147	Sundry Parish Expenses	522			522
99,810		97,419	7,135	-	104,554

St Dunstan's Church, Monks Risborough Parochial Church Council
Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023
Notes to the financial statements

2022

10 Charitable donations

11,842	12,800			12,800
11,842	12,800	-	-	12,800

11 Church management and administration

-	Computer costs			-
170	Printing & stationery	67		67
170		67	-	67

12 Other payments

	Special Payments		1,318	1,318
	Extraordinary payments			-
-		-	1,318	1,318

13 Fund movements

		Receipts	Payments	At 31/12/23
		£	£	£
- 7,495	General Funds	123,326	115,252	8,074
5,000.00	Restricted funds	5,352	9,223 -	3,871
912	Designated Fund	781	-	781
(1,583)	Total fund movements	129,459	124,475	4,984

Independent examiners report to the trustees of St Dunstan's Church, Monks Risborough

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of St Dunstan's, Monks Risborough (St Dunstan's) for the year ended 31 December 2022 set out on pages 1 to 5.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The church's trustees, the PCC, are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act).

I report in respect of my examination of St Dunstan's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act).

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with my examination giving me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of St Dunstan's as required by section 130 of the Act;
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Ann Tomkins

Professional qualification FCA

Date: 5th March 2024

Vicar's Annual Report

Early in the year a new chapter began in the life of the parish, with Sally Prendergast being officially licensed as our Associate Priest by Bishop Alan. Her ministry has already been a great blessing to many both within and outside of the congregation, and has been a great support to me as I serve you as your vicar.

Easter once again fell in April, and our Holy Week was a very special time; it included the return of the services of Compline and Stations of the Cross for the first time since 2019, and a special reading on the Tuesday of the Old English poem the Dream of the Rood, which brought in people from across the Risborough area and beyond, including the Bishop of Buckingham, to hear the beautiful telling of Christ's passion from the perspective of the cross on which he was crucified. Easter, when it came, was marked with great rejoicing.

May saw plenty of celebrations in the community. At the start of the month the nation celebrated the coronation of the King and Queen, which we marked at St Dunstan's with a special service of Choral Evensong on the eve of the Coronation. The congregation was larger than the equivalent service the previous year for our late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and brought in lots of people who were not usually members of our congregation.

It is always particularly special when a long-standing member of the church community weds in St Dunstan's, and so it was a real high point in our marriage ministry when the church was the setting for the wedding of Alexandra Longshaw, a former member of our choir and daughter of Anne-Marie, and Joseph Wilson, who married one another in a splendid service later in May. The service included the bride being piped through the churchyard and into the church – probably a rare thing in Buckinghamshire!

The next day we were once again blessed by lovely weather as we marked our patronal feast of St Dunstan with a Eucharist followed by our traditional feast out in the grounds.

The autumn as always saw us mark important moments in the year such as Harvest, Armistice Day, and Remembrance Sunday; I was very grateful to all those who took on additional duties during my time of paternity leave in October and November.

We had a truly special Advent and Christmas. One encouraging thing was certainly the increase compared with the previous year in terms of how many people attended our Christmas services, as this is such a wonderful opportunity to tell our local community about the love of Christ. However, perhaps the most moving service for me this year was our service of Blue Christmas, held in the week before the great feast, which gave those who might find that time of year difficult for any reason the opportunity to come before God in prayer and contemplation. Whilst only a small number of people attended, the importance of the service was palpable; it was a salutary reminder that ultimately we do not measure the value of what we do as a church by the number of people who come through the door, but by our faithfulness in witnessing to and communicating the love of God.

Amidst all of these joys, a precious part of our life as a church is our funeral ministry. It is a very great privilege to accompany families at such a sad and important time, and we had many services through the year both at St Dunstan's and in local crematoria. Amongst those from the local community whom we commended into God's care were members of our congregation, and so it was with great sadness that we bade farewell to Diana Holman, Sue Pettit, Pamela Rye, and Peter Rainbow during the year.

In all of this, I wish to thank and pay tribute to all those who give their time, expertise, and energy to ensuring that we as the body of Christ can continue to thrive. A church can only flourish by the contributions of those who are a part of it, and we are blessed greatly by having so many people do just that. Rather than single out any individuals, may I thank everyone who contributes in any way, including: my fellow clergy; those who served as churchwardens, financial officers, secretary, and on the PCC during the course of the year; the events team and those who supported them; organists and choir members; 10 O'clock Club leaders and Lunch Club volunteers; sidespeople and the sacristan & linen team; flower arrangers and cleaners; churchyard workers and the newsletter team; and many, many more of you too numerous to mention: thank you for all that you have done to build up Christ's church in this parish.

The Rev'd Peter Godden

Churchwarden Report incorporating Fabric Report

The church boiler has continued to function with intermittent problems throughout the colder months but input from the churchwardens has meant that the church is almost always warm. Since the last report, the boiler had a device fitted to automatically replace any water losses.

