



The Parish of Boxmoor

St John's Boxmoor,

St Stephen's Chaulden & St Francis' Hammerfield

The Parish of Boxmoor

Meeting of Parishioners

&

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

in St John's Church, Boxmoor

Sunday 21 April 2024 at 11.00am

following the Parish Eucharist

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The Parish of Boxmoor

St John's Boxmoor,

St Stephen's Chaulden & St Francis' Hammerfield

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS

Sunday 21 April 2024

At 11.00am following the Parish Eucharist in St John's Church

A G E N D A

The Goals in our 2021-2024 Mission Action Plan are:

- To ensure that within two years the parish will have arrived back at the "new normal" with activities on a broad front in better shape than they were before the pandemic.
- To have by June 2022 an enhanced ability with new equipment to stream services online with people fully trained to operate it.
- To create by June 2022 a parish contingency plan of actions that need taking in the face of another pandemic.
- The creation by end-2022 of a church-based Youth Club, meeting regularly, with a dependable attendance of more than ten.
- The Director of Music invited to present to the PCC a strategy for the future of the choir. This strategy to be in place and underway by June 2022.
- To restart, regrow, and nurture our Junior Choir, including a recruitment drive in our local primary schools, to begin by September 2021.
- To arrange and conduct a Discipleship course for existing members of the church, an Enquirers course for new people, and a Bible study course, before June 2022.
- To set a measurable target to reduce our carbon footprint by end-2022, to be achieved by end-2024, and to take part in the Eco-Church Initiative.

1. Opening prayer and apologies for absence

Meeting of Parishioners

2. Election of Churchwardens

(To be entitled to vote one must either be on the revised Electoral Roll or live in the parish and appear on the register of local government electors).

A nomination for election form will be displayed on the church notice boards and available on the parish website until immediately before this meeting. There are two Churchwarden positions.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

3. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 23 April 2023 with the Vicar's report for 2022.
To accept these minutes and the Vicar's report as a true record of the last APCM.
4. Electoral Roll.
To receive the updated electoral roll, which has been displayed in our three churches before this meeting. *Oral report by Ian Packe (Electoral Roll Officer)*
5. Proceedings of the PCC.
To receive a report on the proceedings of the PCC for 2023/2024.
6. Safeguarding.
To receive a report stating that the PCC has complied with its duty to have due regard to House of Bishops guidance on *Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults*
7. Financial Affairs of the Parish.
To receive a report on the financial affairs of the Parish.
8. Presentation of the Annual Accounts for 2023 and Budget for 2024.
To receive the accounts for 2023 and budget for 2024.
9. Independent Examiner.
To appoint an independent examiner for the PCC accounts for the coming year.
10. Fabric, Goods & Ornaments.
To receive a report on the Fabric, Goods & Ornaments for 2023 from the Churchwardens.
11. Election of lay representatives to the Deanery Synod (*To be entitled to vote one's name must appear on the revised electoral roll*). There is casual vacancy to fill for a residual period of two years.
12. Election of Lay Representatives to the PCC
(*To be entitled to vote one's name must appear on the revised electoral roll*).
There are six vacant places to be filled for three years.
13. Deanery Synod.
To receive a report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.
14. Vicar's Report.
To receive a report from the Vicar on the calendar year 2023.
15. To receive reports from PCC committees and other church groups.
16. Any Other Business.
Any other legitimate APCM business.
17. Date of next APCM.
To set a provisional date for the next APCM. 11 May 2025

Special meeting of the Parochial Church Council

(Only members of the incoming PCC are entitled to vote)

1. Election of Lay Vice Chair
2. Election of Deputy Church Wardens. Two places to fill.
3. Election of Honorary Treasurer
4. Election of Honorary Secretary
5. Appointment of Standing Committee
(The Standing Committee consists of the Chairman, Churchwardens, Deputy Church wardens, Treasurer and Secretary all ex-officio, plus two others). Two places to fill.
6. Appointment of Electoral Roll Officer
7. Co-options to PCC
(The incoming PCC is entitled to make up to three co-options, should they wish, now or during the year ahead)
8. Appointment of Sides People.
To appoint the sides people for the coming year as listed below.
9. Any other legitimate PCC business
10. Date of next PCC meeting.
The first meeting of the new PCC will be on Tuesday 14 May 2024 at 8.00pm in St John's Church. The first meeting of the new Standing Committee is on Tuesday 23 April at 8.00pm, by Zoom.

