



# The Parish of Boxmoor

St John's Boxmoor,

St Stephen's Chaulden & St Francis' Hammerfield

## Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting

in St John's Church, Boxmoor

Sunday 4 May 2025 at 11am  
following the Parish Eucharist

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# ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS

Sunday 4 May 2025

at 11am following the Parish Eucharist in St John's Church

## The Goals in our 2025-2027 Mission Action Plan are :

- To identify and engage a partner organisation in assisting us to deliver an appropriately resourced Youth Group by the end of June 2025; to create a church-based Youth Club, meeting regularly, with a dependable attendance of more than ten, to be operating by the end of 2025.
- To arrange and conduct a Discipleship course for existing members of the Church and an Enquirers course for new people before June 2025; to set up a time-line of study and nurture courses for the next two years with a variety of offerings with the hope that better awareness/publicity will enable people to commit/plan to attend sessions.
- To obtain Silver Eco-Church status by the end of 2026 and Gold award by the end of 2030; to determine, by the end of 2025, the feasibility of installing solar panels on the roof of St John's in a move to a greener, more sustainable source of energy. This will necessarily involve discussions with the DAC, solar power engineers, and with our own Finance Committee regarding budget implications; and to have built new relationships with local organisations engaged with sustainability work and to instil in the church and congregation the 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' practice.

## Parochial Church Council members 2024/5

(\* : members of Standing Committee)

### *Ex officio*

...Revd Mike Macey *Vicar\**  
Marian Davies *Churchwarden\**  
Job Rombout *Churchwarden\**  
Carole Lewis *Reader\**

### *Three Deanery Synod representatives (until 2026)*

Graham Gibbs  
Lorraine Ioannou  
Wilf Stepto

### *Fifteen lay members (terms of office as shown)*

Chris Angell *(until 2027) Hon Treasurer\**  
Rosie Akeroyd *(until 2025) Safeguarding Officer*  
Jo Fisher *(until 2026) Deputy Churchwarden\**  
Jean Garner *(until 2026)*  
Bob Hammond *(until 2026)*  
Mark Harbour *(until 2025) Electoral Roll Officer*  
Nicholas King *(until 2027) Hon Secretary\**  
Anne Lyne *(until 2027)*  
Jason Plessas *(until 2027)*  
James Proehl *(until 2027)\**  
Cathy Shaw *(until 2026)*  
Rosie Shaw *(until 2025) Deputy Churchwarden\**  
Trevor Standen *(until 2027)*  
Di Tovey *(until 2025)*  
Vacancy

## **AGENDA**

### **Meeting of Parishioners**

1. Opening prayer and apologies for absence.
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) The statutory notice of nomination for two Churchwardens to be elected has been displayed on the church notice boards until immediately before this meeting.
  - b) Church Representation Rules prescribe that no individual should serve for more than six consecutive years unless by special resolution of an Annual Meeting of Parishioners. Both nominees having exceeded this limit, the advice of the diocese is that the meeting must firstly pass a resolution to agree that Section 3 of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 "Disqualification after six periods of office" shall not apply in relation to this parish. This resolution may be rescinded by a subsequent Annual Meeting of Parishioners.
  - c) Nominations received are :  
Job Rombout, proposed by Yvonne Laidlaw and seconded by Philip Barton;  
Marian Davies, proposed by Di Tovey and seconded by Lorraine Ioannou.

### **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

1. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 21 April 2024 with the Vicar's report for 2023.  
To accept these minutes and the Vicar's report as a true record of the last APCM.
2. Electoral Roll.  
To receive a report on the revised electoral roll, which has been displayed in our three churches for two weeks prior to this meeting.
3. Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC).  
To receive a report on the proceedings of the PCC for 2024/5.
4. Safeguarding.  
To receive a report confirming that the PCC has complied with its duty to have due regard to House of Bishops guidance on *Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults*.
5. Financial Affairs of the Parish.  
To receive a report on the financial affairs of the Parish (see Book 2).
6. Presentation of the Annual Accounts for 2024 and Budgets for 2025.  
To receive the accounts for 2024 and budgets for 2025 (see Book 2).
7. Independent Examiner.  
To appoint an independent examiner for the PCC accounts for the coming year.
8. Fabric, Goods & Ornaments.  
To receive a report on the Fabric, Goods & Ornaments for 2024 from the Churchwardens.

