

# St Mary's Medieval Church, Thorpe



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND



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## **VESTRY MEETING** *and reports for the*

## **ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING** *Palm Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023 11:30am*

*including the*  
**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH  
COUNCIL OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL  
PARISH OF ST. MARY, THORPE**  
**Charity No: 1176929**  
*for the year ending 31 December 2022*

Vicar: The Revd Damian Stewart Harrison-Miles, BTh  
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[www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk](http://www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk)

# St Mary's Thorpe VESTRY MEETING and reports for the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

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### **What is the Annual Parish Meeting (APCM) all about? A brief introduction**

The APCM is an important meeting for the whole church, an opportunity to elect the people our congregation want to represent them on their Parochial Church Council (PCC). It is an opportunity to ask questions about the finances of the church, the state of the buildings, or about any matter of concern in the life of the parish. The PCC takes account of views expressed at the APCM and matters are taken forward into the subsequent PCC for discussion. Thorpe PCC meets six times a year to conduct the business of the church. Please read these reports thoroughly and come to the meeting with questions, as we share together as the family of faith in our life together, in sacramental worship and fellowship – Transforming Church, Transforming Lives. We do this in a Christian spirit of mutual respect and love, as friends and pilgrims. We come prepared to look forward as well as reflect upon the past year. May the Lord of all guide our thoughts, words and actions to his Glory and the building up of the Kingdom in Thorpe.

## **Agenda for the Vestry Meeting (Meeting of Parishioners)**

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023, 11:30am (*following the Eucharist*)

1. The opening of proceedings with Prayers
  2. Apologies for absence
  3. Minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and any matters arising
  4. Election of Churchwardens
  5. Nomination for approval of four Deputy Wardens (honorary supportive role)
- End of Vestry Meeting

*(At this point those not named on the Church Electoral Roll cannot vote if they remain.)*

## **Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023, 11:30am (*immediately following the Vestry Meeting*)**

Apologies for absence

Minutes of the previous APCM held in Church on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022 11:30am.

Matters arising

### **1. Elections & Appointments**

- Annual election of PCC Members
- Election of Deanery Synod Representatives
- Approval of Sides-persons (to assist Wardens with service duties)
- Appointment of Sides-person to assist the Treasurer with banking
- Confirmation of appointment of the Electoral Roll Officer
- *Note that the PCC Secretary, Treasurer and Vice Chair of the PCC will be formally agreed at the next Parochial Church Council meeting (to be held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023, 7:30pm) as they are Officers of the PCC.*
- Appointment of the Independent Examiner for 2023 Financial Accounts (Mr Paul Whitlock)

### **2. Reports – see written reports**

- (i) Report on Electoral Roll
- (ii) PCC Secretary's Report on the proceedings of PCC
- (iii) Parish reports – *printed & distributed*  
*Summary of reports from the Chair*
- (iv) Churchwardens' Report including Fabric/Terrier
- (v) Accounts – Financial Report 2022  
Acceptance of Financial Report 2022
- (vi) Note on the Deanery Synod Report – *printed & distributed*

### **3. Any other business**

- (i) Questions & Answers Session – *questions please at least 24 hours in advance [stmaryschurchthorpe@outlook.com](mailto:stmaryschurchthorpe@outlook.com)*
- (ii) Announcements

The meeting concludes in prayer and with the Grace.

**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting /Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
of St Mary's Church, Thorpe – Sunday 10th April 2022  
(Held via Zoom and in Church)**

## **Vestry Meeting**

Present: Fr. D. Harrison-Miles – Chair (DHM)

Present in Church: Fr. G. Mee, Mtr J. Winn-Smith, B. Huxley, P. Gruncell, A. West. A. Kelly, S. Bruce, C. Wareham, D. Lees, J. Rook, M. Lilley, B. Grove, T. Grove, J. Mitchiner, M. Herne, D. Kidd, G. Brown, J. Brown, L. Pike, H. Cunningham, L. Gillham, K. Wade, E. Gill, B. Germany, P. Whitlock, J. de Ville, K. Stangroom, Susi Thornton, T. Leighton, A. Leighton, M. Harnden, P. Alder, J. Collinson, J. Carter, A. Corfield, C. Cobbold, J. Gruncell.

Absent: All electoral roll members not listed as Present or having submitted apologies

Meeting commenced: 11.30 a.m

1. Father Damian opened the meeting with prayers.

### **2. Apologies for Absence:**

J. Mookherjee, M. Winn-Smith, J. Bradley, J. Brittain, H. Brittain, Jane Lowe, Jim Lowe, B. Nixon, B. Williams, J. Whitfield, D. Gough, E. Gough. I. Rigazzi-Tarling, J. Taylor, J. Richardson, M. Morris, P. Hudson, N. Brothwell.

### **3. Minutes and Matters Arising**

Minutes for the Vestry Meeting held 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were accepted and no matters were arising.

### **4. Re-election of Wardens**

Barry Huxley and Peter Gruncell confirmed their agreement to stand as Church Wardens. Barry Huxley pointed out that he will by 2023 have completed 4 years of the 6 years he is eligible to stand as church warden. Peter Gruncell confirmed his enjoyment of the role and was happy to offer his services for another year.  
Unanimously re-elected

### **5. Nominations for approval Deputy Wardens**

There were eight Deputy Warden nominations from:  
Margaret Harnden, Susi Thornton, Helen Cunningham, Bev Germany, Jill Collinson, Deborah Kidd, Margaret Roberts and Kim Stangroom.  
All eight candidates were unanimously accepted.  
Fr Gerard Mee expressed his thanks and gratitude for support offered by the Deputy Wardens.

### **7. Any Other Business**

None

## **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of St Mary's Church, Thorpe Sunday 10th April 2022 11:45am**

There were four additions to the electoral roll for approval before the commencement of the meeting:

Ann Frances Corfield, Norman Stuart McNichol, Alice Turner, Benjamin Turner  
Unanimously approved for inclusion on the electoral roll.

Minutes from the APCM held 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were accepted with no amendments.

### **Matters Arising**

DHM updated those present with regards to the AV project. He confirmed that legal planning permission had been received, although the scope of work is to be scaled back to 1 central screen & projector, with two further projections onto walls, enhancement to the sound system and an upgrade to electrical works. Electrical work is estimated to be approximately £10,000. The original AV work was approximately £34,000, we currently have £23,000 available for the work. DHM and churchwardens are to meet this coming week to discuss a scaled down quotation, although this may be higher than expected due to delays and scarcity of components. Additional items can then be added at a later date when monies allow. The electrical work will be done forthwith, again hopefully with a revised quotation.

### **1. Elections and Appointments**

There were 6 nominations for PCC:

Andy West, Allison Kelly, Margaret Harnden, Jenny Bright, Susi Thornton and Diane Lees.

All 6 nominations were unanimously confirmed.

- Election of Deanery Synod Representatives

The three representatives had indicated their wish to continue serving as Deanery Synod Representatives:

Mary Morris

Clare Cobbold

Catherine Wareham

Unanimously approved.

- Approval of Sides-persons

The list which had been left for sign up in the porch has been removed. A new list will be provided by Easter Sunday for sign ups. This will be voted in by PCC at May 22 meeting.

DHM pointed out that anyone holding keys to the buildings is a sides person and they should make themselves aware of the current Health and Safety policy.

- Appointment of Sides Person to Assist the Treasurer with banking

This role will be carried out by Andy West, Treasurer.

- Confirmation of appointment of the Electoral Roll Officer

Claire Cobbold confirmed that she would like to stand as the new Electoral Roll Officer.

Claire pointed out that this was a learning role and she would be taking information on board as the year progresses.

Unanimously approved.

DHM passed his thanks to Sarah Bolton who has now stepped down for her valued work over the last few years.

- Appointment of the Independent Examiner for 2022 Financial Accounts

Paul Whitlock was unanimously confirmed.

