



**Bathampton Parish Church**

# **Annual Review 2023 (for APCM 2024)**



**St Nicholas Church  
Church Close Bathampton BA2 6TU**

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**Background:** St. Nicholas PCC has the responsibility of co-operation with the Revd. Jonty Frith, Incumbent, in promoting our Mission Statement that “We are a church focused on Jesus so that we love one another, serve the whole parish and touch the world.”

**Charitable Status:** The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC is a charity exempted from registration with the Charity Commission. The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church representation rules.

**Bankers:** Current account held with National Westminster Bank, Bath. Deposit and Investment accounts held with the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England (CFB), London.

**Independent Examiner:** Andrew Morrison

**Financial Review:** The full financial report is presented separately.

**Reserves Policy:** It is PCC policy to balance general income and expenditure each year and to invest our fund balances with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund. The PCC policy is to maintain, if possible, a balance of unrestricted funds equal to six months’ unrestricted payments to cover any emergency that may arise.

The PCC has three Charitable Trusts which donate money to the work of St. Nicholas Church, for which the rector and churchwardens act as Trustees:

- The Barlow Trust for the benefit of the sick and poor of the parish.
- The Ramsbottom Trust for the maintenance of the churchyard.
- The Rhodes Trust for Sunday School work in the parish.

## PCC Members April 2023- April 2024

The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules. All elected PCC members are volunteers. Several changes took place at the APCM on 24 April 2023.

The following people served during 2023/24. Ex officio:

**Rector:** Rev'd Jonty Frith

**Churchwardens:** Anna Young  
(*elected annually*) Paul Bryant

**Diocesan Synod:** Phil Edge

**Deanery Synod:** Anna Young  
(*to 2026*) Tim Laver

### **Elected Members:**

To 2024: Nigel White (*since 2021*)  
Carl Fullaway (*since 2018*)  
Sally Magee (*since 2023*)

To 2025: Nigel Shepherd (*since 2023*)  
Helen Williams (*since 2023*)  
Margaret White (*since 2022*)

To 2026: Hannah Findlay (*since 2020*)  
Anne-Marie Conn (*since 2023*)  
Peter Hunt (*since 2023*)

**Chair** The Rector  
**Vice Chair** Anna Young  
**Secretary** Peter Hunt  
**Treasurer:** Rita Warboys  
**Safeguarding officer:** Rachel Howlett

### **Paid Staff:**

**Childrens Minister:** Rachel Howlett: 20 hours per week

**Benefice Administrator:** Natalie Mills: 18 hours per week

## **PCC Review of the Year:**

PCC met formally seven times during 2023. Besides the regular items (including safeguarding and sub-committee reports), the PCC has discussed a variety of matters:

- We approved the appointments of Natalie Mills as Benefice Administrator and Rachel Howlett as Children's and Families' Worker.
- We considered how best to use various funds, including the Anne Skipper legacy, the Barlow fund and the Joy Isaac legacy. We agreed bursaries for Lakeview Venture could be paid from the Susan Rhodes fund.
- We discussed issues regarding the Prayers of Love and Faith, writing to Bishop Michael to express concern about these Prayers and support for Jonty Frith.
- We agreed to become a Partner Church of the South West Gospel Partnership.
- We resolved that a simple said service of Evening Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer would be held on at 18:00 on the first Sunday of each month.
- We put the North Aisle pews project on hold, while the heating project was being tackled.
- We heard that Herschel Infrared could install two main (halo) heaters and six horizon heaters, which could cost in excess of £100,000, when combined with the cost of installation.
- We noted the church is operating with significant deficits, which must be resolved soon, and agreed that there should be a separate fund to pay for the heating project.

*Ian Williams & Peter Hunt*

### **Finance:**

At the end of 2023 income for St Nicholas was under budget, there were 3 legacies and a grant from the Parish Council towards churchyard maintenance. There have been some donations towards the renewal of the church heating system which will carry forward to 2024. Expenses were over budget, these included work on the church heating, work at the vicarage and salaries. The Parish share was higher than the previous year.