Nicholas King

PCC Secretary

Item 3

MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD IN ST JOHN'S CHURCH BOXMOOR FOLLOWING THE 10.00 AM SERVICE ON SUNDAY 23 APRIL 2023

Chair: The Reverend Michael Macey, Vicar of Boxmoor

Present: Clergy 1, Parishioners 49

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION/ FOLLOW-UP
1. Apologies for Absence	Apologies for absence had been received from Tony Beasley, Trevor Boyce, Peter Clayton, Katherine Cox, Marian Davies, Paul Davies, Andy Fisher, Dee Fisher, Mark Harbour, Nicholas King, Pat Moran, Ian Packe, Janet Packe, James Proehl, Cathy Shaw, and Rosie Shaw.	
2. Election of Churchwardens	Two nominations had been received to fill the two Churchwarden posts. These were for Job Rombout (nominated by Trevor Standen and seconded by Paul Davies), and for Marian Davies (nominated by Lorraine Ioannou and seconded by Yvonne Munford). Both were declared duly elected.	
3. Previous minutes and Vicar's report.	The minutes of the APCM held on the 24 April 2022 and the Vicar's report for 2021 were considered and agreed to be a true record.	
4. Electoral Roll	The report from the Electoral Roll Officer, Ian Packe, was read out by the Vicar. Overall, the total number on the Electoral Rolls for our Parish of 3 churches was 179 in 2023 compared with 177 in 2022. This was made up of 19 in 2023 for St Francis (16 in 2022) and 160 for St John's and St Stephen's (161 in 2022). There were no questions or comments from the meeting. Ian was thanked for his work. He had confirmed he was willing to continue in post and was duly re-elected.	
5. Proceedings of the PCC	The PCC Honorary Secretary, Richard Lyne, had provided a brief report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council during the year 2022/2023. There were no questions or comments, and the report was accepted by the meeting.	
6. Safeguarding	The Chairman drew attention to the Safeguarding Report provided by the outgoing Safeguarding Officer, Marian Davies. We are charged with compliance to the Church of England's "Promoting a Safer Church" action plan. The PCC has thus complied with its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It is both necessary	

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION/ FOLLOW-UP
	and important for anyone in a leadership role within the Parish to undertake the necessary training. There were no questions or comments. Rosie Ackroyd is taking over the role of Safeguarding Officer.	
7. Financial Affairs of the Parish	Chris Angell, PCC Honorary Treasurer, pointed out that, at first sight, the St John's & St Stephen's accounts looked very healthy with a surplus. However, this was the result of a one-off legacy and other donations for which we are most grateful. This will enable us to get through the coming year, prior to a major fundraising campaign to be associated with the 150 th anniversary of St John's church building in 2024. So far, in the first quarter of 2023, we are doing better than expected with healthy giving and hall income. St Francis' accounts showed a small deficit and action is being taken to ensure future break-even or better.	
8. Presentation of the Annual Accounts for 2021 and Budget for 2022	<p>Chris Angell formally drew attention to the 2022 accounts which had been confirmed as complete and correct by Roger Taylor, the Independent Examiner. There were no questions or comments. The Vicar warmly thanked Chris and Jo Fisher for their much-appreciated work on the accounts.</p> <p>Roger Taylor endorsed this and said we were blessed to have Chris as our Treasurer, who never made a mistake. It was a real pleasure to examine such well-prepared accounts.</p> <p>The acceptance of the accounts for 2022 was proposed by Chris Angell, seconded by Jo Fisher, and carried unanimously.</p>	
9. Independent Examiner	Roger Taylor confirmed that he was willing to undertake the examination of the 2023 accounts in due course and was thanked for his work and re-appointed as Independent Examiner.	
10. Fabric, Goods & Ornaments	The meeting received the churchwardens' report on the fabric, goods, and ornaments. The Chairman thanked the churchwardens for their report and for all their hard work in keeping the church and grounds well maintained.	
11. Election of Lay Representatives to the PCC	<p>The Chairman thanked all those whose terms of office had ended.</p> <p>There were three vacant places for Deanery Representatives for which we had received two nominations: Graham Gibbs (proposed by Jean Garner and seconded by Ian Packe) and Lorraine Ioannou (proposed by Julie Boyce and seconded by Graham Gibbs). There</p>	

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION/ FOLLOW-UP
	<p>being no further nominations, these two were declared duly elected.</p> <p>There were five vacant places for lay members of the PCC for which we had received four nominations: Jean Garner (proposed by Anne Lyne and seconded by Connie Shaw), Jo Fisher (proposed by Ian Packe and seconded by Janet Packe), Bob Hammond (proposed by Carole Lewis and seconded by Janet Packe), and Cathy Shaw (proposed by Jo Fisher and seconded by Richard Lyne). There being no further nominations, these four were declared duly elected.</p> <p>The Vicar warmly welcomed those elected and re-elected.</p>	
12. Deanery Synod	The report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod, provided by the Deanery Secretary, was received.	
13. Vicar's Report	The Vicar's report for 2022 was accepted as a written report. The Vicar was thanked most warmly for all he does among us, in a sensible and caring way, much of it unseen outside the church. He said that he felt blessed and proud to be our Vicar.	
14. Any other business	<p>Comments from the floor while considering the second APCM reports praised Anne Lyne for putting the daily CofE prayer up on Facebook, Sandy Cutts for her work on the thriving Friendship Teas, Sally Bates and Alan Munford for the parish magazine, Carole Lewis for all she does, and for the musical life of the Parish.</p> <p>Graham Liddle informed the meeting that despite the need to put up Hall fees this year, the increase had been largely accepted by our major customers.</p> <p>A gift was presented to Emma Macey, for being the power behind the throne!</p>	
15. Date of next APCM	The next APCM has been provisionally set to follow the 10.00am Parish Eucharist on Sunday 21 April 2024 in St John's Church.	
	The meeting closed at 11.36am.	