A circuit board that controls the underfloor heating in the church hall was found to be faulty, and has been replaced. Even so, the timer of the heating is unsuited to providing a flexible and responsive control, and work is in hand to upgrade the thermostats so that they can be programmed and controlled remotely.

The alarm system has performed adequately throughout the past year despite its age.

Once an Internet connection is established, we intend replacing the alarm with a more technologically advanced (and cheaper to operate) system. We believe we are slowly getting ever closer to being able to put the church and hall onto the Internet. As well as permitting an overdue upgrade to the church alarm, this will also facilitate improving the heating control in the church hall.

New signs were erected in the churchyard regarding the behaviour of four-legged visitors.

There have been a couple of occasions when small pieces of wood have fallen from the church ceiling. The church architect has visited with a drone to videograph the offending areas and he has informed us that whilst this might seem alarming there is no real cause for concern as it does not mean that the ceiling is about to collapse. The combination of heating, storms and age have contributed to a few wedges drying out and shrinking leading to them heading south to the nave floor.

The church hall has had a new water heater fitted in the kitchen.

Work continues to have the work identified in the Owlswick Quinquennial Inspection Report undertaken. We are at the stage of inviting tenders from contractors to complete the work.

Members of the bell-ringing team are undertaking regular safety checks on the bells in the tower, and all is well.

As previously reported, our 160-year-old church organ is showing its age. Various mechanical functions no longer work properly, or are unreliable. Following investigative work, work is in hand to identify and implement a suitable overhaul of the organ.

Sue Ingram and Paul Woodward-Court

Reports from the Life of the Church and the Parish

Beating the Bounds

Beating the Bounds is an ancient custom which involves walking round the parish boundary, traditionally on Ascension Day. It was necessary to know the boundary to prevent neighbours encroaching, to ascertain where you lived so you knew to whom to pay tithes, or whether you were entitled to welfare payments, medical treatments and burial rights. A priest would take part to ask for a blessing on the next harvest. In Monks Risborough we have one of the earliest recorded parish boundaries. We last did this walk in 2003 and we did it again twenty years later. This year we did the northerly route on May 13th and the southerly part on May 15th. Both days we started from the Monks Risborough layby at 9.30am. The northerly route was just over seven miles, and the southerly part was ten. On the 13th we stopped for a snack/lunch at Orchard View Farm and on the 15th, we were kindly hosted by Speen Baptist Church. Our intrepid walkers enjoyed being part of this special tradition. Well done to everyone who came or who helped to support this!

Rosemary Woodward-Court

Bell Ringing Report 2023

We have continued to carry out our main task, to ring for Sunday morning and other services, and of course, to practice on Thursday evenings. We managed to ring for two Christmas Eve services, Christmas morning and, as usual, Remembrance Sunday with the bells half muffled.

We had help from both Ellesborough and Great Kimble towers which enabled all six bells to be rung on most Sundays and on practice nights.

Luckily we have had no maintenance costs during the year as wedding income has almost dried up with only one couple requiring bells. Our bank account shows a balance of £235 after paying 2024 guild subscriptions.

Brian Highe

Bethany Group

We have ten members in the group, some from St Dunstan's and some from the Methodist church. The last few months we have not been meeting at our usual venue as our hostess has been in hospital. We began the year by studying three chapters on Jesus' temptations from Time for Reflection by Ann Persson. After Easter we began a book of studies on Heaven by Douglas Connelly which was quite a challenge! During Advent we looked at songs from the pre nativity story using chapters from Christopher Ash's book Repeat the Sounding Joy. We are now embarking on a year long study of Luke's Gospel! We all learn something new every time we meet, (especially the leader!) Sadly we cannot take any more members at this time.

Rose Williams

Churches Together in Risborough 2023

'Working together in unity to serve the community in God's love and for God's glory'

This group meets approximately every 3 months and comprises the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Elim and Methodist Churches in Princes Risborough plus Little Kimble, Lacey Green and Speen churches. Whilst each church pursues its own work within the community there are several areas where we can and do work together or provide background support for each other.

We began the year with the service for the Week of Prayer for Christian unity, at Princes Risborough Methodist Church. The Lent and Easter events all took place, with an act of witness, finishing in the Market Square, on Good Friday, and the Easter Sunrise service on Whiteleaf Cross. Thanks to the Myers family for providing hot bacon rolls following the service.

Lighthouse took place at the end of July, with last minute changes. The venue was due to be inside the school, but at the last minute was held on the school field, which entailed a huge amount of extra work and cost. However the week was very successful with approximately 340 children and 110 helpers taking part. CTR also work with the Wycombe Youth for Christ team who have a regular presence in the town, building relationships with the young people.

There was a joint service in October on Climate change. CTR had a presence at the Town Christmas Light Switch on, joining with the Ellesborough Band in leading carol singing in the middle of the High Street, which was much appreciated. Our Advent Service was held at St Teresa's followed by refreshments in their coffee room.