9. Election of lay representatives to the Deanery Synod.  
*To be entitled to vote one's name must appear on the revised electoral roll.*  
No nominations are necessary this year. The present representatives (Graham Gibbs, Lorraine Ioannou and Wilf Stepto) remain in post until 30 June 2026.
10. Election of Lay Representatives to the PCC.  
*To be entitled to vote one's name must appear on the revised electoral roll.*
  - a) Because our Electoral Roll has fallen below 200, the number of lay representatives on the PCC has to be reduced from fifteen to twelve, with immediate effect. There are therefore two vacant places to be filled for three years. Nominations received are :  
Rosie Akeroyd, proposed by Lucy Grayson and seconded by Richard Grayson;  
Mark Harbour, proposed by Andy Fisher and seconded by Ian Packe;  
Rosie Shaw, proposed by Mark Harbour and seconded by Dee Fisher;  
Di Tovey, proposed by Lorraine Ioannou and seconded by Marian Davies.
  - b) An election is necessary, the conduct of which will be explained at the meeting.
  - c) Notice is given, pursuant to paragraph M15(k) of the Church Representation Rules, that the two unsuccessful candidates will be co-opted onto the PCC for a period of one year. If necessary, one of these will be the Safeguarding Officer, pending authority for this to be an *ex officio* appointment.
  - d) The drawing of lots is necessary at any APCM when more than one-third of the lay representative places are available, to determine the period (one, two or three years) for which each candidate is elected, so as to even out the periodicity of renewals. That does not apply this year.
11. Deanery Synod.  
To receive a report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.
12. Vicar's Report.  
To receive a report from the Vicar on the calendar year 2024.
13. To receive reports from PCC committees and other church groups (see Book 3).
14. Any Other Business.  
Any other legitimate APCM business.
15. Date of next APCM.  
To set a provisional date for the next APCM : 3 May 2026.



## The Parish of Boxmoor

St John's Boxmoor,  
St Stephen's Chaulden & St Francis' Hammerfield

### 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.

### MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD IN ST JOHN'S CHURCH BOXMOOR FOLLOWING THE 10.00 AM SERVICE ON SUNDAY 21 APRIL 2024

**Chair : The Reverend Michael Macey, Vicar of Boxmoor**

**Present : Clergy 1, Parishioners 39**

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION/ FOLLOW-UP
<b>1. Apologies for Absence</b>	Apologies for absence had been received from Trevor Boyce, Katherine Cox, Shelagh Hacket, Jean Hammond, James Proehl, Job Rombout, Di Tovey, Rae Warby.	
<b>Meeting of Parishioners</b> <b>2. Election of Churchwardens</b>	Two nominations had been received to fill the two Churchwarden posts for the coming year. These were for <b>Marian Davies</b> (nominated by Graham Gibbs and seconded by Jean Garner) and <b>Job Rombout</b> (nominated by Trevor Standen and seconded by Wilf Stepto). Both were declared duly elected.	