## **2. Vicar's Address**

DHM pointed out that whilst he was away on holiday the previous Sunday, the 10am service had been attended by only 22 people, which was the lowest number in his 11 years as incumbent. He went on to explain that the Church of England are reviewing all parishes and amalgamations are considered where attendance on a Sunday, falls under 50 people attending, or where there are financial challenges, or both. Average attendance along with our reduction in parish share, currently makes St. Mary's viable for consideration, although only just. Over the last year only 3 families have moved away and there have been 2 deaths from those on the electoral roll, so where are the regular attendees? Indeed, the electoral roll is up but attendance is down. Finances are in the best place in 11 years and we have so far met the increase year on year requested and not received any additional support. Other local churches report both their electoral roll and finances are in decline. "You are the church, not the clergy, who are shepherds, what is going on?" DHM pointed out that he asked everyone to bring someone with them on Mothering Sunday. Some people did, it was a lovely service, it was joyous, then the following week there were 22 attendees only. This seems to be a bigger trend and is a danger zone. Nearby churches are being asked to share stipendiary ministry and it is possible he will be asked to look after an additional church at some stage and therefore not be based at St. Mary's only. This could have implications for the future of the Vicarage and car park – they could in theory be sold. Our Diocese is doing better than others, in Leicester DHM is aware that a significant number of parishes are under threat, as in many other Diocese. He believes that St Mary's and wider Thorpe does need a priest living adjacent and we need a curate full time too – there is no shortage of ministry for us to be about.

DHM suggested that some of the change in attendance is the impact post Covid – that changes were happening before the pandemic hit but that seems to have accelerated that change. We need to grow the church quickly, but we must be realistic that it took 6 – 7 years to grow the main 10am congregation to 60 – 70 weekly. We need to re-double our efforts to draw people in within the next few years and it is everyone's responsibility to share faith as disciples today. We start with prayer – the equipping of the Holy Spirit for growth. But it is also possible that something has shifted in our society. We did not have additional attendees on Mothering Sunday because of advertising, even with posters up all around the village – so we need to connect to people personally, to invite them. The number one way people will come is because of an invitation from someone who already attends worship. People come to enjoy community and faith – shared by you. The feedback on Mothering Sunday was great. So, think about how to share your faith and bring people into church. Not all will stick, not all will enjoy our mixture of contemporary and traditional worship – but some will. Encourage people to stay for refreshments, where they can form friendships, to know they are loved and feel part of our community. We need to seek to rebuild and renew. Every member of a family has different gifts, not gifts that define them but different strengths. Church life, mirrored in Christ must always be inclusive, and all talents count.

Looking ahead, DHM intends to come out to visit the congregation at home, and the PCC needs to grow. Teams are to be formed to achieve small but important things - family and children's work, flowers, stewardship etc. An example is the after school club, there is no-one to run it, the 7 trained and checked persons previously involved have moved away or their children have grown up. There are gaps appearing in leadership which must be filled, as things are not getting done. We need new relationships and new starts and re-invigorated teams of people working together.

It takes a significant amount of money to run a church, we will need £75,000 PA eventually to have a full time vicar. Heating and lighting, and general building costs will rise to £10,000 PA. So the financial challenge is there – and will get harder if our congregations decline.

Phil Alder pointed out that people will get fed up with no full time vicar and will simply stop attending. DHM pointed out that the Vicarage is the only asset that can be sold, but once liquidated and money spent churches will decline so we need to keep the Vicarage next to the church even if the vicar is shared with another church. Jane Carter asked if we would be joined with another parish in this deanery. DHM advised the aim would be to try and cluster churches together that are a similar tradition but not necessarily close in distance, although it would be in the same diocese.

Bev Germany asked how sharing a priest would work. DHM could not answer as this had not been in done Runnymede Deanery before, but would expect it to be a

50/50 split with Sunday worship in both churches but service times split over both buildings. But there are many other possibilities.

Paul Whitlock confirmed this had been the norm where he previously lived and asked if, for the children's work, younger families could be asked to assist. DHM pointed out that mothers/fathers today can't just help, for instance the Lego club, new in the life of our church was growing, but the clergy lead this and will need to hand this over and so far there have been no offers of leadership. DHM also reminded the meeting that all those who assist or lead children and youth work must be appropriately recruited and checks completed in line with the national safeguarding policy.

It was asked if the people who view services online count as part of the attendance to services. DHM confirmed no. Vimeo (our live-streaming broadcaster) has been renewed at an expense of £850.00 and income from online services is greater than the annual fee but views of worship do not count in figures as things presently stand. He also believed hub churches may be approached to broadcast services, rather than all churches offering their own, but this was yet to be decided. Claire Cobbold enquired if two churches were joined would there be only one PCC?

DHM confirmed there were various possibilities, with 2 churches remaining independent or a combined PCC. In our case there is the Anglo-Catholic tradition that needs to be retained. John Rook enquired if DHM had views on why people were not attending. DHM felt this was down to commitments/ possibly Covid/lifestyle changes. Most people now come once monthly and not once weekly. The Scout groups in Thorpe are gone as there were no leaders, and this is a trend throughout society. Christianity is a weekly commitment as a minimum. However, standing orders have helped us to budget, so even if people are not present we receive contributions. Kim Stangroom asked what would happen if Mtr Jo and Fr Gerard could not do services. DHM confirmed Mtr Jo's curacy ends in July and she will probably move on this year. Fr Gerard has to work, plus now lives in Dorking. St. Mary's have applied for another training curate and we hope will have a replacement in July 23.

DHM wanted people to note that there is no formal plan for us to share a vicar at present, but over the next 3 years the Diocese will be looking at the figures and exploring possibilities.



### 3. Reports

#### (i) Electoral Roll

DHM confirmed that there were currently 121 on the roll, but there would be a complete renewal in 2023\*, which will drop numbers as people had moved away.

\*Incorrect - complete renewal will be undertaken in 2026.

#### (ii) PCC Secretary's Report

There were no questions raised.

#### (iii) Parish Reports

Margaret Harnden pointed out there was an error on her name on the Flower Guild Report.

There were no questions raised.

#### (iv) Churchwardens Report

There were no questions raised.

#### (v) Accounts – Financial Report 2021

Andy West briefly outlined the highlights of 2021. Finances had ended the year in a good position, due to the generosity of people giving regularly by standing order, he felt this was part of why people did not feel the need to attend weekly. There are reserves in the Works Account to fund the AV works (or part of). The Education Fund has monies to support young people on the path to faith.

Jane Carter queried the costs shown for marketing at £1,161.00 for the year. AW confirmed that posters for fairs (such as the roundabout one), Vimeo, the broadcast service, Thorpe Together and anything IT related, i.e. digitally published or printed were covered in these costs.

Margaret Harnden asked why there was a cost for flowers shown as these were usually met by donation. AW confirmed that donations had only partly covered flowers but expenses were £165.00 for the year.

Linda Gillham asked why postage was so high. DHM confirmed that items such as the APCM booklet had been sent digitally in 2021 – no-one had read it, so it had been chosen to print and send this year as we need to make people aware.

AW advised that utilities are under 'parish buying', which makes it slightly cheaper, although no bill has been received as yet. Electricity costs have always been low, the main cost being gas, which will increase. The Parish Buying scheme covers 1000 buildings across the UK, it is not zero carbon but greener energy. We are expecting the first increased gas bill at the end of April.

DHM proposed acceptance of the Accounts for 2021.

Margaret Roberts and Susi Thornton seconded.

Accounts unanimously accepted.

#### (vi) Deanery Synod Report

There were no questions raised.

#### **4. Any Other Business**

No questions had been submitted before meeting.

DHM confirmed that Margaret Harnden is to become Mayor of Runnymede from 18.05.22, taking over from Elaine Gill.

Elaine confirmed it had been a strange time to be mayor, but felt she had achieved the best she could. She was proud and privileged to represent Runnymede, it is a jewel in Surrey's crown. She had been called the 'Covid Mayor' in schools. She was delighted to report that two independent councillors, herself and Margaret, had followed into the mayoral roll.

Jane Carter wished to draw attention to the lovely brickwork on the patio. DHM also confirmed thanks to Pete Gruncell and Barry Huxley for their behind the scenes work on the project.

Jill Collinson wished to thank DHM for his Covid safe work and getting us all back into church. She reported that the Foodbank collection had had tremendous response and thanked the congregation for their generosity. DHM confirmed that the Foodbank will count as part of our Eco Church work, for which we now hold a Silver Award.

Susi Thornton wished to pass thanks to Mtr Jo and Fr Gerard for all that they do. Mtr Jo passed thanks to DHM for all that he does to support them in their roles.

DHM confirmed that he and Jason have been trying to adopt Sophia's brother over the last year, which had been delayed again because of the pandemic and a legal challenge (Somerset Ruling) which had impacted Surrey and the adoption process. They had been asked before he was born if they would take him and he has now been with foster parents for the last 12 months. They are hoping he will arrive sometime in May.

DHM further advised he had applied to take a sabbatical last year and has now received response agreeing to two months leave, being July and August, he is not however allowed to take leave for a month before going on sabbatical. Hopefully he will be on two weeks paternity mid-May to June and then off on sabbatical July and August. Mtr Jo will be in charge while he is absent.

DHM closed in prayer  
Meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.