Shares to the value of £20,000 have been sold reducing the church reserves.

*Rita Warboys*

### **Churchwardens' Report:**

2023 saw the arrival of two new staff members at St Nicholas': Natalie Mills, who is our Benefice Administrator, and Rachel Howlett, our Children's and Families' Minister. Both have made excellent starts – Natalie has been able to build on Hilary's work in updating and reshaping our administration, and we are seeing the benefits of their combined work on Safeguarding. Rachel runs our junior church groups on Sundays and has launched a couple of new initiatives, including an after-school story club and Halloween outreach with hot chocolate for trick-or-treaters in the village. It has been lovely to see a few new families coming to church services.

The size of the problems with our church heating system became apparent in Spring 2023, when what had been assumed to be a one small leak turned out to be a series of leaks in some completely expired pipework, much of which is buried beneath irreplaceable Wombeyan marble in the Australia Chapel. The cost and complexity of repairing/replacing the pipework, along with the Diocese's commitment to reaching net zero and phasing out fossil fuel powered heating, mean that we need a new, all-electric heating system. This new system will probably be based on far-infrared heaters, which heat objects as

opposed to space and therefore use much less energy than a hot water-based system (this reduction in energy usage then counteracts the fact that electricity is more expensive than gas, and so the final energy bill is comparable). A significant amount of work will be required to upgrade our electricity supply and renew the church wiring (which is also beginning to fail), and we anticipate that the total cost will be in the region of £100,000 (this is a similar amount to our annual church budget and so considerable fundraising effort will be required).

We are glad to have been able to meet in the Miller Room during the colder months, and grateful to the children (and junior church volunteers) for coping with the reduced space in the Upper Room while we use ‘their’ space for services, and to Hilary Crellin for donating the small piano that has made such a difference to our music in the Miller Room.

*Anna Young & Paul Bryant*

**Rector’s Report:**

“Encourage one another, and build each other up” 1 Thessalonians 5:11  
2023 was a year of consolidation following the major challenges of the last few years. And it came with its own challenges. The need for mutual encouragement has been as great as ever and I thank God for making our church family a place where that mutual encouragement is growing. For the whole of 2023 we had no central heating in the main church building. Moving Sunday gatherings into the Miller Room was hampered by the heating not working there for a time either, but Paul Bryant oversaw a smart move to separate the two systems and enable a warm Miller Room. Services in there have been a joy, and it was good to be able to use the church for the summer. We now face a major challenge to replace the heating system with an environmentally-acceptable alternative, rewire and redecorate the church, which will require significant fundraising. It is taking longer than expected to obtain competitive quotes, but estimates of up to £120,000 have been floated.

The Lord is merciful to us and we have seen some growth in numbers in the Miller Room. Meeting there has displaced Junior Church into the Upper room, which is not really suitable for boisterous youngsters, especially on Sundays that see large numbers, which have been occurring delightfully more frequently.

April 2023 was when Rachel Howlett started as Children's & Families' Minister, soon after Natalie Mills started as Administrator. Both have brought great benefit to the life of the church and offer very good value for money but need to be paid for! Shortage of staff has recently been enabling us to get away with lower giving but we need urgently to raise our financial contributions. In the first few months of 2023, Pippa Dowsett kindly voluntarily helped to tide us over the administrative gap between Hilary Crellin and Natalie. We are most grateful.

A large cohort of a previous generation of St Nicholas' members have in 2023 gone to be with the Lord, and others have moved away. We look back with thankfulness and those who remember miss Peter Lloyd-Williams who for many years was a Reader, David Warboys who was Parish Steward, Ray Book who as an electrician did much of the church's electrical work, Michael Wills a key choir member, and both Mary Woodman and Barbara Davies were close to the heart of the church. It is lovely that Andy, Rita and Ann are still with us but Ralph went before Mary, and Judith Book moved to be near her daughter in Cranbrook. Nigel and Annette (mentioned under Tech and Music respectively) White also moved away and are greatly missed, especially for Nigel's hearty preaching.