<b><u>Annual Parochial Church Meeting</u></b>  <b>3. Previous minutes and Vicar's report</b>	<p>The minutes of the APCM held on 23 April 2023 and the Vicar's report for 2022 were considered and agreed to be a true record.</p>	
<b>4. Electoral Roll</b>	<p>Ian Packe, Electoral Roll Officer, read out his report. Overall, the total number on the Electoral Rolls for our Parish of three churches is 182 compared with 179 in 2023. This comprises 19 for St Francis (unchanged from 2023) and 163 for St John's and St Stephen's (160 in 2023). The Vicar mentioned the importance of continuing to have contact details for parishioners who, for various reasons, are unable to attend on a regular basis. There were no questions or comments from the meeting. Ian has decided to stand down from his post, and was thanked for his work over the past eleven years.</p>	
<b>5. Proceedings of the PCC</b>	<p>The PCC Honorary Secretary, Nicholas King, had provided a brief report of the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council during the year 2023/4. There were no questions or comments, and the report was accepted by the meeting.</p>	
<b>6. Safeguarding</b>	<p>The Chairman drew attention to the Safeguarding Report provided by Rosie Akeroyd, Safeguarding Officer. We are tasked to comply with the Church of England's "Promoting a Safer Church" action plan. The PCC has thus met its obligation to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. In doing so, it is important to provide support for each other, as well as to those within our charge. It is both necessary and important for anyone in a leadership role within the Parish to undertake the necessary training. There were no questions or comments. The Vicar thanked Rosie for her sterling work.</p>	
<b>7. Financial Affairs of the Parish</b>	<p>Chris Angell, PCC Honorary Treasurer, spoke to his report, which had been circulated with papers for the meeting, and thanked all who had helped to maintain the parish in a viable financial position. The year had been generally successful. Issues remain ongoing over energy costs misattributed by our suppliers, though these were near to being resolved, and banking costs. On the plus side, interest rates had improved.</p>	

<b>8. Presentation of the Annual Accounts for 2023 and Budgets for 2024</b>	<p>Chris Angell formally drew attention to the 2023 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 continued assiduous work in maintaining the accounts.</p> <p>Roger Taylor endorsed this and said we were fortunate to have Chris as our Treasurer. It was a genuine pleasure to examine such well-prepared accounts.</p> <p>The acceptance of the accounts for 2023 was proposed by Chris Angell, seconded by Jo Fisher, and carried unanimously.</p>	
<b>9. Independent Examiner</b>	Roger Taylor confirmed that he was willing to undertake the examination of the 2024 accounts in due course. He was thanked for his work and re-appointed as Independent Examiner.	
<b>10. Fabric, Goods and Ornaments</b>	The meeting received the churchwardens' report on the fabric, goods, and ornaments. The Vicar thanked the churchwardens and their deputies for the report and for the huge amount of work which they undertake, most of it behind the scenes.	
<b>11. Election of Lay Representatives to the Deanery Synod</b>	There was one casual vacancy for a Deanery Synod representative until 30 June 2026, for which <b>Wilf Stepto</b> had been nominated by Job Rombout and seconded by Mark Harbour, having been co-opted during the past year by the PCC. There being no other nominations, he was declared duly elected.	
<b>12. Election of Lay Representatives to the PCC</b>	There were six vacant places for lay members of the PCC until the close of the 2027 APCM, for which six nominations had been received : <b>Chris Angell</b> (proposed by Graham Gibbs and seconded by Jean Garner), <b>Nicholas King</b> (proposed by Mark Harbour and seconded by Job Rombout), <b>Anne Lyne</b> (proposed by Marian Davies and seconded by Nicholas King), <b>Jason Plessas</b> (proposed by Trevor Standen and seconded by Paul Davies), <b>James Proehl</b> (proposed by Carole Lewis and seconded by Bob Hammond) and <b>Trevor Standen</b> (proposed by Jason Plessas and seconded by Job Rombout). There being no further nominations, these six were declared duly elected.	
<b>13. Deanery Synod</b>	A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod, provided by the Deanery Secretary, was received.	
<b>14. Vicar's Report</b>	The Vicar read out his report for 2023, which had been circulated with papers for the meeting. This was received with generous applause.	
<b>15. To receive reports from PCC Committees and other church groups</b>	Reports from PCC Committees and other church groups were received. Particular thanks were expressed to Sally-Anne Bates for her ongoing work as editor of the parish magazine.	