VICAR'S REPORT ON 2022

(given at the 2023 APCM)

I concluded last year's report by stating:

... [It] goes to show how far we have come in 2021 from the void which was created in 2020 when we were ordered to 'stay at home' and lock our churches. Rebuilding is underway. Of course more was going on behind the scenes than I am able to express succinctly here, and more will be required to counterbalance the effects of the pandemic but we need to remember this is a marathon not a sprint. It is likely that 2022 and the years that follow will throw-up new and unexpected challenges, not least as Covid-19 continues to evolve and mutate. But we will need to find ways to live with the virus, continuing to help and encourage those who are struggling and working towards a brighter, more hope-filled future. May the Lord bless us in this task as we go about his work transforming communities, making new disciples, and going deeper into his love.

As predicted, 2022 was very much a year of re-building, re-engaging, re-opening. Remarkably – considering that the rise of the then new Covid variant, Omicron, our churches remained open for the entire year. For the first time in 2 years nothing was cancelled due to a spike in infections or the Government imposing new regulations. That's not to say everything felt 'normal' but rather that our communal life and worship was slowly recovering. This was perhaps first characterised by the running and completion of a Lent Course – in person, in its entirety. Attendance was small, but we had started to do things again. The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party was a triumph with hoards of children whilst adults enjoyed a Cocktail Evening.

Lent gave way to Easter which saw worshippers return in their droves. The pandemic necessity of lighting the Easter flame outside inspired us to do the same in 2022... but through choice – a public witness to the Resurrection, and the large numbers showed that social distancing was no longer a necessity. Gradually, from Easter onwards, our congregations began to feel more confident and comfortable in Church. At the Feast of Corpus Christi we reintroduce the option to receive the Blood of Christ. To begin with this was met with scepticism and a little fear, but come the end of the year at least 75% of the congregation were taking the Sacrament in both kinds.

Christmas 2022 was much more like a pre-pandemic Christmas. We returned to our 'usual' pattern of services which were all well attended. For some of our more popular services we retained the ticketing element which seems to be greatly appreciated by worshippers who prefer knowing they do not need to queue in the rain to get a seat.

But these weren't the only great liturgical events of the year. In June we celebrated the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II with a wonderful choral service and lunch – full of joy and thanksgiving for her long reign, only for our joy to be turned to grief in September with the death of Her Late Majesty, marking her extraordinary life of service with our own Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving on the eve of the State Funeral.

The liturgical life of this Parish is very varied; each of our Churches has their own style and ways of worshipping – for which we should be thankful. One of the greatest assets we possess is our musical heritage and throughout 2022 our Choir and musicians – in all 3 churches – did not disappoint. Although the choir primarily sang at evening services, the standard mirrored that on offer at Cathedrals and Greater Churches up and down the Land. The PCC recommitted to maintaining our musical tradition and to seeking new ways to enhance our musical life. The desire to have the choir back singing at the Parish Eucharist remains but work needs to be done to ensure that sufficient choristers are available to sing each week. I remain indebted to the skill and talent offered by our

musicians – in all our churches – but especially Keith our Director of Music who always seems to know how to get the best out of our choir. I should also highlight our Junior Choir who are likewise going from strength to strength, first under Katherine’s leadership, and then under Helen’s whilst Katherine has been on maternity leave. Our Junior Choir brings a joy and freshness to our All Age Eucharist which I know is deeply appreciated.

Part of the recovery process in 2022 was to try and get our social life going again. Shrove Tuesday and the Jubilee lunch events formed part of this, but other events like the Annual Cricket Match (which we narrowly lost – again!), our Summer and Christmas Fayres, the Harvest Quiz and the Christmas Tree Festival all brought people together. St Francis also held a successful ‘Open Day’ to mark their Patronal Festival. As the year wore on, confidence definitely returned, which has been wonderful to see and experience. This perhaps has been seen most in the return of Friendship Teas which, when it first returned had 6 guests but come December was up to nearer 30. Thank you to everyone who has helped at, or attended these social events. They have helped us reconnect with each other and opened up the possibility to pray for each other.

The incredibly hot summer of 2022 brought both challenges and opportunities – for once we needed to work out how we could stay cool in church! But our open doors also enabled people to join our worship as they passed by. By the end of 2022 it was particularly pleasing to see new people joining our worshipping community on a weekly basis and sticking with us. God is at work among us in calling people to worship him; our task is to welcome them and help them to take their place within the household of faith. It was therefore very pleasing to host the Deanery Confirmation Service in November when 6 people from this Parish were Confirmed and 2 were Baptised by Bishop Christine.

As already mentioned, it was pleasing to hold a Lent Course again in its entirety. But this was not the only time we attempted to ‘go deeper into God’. As a Parish we took part in the *Living in Love and Faith conversations* hosted by the Deanery. This was a way for the Church of England to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches on issues related to human sexuality and gender. But we also held a sermon series in the autumn on The Sacraments of The Church. For many, it was a long overdue refresher of their own confirmation classes; for others it was something new; but I hope for all it was a way of understanding how God imparts his Grace to us through the ministries of his holy Church.