## **RECEPTION OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL IN ADVANCE OF THE APCM 2023**

The revision of the Electoral Roll is taking place. Notices were posted 13 February 2023 for 21 days and the revised Roll will be displayed for 14 days at Church, as prepared and approved.

Under the Church Representation Rules any persons are entitled to have their names entered on the roll if they—

- (i) are baptised and aged 16 or over.
- (ii) have signed a form of application for enrolment.  
and either

(iii) are members of the Church of England or of any Church in communion with the Church of England being resident in the parish or (not being resident in the parish) having habitually attended public worship in the parish during the six months prior to the application for enrolment;

or:

(iv) are members in good standing of a Church (not in communion with the Church of England) which subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity declaring themselves also to be members of the Church of England and having habitually attended public worship in the parish during the period of six months prior to enrolment.

Clare Cobbold, *Electoral Roll Officer*

## **Vicar's Report on 2022**

We had all anticipated that 2022 would be a year of steady as she goes, as we at St Mary's prayed for renewal and growth following the devastating impact upon the Church during the height of the pandemic. We began the year preparing for Jubilee celebrations, and a really positive growth in numbers at our Noah's Ark group and the launch and great success of our Lego Club. However we were unable to staff-up 'Faith and Fun' groups, with much of that group's leadership now working or unavailable, which was a disappointment both to the church community and Thorpe Primary School, where the group prior to Covid had been double over subscribed. We were joined for 4 months by Sue Phillips who was on placement with us and was such a wonderful member of our community. But we also had our worst period of regular attendance at 10am for many years, leading up to Easter 2022 when attendance on Easter Eve/Day was less than in 2021, partly because fewer people attended the Family Service / Easter Egg hunt. The comparable number of communicants in 2021/22 being exactly the same at 98. Holy Week itself was more positive, with a good attendance on Good Friday for both services but especially 'Children at the foot of the Cross.' We began on Palm Sunday with our APCM and a challenging discussion around attendance in church, live-streaming and our need to overcome our fears post Covid and come back together again in person as one family of faith.

We recognised our need to gather around the altar, where Jesus meets us, indeed feeds us spiritually in the Holy Sacrament. From then onwards numbers began to recover as we prayed for renewal. Numbers began to start to recover with 8am services reaching a regular 11 people in attendance and 10am moving back over the 30 mark and sometimes into the 40's. The fortnightly Family Service recovered somewhat too, back to a regular 20 present.

The clergy team continued to prepare family packs which were distributed to children in church. Indeed there was not a Sunday between August and December 2022 without children in church for at least one service. As more returned to in person worship, online attendance dropped to 30 devices on a Sunday with only 15 actually following worship live, leading the PCC towards a review of continued viability. Once again the operation of live streaming fell to clergy, and largely me, as the Vimeo platform was upgraded and the process for setting-up each live stream became increasingly more complicated and fraught with problems. This has meant that without a volunteer to take on this work, live streaming of services has become impossible to continue into 2023.

The Jubilee celebrations were a lot of work for those involved but so very positive. Our MP Dr Ben Spencer was present for an hour and was blown away by the scale and attendance, he felt making Thorpe's effort the largest gathering in his constituency. Elaine Gill's leadership was sublime, supported by such a brilliant team with our own Parish Treasurer, Andy West, a key player and the Social Committee and their input and vast amounts of time. TESIS did us and Thorpe proud, with use of their South Campus Grounds and support in so many ways, not least with parking and security and we are so blessed to have them, and Mr Bryan Nixon as neighbours and friends.

However, spring 2022 was also marked by loss, with the sudden death of Barry Huxley who had served as churchwarden for 4 years and is dearly missed, along with some members of the Church family moving to pastures new around the UK, including the Alderson, Christie and Wareham families. Then there was Fr Gerard's appointment to Prison Chaplaincy and the end of Mother Jo's Curacy meaning the Winn-Smith family left at the end of November. Jo is now the Chaplain to the Bishop of Guildford. Then it was also announced that I had been appointed by the Lord Chancellor as the next Rector of Weybridge, with a move planned for January 2023, meaning the Christmas season was also a time of goodbyes.

In 2022 we also marked the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II, with her funeral shown live in church on our newly installed screens and lunch for all in the Rutherwyke Room. It was a real privilege to share the nation's loss together at St Mary's and there were still people here watching on the screen in the Rutherwyke Room at 6pm!

The upgrade to technology, including the projection in church has been a very successful addition to church life and used regularly by Thorpe Primary School for their services and each class visit to St Mary's and has been much appreciated. Likewise, we have upgraded the electrical system with RCD protection now in place for critical circuits and additional protection for the boiler house and vestry. We also now have emergency lighting above the porch doors. And the new sound desk arrived and was installed, having been on a boat around the world for months!

So 2022 became a year of transitions and change as we began to prepare for a vacancy and urgently prayed for the right appointment of a second churchwarden to support Pete. Autumn 2022 saw continued growth in Sunday attendances as we prepared for a festive season without restrictions. Winter Wonderland Fair was glorious, with a busy Christingle service and a brightly coloured roundabout stationed in the Vicarage Car Park. Our Christmas lights twinkled beautifully throughout December, drawing in many people. The white lights will remain in place ready for lighting in celebration of the King's Coronation in May 2023. Christmas services were well attended, continuing St Mary's recovery post the pandemic, with a packed 3pm Crib Service and over 450 people attending worship over Christmas itself.

I have written this report while preparing for my move to Weybridge and I leave Thorpe with a heavy heart. This community has been a very happy place to be and Jason and I started a family here with so much support and love. I will treasure in my heart this time of ministry as your priest. Both Jason and I reflected that we have lived longer in St Mary's Vicarage than anywhere else in our lives so far – nearly 12 years! I am delighted to leave St Mary's in a much better place than I found it, in so many ways and am thankful for your gift of time and support. But I realise the goalposts have moved and the challenge of maintaining a full-time vicar for just one church has become more difficult post Covid. The Church of England and Thorpe Parish are not alone in the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges faced today. All voluntary organisations are ageing. Many groups have already folded, and charities are struggling. The ongoing cost of living crisis which impacts us all is yet another layer of complexity to navigate. The way in which St Mary's has recovered post pandemic, even in the face of dramatic shifts in society, is remarkable. This truly is a place of dedication, faithfulness, prayer and Christian flourishing. The Modern catholic approach to worship, community and inclusivity is drawing new people and gifts into the life of St Mary's and the way forward is continued growth if you, those reading this report, are faithful in your prayers and regular worship, your inclusive welcome and pastoral care.

As with all times of transition, there will be change, some things will come to an end but other new opportunities will emerge and I am confident your Vacancy will be a productive and positive time. You can, by prayer, find the right priest to lead you forward. I will always keep Thorpe and St Mary's Church in my prayers and consider having been your priest and guardian of this community the greatest privilege of my working life.

God bless, with prayers, *Father Damian Harrison-Miles.*

### **Electoral Roll Report – January-December 2022**

The Electoral Roll for St Mary's Thorpe at the end of December 2021 was 117 and of this figure there are 19 households where there are 2 members.

The figure at the beginning of April 2022 was 121 so there has been an overall slight decrease of four this year, which has included some additions and some members of our church family passing on or moving away.

In the summer Fr Damian and I did a review of the electoral roll, when some entries were removed. Knowing this, I believe the electoral roll figures to be quite positive. This is my first year serving as an electoral officer. I am grateful for the encouragement I have received during this first year.

*Electoral Roll Officer, Clare Cobbold*

### **PCC Secretary's Report 2022 on the work of the Parochial Church Council**

The Parochial Church Council met seven times over 2022 excluding the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday 10th April 2022. Evening meetings were preceded by the Eucharist at 7pm. The meetings started just after 7:30pm and it was aimed to conclude each meeting by 9:15pm.

In January PCC approved the Faculty for the reduced AV Installation, to cover only one screen and the full electrical upgrade required to support this. In April PCC approved the work to be undertaken and this was completed in 2022 and the screen has been used to good effect during Thorpe Primary School attendances and for Barry Huxley's funeral.

PCC discussed Covid at meetings during the year and approved changes to the Covid protocol being undertaken in church in line with government guidelines and local infection rates.

In March approval was given for application for a future non-stipendiary curate, which was duly submitted.

In September the Church Development Plan was approved and sub-committees moved to new 'teams', with a team leader for each group from PCC. The new teams are Administration, Deputy Wardens, Eco-Church, Fabric, Families and Children's Team and Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Liturgy Worship and Ministry, Organ Project, Social and Fundraising and Standing and Finance – which subsequently became Standing, Finance and Vacancy following the resignation of Fr. Damian. Each team will meet 4 times per year and report back to PCC at regular meetings.