Having lost so many, we are blessed to have relatively stable numbers as new people have joined as well. We continue to aim to be a church focused on Jesus, so that we love one another, serve the parish and touch the world.

A faithful focus on Jesus is becoming more and more counter-cultural in the post-Christian West, and this is sadly also the case even within the Church of England. We have much to repent of, including toleration of abuse and prejudice against those from different backgrounds, race, class or sexual orientation. Jesus calls us to love all our neighbours and to scatter the seeds of the Gospel on all kinds of soil. It is Gospel seed that comes from his word, not created or adapted by us. We are all called to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus. The recent push by the House of Bishops, narrowly approved by General Synod, to introduce “Prayers of Love and Faith” and affirm people in their lifestyle choices, empties proclamation of the Gospel of its power to save. It embeds a contradiction into the official position of the Church of England by simultaneously asserting that the church’s doctrine of marriage is unchanged and implying a radical change. This has led to gridlock in the implementation process, much to everyone’s frustration, and revealed and exacerbated deep divisions. Experience shows that in every province where this route has been followed, faithful Christians, ministers and churches have been driven out of the dioceses, which have dwindled. We do not want to spend our time and energy in conflict. It is sapping the church of strength and deflecting us from loving gospel ministry. But if there is to be any faithful gospel ministry within the Church of England in the next generation and beyond, I believe we need legally secure provision of a place for ministers and churches that uphold the faith as we received it. That is not yet in place and so I need to make clear that I am not walking together with our bishop in this. I remain under his legal licence and am fully with the diocesan Safeguarding structure, but have lost confidence in his spiritual leadership and so am receiving new temporary informal alternative spiritual oversight provided by an active retired bishop. PCC is still working out appropriate ways to express our changed relationship with the Diocese and its implications for our financial interdependence.

Meanwhile, the work of the Holy Spirit in building the body of Christ goes



on in Bathampton. Thank you all, brothers and sisters in the church, for encouraging one another and building each other up. It is a refreshing joy to be part of a church family in which the Spirit is working, causing us to grow into the likeness of the Lord Jesus. And he is bringing more people to himself with us. Let us rejoice in that and welcome them.

*Jonty Frith*

### **Deanery Synod:**

The topic that came up most in 2023 at Deanery Synod was that of ‘Partnerships’ between Benefices. Financial pressures at a Diocesan level mean that the Deanery is required to go from the equivalent of 22 full-time, stipendiary vicars to 17. The strategy and criteria for achieving this reduction are set out in the Deanery Plan (for example, priority is given to ministry in areas of socio-economic deprivation). The practical implementation and implications of these partnerships remains somewhat unclear, though the overall aim is to enable sharing of resources between churches such as to strengthen the ministry across the Deanery.

*Anna Young and Tim Laver*

### **The Diocese and Bishop’s Council**

For the best detail of the work being done, by so many, for the 400 plus Parishes, please click on the link. <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk> It also explains how the Diocese works and the position of Bishop’s Council within it.

These are difficult times, however. The Diocese has a £1.6m deficit for the year and that makes supporting the very rural parishes and also the very poor parishes, difficult.

Bishop Michael’s strategy to grow the kingdom is emerging – read about the Lay Ministry Pathway and the Education Department work, on the web site. Both exciting I think.

Bishop’s Council is working hard to assist all initiatives being implemented, in support of the strategy and also to understand,

measure and deal with the financial problems, along with any difficulties, both financial and otherwise, raised by the LLF prayers of blessing and allied issues.

Your prayers for the work of council would be wonderful. Thank you.

*Phil Edge – Bishop's Council Member*

## **Worship, Teaching and Equipping**

### **Homegroups:**

I currently lead the Wednesday group which meets fortnightly in the Vicarage. Both evening groups are following the Sunday series for our Bible Study and are important means of expression and growth of encouraging, prayerful friendships within the church. I mentioned in last year's report the hope for a daytime group and am delighted to see the establishment of Faith & Friendship for women.