<b>16. Any other business</b>	<p>A gift was presented to Emma Macey for her support of Mike in his duties over the past year. The Vicar expressed thanks for this on her behalf.</p> <p>Mark Harbour asked about the current position regarding liaison with the Hemel Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra is now using the church for its regular concerts, but a number of issues regarding regular rehearsals in the church and any association of a more formal nature have yet to be resolved.</p> <p>Carole Lewis invited the meeting to show its appreciation of all that Mike has done and continues to do on behalf of the parish; carried with acclamation.</p>	
<b>17. Date of next APCM</b>	The next APCM has been provisionally set to follow the 10.00am Parish Eucharist on Sunday 11 May 2025 in St John's Church.	
	The meeting closed at 12.01pm.	

### **VICAR'S REPORT ON 2023**

(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 (née 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, slightly slanted style. Below the name, there is a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right, serving as a flourish or underline.

## **APCM Item 2 : Electoral Roll report**

As stated in previous years, for reasons lost in history we have two rolls, one for St Francis church and one for the combined St John's and St Stephen's churches.

This year was a full renewal of the Electoral Roll meaning everyone was required to provide a form.

Taking St Francis' first, prior to this renewal there were 19 members, based on the responses 7 have been removed and 5 new ones have been added to the list. There are now 17 members on the St Francis' Electoral Roll.

At the combined St John's and St Stephen's churches, last year there were 162 members, based on the responses 40 have been removed and 31 new ones have been added to the list. St Stephen's had no change to its list. There are now 153 members on the combined St John's and St Stephen's Electoral Roll.

Welcome to all of our new Electoral Roll members.

The total roll for our parish following this full renewal of all three churches is 170.

This was my first time as Electoral Roll Officer for the Parish of Boxmoor and it was interesting to see how it turned out. My thanks to Ian Packe for his good, thorough handover. My thanks also to Nicholas King for his assistance.

There will be an opportunity for anyone not on the current Electoral Roll lists to be added in due course. Please also help me to keep accurate information by advising me of any changes of address, other contact details or a change in circumstances as they happen.

Thank you.

Mark Harbour, Electoral Roll Officer

## **APCM Item 3 : Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) 2024/5**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), as elected at the 2024 APCM, has met in alternate months. Written minutes are kept of all PCC meetings, distributed to all PCC members and to any parishioner on the church electoral roll upon request. A summary of PCC discussions is also published in the church magazine after each meeting. Six ordinary meetings and one procedural meeting to appoint officers were held during 2024/5, with an average attendance of 76% by its 21 members; four members attended all meetings, seven attended six meetings, five attended five meetings, four attended four meetings, and one attended none (because of medical grounds). Most PCC members also lead or sit on at least one of its Committees. At the start of the year, Philip Barton stood down as a PCC member for personal reasons, leaving a casual vacancy which was not filled.

There were six meetings of the PCC Standing Committee in intermediate months to progress interim matters, with an average attendance of 82% by its nine members (five members at all meetings, one at five meetings, one at four meetings, one at three meetings, one at two meetings).

The PCC routinely monitors progress on action points, receives reports from most of its committees, and ratifies recommendations from the Standing Committee. Statutory reports have been received from the Vicar, Churchwardens and Treasurer at each meeting, as well as reports from our daughter

churches of St Francis and St Stephen, the Deanery Synod, the associated Music at St John's organisation, and (on a more intermittent basis) other groups such as Pray Hemel and Churches Together.

Major issues considered during the year have included the revision of our Mission Action Plan, several in-depth discussions related to Safeguarding, and our eco-church profile, which has culminated in the award of Bronze Award status (now in plan to promote to a higher level). A regular topic has been to improve the quality of the new streaming equipment into St John's church and the related need for a high-speed fibre internet connection, both inhibited to some extent by logistical issues. Appropriate events were held to mark the 150th anniversary of the St John's building.