All other regular business and approval of Policies were conducted as normal.

*PCC Secretary, Allison Kelly*

## **Church Wardens' Annual Report, including St Mary's Church, Terrier and Fabric, 2022**

This year has seen a number of challenges but St Mary's continues to thrive and enjoy the support of our congregations and local community. Thankfully we have been able to move on from the years of Covid restrictions and have resumed normal services. We do still maintain a careful watch on the levels of infection in the wider community and will react as necessary.

In May we were deeply shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Barry Huxley, beloved friend and churchwarden of St Mary's, Thorpe. He has been sorely missed as he was such a support for St Mary's, giving so much of his time and expertise to his role as churchwarden. As well as taking responsibility for keeping all the checks up to date, it was thanks to Barry that the new patio was completed and the paths widened. During Covid he ensured that all seating was spaced correctly and was responsible for the installation of the audio system, the improvement of the sound system and the audio screen but sadly never lived to see them being used, especially by the school children. Having to manage without him so unexpectedly was very difficult but assistance by others was much appreciated. The Huxley family have donated a defibrillator to the church in memory of Barry. This has been installed on the wall of the new patio.

The St Mary's family would like to record our heartfelt thanks to Pete Gruncell, who supported by his wife Joan, has carried the burden of being sole churchwarden for the majority of the year. He has dedicated himself unstintingly to fulfilling the role and has done it superbly well. Thank you, Pete and Joan, for all the hours and all the effort.

St Mary's has continued to be actively involved in the community through regular social activities and interaction with local organisations and schools, in particular TASIS and Thorpe Church of England Primary School. We thank them all for their constant support and look forward to working with them in 2023.

We would like to thank Fr Damian, Fr Gerard and Mother Jo for their unfailing dedication and commitment in providing leadership and care in our services throughout 2022. In the last months of the year, we had to say goodbye to Mother Jo and Fr Gerard as they moved on to take up new roles within their Christian ministries. Mother Jo was appointed Chaplain to the Bishop of Guildford and Fr Gerard has taken the post of part-time Chaplain at Downview Prison. We are sad to see them leave St Mary's but we wish them every success in their new jobs. Happily, we will see them now and again as they will still be leading some services for us in 2023.

We are further saddened to have to bid farewell to Fr Damian who taken up the position of Rector at St James' Church in Weybridge. We will miss him greatly and we thank him sincerely for the tremendous work he has done developing the worship and fellowship at St Mary's Church, and in the wider community of Thorpe. He has been a great leader and teacher encouraging all age groups to get involved at church and interacting with local community groups for the benefit of us all. We wish him all the best in his new role.

Special thanks go to the following people: Andy West, Treasurer, for his skilled oversight and handling of the church's finances; Mary Morris, Parish Administrator, and Allison Kelly, PCC Secretary, for their dedication and hard work. They all work unflinchingly to keep us up to date, and on course as a church and a regulated charitable organisation.

We would like to thank everyone who is involved in supporting the church as a member or helper of the many groups and committees that facilitate the running of the church. Whether it is cleaning, flower arranging, welcoming, serving, Eco Church development, choir and music preparation, rota planning, gardening, planning and running children's clubs and activities, the list is endless and we value everything you do and are so grateful. Thank you to you all.

Peter Gruncell & Diana Lees

### **Property Register Report (Formerly Terrier and inventory) 2022**

The Quinquennial Inspection in August identified some broken roof tiles at the top of the tower. These have been replaced and all cracks filled with silicon.

**Church Bells:** A full service of the bells and clock was carried out in August which involved realignment and tightening of the bells to facilitate correct ringing.

**Church Organ:** The organ suffers from its location in the west end of the church. It is still working but occasionally suffers from "stuck" keys. Pete and our organists have developed techniques to free the keys as needed. The organ bench has been shortened and the additional support brackets fitted to provide more room for the organist to dismount by the steps. This has increased the organist's safety considerably. The organ gate has also been strengthened by the addition of L shaped metal plates at the joints.

### **Church Grounds:**

The grounds are kept tidy with the help of students from TASIS who give up two hours of their time every other Saturday to help sweep and clear leaves from the paths. In spring and autumn, we held churchyard clean ups when many people, including students and teachers, gave up their Saturday mornings for a major tidying and pruning session.



Thank you to Bryan Nixon, Head of TASIS School, and to the students for their support and assistance for which we are very grateful.

This year saw the completion of the planned AV Project which has seen the installation in the church of the following items: Main drop-down screen, 3 x projectors, (1 above the chancel arch and 2 onto North and South aisle walls), mixer, amplifiers, hearing loop, wireless microphones and receivers and all the necessary power wiring for the above. This facility now offers opportunities for hosting a greater range of social events and outreach, and has greatly improved sound quality within the church,

**Forthcoming work is required in 2023 to:**

- Reset some tiles on the porch roof where we had a small leak and check the flashing
- Clear rubbish from the guttering
- Investigate cracked glass in the second window on the north side of the church, probably caused by a stone kicked up by the mower
- Investigate the automatic system for the bells which has developed a fault

The Church Inventory is being updated by Jill Collinson and an Administration Team. This is detailed time-consuming work and we are very grateful for their endeavours.

*Peter Gruncell & Diana Lees*

**Financial Report 2022**

*(including the PCC Treasurer's report) PCC accounts can be found at page 34.*

**Receipts**

**Regular Giving**

2022 Planned Giving was 3% up on the previous year and income from Gift-Aided collections was up 33% at £12.2k. Non-Gift Aid donations (up by 195%) benefitted from a considerable donation towards the electronic organ as well as continuing donations toward the AV project. These were transferred to the Works Account (see Expenditure>Fund Transfers>Transfer to Works Acc). When this is taken into consideration Regular Giving for 2022 was £51,318 compared with £53,114 in 2021 (down 3.4%).

**Other voluntary receipts**

Income from general donations in 2022 was significantly lower than 2021 which had benefitted from a large donation towards the audio-visual project. Income from wall boxes and that raised for charity increased YOY but overall receipts were expectedly down by £17.8k.

### **Fund-generating activities**

Receipts from fund-raising events were considerably higher for the second year running amounting to more than £19.7k compared to £15.2k the previous year. Income from both the Platinum Jubilee and Christmas Fayre and the other activities organised by the Social Committee were a very considerable bonus. Generous individual donations also meant that the Audio/Visual project could be completed to a high standard. Receipts from hire were 60% higher than 2021 as the impact of the pandemic receded. Total income from this sector was £22.7k, 32.8% higher than last year.

### **Income from Church activities**

Income from fees (weddings & funerals) was 83% more than last year (£15.7k versus £8.6k in 2020) due to the higher number of funerals throughout the year. Overall income was up by 73% (£7k).

### **Receipts from Investments & Other Income**

Income from church activities dropped by just under £3k in 2022 due to fewer Weddings taking place. Receipts from refreshments, Noah's Ark, Lego club, flowers and sundry items like cards and gifts all increased YOY.

The dividend from our CBF shares rose by 3.3% year on year providing an annual return of £505 compared to £489 in 2021.

Inter-account transfers (shown as income from the Works and Education deposit accounts) were to pay suppliers for the AV project and shared resource costs for Youth work.

The Tax reclaim from HMRC for 2021 (received in 2022) was artificially high due to an over-claim error. This was corrected and this figure should be viewed alongside the repayment (see Payments>Other Costs>Tax Repayment).

Total receipts for 2022 were £202,349 compared to £140,964 in 2021 (+43% or £61,376)

## **Payments**

### **Church Activities**

Our Parish Share for 2022 was paid in full. Parish running costs such as travel, telephone and related expenses were £360 (27%) less than 2021. Organist's fees were higher due to the number of funerals this year (money in/out). Costs related to services in church dropped by 27% YOY. Overall, the cost of church activities rose by just under £5k (8.2%).

## **Maintenance**

Maintenance costs were 63% lower this year compared to last. As well as regular weekly cleaning, the main areas of expenditure were electrical works (AV), the Quinquennial Inspection, boiler and clock servicing and churchyard/car park tree maintenance.

## **Church running expenses**

The cost of insurance rose by 3.4% (£90) compared to last year and Utility costs rose by 15.7% (£1,081). Overall running costs rose by 17% (£1,171) but we can expect these to be significantly higher yet again in 2023 due to the rise in energy costs from April.