One particular joy – although born out of great pain and sadness – was the decision to open our Curatage to a Ukrainian family seeking refuge following the Russian invasion of Ukraine earlier in the year. My sincere thanks to our Churchwardens who worked extremely hard to facilitate this and who have helped this family to settle into the life of the Parish.

Another joy for me, personally, was the development of a partnership with The Hemel Hempstead School where I welcomed every Year 7 class (210 children) and both RE GCSE classes (60 teenagers) to St John’s for sessions to help them with their curriculum and understanding. In recent years it has been a struggle to be involved with teenagers but this looks like an enduring partnership. Our links with the Primary Schools and Prep Schools in the Parish remains strong with regular visits, assemblies, and services.

One of the biggest concerns of 2022, and the difficulty of re-opening following lockdown, has been Pastoral Care of everyone. Pre-pandemic there were 2 clergy, assisted by a Lay Reader and a willing Pastoral Group who would keep an eye on people and take the Sacrament to people’s homes. Canon Ruth was in the process of restructuring this group when the pandemic hit and then she retired. Now, we are left with one priest, a Lay Reader, and a Pastoral Group that needs re-instigating. On the plus side, our telephone network worked incredibly well during the pandemic in maintaining contact and friendships. An attempt to continue this whilst re-opening took place during 2022 but the

overwhelming response was that people wanted to reconnect in person via informal means. A task for 2023 will be to oversee the re-creation of a Pastoral Group that works for our current situation.

Our re-opening has not all been plain sailing. For instance, the usual Pastoral Offices of the Church (Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals) have not yet returned in number to the levels expected pre-pandemic. In 2022 7 weddings, 28 baptisms, and 31 funerals or memorial services were held in the Parish/conducted by the ministry team. This compares to 7 weddings, 14 baptisms, and 31 funerals or memorial services in 2021, and 4 weddings, 7 baptisms, and 30 funerals (most of which were at the Crem) in 2020. It is interesting to note that despite the national death rate still being higher than normal in these years our funeral ministry has shrunk. This has nothing to do with the ministry we offer (which we know to be greatly appreciated) but more to do with an increase in funerals conducted by Civil Celebrants and 'Straight to Crem' funerals where no funeral or minister is required. I suspect the rise in locations available for Weddings has also negatively impacted our position. Inevitably we did say 'farewell' to some of our friends in 2022, amongst them Ian Williams, Margaret Delph, Beryl King, Jean Stevens, Leslie Lunn, Rosemary Parish, and Una Higson. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

I would be lying if I said that 2022 had not taken a huge amount of energy from me as we tried to emerge into a re-opened society and Church. It was a hard year. But as I have said before, the task of ministry and our common goal of witnessing to Jesus are always made easier by our partnership in the Gospel. I should like to express my sincere thanks to our visiting clergy who enable worship to take place when I am either not available or leading worship in a different church; to Carole for her insightful preaching and considerable sharing of the pastoral load; and our Lay Leaders of Worship for their prayerful leadership of the flock at St Stephen's. I should also like to thank our churchwardens, Marian and Job, for the unstinting support I receive from them and who do an incredible amount for the life of the parish. My thanks and gratitude also go to myriads of others (the list is too long to name you all) who help our common task with children and young people, communicating our services/events and message, singing God's praise, maintaining and cleaning our churches and grounds, fundraising, enabling fellowship, financial planning, governance and safeguarding, administration and forward planning, pastoral care, and offering hospitality and welcome. Thank you to all of you for making our Parish the joy it is to minister within. I remain incredibly proud to be called to be your Vicar, and I hope and pray that I will continue to be able to serve with and among you for a long time to come. Please continue to pray for me in the ministry laid out before me.

My enduring memory of 2022 will be one of hope and possibility, mingled with hard work, realism, and slow progress. I remain confident that we will emerge more fully to being the Church we can be and want to be in 2023 but I am under no illusion as to the scale of the task. Mercifully, through prayer and trust, God will bring to fruition all that he has planned for us as we share in the work of his Kingdom. May the Lord continue to bless us in this task and may the life and joy of the risen Christ be ours as we live the Easter faith, for:

Alleluia! Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed. Alleluia!

In Christ,

Item 5

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) 2023/4

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), as elected at the 2023 APCM, has met in alternate months. Written minutes are kept of all PCC meetings and these are distributed to all PCC members and to any parishioner on the church electoral roll upon request. A shortened version of the PCC minutes is published in the church magazine when possible and appropriate. Six ordinary PCC meetings and one procedural meeting to appoint officers were held during 2023/4, with an average attendance of 13.5 out of 21 or 22. During the year, Wilf Stepto was co-opted as a Deanery Synod representative and Nicholas King as Hon Secretary, both filling casual vacancies which had arisen at the 2023 APCM, but Sandy Cutts stood down as a PCC member for personal reasons. Rosie Akeroyd succeeded Marian Davies as Safeguarding Officer.

There were also four meetings of the PCC Standing Committee in intermediate months to progress interim matters.