Parish finances have been scrutinised closely during the year; the Treasurer reports more fully on these elsewhere. Significant 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 approved the annual accounts for 2024 and the budgets for 2025 for presentation to the APCM.

Nicholas King, PCC Secretary

#### **APCM Item 4 : Safeguarding Report to APCM 2025**

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 believe that safeguarding is the responsibility of the whole Church and that everyone who participates in the life of our three Churches has a role to play in promoting a safer Church for all. Our parish is committed to the National Safeguarding Standards of the Church of England. 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 parish safeguarding policy on 21 January 2025. PCC members and volunteers have 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

#### **APCM Item 5 : Financial Affairs of the Parish 2024**

Please see Book 2.

#### **APCM Item 6 : Annual Accounts for 2024 and Budgets for 2025**

Please see Book 2.

## **APCM Item 8 : Churchwardens' report 2024**

Maintenance throughout the year :

- In January the lightning conductor was inspected and approved.
- In April, PAT testing was carried out in all three churches and on U3A equipment. All electronic equipment has now passed the test.
- Also in April, the fire extinguishers and blankets in all three churches were inspected, brought up to date and declared fit for purpose.
- In May the gutters and down pipes at St John's were cleared. This is an expensive process but very necessary.

The Quinquennial Inspection was held at St John's and St Stephen's in October. This inspection is required by the Diocese and was performed by Mr Stephen Crawley FRICS, our Church Architect. There were no major problems.

The inspection for St Francis' has been delayed and will be carried later in 2025 once the outstanding maintenance and repair work is completed. A large part of the flat roof between the hall and the church has been refurbished.

Throughout the year the grounds have been maintained and improved by a group of volunteers: Tony Beasley, Pat Moran and Wilf Stepto.

The grass in the Memorial Garden, and at the front of the Church, is regularly cut by Ivor Simmonds.

Improvements in the Church, including double-glazing of the lower windows on the North and South sides of the church and the improved storage over the amenities at the back of the Church, were done by Rob Porter and Job Rombout.

We are enormously grateful for all their efforts.

The entire congregation rallied round to make the 150th Anniversary in May a very special occasion.

There was a spring-cleaning session, a beautiful display of flowers and artefacts, and food was prepared and served. We have so many talented and hard-working members.

Later we had a Summer Fair, an Autumn Fair and a Christmas Tree Festival - all organised and stewarded by keen volunteers.

In December we had a major leak of the gas supply in the hall kitchen. The gas supply to the main boilers, the hall boiler and the oven in the kitchen is in the concrete floor and was inaccessible, so all the pipework has been replaced by surface-mounted pipes from the meter to the boilers and to the oven.

The mobile broadband has caused some issues which have been resolved during the year and seems to be stable at the moment (full fibre or a fast landline are not available).

The AV system has had some streaming issues mainly due to the integration of the new AV equipment with older sound systems components (as well as some set-up settings). These have been addressed and over the last months it has been working as required.

The next stage is to replace the current sound system e.g. amplifier, speakers and microphones and to integrate this into one combined sound and AV system with improved sound quality, including the loop sound throughout the church and optimised AV stream capability.

The entrance drive on Station Road is suffering from broken concrete slabs; it has been repaired once before. We will remove the slabs and install a more substantial concrete base before relaying the slabs. The parking and access will be restricted for at least 3 days to allow it to settle and dry.

The energy cost is a main concern at all three churches. At the time when we signed the energy contract with British Gas Lite (BGL) the pricing was competitive, but today there are better and cheaper options. When our contract finishes, we will move to a different supplier (most likely E-ON green energy).

St John's and BGL are still in dispute for a refund, since they charged us for the energy of the Boxmoor Playhouse. This is ongoing, though BGL is trying to match the Post Office in incompetence. More information will be provided as soon this issue is resolved.