## **Administration**

Costs across administration, computer and office supplies were £6.6k higher than 2021. Apart from secretarial costs this was mainly due to acquiring two replacement computers (Office & Vicarage) and the supporting software and connectivity which were one-off costs. Standard office supplies such as photocopier charges, paper, BT phone line and annual subscriptions are also included here.

## **Other costs**

Total expenditure in this sector rose by £46.9k compared to last year. Most of this increased expenditure (£36k) was on fixed assets i.e., the AV system and accompanying electrical works. Events & Fundraising costs saw a significant increase over the previous year but £4.8k of this was payment to TWRA for their 2/3rds share of the Platinum Jubilee income. Tax Repayment was the refund to HMRC for the over-payment of Gift Aid (see Receipts from Other Income & Investments above)

## **Fund transfers**

A total of £43,938 was transferred from the Current Account to the Works Deposit Account in 2022. As usual all donations specifically identified as project specific were recorded as income when received into the Current account (see Other Voluntary Receipts and Receipts from Fund-generating Activities) and then as expenditure upon transfer to the Works Account (Deposit). Of the £2,324 transferred to the Education Account, £1,500 was its 50% share of the Marshall Grant (AV) and £824 was from Noah's Ark and Lego Club receipts. These transfers impact both Income and Expenditure totals and so should be taken into consideration for any comparison of the two.

Total payments in 2022 were £201,741 compared to £140,126 in 2021.

This is the second year that St Mary's has faced difficult circumstances as a result of the pandemic but I am pleased to report that the church finances are in a stable position which is solely due to the outstanding generosity, hard work and commitment of our faithful parishioners, the PCC and the church's leadership.

*Andy West, Treasurer*

## **Safeguarding Officer's Report 2022**

National and Diocesan resources over the last year have been strained because of the Covid 19 restrictions but attention to safeguarding requirements at St Mary's has not been compromised in any way. The Diocese has struggled with a reduction in staff and also with the changes being implemented by the National Churches Institutions' Safeguarding Department, resulting in new guidelines being set. These guidelines have now been passed on to the parishes. At the end of October 2021 the Bishop of Guildford's Leadership Team issued a new set of safeguarding training instructions in the form of a 'Parish Dashboard'. Each parish has been given its own 'Dashboard' - traffic light system to record and monitor its parish safeguarding training.

With effect from January 2022, significant changes have been made to the training requirements and courses, most of which are by online training. Although obligatory for PCC members, others might find the *Basic Awareness and Foundation modules* beneficial. These courses are accessible via the Diocese of Guildford website and access is available on the Diocesan Website under the 'Safeguarding' section [https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk\\_Safeguarding](https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk_Safeguarding)

### **DBS**

Significant changes to the DBS process were issued by APCS (the Diocesan provider) to the parishes at the end of January 2022. DBS checks now have to be renewed every three years rather than every five years. The 2022 changes include new guidance on those whose role requires a DBS check.

The Diocese will no longer issue a Disclosure Outcome letter and outcome of DBS checks will now go direct to the Validator (Vicar/Safeguarding Officer) rather than to the Diocesan office. We are assured this will make the return process more efficient.

All clergy DBS renewals and Safeguarding training records are dealt with by the Diocesan office.

*Mary Morris, Parish Safeguarding Officer*

## Runnymede Deanery Synod Report 2022



### Deanery Synods

Synod meetings in 2022 were held at St Paul Egham-Hythe (Spring), Christ Church Virginia Water (Summer) and St Paul Addlestone (Autumn), as usual presenting “Parish Focus” reports about the church life and community involvement of the hosting parish, with prayer requests/updates.

In Spring, Runnymede Deanery Climate Champion Clem Jones gave a Climate Challenge Update.

The June meeting was an outdoor synod in the Vicarage garden, with a well-attended and appreciated Bring & Share social, followed by an enthusiastic presentation and lively discussion on “Lay People in the Church of England” facilitated by Sarah Slater (Mission Team, Diocese of Guildford).

October Synod saw the Ven. Paul Davies (Archdeacon of Surrey) speaking passionately to lay members on “How Clergy Thrive”, including a useful group work session, while clergy gathered for a prayer meeting. Runnymede Deanery Eco Church Champion Ben Niblett presented “Eco Church 101”.

All three meetings were open to the public and detailed Minutes are available via the Deanery Administrator whose e mail address is [runnymededeanery@gmail.com](mailto:runnymededeanery@gmail.com) and on the Deanery website.

### Restructuring

The leading bodies of the deanery (Standing Committee and Growth & Strategy Group) have, as per CofE strategy, been incorporated into the new Deanery Leadership Team, which had its first meeting in April 2022. It consists of the Area Dean, Lay Chair and incumbents of the parishes (or their nominated core leadership delegates)/churchwardens in case of vacancy.

### Kebbi Link

Archbishop Henry of Nigeria invited Bishop Andrew of Guildford to speak at a plenary session of the Nigerian National Conference in November 2022, renewing the longstanding link with our diocese. Nigeria is the largest member of the Anglican Communion with over 20 million people. Details on the visit will hopefully be shared at the next synod meeting.

### Finance

Runnymede Deanery accounts continue to be sound and Parish Contributions were confirmed to remain at the same level as in recent years (individual parish amounts are determined by three-year rolling average of Sunday attendance, combined with Relative Prosperity Index), plus an invitation for 30% additional as donations towards the Deanery Growth Fund.

A £500 Deanery Growth Fund grant was awarded to Egham Hythe in support of their work with local Magna Carta Secondary School.

## Other Business

- 2022 was the last year of the current Lay Membership cycle with the next Triennial Lay Representatives Election coming up for APCMs in 2023.
- Former Lay Chair Keith Malcouronne stepped down after over 20 years of good work in his leading function. Steve Baynes of Egham Hythe was duly and unanimously elected as new Lay Chair, with Roy Gouriet of Englefield Green as deputy. Ben Beecroft, Vicar in Addlestone, remains Area Dean, with Rosie Hoad, Vicar in Egham Hythe, as deputy.
- Runnymede Deanery Synod voted in favour of a motion for Diocesan Synod: "For Church of England clergy to marry parishioners and couples with a valid link to their churches in a Church of England ceremony at their chosen, legally correct venues other than a Parish church/chapel/place of worship."

*Claire Cobbold, Mary Morris  
St Mary's Representatives on Runnymede Deanery Synod*

## **OTHER REPORTS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

### **Children's Church Report 2022**

Noah's Ark, the toddler group, continues with lively meetings every Thursday from 9am to 11.30am Children have a range of toys and activities they can undertake and we finish with a singing session. Average attendance is approximately 16 children with their parents/carers each week.

*Allison Kelly*

### **Church Cleaning Report 2022**

The cleaning team of Hannah and Jill meet on an ad hoc basis to clean the church. We would welcome anyone wishing to assist with this and can be flexible on timing. Please let me know if you are able to help

Clare continues to do a sterling job in washing the church floor on a weekly basis. A small group of the congregation contribute £30 on an ad hoc basis to the cleaning of the church

If anyone is able to contribute at any time please put the contribution in a Gift Aid envelope marked CLEANING.

*Jill Collinson*

## **Contemplative Prayer Group Report 2022**

The Contemplative Prayer Group, has been meeting weekly on Monday afternoons, 2.15 to 4.15. It is a means of keeping a Flame of Light and Love alive, which connects us with the Wholeness of Creation and the Creator.

We have a 'getting ready' Reading which leads us into a time of Silence.....a time of waiting, listening, letting go of earthly worries and anxieties.....then we move to pray for individuals, incidents, troubled places. We finish with the Blessing. We often take time to reflect on what may have occurred for us in the Silence but this comes when it is right to do so. Over tea and cake we feel the joy of the group - a safe place. We are very small in number. If anyone would like to know more about the CPG do talk to Margaret H, Jane C or Susi.

*Jane Carter, Margaret Harnden, Marie Jedla, Susi Thornton*

For further information contact the Parish Office.

## **Flower Guild Report 2022**

The Flower Guild is still operating with four main group members, Jane, Helen, Elaine and myself, but we have had help for special occasions from Grace, Jenni and Valery. Special thanks go to them. Valery is at present living with a host family in Thorpe, having fled her home in Ukraine due to the war.

Margaret Alderson continues to spend some time with us in Thorpe, despite now living in Scotland, but is always keen to help us with church flowers when here. Jane is not able to be with us all year now so please, if you would like to join us you would be made most welcome.

Easter saw St Mary's decorated beautifully with white lilies, many donated in memory of a loved one or in thanks for the blessing of a family member.