CTR still provides a presence within the town and surrounds, and hopes to continue to do so in the still challenging times to come. CTR's website www.risboroughchurches.org.uk acts as shop window for our activities and provides a link to all the member churches as well as further afield. Any areas where you think CTR should have a presence please advise Peter or me.

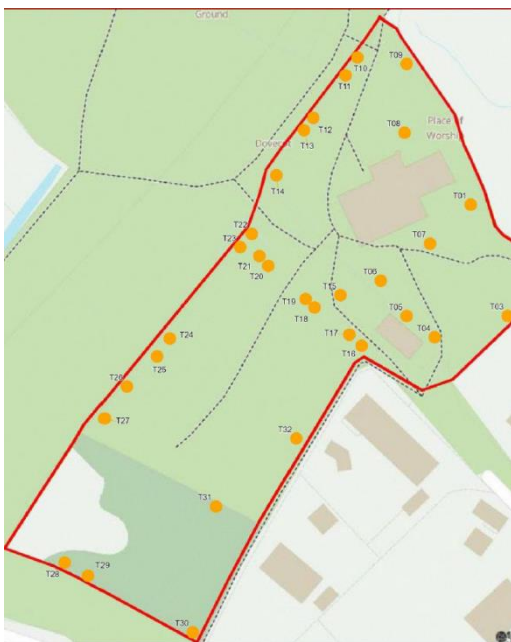
It would be very helpful to have another from St Dunstan's on the Committee.

Margaret Pitman

Churchyard

The routine churchyard maintenance continues to be undertaken regularly by the dedicated team of volunteers. This year there has been a revision to the areas left relatively wild, and this appears to be a popular move.

Following the falling of a sycamore branch in the churchyard in October 2023, it became apparent that a survey of all the trees was urgently needed, in order to ensure that remedial and preventative work could be undertaken. Several of the larger trees have numbered tags on them, indicating that surveys have been done in the past.



Peter approached Arboricultural Association approved arboreal consultants for quotations for this survey. Following receipt of these, the Standing Committee commissioned P Stileman to produce a report. All trees of a significant size were surveyed:

The report broke down the necessary work into 3 degrees of urgency: completion within: one month, 3 months, and one year. The willow in the churchyard extension was the only tree placed in Category 1. 5 trees were placed in Category 2, and 4 trees were placed in Category 3. Following a bidding process, Tree Monkey Tree Services were appointment to undertake the work. The first two categories have now been completed. The final element will be completed once the nesting season is over in the autumn. Patrick Prendergast is thanked for providing much needed professional advice.

Paul Woodward-Court

Deanery

Important Note:

The parish of St. Dunstan's and St. Peter's is entitled to 3 x Deanery representatives. There are currently spaces available for you to represent our parish at the Deanery Synods. Please speak to Peter Godden if you wish to know more about this interesting opportunity to network with representatives of other churches in our area, provide input into decision making for Aylesbury Deanery and hear about ways in which we can help our church to grow.

Ministry of Youth & Children

Presentation by James Wood, Discipleship Enabler for Youth, Children & Families – James would be very happy to chat any time about youth ministry to anyone.

Key points of his talk were:

Vision: Putting children & families first in a Christlike church - Matt. 19.14

Found that most useful aspects for improvement are, in order:

- (1st) the priest/minister focusing and investing in this;
- (2nd) engagement of PCC;
- (3rd) involvement of another key figure in church.

5 things needed for growth of youth element in church:

- (1) Viewing young people as **active participants and pilgrims** along with us;
- (2) Engaging people inter-generationally;
- (3) Being intentional disciple makers;
- (4) We are **all** ministers
- (5) Looking at how we are modelling changes we would like to see.

Funding opportunities:

- (1) Diocesan Development Fund (smaller amounts) and (2) Strategic Mission and Ministry Development Investment (seriously large funding)

Energy Audits

Presentation by Alison Riggs, the Environment Action Co-ordinator for the Diocese of Oxford. Alison opened her presentation by speaking about the Diocese's net zero target by 2030 and recommending parishes consider going for the ECO church awards.

Reasons for having an energy audit:

- Recommendations to increase energy efficiency and manage energy bills.
- Understand your low-cost 'quick-wins'
- Support churches to plan in the event of boiler failure
- Provide advice on how the church could decarbonise
- Now a requirement for major works faculty applications

Jane Curry, Deanery Representative

Events Team

We have had another good year organising events to support the parish and wider community of Monks Risborough and surrounding area and are pleased to report that we raised over £4,500 in 2023. Many thanks to the small but dedicated team who make this happen and to all those who have helped in so many different ways.

Our events are so well attended and so many of the parishioners contribute to their success. We welcome any suggestions for future events and any offers of help by joining or assisting the team.