Plans are in the early stages for solar panels on the Hall facing Station Road, which has the longest period of sunlight. This will provide green energy to offset the rising cost from energy suppliers.

At **St Stephen's**, the porch roof is leaking and the men's toilet is closed as a result. The issue is not straightforward as the porch flat roof extends under the main sloping roof and is very difficult to access. As soon as the weather improves (dry weather) the felt will be removed, new roof boarding installed and a new rubber roof fitted. The guttering and down pipes will be refitted. Inside, the toilet ceiling and walls will be refurbished.

At **St Francis'**, internally the church had an overall clean in the spring. In the summer the flat roofs need to be cleaned and treated with bitumen, gutters cleaned and some of the brickwork re-pointed.

Marian Davies and Job Rombout, Churchwardens

#### **APCM Item 11 : Deanery Synod proceedings (2024/5)**

During the year there were three Deanery Synod meetings, covering a variety of different topics. The key areas of discussion are reported below :

#### **Tuesday 18 June 2024 at The Church of the Resurrection, Grove Hill**

This meeting started off as an open forum where we welcomed an additional 20 guests from around the Diocese. We had Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull join us where he gave a very interesting talk about "AI and a theological response". As this was the first synod meeting of the new triennium, there were several changes to the committee. Mike Macey, James McDonald and Austin Janes were elected Diocesan Synod reps. Colin Gage, Job Rombout and Lindsay Kemp were elected as the three Diocesan Synod Laity. Carolyn Andrews became the new Deanery Synod lay chair and Sam Stanbridge became the new Deanery Synod secretary.

## **Tuesday 22 October 2024 at St Francis' Church, Hammerfield**

Peter Bladon reported on deanery expenditure so far this year. He firstly wanted to thank all of our parishioners for their generous donations throughout the year. Rev. Austin Janes was given a grant by the Deanery to help with the costs of printing a book he had written about St Alban. All profits were distributed between Warners End and Grovehill. We used this meeting as a great way to express one positive thing within each parish and a way to get to know each other a little more. The meeting ended with Compline and Benediction.

## **Tuesday 11 February 2025 at St John's Church, Boxmoor**

We welcomed Glyn Barker – Finance Director for the Diocese, who gave a very in-depth presentation focussed on the diocese's finances. He explained where our parish share goes, and the income and expenditure of the Diocese. Colin Gage also presented us with a presentation used at Holy Trinity's 2024 APCM. The concept was incomings and expenditure for the year using a bath diagram. We could clearly see and understand monies coming in (bath filling up) and monies going out (bath emptying).

I have the presentation from Glyn, which has been sent to all Synod members for them to distribute to their PCC members.

***Words of encouragement from St Mary's, Apsley :  
– Don't give up, keep trying & keep going.***

Deanery meetings planned this year :

*Deanery Synod*

*Standing & Pastoral Committee*

Tuesday 11 February 2025

Wednesday 29 January

Tuesday 8 July 2025

Wednesday 4 June 2025

Tuesday 4 November 2025

Wednesday 8 October 2025

Sam Stanbridge, Deanery Secretary

## **APCM Item 12 : Vicar's report on 2024**

2024 – our Year of Jubilee – celebrating 150 years of St John's Church. If the walls of St John's could talk I wonder what stories they would tell. Hopefully, our celebrations would be among them. We started our celebrations at our Patronal Eucharist on Sunday 5 May at which the Bishop of St Albans presided and preached. Former vicars, curates, directors of music, and others associated with the church were invited and returned to attend this joy-filled Eucharist which was followed by a Festival lunch for invited guests. The next day – despite the soggy conditions – a significant band of walkers Beat the Parish Bounds... 13 miles of undulating terrain, some urban some rural, with regular pit-stops in local public houses and concluding with a BBQ at St John's on our return. The conditions were tough but the company was excellent.