The PCC routinely approves minutes of previous meetings, monitors progress on action points, and receives reports from its committees. It also ratifies decisions taken by the Standing Committee through approval of their minutes. Reports from the Vicar, Churchwardens and Treasurer have been received at each meeting. Progress on our current Mission Action Plan has also been monitored; the fitness for purpose of the present MAP is to be reviewed at the first meeting of the 2024/5 year. Reports have also been regularly received at each meeting from our daughter churches of St Francis and St Stephen, on the activities of the Deanery Synod, Pray Hemel, Churches Together, and the associated Music at St John's organisation.

Major issues considered during the year have included monitoring the return to post-pandemic conditions, where gradual growth is taking place month by month, especially at and following major festivals. The demography of our congregation however remains a matter of some concern, despite attempts to improve our profile amongst younger members of the parish. Upgrading of the installation of new streaming equipment into St John's church (the subject of the 2021 Easter Appeal) and the related need for a high-speed fibre internet connection has been a regular topic, not yet fully-realised, and safeguarding procedures have been reviewed and updated following the introduction of new rules by the Diocese. Plans have also been discussed to mark the 150th anniversary of the St John's building during 2024. Discussion of our eco-church situation has been a regular topic, and will be re-visited in depth at the May 2024 meeting.

Parish finances have been scrutinised closely during the year; the Treasurer reports more fully on these elsewhere. Two substantial legacies have helped to keep us afloat, but it is preferred as a matter of principle to ring-fence legacies for specific projects, rather than to use them to ease our regular cashflow. The PCC has approved the annual accounts for 2023 and the budget for 2024 for presentation to the APCM.

Nicholas King
PCC Honorary Secretary

Item 6

Safeguarding Report to APCM April 2024

The Parish is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and to supporting those who have been victims of abuse, as well as those who may present a risk to others. We affirm the 'Whole Church' approach to safeguarding, in that we believe that the care and protection of those involved in church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the Church.

The PCC has complied with the duty to have "due regard" to the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at every PCC meeting. The PCC last reviewed the safeguarding action plan on 9 January 2024. The procedure for dealing with safeguarding allegations or concerns was reviewed on 14 November 2023 and has been shared with all activity leaders to cascade to their teams.

All members of the PCC completed the appropriate safeguarding training over the course of the past year. Safeguarding information is displayed in all three churches and on the church website, with information including contact details for the Vicar, Parish Safeguarding Officer and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Rosie Akeroyd

Parish Safeguarding Officer

Item 7

Report on the Financial Affairs of the Parish 2023

The attached accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023 have been approved by the PCC for presentation at the APCM and independently examined by Roger Taylor. Both those for St John's and St Stephen's and those for St Francis' have been prepared in the format required by the Church Accounting Regulations 1997, detailing gross income and expenditure. A consolidated Parish Report and Accounts for 2023 will be prepared for submission to the Charity Commission. Results for 2023 and Budgets for 2024 are also provided in the simpler Management Accounts format.

My thanks go once again to Janet Packe for dealing with St John's weekly and miscellaneous takings; to Garth Bridgwood for performing the role of Covenants secretary; to Hilary Kemp for managing the office fees account; to Graham Liddle for managing St John's Hall bookings and income; to Alan Munford and Sally Bates for collecting revenues from Magazine sales and advertising respectively; to Jean Garner for looking after the St Stephen's Hall and Church income and expenditure; to Jo Fisher for maintaining the accounts for St Francis; to Paul Davies for managing the bookings of St Francis Church Hall; to all involved in Fundraising and finally to Roger Taylor for taking on the independent examination of the final accounts.

St Francis's accounts show a small deficit whilst at St John's and St Stephen's the budgeted deficit for 2023 was avoided as a result of the receipt of some £15,000 from legacies. The PCC prefer where possible to use legacy monies for fabric projects rather than to cover day to day shortfalls and were able to transfer £10,000 to the Fabric Fund for this purpose without jeopardising the position on General Fund. Nearly all regular sources of income showed an improvement over 2022 but day to day expenditure increased significantly, particularly maintenance, printing, and energy costs. The latter were also impacted by erroneous billing by, and direct debit payments to, suppliers old and new, problems which the Churchwardens and Finance Committee have been struggling to resolve.

The energy issues also impacted St Francis's accounts and reserves have been made in both sets of accounts for anticipated charges and refunds.

2024 will be St John's 150th Anniversary and major celebrations are being planned together with various Fundraising campaigns. However, general fund budgets for 2024 envisage continuing deficit positions with attempts to "balance the books" through a major stewardship campaign being deferred further to 2025 in view of the continuing impact of the current cost of living crisis on household budgets.

At St John's the Fabric Fund was used to pay for work to enhance the new broadcast system, although the full benefits still await optical fibre links reaching the church. Stonework repairs identified as urgent at the last Quinquennial inspection were completed.

Chris Angell

Honorary Treasurer

March 2024

Item 8

Please see separate schedules.