*Jonny Frith*

### **Tuesday Group:**

We normally meet in Jan and Ian's home at 7.30 pm on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, with the option of also meeting when there is a fifth Tuesday, perhaps for a social evening or to do something different: since the fifth Tuesday in October fell on Halloween, a good number of us helped with the hot chocolate distribution. Usually, we look together at bible passages following the sermon series and are encouraged by thoughts, suggestions and experiences shared between us. Discussion then turns to prayer for concerns shared by those present and often also from those absent. We have continued to grow in prayerful support of one another, and have been open to receiving new members, subject to practical limits of space.

*Ian Williams*

**Music:**

*Sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all the earth.  
Sing to the LORD, praise his name;  
proclaim his salvation day after day.  
Psalm 96: 1,2*

We continue to be blessed with the faithful service of a team of regular musicians, meaning that most weeks we are able to be led by voice and piano, with violin, cello, cajon and saxophone additional welcome features whenever possible. We can be truly grateful to God for each of them, for the skills he has blessed them with, and for their generous willingness to share their time and expertise in this way.

This year has seen us bid a fond farewell to Hilary who had been faithfully playing the organ and to Annette whose violin playing had enhanced our worship enormously. We are so grateful for all that they have contributed and continue to pray for them in their new locations of worship. We are also most grateful to Hilary for her gift of the piano which has greatly enhanced our worship in the Miller Room. We have been delighted to welcome the Howlett family to the music group as regulars on the rota. A highlight was once again our Christmas music when we were joined by others from the congregation, friends and family members, to celebrate the wonder of the birth of Jesus.

All this has enabled us to continue to sing a mix of old favourites and well-loved contemporary worship songs, and to expand our repertoire, to express our praise and thanks to God for his love, faithfulness and goodness to us.

*Singing, how marvellous, how wonderful  
And my song will ever be  
How marvellous, how wonderful  
Is my Saviour's love for me.*

*Margaret White*

### **Prayer Meeting:**

The monthly Prayer Meeting is for the whole church, on the first Thursday at 7.30pm for an hour. The Lord has blessed our little gathering, draws near to us and hears our prayers. If you don't normally come, come!

*Jonty Frith*

### **Prayer Ministry:**

Prayer Ministry continues to be a sparsely used, but very useful ministry within St Nicholas. It has been a little more difficult in the Miller Room, but still effective.

The team of ministers has grown, with the welcome addition of Peter Hunt to the group and this year we have, again, had some real answers to prayer, that recipients have told us about. We thank God for those responses, and we look forward to being back in the main building after Easter time.

*Phil Edge*

### **Stewards:**

The job of a Steward is very important - not only are they a help to the Wardens in making a service run smoothly, but they are usually the first people that visitors meet on entering the church for a service and therefore a bright cheery welcome is much appreciated. I think our Stewards fill that role well and we are grateful to them for their continued support. If anyone else would be interested in joining our team please let me know.

*Jane Buckley*

### **Worship Committee:**

The main issues in our services have been related to the winter move to the Miller Room. Services in church in colder weather are helped by gas space heaters, but they leave a cooling space during the service.

Margaret White has developed the suggestions she gives to service leaders and we try to think more about linking the various elements of the service with a clear and explicit theme.

*Jonty Frith*

## **Getting to Know and Care for One Another**

### **The Luncheon Club (was Maxi Club):**

2023 has been a year of some success but tinged with great sadness. Our numbers have dwindled through some sad losses of valued members and through age and general mobility. Two valuable volunteers have also had to resign. These factors together with the new Health and Safety rules following the Covid lockdown have made it no longer feasible for the Luncheon Club to continue. After a long and very heartfelt meeting it was decided that after almost 25 years the Club must cease.

During the year those that came, enjoyed the food and experience and the Luncheon Club went out with a bang with a final Christmas meal in November. Previous volunteers were invited back and the lunch rounded off with carols supplied by Bathampton Primary School and with a free Raffle.