Celebrations continued at the end June with our Exhibition charting the story of St John's. Terrific floral and visual displays combined with archive material and Registers to tell the human story of St John's and our Parish. On large screens we displayed photos of couples who had wed at St John's over the years and those who had been baptised. We showed the devastating effects of fire and charted the build of our "new" hall complex. It was a joy to see the way our wider community engaged with this

Exhibition and the welcome which was offered. My sincere thanks to all who helped to organise this event, especially those who provided material for display, made stunning flower arrangements, stewarded and welcomed, and fed those who came.

Our Jubilee celebrations concluded in October when our fabulous choir led us in worship with a stunning rendition of Sir John Rutter's *Feel the Spirit*. This uplifting and moving service was accompanied by the St John's Ensemble under the direction of our extremely talented Director of Music, Keith Beniston, to whom I owe a huge debt of gratitude for all his support and musical flexibility and flair over the last year – we are very lucky to have Keith on the organ bench. Our choir continued to go from strength to strength throughout the year. Their ability, as a Parish choir, to sing and perform some very challenging music to cathedralesque standard is testament to both Keith's leadership and the quality and dedication of our singers. In December the choir, accompanied by the St John's Ensemble again, led us in a stunning Festival of 9 Lessons and Carols – a service that is once again growing in popularity year on year. My sincere thanks to our musicians.

Throughout 2024, in addition to celebrating our Jubilee, we sought to overcome one the lasting and damaging effects of the Covid pandemic – loneliness and isolation. In addition to our monthly *Friendship Teas* and a new fortnightly venture of *Sew, Knit, Natter* we held regular events (both fundraising and social) with the intention of bringing people together. From our Shrove Tuesday parties to the annual cricket match we came together to enjoy each other's company. The cricket match was a particular triumph – not just because of scale of our victory levelling the series 2-2, but because of the number of people who came and watched on the boundary. If we can take this form into 2025 we might just be able to lead the series 3-2! My thanks, as ever, to our fabulous team on the Social Committee and Fundraising Committee for organising some fabulous events. And of course, our year would not be complete without our Summer Fayre, Countdown to Christmas Fayre, and Christmas Tree Festival - all of which were very successful both financially and in fostering community engagement.

2024 also marked my 10 year anniversary as your Vicar. Time has absolutely flown during these 10 years and I remain thankful to God for calling me to Boxmoor and for the privilege of leading you – his people – in prayer and praise and engaging in his work of transformation, revelation, and proclamation. I was deeply touched by your gifts to me in February and for the cake decorated with many facets of my ministry among you. We have been on quite a journey together and I am looking forward to seeing where the journey will lead us together to next.

One of the tools we use as a Parish to help us navigate into the future is Mission Action Planning (MAP). This helps us set clear missional goals where we plan to grow and direct our energies and resources. Over recent years we have made significant progress in these goals from re-starting our Junior Choir, holding Lent Study Courses and annual Sermon Series, to gaining a Bronze Award for our work in becoming an Eco-Church. My sincere thanks to the various teams and champions who have led the way in these areas. In 2024, however, the PCC determined that a new MAP was needed for 2025 onwards. After much prayerful work and collaboration a new MAP was approved by the PCC ready to be enacted in 2025 which focuses on the characteristics of our 3 patronal Saints (enlightenment, service, care for children and nature) and the diocesan vision of *Living God's Love* in giving us our missional objectives to *Go deeper into God, Make new disciples, and Transforming Communities*.

In addition to celebrating our corporate Year of Jubilee, many within our worshipping community (I won't name them) also celebrated their own private jubilees with significant birthdays and anniversaries sprinkled throughout the year – another excuse for cake and prosecco! Sadly, we also said farewell to members of our community whom God has called to his eternal keeping. Among them



were Margaret Gunning, Sheila Watts, John Birnie, Jill Moore, Marion Penfold, and Fr Rex Merry. Their contribution to the life of this Parish over the years cannot be underestimated. May the glory and the promise of the Risen Christ be theirs for all eternity.