Pop up Cinema

We started the year with Pop up Cinema showing the films Encanto and Belfast. The second film had better attendance and we have decided that showing specific children's films is not feasible as most children access films at home via streaming services. Our autumn films were A Man Called Otto and Mrs Harris goes to Paris and the number of attendees means that the future of the event is secured for another year.

Coronation Evensong

The Coronation Evensong in May was well attended and most people stayed on for canapés and prosecco or a soft drink after the service. This attracted many people from the wider community which was lovely.

Village BBQ

With fine weather again we were able to be outdoors with delicious food. This is another community event and we very much appreciate the contributions people made towards the salads and desserts. However thanks must be made to Jim and his team from Orchard View Farm who provided the barbeque at cost and made a further reduction to help church funds.

Bucks Art Cream Teas

In June the team organised cream teas at the weekends to support Bucks Art Week. Though the craft organisers reported the event was not as well attended as usual we had a regular stream of customers and it was great to chat to visitors to our lovely church. It also raised a substantial sum for church funds. Thanks again go to our regular scone and cake makers and those who helped serve and wash up.

Chandos Ensemble Concert

The Ensemble, actually a large group of twenty musicians, performed a wonderful programme of Baroque music in July. Wesley John was the solo flautist and gave an outstanding performance. We are extremely blessed to have so many talented musicians who like to use the special space and acoustics of our church.

Harvest Lunch

Once again we felt holding the Harvest Lunch in the church was right as last year was a success and it meant people could stay and chat in the warmth whilst the lunch was set up. We asked for feedback from the previous year's finger buffet and although all the food was enjoyed people felt there was too much variety. So we thought having a ploughman's lunch was perfect for a Harvest

lunch. We were a little worried when we realised we had more people than originally thought as we were blessed with some visitors who were warmly invited to stay, but glad to say it was a fishes and loaves moment and there was enough food for all and for those who wanted seconds.

Advent Craft Fair

This year we hosted our Advent Craft Fair at the end of November and it was a lovely morning with the church full of a variety of Christmas craft stalls, plants, raffle, refreshments and more. We had a steady stream of people in the church and the atmosphere was wonderful. We made over £900 which was a fantastic sum especially as we were competing with around eight other local events that day.

Chinnor Silver Band Concert

In December we welcomed back the Chinnor Silver band for what is always a sell-out event and our biggest fund raiser. The concert was candlelit and the church was decorated beautifully by Gwen and her team. Everyone appeared to enjoy themselves listening to the popular pieces and joining in singing the carols. A perfect start to the Christmas season.

Events team (Cathy Farquhar, Penny Hollings, Sue Ingram, Gwen Miles, Ann Myers, Johanna Powell, Rachel Ungi, Jo Wade, Anne White)

Fellowship

We have met each month in the Church Hall on the second Thursday morning of the month, apart from our Garden Party which is on a Saturday in July. We had three speakers over the year. Lisa, the volunteer coordinator from Bucks Vision, and Tom, the Chief Officer at the Chiltern Society, came to tell us about their work. Then in September our very own Margaret Pitman spoke about her job as an air traffic controller.

We had an outing to Haddenham Museum where Alan Rose, who had previously come to speak to us, gave us a very engaging 'tour' of the small museum, and took us on a trip round the local area.

Along with the aforementioned Garden Party we enjoyed listening to our handbell ringers at our Christmas get together, and we had a simple pop up café session in January.

Our DIY meetings included bringing along a favourite piece of music, an object of special significance and a baby photo which we tried to match with its owner. These mornings proved very interesting and enjoyable. Not to mention somewhat entertaining....

Our finances are in the safe hands of our church treasurer who keeps a note of our transactions within the church account. We are responsible for cleaning the church brass.

For the future, we are hosting a Souper Soup Day in February to raise money for Christian Aid and thereafter some ideas are taking shape for our new programme.

My thanks to everyone who has helped with refreshments over the year. We are open to absolutely everyone with no age limit. It would be particularly great to welcome some gentlemen along. Here's hoping!

Rosemary Woodward-Court

Fellowship Walking Group

We have been meeting once on the last Wednesday of each month (other than Dec), at 9.30 am and starting from Burton Lane.

It is surprising the variety of local walks that have been achieved, often including a coffee stop. This year we have used our local bus service to enjoy other environments nearby, Exercise and fellowship. What a great combination for those who have been part of this.

Mick & Anne White

Flower Team

2023 saw a return to a “normal” rota with a team of 24 arrangers and 3 new recruits, Sally Spurway, Isabel Taylor & Helen White. The St Dunstan Flower Arrangers continue to provide flowers for the porch, Wilberforce Chapel niche and the High Altar on a fortnightly basis with the flowers being mainly provided by the team. On average the members of the team feature on the rota three times a year with festivals & weddings as extras.