One of our saddest, but poignant tasks was decorating the church for the funeral of our dear churchwarden, Barry's funeral – something we would never have expected to be doing. The family was very complimentary about our efforts and we were happy to play our part in what was a very moving service.

The Platinum Jubilee of the Late Queen Elizabeth II, was a particularly special time for us, when we encouraged all in the congregation and beyond, across the ages, to bring an arrangement to church, however simple, to celebrate that unique occasion. The response was brilliant! They were both simple and beautiful, with some spectacular, and were much admired by the hundreds of people who visited the church over the extended four day Bank Holiday.

Christmas is always a highlight for us arrangers and the feedback we had in 2022 about the festive floral decorations was particularly positive. St Mary's is a beautiful church to worship in, and the Flower Guild is here to enhance that beauty. We feel privileged to be involved and look forward to adding to our number in 2023. Come and join us!

*Margaret Harnden*

### **Liturgy Group Report 2022**

Why do we feel the need to physically gather together publicly, when in recent years 'online' worship has for many become the norm? Why do we devote huge amounts of our time, energy and financial resources in maintaining a physical structure, if the old adage is true and The Church is the people and not the building!

Let's turn this around, why did sensible people sacrifice their lives, just so future generations, could log into worship, when it was convenient. Surely, because the transformative love of God which burns in our hearts, is not about us 'getting our fix' but rather about a public statement, a witness to the wider community, which simply says, 'God is so special, he deserve us to pull out all the stops, to do everything at our disposal to scripturally and emotionally show others that the chance to come together and the living fellow of God's kingdom, at this time, in this place, is just as important as the food we eat or the clothes we wear.'

Without falling into the current trap of constantly using Management Talk, the truth is we unfortunately, live in a world of Numbers, Targets Viability Charts or in everyday language 'Bums on Seats'. For over 1000 years, people from all different walks of life, from different social backgrounds, have felt called to St. Mary's to offer uplifting and accessible worship that gives us a foretaste of Heaven. The effort and devotion which people give willingly for the good of others makes St. Mary's a beacon of hope and encouragement in a world that often feels as though it has lost its way.

Change can be scary, however it can and should also be seen as God's gift to allow the Holy Spirit to equip and inspire the lives of other disciples. Yes, St. Mary's took a big hit this year, when God called the resident priests to pastures new, but this is the beginning of a new chapter, so let's continue to fly the flag here at St. Mary's, let's ensure that this community in Thorpe continues to present worship in such a way that the action of coming here to worship is simply a part of who and what we are, of what makes us tick.

*Fr Gerard Mee*



## **Music Secretary's Report 2022**

It has been a pleasure to return to unrestricted singing in St Mary's after the constraints of the last couple of years. We sang at 24 services, 9 funerals and 6 weddings and were joined by some of The Hythe Singers for Lessons and Carols. We are fortunate to have the services of our splendid organists, David Howard and Lionel Pike, and thank them for their excellent music and support. We also thank Petra Hudson for cantoring on many occasions. We were invited to sing at St Paul's Church in Addlestone on four occasions. In September we opened St Mary's after the sad loss of our Queen. Father Damian set up the screens and provided Order of Services for us to follow a very moving the service. Some 40 people attended. The Knights Templar celebrated their annual service with us on the 9<sup>th</sup> October. We joined All Saints at Woodham for their Patronal Service on the 30<sup>th</sup> October. Thank you to all the choir for giving up their time to rehearse and sing at St Mary's it is greatly appreciated and enhances our services. We welcomed a new member, Linda, to our choir this year and are always looking for new members. Please contact me if you would like to know more about singing at St Mary's

*Jill Collinson*

## **Social and Fundraising Team Report 2022**

Our social and fundraising activities are now "back to normal" after considerable "stops and starts" during the two years of the pandemic.

Our major event of the year was the Platinum Jubilee party on the 3 June. TASIS kindly let us use their massive garden in the South Campus so our Churchyard was a thoroughfare to TASIS. It was a huge success, not least because people felt comfortable at coming out to such a large scale fete after two years of being very careful when the pandemic was at its peak. Also it was an amazing day weather wise, so much so we had to send out for several reinforcements of PIMMS and other beverages. The teas were served in the Rutherwyke Room and went down very well. The Platinum Committee worked so hard to make it a success and TASIS worked with us as a team. The proceeds were split so two thirds went to the TWRA and one third to our Church - the proceeds for our Church were nearly £2,500. It was a great community activity; thanks to Elaine for chairing the Committee.

In October we held a barn dance in the Village Hall but despite efforts to sell more tickets there were only 36 of us. However we still made a profit of nearly £400 and it was a great evening.

We continue to look for ideas to fundraise so we hired the British Legion Hall in Pooley Green for a nearly new sale. Unfortunately very few people attended but we managed to make a net profit of £160 and we had great fun doing it.

After that came our Winter Wonderland. As it was so cold outside last year we restricted the number of stalls outside for the brave hearted! It was a very jolly affair. We still managed to make a good profit of around £1,500 and we did well on the Grand Draw this year.

Then came all the events at Christmas, i.e. lessons and carols, Egham Band, crib services for which we provided refreshments. We had been sponsored for two licences which meant we could charge for mulled wine and mince pies and we managed to add to the fundraising pot.

At the Remembrance Service we learned that our priest Fr Damian was leaving us in January. Because of the numbers we decided to hold his leaving party in the Village Hall. TESIS very kindly supplied a hot dish and various Church members made puddings. It was very successful.

Our next venture is our annual quiz on March 11<sup>th</sup> and we are hoping for good attendance.

*Jenny Bright*

## **Environmental Stewardship Report 2022**

As a mark of our achievements in 2021, we were able to apply for the Eco Church Silver Award which was granted on 29 March 2022. You can now find us on the Eco Church map at <https://app.ecochurch.org/map> with a silver marker and our award certificate is displayed on the Link pin board.

At the beginning of 2022, following request from PCC, St Mary's Eco Team was formed, consisting of Ann Corfield, Susi Thornton and Petra Hudson, with an inaugural meeting in March. The team has overseen the following events in 2022:

- Tearfund "Renew Our World" speaker at Lent Lunch
- St Mary's Eco Church stall – with a hedgehog theme and link to Harper Asprey Wildlife Rescue – at the big Jubilee Fete
- Eco Church section on St Mary's stall at the school fair
- Counsellor Linda Gilham speaking on Bee Conservation at November Community Lunch

Further activities in 2022:

- Introduction of St Mary's Eco Church Mascot "Hoopy Hannah Hedgehog", kindly knitted by Jenny Pike and named as a prize game at the two fairs mentioned above
- Introduction of an occasional St Mary's Eco Church Info publication with tips and ideas on environmental topics, plus fun challenges for Creation Appreciation, Creation Conservation and Creation Kids

- “Creation Care” Household Eco Survey as a church-family-wide activity, sadly with poor uptake – if you have not yet done this survey please go to Creation Care (see notes below) and do it now because your personal (anonymous!) participation in this is a crucial part of our journey towards food bank
- Installation of a variety of bug hotels and bird boxes, kindly made by Pete Gruncell
- Information on and promotion of bumblebee hives for gardens
- Participation in The Queen’s Green Canopy scheme in conjunction with TISIS
- Pledging “Renew Our World” as St Mary’s Environmental Prayer Charity – please keep remembering their projects in your prayers regularly (both at home and for Intercessions at worship)

“Going for Gold”:

SM Eco Team has created a complete overview of how St Mary’s can achieve the Eco Church Gold Award going forward – yes it’s possible without undue pressure on resources, both financial and volunteering! This was lodged with PCC for the upcoming Parish Needs Process and vision building.

As a reminder: Eco Church is an ecumenical environmental stewardship programme, run by Christian environmental charity A Rocha UK. Our Diocese of Guildford has signed up as an Eco Diocese, has achieved Bronze level and is strongly encouraging all parishes to progress through these awards, so they can progress as a diocese. The Eco Church programme guides churches towards a more creation-centred and environmentally sustainable future within a balanced scheme. You can read about it in more detail at <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk>.

Please join the Creation Care register at <https://creationcare.org.uk> – linking to St Mary’s Church Thorpe! – and complete the survey.

They also feature an excellent webinar recording on their HOME page which explains everything about why as Christians we should be concerned with environmental stewardship (scroll down the HOME page and especially listen to the Bishop of Horsham). She explains why Eco Church is not simply a box ticking, award hunting exercise – those are only the markers of progression! It’s a learning process towards increasing Eco Awareness (Creation Appreciation) and Eco Stewardship (Creation Care), both as Church and as individuals who make up that Church.

The Eco Team thanks everybody who has helped in any way with the events and activities mentioned above. Your support is very much appreciated.