Item 10

Churchwardens' report 2023

We very much appreciate all the support from the congregation and others in maintaining the fabric of the three Parish churches, the cleaning and the maintenance of the building, the maintenance of the garden and the grounds around our building, many thanks to all.

These Annual checks were carried out and were all satisfactory in all three churches.

- Lightning conductor
- Fire safety appliances
- PAT testing

The 5-year Electrical Installation Condition report was carried out satisfactorily at St John's. It was carried out at St Francis and St Stephens the previous year.

St Johns - Boxmoor

Some of the stonework around the East window was eroded and repaired in February by Corinthian stone.

There have been various plumbing incidents, there was a blockage in the drains under the hall which was cleared by a contractor. The disabled toilet at the back of church had a new cistern installed.

There was a leak in the water supply in the hall kitchen which meant there was no water or heat on one November weekend. This was partially paid for by insurance.

Pests have become more obvious, a squirrels drey was found in the church containing four babies. Hillary whilst in the office heard noise caused by some creature and a pest control firm were brought in. A glis-glis was caught in the choir vestry and also in the hall loft, the glis-glis hibernate we must be prepared for when they wake up. There was a large wasp's nest above the hall, which had to be destroyed.

The choir stalls have been refurbished, re-enforced and are now sturdier and moveable which provides more flexibility. As an ongoing project we have installed 5mm acrylic secondary glazing in the Lady Chapel and on the lower North and South windows, due to be completed before the end of April. The primary reason is to insulate the building, reduce heat loss and protect the windows.

The recording and AV streaming equipment works and provides good quality recording, we still have an issue with the mobile broadband stability and is an ongoing concern, this is being pursued with the suppliers. Previously we have been in touch with Openreach and explored the potential of a fibre broadband connection but this is currently not available.

The grounds are in well maintained order, the grass in the garden of remembrance is regularly cut and the roses are all trimmed, the memory plaques will be cleaned and varnished later this year. The north side garden is replanted and the trees in the copse have been trimmed and the general area has been tidied. Outstanding is the cleaning of the lower gutters which is planned in the near future.

In October a car ran into the Church boundary wall near St John's Road and Heath Lane destroying a substantial section, the wall being part of a grade 2 list building was restored by Corinthian stone. The cost of this was covered by the driver's insurance.

St Stephen - Chaulden

Little to report on St Stephen, the gutter is due to be cleaned and the flat roof above the porch will be resealed with bitumen, the light in the porch will be replaced. The outside handrail by the front steps has been replaced.

We are waiting for an appointment date with the BGL contractor to install a SMART meter later this year.

St Francis - Hammerfield

St Francis is in need of substantial effort of maintenance, the work has been started on the roof and some of the walls but needs to be continued. The work is weather dependant and both the North and South flat roofs need bitumen treatment and all the gutters need cleaning and fixing. Some tops of the walls require repointing where we have ingress of water and we also paint the wooden windows both outside and inside.

The inside walls require painting with particular attention of the back/east wall which is prone to damp and requires preparation and special paint/treatment. The gates and railing require painting as well as the outside and inside walls by the entrance of the church and the hall.

Energy

Our **energy** is supplied by British Gas Light and SSE Scottish Hydro

BGL contacts provide Electricity to St John, St Stephen and St Francis plus the Gas supply to St Francis.

BGL Fuel mix (Electricity) – Environment goals

Mix of fuels used to generate the electricity and their environmental impact.

April 2022 - March 2023.

• Energy source	British Gas Trading Ltd	UK Average
• Coal	2%	3%
• Natural Gas	17%	39%
• Nuclear	26%	14%
• Renewable	54%	41%

- Other 1% 3%
- CO2 emissions 88 g/kWh 199 g/kWh
- High-level radioactive waste 0.0018 g/kWh 0.001 g/kWh

SSE maintains the supply of Gas to St John

Quinquennial Inspection 2024

This year we are due the quinquennial inspection by our architect, this no doubt will provide an additional list of jobs to maintain the fabric of our building to the required standards.

If there are any volunteers interest to help with the maintenance of our building than please let the vicar or the churchwarden know: we are particular interested in electricians, plumber, carpenters, building and repair skills and anybody with access to high-level towers to access the high level at St John and St Francis.

Report by Marian Davies, Job Rombout, Churchwardens

Item 13

Report of Deanery Synod proceedings (2023 - 2024)

This report covers the proceedings of the Hemel Hempstead Deanery Synod for the period from March 2023 to February 2024. During the year there were three Deanery Synod meetings, covering a variety of different topics. The key areas of discussion are reported below:

Wednesday 5th July 2023 at St John's Boxmoor

As this was the first synod meeting of the new triennium, there were several new lay representatives present who had been recently elected at parish APCMs. The meeting took the form of a welcome to those new lay members, and to the new member of clergy Matt Renyard recently installed in St Barnabas, in the Hemel team.

The Deanery Treasurer Peter Bladon reported on deanery expenditure so far this year. He also explained the extremely straightforward nature of the Deanery accounts, advising he is looking forward to handing over the role of Deanery treasurer during the year, and invited anyone interested in taking it over to discuss it with him.

We shared news from each parish over refreshments and closed the meeting with compline.