Some churches have abandoned the use of oasis on environmental grounds as it does not break down easily. We have reduced our usage to 25% of our pre covid usage with reuse of blocks and vases where appropriate. However, oasis does burn. *In Buckinghamshire, over 50% of the waste we produce is re-used, recycled or composted, but we still need to dispose of what is left. Waste that cannot be recycled is no longer sent to landfill, it now goes to Greatmoor Energy from Waste Facility, in the north of the county. It burns the waste to generate electricity, enough for 40,000 homes and will save local taxpayers at least £150million over the next 30 years. Non-recyclable waste is collected from homes across the County and at the nine household recycling centres. <https://www.recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk/what-happens-to-your-waste/non-recyclable-waste/> For those interested this site runs great visits!*

The yearly pattern starts with Mothering Sunday, followed by Easter. As part of Easter, we continue to ask for contributions towards the lilies in memory of loved ones. We also arrange spring flowers for the “Altar of Repose”. May saw the church decorated with displays chosen and designed by the arrangers for the Coronation celebrations. There were 20 arrangements covering different aspects of King Charles & Queen Camilla’s interests and patronages ranging from organic farming, to the Queen’s Reading Room – a mini-Flower Festival. This was followed by the Bucks Art Week, a wedding, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday. As there were so many local events taking place on the weekend of the first Advent it was decided that the two-day Christmas Tree Festival would not take place.

Christmas is extremely busy and starts at the end of November, when the Christmas tree is installed with purple Advent decoration, and goes through to January which is a challenge for the watering and refresh team. The Christmas decorations are put up in three stages with flowers and a change of colour to the Advent tree being undertaken just before Christmas day. The packing away and storage of the “angels” is always rather a chore but about 10 of the team not succumbing to ‘flu and other viruses put away the decorations in January.

This year is already proving to be busy with Easter, two weddings, Bucks Art Week on the agenda. We are hoping to organise at least one workshop as they are very popular but squeezing it into the calendar is a challenge and discussing a possible wedding themed collaboration with the Events Team for the future.

Gwen Miles & Jenny Masterton Smith

Friendship Group

We continue to hold our monthly meetings on the third Wednesday at 2:00pm in winter and at 2:30pm in summer in the Church Hall. Our numbers have kept up this year, and we have had some very interesting times together.

We would like to expand a bit as we feel there are more people who are lonely and would like to make some more friends, but we need people to offer lifts because our members have mostly given up driving and often cannot walk very far.

Avril Clark

Gift Aid

The report covers the claim year April 2022 -2023.

The total amount of tax being claimed from HMRC amounts to £10,105.41 which is a substantial 33% down on last years claim.

Blue Envelope Scheme and Pledges total Donations Received £9293.489 which is a 44% reduction on last year.

Regular Standing Orders, total Donations £26,369 which is down by 25% from last year.

From the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS), this covers the donations which are usually cash donations during the services at St Dunstan's' and St Peter & St Paul at Owlswick. This year we were able to claim a tax refund of £1189.75., which is included in the above total amount claimed of £10,105 but again this figure is down on last year by about 44%.

We still receive a number of donations in Blue Envelopes, which do not qualify for a reclaim as they are incorrectly completed or totally ineligible. These are usually from people attending weddings or funerals who would not be known to us. Our Tax Re-claim is probably reduced by up to £100 because of this. Where I know or recognise the donor of an incorrectly completed blue envelope, I do complete these myself and include them in the claim.

Nick Tyler

Hody's Charity

Work was done during the year to fulfil various administrative updates for CCLA Investment Management, who look after the charity's capital. The capital continues to provide a good return for the charity, which is more than enough to cover grants for applications that come in. Only one application was received in 2023; the trustees will consider in 2024 how to make the offer of grants more widely known to those who qualify.

The Rev'd Peter Godden

Lunch Club

The Lunch Club has continued to meet regularly on the first Friday of each month in the Church Hall. Between 20 and 25 members attend and the Lunch costs £5 which includes a raffle to which the members contribute prizes. After the December lunch we had in hand a profit of £146.37 so we are well in funds and annually we aim to contribute £500 back to the church to cover rent of the Hall.

We are immensely grateful to the drivers and helpers who make this popular lunch possible. Anyone living on their own in the parish are eligible to come to the Lunch and we warmly welcome newcomers.

Anne Baker

Monks Monkeys

Monks Monkeys returned weekly from Wednesday March 1st 2023 after a long break due to the pandemic.

It followed a similar pattern as previously with singing, story, prayer, play and refreshments.

The sessions were held in the church hall apart for the 3rd Wednesday of each month where we were in the Church.

The sessions continued till October 2023 when it was decided to take a rest for the time being as it didn't attract many people and sadly on occasions none. It was felt that going into the winter months less would be inclined to join.

We will continue to pray for what God is calling us to do with Monks Monkeys in the months to come.

Ann Myers

Monks Risborough C of E Primary School

Religious Education: At the end of the academic year 2022-2023 an adviser from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education visited the school to assess teaching of Religious Education throughout the school. A very positive report ensued, with a few suggestions for enhancement.