It was difficult saying goodbye to friends who have been attending for many years but there is hope that St Nicholas might be able to find another way to unite both the young Mini Club and the senior former Maxi Club.

*Sara Fudge*

### **Faith & Friendship Ladies Group:**

Faith and Friendship is a new group for women of all ages at St. Nicholas'. We began meeting in October with the twin aims of exploring and

deepening our Christian faith and getting to know one another better and deepening friendships. We meet on alternate Thursday mornings, in a local home, from 10am - 11.30 in school term times. A typical group meeting consists of discussing some aspect of Christianity (at present we are working our way through the Apostles Creed) for about 40/45 minutes, followed by time for coffee and cake and the chance to chat informally together. We have also enjoyed an informal Christmas social together, with a light hearted Christmas Quiz and some lovely Christmas snacks. There is always a lovely warm atmosphere in the sessions and everyone is welcome. If you would like to know more, please have a chat with me, after church one Sunday.

*Linda Lewis*

### **Men's Group:**

The tried and tested format of meetings continued in 2023 with regular monthly meetings on the 3rd Monday of the month at members' houses, except for the very enjoyable Christmas celebration at Bathampton Mill.

The evening focuses on questions raised by members on all kinds of issues whether topical or personal, local or global, serious or lighthearted, secular or religious. The questions reflect the wide and varied interests of the group, many of whom are actively involved in church life, for example in the Fabric, Pastoral Visiting and Catering teams.

Very good value, free coffee, best biscuits, friendly discussion, no commitments. 7.30 to 9.30pm. Come and join us.

*Ray Bennett*

### **Coffee Rota:**

Not much has changed on the provision of coffee in the last year. The number of volunteers on the rota has remained at 7. They are reliable

and efficient. I draw up the rota every 4 months and it is still the case that some people on the rota can do more Sundays than others.

The trolley is still being used when the services are in the church and is a very successful way of serving the coffee. As the services are now in the Miller Room, the coffee can be served from the kitchen.

I still order the coffee and a recent 'taste test' of some different coffee varieties was very popular.

I anticipate making a request for further people to join the rota in the coming year in case anyone has to drop out and because of unavoidable absences of people on the rota.

In conclusion, the coffee rota is functioning well with no problems.

*Helen Williams*

### **Pastoral Visiting Team:**

Our group have been busy with visits this year. We see many people regularly which brings some valuable friendships for us. We are so pleased that Tim Gray has joined us as a new member of the team. He recently came to live in the village and we are grateful for his help.

There is a new coffee morning, called the Bridge, starting in the Miller Room, for companionship for all ages. We are hoping that the young and the elderly will enjoy meeting together there.

We ask church members to let us know if anyone would like a visit from us. Maybe a new resident or just someone wanting a chat; it would be a great help to us.

*Angela Donald*

# Outreach

## **Parish Outreach:**

Distributing Easter and Christmas cards to every home, opening the church midweek, and holding a Marquee Service following the Village Show have all helped to supplement the other ministries reported on in this section. There was no church Breakfast in 2023. Some strategic thinking and planning is needed for our structured parish outreach. Rachel reports on some fine initiatives to reach out to children and families in the community.

*Jonty Frith*

## **Marriage Ministry:**

There were no weddings in Bathampton in 2023.

*Jonty Frith*

## **Funeral Ministry:**

There were seven funerals in St Nicholas' and I took one for this parish at the crematorium. Most of these were for church members or people with a close connection to the church. It is still a significant part of our serving the parish, and the congregations in funerals include more non-church-members than any of our other outreach events, including a strong proclamation of the good news of resurrection, which is all the more joyful when the deceased had evident personal faith and hope in Jesus.

In addition we held three burials of cremated remains in the churchyard. Church family members and visitors are appreciating the coming together of a main church service and this small special event when this happens on a Sunday.

*Jonty Frith*



### **World Mission:**

We are committed to prayer for and financial support of several partners on a yearly basis. As a church family, we rotate our prayer focus on specific individuals and organisations for periods of a few months at a time.