Thursday 19th October 2023 at St Alban Warners End

Synod welcomed The Reverend Canon Will Gibbs, Canon for Mission and Pastoral Care, St Albans Cathedral, who spoke on 2 topics – firstly on Wellbeing within the church, with particular reference to clergy wellbeing, and secondly, he consulted the group to help establish a vision statement for St Albans Cathedral for the coming year.

The talk on Wellbeing was of great interest, and he shared some detail of the resources available to clergy and others in leadership roles in the life of our churches. There is a Wellbeing group in the diocese of which he is chair, and the group is endeavouring to ensure all are aware of what is available to support clergy, and also to create a good culture where all can speak honestly & openly about wellbeing without fear of being judged.

The cathedral is in the process of updating its MAP – the last one having been written in a room by a few people. For this update, the team is talking and consulting widely around the diocese on what people feel the purpose is of the cathedral, what is valued, and how we would like the cathedral to change the world – or at least our small part of it.

The Deanery Treasurer Peter Bladon reported on deanery expenditure so far this year.

We shared one challenge and one thing to be thankful for from each parish and closed the meeting with compline.

Tuesday 27th February 2024 at Holy Trinity Leverstock Green

We welcomed Suzanne Clarkson and Jacob Kurien from the Management Group of the diocesan Dispute Advisory Service who gave a very interesting presentation about the work of the service and the support they can provide, helping parishes to resolve situations and problems involving conflict. The advisers are all independent volunteers who have been trained in conflict resolution and the service is completely confidential.

The Deanery Treasurer Peter Bladon presented his report on expenditure for 2023, and on Parish Share payments made by each of the churches in 2023.

We shared news from the parishes, including one joy and one challenge from each.

As this was Rev. Lizzie Hood's last synod before her retirement, we presented her with some flowers and a card to thank her for all she has given to the deanery.

Further Deanery meetings planned this year:

Deanery Synod

Tuesday 18th June

Tuesday 22nd October

Standing & Pastoral Committee

Wednesday 15th May

Wednesday 25th September

Carolyn Andrews *Deanery Secretary*

Item 14

VICAR'S REPORT ON 2023

(to be given at the 2024 APCM)

For the most part, 2023 was an uneventful year within the life of the Parish. Recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic continued, and by the end of the year the PCC had decided it has reached its MAP goal to return the parish to 'normal'. Of course, there are always some things some people want to see returned that haven't but in general we are back to life as normal and able to concentrate on moving forward as a Church. A bishop said to me that we are in this position because we opened as soon as we could and tried to offer as near to 'normal' service as possible. My sincere thanks to all who have helped us weather this storm and organised rotas and volunteers with a dwindling pool of helpers.

As in 2022, we spent quite a lot of time and energy re-engaging with one another, with God, and with our community partners – particularly our schools and Council through regular visits to schools, giving out Bibles to Children, teaching, and leading services, and hosting the Mayor's Civic Service in May. We held regular social events throughout the year: a Wine & Cheese evening and a couple of quizzes; Friendship Teas grew; coffee was offered after every service; and St John's Lunch returned. We won our annual Cricket match against the Boxmoor Occasionals (the score is now 2-1 to the Occasionals but I hope it will be 2-2 in 2024!).

We re-engaged with God through our Lent Course *Images of Christ* which I wrote specifically for us and through a Sermon Series on Mission and Evangelism. Some of our number combined with the folk at St Mary's in the Old Town and went on pilgrimage to Walsingham – the first such pilgrimage in many years and one which we hope will become a regular event and be the springboard for other pilgrimages. Later in the year 5 members of the congregation were Confirmed as members of the Church – the body of Christ – and really engaged with the preparation sessions. We hosted guest preachers at Choral Evensong – among them the new Archdeacon of St Albans and familiar faces in Canon James Reveley (former vicar) and the Reverend Laretta Wilson (former curate).

One constant throughout the year was the sincerity and joy within which we worshipped almighty God. We have remained faithful to our inheritance whilst accepting that change to our liturgies is possible and to be welcomed. This has been done with integrity in all our churches – perhaps this is why, for the second year running, we have seen new faces every week and new people becoming regular members of our worshipping community. A particular highlight has been the sustained progress our choirs have made over the last year under the direction of Keith Beniston, our Director of Music, and Helen Isaacs, leader of the Junior Choir. Our Junior Choir never cease to bring joy and life to our All Age Eucharist each month, whilst the Adult Choir rival the quality offered by cathedral musicians. Choral Evensong is simply a delight to attend – and that's not including the special services like Mozart's *Requiem*, the annual Service of Thanksgiving for the Departed, the service in Thanksgiving for the Coronation of HM King Charles III, or our Christmas Carol Service – all of which were sensational... but also just what we do. It would be lovely to see more members of our worshipping community taking advantage of the musical calibre on offer in the coming year; and it should not be forgotten that work is still ongoing to reintroduce an adult choir during our morning worship at St John's.