*Petra Hudson*  
Environmental Stewardship Co-ordinator

## Thorpe Church of England Primary School Report 2022

We are all very sad that **Fr Damian** has left us but very grateful for the close partnership with St Mary's PCC. We had a productive meeting with Churchwardens Peter, Diana and Andy this term and hope to work closely with all those at St Mary's Thorpe to ensure the school and children continue with the great links between church and school.

Again, big thanks to the **Churchwardens** and volunteers who have supported the children with their church visits for curriculum and services. It would be very difficult to manage these visits without your support at Church and walking back to school. You are very much appreciated and we will need your support even more so in the coming months.

We have continued to work closely with The **Grace Learning Partnership** to enhance practice and our offer to children. These schools include; Lyne and Longcross, St Jude's Infant and Junior School. We are working with wider school community in North West Surrey.

We are committed to **safeguarding** children's welfare and all checks on regular helpers are carried out. Our Single Central List is checked by our Safeguarding Governor Mr Bryan Nixon every term. Head teacher trains governors and every member of staff on an annual basis and visitors who volunteer also have training before they work with children.

**FOTSA** has raised a lot of money - they work hard, often with other job roles, for the benefit of all the children in the school.

We have a very successful **Breakfast Club - Earlybirds**, starting at 7.30am. **After School Club – Owl Club** (from 3pm to 5.30pm). We also have a variety of other clubs; dance, coding, football, Warhammer, multi skills and judo. Again, we would love Faith and Fun to return to Thorpe when St Mary's has capacity.

**Opal Play** continues to support children with their play but this needs regular replenishment with donations of various items such as sand, dressing up clothes, construction items.

We are very pleased with the **admissions** to our school for 2023 and although we have seen quite a bit of movement to and from school; children have joined our school and settled well. Infant classes are full and we have 10 spaces across the Junior classes, most in Y6

If you have any questions, or would like to come for a visit, please do not hesitate to contact me.

01932 562329 or [head@thorpe.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:head@thorpe.surrey.sch.uk)



*.Mrs Helen Southgate, Head teacher Faith, Love and Excellence*

**God's Kingdom in our School**  
**Faith – Love – Excellence**

## **Runnymede Foodbank**

A monthly list of “needs” is received from the Foodbank and displayed within the Church and Rutherwyke Room and the congregation of St Marys continue to contribute generously which helps meet the increasing needs in the area.

In the first 10 months of 2022 over 59,000 meals were distributed in the Runnymede area, a 20% increase on 2021.

Thank you all for your generous support which is needed now more than ever

Jill Collinson

## **Part 2**

### **The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary, Thorpe – Charity No: 5116755**

#### **Annual Report & Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2022**

*On Sunday 7th June 2015, the Right Reverend Andrew Watson, Bishop of Guildford, led a service of Institution and Induction at which The Very Reverend Paul Bryer, Archdeacon of Dorking, made Father Damian Stewart Miles BTh the Vicar of Thorpe under ‘Common Tenure’ – with the agreement of our Parish Patrons Keble College Oxford. This was following a period of five years when the ‘Living’ was suspended under the pastoral measure. From 31 January 2011, all appointments are made under ‘Common Tenure’ and the ‘Living’ has ceased to exist. Father Damian’s appointment as Vicar of Thorpe is under Common Tenure and is not time limited. Fr Damian had served Thorpe as Priest in Charge from February 2011 until he was made the Vicar in 2015.*

**Review of the Year** *Please refer to the Vicar’s and PCC Secretary’s reports.*

### **The Parochial Church Council and Responsibilities**

St Mary’s Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with and assisting the Vicar in promoting, in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission to which Christ Jesus calls his Church; worship, pastoral care, evangelistic outreach, fellowship as well as engaging fully within our local Deanery of Runnymede. Our PCC has responsibility for the fabric of St Mary’s Historic Medieval Church, the Rutherwyke Room with Wallace Room (Parish Office) and closed churchyard surrounding the church buildings (including the Leigh Bennett Enclosure, and the southern end of Church Approach including the lych-gate, flowerbed and entrance to the Vicarage in Church Approach). By agreement St Mary’s PCC maintains the Vicarage front garden for use as a church car park. This land remains the property of the Diocesan Parsonage Board and the agreement allows for car parking on the red gravel area only (approximately 13 spaces). The red surfaced part of the driveway must always be kept clear for emergency vehicles and access to the Vicarage.

## **Governance**

Churchwardens are elected at the Vestry Meeting (meeting of parishioners) and serve for a period of no longer than six years. They are then disqualified from being churchwardens for the next two years, after which they are free to stand for another term of six years. In 2008 the APCM voted to allow an extension of up to two years' service before disqualification under the rules. Members of the PCC are either elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) or ex officio in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Up to 2018 elected members have served on a three-year term for up to two terms, before being disqualified for a year, as agreed by a previous APCM. This was reviewed at our 2018 APCM and a motion carried for a change to block elections for the PCC annually.

From 2019 APCM all those intending to stand for the PCC need to complete an application form and be proposed and seconded in the customary way. If there are more proposed people than places an election will be held. Additional members may be co-opted at the PCC's discretion for a specific purpose, up to two at any one time. (Church Representation Rules 46A and 46B) A person shall be disqualified from being nominated, chosen, or elected or from serving as a member of a parochial church council, a district church council or any synod under these rules if the person:

- is disqualified from being a charity trustee under section 72(1) of the Charities Act 1993 and the disqualification is not for the time being subject to a waiver by the Charity Commissioners.
- is included in a barred list (within the meaning of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006).
- has been convicted of an offence mentioned in Schedule 1 to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (unless the person's disqualification under this sub-section has been waived in writing by the bishop of the diocese in question).
- has been so disqualified from holding office under section 10(6) of the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure [1997].

A person is disqualified from being a charity trustee under the Charities Act if they have been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty (unless any such conviction is legally regarded as spent), if they are an undischarged bankrupt, have made compositions or arrangements with any creditors from which they have not been discharged or have been removed from serving as a charity trustee, or been stopped from acting in a management position within a charity.

## **Charity Registration**

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Mary, Thorpe is a registered charity no: 1176929. See [www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk/policies](http://www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk/policies) for Thorpe Governing Documents and PCC Trustee Guidance, as well as other parish policies and role descriptions for elected, voluntary and employed staff.

## **Parish Share 2020 – 2023**

In 2018 the Diocese of Guildford voted to adopt a new Parish Share calculation from 2019. For Thorpe Parish, if the new calculation were implemented in full, from day one, we would have needed to find nearly 80k each year, an increase of 35k annually. Negotiations followed with the PCC and Standing Committee, and a revised calculation for Thorpe was proposed by the Diocesan Board of Finance, which sees an increase in our contribution of 40% phased over five years. In 2019 we were asked to contribute £50,121. (+5k on 2018) In 2020 we are asked to contribute = £54,439. This should have increased in 2021 to £58,769, 2022 to £63,281 and 2023 to £67,982. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Parish Share has been frozen across the Diocese. It is unclear what the position will be beyond 2023, but we are aware the Diocesan Board of Finance has significant financial challenges, so regrettably we can expect the annual rises to continue.

The Parish Share calculation is made up of two component parts: 'Ministry Costs' at £56,300 includes the stipend for a full-time Vicar - Fr Damian is actually paid £27,000k before deductions – this amount has been frozen for two years with no % increase expected any time soon, so in effect, the clergy have taken a pay cut. Other aspects of the parish share calculation include pension liabilities (including historical pension costs), housing, training (including curates) and the cost of maintaining vicarages, etc. 'Shared Costs' are then calculated on the top, and these include money for mission and the National Church, church schools, diocesan costs and much more besides. As our share contribution rises annually, we will not only pay the full ministry cost but begin to pay the shared costs component, which had previously been subsidised by other churches.

## **Church Attendance**

It is impossible to make an accurate comparison between 2022 and recent years due to the nature of the Covid-19 pandemic and the heavy restrictions which were placed upon society – the church has in no way been immune to this. Although 2022 was restrictions free, the impact of social distancing was felt at worship throughout much of the year. Thorpe PCC are so thankful for the support of so many in achieving all we did this year. It will take some time to recover numbers in Church, but we have made a good start and must remain determined to work at growing St Mary's once more through personal evangelism and discipleship, as we share the blessings of what we have here far and wide.