Particular highlights of 2023 included our ongoing support for Dan Mak (for whom it has been a delight and privilege to pray; his studies are going well) and a wonderful surge of support for Operation Christmas Child (Samaritan's Purse).

It is planned to reflect further on the church's approach to world mission in 2024. We aim to collect views from the congregation and from our partners.

The PCC have decided that in 2024, we will support: Delhi Bible Institute; Dan Mak; Wycliffe Bible Translators; Open Doors; UCCF; and Samaritans Purse.

New volunteers to join the World Mission Committee are also warmly welcomed. Why join? It's fun, meaningful and requires very little activity from its members!

*Anne-Marie Conn*

## **Engaging Children and Youth**

### **Junior Church:**

Junior church has a lovely group of leaders and helpers which means that they can have a good balance between being in church and serving. We have had a few new children join us this year, meaning we have 13-15 who come reasonably regularly, though the weekly attendee numbers

can be very variable. We have moved to using Scripture Union Light Live resources and mix the 5-7 and 7-11 resources weekly to have something that is accessible to all ages. The format is usually a game or activity to start, the main part focused on the Bible and then an activity or choice of activities to respond. There is quite an age range so I have been trying to offer something for the older and the younger when appropriate. It is lovely to see the friendship and fellowship growing across the ages as well as the excitement at sharing their faith.

*Rachel Howlett*

### **Story Club:**

Story Club was relaunched in the summer to a small group of church children and then advertised more widely from September. We currently have ten regular attendees, which works well as a group size at present. We have looked at Old Testament heroes (David, Daniel, Shadrach and Meshach, Abednego), Jesus' parables. This term we are exploring the life of Moses before half term and some of Jesus life as we lead to Easter. In sessions we usually do something like: have a snack, hear the Bible story, sing a worship song and then do some activities based around the story. We are lucky to have a great group of volunteers supporting, I'm very thankful for all they do.

*Rachel Howlett*

### **Mini Club:**

Upon taking on MiniClub last April there was an initial increase in families, with 7 attending one week, however this didn't last and we were soon back to having one or two families a week. This lack of a "critical mass" then made visitors feel a bit awkward. With the finishing of Maxi/Lunch Club and a number of comments from the families that did attend about being far from grandparents we have decided to try a more inter-generational group.

*Rachel Howlett*

### **Bathampton Primary School:**

After several meetings with different staff members this year we started to build a relationship up again with the school. I have been asked to help with forest school a few times and after that a few assemblies. Three classes have also come to the church for different parts of their learning about the Christian faith. StoryClub also means that the team are at the school each Tuesday and are able to chat to staff and the head. There has been interest from the school in being involved in a community project with the church, we hope that "The Bridge" will be a group that they are keen to get involved with and we can continue to develop our links.

*Rachel Howlett*

## **Support Ministries**

### **Administration:**

Many thanks to Pippa Dowsett for all her work in the office during the first part of the year, following the retirement of Hilary Crelin.

In March Natalie Mills was appointed Benefice Administrator. Natalie has used her experience to re-create the invoicing system and to try and streamline all the administrative tasks.

At the end of 2023 we changed over from Vodafone to Yappl and introduced wireless access points in the Miller Room and church which are working well. The phone line is now via VOIP which the landline number 01225 is redirected to Natalie's mobile during working hours. The printer has also been changed to reduce costs.

It is hoped that 2024 will be a year of consolidation of these changes, as well as on-going work to improve the overall efficiency of the

administrative life of the church. In 2024 Nataile also hopes to create a church contact list – separate to the electoral roll – so that the church family can easily find ways of communicating with others in the church family – especially in times of hardship.

*Natalie Mills*

### **Safeguarding:**

There has been a lot of changes in the way that safeguarding has been organised in parishes this year. We now have access to a parish dashboard and hub to highlight to us any work that needs to be done in a traffic light system. The hub also highlights anyone who needs training completed or a new DBS. The diocese has also moved the DBS checking system to 31:8 away from capita. We have 25 people with current DBS checks on our teams working with vulnerable adults and children.