Despite saying farewell to a significant number of our worshipping community, 2024 was a surprisingly quiet year with regards Pastoral Services. We went months without taking a funeral, wedding, or baptism. I would be lying if I said this didn't concern me or baffle me. I am increasingly concerned about the rise in *Direct Cremations* and the effect this will have on our society as we store-up unresolved grief for the future by not giving ourselves the opportunities and space to grieve and give thanks for those whom we love but see no longer. I hope my concerns are unfounded but it is something worth considering.

One of the big media stories concerning the Church of England in 2024 concerned the horrendous child abuse scandal (perpetrated by John Smyth over many decades) which led to the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The extent of his abuse is truly horrifying. As a Parish we take the care of children, young people, and vulnerable adults extremely seriously. During the year we established a new Safeguarding Steering Group to assist and hold to account both myself and our Parish Safeguarding Officer, Rosie Akeroyd. Under her direction, we have updated our Safeguarding Policy, overseen a complete revision of our training and vetting for volunteers, helpers, and PCC members, and begun a conversation about how we change and instil a corporate culture where everyone is known, loved, respected, and honoured. This will take years to embed but it is incredibly important that we start the process now, building on the work that has already taken place over many years. My sincere thanks to Rosie and those in the Steering Group for all their wisdom, guidance, and dedication to this important aspect of our common life.

Throughout this report I have spoken about our common or corporate life. I do this with St Paul's writings in mind that we are many members but one body. (1 Cor 12) An African saying states "It takes a village to raise a child." To this I want to add it takes a community to make a Church. I should therefore like to thank everyone for all your hard work and endeavours over the past year, for your prayers, and for your commitment. Thank you to our readers, intercessors, and welcomers. Thank you to our coffee makers, flower arrangers, and cleaners. Thank you to our Junior Church leaders, Magazine editor and contributors, and caterers. Thank you to our Rota organisers, organists, quiz writers. Thank you to our works party, committee members, and secretaries. Thank you to Carole, our Lay Leaders of Worship, and our regular priestly visitors who enable worship and enrich us through their preaching. Thank you to our treasurers Chris and Jo who keep us on a financial even keel. Thank you to Deniece our Administrator who does her best to makes sure I'm in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing. Thank you to our churchwardens Job and Marian for their ongoing support of my ministry, their care for each of our precious buildings and holy spaces, their leadership and humility. Thank you to my family for putting up with me, the demands ministry places on our family life, and for their love and support. Thank you.

In summation, I would commend 2024 to you without hesitation as a good year within the life of the Parish. It was a joyful Year of Jubilee. And it was only so because underneath our celebrations we had a firm foundation of purpose. We know that our task is to give glory and worship to God for the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ, in whom we have life and through whom we are forgiven. We know that worship, prayer, and receiving the Sacrament regularly are central to our being able to go out and share the Gospel of Christ with our friends and families and drawing people into the community of faith. And it's clear that we know this by the way new people are joining us for worship each week. But it is also clear to me, that despite being a significantly large worshipping community, our ability to share in the tasks of ministry is noticeably lacking. We are reliant on an increasingly small number of people to serve at the Altar, welcome people to church, provide refreshments, clean the church,

organise, publicise, and facilitate events, visit the sick, decorate the church, lead Junior Church sessions, etc etc. We are a busy and active Church – for which I am most thankful – but to remain so we need to respond and offer ourselves in service to one another. It is often talked of as volunteering, but might we look at it in a new way? A generous response to God's gracious call on our lives to minister in whatever way we can to those around us!

2025 looks full of promise, challenge, opportunity, and blessing as we build on our Year of Jubilee and continue to grow together in God's love. May our Risen Lord continue to bless all that we try to do here in his name, for...

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

In Christ,



**APCM Item 13 : Reports from PCC committees and other church groups**

Please see Book 3.