Over recent years I have tended to use some rather crude statistics to provide a flavour of our strengths and weakness as worshipping communities within the Parish. Although this can be helpful in giving a snapshot of the year, statistics can also be very misleading. They do not allow for anomalies (like a pandemic) or changes in behaviour. When we compare our Electoral Roll figures with those of 5 or 10 years ago they show that we have diminished as a worshipping community – partly because the entire Roll was re-written a few years ago but also because a) the qualifying connections to marry

in a parish church have changed – not to mention our share in the “weddings market” has decreased; and b) people (in general) do not like to sign-up to things. If we take a look at weekly attendance we can see that numbers likewise are down but this does not take into consideration those for whom ‘regular attendance’ is once or twice a month when in former years it was every Sunday, perhaps twice!

These statistics could make us downcast. But, speaking as someone who sees all our congregations, I can confirm that the number of different faces we see within our worshipping communities each month has grown. We are a growing parish! Not outrageously or exponentially but steadily and faithfully. For this we need to give thanks to God - for he is the agent of this growth - and we need to acknowledge our part as labourers in God’s mission field in creating an atmosphere of welcome and hospitality, coupled with worship where we expect to meet with God and a desire to grow in knowledge and love of his holy name.

As a community it is always a joy to celebrate some of the more joyful transitions in life. In 2023 we celebrated with many people (too many to list) who passed significant birthdays at both ends of the scale! We also shared in the love and joy of James and Zoë Proehl (nee Harbour) as they wed having met as choristers many years ago, and in the baptism of Baby George Cox (Boyce). Sadly, we also sadly farewell to some longstanding members of the community (Godfrey Rock and Dorothy Freeman) alongside community family members. But as Easter People our hope and joy is that we will see them again in the resurrection.

2023 also saw a change of personnel in the Parish Office. Our longstanding administrator, Hilary Kemp, was signed-off sick for 4 months following brain surgery, during which time we are most grateful to Penny Pomroy for deputising for her. Upon her return to work, Hilary, who is also a self-supporting minister (hence why she was working in the Office) was then appointed to a new ministry in Devon to begin at the start 2024. Thus followed an appointment process from which we appointed Deniece Colley who took up her duties likewise at the start of 2024. I should like to put on record my sincere thanks to Hilary and Penny for their contribution to our common life, and my best wishes to Hilary as she starts her new ministry.

Over the past year I have come to realisation again that it is the small things that makes this Parish work; makes it the joy it is to minister and worship within. The small things matter. And so many of you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, contribute in so many and varied ways to our common life that it would be impossible to list you all by name. That’s not to say there isn’t room for more helpers, but that your contribution is gratefully received, and to you all I would like to thank you most sincerely for all that you do and give to the life of this Parish. This is your Parish... and by your efforts you are making this a welcoming, well kept, active, caring, dignified, and spiritually refreshed Parish. Whether you help with our Comms Team and our regular Magazine, or you visit/call/give Communion to the sick or housebound; or are a flower arranger, sidesperson, reader, server, intercessor, choir member, Baptism helper, cleaner, gardener, card deliverer, caterer, chauffeur, Eucharistic Minister, fundraiser, treasure, secretary, etc; I am most grateful for all that you do and for the way that you do it. Thank you.

I should also like to thank Carole and our wonderful team of retired priests who assist us so ably and ensure that worship is offered each week and sermons are given that point us to God and enrich our thinking as disciples of Christ in this generation. My thanks also go to my family for their continued support and love as they enable me to be the priest God has called me to be among you.

Looking ahead, 2024 is set to be a big year in the life of the Parish as we mark our 150th anniversary in a year of jubilee. Much planning has already taken place and will continue as we prepare to give thanks

to God for St John's as a House of Prayer where many of us have been formed and nurtured as disciples of Christ. There will be a celebratory Eucharist lead by the Bishop of St Albans in May, and an Exhibition in flowers, pictures, and artefacts in June, and hopefully a few other celebrations. So much has happened in the life of this Parish over the last 150 years and I'm sure our hope and prayer is that it will continue again for the next 150 years. May the Lord continue to bless us in his service and enable us to be Easter people all year round as we glory in our risen and ascended Lord, for:

Alleluia! Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed. Alleluia!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the name is a single, slightly curved horizontal line that extends to the right.

Item 15

Please see separate booklet.

PCC meeting item 8

Paul Davies has provided this list. He has removed Alan and Sue Proehl; and although James often appears, he is not thought to do sides duty.

Rosie Akeroyd
Chris Angell
Sally Bates
Garth Bridgwood
Marion Cowe
Alan Darvill
Marian Davies
Jo Fisher
Richard Foenander
Philippa Graham
Bob Hammond
Jean Hammond
Mark Harbour
Catherine Holness
Marion Howard
Andreas Ioannou
Lorraine Ioannou
Noel James
Sheila James
Marion King
Graham Liddle
Eileen Martin
Pat Moran
Alan Munford
Yvonne Munford
Ian Packe
Janet Packe
Rob Porter
Yolanda Porter
Cathy Shaw
Di Tovey
Muriel Williams

Sally has been inactive for some time and may wish to stand down formally. Muriel Williams was inactive for some time and then mentioned to Marian that she would resume – but not seen since. Marion Cowe will hopefully resume soon?