This year we have kept up to date with DBS checks and run two basic and foundation training courses which have been well attended. There is still a bit of a struggle to get everyone to the right level of training but hopefully it will improve next year. The introduction of all PCC members being required to take the Domestic Abuse Awareness course has particularly been difficult as this course is not available in person (only online)

The safeguarding team is made up of myself (as PSO), Natalie Mills (as DBS administrator), Jonty (as incumbent) and Hannah Findlay.

*Rachel Howlett*

### **Church Cleaning:**

For 2 years the church have continued to use Rachel Leonard to provide professional cleaning for the extension each week, and this system has worked beautifully, ensuring that all the rooms have been kept in an excellent state for both church and external users alike. Rachel is kept up to date with the calendar and works around events held in the Miller

Room as and when needed. A huge thanks to all her help as the Miller Room as begun to get busier with different activities led by our Children's Minister, Rachel Howlett.

*Natalie Mills*

### **The Flower Team:**

Thankfully we have been able to continue to praise God by arranging flowers weekly with our small team throughout 2023. If anyone would like to come and help with flowers at the Festivals : Easter, Harvest and Christmas do please get in touch with me on 01225 465454.

*Andy Lloyd Williams*

### **Tech Team**

Tech at St Nicks has reached a steady rhythm with a regular set of individuals attending on zoom. Staffing the rota has been difficult since Nigel White left. More volunteers would be most appreciated. I am grateful for the support of Ian White, Anna Young, Paul Bryant & Barnaby Frith. We have been seeking to simplify the setup as much as possible and now only require one person each Sunday.

*Tim Conn*

### **Bellringers:**

We have continued to have very low numbers in the Ringing team, so ringing has been ad hoc and limited to Monday practice evenings. We have not yet managed to re-establish Sunday ringing since COVID-19. We are delighted that we have two new trainees who are progressing well. Their training has been provided by Maggie Willans, from Christchurch , St John's Road and Maggie's input has been greatly appreciated. We continue to be active looking for more ringers, or potential trainees.

We have only rung for one wedding in the past year, and this was at Claverton Church. Unfortunately three of the bells at Claverton have developed mechanical issues, which we are having investigated in

February. This has meant that there has been no ringing at Claverton since summer 2023.

The number of visiting bellringing teams at Bathampton has slowly picked up over the year, and since the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Candy McCabe, Captain of the Tower*

### **Church Rooms Bookings:**

There was a steady, if only moderate, usage of the church rooms during 2023. There were occasional bookings from external organisations, as well as a number of post-funeral events. The Miller Room is often used for Story Club and Children's Church and this year we have been very grateful for the heating in the Miller Room whilst we have held our services in there during the winter months.

*Natalie Mills*

### **Fabric Committee:**

The Committee is responsible for the day to day upkeep of the church and churchyard and for the progress of the repairs and professional surveys listed in the Quinquennial Inspection reports. Work is carried out using in-house effort where possible but calling in contractor assistance as appropriate when funding is available.

The Fabric Committee has a team of hardworking and professional members who individually look after separate aspects of our work according to their expertise.

Planning for the next Quinquennial Inspection has started which will take place on 4th July 2024.

The biennial churchyard tree survey was reported in January 2023 with no immediate action required. The removal of seasonal leaf drop continues to maintain the appearance of the churchyard. Tomb safety inspection remains ongoing to maintain churchyard safety. Roof gullies, hoppers and drains and ground gullies are cleared regularly to keep the church dry. Repairs and redecoration are undertaken by the team as they arise.

The church heating pipework buried under the flagstone and marble flooring was found to be badly corroded and beyond repair. PCC directed Paul Bryant to lead studies on alternative heating options.

The Fabric Committee has contributed to his studies as required. The glass doors project to improve the south entrance visual experience and disabled access remains deferred. Current thinking is that it will form part of an appeal for new church heating, electrical rewiring and redecoration.

*David Lascelles, Chairman*



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