## **GDPR & Privacy Policy**

Your privacy is especially important to Thorpe PCC and we are committed to keeping your information and data secure and safe. Visit our website to read our Privacy Notice: <https://www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk/copy-of-safeguarding>

## ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH STATISTICS FOR MISSION 2016–2022

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Mothering Sunday	77	97	157	8	25	68
Easter Day	259	257	249	(closed)	149	124
Harvest	84	106	112	41	79	93
Advent/Carol/School Services	916	1133	1082	181	569	684
Christmas Eve/Day	638	639	627	161	258	438
<i>Occasional Offices:</i>						
Funerals (Crematorium)	9	10	15	20	20	10
(In Church)	11	9	9	9	14	12
Burial of Ashes	5	3	4	1	3	4
Baptisms	22	17	25	3	4	19
Weddings	10	6	6	2	7	7
Wedding Blessings	0	0	1	0	1	0
Wedding Banns Only	2	2	3	2	2	2
Electoral Roll (Dec year-end)	140	142	107	119	118	117
Average 10am attendance at worship ONLINE (devices) during 2022						30

### National Church – continuing to decline

According to the British Attitudes Survey (September 2018), the number of people in society who describe themselves as part of the Church of England has more than halved since 2002, from 31% to 14%. This is a worrying statistic and should give us cause for concern with the number who attend regular Sunday worship thought to be far lower. Anecdotally, we have seen more people connected to St Mary's (known as the 'fringe' of the church community) but overall, people are less regular in their commitment to worship with the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns exacerbating this trend. Nationally, the decline in attendance among 45 – 54-year olds is most acute and again reflects the challenge we have in meeting this age group and their spiritual needs. The national average decline in Church of England attendance is said to be around 2% but could well be higher because of Covid and St Mary's Church has not been immune to this, with a number of people moving away, or choosing to remain online for regular worship. We were one of a handful of churches in the Diocese of Guildford which showed up as growing consistently over a three-year period to October 2016, however that is no longer the case and we must redouble our efforts to reverse Covid-related decline.

Our numbers have fallen in recent years, partly attributable to deaths, some Covid related and others moving away. During 2022, Sunday attendances varied dramatically from over 50 at 10am to just 22 on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent – a record low. As some joined the electoral roll, we have overall remained relatively level at 121. Considering the national challenge, we must not be complacent. 2022 saw new faces join our regular community, although a number of families and two of our clergy team move away, so there is a lot to celebrate amidst the challenges of our time.



## **Church Development Plan (CDP) for Thorpe**

*Approved at our November PCC.*

As we look to the future, we always hold in mind that:

**"Unless The Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain."** *Psalm 127:1*

We turn to the Trinity of love in faith for inspiration. All our discussion are rooted in prayer and trust in the God from whom all good things come in the first place. (See 1 Chronicles 29:14)

We will embed our Diocesan Vision TCTL into our priorities. Laying sound foundations at our September 2022 PCC meeting, we agreed to renew teams of people to lead our innovation. With about 6 people in each, we hope these groups will meet quarterly and deliver our vision 2023-2025. Each of these teams is asked to report back to the PCC. They cover every aspect of our church life together.

### **Vision Priorities:**

- i) Work to ensure the musical tradition of the church is maintained with a working organ.
- ii) Secure a children and families worker part time to lead Lego Club and re-introduce Faith & Fun activities on a Sunday morning and after school club at Thorpe Primary.
- iii) Establish new Whatsapp groups and a bible study group. (End use of the Workplace communication platform before charging begins).
- iv) Develop discipleship and personal evangelism with continued courses.
- v) Migrate financial management over to the Planned Giving Scheme.
- vi) Eco-Church - strive for the Gold award.

### **Gift Aid**

As a charity this is especially important in meeting the costs of ministry and the maintenance of our historic medieval church here in Thorpe. We ask every member of the church family who can do so, to complete and sign an annual Gift Aid declaration. Thank you for your help and support.

# St Mary's Church, Thorpe

## Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2022

### General Receipts & Payments

#### Receipts

	2022	2021
	£	£
<i>Regular Giving</i>		
Planned giving	30,474	29,545
Collections and other giving (non gift aid)	52,576	14,435
Collections and other giving (gift aid)	12,206	9,134
	<b>95,256</b>	<b>53,114</b>
<i>Other Voluntary Receipts</i>		
Donations/ <i>In Memoriam</i>	2,095	20,164
Charities	199	10
Wall boxes & Candles	231	172
	<b>2,525</b>	<b>20,346</b>
<i>Receipts from Fund-generating Activities</i>		
Fund-raising Events & Activities	19,771	15,272
Hire of Church and Rutherwyke Room	3,012	1,878
	<b>22,783</b>	<b>17,150</b>

*Receipts from Church Activities*

Fees (Banns, Weddings, Funerals)	11,513	15,762
Refreshments	1,131	615
Noah's Ark & Lego Club	739	114
Flowers	224	99
Books	-	-
Sundry (Stall, Cards, Gift etc.)	448	263
	<b>14,054</b>	<b>16,853</b>

*Receipts from Investments*

CBF Dividends	505	489
	<b>505</b>	<b>489</b>

*Other Income*

Works Account (inter a/c transfers)	24,723	14,330
Education Account (inter a/c transfers)	12,679	6,050
Tax reclaims (2021 Gift Aid)	29,816	12,633
Receipts from insurance	-	-
	<b>67,218</b>	<b>33,013</b>

**Total Receipts**

<b>202,340</b>	<b>140,964</b>
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## Payments

2022

2021

£

£

### *Church Activities*

Diocesan Parish Share 58,617 54,375

Parish Costs (Expenses,  
Travel, Telephone) 985 1,345

Organists 3,320 1,270

Cost of services 2,537 3,496

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**65,459 60,486**

### *Maintenance*

Facilities maint. Cleaning,  
Fees etc 8,738 23,532

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**8,738 23,532**

### *Church running expenses*

Insurance 2,762 2,672

Gas, Electricity, Water 5,163 4,082

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**7,925 6,754**

### *Administration*

Admin, computer & office  
supplies 10,129 3,564

Bank charges 10 -

Postage 69 33

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**10,209 3,597**

*Other Costs*

Books	10	80
Music & Subscriptions	91	-
Children's Resources	264	-
Charities	208	-
Parish Fees to Diocese	3,682	6,808
Events & Fund-raising costs	8,251	1,666
Refreshments	903	480
Marketing	1,655	1,161
Flowers	399	167
Tax repayment	11,394	-
Sundry payments (training, misc)	192	30
Fixed assets	36,100	5,822
	<b>63,149</b>	<b>16,214</b>

*Fund Transfers*

Transfer to Works Acc	43,938	29,543
Transfer to Education Acc	2,324	-
	<b>46,262</b>	<b>29,543</b>

**Total Payments**

<b>201,740.89</b>	<b>140,126</b>
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**Balance (Income less Expenditure)**

**599      837**

# Statement of Assets and Liabilities

		<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cash Funds</b>			
at 31 Dec 2022	Bank: Current Account	1 23,760	23,161
	Bank: Business Reserve Account:		
	Education	2 23,976	34,308
	Bank: Business Saver: Works	3 44,481	25,251
<b>Investment Assets</b>			
	CBF: Thorpe St. Mary PCC - value of shares	4 16,983	19,249
	<i>821.00 shares @ £20.66.14 each on 31/12/22</i>		
		<b>109,201</b>	<b>101,969</b>
<b>Other Monetary Assets</b>			
	Estimated refund for 2022 GA donations	5 12,985	12,437
		<b>12,985</b>	<b>12,437</b>
<b>Breakdown of Cash Funds</b>			
	Unrestricted (1+4+5)	53,729	54,847
	Restricted (2+3)	68,457	59,559
		<b>122,186</b>	<b>114,406</b>

Approved by the PCC on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
and signed on their behalf by:



Mr. Andrew West  
Treasurer



Diana Lees  
Churchwarden



Allison Kelly  
PCC Secretary





Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name  
THORPE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022  
Charity no (if any) 1176929

**Set out on pages**

1 & 2  
(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/12/2022**.

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed: Paul Whitlock

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023

Name: Paul Whitlock

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

Address: 47, ASHLEIGH AVENUE, EGHAM, SURREY TW20 8LB



### Part 3 Appendix Section

#### Sunday Worship at St Mary's

8am Said Eucharist, **10am Sung Parish Eucharist**  
*1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday monthly* **11:30am Family Service**  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday monthly* **11am Healing Ministry**  
[ *4<sup>th</sup> Sunday* **12noon Baptism Service** ]  
**6pm Compline** – *check the newsletter for details.*

#### Weekdays

**Weekday Said Eucharist: 11am Wednesday**  
**Evening Sung Festival Eucharist**  
at 7.30pm on select occasions.