Links with St. Dunstan's: Strong links between church and school continue, with Rev. Peter Godden leading worship weekly at the school and the children attending services at the church on special occasions. Year 6 ended their time at the school with a farewell service in the church on Friday 21st July. The calendar year concluded with a Christmas Service in the church, featuring Year 3 in scenes of the Nativity.

SIAMS: New guidelines under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) were issued in 2023 and are now being studied by governors and senior leadership at the school. There is a backlog of inspections due to a hiatus during the worst of the pandemic, so, although the school is overdue another inspection, it has not been placed on the list for the academic year 2023-2024.

School Development Plan: The academic year 2023-2024 began with a fresh School Development Plan which continues to follow the school vision, mission, strategy and values.

The School Vision is: 'A school family where everyone thrives in every way.'

Jesus said, 'I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.' John 10:10

“At the heart of our school is family where all are welcome. We celebrate being part of God’s family where everybody respects others, the world around them and also themselves. Guided by our Christian values, it is our ambition to motivate and inspire everyone to be life-long, resilient and enthusiastic learners. We aspire to equip every child to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world, and to reach out to the wider community.”

Aims of the new School Development Plan include

“To create and run a permanent pastoral care programme, that places mental health and well-being at the centre of school life for both pupils and staff”.

The Plan sets the following priorities:

PRIORITY 1: To increase the pace of progress for all pupils.

PRIORITY 2: To continue to embed our core curriculum and key learning skills across the curriculum.

PRIORITY 3: To maintain high standards of safeguarding and behaviour procedures and develop our spirituality curriculum.

PRIORITY 4: To enrich education: an inclusive curriculum which celebrates every human being.

PRIORITY 5: To continue to create a caring, positive, loving environment in which to learn and work.

PRIORITY 6: Developing and creating a learning environment that places mental health and well-being at the centre of school life for both pupils and staff.

Jane Curry, Foundation Governor, Monks Risborough C of E Primary School

Music

Following on from their success in 2022 the choir continued with the improvements made well into 2023. The Easter Services continued in the same vein as the previous year and were very moving.

We sang at a special service before the Coronation and at numerous funerals and weddings. At some we supported the congregation with the hymns, but at a couple the music included an anthem, sung Lord’s prayer and also, a first for us – singing whilst the cortege left the church enroute to the churchyard. The choir acquitted themselves very well, singing with confidence and great sensitivity, a real privilege for us.

During the summer period, the congregation returned to the chancel to receive communion, so it was agreed the choir would only sing when all communicants had left the chancel, hence a slight reduction in the singing, made up for by more opportunity for the organist to play.

Advent and Christmas came around all too quickly. There were some new anthems learnt as well as singing old favourites. The majority of the choir were able to take part through this busy period. We were fortunate to have a great deal of help from Sarah whilst learning the music, which was a great help, as well as Simon and the other organists.

We have been fortunate to gain 2 new singers this year, Phil and his daughter Elizabeth. Phil's base voice is a real asset alongside the other men, especially as Frank has been busy with family matters. Elizabeth is a lively addition to the sopranos.

As usual choir practices take place on Thursdays and are often over all too quickly. My grateful thanks to all our singers, especially putting up with my, sometimes, disjointed thoughts and methods. I too aim to improve!

As I've said before the music report is not just about the choir, but wouldn't be complete without paying tribute to our group of organists. We are so fortunate to have so many that are willing to play (as well as sometime helping with the singing). Their contribution to the worship is very important, as they set the tone before and after the services with their voluntaries. It is a joy to listen to them.

They are very helpful at choir practice as well, patiently going over notes and offering advice where needed, and assisting greatly in the performance of the hymns, anthems and responses.

My thanks to Sue Ingram for organising their rota.

It only remains for me to thank the choir and our organists for making the music at St Dunstan's such an integral part of our worship.

Margaret Pitman

Newsletter

In December this year, we had a change to the editorial team, when June Timms stepped down from her role managing the advertising, an important task which she has carried out with great reliability and competence for the last 10 years. We will certainly miss her. We are delighted, however, to welcome Janette Bacon, who has agreed to take over the advertising and we look forward to working with her. Otherwise, the team is unchanged so, many thanks to John McKay who continues to handle the production of the magazine as well as managing the Website and now also the weekly on-line e-News. John uses his own photographs for the magazine covers and creates posters for church events. His contribution is really outstanding. We also thank Penny Hollings for organising the distribution and Jane Curry for the proof-reading. All give their time and commitment to ensure the Newsletter continues to be a reliable and, we hope, entertaining magazine for the whole parish.

As well as keeping everyone in touch with all the St Dunstan's services and societies, we also like to provide more general interest articles for the community. Susanne Carr's art tickles and David Keywell's pilgrimage series have continued to entertain and educate us through the year and it's a year which also had some very special events to cover. The May/June issue was a busy one, as we welcomed our new priest Sally Prendergast to assist Peter; covered the Beating of the Bounds in Monks Risborough (thanks for Jane Rogers and Rosemary Woodward-Court for their articles) and, of course, the special Choral Evensong service to mark the King's Coronation. Later in the year, Sally Prendergast gave us two wonderful articles, first explaining the significance of ecclesiastical colours and then describing on her work as a maker of clerical stoles. Brian Highe started what we

hope will be a continuing gardening series with advice on managing allotments through the year. There are always too many contributors to mention individually in this report, but every entry is important and much appreciated.

We thank our printers South Bucks Business Products, who have again given us excellent service, and our stalwart team of distributors who ensure every house in the parish receives a copy. We are now looking forward to the summer months, when we have a number of exciting events coming up, which will be fun to highlight. Make sure you keep reading!

Morna Hinch

Open House

This year we have covered three topics generated by questions from the group about various aspects of Christian living and growth.

We started by looking at different translations of the Bible and how they come about, seeing the difficulty of translating a different language but retaining both accuracy and readability. Just by looking at one word 'covenant' we learnt about this word and what it meant in its Jewish context.

We then moved on to why there are so many Christian denominations and some of the differences in approach, but more importantly the common beliefs and the ability to work together. We finished by looking at how the physical building of the church reflects different emphasises regarding aspects of faith .

Several members of the group had raised questions about the Old Testament and how it portrayed God. So we have started looking at the book of Joshua.

We are a varying group of about ten people meeting once a month in different houses. We hope we are friendly where issues of Christian living and belief can be explored in a supportive environment. All are welcome.

Ted and Mary Kent

Organ Working Party

The organ was built over 160 years ago, and has had several major overhauls during its lifetime, in addition to regular maintenance. As a complex mechanical construction sensitive to temperature and humidity, parts of it require periodic updating and - partly due to the increased number of callouts required recently - it seemed prudent to assess the instrument and consider options for the future.

Furthermore, the instrument as designed is not ideal for worship at St Dunstan's – the heavy action is quite difficult to play, the sound produced is focused in the chancel, and the design (both the span of the keyboards and the range of stops) limit what can be played on it.

This year we have been focused on doing the homework that should enable us to make considered proposals that have support of the relevant authorities. After an open meeting in July with the diocesan organ advisors (in whose opinion the organ "...demonstrates many of the inherent weaknesses in mid-19th Century design and is inadequate as a church instrument for the 21st Century and beyond") a representative working group has been reviewing information, consulting organ builders, and visiting churches elsewhere that demonstrate what can be achieved. This phase is continuing, and we hope to be able to present options to the PCC during 2024.

Important criteria for a renovated instrument will cover everything from the pitch (so that it can be used with other instruments for school services, concerts etc), to a design that makes it suitable for the next generation of organists to learn on, amongst others. Two vital requirements are that the action (the underlying machinery of an organ which directs air through the pipes based on the keys played and the stops drawn) must be upgraded, to ensure reliability and playability for the next 50~100 years, and the organ's support for congregational singing should be enhanced so that the whole church benefits from whatever work is done.

Thanks are due to the working group members - Jane Curry, Peter Godden, Sue Ingram, David Keysell, Sue Merchant and John Precious - for contributing their experience and opinions, and for being willing to traipse around the country visiting other churches to learn from their experience.

Simon Gray

Play Days

Back in the September of 2021 the seed for Play Day was sown, the aim being to give an opportunity to children within the locality to have fun. We believed that St Dunstan's had the facilities to provide for a free play session each half-term holiday and wanted to include different generations either in their capacity as carers or as helpers.

May Play Day on 31 May 2022 was the first. A good number of children came with their carer and greatly enjoyed the story telling, dressing up, planting seeds, treasure hunt, origami, working with clay, singing, and much more. 16 willing volunteers helped and feedback reported that a great time was had by all.

Bonkers with Conkers was in October, and in the following year we had Pancake Play Day, May Play Day and a Hooray for Play Day that was based around The Gruffalo. Attendance has been about 20 children plus their carers.

We would like to say a big thank you to all the very supportive helpers, and to those who have come along to be part of the mornings.

Rosemary Woodward-Court and Anne White

Risborough Team

The Risborough Team – made up of the parishes of Princes Risborough with Ilmer, Bledlow with Saunderton and Horsenden, Lacey Green, and this parish – continues to be a means of encouragement for the local clergy, as well as a blessing to the people who make up our congregations.

In the case of the former, our weekly services of morning prayer, together with monthly meetings, help the ministers in the parishes to be nourished both by prayer and fellowship together. There is also the chance to support one another in practical ways: for me, this particularly comes in the form of leading Collective Worship at St John's Primary School in Lacey Green, and Speen Infant School,

which is a real privilege. The pupils continue to enjoy shouting out 'Hello knitted Jesus!' when I bring out my knitted Bible figures to help tell a story.

For our congregations, our team ministry makes it particularly natural for some of our number to worship in a combination of our churches, which plenty of our congregants do. This is a real strength of a collaborative style of ministry.

During the year we sadly bade farewell to the Rev'd Norbert Mutuku, who left the parish Bledlow with his wife Mercy to return to his homeland of Kenya. We miss his prayerfulness, his good humour, and his splendid baking very much, and we look forward to the appointment of his successor some time in the future.

The Rev'd Peter Godden

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Policy

The Safeguarding Policy for the parish was reviewed and accepted at the PCC meeting on 23 January 2024 can be seen on the website and on church notice boards. A list of local and national crisis and help lines is included.

Safer Recruitment

3 DBS applications have been completed.

Safeguarding Training

4 people have completed the Basic Safeguarding course.

2 people have completed the Foundation course.

PSO has completed the Leadership course and Domestic Abuse course.

Parish Safeguarding Dashboards

We joined the Safeguarding Dashboard project in summer 2021. The dashboard brings together and streamlines safeguarding policy and practice. It is intended to support parishes in understanding the Church of England safeguarding requirements, and to track progress in meeting these requirements. The dashboard consists of questions about safeguarding practice in the parish and rates the answer to each as green (completed), amber (work to do) or red (urgent action required). As information is added to the dashboard, it generates an action plan detailing which areas of safeguarding are still to be progressed.

The parish dashboard is complete at the time of writing this report.

Angeline Vere, Parish Safeguarding Officer

Sidespersons Team

We are very fortunate at St Dunstan's to have such an amazing team of people who carry out the duties of Sidespeople, reading and preparing the intercessions. I personally think that the welcome and assistance that people receive who attend our Services is second to none.

Last September David Kemp, for personal reasons made the decision to step away from our team of Sides persons, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank David for his many years of service.

I would also like to welcome Susan Hopkins, Christopher Trower, Janette Bacon and Vicky Attridge to our team.

A very big thank you to everyone for all that you do to ensure the smooth running of all our Services and for the all the help that you give me .

Mick Quigley

St. Peter's Chapel, Owlswick

The chapel remains a focal point of the hamlet although the surroundings have changed considerably over the last year with the nine new dwellings gradually moving towards completion, the Green, which was a lifeline for meetings during Covid became unusable due to parking of builder's vehicles, however we look forward to its reinstatement and a change of ownership when it is taken over by Longwick cum Ilmer Parish Council.

A few items mentioned in the Quinquennial Report have been done, these include Below ground pipe covered, Entrance gate now latches, former chimney flue hatch secure, pew monitored for woodworm, (no sign, but treated anyway) and the external light now works, a few minor items remain, but the main work of fixing the crack in the end wall and replacing the "tin arch" are still to do.

A quiz to help fund the repairs was held in February and raised £963

In July we revived the tradition of "Cream Teas and Songs of Praise," however due to the state of the Green the cream teas had to be held in a private garden a short walk from the chapel. The event proved to be very popular and we hope to bring it back as a regular event, hopefully with the cream teas on the Green.

In addition to the regular services, we celebrated Harvest Thanksgiving with a donation of goods to the Whitechapel Mission. The Carol Service was popular as ever with seven lessons and carols, followed by sherry, mince pies and a chat.

Thanks are due to everyone from St. Dunstan's who has supported the chapel through the year and particularly Stuart who plays the organ for Evensong.

We look forward to welcoming new inhabitants to the hamlet in 2024 and hope that some of them will want to join us in our worship.

Jane Rogers

Youth

The 10 o'clock club has around 8 children on the Sunday school register, ranging from ages 4 to 15, some occasionally, some more regularly. There are younger children in the church, so this number will hopefully grow. We switched back to using the Roots resource, which works well with adaptation according to ages, as it gives flexibility. Lighthouse songs are sung as part of our worship, and the children are becoming experts at the actions!

The children built a beautiful Easter Garden for all to admire, outside the porch, which I know had many lovely comments from parishioners. Thank you to all those who helped and supplied plants.

The children continue to lead the prayers or help with the reading, at the family service each month, when one of their families are able to attend church.

Lighthouse was a great success again this year, still smaller than previous years, but we had a good supply of volunteers. Last year we noticed the increase in SEN children, so increased our SEN team which worked well. We are always looking for new supporters of Lighthouse, so if you can help in any way, during the week or beforehand behind the scenes, please get in touch.

Harvest festival and Remembrance saw greater numbers of uniformed children attending from 2nd Monks Risborough Rainbows, Brownies and 1st Monks Risborough Guides, which was encouraging.

Our half term play days continue to be very popular and well attended, with lots of fun craft, games, singing and activities.

We ended the year with our Christmas party, making lolly stick nativity scenes, and telling the Christmas story in fancy dress! Our Crib service was very well attended this year with many children in Nativity dress.

Debbie Norie, Youth Team Leader